

AT HOME IN THE WORLD:
CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ AND THE ONTOLOGY OF SPACE

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Note on Translations

Quotations in English from secondary sources, as well as quotations from Czesław Miłosz's essayistic writings and the novel *Dolina Issy*, are provided on the basis of the published translations; otherwise, quotations are translated by M. Machala, and indicated in footnotes as [trans. by MM]. Where a particular quotation from a published translation of the secondary source, or Miłosz's essayistic writing, does not adhere very closely to the Polish text, quotations both in English and Polish are provided.

Quotations of poetry are provided in their original form in footnotes. Translated quotations of poetry are based on the translations authorized by the poet: Czesław Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems 1931 – 2001* (London: Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 2001) and Czesław Miłosz, *Second Space. New Poems*, trans. by the author and Robert Haas (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005). If the translation is not faithful to the original in some elements of form or contents, an explanatory note has been made pointing to the semantic or formal discrepancies. There are a few instances where quotations are provided only in the original form due to the lack of published translations or/and the presence of linguistic nuances which might be lost in translation.

ABSTRACT (I)

AT HOME IN THE WORLD: CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ AND THE ONTOLOGY OF
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Space constitutes one of the main leitmotifs of Czesław Miłosz's work, both theoretical and poetic. Central in this respect is the notion of imagination as a faculty organizing space, the faculty which, from the times of the Scientific Revolution, has been subject to erosion, especially as far as the religious imagination is concerned. The abolition of the anthropocentric, hierarchical vision of space, threw human beings into a state of alienation, conceptual nowhere. Religion was replaced by the dogmatism of scientific reductionism, the reality of Ulro. Miłosz shows the way out of Ulro, the way out of *nowhere* to the *somewhere*.

This thesis aims to illustrate the conceptual map of the way out of Ulro as portrayed in four selected volumes of poetry and the novel *Dolina Issy*, anchored in different points of Miłosz's biography. *The Land of Ulro*, the collection of essays which encapsulate Miłosz's ideas on space, constitutes a canopy work for the interpretation of the practical realization of those ideas in Miłosz's poetic work. *Trzy zimy* (1936), *Świat, poema naiwne* (1943), *Miasto bez imienia* (1969), and *Druga przestrzeń* (2002) provide the material for the analysis of different aspects of Miłosz's conception of space. Subject to analysis is the relationship between object and human subject as regards the formative, childhood experience of the space of the house (manor) and surrounding landscape, the act of *building* space on the basis of memory and retrospection in the context of distance

and exile, and the workings of religious imagination in the context of the realm of second space.

Through his conception of space, Miłosz defends human existence in its completeness. He shows the way out of Ulro. This thesis aims to retrace Miłosz's map out of the land of alienation on the basis of the poet's selected works.

ABSTRACT (II)

AT HOME IN THE WORLD: CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ AND THE ONTOLOGY OF SPACE

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Charles Taylor wrote: 'Miłosz captures the sense of threat to the central meanings of life, as well as the refusal to confine these to a lost past, and the determination to recover a new way of expressing and validating these meanings.'¹ Miłosz's battle in defence of *meaning* is part of his carefully developed conception of space. Diagnosing the crisis of civilization as being rooted in the erosion of religious imagination, Miłosz provides, both in his essayistic and his poetic work, a portrayal of two distinct orders: the order of Ulro and the order of hierarchical space safeguarded by the pre-Fall imagination.

In the *Land of Ulro* Miłosz wrote: 'Man is above all an organizer of space, both internal and external, and this in fact is what is meant by imagination. We are that pulsation of blood, that rhythm, that organism which transposes external spatial structures into internal spaces'.² Imagination as a faculty organizing space, both physical and metaphysical, is defended by Miłosz against dogmatic scientific reductionism which threw human beings into a condition of alienation once the Scientific Revolution took place and abolished the anthropocentric and hierarchical vision of the world. This vision conceptually denoted the privileged position of human beings between two realms:

¹ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 593.

² Czesław Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, trans. by Louis Iribarne (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1985), p. 245. See 'Człowiek jest organizatorem przestrzeni, zarówno wewnętrznej jak i zewnętrznej, i to właśnie nazywamy wyobraźnią. Jesteśmy pulsowaniem krwi, rytmem, organizmem przetwarzającym układy przestrzeni zewnętrznej w przestrzeń wewnętrzną', Czesław Miłosz, *Ziemia Ulro* (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1977), p. 189.

Heaven and the Underworld (Sheol, Hell). Humans have, since then, existed in the ‘Land of Ulro’ – a land of *alienation*, of the conceptual *nowhere*. The relationship between imagination and the perception of space (hierarchical or lacking religious points of reference) denotes and defines the human ontological condition, a *privileged*³ or alienated existence.⁴

This thesis is an attempt to illustrate Miłosz’s ‘map’ of the way out of Ulro, which appears to be his ‘project’ spanning his oeuvre even before he theorized his ideas in *The Land of Ulro* (1977). The ‘map’ is connected with the intention of recovering a specific type of spatial imagination: imagination which allows for metaphysical points of reference, which acknowledges the presence of God, and embraces, at the same time, the very materiality of existence. The ‘map’, theorized in *The Land of Ulro*, finds its practical exposition in Miłosz’s poetry.

Miłosz’s ‘project’ appears to have the same orientation as the assumptions on which the discourse of the phenomenology of space is based. The Heideggerian concept of *dwelling*, which found its continuation in the philosophy of architecture of Christian Norberg-Schulz, and which influenced in some ways the philosophy of Gaston Bachelard (immersed in the discourse of psychoanalysis), corresponds to Miłosz’s ‘project’ of leading a contemporary human being out of *nowhere* and restoring the sense of *dwelling* in the world against any type of alienation – to make a modern human ‘feel at home’. The Heideggerian idea of the ‘primal oneness of the four – earth and sky, divinities and mortals’ belonging ‘together in one’⁵ resonates with Miłosz’s aim at reinstating a human

³ See Czesław Miłosz, ‘O Erozji’, in *O podróżach w czasie* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2010).

⁴ Miłosz’s is the voice in a larger debate on the relationship between scientific thinking, space and imagination. See Stuart Kauffman: ‘Paradise has been lost not to sin, but to science. [...] Without Satan and God, the universe now appears the neutral home of matter, dark and light, and is utterly indifferent. We bustle, but are no longer at home in the ancient sense’ [Stuart Kauffman, *At Home in the Universe: the Search for Laws of Complexity* (London: Viking, 1995), p. 4.]. See the work of Alister McGrath, Michał Heller, Charles Taylor, to name just a few.

⁵ Martin Heidegger, ‘Building Dwelling Thinking’, in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. and introd. by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 149.

being's place in relation to the divine realm, for the sake of completeness of human existence, not reduced only to the laws of scientific determinism.

The following thesis begins by introducing Miłosz's philosophy of space in its theoretical aspect, principally on the basis of *The Land of Ulro*. This work is treated as a 'canopy' providing a theoretical background for the practical realization of Miłosz's treatment of space in the selected four collections of poetry, and the novel *Dolina Issy*.

The chosen poetry volumes, *Trzy zimy* (1936), *Świat, poema naiwne* (1943), *Miasto bez imienia* (1969), *Druga przestrzeń* (2002) are anchored in different points of Miłosz's biography. Although their genetic contexts vary significantly, they appear to be pieces of a larger mosaic which, gathered together, form a picture of interrelated themes and motifs, a portrayal of the poet's search which began in his youth and found its completion in the poet's last years. Each of the aforementioned volumes displays a different aspect of Miłosz's conception of space; different, yet subsumed under the common denominator of the ideas encapsulated in *The Land of Ulro*.

Trzy zimy constitutes a legend to the map of Ulro. Here space is a tool, a literary device, through which a condition of spiritual wasteland is portrayed. Different in its poetics from the rest of Miłosz's oeuvre, *Trzy zimy* offers an image of a poetic landscape of blurred boundaries, out of which a human voice is heard in its search for definition, identification, *presence*.

Świat, poema naiwne provides a poetic context for the study of subject-object/object-subject interaction within space against the background of a journey from the space of the house to the metaphysical realm symbolized by the sun. Here the motif of geographical anchorage in a particular location is restricted to the specific site/location encompassing the manor and its surroundings, yet opening onto the symbolic realm.

Miasto bez imienia offers a portrayal of the process of *building* space on the basis

of the material of memory as mediated by the experience of distance and exile. The constructed cityscape, although based on nostalgic retrospection, is a constructed space of dwelling in the present, especially as juxtaposed with the experience of the most immediate, Californian landscape.

Druga przestrzeń offers the most direct representation of the ideas enclosed in *The Land of Ulro* as it provides a map of the forgotten realm, with all its mazes and intricacies, the complexities of theological doctrines and religious experience, and showcases the workings of religious imagination as portrayed through various voices and traditions of thought.

Miłosz's philosophy of space, grounded in his poetics of detail which opens onto the general, and the poetics of the personal opening onto the universal, is contemplated by him always *in reference to* a human subject. The poet flinches from building multiple levels of abstraction. Instead, he combines all the aspects of space, the material, physical, geographical, conceptual, and metaphysical, to provide a holistic image of a human place in the world. His view opposes the reductionist approach of scientific determinism. Miłosz wages his battle for human existence in its completeness.

Miłosz is part of the pantheon of, what I call, the apostles of Imagination, the pantheon he himself described in *The Land of Ulro*, to which contemporarily belong, among others, Michał Heller, Mary Midgley or Alistair McGrath. Their common aim is to abolish the artificial boundary between science and metaphysics, science and religion, and show how the sacred and the profane are mutually complementing, not mutually exclusive, realities.

Conceptualizing, theorizing, and poeticizing the notion of space, Miłosz restores the memory of the forgotten order where a human being has a *place* in the world, and an act of *dwelling* has an ontological dimension. The poet defends the presence of *meaning*

in the reality of *nothingness*. This battle is not easy, and does not provide fixed answers. Yet, it is the battle which breaks down the gates of Ulro. Miłosz's work shows the way out of *nowhere* to the *somewhere* and this thesis is an attempt to reconstruct and trace back this way through the analysis of Miłosz's practical realization of his conception of space in his poetic work.

I.

INTRODUCTION

‘Space is a constant leitmotif of your work. It comes back both in your poetry, and your essays. It is a motif which shapes your poetic imagination and is a subject of your interest in its theoretical aspect’ as Aleksander Fiut points out in his conversation with Czesław Miłosz.¹ Thus he defines the texture of Miłosz’s oeuvre, the fabric of which constitutes the notion and perception of space, its experience and its theory, or an attempt of definition. Łukasz Tischner, similarly, characterizes Miłosz’s work as that which ‘enthalls (but at the same time overwhelms) with the richness and depth of insight into the mysteries of “first” and “second space.”’²

Extremely complex, and probably undefineable, as the notion of space is, both as an autonomous concept and as the concept addressed by Miłosz in his work, it constitutes for the poet-thinker a continuous project, though maverick at times, which has the character of a search alongside the trajectory lines which the notion of space delineates. This search is manifested both in Miłosz’s essayistic writing, his conversations, and, first of all, in his poetic work which has an extraliterary significance in this respect.

In his Nobel Lecture, Miłosz refers to a poet’s work as that of ‘leaving books behind as if they were dry snake skins, in a constant escape forward from what has been done. [...] What is this enigmatic impulse that does not allow one to settle down in the achieved, the finished? I think it is a quest for reality.’³ In a similar way, Miłosz’s

¹ Czesław Miłosz, Aleksander Fiut, *Autoportret przekorny. Rozmowy* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2003), p. 335 [trans. by MM].

² Łukasz Tischner, ‘Miłosz jako miara’, *Znak. Miesięcznik*, nr 664 (Wrzesień, 2010) <<http://www.miesiecznik.znak.com.pl/4021/calosc/milosz-jako-miara>> [accessed 4 Oct 2012]. See, ‘Jego twórczość olśniewa (choć zarazem przytłacza) bogactwem i głębią wglądu w zagadki „pierwszej” i „drugiej przestrzeni”’ [trans. by MM].

³ Czesław Miłosz, *Nobel Lecture* <http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1980/milosz-lecture.html> [accessed on 2

exploration of the notion of space in all its complexity is a search of the poet – *homo viator*. As if the poet, walking along the particular, carefully chosen path, uncovers particular vistas, returns to the sights already seen, yet looks at them from various perspectives which, altogether, constitute his perception of space, his *way of seeing and being*. It is a process which, in the light of his whole oeuvre, is marked by the recurrence of themes and motifs which, diachronically, form part of the mosaic of Miłosz's conception of space, his 'philosophy of space.' The aim of this thesis is to gather the pieces of the mosaic together, although inevitably filtered through the interpretative lens of the researcher, in an attempt to form them into a Gestalt picture of the poet's thought on space, notwithstanding the fact that the poet denies the label of a philosopher: 'I am not a philosopher but a poet and a historian of ideas.'⁴ Theorizing and poeticizing the notion of space, Miłosz provides, at the same time, a diagnosis of the malady of the times through what seems to be a literary response to Hölderlin's question: 'in such spiritless times, why to be poet at all?'⁵

His project is a search, and in the same way this thesis recognizes the impossibility of conclusiveness and exhaustiveness in its interpretative aspirations. Holistically a mosaic, one needs to allow for some missing parts, parts which still need to be found.

Despite the enormous size of scholarship produced on the work of Czesław Miłosz, there has still been room for systematic study of the poet's conception of space which in many ways is seminal in the interpretation of his oeuvre. Barbara Malinowska in her book *Dynamics of Being, Space and Time in the Poetry of Czesław Miłosz and John Ashbery* provided an insight into Miłosz's notion of space in the light of

Dec 2010]. See also, Aleksander Fiut, *Moment Wieczny* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2011), p. 473.

⁴ Czesław Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, trans. by Louis Iribarne (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1985), p. 184.

⁵ As quoted by Erich Heller, *The Disinherited Mind. Essays in Modern German Literature and Thought. Expanded Edition* (London: A Harvest/HBJ Book, 1975), p. xvii.

Heideggerian ontology. The current thesis, in its matryoshka structure, aims to delineate a holistic image of the constituents of Miłosz's conception of space: from the analysis of the human-object-human interaction within space, through the study of the mythologized geographical locations, to the investigation of the metaphysical realm of second space. As the notion of space is present, in its many manifestations, in Miłosz's whole work, the methodological approach adopted in this thesis relies on the selection of volumes of poetry, and the poetic novel *Dolina Issy*, which span, chronologically, across Miłosz's artistic biography and thus allow for both synchronic and diachronic analysis. Such an analysis, in turn, points to the network of mutually interrelated continuities of themes and motifs present at different historical moments in the poet's work. The interpretative link across the selected poetic collections constitutes *The Land of Ulro*, where space is subject of Miłosz's theoretical inquiry.

The notion of space is contemplated by Miłosz *in reference to* a human subject. It has an ontological dimension. Even when the poet nostalgically marvels at the landscapes of childhood and youth, or sucks out poetic essence out of objects surrounding him, he does so in relation to the human being whose existence is oriented towards, or away from, the second space and God. Space, which, holistically, is a certain construct, is (re)-organized by the poet according to the forgotten primeval order,⁶ the order rooted in the Garden of Eden,⁷ whose archetype, though dominated and subdued by scientific thinking, still functions in our collective memory yet has been forgotten due to the erosion of religious imagination, imagination which sealed itself off from transcendence, from

⁶ Miłosz theorizes this notion as he refers to Jacques Monod and his claim that religion is a vestige of animistic tradition, C.G. Jung and his notion of religion as a primary impulse, or Oscar Miłosz – and his idea of the proto-memory of Eden.

⁷ See also the essay 'Szczęście', here 'oczarowanie ziemią jako rajskim ogrodem' (in Czesław Miłosz, Joanna Gromek, *O podróżach w czasie* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2010), p. 326; 'an experience of enchantment with earth as a Paradise' (Czesław Miłosz, *Proud to Be a Mammal: Essays on War, Faith and Memory*, trans. by Catherine Leach, Bogdana Carpenter and Madeline G. Levine [London: Penguin Books, 2010], p. 80).

the metaphysics anchored in God. Out of Miłosz's study of human alienation within space, there emerges an order of the universe, a hierarchical arrangement where a human has a *place*.

Miłosz's notion of space can be contextualized in various discourses: for example, the discourse of geopoetics,⁸ or of cultural and literary theories of place; but it also occupies a significant part of the eternal debate on the binary reason-imagination, reason-faith, which binary Miłosz overcame. In *The Land of Ulro*, he creates a pantheon of the apostles of Imagination who reconciled scientific thinking and metaphysics. Contemporarily, this 'project' is embraced by scholars such as Michał Heller, Charles Taylor, Alistair McGrath, Mary Midgley, Stuart Kauffman, to name just a few. One of the present-day manifestations of the formal acknowledgement of efforts of the scholars who oppose scientific reductionism is the Templeton Price awarded to a living person who 'has made an exceptional contribution to affirming life's spiritual dimension, whether through insight, discovery, or practical works.'

In spite of touching upon various discursive boundaries, Miłosz's notion of space is contextualized in this thesis mostly in the discourse of the ontology of architecture which allows for the representation of the dynamics of both material, physical, geographical and mythological aspects of space enclosed within metaphysical space. In universal terms, it also reflects the structural character of space seen holistically as a certain enclosure where a human being has a *place*, which model emerges out of Miłosz's work.

The *Land of Ulro* (1977), which is a theoretical 'canopy work' in this thesis, constitutes an all-encompassing exposition of Miłosz's thought on space: the themes,

⁸ See the work of Kenneth White within the discourse of geopoetics <<http://www.geopoetics.org.uk>>.

motifs and ideas which the author brings about here both were, before the book was written, and will be present throughout his whole oeuvre. It constitutes a point of anchorage for the analysis of how Miłosz's thought on space is actually realized in his poetic work. It is treated in this thesis as, what could be expressed through Roman Ingarden's notion of a stratum of a literary work, a 'spatial stratum' which provides a model of a hierarchized meaningful space in Miłosz's poetry, with God as the ultimate point of reference. This thesis is to illustrate how Miłosz's poetry functions within this model on the basis of human interaction with and within space in its multiple aspects.

A chronological approach for, what will emerge as a holistic illustration, has been adopted: the analysis revolves around four volumes of Miłosz's poetry written at different points of his life and anchored in different contexts of his oeuvre: *Trzy zimy* (1936), *Świat, poema naiwne* (1943), *Miasto bez imienia* (1969), *Druga przestrzeń* (2002); it also includes the poetic novel *Dolina Issy*. Biographically, as far as the spatial context is concerned, these works constitute a poetic illustration of Miłosz's confrontation with different geographical locations, both immediate and seen retrospectively, in which the poet's life was anchored at its different stages. Poetically, they constitute a map out of Ulro: the search, definition and restoration of the human *place* within space through imagination open onto transcendence. The choice of the aforementioned collections also allows for a 'matryoshka-structure' illustration of Miłosz's poetic study of the notion of space in relation to a human subject: from the experience of a house, through the retrospective experience of the city-space and the act of building a conceptual space, on to the exploration of the second space itself. This illustration is preceded in the thesis by an analysis of *Trzy zimy* – the collection standing out from the rest of Miłosz's oeuvre. Here space is a tool through which the condition of a spiritual wasteland is shown: the hierarchical arrangement of space is overturned, human subject is inscribed into the

infinite vastness of space and needs to establish his/her subjectivity, while the boundaries between a human and the outside are fluctuating.

Whereas, methodologically, a biographical or genetic approach to the analysis of the chosen poetic works is tried to be avoided in this thesis, it is impossible to separate Miłosz's work from his autobiography, as the poet's 'I' constantly touches upon his private autobiography,⁹ his work and life interweave very strongly. Biographical context, indispensable for the interpretation of Miłosz's works, is provided, yet it is not considered to determine how his texts speak for themselves. The analysis in this thesis is restricted to the textual space within the poems: space whose notion is treated as a literary material, and is an addressed subject of the poetic works in its textualized and poeticized form. Hence the notion of space as delineated in this thesis encompasses: physical and material space as an arrangement of objects and a system of interaction between objects and human subject, and vice versa; geographical space in the form of location; space as contained in memory, built and turned into a conceptual place; and the second space, the all-enveloping space of the metaphysical realm which provides a point of reference and a structure to the first space denoting, at the same time, the direction in which human life should be oriented.

The Land of Ulro pictures the plight of a 'disinherited human', alienated and trapped in dogmatic scientific thinking, in an infinite universe devoid of a point of reference. It is the plight of a human without *place*. In his endeavour to 'break down the gates of Ulro',¹⁰ Miłosz opens the forgotten realm of the second space, points to the need for imagination opened onto transcendence.

⁹ Aleksander Fiut, 'The Identity Game', as quoted by Carmen Bugar, *Seamus Heaney and East European Poetry in Translation: Poetics of Exile* (London: Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing, 2013), pp. 98-99.

¹⁰ 'I suppose that in the present literary enterprise I am guided, partially at least, by a perverse ambition: can I, by citing an unorthodox tradition, say something about matters I regard as urgent, in a language at

The four chosen volumes of poetry and the novel *Dolina Issy*, subject to analysis in this thesis, serve as an illustration of the practical realization of the poet's fight against the 'spiritual disinheritance' of a human being as the poet studies the semantics of space and explores the realm of human interaction with space: interaction both physical and conceptual. Miłosz draws the map of the path leading away from Ulro, from the state of 'spiritual disinheritance' and 'spiritual death suffered by man in the incessant struggle between arrogance and humiliation, in his exposure to the mighty lovelessness of a chance constellation of energy.'¹¹ The path connects the first and second space. With second space, a point of reference, and hence *meaning*, is restored for human life; and thus, a possibility for a human to have, in the vastness of space, a meaningful and purposeful *place* of being and dwelling.

Trzy zimy is a 'legend' to the map of Ulro which the remaining poetic works constitute. It is a vision of a wasteland, image of the state of crisis dictated by daimonion.¹² Miłosz points out in *The Land of Ulro* that *Trzy zimy* constitutes the poet's release from the imprisonment in the Urizen's domain: 'My poor Urthona, or Imagination, tried to release me from that imprisonment; finding all exits barred, she began tunneling an escape route, occasionally – as in *Three Winters* – succeeding.'¹³ Different in its poetics from the rest of Miłosz's works, *Trzy zimy* seem to represent, to use Kristeva's terms, the semantic voice of his oeuvre, so apparent in the poetic form of 'Pieśń', as opposed to the symbolic voice in the poetry cycles that followed. This differentiation may correspond to the distinction made by the critic, Jan Błoński, between

once intellectually lucid and evocative, so as to leave an impress on the mind and in that way help to break down the gates of Ulro?', Czesław Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 187.

¹¹ Erich Heller, *The Disinherited Mind* (London: A Harvest/HBJ Book, 1975), p. 17.

¹² See Maria Janion's essay on 'Elegia' in *Trzy zimy & Głosy o wierszach*, ed. by Renata Gorczyńska i Piotr Kłoczowski (London: Aneks, 1987), p. 82. Here Miłosz about the poem 'Hymn' from *Trzy zimy*: 'Dajmonion podyktował, ja napisałem'.

¹³ Czesław Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 183.

Miłosz's work before and after 1943, the year when *Świat, poema naiwne* was published. With its publication, the poet appeared as absolutely certain that the main task of the artist, and poet, is mimesis.¹⁴ Thus a referential shift, as far as the object and aim of poetry is concerned, took place: the externalization of the internal conflicts within the poetic form, or, as was the case in Miłosz's early poetic works – socio-political role of poetry, were superseded by the principle of mimesis.

It is already in *Trzy zimy* that the thoughts encapsulated in *The Land of Ulro* find their poetic realization. On the most immediate, literal plane, the works are linked by the figure of Oscar Miłosz: *Trzy zimy* contains a translation of his poem 'Symfonia listopadowa.' The poetic cycle echoes with Oscar Miłosz's thought. The poet's cousin 'endowed with the gift of prophecy' acquainted Miłosz with Swedenborg;¹⁵ both thinkers occupy fundamental place in *The Land of Ulro*, published forty-one years later. Furthermore, both works are connected by the catastrophic discourse. As Miłosz points out in *The Land of Ulro*, catastrophism 'was, above all, engaged with the great crisis of civilization.'¹⁶ The poet admits 'in a sense I have remained a "catastrophist" all my life.'¹⁷ He points to the similarities between 'catastrophism' as the 'tendency' in Polish literature in the years 1918-39, as closely linked to the spirit of the Romantic age through its eschatological expectations¹⁸ which found expression in *Trzy zimy*: 'in a vision of massive convulsions, cataclysms, of a crisis of cosmic proportions and of unspecified duration. "Bottoming out" became a recurrent motif, and yet, curiously, it was a vision of the Last Judgment in which not everything came to an end; it was not without hope.'¹⁹

¹⁴ Jan Błoński, *Miłosz jak świat* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 1998), p. 82.

¹⁵ Błoński, *Miłosz jak świat*, p. 80.

¹⁶ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 271.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 272.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 270.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 270.

The reasons underlying catastrophic discourse of *Trzy zimy* were multiple and complex, ranged from personal to socio-political reflecting the contemporary Zeitgeist. Space became, in *Trzy zimy*, a tool through which the poet portrayed a human subject striving to consolidate subjectivity in a shapeless vastness of the universe's infinity. But it is also the space, de-hierarchized and God-less, which pointed to the crisis rooted in the erosion of religious imagination. In his essay 'On Erosion' Miłosz points out that among the causes of the emergence of 'monster states' which led to the tragedies of the twentieth century were the erosion of religious imagination and rejection of Judeo-Christian ethics of compassion.²⁰ The same causes, originating a couple of centuries before, are 'responsible' for the human condition where 'jakikolwiek istnienie jest pozbawione sensu i poddane niszczącej władzy czasu niosącego je ku nicości.'²¹ In the reality where an equation is made between human and animal, where the binary opposition of *sacrum-profane* is abolished and metaphysics grounded in God is considered to be an archaic vestige of some old system of thought, human existence has no teleological orientation and is deprived of meaning. Moreover, because of the absence of the sphere of religious *sacrum*, an experience of sublimity is no longer possible: 'sublimity is no longer within our power.'²² We have lost our capability of analogical thinking, reflected in Swedenborg's theory of correspondences: 'as above, so below'.²³ Human being becomes trapped in a 'disinherited condition'.

In the *Land of Ulro*, Miłosz analyzes the 'disinherited condition' and makes a diagnosis of the crisis of civilization:

²⁰ Czesław Miłosz, „O Erozji” in Czesław Miłosz, Joanna Gromek, *O podróży w czasie* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2010), p. 28.

²¹ Miłosz, „O Erozji”, p. 26.

²² Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 192.

²³ *ibid.*, pp. 209-210.

This much can be said: that Blake's Land of Ulro is not a fantasy if we ourselves have been there; that since the eighteenth century something, call it by whatever name one will, has been gaining ground, gathering force. And all who have sought exit from the 'wasteland' (another of the names by which it is known) have been, in my opinion, justified in their endeavor, more, are worthy of admiration, even if their efforts ended in failure and were bought at the price of various 'abnormalities.'²⁴

Trzy zimy is an illustration of a state of crisis. It constitutes a legend to the map out of Ulro as an image of a tormented imagination confronted with a spiritual wasteland. Space is a tool illustrating the spiritual Angst, but it also reflects and points to the universal crisis of civilization.

The poetic volumes that follow in the analysis, that is *Świat, poema naiwne*, *Miasto bez Imienia* and *Druga przestrzeń*, and the poetic novel *Dolina Issy*, are the actual contemplation of being within space. Being, which is not alienated, not random and accidental, but intentional and purposeful, because it is oriented towards the ultimate point of reference – God.

Świat, poema naiwne, refers to the nucleus proper of personal space: home. Home which is primarily experienced as a house, a building enclosing the childhood world, of which experience determines and shapes all future perception of space and one's position in relation to the world.²⁵ The poet, drawing on his childhood memories, provides a picture of the world as a manor and its surroundings, as he enacts a journey upwards through the micro-universe perceived through the child's eyes.

Miasto bez imienia, a collection very diverse in its subject matter with the central poem devoted to the Wilno of the poet's youth, illustrates an act of re-creation of conceptual space.²⁶ Biographically, the poet, after moving to Berkeley and eventually

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 269.

²⁵ See Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), pp.14-15.

²⁶ For comparison, see the poem 'My real dwelling', trans. from Japanese by John Stevens: 'My real dwelling/ Has no pillars/ And no roof either/ So rain cannot soak it/And wind cannot blow it down!', in *Soul Food: Nourishing Poems for Starved Minds*, ed. by Neil Astley and Pamela Robertson-Pearce (Tarset: Bloodaxe Books, 2010), p. 79.

settling down on Grizzly Peak was fascinated with the new landscape, the new land. Yet, this space was not his. As Miłosz remembers in *The Land of Ulro*: ‘I shall address a crippling disability of mine, lest anyone envy me what is truly one of the most spectacular vistas in the world. I recall the feelings of despair and revolt that once were mine on this street. No more running around, no more anticipating, no more being active, mixing, conversing – stranded in a zone of absolute alienation.’²⁷ Yet he breaks out of the zone of alienation into ‘a mountain above the clouds and the sea, a place to meditate to your heart’s content.’²⁸ He warns himself, though: ‘But be careful, this time it’s for keeps; either you’ll make something of the gift, or you won’t: no more squeamishness for you. Even the continent stops here.’²⁹ *Miasto bez imienia* is a poetic act of building space, and the collection is treated in this thesis in architectural terms. As Norberg-Schulz writes: ‘Architecture belongs to poetry, and its purpose is to help man to dwell.’³⁰ Similarly, one could say that vice versa is true as well. Of particular significance in the process of building the space of *Miasto bez imienia* are the notions of memory, retrospection, distance, exile, language, religion and faith which all constitute bricks of the great edifice, of *miasto*, the actual place of dwelling. *Miasto bez imienia* is a contemplation of being and dwelling through the act of building conceptual space by re-lived retrospection.

Druga przestrzeń is a poetic exploration of the second space. Structurally divided into five parts, it is the poet’s call for the restoration of the forgotten realm of second space. ‘Let us implore that it be returned to us, / That second space’³¹ resounds from the collection’s opening poem. Various perspectives and standpoints form the poet’s treatise on second space composed of reflection on the personal experience of faith and religion,

²⁷ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, pp. 24-25.

²⁸ *ibid.*, *The Land of Ulro*, p.24.

²⁹ *ibid.*, *The Land of Ulro*, pp. 25-26.

³⁰ Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1980), p. 22.

³¹ ‘Błagajmy, niech nam będzie wrócona/ Druga przestrzeń’ (‘Druga przestrzeń’).

and of theological quandaries and complexities in the light of various traditions of thought. The poet, who in *The Land of Ulro* made the diagnosis of the crisis of spiritual disinheritance and God-less alienation, does not leave the reader without assistance once the gates of the second space are open again. He paves the way to the second space and draws a map thereof as he reflects on the relationship between human and God, and God and the world, and vice versa, in both personal, theological and philosophical contexts.

In *The Land of Ulro*, Miłosz wrote about himself:

If I have alluded to the boy who once drew chimerical kingdoms in his notebooks, it was because we are too apt to think of the ‘final things’ in solemn and august terms, as the province of gray-bearded sages and prophets. Yet how much of millenaristic yearning betrays a childish instinct. The song of innocence and the song of experience share a common theme. In a cruel and mean century, ‘catastrophism’ entertained dreams of an idyllic earth where the ‘hay smells of the dream’; where tree, man, animal are joined in praise of the Garden’s beauty. By recalling that the boy and the poet – ‘catastrophist’ and the old professor in Berkeley are the same man, I am merely observing the guiding principle of this book, a book both childish and adult, both ethereal and earthbound.³²

Out of the aforementioned quotation, Miłosz’s work emerges as a holistically composed cycle. The four collections of poems and *Dolina Issy* chosen for analysis in this thesis are pieces of the mosaic which, although autonomous, are linked together and underlain by the common poetic motivation: to restore hierarchical vision of space, to restore the memory of the forgotten Garden and of second space; to show that there is a point of reference, there is meaning, there is purpose and a human subject is not doomed to grope in alienation, in thrall of scientific thinking, devoid of religious imagination, in the vastness of infinite space. Miłosz turns space into a *place* of dwelling. Fascinated with map-drawing since his early childhood, Miłosz kept drawing the maps out of Ulro throughout his whole oeuvre. It was the practical realization of his ‘dreams of a

³² Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 275.

civilization in which man will be freed from the servitude of Ulro.’³³ The realization took place through the map-drawings of first and second space.

³³ *ibid.*, p. 273.

II.

SOMEWHERE AND NOWHERE

This chapter is composed of two parts which, symmetrically, relate to two different aspects of space: physical/geographical enclosure in the form of location and the spiritual reality of space in its universal, cosmic dimension. The two parts refer, in turn, to the places of Miłosz's childhood and youth shown mostly through the prism of the poet's autobiographical gaze, and the philosophical image of space as presented in *The Land of Ulro*. Gathered together are, then, two aspects of the experience of dwelling: the particularity of physical anchorage in specific locations, and the universality of inhabiting the world. What may seem as a binary of the factual and the abstract, or of the realistic and the philosophical, is, in fact, a totality of the ontological experience of space which determines the condition of feeling at home in the world.

As already pointed out, there exists a blurred boundary between Miłosz's life and his highly autobiographical work. The places of Miłosz's childhood and youth played a pivotal role in shaping his spatial imagination and in many ways determined his future perception of space. Geographical locations, as experienced by the poet during his lifetime and his philosophy of space are interconnected. Miłosz's conception of space is not abstract: it stems from the actual experience of space and is realized in the particularity of its experience. It encompasses and contains it. That is why the analysis of the poetic realization of Miłosz's conception of space is preceded in this thesis by the biographical outline of his places of childhood and youth followed by the philosophical exposition of Miłosz's conception of space as presented in *The Land of Ulro*.

There exists a network of regular and logically interwoven correspondences between the realms of the material, geographical, philosophical, and metaphysical across

which Miłosz's conception of space spans. As observed holistically against Miłosz's oeuvre, space is addressed in his work according to the system which has a Russian-doll structure: Miłosz puts under his poetic scrutiny objects within space and their interaction with human subject and vice versa; his perspective is enlarged onto the house of the Niewiaża Valley and Lithuanian land, the nucleus of his personal space. Geographical locations, immediate and remembered, mythologized and filtered through poetic reflection and retrospection, expand into conceptual realms both personalized and of universal dimension. Finally, space becomes the subject of philosophical and theological reflection. In the times of scientific reductionism, Miłosz's conception of space can be called 'a swan song of the past.' The poet, proponent of a metaphysical type of sensitivity, defends those realms of human existence to which access has been denied and which have been usurped by the despotism of reason.

One of the parallels between Miłosz's treatment of the topos of his *arche*-place – home – and his philosophical conception of space is the myth of the eternal return, and its personal realization. In his essay, 'Szczęście', Miłosz writes:

In a world dominated by technology and mass mobility, most of us are first- or second-generation immigrants from the country to big cities. The theme of homeland, the whole nostalgic rhetoric of *patria* fed by literature since Odysseus journeyed to Ithaca, has been weakened if not forgotten. Returning to my river valley, I carried with me my heritage of these venerable clichés, already grown somewhat pale, and I was rather impervious to their sentimental appeal. Then something happened – and I must recognize that the myth of Ithaca stems from profound layers of human sensibility. I was looking at a meadow. Suddenly the realization came that during my years of wandering I had searched in vain for such a combination of leaves and flowers as was here and that I have been always yearning to return. Or, to be precise, I understood this after a huge wave of emotion had overwhelmed me, and the only name I can give it now would be – bliss.¹

¹ Czesław Miłosz, 'Happiness', in Czesław Miłosz, *Proud to Be a Mammal*, trans. by Catherine Leach, Bogdana Carpenter and Madeline G. Levine (London: Penguin Books, 2010), pp. 87-88.

Miłosz's actual return *ad fontes* towards the end of his life was constantly effected and realized poetically, throughout his whole oeuvre. The recurrence of themes and motifs connected with the poet's homeland forms a network of thematic correspondences which define the poet's conception of space. In the same way, the poet advocates, philosophically, in his universal conception of space, the return to a *Weltanschauung* shaped by religious imagination, the return to the forgotten order, and liberation from, what I call, the state of the second expulsion from Paradise in which the scientifically conditioned mind is trapped. It is a call for the return to the primeval *Weltanschauung* of God's *presence*, as opposed to the predominant order of the godless land of Ulro with Urizen as 'an architect of the universe.'

Miłosz's philosophical conception of space has been shaped by his upbringing in the Lithuanian context. This physical location, with the richness of cultural wealth and tradition, constitutes an *arche-place* of Miłosz's work² which is a place not only in geographical, but also conceptual terms, as a certain mythologized model of reality.

The notion of *place* has been widely theorized in both architectural studies and cultural studies in general.³ In this thesis, the notion of *place* is treated in ontological terms, with a strong reference to the architectural discourse of Christian Norberg-Schulz

² Jan Kott, 'Ty silna noc', in *Trzy zimy & Głosy o wierszach* (London: Aneks, 1987), p. 103 (with reference to the importance of Lithuanian landscape in Miłosz's work).

³ Elena Jotta draws a distinction between the concept of space and place: 'Place, unlike indefinite space, is omnipresent, represents a reserved body, sometimes closed, half open, or open, that however retains its sense of shelter and return. One can return to a place: to space would make no sense. Place is made. Even when it is natural, it is made in the mind of man who recognizes and names it. Space has always been there and one can imagine it afterwards as well. Place can be changed or lost, space cannot. Place can be remembered and be the source of nostalgia, space cannot' (Elena Liotta, *On Soul and Earth: the Psychic Value of Place* [London: Routledge, 2009], p. 71). Amos Rapoport questions the validity of the concept of place: 'In taking a rather skeptical and critical look at "place", I argue that the concept, as used, has a number of major flaws. Some of these are identified by examining a few selected examples of the literature; an attempt is also made to disentangle some of the putative attributes of "place". I also argue that the term is not needed, because an already existing framework and set of concepts are more useful, can achieve whatever the use of "place" is meant to achieve, and can do so effectively' (Amos Rapoport, 'A Critical Look at the Concept of "Place"', in *The Spirit & Power of Place: Human Environment and Sacrality: Essays Dedicated to Yi-Fu Tuan*, ed. by Rana P.B. Singh (Varanasi: National Geographical Society of India, 1993), p. 31. For conceptualization of the notion of place see also: Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place. The perspective of Experience* (London: Edward Arnold Publishers, 1977).

which stresses the *meaningful* character of a place as a site of being and dwelling. This notion of a place constitutes an antipode to the notion of the Land of Ulro: placeless place, the land of nowhere hovering in infinite vastness; the realm of alienation where meaning and significance are blurred foundation-less concepts because devoid of points of reference. At the centre of Miłosz's conception of space lies the definition of human place in the world in relation to God who, in *The Land of Ulro*, is at some point referred to, after Oscar Miłosz, as 'a Place of places'.⁴

Let us first draw a semi-autobiographical outline of the geographical reality of the poet's childhood and youth: Miłosz's arche-places, the Niewiaża Valley and Wilno, but also his first encounters with Paris, which experience, as a first major confrontation with the West, with what was not the home *place*, had a profound effect on the young poet.

⁴ Czesław Miłosz with reference to Oscar Miłosz's work: 'In *Ars Magna* and *Les Arcanes* the progression of thought, from the relativity of spatial reference points to the "Place of places," to the Divine', Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 226.

1. Places of Miłosz's childhood and youth

The Niewiaża Valley

In his conversations with Aleksander Fiut, Miłosz distinguishes between space which one sees and space by which one is seized. The space of his youth that 'possessed' the poet and became anchored in his imagination is the space of Lithuania – the Niewiaża valley, Wilno and Paris.⁵ Miłosz uses the concept of space here in reference to the actual appearance of particular images of space in his imagination, hence when he defines what formed his spatial imagination he also makes analogies to the historical-cultural background which contextualizes the space of a given place.

The place of birth, the idyllic countryside by Niewiaża, is the point of the poet's continuous return, an object of his topophilia. As already mentioned, Jan Kott pointed out, the Lithuanian landscape constitutes the *arche* of Miłosz's work.⁶ Miłosz states in his conversations with Fiut: 'It seems to me that every person looks for space, landscape, which reminds them of their childhood, the security of childhood'.⁷

It was on the banks of one of these tributaries, the Niewiaża, that all my adventures began. [...] There are no mountains, but it is hilly. And probably it was these first visual impressions that taught me my abhorrence for completely flat terrain. [...] There is an abundance of lakes and forests, both coniferous and mixed. The latter contain a number of oak trees, whose role in pagan mythology was, and in my own personal mythology continues to be, so important. Because of such childhood memories I tend to classify the places I have lived as 'better' or 'worse': 'better' means that there are lots of birds.⁸

⁵ Miłosz, Fiut, *Autoportret przekorny*, p. 337 [quotation trans. by MM].

⁶ Jan Kott, 'Ty silna noc', in *Trzy zimy & Głosy o wierszach* (London: Aneks, 1987), p. 103.

⁷ Miłosz, Fiut, *Autoportret przekorny*, p. 339 [quotation trans. by MM].

⁸ Czesław Miłosz, *Native Realm: A Search for Self-Definition*, trans. by Catherine S. Leach (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1981), p. 15.

The Lithuanian landscape, intensely experienced and observed by the poet both in its macro and microscopic dimensions, during hunting and walks through the forest, provides a pattern for the representations of nature in his work. The Columbus-like discoveries made during the poet's childhood years within the landscape of the Niewiaża valley were supported by learning of the Linnaeus botanical nomenclature and taxonomic systems of ornithology. The sensitivity to detail within natural space is visible in the poet's entire oeuvre. As an example, many a translator struggled with the epithets ascribed to *leaves* in the poem 'Nad strumieniem' ['By a stream'] where Miłosz creates a new lexicon of shapes of leaves, strongly rooted in Polish semantics, and thus – because Miłosz chose to write only in Polish – even more strongly endemic to the *personalized* space of the poet's childhood.⁹

In the pastoral landscape of Szetejnie there was located the Kunat's family manor – Miłosz's place of birth described in detail in the poetic novel *Dolina Issy* (1955), and, later on in the conversations with Aleksander Fiut published in *Autoportret Przekorny*. Miłosz pointed out that, although *Dolina Issy* should not be treated as a childhood memoir, the description of the Szetejnie manor is factual and accurately corresponds to the building as it existed during his childhood.¹⁰ Miłosz lived in Szetejnie for three years before the trip to Russia when his father was mobilized to build roads and bridges for the Russian army, and returned to Szetejnie in 1918. The manor itself is described by the poet not only with reference to the particular objects and the space of the house itself, but also with reference to the aura of the place - the result of the historical conditioning and the wealth of the noble traditions of Miłosz's family. Evoking (as he does in the lyrical

⁹Jaśnieją w słońcu paprocie na brzegu,/ piętrzy się nieogarniona forma liści/ lancetowatych, mieczykowatych,/ sercowatych, łoputowatych,/ językowatych, pierzastych,/ karbowanych, ząbkowanych,/ piłkowatych – i kto to wypowie' ('Nad strumieniem'), in *To* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2001), p. 27. Compare with Czesław Miłosz, 'By a stream', in *New and Collected Poems 1931 – 2001* (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 682.

¹⁰ Miłosz, Fiut, *Autoportret przekorny*, p. 152.

descriptions of *Dolina Issy*) old chests and idiosyncratic household objects – objects long forgotten and often of archaic names (just to give an example of the description of the pantry), Miłosz creates a peculiar poetic museum whose elements are linked within the space of the house by some kind of archaic ‘transcendental geometry’¹¹ which echoes with the spirit of history and tradition. Those household objects will be evoked by the poet in his confrontations with different cultures. As he writes about his experience of Mrs. Helen Naef’s house by Lake Geneva: ‘It all began, though, in the attic. There I discovered an old chest painted green with red flowers and a similarly painted canopy bed, which had served generations of Swiss peasants. [...] The fragrance of that attic was familiar, as if it came from the corners of my childhood, but the country where I was born was far away’.¹²

Talking about the representation of the aura of the manor’s space, it is important to point out that the recurrence of particular spatial images in Miłosz’s work is based on the poet’s retrospection, therefore the question of *distance* and, what follows, of the *mythologization* of space appears. Both distance and mythologization are used by the poet as tools inseparably connected with the representation of space throughout his work. As Miłosz wrote in *The Land of Ulro*:

From what does ecstasy come – in a poem, in a painting – if not from the detail recaptured. And if distance is the essence of beauty, that distance by which reality is cleansed – of life’s willing (*Lebenswillen*), of our grasping lust for power and possession, Schopenhauer, that great theoretician of art as contemplation, would have said – then there is also a distance to be gained by bodying forth the world in recollection.¹³

¹¹ John R. Stilgoe, ‘Foreword to the 1994 edition’, in Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), p. VII.

¹² Miłosz, *Native Realm*, pp. 1-2.

¹³ Czesław Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, trans. by Louis Iribarne (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1985), p. 11.

Hence, the form of the particular images of space, as represented by the poet, for example, in *Dolina Issy*, can be compared to the form of paintings which capture, from a distance, poetically adorned details contextualized in a particular historical moment.

Evoking the space of the manor in *Dolina Issy*, Miłosz contextualizes it within a larger historical context with the wealth of tradition in which the manor is anchored. It is the space *inhabited* by his ancestors who are his ‘source of strength. Thanks to them, the clothing and the furniture of past epochs, the handwriting on yellowed documents, are not completely dead objects. The awareness of one’s origins is like an anchor line plunged into the deep, keeping one within a certain range.’¹⁴ This space is a reservoir within which the past and the present is transcendently united, enabling an empirical experience of bygone years and communion with the ancestors: ‘No one lives alone; he is speaking with those who are no more, their lives are incarnated in him; he is retracing their footsteps, climbing the stairs to the edifice of history.’¹⁵ Hence, the space evoked is not reduced to a nostalgic retrospection, but it is re-lived, re-experienced empirically and sensually in its multidimensionality and its historical context. It is populated with detail which is re-touched, just like in the description of ‘the feel of naked feet racing over smooth boards, onto the cool of a corridor’s tiled floor, over a garden path’s circular flagstones still wet with dew’¹⁶ – ‘touch was also a kind of ecstasy’.¹⁷

Gaston Bachelard in his analysis of the space of a house¹⁸ argues that the house constitutes ‘the first universe’, ‘the first cosmos’ for a child - the space which shapes ‘all

¹⁴ Miłosz, *Native Realm*, p. 20.

¹⁵ Czesław Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, trans. by Louis Iribarne (London: Penguin 2001), p. 108; see Czesław Miłosz, *Dolina Issy* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2009), p. 75: ‘Nikt nie żyje sam: rozmawia z tymi co przeminęli, ich życie w niego się wciela, wstępuje po stopniach i zwiedza idąc ich śladem zakątki domu historii’.

¹⁶ Czesław Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 19; see Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, pp. 17 – 18: ‘bosymi stopami Tomasz przebiegał od gładkości desek podłogi, do chłodu kamiennej posadzki korytarza i od okrągłości bruku na ścieżce, gdzie obsychała rosa’.

¹⁷ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 19; see Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 17: ‘Szczęśliwość to także dotyk’.

¹⁸ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994).

subsequent knowledge of other space' and is 'the shelter of the imagination.'¹⁹ As if, to paraphrase this theory into Kantian discourse, the childhood perception of space imprints on its corresponding mental category an image determining further perception of the outside. This claim is echoed in Miłosz's work: it is the architecture of the house, of the Szetejnie manor, and the surrounding landscape that provides, though with slight variations, the structure for the volume *Świat (poema naiwne)* written, significantly, in 1943 in Warsaw. Bachelard's argument can also be applied beyond the space of the house – the manor – to the Lithuanian landscape which, experienced intensely during childhood years, constitutes the poet's primordial universe, as if the *genius loci* of the house and of the land remained by the poet's side throughout his whole life. The aforementioned motif of the oak and birds of the landscape of the Niewiaża valley exemplifies the poet's fascination with botany, ornithology and nature in general – in his fourth class at high school, with his 'aquariums, glass jars, and cages of birds or white mice', he saw his future only as a naturalist²⁰ – and plays a symbolic role as regards the concept of space: the oak can be interpreted as a symbol of rootedness, and birds, belonging to the aerial realm, as epitomizing freedom, yet also dependent on the 'anchor': trees. It is the poem 'Ptaki' ['Birds'], with its symbolic and quasi-surreal rendition of the bird motif, that opens the collection *Trzy zimy* considered to be the proper debut of the poet (earlier poems belong to the circle of *Juwenilia* and were regarded by the poet as 'weaker').

Talking about the childhood experiences that formed his spatial imagination, Miłosz points to the influence of reading which pre-determines the perception of space in which one finds themselves. This corresponds to the thesis of Robert Macfarlane who, analyzing the experience of the mountain space by individuals, pointed out that

¹⁹ John R. Stilgoe 'Foreword to the 1994 edition', in Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. viii.

²⁰ Miłosz, *Native Realm*, pp. 70-71.

perception of a landscape is ‘culturally devised. [...] When we look at a landscape, we do not see what is there, but largely what we think is there. We attribute qualities to a landscape which it does not intrinsically possess [...] and we value it accordingly’ – there is a ‘disjunction between the imagined and the real’.²¹ Among the books through which the space of childhood was filtered, Miłosz mentions James Fenimore Cooper and Thomas Mayne Reid as his first childhood readings.²² He enumerates in *The Land of Ulro*, his reading of J.F. Cooper, *The Pathfinder*, Mayne Reid, *Watery Wilderness*, *Rodziewiczówna*, *Summer of the Forest People*, or Korsak, *Tracking Nature*.²³ Paradoxically, later on in life, when confronting the American landscape, Miłosz filters the experience of its space through the lenses of his childhood perceptions shaped by the American and the Irish-American writer; the poet’s personal hermeneutics of space will form, in a way, a closed circle where ‘the two centers [childhood space and the American space] and the two spaces arranged around them interfere with each other or - and this is a happy solution – coalesce’.²⁴

Miłosz points out that an important part in the formation of his spatial imagination was also played by, as already mentioned before, the reading and making maps, accompanied by the process of mythologization of space.²⁵ ‘My pastimes, when I was very young’, says Miłosz, ‘were based mostly on making maps of ideal countries. Those countries had only forests, there were no agricultural fields there, and boats were the means of communication by which only those entitled could move through rivers and canals. Those were countries – reserves where one led a happy life in contact with

²¹ Robert Macfarlane, *Mountains of the Mind: A History of a Fascination*, (London: Granta Books, 2008), pp. 18 and 19.

²² Miłosz, Fiut, *Autoportret przekorny*, pp. 336 and 341.

²³ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 273.

²⁴ Czesław Miłosz, ‘Notes on Exile’, in *Books Abroad*, 50/2 (1976), p. 283; see Miłosz, *Zaczynając od moich ulic* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, 1990), p. 49.

²⁵ Miłosz, Fiut, *Autoportret przekorny*, p. 338.

nature.’²⁶ The poet’s childhood fascination with maps is projected on the descriptions of Tomasz’s pastimes in *Dolina Issy*: ‘Thomas became fascinated by maps – by the way the finger went down, and under it were born forests, land tracts, roads, villages, and vast multitudes of people in motion, each distinct, each somehow distinguishable from the other; but how, the moment it was lifted – *poof!* [...] The more we devote ourselves to that realm of contours, zones, and lines, the greater our enthrallment.’²⁷

The forming of the poet’s spatial imagination was affected by the trip to Russian Krasnoyarsk in Siberia and the family’s subsequent travels through Russia. The poet’s childhood space became drastically enlarged. As Miłosz admits, travel – the movement through space- affected his later understanding of time and history, which will again be ‘shaken’ later on, in Paris, when he met his cousin, Oscar V. de Lubicz Miłosz who was preoccupied with the concept of space encapsulated in the central question of his work: ‘where is space’.²⁸ Miłosz recollects in his *Rodzinna Europa*:

Throughout all my early childhood, rivers, towns and landscapes followed one another at great speed. My father was mobilized to build roads and bridges for the Russian Army, and we accompanied him, traveling just back of the battle zone, leading a nomadic life, never halting longer than a few months. [...] Such a lack of stability, the unconscious feeling that everything is temporary, cannot but affect, [...], our mature judgements [...]. History becomes fluid because it is equated with ceaseless wandering.²⁹

In 1918 the family came back to Szetejnie for around two years. Miłosz returned to the place in 1992 to be awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa of the University of Witold the Great in Kovno, and the Honorary Citizenship of Lithuania. In front of the rebuilt

²⁶ Miłosz, Fiut, *Autoportret przekorny*, p. 341.

²⁷ Czesław Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 280; see Czesław Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 191: ‘myślał o mapach w ogóle, o tym, że przyciska się palcem jakiś punkt i tam, pod palcem są lasy, pola, drogi, porusza się mnóstwo ludzi, z których każdy szczególny, różny w czymś od innych, podnosi się palec i nie ma nic. [...] Im więcej poświęca się uwagi tej przestrzeni z jej zarysami łądów, kółkami i liniami, tym bardziej nas ona pociąga’.

²⁸ Miłosz, Fiut, *Autoportret przekorny*, p. 344.

²⁹ Miłosz, *Native Realm*, p. 41.

granary of the Szetejnie manor an information board says: ‘He spent fifty years abroad (Poland, U.S.A., France)’.

Wilno

Miłosz enrolled in the Gimnazjum im. Zygmunta Augusta in Wilno in 1921; in 1929 he became a student of the Stefan Batory University. Inter-war Wilno was a melting-pot of cultures, religions, languages and ethnic groups – Polish, Jewish,³⁰ Lithuanian, Belarusian, and Russian. The city often perceived by the poet as a provincial town will become, with time, the subject of poetic mythologization which envelops the image of the city at different stages of its metamorphosis: both metaphorical – in the poet’s renditions of the urban space, and in reality. As Marta Wyka points out, the tale of Wilno is told, each time, by different personas of the author: it is related by Miłosz – each time a different Miłosz – from various spatial and temporal perspectives which affect the narrative of the city space:³¹ *Wilno of Rodzinna Europa [Native Realm]* (1958) is not the same as *Wilno of Zaczynając od moich ulic [Beginning with my Streets]* (1985), where we can read ‘If I am to speak now about what one could see there, I should first explain that I am there simultaneously as a small boy and an adolescent and a young man, so that many years of watching are concentrated in a single moment.’³²

In his analysis of urban space as a Hegelian form, Henri Lefebvre pointed out that ‘the urban is not a certain population, a geographic size, or a collection of buildings. Nor

³⁰ See Joanna Lisek, *Jung Wilne – żydowska grupa artystyczna* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2005), and Eugenia Prokop-Janiec, *Polish-Jewish Literature in the Interwar Years*, trans. by Abe Shenitzer (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003).

³¹ Marta Wyka, ‘Miłosz i “geografia młodości” – kraje, konteksty, pokolenie. Rekonesans’, in *Żagary. Środowisko kulturowe grupy*, ed. by Tadeusz Bujnicki, Krzysztof Biedrzycki and Jarosław Fazan (Kraków: Universitas, 2009), p. 293.

³² Miłosz, *Beginning with My Streets* trans. by Madeline G Levine (London: Tauris, 1992), p. 5; see Czesław Miłosz, *Zaczynając od moich ulic* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, 1990), p. 11.

is it a node, a transshipment point or a centre of production. It is all of these together, and thus any definition must search for the essential quality of all of these aspects.’ City here is understood as ‘the pre-eminent site of social interaction and exchange, which Lefebvre refers to as “social centrality”.’³³ This definition, with the stress on ‘the social interaction’ aspect of a city space, can be partly projected onto Miłosz’s twelve-part poem ‘Miasto bez imienia’ [‘City without a name’]³⁴ written in Berkeley in 1968 and evoking inter-war Wilno against, among others, its historical, nineteenth century background. Constructing the image of the city, the poet actually presents the city-ness, in Lefebvre’s sense, of Wilno. What makes up the city are: ‘Vagabonds, Pathfinders, brethren of a dissolved lodge’ (the Pathfinders as a reference to the poem *Tropiciel* by Aleksander Rymkiewicz – member of the Żagary group); the Ponary Hills – oak forest hills near Vilnius, students’ holiday destination, during World War II the place of a massacre of 120,000 people – mostly Jews;³⁵ ‘the buzzing of wild bees’, rafts, ‘a man in a visored cap and a woman in a kerchief’; the library and Kontrym whiffing from his snuffbox; Jewish carts and a grouse ‘standing on a cuirassier’s helmet, a relict of La Grande Armée’; the Wilia river. It is the Wilno of Sekcja Twórczości Oryginalnej Koła Polonistów [Humanities Students Club, Division of Creative Writing], and of ‘us’ who wrote a whole library of books, visited a great many of lands (which is a reference to the Vagabond Club of Stefan Batory University), and lost a number of battles.³⁶ The poet evokes the Lithuanian Lodge of the

³³ Rob Shields, ‘Henri Lefebvre’, in *Key Thinkers on Space and Place*, ed. by Phil Hubbard, Rob Kitchin and Gill Valentine (London: Sage, 2010), p. 209.

³⁴ See the Appendix I for ‘Miasto bez imienia’ from Czesław Miłosz, *Wiersze II* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 1993) and ‘City without a name’ from Czesław Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems 1931 – 2001* (London: The Penguin Press, 2001).

³⁵ See ‘Notes’ in Czesław Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems 1931 – 2001* (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 762.

³⁶ See ‘City Without a Name’, in Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems 1931 – 2001*, p. 215.

Zealous to which, as he explains in his conversations with Renata Gorczyńska, he himself did not belong.³⁷

In discussing 'Miasto bez imienia' with Gorczyńska, Miłosz points out that the poem combines two temporal perspectives: the Wilno of the nineteenth century (with Mickiewicz, the Philomaths, Maryla Wereszczakówna), and that of his youth – represented by the S.T.O. [Division of Creative Writing];³⁸ hence the city-ness of the place is extended beyond 'temporality' onto the historical plane.

The historical contextualization of space is visible throughout Miłosz's oeuvre, both poetry and prose, just to give an example of the description of the poet's place of birth in *Rodzinna Europa* where it is preceded by a detailed history of the city going back to the times where the poet's native land 'was a virgin forest whose only visitors were the few Viking ships that landed on the coast.'³⁹ Both in *Rodzinna Europa* and in the poem 'Miasto bez imienia', the city-ness of Wilno is strongly anchored in the geographical context through the precision of the geographical detail – Miłosz's penchant for which is apparent in, e.g. the essay 'Dykcyonarz wileńskich ulic' written for *Pamiętnik wileński*.⁴⁰

In presenting the space of Wilno in its particular, strictly defined historical and geographical dimensions, Miłosz, however, often points to the universal motifs which testify to space as being a culturally conditioned formation, whose pattern repeats itself irrespectively of geographical location in the holistic context of the world. The particular and the universal go together in his representations of space as he makes analogies

³⁷ Czesław Miłosz, Renata Gorczyńska, *Rozmowy. „Podróżny świata”* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002), p. 187.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 189.

³⁹ Miłosz, *Native Realm*, p. 7.

⁴⁰ Miłosz, Gorczyńska, *Rozmowy. „Podróżny świata”*, p. 192; for the reprint of 'Dykcyonarz wileńskich ulic' see Czesław Miłosz, *Zaczynając od moich ulic*, pp. 9-11.

between motifs which recur in various regions of the globe as transmitted by ethnic diasporas. Describing the Jewish commercial districts of Wilno, he admits:

Later on, while I was walking on New York's Third Avenue, I stopped short with the feeling of having seen something before: here, too, the dreary walls had been covered with a front of colors and lights to attract customers. Whatever one may say, we belonged to that same economic circuit, although it was only by experiencing the contrast of completely different systems that I was able to understand the fact.⁴¹

Stanisław Bereś in his essay 'Wileński obłok, czyli zanim powstały Żagary' ['The Wilno cloud. Before the emergence of the Żagary group'], refers to Wilno as the 'architectonic pearl of the North of the unbridled Gothic and Baroque, and unique geographical location', the melting-pot of religions – the city which defies all classifications and generalizations.⁴² At the same time, as already mentioned before, this city was perceived by Miłosz in his youth, and especially after his visit to Paris, as provincial: he points out that after his stay on scholarship in Paris in 1934-35, he 'did not want to return to the sad landscapes, the melancholy skies with their heavy clouds, the shrieking crows.'⁴³ Elsewhere, Miłosz refers to Wilno as 'a city of clouds resembling baroque architecture and of baroque architecture like coagulated clouds.'⁴⁴ Mythologization of Wilno comes later in his life, with a sufficient spatial and temporal distance from the city space.

Bereś draws a picture of the architecture of the city where history is 'imprinted on the walls of the houses and churches'. The historical centre is enclosed by the Wilia and the Wilenka River and eight hills. The panoramic view from Góra Zamkowa [The

⁴¹ Miłosz, *Native Realm*, p. 59.

⁴² Stanisław Bereś, 'Wileński obłok, czyli zanim powstały Żagary', in *Żagary. Środowisko kulturowe grupy literackiej*, ed. by Tadeusz Bujnicki, Krzysztof Biedrzycki and Jarosław Fazan (Kraków: Universitas, 2009), p. 20.

⁴³ Miłosz, *Native Realm*, p. 182.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 185.

Castle Hill] opens vistas on the city strewn with pinnacles and domes of forty churches with little streets immersed in the slopes of the hills. The immediate attention is drawn by, to name but a few: St. Stanislaus Cathedral, which hosted all Polish kings since the times of Jagiello; St. Anne's Church close to which there's located Bernardin's 'corner' – the place where Adam Mickiewicz, Tomasz Zan or Francois Lefebvre lived.⁴⁵ There is The Holy Trinity Church and the Basilian Monastery in whose southern block, turned into a tsarist prison, members of the Philomaths and the Philareths, including Mickiewicz, were kept (Conrad's Cell is symbol of Polish romanticism). Bereś portrays the architecture of the city with its immense historical wealth, but also points to the picturesque surroundings encompassing Wilno, where places of huge historical importance are situated among hills and ravines immersed in lush nature; this space is strongly imprinted in the poetics of the members of the Żagary group.⁴⁶

What constituted the heart of the city was the Stefan Batory University – Alma Mater Vilnensis - whose buildings stood out as the 'stylish combination of the Gothic style, Baroque, and Classicism [...] located among five courtyards which extended into suites of rooms overgrown with woodbine, divided by a complex network of passages and corridors, immersed in the noble spirit of history, and reminding, with the site's every detail, of its past.'⁴⁷

It is here that Czesław Miłosz made his debut in the University's *Alma Mater Vilnensis*⁴⁸ with the poems 'Kompozycja' and 'Podróż'. And it is here that the members of the Żagary circle met and formed their group which first came together on 28 January 1931 – the evening of 'Środa literacka' ['Literary Wednesday'] announced in *Kurier*

⁴⁵ Stanisław Bereś, 'Wileński obłok, czyli zanim powstały Żagary' in *Żagary. Środowisko kulturowe grupy literackiej*, pp. 20 - 25.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴⁸ *Alma Mater Vilnensis* (Zeszyt 9 [Issue 9], 1930, pp. 56 and 57).

Wileński:⁴⁹ ‘Teodor Bujnicki, Kazimierz Hałaburda, Czesław Miłosz, Jerzy Zagórski will read their unpublished poetry and works in prose. The second part [of the evening] will be filled with light texts, satire and literary parodies by the aforementioned authors.’⁵⁰ In April 1930 the first issue of *Żagary: Miesięcznik Idącego Wilna Poświęcony Sztuce* [*Żagary: a Monthly of the Forth-Coming Wilno Devoted to Art*] appeared as a free supplement to *Słowo*. The motto read:

The forth-coming Wilno, that is the generation which is only now making its start. The start on the track it has already chosen./ We do not form a group, school or trend. We are united by a common effort, rather than by the character of this effort; that is, by the fact itself that we write or paint – not that we write or paint in this or that manner./ ‘Coming forth’ we meet with the whole range of issues against which we need to form our opinions; hence our judgement about ‘the old’. We are not a closed circle; we are open to the cooperation with people about whose existence we do not even know today. We welcome them to our common start.⁵¹

Its publication started a series of eight issues of *Żagary* as a supplement to *Słowo* edited by Stanisław Cat-Mackiewicz, and was then reissued as a supplement to *Kurier Wileński* and renamed *Piony*, of which five issues were published; having amalgamated with *Smuga*, *Żagary* reemerged as an independent periodical in 1933 and produced its last issue in March 1934 – a double number.⁵²

The University was a place of thriving of some significant student organizations. Miłosz belonged to S.T.O. – Sekcja Twórczości Oryginalnej [The Division of Creative Writing], which, in 1927 on the initiative of its chairman – Teodor Bujnicki, began

⁴⁹ *Kurier Wileński* (no. 28, 1931).

⁵⁰ Krzysztof Biedrzycki, ‘Między "Słowem" a "Kurierem". Żagaryści w wileńskiej prasie codziennej’, in *Żagary. Środowisko kulturowe grupy literackiej*, p.82.

⁵¹ See *Żagary. Miesięcznik Idącego Wilna Poświęcony Sztuce*, N° 1 (April, 1931): ‘Idące Wilno, a więc pokolenie, które dopiero startuje. Startuje na już przez siebie wybranej bieżni./ Nie tworzymy grupy, szkoły, kierunku. Łączy nas wspólny wysiłek raczej niż jego charakter. Fakt, że piszemy czy malujemy – a nie, że piszemy czy malujemy tak lub inaczej./ „Idąc” mijamy, napotykamy cały szereg zagadnień, do których musimy się ustosunkować, stąd też i nasz sąd o „starszych”. Nie jesteśmy gronem zamkniętym, przewidujemy współpracę ludzi, o których nawet istnieniu dziś nie wiemy. Zapraszamy ich do wspólnego startu’ [trans. by MM].

⁵² Nina Taylor, ‘Wilno Catastrophism’, in *Muza Donowa: A Celebration of Donald Pirie’s Contribution to Polish Studies*, ed. by Rosemary Hunt, Ursula Phillips (Cotgrave: Astra, 1995), p. 117, and Teresa Dalecka, ‘Żagaryści na Uniwersytecie Stefana Batorego’ in *Żagary. Środowisko kulturowe grupy literackiej*, p. 60.

publishing a series of poetry volumes by its members.⁵³ For Miłosz and other students the space of Wilno and its University heartland extended, however, far beyond the University walls. It is mostly thanks to the famous Vagabonds Club, established in 1923, of which the poet was an active member together with almost all members of the S.T.O. group, except for Henryk Dembiński.⁵⁴ Reminiscing about the Stefan Batory University and the Vagabonds Club, Miłosz recalls:

But it was a very different university from other universities within the Polish state. I do not know how to explain its specific character. Perhaps by tradition — a tradition of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Or by other factors: geography perhaps, or something difficult to define — an aura of the city itself. In any case, my student years were marked by a permanent conflict between students' organizations of a standard, 'Buerschenschaft' type and a quite curious group to which I belonged, without any analogy at any other university of Poland, the Club of Vagabonds. The 'Buerschenschaft' type 'corporations' were modeled upon similar 'corporations' in Dorpat and Riga where many young Poles studied in the XIXth century. In my time the 'corporations' were the mainstay of the Polish patriotic and conservative mentality, while we were a sort of hippies differing from our pro-establishment colleagues, even by our attire — we were wearing, as a sign of protest, large black berets with a red or golden tassel.⁵⁵

The Club's slogans encompassed 'physical and spiritual wandering' and a fight against 'all types of stagnation, numbness, mold and cobweb, and against *form* which does not have corresponding content; against symbols which owe their cult only to the common uncritical acceptance.'⁵⁶ The Vagabonds, initially programmatically apolitical, were very active in the Wilno's social and cultural life.

It is with 'Robespierre' (Stefan Jędrychowski) and 'Elephant' (Stefan Zagórski) – his friends from the Vagabond's Club - that Miłosz went, in 1931, on the kayaking expedition (there is a detailed description in *Rodzinną Europą*) to reach Paris where he

⁵³ Stanisław Bereś, 'Wileński obłok, czyli zanim powstały Żagary', p. 38.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.42.

⁵⁵ Czesław Miłosz, 'Legend of the University', in *Lituanus: Lithuanian Quarterly Journal of Arts and Sciences*, 27/1 (1981), this issue ed. by Tomas Venclova, Thomas Remeikis <http://www.lituanus.org/1981_2/81_2_04.htm> [accessed 20 February 2011] (emphasis added).

⁵⁶ Przykładka [Henryk Medyński], *Tu Akademicki Klub Włóczągów. Duchowa i fizyczna włóczęga akademicka*, 'Włóczęga' 1932, nr 3, s. 15-16 as quoted by Beata Tarnowska, "A krain tośmy co niemiara zjeździli...", in *Żagary. Środowisko kulturowe grupy literackiej*, p. 65.

meets, for the first time, his cousin Oscar Vladislav de Lubicz Miłosz, whose influence would leave a lasting imprint on his work.

Paris

Miłosz visits Paris twice in the 1930s: the first time in 1931, travelling by canoe from Wilno through Praga, Lindau in Bavaria, down the Rhine and its rivers, to Paris to see the Colonial Exposition. Asked by Aleksander Fiut about the influence of travel on the poet's spatial imagination, Miłosz replies that 'Space and movement are almost identical, mutually interconnected, hence travelling must have had its impact on me.'⁵⁷

Miłosz's experience of travel to the West, as he later represented it, could be described as an antipode to Thomas Mann's description of the effect that change of space had on Hans Castorp when he journeyed from Hamburg to Davos-Platz:⁵⁸ 'Space, rolling and revolving between him and his native heath, possessed and wielded the powers we generally ascribe to time. [...] Space, like time, engenders forgetfulness; but it does so by setting us bodily free from our surroundings and giving us back our primitive, unattached state.'⁵⁹ Miłosz carried his homeland with him and his confrontation with the West was filtered through the experience of the home landscape projected onto the newly seen lands. He writes about Lindau:

As I stood on the shore, getting sprinkled by the waves, I did not see the Alps on the other side. Every form, even the feel of the air, was new and astonished me. What I did next shows that I was a real savage: I adjusted the straps of my knapsack and headed through the empty streets, where a milk horse was clip-clopping along the asphalt, to a 'safe place'. That meant the forest. For a long time I forced my way through a thicket on the mountainside, to find a place as far off the path as possible. I cut off some branches, prepared a place to sleep under a low-hanging spruce tree, and

⁵⁷ Miłosz, Fiut, *Autoportret Przekorny*, p. 337.

⁵⁸ *Magic Mountain* read by Miłosz during his university years exerted a large influence on him.

⁵⁹ Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain*, trans. by H.T. Lowe-Porter (London: Vintage, 1999), p. 5.

rolled up in a blanket. In the middle of the foreign country I could now sleep as if I were in my own home.⁶⁰

Then comes the confrontation with France itself which, for the young poet, was like opening the door ‘onto a fragment of a movie. [...] like thinking you were entering your own room, but walking into an audience with a Cardinal. A big room.’⁶¹ The first view of France which imbedded itself in the poet’s mind was a landscape strewn with crosses – a cemetery seen as Miłosz and his friends travelled on the train through Alsace along the Vosges: ‘Geometrical patterns, formed by rows of small crosses leaving wings of shadow and light behind them. [...] We were not indifferent to that view, if only because the Unknown Soldier was then one of the most honored themes in the poetry we read.’⁶² That was France pre-conceived and pre-judged by the ideas anchored in the particular context in which the poet grew; as he admits while talking about the emotions accompanying his perception of France: ‘Poland weighted on us’⁶³ – Poland with its long complex history.

In *Rodzinna Europa* Miłosz points out that the journey to the West showed him how human self-identification within the world changes according to the geographical and historical differences between various types of space. He draws a comparison between French workers – their ‘patient shaping of the landscape over the centuries in the bustling about the vineyards’⁶⁴ and the Russian ones whose ‘sudden thrusts of will’ were ‘capable of raising a St. Petersburg out of the swamps on the Neva.’⁶⁵ Miłosz concludes: ‘Men who understand their place in the world differently cannot be measured by a common standard’.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Miłosz, *Native Realm*, p. 152.

⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 158.

⁶² *ibid.*, p. 159.

⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 162.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 167.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 167.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 167.

Recollecting Paris in *Rodzinna Europa*, Miłosz describes his impressions from a different than the aforementioned perspective and points to what constitutes the essence of the city: the interaction between its architecture and ‘that whole sea of human eyes’ flooding it:

Those eyes, whose secret I tried then to guess, have been surrounded by wrinkles [...] but the city is the same, and today I can walk along a street in Paris as avid as ever for something more than just an amorous adventure. At the same time, that ever-renewed contact between old stones and successive generations awakens an image in me [...] of kings sleeping amid a tangle of stone lilies, like dried-up insects in winter.⁶⁷

The same city, visited by the author of *Ocalenie* after World War II, evokes in the poet totally new impressions, influenced by real historical events: the capital of power appeared shrunken ‘as if the rush of history had pushed it aside’.

During his second visit to Paris, on a state scholarship of the Fundusz Kultury Narodowej [the National Culture Fund], which took place in 1934/35, Miłosz further developed his personal acquaintance with Oscar Miłosz. He harks back to the experience of Paris of 1934/35 in the poem ‘Rue Descartes’ (1980) where he expresses the inner conflict springing from his confrontation with Parisian culture. Elsewhere, Miłosz refers to this period: ‘I remember that I was walking through the streets of Paris swollen to the point of bursting, repeating only one line for days on end, not being able to go further because it was so impossible for me to grasp. The pressure was so huge that it blocked me at times. Extremely strong, strange feelings.’⁶⁸ The source of this pressure had different roots, ranging from personal problems to the difficulties with creative expression. He recollects in *Rodzinna Europa* that through managing the surrounding

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 161.

⁶⁸ Czesław Miłosz as quoted by Krzysztof Dybciak, in ‘Pieśń’ in *Trzy zimy & Głosy o wierszach*, ed. by Renata Gorczyńska, Piotr Kłoczowski (London: Aneks, 1987), p. 66: ‘Byłem pod olbrzymim ciśnieniem, kiedy pisałem te wiersze. Pamiętam, że chodziłem po Paryżu nabrzmiały aż do pęknięcia, powtarzając jedną tylko linijkę całymi dniami, nie mogąc wyjść dalej, bo to było dla mnie tak niemożliwe do uchwycenia. Ciśnienie było takie, że aż mnie zatykało. Niesłuchanie silne, dziwne przeżycia’ [trans. by MM].

space, he attempted to control his inner chaos and restore some structure within his self: 'to subdue my inner chaos, I set up a fixed routine for myself. I walked to my lectures [from the Hotel Laplace] at the Alliance Francaise [...] through the Luxembourg Gardens, and twice a week I went swimming at the Piscine Pontoise, near the hotel.'⁶⁹ The poet admitted that his confrontation with Paris was a contributing factor to the deepening of his inner split, as reflected in his poetry of dichotomies, conflicts and contradictions. It was during his trip to Paris in 1931 that he meets his cousin, Oscar Milosz, for the first time. Encounter with his cousins writings was a turning point in Miłosz's thinking about space: 'w mojej wczesnej młodości mój religijny temperament natrafił na problemy nowej fizyki w dziełach mistycznych mojego kuzyna Oscara Milosza i zacząłem rozmyślać o konflikcie między nauką a religią w nowy sposób. Innymi słowy, zamiast bronić pozycji drogich przeszłości, zacząłem zwiedzać obszar, który, jak myślę, wiele obiecuje poetom jutra.'⁷⁰ The conflict between science and religion, which in many discourses is reconciled, is rooted in the perception of space as God-less infinity of the universe with Urizen as its architect. Miłosz breaks out of this vision. He breaks out of Ulro.

⁶⁹ Miłosz, *Native Realm*, pp. 177-178.

⁷⁰ Miłosz, 'O Erozji' in *O podróżach w czasie*, p. 38.

2. Homo viator in the wasteland of Ulro

Miłosz wrote in *The Land of Ulro*: ‘I inhabited the Land of Ulro long before Blake taught me its proper name, though it was not a place in which I was comfortable residing.’⁷¹ The recurrence, in Miłosz’s poetry, of themes and motifs relating to his places of childhood and youth offers a representation of a model of reality alternative to that dominated by scientific reductionism. Miłosz studies, in his essayistic and poetic work, both semantics and semiotics of space. He translates space, confronts it with a ‘devouring eye’, internalizes it and bestows *meaning* upon it. There are parallels between his vision and Norberg-Schulz’s idea of human existence in a hierarchical space:

To be able to dwell between heaven and earth, man has to ‘understand’ these two elements, as well as their interaction. The word ‘understand’ here does not mean scientific knowledge; it is rather an existential concept which denotes the experience of *meanings*. When environment is meaningful man feels ‘at home’. The places where we have grown up are such ‘homes’; we know exactly how it feels to walk on that particular ground, to be under that particular sky, or between those particular trees; we know the warm all-embracing sunshine of the South or the mysterious summer nights of the North. In general we know ‘realities’ which carry our existence. But “understanding” goes beyond such immediate sensations. From the beginning of time man has recognized that nature consists of interrelated elements which express fundamental aspects of being. The landscape where he lives in not a mere flux of phenomena, it has structure and embodies meanings. These structures and meanings have given rise to mythologies (cosmogonies and cosmologies) which have formed the basis of dwelling.⁷²

Norberg-Schulz’s statement entails, just like Miłosz’s ideas on space, a hierarchical arrangement of human life between heaven and earth. Space is structured; it is not an infinite shapeless vastness. Moreover, the act of understanding space, that is the ‘experience of meanings’ entails building a mythology which lies at the foundation of dwelling in the world, and feeling ‘at home’ therein, having a meaningful *place* in the world.

⁷¹ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 183.

⁷² Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, p. 22.

Meaning is impossible without a point of reference. Miłosz said: ‘A person looks for some centre in oneself and outside of oneself, a point of reference. I think that if there is no point of reference, it is harmful, even biologically.’⁷³ The search for the point of reference which defines one’s place in the world is an ontological act which is a prerequisite for the consolidation of subjectivity and identity formation. However, in the context of the wasteland of Ulro, it is a *forgotten* ontological act and impossible to enact.

Ulro as a placeless place

‘The name Ulro is from Blake’ – Miłosz explains. ‘It denotes that realm of spiritual pain such as is borne and must be borne by the crippled man. Blake himself was not one of its inhabitants, unlike the scientists, those proponents of Newtonian physics, the philosophers, and most other poets and artists of his day. And that goes for their descendants in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, up to and including the present.’⁷⁴ Ulro is a concept, a state of spirit and a human condition which is defined in terms of spatial categories; its realm and its presence is conditional upon and determined by human spatial imagination. As Miłosz wrote: ‘wyobraźnia ludzka jest przestrzenna i z tego względu obraz człowieka pojawiający się w ludzkim umyśle zależy od miejsca, jakie człowiek wyznacza samemu sobie.’⁷⁵

With the Scientific Revolution, the place of God in human minds was replaced by Nature ‘perceived as a system of mathematical relations,’⁷⁶ with the universe ‘construed as an infinity of absolute, void, Newtonian space [...] whose rotating planets and

⁷³ Czesław Miłosz, Aleksander Fiut, *Autoportret przekorny. Rozmowy* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2003), pp. 339-340 [trans. by MM].

⁷⁴ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 32.

⁷⁵ Miłosz, ‘O Erozji’, p. 24.

⁷⁶ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 140.

planetary systems overwhelmed the mind by their infinite profusion.’⁷⁷ The overturning of the hierarchical vision of space, led to ‘man’s dethronement’⁷⁸ within the universe. This process lies at the heart of the ‘Romantic crisis of European culture’ unleashed by the ‘dichotomy between the world of scientific laws – cold, indifferent to human values – and man’s inner world.’⁷⁹ Miłosz points to the schism and urges towards the reconciliation of the dichotomies: faith/science, religion/science, imagination/reason, theology/natural science. The dichotomies are constructs of human mind, end-effects of the processes triggered by the technological and scientific advancements; end-effects of the hubris of modern science, as Ulro is the triumph of arrogance, the triumph of Swedenborg’s proprium, Blake’s Selfhood, of the ego.⁸⁰

In his study of the idea of the Great Chain of Being, Lovejoy delineates what the elements of history of thought, that is unit-ideas, are. He distinguishes: unconscious mental habits, e.g. ‘disposition to think in terms of certain categories or of particular types of imagery’;⁸¹ ‘dialectical motives’, ‘susceptibilities to diverse kinds of metaphysical pathos’, and ‘philosophical semantics’. All the aforementioned determine the functioning of an idea, both in an individual context and in the context of an epoch, generation, etc. This applies to the idea of space and, what follows, to human perception of themselves in relation to the universe. Miłosz points out that ‘We are in the thrall of certain habits of mind acquired over the past couple of centuries’.⁸² Those ‘habits’ have led to the formation, through scientific radicalism, of the scientifically conditioned human mind in a state of spiritual disinheritance. The ‘disinherited mind’, a concept adopted by Miłosz

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 140.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 140.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 94 with reference to Erich Heller’s essay on ‘Goethe and the Idea of Scientific Truth’. See also Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 593.

⁸⁰ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 165.

⁸¹ Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being. A Study of the History of an Idea* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960), p. 7.

⁸² Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 269.

after Erich Heller, is ‘a mind torn between the certainty of man’s insignificance in the immensity of a hostile universe, and an urge, born of wounded pride, to endow man with preeminence.’⁸³ A human being has become torn in the ‘incessant struggle between arrogance and humiliation’⁸⁴: we became dwellers of Ulro. Ulro is the realm ‘where man is reduced to a supererogatory number, worse, where he becomes as much for himself, in his own eyes, in his own mind.’⁸⁵ Dwellers of Ulro are ‘wrzucony we wszechświat, w którym każde orzekanie o tym, co jest prawdziwe albo fałszywe, złe albo dobre, jest bezpodstawne, bo nie ma żadnej obiektywnej miary, człowiek musi uznać, że jest emanacją nicości i że nicość pochłonie wszystkie uczone budowle jego umysłu.’⁸⁶

The plethora of binaries which underlie spiritual disinheritance and human alienation in the vastness of space is overcome by Miłosz in his postulate of the return to the primordial unity. He spins his vision against the Blakean conception of unity between Urthona and Urizen, Imagination and Reason, two among four mythical unities whose split brought about calamity.⁸⁷ In Blakean terms, Urizen is responsible for bringing negation and drawing ‘distinctions where none were meant to be’. Hence the schism between scientific and religious imagination; the world of scientific laws and man’s inner

⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 95.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p. 95.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 122.

⁸⁶ Miłosz, “O Erozji”, in *O podróżach w czasie*, p. 33.

⁸⁷ Miłosz describes the split between the four mythical figures (among them Urthona and Urizen): ‘in Blake, four mythical figures join in man to make a family; from their celavage came calamity. The spatial relationship between these figures – as in Swedenborg’s “other space” - is of particular note: 1) Tharmas, or the body. Its orientation: West. Its element: water (the ocean of Time and Space). Its location: the loins. Its sense: touch. 2). Urthona, or the individual creative Imagination (Christ is the all-encompassing Imagination). Its orientation: North. Its element: earth. [...] Its location: the subconscious. Its sense: hearing. Its art: poetry. 3) Luvah, or the emotions (love and hatred). Its orientation: East. Its element: fire. [...] Its location: the heart. Its art: music. And finally 4) Urizen, or Reason (the Lawgiver). Its orientation: South. Its element: air. [...] Its location: the head. Its sense: vision. [...] Tharmas, Urthona, and Luvah may personify the Holy Trinity in man (the human body as an image of the Father, love as an image of the Son, the imagination as an image of the Spirit), in which case Urizen, as some commentators have suggested, would be the fallen aspect of the Godhead, or Satan.’ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 166.

world; the schism between ‘faith and love’ and ‘lenses and learning’,⁸⁸ and, to repeat after Monod, the conflict between ‘animistic tradition’ and ‘objective truth.’⁸⁹

The condition of ‘disinherited mind’, underlain by dichotomies, finds its reflection in the twentieth-century literature. Aleksander Fiut points out that Miłosz ‘constantly emphasizes the decisive role of the twentieth century and the ruining of beliefs and conceptualizations that has resulted from the scientific revolution.’⁹⁰ As Miłosz observes: ‘In the literature of the mid- and late twentieth century, no one would presume to challenge the laws of physics, biology, psychology, sociology, and so on; they are flatly taken for granted. But if as a result of continual reduction man was no longer king but some subspecies of anthropoid ape; if he was stripped of Eden, of Heaven and Hell, of good and evil, now defined as the product of social determinants, then was he not ripe of the ultimate reduction, for his metamorphosis into a planetary society of two-legged insects?’⁹¹ Miłosz draws a parallel between Beckett and Monod and calls the former a ‘literary counterpart’ of Monod’s scientific radicalism. With the absence of God,

on a mass scale, was born the realization of man’s new metaphysical condition, summarized by a single word: NO. No voice reaching from the cosmos, no good and evil, no fulfillment of the promise, no Kingdom. But that was not all. The individual, proudly pointing to himself as ‘I’, proved just as much an illusion, a bundle of reflexes covered by a uniform epidermis. Love was an illusion, friendship an illusion – because both were premised on the possibility of communication, and how to communicate when language is reduced to a babble bespeaking the solitariness of each? So what is left in the presence of this huge NO? Only time, absolute time, rushing nowhere out of nowhere; time measured by the gradual deterioration of organic cells.⁹²

⁸⁸ From Mickiewicz, “The Romantic” trans. by W.H. Auden as quoted in *The Land of Ulro*, pp. 97-99.

⁸⁹ Jacques Monod, as quoted in *The Land of Ulro*, p. 51. Jacques Monod, *Chance and Necessity*: “No society before ours was ever rent by contradictions so agonizing. In both primitive and classical cultures the animistic tradition saw knowledge and values stemming from the same source. For the first time in history a civilization is trying to shape itself while clinging desperately to the animistic tradition to justify its values, and at the same time abandoning it as the source of knowledge, of truth.” See also, Jacques Monod, *Chance and Necessity: An Essay on the Natural Philosophy of Modern Biology* (London: Collins, 1972).

⁹⁰ Fiut, *The Eternal Moment*, p. 84.

⁹¹ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 157.

⁹² *ibid.*, pp. 240-241.

Ulro is a state of spirit which reflects the ‘poetically useless’ world, the world which is ‘a barren place for human affections to dwell in.’⁹³ It is the world where the obsession with answering ‘the question about the “How” of things’ abolished ‘all the creative interest in what this, that or the other are and mean.’⁹⁴

Being nowhere and moving towards nowhere is the state inherent in a scientifically shaped world, with tyranny of reason and reign of scientific determinism and reductionism. As Miłosz proclaims: ours is ‘an age of total dislocation.’⁹⁵ This state can be redeemed with the restoration of the faith in the second space and with the resurrection of the faculty of Imagination.

Ulro – way out

In *The Land of Ulro*, Miłosz creates a pantheon of the Emissaries of Being, ‘the great labourers of Imagination’⁹⁶ and defenders of ‘somewhere’, who strived to overcome the schism between science and faith/imagination in order to preserve *being* in the world in its holistic form. Aleksander Fiut points out: ‘The reduction of man, the atrophy of religious symbolism, ethical relativism, and the destruction of a hierarchical and value-carrying spatial vision – these are the conditions whose gradual rise was noted by Blake, Swedenborg, and Oscar Miłosz, a rise they endeavoured to oppose through the invention of their own mystical constructs.’⁹⁷ Their work is about bridging the gap between what came to be, yet is not, mutually exclusive. They ‘sustain a belief in the commensurability of the world and the human mind.’⁹⁸ Among the apostles of Imagination, Miłosz points

⁹³ Miłosz, quoting Heller, in *ibid.*, p. 96.

⁹⁴ Miłosz, quoting Heller, in *ibid.*, p. 94.

⁹⁵ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 226.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 184.

⁹⁷ Fiut, *The Eternal Moment*, p. 85.

⁹⁸ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 210.

to, among others, Goethe, Mickiewicz, Swedenborg, Blake, Oscar Miłosz. Their work provides the map to the way out of the wasteland of Ulro. Miłosz himself belongs to the group. As he writes in *The Land of Ulro*: ‘I have surrendered to the Law of Imagination, in the Blakean sense of the word.’⁹⁹ The poet admits it is thanks to his upbringing in ‘mystical Lithuania’ and thanks to Una Sancta Catholica Ecclesia that his freedom from Ulro was actualized.¹⁰⁰ Robert Hass, in his interview with Cynthia L. Haven, said of Miłosz: ‘the idea of the world without hierarchy and a world in which there was no final justice and one in which we just perished, [...], the worldview of modern biology and physics, was intolerable to him.’¹⁰¹

Miłosz refers to Erich Heller’s essay on Goethe which, in many ways, captures the nature of the processes which led us to Ulro showing, at the same time, resistance epitomized by the figure of Goethe - the poet-scientist:

Heller takes up the dichotomy between the world of scientific laws – cold, indifferent to human values – and man’s inner world. Coming into prominence only in the late eighteenth century, this split would later form the essence of the ‘Romantic crisis.’ Goethe attributed it to the alternative elected by science, and foresaw the consequences. ‘He appointed himself,’ states Heller, ‘a kind of emissary of Being in a territory of the human mind which had given itself up to the alluring mechanics of becoming, evolving and revolving.’ Goethe strenuously sought to avoid the cleavage, hence his experiments in search of another science consistent with ‘his faith in a perfect correspondence’ between the human soul and the universe. In his lifetime he had witnessed the emergence of the ‘disinherited mind’ in the ontological sense, of a mind torn between the certainty of man’s insignificance in the immensity of a hostile universe, and an urge, born of wounded pride, to endow man with preeminence. The ‘incessant struggle between arrogance and humiliation’ that ensued was one that would define the whole of modern literature, from Nietzsche to Kafka, Proust, Sartre, and so on.¹⁰²

With scientific development the disparity and chasm between reason and faith grew ever bigger and, eventually, led to the subjugation of perception and cognition to the authoritarian dictates of reason, the only cognitive faculty considered to be valid.

⁹⁹ *ibid.* p. 272.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 183-184.

¹⁰¹ Cynthia L. Haven, ed., *An Invisible Rope. Portraits of Czesław Miłosz* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011), p. 257.

¹⁰² Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, pp. 94-95.

Topography of space came to include only the earthly, with the exclusion of the spiritual. The process encompassed all spheres of learning and left a lasting imprint on theology and philosophy. As secular knowledge and theology grew apart, there took place erosion of theological language,¹⁰³ the mind ‘found nothing of nourishment in imaginative terms.’¹⁰⁴ Hence, Miłosz’s continuous reference to the writings of Blake, Swedenborg or Oscar Miłosz, in which he saw ‘a major defence of Christianity, and it was addressed to atheists and Deists as much as to the theologians.’¹⁰⁵ Miłosz points to what he considered counteracting forces of resistance to the aforementioned processes: Christian gnosis, prophets: Jakob Boehme, Swedenborg, Saint-Martin, Christian Cabala, Manicheism. Ulro in this light is seen as a product of the Fall: Scientific Revolution of the eighteenth century only exposed to light the conflicting forces which underlie human condition.

It is important to stress here, after Aleksander Fiut, that ‘Miłosz does not negate the achievements of contemporary science, for he is aware that it alone may find an effective remedy for the disinherited intellect.’¹⁰⁶ It is science, though, which is capable of acknowledging its limitations.

The redemptive force leading out of Ulro is Imagination – the element denied in the reign of Urizen, the ‘god of reduction who reduces everything to quantitative terms.’¹⁰⁷ For Blake, Imagination (capitalized) was ‘animating and redemptive power of the Human Form Divine, an emanation of the Holy Spirit. In Blake, religion and poetry merge, art becomes prophecy’,¹⁰⁸ ‘Christ is all-encompassing Imagination.’¹⁰⁹ For Blake, ‘Poetry and religion [...] are synonymous, provided they be authentic, i.e. eschatological.

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 224.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p. 224.

¹⁰⁵ *The Land of Ulro* as quoted by Aleksander Fiut, *Eternal Moment*, p. 85.

¹⁰⁶ Fiut, *The Eternal Moment*, p. 85.

¹⁰⁷ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 171,

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p. 164.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p. 166.

The only language recognized by Blake was the language of prophecy, the language of the “final things.”¹¹⁰ A direct parallel can be drawn here with Miłosz’s poetry. As Jan Błoński points out: ‘Bóg staje się nie tyle adresatem, ile świadkiem czy gwarantem poezji. Taki jest punkt wyjścia Miłoszowej teorii wyobraźni chrześcijańskiej i nieco ezoterycznych spekulacji *Ziemi Ulro*.’¹¹¹ Aleksander Fiut points out that Miłosz ‘clearly says that a “non-eschatological poetry” is impossible because it would contradict the nature of our civilization, “shaped as it is by the Bible and, for that reason, eschatological to the core”’.¹¹²

For Blake, poetry surmounts man’s fallen state. Not philosophy, but poetry: ‘Proper use of the poet-seer’s language is made when Imagination allows him, the poet, to surmount the fallen state in which our species resides. That is why Blake’s own poetry defies translation into the language of philosophy, itself a product of the Fall.’¹¹³ Parallels here could be drawn with Heideggerian idea of attunement with Being through language of poetry, not philosophy, as the latter forgot Being. ‘Language is the house of Being’,¹¹⁴ according to the philosopher.

Imagination leads us out of the fake, counterfeit reality which Blake calls ‘vegetative mirror’, to the truth, to the reality epitomized by the Garden of Eden. Miłosz draws analogies between Blakean vision of the earthly garden and Mickiewicz’s *Pan Tadeusz*. He calls the latter ‘at heart a metaphysical poem, its subject being one seldom perceived in quotidian reality: *the world of existence as an image of pure Being*’.¹¹⁵ Mickiewicz, in turn, is referred to as the poet ‘sheltered, for a time, by his provincial

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 181.

¹¹¹ Błoński, *Miłosz jak świat*, p. 187.

¹¹² Fiut, *The Eternal Moment*, p. 84.

¹¹³ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 165.

¹¹⁴ ‘Die Sprache ist das Haus des Seins’, Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tuebingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006).

¹¹⁵ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 122.

Muse, Lithuania’,¹¹⁶ the poet ‘whose imagination never divested itself of pre-scientific cosmologies.’¹¹⁷

Miłosz draws on the vision of Eden in the context of his poeticizing second space, for example in poems ‘Ja’, ‘W Raju’. We have imprinted in us the memory of Eden. Oscar Miłosz would refer to it, as quoted in *The Land of Ulro*, first nature, divine and true, which, through Adam’s sin, was transformed into second nature.¹¹⁸ He wrote: we remember ‘higher reality, which is not unknowable because through intuition we are given access to the archetypal world. The language of religious cults and myths evokes in us such a strong response because we recognize in them what is known unconsciously’; ‘intuitions are recollections.’¹¹⁹ Similarly, C.G. Jung, to whose thought Czesław Miłosz refers as ‘verbatim transposition’ of Blake at some points, recognized religious impulse as primary to a human being, ‘as primary as hunger or the sexual urge.’¹²⁰ There is a correspondence between Blake’s four elements and Jungian Tetrad. For both thinkers, ‘a full human personality is possible only when none of the four elements is denied, when all are bound together in conjunction oppositorum.’¹²¹

Among defence strategies against the spiritual vacancy of Ulro, Miłosz enumerates sarcasm, irony, polyphony in the novel or, the failed ‘Romantic strategy’ – ‘faith as opposed to reason, subjectivity as a refuge against the press of “objective” necessity and of movement governed by it.’¹²² Those I think could be called formal defence strategies. Theologically and cosmologically, the vision of a human being alienated within infinite space, subject only to natural laws, was redeemed by the

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 122.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 103.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 218.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 210.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 184.

¹²¹ *ibid.*, p. 185.

¹²² *ibid.*, pp. 134.

anthropocentric models of space and the concept of Godmanhood, the concept which made religion fully accessible to human understanding: ‘In the eighteenth century an extraordinary concept makes its appearance, one possibly related to that of the Adam Kadmon, the primordial, pre-cosmic man of the Cabala. For Swedenborg, God in Heaven has a human form; Christ’s humanity is thus a perfect fulfillment of the Godhead. “The Human Form Divine” and the God-man as the only God were taken from Swedenborg by William Blake.’¹²³ In the vastness of the infinity of space, Man-shaped heaven and vertically structured space, Divine Human signifying the Creator of the universe,¹²⁴ constitute the ultimate points of reference for human mind and imagination:

The eighteenth century cosmos: myriads of planets spinning around in an infinite and absolute space. Easily said; but let us try to imagine, to locate our home in that infinity. Swedenborg understood that the only refuge lay in assigning a central place to the Divine Human. And what distinguished the human if not the mind and imagination – the inner life of a subject, in other words – whence that other world, the subjective, which was not only parallel to the objective world but was its reason and purpose.¹²⁵

Human Form Divine and the Cosmos were equated. This, in consequence, means that ‘any disruption of order in man is tantamount to a cosmic disruption.’¹²⁶ Moreover, subjective human space and universal space became equated. Human and divine were united. The rescue against the conceptual alienation in the infinity of space lies in the subjectivity of a human being: in their mind and imagination. Swedenborg’s space is subjective. ‘Since Heaven and Hell represented spatially in the medieval imagination had lost their visually evocative power, Swedenborg proclaimed Heaven and Hell as a subjective space.’ This idea is underlain by Swedenborg’s thought that we cannot believe

¹²³ *ibid.*, p. 53.

¹²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 148.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 153.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 165.

in what we do not understand.¹²⁷ Abstract ideas of space need to be translated and internalized by human mind; space is a product of human subjectivity.

Space becomes internalized, the infinite vastness of ‘starry wheels’ becomes subjectified. Miłosz refers to Swedenborg as a proponent of internal space who strove to build, at the same time, a ‘verbal space’: ‘A man must abide somewhere, a physical roof over his head is not enough; his mind needs its bearings, its point of reference, vertically as well as horizontally.’¹²⁸ Building verbal space is an architectural act with reference to mind and imagination: ‘Do we not speak of *edifying* readings?’¹²⁹ which is directly manifested in Miłosz’s collection *Miasto bez imienia* treated in this thesis in architectural terms as an act of building conceptual space.

The very act of thinking has a spatial dimension. Oscar Miłosz wrote in *Les Arcanes*:

To think is first of all to situate and to compare: still, the two operations may be reduced to one, for the initial comparison is the relations of one place to another. Thus, to think is originally to situate oneself with respect to external objects, at first physically, then morally. Later on, it is to determine the position of our world with respect to that of surrounding worlds. To be is to be in a place, to cover a series of points which are themselves mobile; it is to move as a mind in a body endowed with motion and carried by a world gravitating around other gravitating worlds. Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, long before they made their discoveries prompted by little mobile images coming from the external world, already carried all their knowledge in their latent memory. Intuitions are recollections. By reason of the basic universal law, that of *analogy*, the essential operation of the mind extends to the moral sphere: to love and to hate is to obey a movement of attraction or of repulsion. In consequence, thought is only an awareness and love of movement, an aesthetic, a science of rhythm, for movement means determination of place, and place itself means determination of being. – *Les Arcanes*, commentary to verset 8.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 221.

¹²⁸ *ibid.* pp. 151-152.

¹²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 152.

¹³⁰ Oscar Miłosz as quoted by Czesław Miłosz, in *ibid.*, p. 209 (emphasis added). See Miłosz on Oscar Miłosz’s metaphysical poems: ‘The law of analogy: here is the key to the “metaphysical poems,” their guiding assumption’, in *ibid.*, p. 209.

The ways out of Ulro to which Miłosz refers in his study are rooted in various traditions of thought. The solution to the tragedy of the modern human, isolation and spiritual emptiness may lie in the internal and verbal space of subjectivity, in Imagination, in rediscovery of the space internalized within human body and its movement, in the return to the Garden of Eden; all are based on the law of hierarchical, vertically structured space, as it is hierarchy that underlies human thinking ('Wherever we have to do with the human mind and heart, equality is a fiction; inequality, the general rule.'¹³¹). It is also hierarchy that underlies the workings of religious imagination. As Błoński points out with reference to Christian imagination: 'Jego fundamentalną cechą byłoby poczucie hierarchii, a więc miejsca które rzecz, działanie, idea i człowiek zajmują w ekonomii Stworzenia...'.¹³² The key to full existence and Being lies in the rediscovery of the commensurability between the spiritual and the earthly, 'as above, so below', against the reductionistic vision of existence as governed by natural laws dictated by reason. Miłosz, through his poetic work which will be analyzed in the following chapters of this thesis, creates a counter-reality to Ulro: the world of pure being, of being consciously and intentionally within hierarchically structured space which encompasses the spiritual and the earthly, that is the totality of human existence.

¹³¹ *ibid.*, p. 87.

¹³² Błoński, *Miłosz jak świat*, p. 216.

III.

TRZY ZIMY – LEGEND TO THE MAP OF ULRO. WILNO

CATASTROPHISM AND SPACE

Stanisław Bereś, in his detailed monographic work on the Żagary group, points, among others, to the ludic aspect of the culture of Wilno, where the humour of Żagary poets played a special role of an often interventionist character.¹ It manifested itself in the shows performed by ‘Ży-ga’ – Żywa Gazetka (a live paper), ‘szopki akademickie’ (academic nativity plays), the radio programmes of ‘Kukułka Wileńska’ (Cuckoo of Wilno), the literary cabaret ‘Smorgonia’,² or the satires written by the fictitious figure Aron (later Ariel) Pirmas on the pages of *Żagary*.³ That was, however, only one end of the spectrum. The echoes of the poetics of *élan vital* of the ‘Skamander’ Group had thrived in Poland in the 1920s – the group whose poetry ‘could at last recover its lightheartedness and could perform a spontaneous dance without recourse to compulsive justifications’⁴ – only to be overshadowed in the 1930s by the poetics of the Second Vanguard (Wilno and Lublin) whose catastrophism came to the fore, with Miłosz as one of its major representatives.

Catastrophism underlies the representation of space in the volume *Trzy zimy* which is considered one of the most significant poetic manifestations of this ‘system of thought’ in Polish literature.

¹ Stanisław Bereś, *Ostatnia wileńska plejada* (Warszawa : Wydawnictwo PEN, 1990), p. 19.

² *ibid.*, also quoted by Tadeusz Bujnicki, ‘Humor żagarystów’ in *Żagary. Środowisko kulturowe grupy literackiej*, ed. by Tadeusz Bujnicki, Krzysztof Biedrzycki and Jarosław Fazan (Kraków: Universitas, 2009), p. 129.

³ Tadeusz Bujnicki, ‘Humor żagarystów’, pp. 144 – 145.

⁴ Czesław Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1983), p. 385.

The socio-political situation of the 1930s: the war in Manchuria (1932), Hitler's seizure of power, the rise of Mussolini, Italy's invasion of Ethiopia (1935-36), the Civil War in Spain, economic stagnation, large-scale unemployment, escalation of nationalistic ideologies and militarization of Europe – all justified the pessimistic mood of the times.⁵ The main initial orientation of the catastrophising poetry was directed at stirring the social conscience.⁶ On the pages of *Żagary*, in his article 'Buljon z gwoździ', Miłosz advocated the socio-political engagement of poetry: 'A producer of cultural artifacts needs to have a clear and distinct aim. This aim should be to form such a type of human being who is, according to the needs of the society, most needed in the nearest future'.⁷ Miłosz will soon depart, however, from those assumptions and the catastrophising thought manifested in *Trzy zimy* (1936) will be displayed in a mostly quasi-surrealistic oneiric convention.

The Wilno Catastrophists were 'led' by Marian Zdziechowski – professor of Slavonic Literatures at the Stefan Batory University, to whose influence Miłosz referred: 'We are all, in a sense, the children of Marian Zdziechowski'.⁸ Miłosz will present him in the poem 'Zdziechowski'⁹ as a 'philosopher of despair/ Who doubted the goodness of Creation' and waited in 'a city taken from the Bolsheviki by Polish cavalry [...] aware/ of the "approaching end"'. His 'prophesy was fulfilled, whatever existed there sank, only church/towers jutted up above the deep.' The poet encapsulates Zdziechowski's thought in the quotation from the philosopher's writings: 'And with the years, as I moved further

⁵ Nina Taylor, 'Wilno Catastrophism', in *Muza Donowa: A Celebration of Donald Pirie's Contribution to Polish Studies*, ed. by Rosemary Hunt and Ursula Phillips (Cotgrave: Astra, 1995), pp. 115-116.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 118.

⁷ Czesław Miłosz, 'Bulion z gwoździ', *Żagary*, N° 5 (December, 1931).

'Producent dóbr artystycznych musi mieć jasny i wyraźny cel. Tym celem powinno być urobienie takiego typu człowieka, jaki ze względów społecznych jest w najbliższej przyszłości potrzebny' [trans. by MM].

⁸ Czesław Miłosz, 'Religijność Zdziechowskiego', as quoted by Nina Taylor, 'Wilno Catastrophism', p. 116.

⁹ See the Appendix II for 'Zdziechowski' from Czesław Miłosz, *To* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2001) and 'Zdziechowski' from Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems 1931 – 2001*.

and further into life and the/ world, I realized more and more clearly and painfully that this world, considered as a whole, is disorder and unreason, not, as we have been taught, the work of reason: it did not come from the hand of God.”¹⁰ Zdziechowski, who foretold the end of Polish independence, was known for his affirmation of Christian ideals, sometimes against the official line of the Church – especially in the context of Church and modernity, and saw the dangers in the secularization of Europe, which, as he believed, must lead to its barbarization. He warned against the menace of revolutionary utopias, which he considered to be an expression of pride of human mind aiming to replace God on Earth.¹¹

Krzysztof Zajas made a distinction between two ‘schools’ of Catastrophism: Western – with ‘scientific aspirations’, based on proof material, aiming to create a universal system of historiosophy – represented by Oswald Spengler, Arnold Joseph Toynbee and Jose Ortega y Gasset, and Eastern – religiously oriented, with Vasily Rozanov, Vladimir Solovyov, Vyacheslav Iwanov, and Nikolay Berdyaev. Zdziechowski, belonging to the latter, was influenced by Berdyaev and considered himself to be his disciple, although he rejected his Russophile Pan-Slavism.¹² It is through Zdziechowski, at the Stefan Batory University, that Miłosz and other Żagary poets were influenced by the pessimistic prophesies of the Eastern thought filtered through the individual prophesizing vision of the Professor.¹³

Miłosz’s first significant volume of poetry, *Trzy zimy*, was published in a print run of three hundred copies by the Związek Zawodowy Literatów Polskich in Wilno in

¹⁰ Czesław Miłosz, ‘Zdziechowski’ in *New and Collected Poems 1931 – 2001*, p. 715, quoted by Miłosz according to Marian Zdziechowski *Pesymizm, romantyzm a podstawy chrześcijaństwa*, 1915 (see a note to ‘Zdziechowski’ in *To* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2001), p. 65.

¹¹ Marian Zaczynski, ‘Wstęp’ to Zdziechowski, *Wybór pism* (Kraków: Znak, 1993), pp. 5-11.

¹² Krzysztof Zajas, ‘Modlitwa o światło. Żagaryści a katastrofizm’, in *Żagary. Środowisko kulturowe grupy literackiej*, pp. 97 – 98.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 97.

1936. The poetics of *Trzy zimy* stands out from the rest of Miłosz's oeuvre: the poems – at times quasi surrealistic, attuned to the voice of the *daimonion*, immersed in the esoteric discourse of mysticism – elude definitive hermeneutic analysis. As Jan Błoński points out, they belong to the time of Miłosz's poetic youth which is definitely closed at the moment of the apocalypse realized – when the poet adopts the principle of *mimesis* as the foundation of his work (which Błoński dates for 1943).¹⁴ On the other hand, however, as Błoński pointed out, 'Miłosz jak świat' ['Miłosz [is] like the world']: 'Miłosz was talking about everything, many times, but he was talking differently enough, to make his every poetic statement look new. He was like a painter who eagerly painted the same picture, the same model'.¹⁵ The poet craved to find 'a more capacious form' ('Ars poetica?') to contain *space* in a poetic form of expression, though at the same time he was aware of the arbitrariness of language, of, in the words of Stanisław Barańczak, the 'incommensurability of words and things'.

At the time of the publication of *Trzy zimy* Miłosz's poetics was not crystallized according to the aforementioned assumptions. Drawing an analogy to Nietzsche's distinction between two artistic types, in *Birth of Tragedy*, one might say that *Trzy zimy* constitutes an expression of Dionysian aesthetics: both in its form (just to give an example of Miłosz's 'walka z wierszem' ['fight against verse'] to which Barańczak refers, quoting Stanisław Balbus, in his analysis of the poem 'Świty')¹⁶ and also on the plane of its contents. In adapting the principle of *mimesis*, the poet moves closer towards Apollonian aesthetics. Nevertheless, *Trzy zimy* constitutes a powerful idiosyncratic voice oriented towards the aims which Miłosz will continue defining in his later poetic work.

¹⁴ Jan Błoński, *Miłosz jak świat* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 1998), p. 82.

¹⁵ Błoński, *Miłosz jak świat*, p. 81. [quotation trans. by MM].

¹⁶ Stanisław Barańczak, 'Świty', in *Trzy zimy & Głosy o wierszach*, ed. by Renata Gorczyńska and Piotr Kłoczowski (London: Aneks, 1987), p. 94.

The concept of space, the construction of space, understood both as a formal device of organizing lyrical landscapes as indexical signs pointing to various semantic fields of interpretation, and, on the more immediate plane of the represented poetic world, as a 'boundless, three-dimensional expanse in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction' serves Miłosz as the main conceptual tool through which the catastrophic landscape of *Trzy zimy* is constructed. It is space without strongly delineated points of reference; the space where there is *nowhere*, in the sense problematized by the poet later on in *Ziemia Ulro* (1977). Miłosz seeks to define the place of the human subject within the world, within worldly space, against the background of fractured and torn spatial landscapes that overlap and interact in clashes between different voices occupying opposing orders, or, on the more immediate level of the represented world - against the background of topographical fissures within the landscape torn by the workings of the four elements.

One methodological perspective which can be adopted in the interpretation of *Trzy zimy* is to approach the volume as a cubist painting: with reference to the multidimensionality of the spaces delineated in each poem against the often deantropomorphised, or rather, de-humanized landscape. These spaces are broken, fractured and then reassembled to constitute a holistic, organic form of particular elements that stand in a synecdochic relationship to the volume as a whole. After all, Miłosz himself enumerates 'Cubism' as part of the heritage with which he was endowed at the moment of his birth.¹⁷ The sharp division of the spaces in a particular poetic landscape takes place on the formal level as a poetic device applied to the formal features of the poems through the introduction of dialogism, dialogic exchanges of voices representing a different 'order of things'. This poetic technique underlies the construction

¹⁷ Czesław Miłosz, *Native Realm*, p. 18.

of 'Pieśń', 'Dialog', 'Ptaki' with the dialogic exchange between 'the disciple of the dream' and the birds, 'Hymn' where the exalted dialogue between the speaking persona and God could be compared to Mickiewicz's Konrad's 'Improvisation', 'Kołysanka' – with a juxtaposition of two orders represented by the child and 'those' whispering a tale to the child, the lieutenant and the fighting 'boys', or in 'Powolna rzeka' – where Miłosz interpolates two larger 'quotations' in the form of two stanzas which disrupt the continuity of the lyrical narration. The introduction of dialogic exchanges could be viewed in the light of the Bakhtinian concept of internal *dialogism* on the level both of the individual poems and of the holistic interaction between poems in the volume as a whole; as a critic rightly pointed out, in Miłosz's early poems the multiplicity of observations is characteristically subordinated to the polyphonic character of expression.¹⁸

Above all, however, the sharp division of space takes place within the represented poetic worlds themselves. Poetic space is torn by acute sounds (din, noise, tumultuous chaos), and, synesthetically, highlighted by colours and the contrasts between light and dark, chiaroscuro. It is enlivened by movement, torn by precipices and other dramatic features of the topography. The poetic landscapes are divided between the layer of the idyllic past (represented retrospectively or, as in 'O młodszym bracie' – of quasi-reverie) and the bleak present. The space, or rather spaces, delineated within the cycle *Trzy zimy* are marked by the poet's sensitivity to their very texture and substance: the poet seems to want to touch the ephemeral, reach the very core of the earthly, corporeal and material, to fathom the mechanisms underlying the ontology of space. Out of the amalgam of various elements, there emerges, if we analyze *Trzy zimy* in a holistic way, a chain of

¹⁸ Aleksander Fiut, 'Ciemne iluminacje', in *W stronę Miłosza* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2003), p. 12.

interrelationships which where juxtaposed, form a systematically developed discourse on the ontology of space and the human subject's place within the space underpinned by the 'catastrophic dialectics'.

As already mentioned, Miłosz stressed the importance of the point of anchorage, of the centre that a person needs, for psychological and biological reasons, to find within oneself and without. Perception of space defines one's position *in relation to* the outside; it degrades or privileges the human subject. The stratification of space, involving hierarchization of its constituent parts, constitutes a means for self-identification. Miłosz makes the point: 'one can control reality only through hierarchy'.¹⁹ In the catastrophic landscape underlying *Trzy zimy*, the landscape of metaphysical angst, there is a blurring of boundaries and contours between the human subject and the outside world with its cosmic dimension, animals and material objects. This view of space stands in contradiction to Renaissance anthropocentrism, or the Enlightenment philosophy of the Order of things – the general frame of the Whole where every-thing has a strictly defined place.²⁰

The overturning of hierarchies is manifested in *Trzy zimy* through leveling of the animal and the human. An animalized human subject is often represented in naturalistic or turpistic terms. 'Bramy arsenału' (1934)²¹ opens with the image of animals 'tender and faithful', 'secretive, very quiet' watching 'the expanse of gardens'. As the lyrical picture unfolds, the space becomes thickened by the alertness of animals. It becomes restricted, via a camera-eye technique, by the perspective of the narrowed eyes – of the half shut slits of the animals' olive eyes, only to open itself again onto the wider, in the words of a

¹⁹ Czesław Miłosz and Aleksander Fiut, *Autoportret przekorny. Rozmowy* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2003), p. 353.

²⁰ Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man* in *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature*, vol. I, ed. by Frank Kermode, John Hollander (New York; London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 1896.

²¹ See the Appendix III for 'Bramy arsenału' from Czesław Miłosz, *Trzy zimy* (London: Aneks, 1987) and 'The Gates of the Arsenal' from Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems 1931 – 2001*.

critic, 'broken, shattered, visionary kaleidoscope of images'.²² The motif of the narrowed-eye gaze will return in the poem 'Roki' (1936) as a defence against the boundless catastrophic space in the apocalyptic moment of destruction.

Space in the poem 'Bramy arsenału' is dense, likely to be invaded and violated. Matter is animized and the statues march 'with a stone scroll/ of laws from long ago'. The human element is introduced with the image of travelers – dehumanized, naturalistically portrayed creatures 'showing each other their lips locked by frost,/ Contorted in a scream, or their eyebrows/ ripped apart by wisdom, or fingers tearing open/ Their breasts shorn of ribbons, medals, braids.'²³ Against the space torn by the abyss, filled with din and noise, a young woman appears – a figure from the pastoral world. Her human subjectivity, her humanness is, however, questioned; she is reduced to corporeality:

Even if she is miserable, a handful of gathered ash,
Destined to last no longer than the sun's flight,
Take her, never let her summon love.

[...]

Silver seeps into her lips, fear bleaches her face,
The breast, two icicles now, restlessly heaves,
The glare strikes. And touched by light, all that lives dies.

[...]

Her nimble thighs no more rule over dreams,
Naked and pure they smoke like auburn Pompeii.²⁴

²² Stefan Kisielewski, 'Bramy arsenału i okolice' in *Trzy zimy & Glosy o wierszach*, ed. by Renata Gorczyńska and Piotr Kłoczowski (London: Aneks, 1987), p. 72.

²³ 'ukazując nawzajem usta mrozem skute, /wykrzywione w wołaniu, albo brwi rozprute/ mądrością, albo palce szukające zera/ w piersi odartej z wstążek, sznurów i orderów'.

²⁴ 'Jakby nie była marna, zebranego garstka/ popiołu, na niedługie, jak lot słońca trwanie,/weźcie ją, niech miłości nigdy nie przyzywa.//[...] Srebro sączy się w usta, lęk rumieńce ściera,/pierś stężała w dwa sople niespokojnie dyszy,/blask tnie. Od światła wszystko, co żywe, umiera.// [...] uda ruchliwe odtąd marzeniem nie rządzą, /nagie i czyste dymią jak rude Pompeje'.

A child, her progeny, if born, 'it will strike its head hard against the steps/And sleep with its four legs up, day and night,/ As a dead horse sleeps amid burned-out pastures.'²⁵

The texture of the lyrical spaces of the poems in *Trzy zimy* is *materialized* by reducing the human to the corporeal which, at times, becomes dispersed within the aerial realm, or becomes united with the primordial place – the earth – the chora closing the circle of the eternal return according to the dictum: 'Everything is begot by the earth, to her everything will return.' ('Pieśń'). The connection between body and earth, and the actual reducing of human essence to corporeality is apparent in the poem 'Pieśń',²⁶ where all the hierarchies within the spatial organization of the presented world are overturned.

The poem was written in Wilno in 1934 and dedicated to Gabriela Kunat – the daughter of Bronisław Kunat, who lived with her sister Nina on her father's estate in Krasnogruda, where young Miłosz used to spend his summer holidays. She was, as Andrzej Franaszek points out, 'the object of still-boyish fascination, whom Miłosz saw as the archetype of feminine beauty.'²⁷

In his analysis of 'Pieśń', Krzysztof Dybciak points to conflicts between various 'semantic energies' and to emotional contrasts as components of the poetic landscape, in which biology constitutes a distinct reality and deprives an individual of their specific human signification.²⁸ Anna's lament: 'I am afraid to stay here alone, I have nothing except my body/ – it glistens in the dark, a star with crossed hands,/ so that I am scared to look at myself. Earth, /do not abandon me'²⁹, reverberates against the eulogy of earth

²⁵ 'Ibem ciężkim na stopnie potoczy/ i z czworgiem łap w powietrzu w dzień będzie i w nocy/ spać jak koń martwy w runi wypalonych pastwisk'.

²⁶ See the Appendix IV for 'Pieśń' from Miłosz, *Trzy zimy* (London: Aneks 1987) and 'The Song' from Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems 1931 – 2001*.

²⁷ Andrzej Franaszek, 'The Eternal Light of Stopped Time. A Biographical Sketch', trans. by Jennifer Croft, in a special section of *Tygodnik Powszechny*, N° 34, August 22, 2004, as accessed through <<http://www.milosz365.eu/en/teksty,22,72.php>>.

²⁸ Krzysztof Dybciak, 'Pieśń', in *Trzy zimy & Głosy o wierszach*, p. 66.

²⁹ 'boję się zostać sama, prócz mego ciała nic nie mam/ – ono błyszczy w ciemności, gwiazda ze skrzyżowanymi rękami,/ aż straszno mi patrzeć na siebie. Ziemi, /nie opuszczaj mnie'.

sung out by the Chorus: 'All joy comes from the earth, there is no delight without her,/ man is given to the earth, let him desire no other'; 'everything is begot by the earth, she is without blemish'.³⁰ The reduction of the essence of humanity to biology, hence human degradation, problematized in Anna's mournful soliloquy, is contrasted with the pastoral and idyllic vision advocated by the Chorus: the vision which presents an ordered spatial-temporal organization of the world, where everything has its place – the right place. The problem of oppositions and clashes does not exist here. The harmonious coexistence of the elements of space, with the eventual return to the earth, reminds of Nicolas Poussin's painting 'Et in Arcadia ego'.

There is no communication between Anna and the Chorus: the latter seems to recreate, like a dogmatic formula, the image of an idyll, whereas Anna – even though she addresses God or earth in her apostrophes – in fact shouts out into the void. Her cry 'You, God, have mercy on me./ From the earth's greedy mouth deliver me,/ cleanse me of her untrue songs' is unanswered.³¹ No one listens to her voice. Between her and the Chorus representing the ordered world, as well as between her and God there is a gap filled with silence, and this unanswered silence – emerging out of the tumult of the fractured catastrophic space - constitutes the subject of the poem.

Krzysztof Dybciak writes about Miłosz's pre-War poetry as a realization of the catastrophic myth, composed of four phases: the primordial totality and prosperous existence; the dwindling away of energy and growing destruction; return to chaos, hence also to regeneration; the recovery of the cosmic totality.³² Dybciak points out, it is

³⁰ 'Radość wszelka jest z ziemi, nie masz prócz ziemi wesela,/ człowiek jest dany ziemi, niech ziemi tylko pożąda', 'wszystko jest z ziemi poczęte, ona jest doskonała'.

³¹ 'Ty, Boże, miłościw mnie bądź./ Od ust ziemi chciwych odłącz mnie./ Od pieśni jej nieprawdziwych oczyść mnie'.

³² Krzysztof Dybciak, 'Pieśń' in *Trzy zimy & Głosy o wierszach*, p.68.

difficult to locate ‘Pieśń’ within any of these stages. Is it because of the aforementioned ‘suspension in silence’ of the human subject?

Perhaps ‘Pieśń’ could best be classified as a poetic illustration of the *nowhere* to which Miłosz refers in his conversations with Fiut in discussing the necessity of the existence of certain points of reference within space for human self-identification within the world.³³ In ‘Pieśń’, what seems to emerge from the clash of the idyllic order and chaotic non-order, is the unanswered silence; the space occupied by the human subject – by Anna – is suspended in silence, is *nowhere*.

‘Pieśń’ constitutes a specific example of Miłosz’s idiosyncratic use of the topos of space and movement within space, with the latter possessing an ontological status, in the manner of Bergson’s idea of *élan vital*. Continuous switches of perspective, Anna’s oscillations between the ‘greedy mouth’ of the earth and her simultaneous attempts to free herself from it, as well as the dichotomous visions represented by contrasting voices, all build the aura of ‘movability’ of the poetic landscape within ‘Pieśń.’ The space of the poem is torn by frictions; it is constantly becoming and renewing itself out of the clashes. The introduction of the Chorus points to the stylization of ‘Pieśń’ according to the generic form of Greek tragedy and transforms it into a dramatic poem. As a critic wrote about Greek tragedy:

Drama by its very nature presents a series of competing voices. It is different from the solitary outpouring of the lyric poet [...]. As Hegel saw, the distinguishing characteristic of the dramatic form is that it is unmediated: ‘It presents an action completed in the past as actually happening before us, as emanating from the inner life of self-directed characters’. There is no single voice directing our reactions.³⁴

³³ Miłosz, Fiut, *Autoportret Przekorny*, p. 345.

³⁴ John Burgess, *The Faber Pocket Guide to Greek and Roman Drama* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), pp. xv-xvi.

August Wilhelm Schlegel proposed that Chorus shows how an ideal audience might react to the drama.³⁵ In 'Pieśń' the voice of the Chorus represents the habituated perception of space – of the ordered world. As the *voce populi*, it intensifies the effect of Anna's solitariness in her confrontations with earth. Interspersing Anna's voice with that of the Chorus creates a peculiar dynamics within the poem: the poem is not static, it is in movement, it 'is living' and 'is becoming' in the interchange of voices. Also, the formal division of voices corresponds to two different poetic spaces occupied by Anna and the Chorus: with both spaces overlapping like a shift in a movement of earth's tectonic plates – each, however, belonging to a different spatial-temporal reality, to a different order of things. The harmonious and the pastoral stands in a binary opposition to the 'diabolic' power that the earth exerts upon Anna as she strives to free herself from the earth's grip, while at the same time identifying herself with the earth: 'I don't want you, don't tempt me, keep flowing, my tranquil sister./ Your burning touch on my neck, I still feel it.'³⁶ The ambivalence that springs from the sense of belonging to and being *made of* earth, with the simultaneous rebellion against it, could be interpreted in Manichean terms. It is a conflict which, as Miłosz himself pointed out, troubled his young conscience, and already came to the fore as the subject of his high-school confrontations with his teacher – Father Chomski (aka Chomik – Engl. Hamster) to whom the closing poem of *Trzy zimy* is dedicated.

Despite the apparent entrapment of the human subject within the aforementioned dichotomies, there is also in 'Pieśń' an attempt to restore a *point of reference* within space through the symbol of a stone. A stone – the most solid material form – is endowed, as a

³⁵ *Encyclopaedia Britannica. Academic Edition*, 'tragedy',
<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/601884/tragedy/51138/Schlegel>> [accessed November 2010].

³⁶ 'Nie chcę ciebie, nie skusisz mnie. Odpływaj, siostró pogodna,/czuję twój dotyk jeszcze, twój dotyk szyję mnie pali'.

mediator, with the potentiality to disclose ‘the real’ – the truth of the world. As Anna says:

I would wait quietly till the slow movement ceases
and the real shows itself naked suddenly,
till a wildflower, a stone in the fields stare up
with the disk of an unknown new face.³⁷

as if, simplifying Aristotle’s principle of dichotomy between potentiality and actuality – ‘*energeia*’ and ‘*entelechy*’- the stone, in its actuality, is endowed with the truth of the ‘real’. This truth is *waiting*, dormant, to be revealed, to expose the *ousia* – ‘thinghood’ of things. The symbol of the stone appears also in the poem ‘Dialog’ where stone embraces the truth, the real, which is hidden from the world of the appearances:

I cannot hear voices, no cry breaks
my silence
And no stone has told
me the truth of the stone.³⁸

In the same way ‘A stone scroll/Of laws from long ago or the trace of a sword’ is an attribute of the enlivened statues marching ‘covered with the laurels of new autumns’ (‘Bramy arsenału’). Stone becomes the ‘guardian’ and ‘safeguard’ of tradition and it epitomizes solidity, the ‘sealing’ of a particular order of things; it comes to symbolize a conceptual point of reference within disordered space.

As already mentioned above, the catastrophic space is a space of blurred boundaries and overturned hierarchies. The agency to control space is bestowed, however, upon a privileged human being: a poet. ‘I have no wisdom, no skills, and no

³⁷‘Spokojnie czekałabym, aż zgaśnie ruch powolny,/a rzeczywiste nagle się obnaży/i tarczą nowej nieznajomej twarzy/spojrzy kwiat polny, kamień polny’.

³⁸ ‘Nie słyszę głosów, żaden krzyk nie łamie/mego milczenia./ Ani mi żaden nie powiedział kamień/ prawdy kamienia.’, in Czesław Miłosz, ‘Dialog’ in *Wiersze I* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 1993), p. 32 [trans. by MM].

faith/ but I received strength, it tears the world apart' ('Hymn')³⁹ are the words of the speaking persona – the poet who stands, like Mickiewicz's Konrad, against God whom he acknowledges as the source of the poetic power. The space delineated in the opening stanza of the poem 'Hymn', that of the earthly and the transcendental, is re-united: 'There is no one between you and me'. The hierarchization within it is again overturned: the human and the divine are placed on the same level. All corporeal beings 'a plant drawing sap from the depths of the earth', animals, nor men 'befoul' it with their presence. The space is not mediated, it is exalted and it exists as in the moment of its creation, in its pure, perfect, primordial form. It is the space before the apocalypse foretold in the final stanza: 'The sound of the horn still is not heard/ calling the dispersed, those who lie in the valleys./ On the frozen ground as yet no rumble of the last cart./ There is no one between you and me.'⁴⁰ At the same time, however, the very human essence of the poet-demiurge possessing 'the strength' is reduced to its corporeality which is contextualized in a temporal frame: the poet as a human being is an amalgam of 'heart', 'blood' and 'duration' which will lead 'a faithful son of the black earth', back to the black earth. The echoes of Krasiński's *Nie-Boska Komedia* can be heard here: 'Through thee flows a stream of beauty, but thou are not beauty thyself.'⁴¹

A point of geographical reference which restores a stratified structure within the space represented in 'Hymn' is the moon emerging out of the darkness in the invocation of the poem's third stanza. As darkness is addressed, it overwhelms poetic space. Abstract, infinite darkness, which cannot be conceptualized through definitive,

³⁹ See the Appendix V for 'Hymn' from Miłosz, *Trzy zimy* (London: Aneks 1987), and 'Hymn' from Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems 1931 -2001*.

⁴⁰ 'Jeszcze nie odzywa się głos rogu/ zwołujący rozproszonych, leżących w dolinach./ Koło wozu ostatniego jeszcze nie dudni na grudzie./ Pomiędzy mną i tobą nie ma nikogo'.

⁴¹ Zygmunt Krasiński, *The Un-Divine Comedy*, trans. by H. E. Kennedy and Z. Umińska (London : G.G. Harrap & Co. Ltd; Warsaw: Książnica polska, 1927), p.1; see Zygmunt Krasiński, *Nie-Boska Komedia* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1959), p. 3.

quantitative terms, transcends boundaries and, not having boundaries itself, is nevertheless 'filled' with the very solidity of matter: of the apples and scissors lying on a table, the matter consolidated, dense, tangible. The camera-eye switch of perspective from the broad, universal, and abstract to the particular and material, leads, finally to the unification of the two, and the eventual homogenization of time and space across cultural boundaries and various civilizations subsumed under the common denominator of the moon: 'and we were alike:/ apples, scissors, darkness, and I/ under the same immobile/ Assyrian, Egyptian, and Roman/ moon.' Is this the same moon which 'would pause every spring/ Above the sleep of the weary ones.' ('Świty')? 'The red moon' which is set above the statue of a couple? ('Statue of a couple') or perhaps the menacing moon of reproach thrown by the guide to the disciple: 'my lighthearted, greedy admirer/ of blood and the moon' ('Dialog')?⁴²

⁴² 'mój lekkomyślny, chciwy wielbicielu/ krwi i księżycu' [trans. by MM].

IV.

AT HOME IN THE WORLD

1. The world as it should be: space and matter in *Świat, poema naiwne* and
Dolina Issy

Świat, poema naiwne in its totality is a poetic journey, almost of a Dantean type, through the parts and elements of the house which are endowed with metaphysical significance and lead onto the more abstract field of philosophical reflection as the journey leads towards the sun. Both *Świat* and the poetic novel *Dolina Issy* constitute a vision of the world ‘as it should be’¹ and an illustration of a place that individuals occupy in their environment which is their *dwelling*² space – dwelling in Heidegger’s understanding: ‘The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth, is *Buan*, dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell.’³ *Świat* – the poetic world in its totality comprising the house (the manor) and its natural surroundings, and *Dolina Issy* which also constitutes a portrayal of a certain self-contained world,⁴ represent a holistic picture of a certain *place* as

¹ Czesław Miłosz, Renata Gorczyńska, *Rozmowy. „Podróżny świata”* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002), p. 64 [quotation trans. by MM].

² The concept of *dwelling* as defined by Martin Heidegger in his *Being and Time* (trans. by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), pp. 78-90, 149-168. See also Martin Heidegger, ‘Building Dwelling Thinking’, in *Poetry Language Thought* (trans. and introduction by Albert Hofstadter, New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

³ Martin Heidegger, *Poetry Language Thought* (trans. and introduction by Albert Hofstadter, New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 147.

⁴ ‘The Valley is blessed with an abundance of black earth – a rarity for us – with the lushness of its orchards, and possibly with its remoteness from the world, something that has never seemed to bother its inhabitants’ (Czesław Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, trans. by Louis Iribarne [London: Penguin 2001], p. 5). See ‘Dolina jest błogosławiona przez rzadki u nas czarnoziem, bujność swoich sadów i może odcięcie od świata, które ludziom tutejszym nigdy nie przedstawiało się jako dokuczliwe.’ (Czesław Miłosz, *Dolina Issy* [Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2009], pp. 8-9).

theorized by phenomenology of architecture, a place constructed by the poet-architect. Hence the representation of the house in both works echoes with the assumption that ‘The existential purpose of building (architecture) is [...] to make a site become a place, that is, to uncover the meanings potentially present in the given environment.’⁵ The place is a site of human dwelling in the ontological sense of the concept. It is a physical ‘site’, yet transcends its physical dimensions. In Norberg-Schulz’s understanding:

A concrete term for environment is *place*. It is common usage to say that acts and occurrences *take place*. In fact it is meaningless to imagine any happening without reference to a locality. Place is evidently an integral part of existence. [...] [by the word *place*] we mean something more than abstract location. We mean a totality made up of concrete things having material substance, shape, texture and colour. Together these things determine an ‘environmental character’, which is the essence of place. In general a place is given as such a character or ‘atmosphere’. A place is therefore a qualitative, ‘total’ phenomenon, which we cannot reduce to any of its properties, such as spatial relationships, without losing its concrete nature out of sight.⁶

In the following chapter, Miłosz’s treatment of space in *Świat, poema naiwne* and *Dolina Issy* on the basis of the topos of the house (the manor) and the surrounding landscape, will be examined from the perspective of theories of phenomenology of space. Since for Miłosz space constitutes a certain mode of imagination, it is impossible to separate space from the perceiving subject who turns it into ‘lived space’: the attuned space, the space of action and intuition.⁷ The relationship between subject and space is, then, reciprocal, and corresponds to Norberg-Schulz’ understanding of space and architecture: ‘When we treat architecture analytically, we miss the concrete environmental character, that is, the very quality which is the object of man’s

⁵ Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (London, Academy Editions: 1980), p. 18.

⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

⁷ The following division into attuned space, space of action and intuition within lived space is a methodological differentiation adopted by Elizabeth Stroecker to illustrate ‘three styles of corporeity’. See Elizabeth Stroecker, *Investigations in Philosophy of Space*, trans. by Algis Mickunas (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1987), pp. 13-172.

identification, and which may give him a sense of existential foothold. To overcome this lack I introduced [...] the concept of “existential space”. “Existential space” is not a logico-mathematical term, but comprises the basic relationships between man and his environment.’⁸

The following chapter is an attempt to illustrate how Miłosz restores the sense of *dwelling* and ‘existential foothold’ within the world through his poetic treatment of space, the mission which Norberg-Schulz, continuator of Heidegger’s ideas and one of the leading voices in the discourse of the phenomenology of space, followed himself in his perception of the role of architecture. Miłosz turns our attention to the essence of *things*,⁹ to their reverberation¹⁰ and semantic potency. He seeks for *presence* within the world. He redefines human beings’ place within the world in relation to the natural environment and restores the conceptual division of space into the earth and the sky, with the sun as a natural ‘direction’ towards which a human being should be oriented, without detachment, however, from the very materiality of the earthly existence. Miłosz organizes space by anchoring it in the detail of the house and landscape of which the house, the manor-house, is an integral part. His poetic treatment of space abolishes the binary opposition of nature-culture and the dichotomy between the inside and the outside. His ‘world’, both in *Świat*, *poema naiwne* and in *Dolina Issy*, is a *place* of overlapping spatial organizations –

⁸ Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, p. 5.

⁹ *Thing* as defined by Heidegger in his essay ‘The Thing’ in *Poetry Language Thought* where the primary characteristic of a thing is gathering, through which a thing is ‘presencing’ and ‘standing forth’. Heidegger defines the nature of a thing against Plato’s and Aristotle’s philosophies: ‘That is why Plato, who conceives of the presence of what is present in terms of the outward appearance, had no more understanding of the nature of the thing than did Aristotle and all subsequent thinkers. Rather, Plato experienced (decisively, indeed, for the sequel) everything present as an object of making. Instead of “object” – as that which stands before, over, against, opposite us – we use the more precise expression “what stands forth”. In the full nature of what stands forth, a twofold standing prevails. First, standing forth has the sense of stemming from somewhere, whether this be a process of self-making or of being made by another. Secondly, standing forth has the sense of the made thing’s standing forth into the unconcealedness of what is already present.’ [Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. and introduction by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 168].

¹⁰ The notion of *reverberation* will be analysed later in the chapter. See the section: ‘The house – ontological space anchored in materiality. Sensual perception of space’.

geographical, cultural, traditional, metaphysical and religious – as originating from a particular form of perception of space and objects within space.

Świat, poema naiwne and Dolina Issy as Miłosz's maps. Background information

Świat and *Dolina Issy* belong to very different biographical contexts: *Świat* was written in occupied Warsaw in April 1943 and was incorporated within the volume *Ocalenie* (1945), whereas *Dolina Issy*, published in 1955, was written between autumn 1953 and June 1954 in France, in Bon by Lemman (Lake Geneva) and Brie-Comte-Robert near Paris.¹¹ After serving as a cultural attaché of the communist Poland, Czesław Miłosz had defected, and obtained political asylum in France.

In case of *Świat*, the binary relationship between the poetry of childhood idyll and the reality of war could be perceived in escapist terms,¹² with the poet's return to roots, ad fontes, to the Szetejnie manor and its surrounding landscape as a defence-mechanism and a shield against the horror of war. When the world collapses in all its dimensions – physical, ideological, and conceptual – the recourse to the nucleus of the space of childhood constitutes the only possible modus vivendi and a survival strategy. It also echoes with the universal symbolism of a *house* as a primary and primordial space of habitation, and a shelter, the private universe within which human anthropocosmic ties

¹¹ Agnieszka Kosińska, *Czesław Miłosz. Bibliografia druków zwartych* (Kraków-Warszawa: Krakowskie Towarzystwo Edukacyjne, 2009), p. 47.

¹² See the conversation between Renata Gorczyńska and Czesław Miłosz about *Świat*: 'R.G.: But isn't it, at the same time, a form of escape into a realm of hierarchy, order, safety, where a father holds the highest authority and protective power? C.M.: Naturally, it is a creation of an artificial world as a shield against the horror. [of war – my interpolation].' [quotation trans. by M.M.] See: 'R.G.: Ale czy nie jest to zarazem forma ucieczki do krainy hierarchii, ładu, bezpieczeństwa, gdzie ojciec jest najwyższym autorytetem i obrońcą? C.M.: Naturalnie, to jest stworzenie sztucznego świata jako ochrony przed tym horrorem.', in Miłosz, Gorczyńska, *Rozmowy. „Podróżny świata”*, p. 65.

are formulated.¹³ Andrzej Franaszek points out that *Świat* ‘must have astounded contemporary listeners. Hearing the gunfire and shouts of fear, they listened to the poetic pieces written in a regular eleven-syllable verse, consistently rhymed and drawing a picture deriding the hellish reality which surrounded them; the picture somewhat resembled little portrayals, remembered from childhood, hanging above the cot, of a Guardian Angel safeguarding children’s paths.’¹⁴ According to Franaszek, Miłosz presents ‘the world as it is being discovered through a child’s eyes and, at the same time, the world as it should be – given to a human being to dwell in. The world filled with sacred harmony, as if the poet is building an edifice of *sense* against the surrounding horror, an edifice of *being* against nothingness.’¹⁵ The possible influences on *Świat*¹⁶ include the poetry of the Far East (‘poezja wschodnia’),¹⁷ Traherne, to whom Miłosz refers in his conversations with Renata Gorczyńska,¹⁸ and, most of all, *Songs of Innocence* by William Blake. Miłosz himself characterized *Świat* as a metaphysical treatise with philosophical underpinnings of Thomism: ‘The “naive poems” [poema naiwne] I wrote [...] are really a metaphysical tract, an equivalent, in colors and shapes,

¹³ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), pp. 4-5.

¹⁴ Andrzej Franaszek, *Miłosz: Biografia* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2000), p. 348. See: ‘musiał budzić zdumienie ówczesnych słuchaczy. Mając w uszach odgłosy strzałów i krzyki strachu, słyszeli utwory napisane regularnym jedenastozgłoskowcem, konsekwentnie rymowane i ukazujące obraz urągający otaczającej ich piekielnej rzeczywistości, przypominający nieco zapamiętane z dzieciństwa, wieszane nad łóżeczkiem malunki, na których Anioł Stróż czuwa nad dziecięcymi drózkami’ [trans. by MM].

¹⁵ Franaszek, *Miłosz: Biografia*, p. 349 (emphasis added). See: ‘świat, odkrywany oczami dziecka i zarazem taki, jakim być powinien – dany człowiekowi na mieszkanie. Świat wypełniony sakralnym ładem, jakby poeta wznosił budowlę sensu na przekór otaczającemu go horrorowi, byt przeciwstawiał nicości’ [trans. by MM].

¹⁶ As enumerated by Franaszek, *Miłosz: Biografia*, p. 349. See also Czesław Miłosz, Renata Gorczyńska, *Rozmowy. „Podróżny świata”* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002), pp. 63-65.

¹⁷ Franaszek, *Miłosz: Biografia*, p. 349, as quoted after Miłosz from Czesław Miłosz, Aleksander Fiut, *Autoportret przekorny. Rozmowy* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2003), p. 59. See: ‘I read [...] *Fletnia chińska* by Staff. It was a model of poetry for me.’ [trans. by M.M.].

¹⁸ See Miłosz, Gorczyńska, *Podróżny świata*, pp. 63-64.

of the school blackboard on the Rue d'Assas where Father Lallemand drew his Thomistic circles.'¹⁹ Miłosz tells Renata Gorczyńska:

What *Świat* is about – it is a poem about what the world should be like. The piece was written in terrible circumstances. Warsaw of 1943 touched bottom. But an act of magic was sufficient to describe [reality] defiantly. Because the world is such that to say anything about it one would have to shout, not talk. That is why I decided, defiantly, to write about the world as it should be. It is a rather ironic act.²⁰

Świat is considered by critics to be a breakthrough in Miłosz's oeuvre: the poet moves away from avant-garde 'ideas' and, as Jan Błoński put it, 'In 1943 Miłosz is absolutely – and irrevocably – certain that the actual task of an artist (poet) is imitation, *mimesis*. In other words: poems are not born out of poems, and truth (the truth of poetry) is not a reflection of an individual *ego* or – simply – a recollection, or a dream of a poet. And because of the fact that he [Miłosz] grew stronger in his convictions, he reveals them rarely, cautiously and somewhat shyly.'²¹

There is a tension between the context in which *Świat*, *poema naiwne* was written and the work itself. This tension corresponds to the definition of irony, as put forward by Cleanth Brookes: irony as 'the *obvious* warping of a statement by the context';²² any kind of tension between an element and its context opening the field of ambiguity. The ironic

¹⁹ Franaszek, *Miłosz: Biografia*, p. 349 as quoted from Czesław Miłosz, *Rodzinną Europą*, p. 279. Here trans. from Czesław Miłosz, *Native Realm: A Search for Self-Definition*, trans. by Catherine S. Leach (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1981), p. 248.

²⁰ Miłosz, Gorczyńska, *Podróżny świata*, p. 64. See: 'Na czym polega *Świat* – to jest wiersz o tym, jaki świat powinien być. Utwór był napisany w okropnych okolicznościach. Warszawa 1943 to było dno. Ale wystarczyło tylko aktu magicznego, ażeby opisywać właśnie na przekór. Ponieważ świat jest taki, że właściwie powiedzieć o nim cokolwiek, to trzeba byłoby krzyczeć, a nie mówić. Więc właśnie na przekór postanowiłem napisać o świecie, jaki powinienem być. Jest to operacja raczej ironiczna' [trans. by MM].

²¹ Jan Błoński, *Miłosz jak świat* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 1998), p. 82. See: 'W roku 1943 Miłosz jest już zupełnie – i nieodwołalnie – pewien, że właściwym zdaniem artysty (poety) jest naśladowanie, *mimesis*. Inaczej mówiąc: wiersze nie rodzą się z wierszy, zaś prawda (prawda poezji), nie jest odbłaskiem jednostkowego *ego* czy też – po prostu – wspomnieniem, czy marzeniem poety. Ale właśnie dlatego, że umocnił się w swoich przekonaniach, ujawia je rzadko, ostrożnie i nieco wstydliwie' [trans. by MM].

Also, for a critical analysis of the concept of *mimesis* in Miłosz's work, see Aleksander Fiut, *Eternal Moment* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 6-36.

²² Cleanth Brookes, 'Irony as a Principle of Structure' (1971), in http://letras.cabaladada.org/letras/irony_principle_structure.pdf [accessed on 15 March 2012].

aspect of *Świat* was stressed by Jacek Łukasiewicz who, in his analysis of space in the collection, pointed to the significance of the neighbouring poems:²³ *Campo di Fiori* and the sequence *Głosy biednych ludzi* which constitute a powerful voice in confrontation with the tragedies of war.

Irony is an important constituent of Miłosz's poetic oeuvre and, according to Franaszek, it appears in Miłosz's work for the first time on a grand scale in *Świat*.²⁴ The irony of *Świat* intensifies the potency of the archetypal images constituting 'the world': the images of the home – the manor, and the landscape – which, as constructs, become an alternative space to the space of the reality which was shattered not only in its functional, geographical dimension, but, most of all, in its conceptual, ideological and metaphysical dimension. The mode of perception of the world was shaken throwing an individual into a position of physical, ontological, and metaphysical alienation. In this context *Świat* becomes a manifesto of universal values and paradigms which provide *certainty*, a fixed foothold, in the crumbling reality where all certainty is undermined. This 'world' does not exist in reality – but it becomes a reality for the poet.

The construction of the parallel world based on the poet's nostalgic retrospection not only has a palliative character but, primarily, constitutes an existential act of restoring the poet's place within the world – of restoring the sense of *dwelling*. The actual construction of 'świat' ['the world'] takes place through recourse to the ancestral myth, with the prominence of the father figure and the act of poetic re-building of the manor in its material form against a landscape which opens onto a metaphysical dimension. The poetic space of *Świat* comprises, then, multiple layers which permeate each other. The

²³ Jacek Łukasiewicz, 'Przestrzeń "świata naiwnego". O poemacie Czesława Miłosza *Świat*.' in *Poznanwanie Miłosza 2. Część pierwsza 1980 – 1998*, ed. by Aleksander Fiut (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2000), p. 129.

²⁴ Franaszek, *Miłosz: Biografia*, pp. 350-351.

materiality of objects in their three-dimensional form placed within a particular landscape *emanates* with ontological significance, and finally opens onto the metaphysical realm.

Dolina Issy – a poetic novel - was published in 1955. It was written in a different biographical and historical context than that of *Świat*, yet it treats Miłosz's personal myth of his homeland in a very similar way and to a similar purpose. The reasons behind writing *Dolina Issy* are stated by the poet: 'When I was writing *Dolina Issy*, I was undergoing a huge inner crisis, impasse. I could not write poems. It [writing *Dolina Issy*] was my treatment. [...] Having written the novel, I began to return to poetry gradually.'²⁵ And, at some other point Miłosz remarks: 'if a person goes through a very difficult period, is "thrown out of the orbit" to the extent that he has to start his life anew, then he reaches for his treasures, goes back to his childhood. [...] When I was writing *Dolina Issy* I wasn't wondering if the book would sell well. I was writing it just for myself. I had to.'²⁶ Miłosz points out that *Dolina Issy* is based on childhood memories, but the novel is not a childhood memoir: 'the action of the novel is something totally different. It has its symbolic structure'²⁷ – the poet stresses in his conversations with Gorczyńska. To the question about the symbolic structure of *Dolina Issy*, Miłosz replies: 'Let's leave this matter to the critics.'²⁸

Miłosz himself frequently drew parallels between *Świat* and *Dolina Issy*. He referred to both as products of 'walking defiantly' ('chodzenie na przekór'):

²⁵ Kosińska, *Miłosz. Bibliografia druków zwartych*, p. 47. As quoted after Miłosz, Gorczyńska, *Podróżny świata*, p. 132: 'Pisząc *Dolinę Issy*, byłem w bardzo dużym wewnętrznym kryzysie, w wielkim impasie. Wierszy nie mogłem pisać. To był mój zabieg kuracyjny. [...] Po jej napisaniu zacząłem stopniowo wracać do poezji'[trans. by MM].

²⁶ Miłosz, Gorczyńska, *Podróżny świata*, p. 126: 'jeżeli człowiek jest w bardzo trudnym okresie, tak kompletnie wyrzucony z orbity, że musi zaczynać życie od nowa, sięga wtedy do swoich skarbów, do swojego dzieciństwa. [...] Pisałem *Dolinę Issy* nie myśląc o tym, czy książka będzie się sprzedawała. Pisałem ją po prostu dla siebie. Musiałem'[trans. by MM].

²⁷ Miłosz, Gorczyńska, *Podróżny świata*, p. 124: 'akcja powieści to zupełnie co innego. On ma swoją symboliczną strukturę'[trans. by MM].

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 125.

writing that type of works, at the time was a peculiar walk of defiance ('chodzenie na przekór'). It happened that my whole writing was a defiant walk. In some sense, it was like sticking the tongue out, sometimes intentionally, sometimes less. Not in the sense of deriding, *Świat (poema naiwne)* is a similar type of operation as *Dolina Issy*. It is unfashionable writing. Because, ultimately, for the Warsaw poets, writing was a fusion of the avant-garde heritage and contemporary reality. A terrible combination, quite honestly. So here is an attempt of, as I said, calligraphical cleansing of the image of some red or black soot. What is *Dolina Issy*? It is also some kind of attempt written in Paris ['To także swojego rodzaju próba, napisana w Paryżu'] against the whole modern literature. I am not primitive. I could have written avant-garde books.²⁹

Elsewhere Miłosz points out:

Dolina Issy may be interpreted as a marginal note to my poetry, intimately connected with my poetry. It is certainly related to the works like *Świat*. Some pages are like an elaboration on the same topic, that is the world as it could be, as it should be.³⁰

The world as it could be, and should be. That is what *Świat* and *Dolina Issy* offer a reader. At the same time, it is not an abstract project that Miłosz undertakes. The aim of the project is to provide a sense of *dwelling*, orientation and identification for the human subject within the world and guide him/her out of Ulro.³¹ Miłosz aims at providing modern human being with a map – with a plan of a certain organization of space, or rather certain mode of perception of space, with the definition of a human position within it. He aims at providing a model of spatial imagination, according to his dictum: 'Man is above

²⁹ Miłosz, Gorczyńska, *Podróżny świata*, p. 66: 'pisanie tego typu utworów w ówczesnych warunkach było jakimś chodzeniem na przekór. Tak wypadło, że cała moja twórczość była chodzeniem na przekór. W pewnym sensie pokazywaniem języka, czasem świadomie, czasem mniej świadomie. Nie w sensie grania na nosie, wykpiwania. *Świat (poema naiwne)* jest tego rodzaju operacją jak *Dolina Issy*. To jest pisanie niemodne. Bo ostatecznie u poetów Warszawy było zbite w jedno: dziedzictwo awangardowe i ówczesna rzeczywistość. Dla mnie połączenie okropne, przyznam się szczerze. Więc tu jest próba kaligraficznego, jak powiedziałem, oczyszczania obrazu z jakichś czerwonych, czarnych sadz. Czymże jest *Dolina Issy*. To także swojego rodzaju próba, napisana w Paryżu przeciwko całej literaturze nowoczesnej. Nie jestem przecież prymitywny. Potrafiłbym pisać awangardowe książki' [trans. by MM].

³⁰ Miłosz, Gorczyńska, *Podróżny świata*, pp. 130 -131: '*Dolina Issy* może być interpretowana jako rzecz na marginesie mojej poezji, związana z nią intymnie. Na pewno ma związek z takimi utworami jak *Świat*. Niektóre stronic są troszkę rozwinięciem tego samego tematu, to znaczy świata, jaki mógłby być, jaki powinien być' [trans. by MM].

³¹ According to the definition provided by Christian Norberg-Schulz: 'When man dwells, he is simultaneously located in space and exposed to a certain environmental character. The two psychological functions involved may be called "orientation" and "identification". To gain an existential foothold man has to be able to *orientate* himself; he has to know *where* he is. But he also has to *identify* himself with the environment, that is, he has to know *how* he is a certain place' (*Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, p. 19).

all an organizer of space, both internal and external, and this in fact is what is meant by imagination.³²

Map-making is an exercise of the imagination to which Miłosz himself often refers, both in his work and his interviews.³³ He points out that an important role in the formation of his spatial imagination was played, inter alia, by the reading and making of maps, accompanied by the process of mythologization of space.³⁴ ‘My pastimes, when I was very young’, says Miłosz, ‘were based mostly on making maps of ideal countries. Those countries had only forests, there were no agricultural fields there, and boats were the means of communication by which only those entitled could move along rivers and canals. Those were countries – reserves where one led a happy life in contact with nature.’³⁵ The poet’s childhood fascination with maps is projected on the descriptions of Tomasz’s pastimes in *Dolina Issy*: ‘Thomas became fascinated by maps – by the way the finger went down, and under it were born forests, land tracts, roads, villages, and vast multitudes of people in motion, each distinct, each somehow distinguishable from the other; but how, the moment it was lifted – *poof!* [...] The more we devote ourselves to that realm of contours, zones, and lines, the greater our enthrallment.’³⁶ Wisława Szymborska, in her poem ‘Mapa’, wrote about the subject from a similar viewpoint:

³² Czesław Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, trans. by Louis Iribarne (New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous, 1985), p. 245. See: ‘Człowiek jest organizatorem przestrzeni, zarówno wewnętrznej jak zewnętrznej, I to właśnie nazywamy wyobraźnią.’ (Czesław Miłosz, *Ziemia Ulro* (Paryż: Instytut Literacki, 1977), p. 189).

³³ For a study of Miłosz’s poetic maps, see Wojciech Karpiński, ‘Mapy Czesława Miłosza’ in *Poznawanie Miłosza 2. Część pierwsza 1980 – 1998*, ed. by Aleksander Fiut (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2000), pp. 85-104.

³⁴ Czesław Miłosz, Aleksander Fiut, *Autoportret przekorny. Rozmowy* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2003), p. 338.

³⁵ *ibid.*, *Autoportret przekorny*, p. 341.

³⁶ Czesław Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, trans. by Louis Iribarne (London: Penguin 2001), p. 280. See Czesław Miłosz, *Dolina Issy* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2009), p. 191:

‘myślał o mapach w ogóle, o tym, że przyciska się palcem jakiś punkt i tam, pod palcem są lasy, pola, drogi, porusza się mnóstwo ludzi, z których każdy szczególny, różny w czymś od innych, podnosi się palec i nie ma nic. [...] Im więcej poświęca się uwagi tej przestrzeni z jej zarysami lądów, kółkami i liniami, tym bardziej nas ona pociąga’.

Wszystko tu małe, dostępne i bliskie.
 Mogę końcem paznokcia przyciskać wulkany,
 bieguny głaskać bez grubych rękawic,
 mogę jednym spojrzeniem
 ogarnąć każdą pustynię
 razem z obecną tuż tuż obok rzeką.

and concludes:

Lubię mapy, bo kłamią.
 Bo nie dają dostępu napastliwej prawdzie.
 Bo wielkodusznie, z pocziwym humorem
 rozpościerają mi na stole świat
 nie z tego świata.³⁷

Świat and *Dolina Issy* provide a picture of alternative worlds which belie reality, in that those worlds do not exist. Although based on personal recollection, their image is filtered through the poetic imagination whose vision points to ‘what should be’. The map of those worlds, defining human position within them and the hierarchy of beings, aspires to a certain ideal – to a certain model which functioned in the collective unconscious before the Scientific Revolution: the model of spherical space, where Heaven- the sky, and Hell – the underworld, provided points of reference against which human beings defined their position within the world. Miłosz wrote in his poem *Do Józefa Szadzika* (September 1980):

Jakże tak można, pośrodku rozmowy
 Zniknąć i nawet nie powiedzieć: ‘wróć’,
 I dom od razu mieć wieloechowy,
 Skąd żadnej wieści, tylko szum zakłóceń?

Tak szczerze to nam obce i Piekło, i Niebo
 I Pola Elizejskie, i Nirwana.
 A nie ma przewodnika dostojnego
 I mapa lądów nie narysowana.³⁸

³⁷ ‘Mapa’ is the last poem finished by Wisława Szymborska before her death on 1 February 2012. It was first published by *Tygodnik Powszechny*, no. 7(3266), on the 12 February 2012 in the issue mostly devoted to the poetess. It has not been translated into English. Loose translation [by M.M] is as follows: ‘Everything is small here, accessible and near/ I can press volcanoes with the tip of my fingernail/ Stroke the poles without thick gloves/ One glance can engulf every desert /Together with a river present close-by’. ‘I like maps because they lie/ Because they prevent access of the intruding truth/ Because generously and with kind humour/ They spread on my table a world/ Not from this world’.

³⁸ Also the second stanza of the poem quoted by Wojciech Karpiński as an epigraph to his essay ‘Mapy Czesława Miłosza’ in *Poznanie Miłosza 2. Część pierwsza 1980 – 1998*, ed. by Aleksander Fiut

The poem encapsulates the essence of Miłosz's philosophy of space which he theorized in his *Land of Ulro*: the hierarchical space which allows for the metaphysical points of reference. It is significant that the poet builds the philosophical vision of space here as divided into Heaven, Earth and the Underworld (here Hell) preceding it with the metaphor of a *house*. The map out of Ulro begins with the concept of a *house*. And it is from the topos of the house that an attempt at presenting Miłosz's philosophy of space will proceed in the following chapter.

The house – ontological space and materiality. Sensual perception of space

As a symbol in the Western culture, the house, just like a chest, a wall or an enclosed garden, has been considered the feminine aspect of the universe.³⁹ J.E. Cirlot in his *Dictionary of Symbols* points out:

Another symbolic association is that which equates the house (and the above, related forms [e.g. a chest, wall, enclosed garden]) with the repository of all wisdom, that is, tradition itself. In architectural symbolism, on the other hand, the house carries not only an overall symbolism but also particular associations attached to each of its component parts. Nevertheless, the house as a home arouses strong, spontaneous associations with the human body and human thought (or life, in other words), as has been confirmed empirically by psychoanalysts.⁴⁰

(Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2000), p. 85. Certain parts of the poem translated by Bogdan Czaykowski in his essay 'The Idea of Reality in the Poetry of Czesław Miłosz' in *Between Anxiety and Hope. The Poetry and Writing of Czesław Miłosz*, ed. by Edward Możejko (Edmonton, Alberta; Canada: The University of Alberta Press, 1988), pp. 109-110. Working translation of the given extract [trans. by M.M.]: 'How can one, in the middle of a conversation /Disappear and not even say "I will be back" /And have the house multi-echoing/Wherefrom no news comes, only hum of disruptions?// In truth, Hell and Heaven are foreign to us/ And the Elysian Fields, and Nirvana./ And there is no worthy guide/ And the map of lands has not been drawn'.

³⁹ J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, trans. by Jack Sage (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2001), p. 153.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 153.

Elaborating on the last point, Cirlot refers to the ideas of Ania Teillard who explains:

in dreams, we employ the image of the house as a representation of the different layers of the psyche. The outside of the house signifies the outward appearance of Man: his personality or his mask. The various floors are related to the vertical and spatial symbols. The roof and upper floor correspond to the head and the mind, as well as to the conscious exercise of self-control. Similarly, the basement corresponds to the unconscious and the instincts (just as sewers do, in symbols pertaining to the city). The kitchen, since this is where foodstuff is transformed, sometimes signifies the place or the moment of psychic transmutation in the alchemical sense. The intercommunicating rooms speak for themselves. The stairs are the link between the various planes of the psyche, but their particular significance depends upon whether they are seen as ascending or descending.

Finally, there is, as we have said, the association of the house with the human body, especially regarding its openings, as was well understood by Artemidorus Daldianus.⁴¹

The aforementioned are psychoanalytical explanations of the conceptual symbol of the house. On a more direct level, the house denotes, in ontological terms, a site of human dwelling within the world and as such it is used by Miłosz in *Świat*, *poema naiwne* and in *Dolina Issy* on both the particular-personalized, and the universal plane. The representation and significance of the manor and its surroundings encapsulates, then, both a unique poetic experience and an archetypal paradigm, inscribing the symbol of the house within a set of universals of ontological value; in architectural terms, the manor becomes a proper subject of analysis within the discourse of the phenomenology of space. Both *Świat* and *Dolina Issy* provide an illustration of the functioning of the topos of the house in the human unconscious which tallies with Gaston Bachelard's argument that 'there exists for each one of us an oneiric house, a house of dream-memory, that is lost in the shadow of a beyond of the real past'.⁴² This house is engraved within the human mind and constitutes a model of human dwelling in any future contexts:

An entire past comes to dwell in a new house. The old saying: 'We bring our *lares* with us' has many variations. And the daydream deepens to the point where an immemorial domain opens up for the dreamer of a home beyond man's earliest memory. [...] And after we are in the new house,

⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 153 -154.

⁴² Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), p. 15.

when memories of other places we have lived in come back to use, we travel to the land of Motionless Childhood, motionless the way all Immemorial things are. We live fixations, fixations of happiness. We comfort ourselves by reliving memories of protection – because in the house there takes place the synthesis of the ‘immemorial and recollected’⁴³ and ‘the house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind. [...] In the life of a man, the house thrusts aside contingencies, its councils of continuity are unceasing. Without it, man would be a dispersed being. [...] It [the house] is the human being’s first world. Before he is ‘cast into the world,’ [...] man is laid in the cradle of the house.’⁴⁴

Elsewhere Bachelard remarks: ‘over and beyond our memories, the house we were born in is physically inscribed in us. It is a group of organic habits. [...] In short, the house we were born in has engraved within us the hierarchy of the various functions of inhabiting. We are the diagram of the functions of inhabiting that particular house, and all the other houses are but variations on a fundamental theme.’⁴⁵

Bachelard’s phenomenology of architecture applied to the notion of the house illuminates the ontological concept of space and *dwelling* from a psychoanalytical perspective. The importance of the ontological concept of space for interpreting Miłosz’s oeuvre, yet in conjunction with Heidegger’s thought, was stressed by the critic Barbara Malinowska. Using the concept of space as locality, Malinowska provides a Heideggerian reading of the poems, particularly ‘in the light of the analysis of the ontological transcendence [...] rendered via multivocal, “composite persona”’,⁴⁶ and, on the example of selected poems, describes ‘how in each case the poems evolve their spatial perspectives or gradually focus on a human being’.⁴⁷ According to Malinowska, ‘it seems of value to consider Heideggerian “ontological transcendence” as a model to analyze the multiple aspects of contemporary poetry, both prose and non-punctuational poetry, in which the multi-temporality and multi-spatiality as well as the “composite persona” as a

⁴³ *ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

⁴⁶ Barbara Malinowska, *Dynamics of Being, Space, and Time in the Poetry of Czesław Miłosz and John Ashbery* (New York; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000), p. 67.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 70.

conglomerate of subjective agents defy the model of traditional representational art reflecting a linear concept of reality.⁴⁸ Malinowska's comparative study of the poetry of Czesław Miłosz and John Ashberry undoubtedly casts a different light on Miłosz's work, so carefully shielded by the poet and most of his critics against postmodern influences.

In her 'Space, Location and Locality as Poetic Context(s)', Malinowska remarks, with reference to Miłosz's and Ashberry's poetry, that 'As the persona in the poems converges into the plural subject, so the defining contexts reflect a variety of spatial ramifications; space is rendered as a local setting as well as a multiple localities/horizons defining their inhabitants – humans.' She further makes an analysis of the spatial dimension of the vision of reality in Miłosz's and Ashberry's poems, which vision of reality 'moves within the forms of time and space with a poetic multidimensionality.'⁴⁹ Malinowska, juxtaposing various critical readings, points to the manifold significations of the concept of space 'as a setting in the poems': 'It can denote 1) an ideal place of Arcadian quality, "the world that should be" [...], "in defiance of time"; 2) microcosm symbolic of macrocosm [...], 3) symbolic "universal space" [...]; 4) the waste land whose values need to be restored'.⁵⁰ In all those contexts, Heideggerian 'ontological transcendence' serves as a model for the analysis of spatial and temporal aspects of Miłosz's and Ashberry's poetry.

Whatever interpretation of the selected poems Malinowska offers, her pointing to the ontological dimension of space in Miłosz's poetry is of great significance. Malinowska shows the metaphorical rendition and realization of Heideggerian ideas in Miłosz's poetry. In the present chapter it will be shown, however, that this metaphoricity, which expands further onto the level of religious thought, is strongly grounded in the very

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 159.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 67.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 70.

corporeality of the material world and echoes with it through literal referentiality. In this sense the concept of a *dwelling* illustrated in *Świat, poema naiwne* and in *Dolina Issy* is literally represented by the very act of *building* of the alternative world by the poet-narrator-architect for whom bringing together various parts of the manor and its surroundings constitutes an ontological act rooted in the very functional act of construction. The materiality of the parts of the manor and particular objects does not only function, in its poetic rendering, as an indexical sign of ontological transcendence. The materiality of the world which is being constructed functions alongside and parallel to the ontological plane towards which it points, and goes further beyond it towards the realm of religion.

In both *Świat* and *Dolina Issy* the manor is presented with attention to detail: it is not only a building, but a certain spatial organization of objects, nooks and corners which carry their own history and create the aura of the place in its totality. On the realistic plane, *Świat* constitutes a journey through architectural elements of the manor and its surroundings – the road, gate, porch, dining room, stairs, library, garden, and the expanse of land around the manor. In *Dolina Issy* the manor, endowed with symbolic significance of its elements, is also presented in a factual way: ‘In winter, only the wing facing the orchard was occupied; that is, the part looking out across the angle formed by the old manor and the annex. First came the weaving room (where Pakenas worked), then nothing, then a storage room for wool and seed, the Grandmother Dilbin’s room, then Thomas’s, followed by Misia’s little cubbyhole and, at the far end, by Grandfather’s room.’⁵¹ On both sides of the porch, there are flower beds: ‘He [Tomasz] helped his

⁵¹ Czesław Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, trans. by Louis Iribarne (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 76. See: ‘Zamieszkiwano w zimie tylko tę część, która miała okna na sad, to jest do wewnątrz kąta tworzonego przez stary dwór i dobudowę. Najpierw tkalnia (tam gdzie pracował Pakienas), później nic, skład na wełnę i nasiona, dalej pokój babki Dilbinowej, za nim ten, w którym sypiał Tomasz. Następnie dziupla babci Misi i już w samym rogu, dziadek.’ (Czesław Miłosz, *Dolina Issy* (Paryż: Instytut Literacki, 1980), p. 55).

grandfather tend the flower beds along the wall to the right and left of the porch [...]. Terraced steps, reinforced with stakes, led to the footbridge through a small wicket gate – why the gate was there was anyone’s guess – in a fence invisible under heaps of hops and morning glory.’⁵² The house both in *Świat* and in *Dolina Issy* is represented, first of all, as a material entity located in a particular natural landscape. The symbolic ‘layers’ which comprise its space, and which will be analyzed later in the chapter, are strongly anchored within the very materiality of the building and its objects. This materiality, captured through the poet’s search for the *thinghood* of things, is mediated through the sensual perception of space by a child-narrator, whose perspective interplays at times, however, with the adult narrative voice.

As Aleksander Fiut points out, ‘The origin of Miłosz’s poetry is his enchantment with the beauty of being and with its most fundamental premise: faith in the existence of the outside world. This faith is irrespective of even the most subtle or refined philosophical speculations or magic play of fantasy. For Miłosz, the world exists simply because our five senses confirm it.’⁵³ Further, Fiut refers to the issue of the perception of the materiality of objects in Miłosz’s work and to what Stanisław Barańczak called ‘the veil of senses’ – that is ‘the intangibility of the material object’.⁵⁴ According to Fiut, ‘The veil of the senses appears in Miłosz’s poetry not as a questioning of the truth of their data but rather as an indication of their natural limitations. Thus, a view from the perspective of an insect or bird changes the scale and proportion, but does not disturb the physical

⁵² Miłosz, *The Issay Valley*, trans. by Louis Iribarne, p. 120. See: ‘Dziadkowi pomagał w uprawie grządek pod ścianą, z obu stron ganku. [...] Do kładki schodziło się po stopniach z darni umocnionej kołeczkami. Wiodła tam furka (nikt nie odgadnie po co tam była) w drewnianym płocie niewidocznym pod zwalami chmielu i powoi.’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 83).

⁵³ Aleksander Fiut, *The Eternal Moment. The Poetry of Czesław Miłosz* trans. by Theodosia S. Robertson (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1990), p. 6.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 19.

laws of reality. Only in the hell of Swedenborg do phenomena lose their real-life texture (“On the Other Side”).⁵⁵

Miłosz’s eye penetrates the very matter of reality. He exhausts poetic means to get to the core of *things*, although the task might be and actually is considered unattainable. Miłosz aims at saving objects from ‘as-if-ness’⁵⁶ because it is the texture of things that makes a human being certain of *belonging* to the world. As he writes in ‘On the Other Side’:

Falling, I caught the curtain
Its velvet was the last thing I could feel on earth
As I slid to the floor, howling: aah! aaah!⁵⁷

Both in *Świat* and in *Dolina Issy*, the experience of space through the senses corresponds to a child’s ‘way of seeing’, which in the early stages of development is of a kinesthetic character. Tomasz’s tactile imagination has no bounds,⁵⁸ just to give an example of the description of Tomasz’s/narrator’s view of Babcia Misia while she is asleep:

A foot, delighting in itself, in the very gift of touch, feels the soft quilt and lifts it. A hand draws the fluffy material up to the sleeper’s chin. [...] Still time to sleep, or rather to linger on the border,

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 19.

⁵⁶ See the poem ‘On the Other Side’, Czesław Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems 1931 – 2001* (London: Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 2001), p. 200. ‘They played as-if-cards, I smelled as-if-cabbage,/There was as-if-vodka, as-if-dirt, as-if-time./ I said: “See here...”, but they shrugged their shoulders,/ Or averted their eyes. This land knew nothing of surprise’.

⁵⁷ Miłosz, ‘On the Other Side’ in *New and Collected Poems 1931 – 2001*, p. 200. See: ‘Padając, chwyciłem się zasłony/ i jej aksamit w ręku był ostatnią rzeczą na ziemi,/ kiedy obsuwałem się, rycząc: aaa aa.’ (Czesław Miłosz, ‘Po drugiej stronie’ in Czesław Miłosz, *Wiersze wszystkie* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2011), p.530.) Also referred to by Aleksander Fiut in *The Eternal Moment*, p.19.

⁵⁸ Donna J. Peuquet, in her *Representations of Space and Time*, writes about ‘acquiring world knowledge through direct experience’, among others – through the sense of touch: ‘Nevertheless, the sense of touch has several unique characteristics. First, the haptic “organ” is not isolated locationally in the body. [...] Perhaps a more important difference in a geographic context is that haptic sensation is restricted to objects on a personal scale – things that can be grasped or traversed. Haptic sensation is also limited to what is detected at any single moment. [...] Because the sense of touch is more spatially restricted, it has an obvious disadvantage in providing direct experiential information about geographic-scale space.’ (Donna J. Peuquet, *Representations of Space and Time* (London: Guilford Press, 2002), p. 105. Miłosz captures haptic experiences and perpetuates them. Sense of touch becomes a medium through which materiality of space is defined in the interaction between objects and a human subject.

beyond the reach of that which can be formulated in words and thoughts, in a world as yet undifferentiated into blankets, earth, people, stars, leaving only this spaceless realm – and awe.

The experience of those mornings had taught Misia the relativity of names given to objects, the relativity of all things human.⁵⁹

Elsewhere, with reference to Tomasz's own experience: 'Touch was also a kind of ecstasy – the feel of naked feet racing over smooth boards, onto the cool of a corridor's tiled floor, over a garden path's circular flagstones still wet with dew.'⁶⁰

Sensual perception determines the exploration and 'interpretation' of space which depends on the human experience. In *Dolina Issy*, the dining room is presented in terms of Tomasz's experience and perception: it is the experience that *creates* the place and is of primary importance for its characterization: 'In the dining room he was reluctant to approach the oilcloth sofa – less because of the portrait of a man clad in armor with purple trim, and so stern of gaze, than of the two horribly twisted ceramic faces standing on the mantel.'⁶¹ The 'drawing room' is marked by a conspicuous absence pervading its space: 'He [Tomasz] never ventured into the part of the house referred to as the "salon", and even as a grown boy he felt ill at ease there. Just off the hallway, the "salon" was always empty, the parquet floor and the furniture creaked even in the silence, and somehow the room always bespoke a human presence.'⁶² Tomasz's experience of the pantry (spizarnia), represented as more objective than that of the dining room and 'salon',

⁵⁹ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 253. See: 'Noga dotyka miękkości koca, podwija go, lubując się w sobie i w darze dotyku. Ręka podciąga puszystą materię pod brodę. [...] Spać jeszcze, albo raczej istnieć na granicy snu. Wewnętrznego punktu w nas nic wtedy nie dosięga takie jak ujmują to myśli i słowa, pomiędzy kocem, ziemią, ludźmi, gwiazdami znika różnica, zostaje tylko jedno, jedno, które nawet nie jest przestrzenią – i podziw. Wsparta na doświadczeniu swoich poranków babcia Misia rozumiała względność nazw nadawanych przedmiotom i względność wszelkich ludzkich spraw' (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 173).

⁶⁰ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 19. See: 'Szczęśliwość to także dotyk – bosymi stopami Tomasz przebiegał od gładkości desek podłogi, do chłodu kamiennej posadzki korytarza i do okrągłości bruku na ścieżce, gdzie obsychała rosa.' (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, pp. 17-18).

⁶¹ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p.10. See: 'W Sali jadalnej bał się zbliżyć do ceratowej kanapy – mniej z powodu portretu mężczyzny w zbroi, z rąbkiem purpurowej szaty, patrzącego surowo, bardziej z powodu dwóch okropnie wykrzywionych twarzy z gliny na półce.' (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 12).

⁶² Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 10. See: 'W część, na którą mówiło się „salon” nigdy się nie zapuszczał i, będąc nawet dużym już chłopcem, czuł się tam nieswojo. „Salon” za sienią był zawsze pusty, parkiety i meble trzaskały same w ciszy i jakoś wiadomo było, że tam przebywa czyjaś obecność.' (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 12).

displays before a reader an array of smells, tastes, and colours. The synesthetic description conveys some exotic aura of spices, whereas old idiosyncratic objects create a peculiar poetic museum whose elements are linked within the space of the house by some kind of archaic ‘transcendental geometry’⁶³ which resounds with the spirit of history and tradition:

But the larder was the place he liked most to visit, which happened rarely. His grandmother’s hand would turn the key in a door painted bright red and release a rush of odors: the smell of smoked sausage and hams hanging from the rafters, mingled with others emanating from the little drawers stack along the walls. Sometimes his grandmother pulled out the drawers and let him sniff their contents. ‘This is cinnamon’, she would say, ‘this is coffee and these are cloves.’ Higher up, in a place where only grownups could reach, shimmered little dark-gold pots that aroused one’s desire, mortars, an almond-grinding machine, and a mouse trap – a tin box big enough for a mouse to climb onto by crossing a little bridge notched with stairs; when it reached the bacon, a trapdoor opened and sent it plummeting into the water. The pantry had a grated opening, and the room was always cool and shady.⁶⁴

In a similar way, in the poem ‘Schody’ from *Świat*, the highly subjective sensual experience by a child of a particular physical space actually creates this space. Synesthetic description of the stairs points to their colour, smell and sound; a child’s voice in free indirect speech presents, in the first stanza, the seriousness of the endeavour of climbing the stairs which is dissected into minute details. Through the child’s eyes a reader can see a ‘live’ boar: the head hung on the wall is animated, a menacing aura around it prevails. The dynamism of the image is enhanced through the play of light and shadow: ‘the light dissolves into vibrating dust’,⁶⁵ whereas the boar’s head is ‘in shadow’.

⁶³ John R. Stilgoe, ‘Foreword to the 1994 Edition’ of *Poetics of Space* by Gaston Bachelard (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), p. vii.

⁶⁴ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 10. See: ‘Najbardziej pragnął znaleźć się w spizarni, co zdarzało się rzadko. Wtedy ręka babki przekręcała klucz w drzwiach pomalowanych na czerwono i buchał zapach. Najpierw zapach wędzonych kielbas i szynki, które wisiały pod belkami pułapu, ale mieszała się z nimi inna woń, z szufladek, wznoszących się jedna na drugą wzdłuż ścian. Babka wyciągała szufladki i pozwalała wachać, objaśniając: „to cynamon, to kawa, to goździki”. Wyżej, tam, gdzie tylko dorośli mogli sięgnąć, błyszczały garnuszki ciemno-złotego koloru, które budziły pożądanie, moździerz i nawet maszynka do mielenia migdałów, a także pastka na myszy: pudełko z blachy, na które mysz mogła wbiec po mostku, powycinanym w schodki, a kiedy sięgała po słoninę, otwierała się zapadnia i wpadała w wodę. Małe okno spizarni miało kraty i prócz zapachu był tu chłód i cień.’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 12).

⁶⁵ ‘A światło w drżących rozplywa się kurzach’.

The space is enlarged: the perspective of the ceiling and the stairway of the vault is introduced while, at the same time, there takes place molecularization of space – capturing its minute details – and of the child’s experience of the space of stairs. This space is alive and boundless. Traversing it is an act of utmost seriousness. In the final stanza, mother appears with a flickering light. As she descends downstairs a battle is waged between shadows: shadow of the mother and that of the beast. A parallel space – the parallel reality of fighting shadows is delineated: a reality of epic character. Both realities possess the same status of the *real* – both spaces overlap, coexist and permeate each other. Through this space the mother steps downstairs with a flickering light. The movement *down* with the light is of symbolic significance, yet it is accompanied by the movement *up* of her shadow. Two parallel spaces – two different totalities governed by their own laws – are once again marked, neither of which is privileged, both possessing the same status of the *real*.

The intensity of sensual imagery in *Świat* and *Dolina Issy* corresponds to what Miłosz will refer to, in his *Szukanie ojczyzny*, as capturing the detail of land, its essence through sensuality, sensual perception. As he wrote in his essay ‘On Exile’ (‘O wygnaniu’): ‘And still one cannot *not* look back; because out there, in the land of your ancestors, of your language, your family, there was left a treasure more precious than all wealth measured by money: colours, shapes, intonations, details of architecture, everything that moulds us in childhood.’⁶⁶ *Świat* and *Dolina Issy* constitute such a picture of the revived experience of the poet’s childhood space through its colours, shapes, intonations, architectural details.

⁶⁶ Czesław Miłosz, *Szukanie ojczyzny* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2001), p. 210. See: ‘A jednak nie można nie oglądać się za siebie, bo tam, w kraju twoich przodków, twego języka, twojej rodziny, został skarb cenniejszy niż wszelkie bogactwa mierzone pieniądzem, a są nim barwy, kształty, intonacje, szczególnie architektury, wszystko, co urabia nas w dzieciństwie’ [trans. by MM].

In *Świat* the view of the manor is introduced from the perspective of the movement alongside a 'road' together with children coming back from school. The road leads to a gate. The poem 'Furtka' is a picture of a gate of clearly delineated contours (white and sharp pickets painted white at the top), saturated with colour, marked with human touch, immersed in lush vegetation. Sensual perception here defies temporal restrictions: the first stanza of the poem begins with a future perspective ('Later dense hops will cover it completely')⁶⁷ only to return to the present ('As for now, it has the color/ That lily pads have in very deep water').⁶⁸ The temporal shifts produce an effect of time-lapse photography in reverse form: the future appearance of the gate is pre-empted, and the image fluctuates to the 'here and now' with an extended description of the idiosyncratic, newly defined colour of the gate. Touch, colour and light dominate the imagery of the poem which abounds in vital energy. Pathetic fallacy is applied to the imagery of vegetation: 'Nettles *like* to steal underneath the handle.'⁶⁹ At the same time the boundaries between the natural and man-made elements are blurred: nature adopts functions ascribed to man-made objects and vice versa: jasmine turns into a tiny lantern, the human touch marking the handle is accompanied by a nettle stealing up from below, sharp pickets provide a perch for birds. The boundaries between the functioning of the human-made world of artifacts and nature fluctuate; perfect harmony prevails, which, again, is reflected in the form of the poem written in cross-rhymed quatrains of eleven-syllable lines each.

'Furtka' is one of the exemplary poems of the cycle, in which Miłosz, resorting to the very materiality of space, seeks to arrive at the essence of a *thing* as defined in Heideggerian terms. Norberg-Schulz stressed the importance of 'thing' in relation to the

⁶⁷ 'Potem ją całą chmiel gęsty owinie'.

⁶⁸ 'Ale tymczasem jest tego koloru,/ Co liście lilii wodnych na głębinie'.

⁶⁹ 'Pod kłamką *lubi* skradać się pokrzywa' (emphasis added).

concept of ‘gathering’ – with both concepts in use to define architecture as ‘concretization of existential space.’⁷⁰ As he argues: ‘the man-made environments comprise artifacts or “things”, which may serve as internal foci, and emphasize the gathering function of the settlement. In Heidegger’s words: “The thing things world”, where “thinging” is used in the original sense of “gathering”, and further: “Only what conjoins itself out of world becomes a thing.”⁷¹ It is through the attributes of matter and the minute details of objects that Miłosz defines space. He does it through the rediscovery of the thinghood of things – of objects – and of the very essence of matter which ‘gathers’ the world and points beyond itself. It is significant also that the attributes of matter do not always have material form: matter emanates, reverberates and objects are characterized by their *allusionality* – that is they point to various spatial organizations of physical, ontological, cultural, metaphysical or religious character.

The notion of the reverberation of objects, as formulated by Eugene Minkowski, refers to ‘an auditive’ metaphor – ‘in sound both time and space are epitomized’.⁷² Yet, this metaphor can be extended to the sensual perception in general: material objects emanate with non-material substance of various forms. In *Świat* and *Dolina Issy*, all the elements of the house become enlivened through the act of the poet’s retrospection, but they also seem to innately reverberate with their own being per se, their *élan vital* which endows the significance of *being* upon them – they *are* and their being is actualized through human experience of them. They, to use Minkowski’s notion, *reverberate* with their *being*. As Minkowski writes

If, having fixed the original form in our mind’s eye, we ask ourselves how that form comes alive and fills with life, we discover a new dynamic and vital category, a new property of the universe: reverberation (*retentir*). It is as though a well-spring existed in a sealed vase and its waves,

⁷⁰ Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, p. 5.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 10.

⁷² On Minkowski’s theory see Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. xvi.

repeatedly echoing against the sides of this vase, filled it with their sonority. Or again, it is as though the sound of a hunting horn, reverberating everywhere through its echo, made the tiniest leaf, the tiniest wisp of moss shudder in a common movement and transformed the whole forest, filling it to its limits, into a vibrating, sonorous world....What is secondary in these images, or, in other terms, what makes these images only images for us, are the sonorous well-spring, the hunting-horn, the sealed vase, the echo, the reflection of sonorous waves against the sides – in a word, all that belongs to the material and palpable world.

Suppose these elements were missing: would really nothing living subsist? For my part, I believe that this is precisely where we should see the world come alive and, independent of any instrument, of any physical properties, fill up with penetrating deep waves which, although not sonorous in the sensory meaning of the word, are not, for this reason, less harmonious, resonant, melodic and capable of determining the whole tonality of life. And this life itself will reverberate to the most profound depths of its being, through contact with these waves, which are at once sonorous and silent...[...] It is not a material object which fills another by espousing the form that the other imposes. No, it is the dynamism of the sonorous life itself which by engulfing and appropriating everything it finds in its path, fill the slice of space, or better, the slice of the world that it assigns itself by its movement, making it reverberate, breathing into it its own life.⁷³

Gaston Bachelard comments upon Minkowski's theory of reverberation:

Very often, then, it is in the opposite of causality, that is, in *reverberation*, which has been so subtly analyzed by Minkowski, that I think we find the real measure of the being of a poetic image. In this reverberation, the poetic image will have a sonority of being. The poet speaks on the threshold of being. Therefore, in order to determine the being of an image, we shall have to experience its reverberation in the manner of Minkowski's phenomenology.⁷⁴

As multiple examples of the analysed poems of *Świat* and parts of *Dolina Issy* in the current chapter will show, reverberation of objects is connected with what I called *allusionality*. The objects point *beyond* themselves towards different spatial organizations: the realm of culture, tradition, metaphysics and religion. They are ontologically active⁷⁵ – and constitute *nests* of human existential footholds. Through the recourse to the *thinghood* of things, Miłosz makes space *meaningful*. And as Norberg-Schulz points out 'When the environment is meaningful man feels "at home"'.⁷⁶ Without

⁷³ Eugene Minkowski, *Vers une Cosmologie*, as quoted by Gaston Bachelard in Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. xvi.

⁷⁴ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. xvi.

⁷⁵ The household objects will be evoked by the poet in his confrontations with different cultures. As he writes about his experience of Mrs. Helen Naef's house by Lake Geneva: 'It all began, though, in the attic. There I discovered an old chest painted green with red flowers and a similarly painted canopy bed, which had served generations of Swiss peasants. [...] The fragrance of that attic was familiar, as if it came from the corners of my childhood, but the country where I was born was far away' (Czesław Miłosz, *Native Realm: A Search for Self-Definition*, trans. by Catherine S. Leach (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1981), pp. 1-2).

⁷⁶ Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, p. 24.

identification with *things* the human being experiences alienation. As Norberg-Schulz writes:

Alienation is in our opinion first of all due to man's loss of identification with the natural and man-made things which constitute his environment. This loss also hinders the process of gathering, and is therefore at the root of our actual 'loss of place'. Only if man regains his ability of identification and gathering, we may stop this destructive development. The first step to take is to arrive at a full understanding of the *objects* of identification and gathering, that is, an understanding of the concept of *thing*.⁷⁷

The journey through the house in *Świat* leads through the dining room. The interior of the place is filled with a magic aura of objects pulsating with vital energy. The first stanza of 'Jadalnia' of five lines, opens in an atmosphere of somberness: 'low windows with brown shades',⁷⁸ the Danzig clock persistently 'keeps silent'.⁷⁹ The silence of the clock is intense – it can be heard. Moreover it is a Danzig clock: the denominative adjective pointing to the origin and style of the clock introduces a different spatial perspective within the room – it broadens it beyond the confines of the four walls. The space of the dining room is vibrant: it reverberates with the 'smiling devils' and 'gleaming paunches' of a copper pan. It is another portrayal of Malinowski's idea of reverberation – though extended beyond sound onto sensual perception in general – as already discussed.

Miłosz's capturing the thinghood of things in a poetic way points to a certain 'methodology of viewing' and perceiving objects, defining their matter and form. The way he captures the thinghood of things by fathoming their sensually perceptible manifestations tallies with Goethe's view of the description of nature through its material displays, or rather *effects*, of various sorts. Goethe, in his *Theory of Colours*, makes the point that 'Indeed, strictly speaking, it's useless to attempt to express the nature of a thing

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 168.

⁷⁸ 'niskie okna, cień brązowy'.

⁷⁹ 'I gdański zegar milczy w kącie'.

abstractedly. Effects we can perceive, and a complete history of those effects would, in fact, sufficiently define the nature of the thing itself.’⁸⁰ He continues: ‘And thus as we descend the scale of being, Nature speaks to other senses – to known, misunderstood, and unknown senses: so speaks she with herself and to us in a thousand modes. To the attentive observer she is nowhere dead nor silent; she has even a secret agent in inflexible matter, in a metal, the smallest portions of which tell us what is passing in the entire mass. However manifold, complicated, and unintelligible this language may often seem to us, yet its elements remain ever the same.’⁸¹ Goethe’s idea on the status of a ‘colour’ in relationship to an object can be related to the philosophy of matter of another philosopher who exerted a large influence on Miłosz, St. Thomas Aquinas. For St. Thomas Aquinas, representations of matter do not convey the essence of it:

if we consider a color and its characteristics without at all considering the apple that has the color, or even [if we] express verbally what we have intellective cognition of in that way, there will be no falsity of opinion or of speech. For the apple has no part in the nature (*ratio*) of the color, and so nothing prevents our having intellective cognition of the color without any such cognition of the apple....For there is no falsity in the fact that the intellect’s way of having intellective cognition [of a thing] is different from the thing’s way of existing.⁸²

So, the colour of an apple ‘can be cognitively considered veridically independent of any consideration of the apple.’⁸³

As already mentioned, both St. Thomas Aquinas and Goethe exerted a considerable influence on Miłosz who, in his poetry confronts the question of form and matter and their manifestation and perception. Miłosz dissects this ‘unintelligible’ language of matter and portrays objects in their full realized *potential*, whether that

⁸⁰ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, ‘Preface to the First Edition of *Theory of Colours* of 1810’, in *Goethe’s Theory of Colours*, trans. by Charles Locke Eastlake (London, 1840), p. xvii.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. xviii.

⁸² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* (Ia.85.I, ad I) as quoted in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. by Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 140.

⁸³ *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. by Kretzmann and Stump, p. 141.

potential conveys the essence of a thing or stands independently of it; the aim seems to be to show a 'poetic' methodology of philosophical investigation, to provide 'a model of looking'.

Of significance to the perception of space in both *Świat* and *Dolina Issy* is the contrast between light and darkness, the play of shadows, the intensity of colours. Tomasz's sensitivity to colour is stressed many a time in the novel – as in his perception of a religious picture of the Virgin Mary he received from a priest: 'The Virgin Mary in the picture reminded him of the swallows that nested above the hay ladders and in the barn rafters. A blue dress, a bronzed face, surrounded by a disk of real gold. He kept the picture in an almanac, approaching its colors with delight every time he leafed through its pages.'⁸⁴ Colours, many a time, seem to possess, in both Miłosz's works, a status of independent entities as the actual realizations of the potentiality of objects and of the *effect* of matter. The gate in the poem 'Furtka' is described in the opening lines as, in fact, an idiosyncratic colour ('it has the color/ That lily pads have in very deep water/ When you pluck them in the light of a summer evening'),⁸⁵ whereas in the poem 'Schody', shadows wage their battle on the staircase of the house.

As regards the play of shadows in the poem 'Schody' – the play which is an effect of a subjectified child's experience of space, a reference should be made to Jean Piaget's work *Child's Conception of Space*. Piaget points to the study analyzing 'physical explanations of shadows' by children in which there are described 'four distinct levels of development':

⁸⁴ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 43. See: 'Matka Boska na nim podobna była do jaskółek, które lepiły gniazda nad stajnią i nawet wewnątrz, nad drabinkami od siana. Ciemno niebieska suknia, brąz na twarzy i naokoło niej krąg z prawdziwego złota. Przechowywał ten obrazek w kalendarzu i cieszył się otwierając stronicę, że zbliża się do miejsca gdzie leżą kolory.' (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 33).

⁸⁵ 'Ale tymczasem jest tego koloru,/ Co liście lilii wodnych na głębini/ Zrywane w świetle letniego wieczoru'.

(1) the shadow of an object placed on the table is regarded as emanating from some outside source (such as the night or the shade of trees, etc.); (2) the shadow is not related to the light source but belongs to the object; (3) the shadow belongs to the object but runs away from it (is somehow 'put to fight' by the light); (4) the shadow is simply absence of light and is due to the object forming a screen between the light source and the projection plane.⁸⁶

The perspective adopted in the final stanza of Miłosz's 'Schody' seems to be yet different from those proposed by Piaget: the child in the poem envisages the shadows as independent entities existing irrespective of the object/subject of their source: the mother's shadow and the boar's struggle irrespective of the mother's movement downstairs and the boar's inert hanging on the wall. Shadows and their objects become separated and adopt the roles of independent entities themselves.

The importance of colour, and of the 'play of light' in general, to Miłosz's work is expressed in his *Land of Ulro* through a reference to Goethe's *Theory of Colours*. In *Ziemia Ulro*, Miłosz looks at Goethe through the eyes of the critic Erich Heller whose *Disinherited Mind* was of huge influence on Miłosz's book. He points to 'the poet's [Goethe's] efforts to construct a science distinct from that established by Newtonian physics, to which science Goethe's own theory of color and *Urpflanze* was meant to contribute.'⁸⁷ As already mentioned, the aim of this chapter is to illustrate how through his poetic representations in *Świat* and *Dolina Issy*. Miłosz *practically* aims to lead contemporary human being out of the Land of Ulro – that is restores the sense of *dwelling* within the world. According to Miłosz, Goethe was one of the leaders out of the Land of Ulro. He writes about him, quoting Heller:

'He [Goethe] appointed himself' – states Heller – 'a kind of emissary of Being in a territory of the human mind which had given itself up to the alluring mechanics of becoming, evolving and revolving.'⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Jean Piaget and Baerbel Inhelder, *The Child's Conception of Space* trans. by F. J. Langdon and J.L. Lunzer (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 195.

⁸⁷ Czesław Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, trans. by Louis Iribarne (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1985), p. 94.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 94-95.

And further Miłosz writes:

Goethe strenuously sought to avoid the cleavage, hence his experiments in search of another science consistent with 'his faith in a perfect correspondence' between the human soul and the universe. In his lifetime he had witnessed the emergence of the 'disinherited mind' in the ontological sense, of a mind torn between the certainty of man's insignificance in the immensity of a hostile universe, and an urge, born of wounded pride, to endow man with preeminence.⁸⁹

Miłosz's map out of Ulro relied on creating in his reader a particular form of imagination. *Listening to* the reverberation of matter, penetrating it with one's senses, sensitivity to colour, to the play between light and shadow which displays an interaction between objects, human subjects and their environment, are the constituents of the imagination of a human who *dwells* within the world.

The house as part of the landscape. Abolition of the binary inside-outside

In *Dolina Issy*, the description of the manor is preceded by a poetic presentation of the 'Kraj Jezior' (The Land of Lakes) where Tomasz lives. The natural landscape is dissected with the careful observation and description of a passionate poet-naturalist who draws attention to its every detail: soil, types of trees, lakes, and proceeds to the characterization of people's harmonious co-existence herein. From the initial presentation of the landscape, the perspective is narrowed down to the Issa Valley which, as the narrator points out, is exceptional in the Land of Lakes. It is detached from the world – it constitutes a self-contained world within itself; it is an expanse of land that 'echoes like an echo chamber every hammer blow, dog bark, and voice- which may

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 95.

explain why the Valley is celebrated for its ancient songs'.⁹⁰ Within this land, there is located a manor house – itself a vestige of richness of tradition of the Polish manor house in Lithuania shown in the historical context of the Lithuanian agricultural reform and parcelation of land. The description of the manor, as in *Świat*, is preceded by the picture of the alley which leads to the house: 'A lane branching off from the road led homeward. Thick with lindens, it was more like a tunnel, descending all the way to the pond near the granary. [...] Across the pond, the lane climbed again, opening out onto a brilliant green lawn.'⁹¹ The symbolic importance of a path is pointed out by Norberg-Schulz as representing 'man's attempt at "orientating" himself in the given unknown environment.'⁹² The path, therefore, constitutes a manifestation of the 'function' of orientation and identification with the environment – primary functions of *dwelling*. The path of the Issa Valley leads to the house which emerges from the landscape:

The house was white and built so low to the ground that the roof, its shingles here and there tufted with grass and moss, seemed to be crushing it with its weight. Wild grapevine, whose berries made your tongue curl, wound about the windows and the two small porch columns. Another wing had been built onto the rear of the building; here they used to set up winter quarters, as the front of the house was rotting and sinking from the dampness seeping from underneath the foundation. The wing was divided into a number of rooms, housing the spinning wheels, looms, and ironing presses.

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As already pointed out, the house – the manor, as represented both in *Świat* and in *Dolina Issy* is an integral part of the environment in which it is situated. The house in

⁹⁰ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 5. See: 'który powtarza jak pudło rezonansowe stuk młotka, szczekanie psów i głosy ludzi – może dlatego tak znana jest ze swoich starych pieśni' (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 9).

⁹¹ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 9. See: 'Od drogi aleją idzie się w stronę domu. Jak tunel, tak gęste są tutaj lipy, zniża się aż do sadzawki koło świrna. [...] Za sadzawką aleja wznosi się znowu i nagle otwiera się jasność gazonu.' (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 11).

⁹² Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, p. 7.

⁹³ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, pp. 9-10. See: 'Dom jest biały, tak niski, że dach, na którego deszczułkach mieszka gdzieś mech i trawa, wydaje się go przygniatać. Dzikie wino, którego jagody ściągają język, oplata okna i dwie kolumnki na ganku. Z tyłu dobudowano skrzydło budynku – tam wszyscy przenoszą się na zimę, bo front butwieje i zapada się od wilgoci, jaka przedostaje się spod podłogi. Skrzydło składa się z wielu pokoi, stoją w nich kołowrotki, warsztaty tkackie i prasy do walowania sukna' (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 11).

both Miłosz's works is a material and symbolic object. It constitutes a living entity, interacting with human subjects, and forms a kernel of space, yet does not stand in opposition to the natural world outside. The house is actually a component of the natural context in which it is situated. Such a treatment of the house, in the context of nature, echoes with Norberg-Schulz's view of space: 'landscape functions as an extended *ground* to the man-made places. It contains these places, and as a "preparation" for them, it also contains natural "insides".'⁹⁴

The view of a house as an 'extension' of the landscape is introduced in the opening poem of *Świat* – 'Droga'. Here, the reader's gaze is led alongside a couple of children coming back home from school. In *Świat*, the poem exposes the function of orientation within space; at the same time, it explores the notion of human identification with the natural landscape. The road in the poem provides the link between the natural 'outside' and the manor and it is significant that the collection starts just from the portrayal of the road. Norberg-Schulz points out, referring to the ideas of Kevin Lynch, that a 'path', as already mentioned, is one of the basic elements which 'form the basis for men's orientation in space.'⁹⁵ Orientation and identification are, in turn, basic categories providing a human being with a sense of existential foothold, which saves one from *alienation*. Norberg-Schulz writes about both functions:

Although orientation and identification are aspects of one total relationship, they have a certain independence within the totality. It is evidently possible to orientate oneself without true identification; one gets along without feeling 'at home'. And it is possible to feel at home without being well acquainted with the spatial structure of the place, that is, the place is only experienced as a gratifying general character. True belonging however presupposes that both psychological functions are fully developed.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Norberg - Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, p. 45.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 12.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p 20.

The path functions, then, as a symbolic ‘link’ between human subject and the environment. At the same time, the path connects the realm of nature with that of culture. Maria Catedra in her anthropological study of space puts forward that ‘Perhaps one of the first and primary limitations of space is the division between natural space and cultural space. The first space is a chaotic and dangerous place and the second is our secure and ordered habitat.’⁹⁷ Yet, as she points out, the limits between culture and nature – with the door being boundary between them – is not always clear. In ‘Droga’ the realms of nature and culture coexist in perfect harmony, the boundary between the two is blurred. The manor is immersed within the landscape; just as human beings are an integral part thereof. The final stanza of the poem intensifies this on the symbolic level: with the figure of the father leaning on a hoe and inspecting the region from the standpoint of his flower bed in front of the house. The universal cultural symbolism of the figure of the father, as defined by Cirlot in his *Dictionary of Symbols*, is that ‘he stands for the force of tradition.’⁹⁸ In Miłosz’s poem, the figure of the father links, then, the realms of culture (tradition) and nature. Neither the image of the father nor the intensity of the colour of the roof of the house – whose redness makes the manor stand out against the landscape – disturb, however, the landscape of natural idyll, but form its harmonic component. The gaze of the father leads us, again, onto the panoramic view of the ‘region’, and thus the reader’s gaze reverts back to the view of the landscape represented in the first stanza of the poem.

The abolition of the binary inside-outside, the distinction between culture and nature, is visibly blurred in ‘Ganek’. The porch has large windows which open the vista on forests, rivers, fields and tree-lined lanes. Once again the time-lapse photography

⁹⁷ Maria Catedra, “‘Through the Door’: A View of Space from an Anthropological Perspective’, in *Cognitive and Linguistic Aspects of Geographic Space*, ed. by David M. Mark and Andrew U. Frank (Dordrecht; London: Kluwer Academic, 1991), p. 55.

⁹⁸ Cirlot, *Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 102.

effect is produced as an image of oaks arraying ‘themselves in green’⁹⁹ and of the world disappearing ‘behind the blue bark’¹⁰⁰ is created. Harmony and order are absolute and non-contingent characteristics inherent in the place. Some ‘fractures’ on the harmonious image are introduced, however, in the description of the children’s play and sinking warships. Is it the reality of 1943 Warsaw creeping into the poetic imagery? Or perhaps it is a universal view of the world as such – where perfect harmony is accompanied by the omnipresence of death. What strikes in the imagery of the play is a synecdochic representation of children: they are ‘reduced’ to their ‘pink tongues’¹⁰¹ in a naturalistic way, which once again points to the blurred boundaries between the realms of culture and nature.

The boundaries between culture and nature fluctuate and are blurred not only with respect to the land to which the manor belongs. In *Świat* that idyllic vision is projected upon the holistic picture of Europe. In the poem ‘Z okna’ the perspective turns into the outside. It is significant that the poem presents a dioramic image of Europe – ‘a home for people, dogs, cats, and horses’¹⁰² – from the standpoint of the library window which opens onto the perspective ‘beyond a field’ and ‘second field’¹⁰³ in a continuous way. The play of perspectives dominates the imagery: close-ups and distant takes, details enlarged, and largeness miniaturized. Europe ‘Now is smoking after many floods’,¹⁰⁴ but still the image is adorned with ‘the bright towers of cities’,¹⁰⁵ streams, and the moons of mountains. Nature and culture co-exist in peaceful harmony. This image constitutes a prelude to father’s explanations, his guidance through Europe, where space becomes

⁹⁹ See: ‘Kiedy już dęby w zielen się przybiorą’.

¹⁰⁰ See: ‘Świat ginie w dali za niebieską korą’.

¹⁰¹ See: ‘I pomagają różowym językiem/ Wielkim okrętom, z których jeden tonie’.

¹⁰² ‘Mieszkanie ludzi, psów, kotów i koni’.

¹⁰³ See: ‘Za polem, lasem i za drugim polem’.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Dymiąca jeszcze po wielu potokach’.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Miast kolorowych iskrzą się tam wieże’.

narrowed down to its constituent elements. Panorama of Europe is drawn with the father's storytelling in 'Ojciec objaśnia'. Particular cities are portrayed in the context of their natural background, of the landscape in which they are immersed. Contrasts between colours, between shadows and light abound. Shapes and silhouettes are delineated against the horizon. Warsaw, Prague, Rome, Paris are depicted as 'natural' elements of the landscape in which they are immersed.

Like other poems of *Świat*, 'Wyprawa do lasu' illustrates the 'practical theory' of space presented in 'Wiara', 'Nadzieja' and 'Miłość', which will be analysed later in the chapter. The word 'excursion' ('wyprawa') suggests the very act of moving outside from some enclosed space. The culture-nature distinction is again blurred. Man-made artifacts are projected onto natural environment ('The setting sun fixes a rosy flame/ On every tree, as on a candlestick'),¹⁰⁶ boundaries between the natural and human-made fluctuate. Tiny people are visible against the magnificence of the trees. Colours permeate the imagery: 'Color after color is flowing down the sky.'¹⁰⁷ The harmony of peaceful coexistence of the human and the natural pervades the landscape of the forest. In the last stanza of the poem a reader's gaze is directed upwards: 'And there, above, a feast.'¹⁰⁸ There takes place movement towards the sky – towards the space above – opening new symbolic vistas. The natural and cultural orders are juxtaposed on this higher, symbolic, level of space: 'And an airborne coach carries gifts/ For the invisible kings or for the bears.'¹⁰⁹

Miłosz's understanding of the culture-nature relationship, as manifest in *Świat* and *Dolina Issy*, is a poetic illustration of Norberg-Schulz's argument:

¹⁰⁶ 'Słońce zachodzące różowo się pali/ Na każdym drzewie jakby na świeczniku'.

¹⁰⁷ 'I z góry spływa kolor po kolorze'.

¹⁰⁸ 'A tam nad nami uczta'.

¹⁰⁹ 'I wiezie dary powietrzna karoca/ Dla niewidzialnych królów czy niedźwiedzi'.

From the beginning of time man has recognized that to create a place means to express the essence of being. The man-made environment where he lives is not a mere practical tool or the result of arbitrary happenings, it has structure and embodies meanings. These meanings and structures are reflections of man's understanding of the natural environment and his existential situation in general. A study of man-made place therefore ought to have a *natural* basis: it should take the relationship to the natural environment as its point of departure.¹¹⁰

Space and movement

One of the principles underlying the construction of space in *Świat* and *Dolina Issy* is that of movement. Miłosz's idea of movement was strongly influenced by his cousin's philosophy, whom he quotes in *Nieobjęta ziemia*: 'Rhythm is the highest expression of what we call *thought*, that is the constation and love of Movement.'¹¹¹ The 'love of movement', in its very formal manifestation, underpins the prosodic and thematic structure of *Świat*, and constitutes an organizing principle within *Dolina Issy*.

Alexander Fiut writes about *Świat* as a labyrinth and a simultaneous portrayal of the process of an initiation where space provides an important interpretative key. According to Fiut, Miłosz's *poemat* is governed by the movement in space – both tamed space (gate, porch, dining room, stairs...) and untamed. Initiation 'takes place in a particular time and strictly defined space. The whole *poemat* represents the cognitive process as gathering of knowledge alongside the movement within a terrain.'¹¹² Space is organized according to the vertical and horizontal axes: 'The sun is a point of reference for the vertical space, whereas the house constitutes the centre of the horizontal space.'¹¹³ Fiut stresses the importance of this analogy: it portrays the mode of perception and

¹¹⁰ Norberg-Schulz, *Geniusz Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, p. 50.

¹¹¹ See: 'Rytym jest najwyższym wyrazem tego, co nazywamy myślą, czyli konstatacją i miłością Ruchu' [trans. by MM]. Czesław Miłosz, 'Epigrafy' in *Nieobjęta ziemia* in Czesław Miłosz, *Wiersze zebrane* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2011), p. 799.

¹¹² Aleksander Fiut, 'Poema nienaiwne', in *Poznawanie Miłosza 2. Część pierwsza 1980 – 1998*, ed. by Aleksander Fiut (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2000), p. 174.

¹¹³ *ibid.*, p. 174.

representation within *Świat* as a system of analogues ('odpowiedniości'). In his view, the house and the sun are the signs of the space of the sacrum. The *poemat* illustrates, then, 'the road to the sun' – as the first and the last part of *Świat* already suggests, the sun being an Absolute.¹¹⁴

Fiut's theory can be applied to *Dolina Issy* as well. The manor, as will be later shown in this chapter, constitutes a space where individual and collective culture, tradition, history, metaphysics and religion are accumulated. Here Tomasz gathers knowledge about his ancestors. The library is a site of strong intellectual stimulation. At the same time, the manor is part of the natural landscape which is subject to Tomasz's exploration and which constitutes a site of his development. Tomasz's development takes place, then, alongside the terrain with the ultimate orientation towards the sky: he is literally oriented towards the aerial realm in his strong fascination with ornithology. He develops a methodology of participant-observation of nature and documentation of observed phenomena. As his fascination with ornithology evolves, he creates a self-made 'treasure': an ornithological notebook. His love for birds has a metaphysical underpinning, it expresses his desire to 'contain' the world, to penetrate its core:

The notebook proved that Thomas had the gift of concentrating on things that excited him. To name a bird, to case it in letters, was tantamount to owning it forever. The endless multiplicity of colors, shadings, mating calls, trills, wing sounds... Turning the pages, he had them all before him, at his command, affecting and ordering the plenitude of things that were. In reality, everything about birds gave rise to unease. Was it enough, he wondered, to verify their existence? The way the light modulated their feathers in flight, the warm, yellow flesh lining the bills of the young feeding in deeply sequestered nests, suffused him with a feeling of communion. Yet, for many, they were little more than a mobile decoration, scarcely worthy of scrutiny, whereas, surrounded by such wonders on earth, people should have consecrated their whole lives to contemplating only one thing: felicity.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 181.

¹¹⁵ Milosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 151. See: 'Ów zeszyt dowodził zdolności Tomasza do skupienia uwagi na tym, co go pasjonowało. Trud się opłacał, bo nazwać i zamknąć ptaka w piśmie to prawie to samo, co mieć go na zawsze. Nieskończona ilość barw, odcieni, świstów, gwizdów, trzepotów – przewracając karty miał je tutaj przed sobą, działał i porządkował jakoś nadmiar tego, co jest. W ptakach wszystko właściwie skłania do niepokoju: dobrze, one są, ale czy można tylko to stwierdzić i dalej nic? Światło mieni się na ich piórach kiedy lecą, od żółtego, ciepłego wnętrza dziobów, które młode otwierają w gnieździe utajonym w gąszczu, przenika nas prąd miłosnej wspólnoty. I ludzie uważają ptaki za drobny szczegół, taką sobie

Tomasz's initiation into the world, his gathering of knowledge about it, is thus based on the movement through the terrain, through space, and on the exploration of its different realms. A more literal illustration thereof is also hunting, which gives him an insight into the functioning of nature; it also becomes an ontological act on the basis of which he defines himself in relation to the environment. The movement through the horizontal space, and the distinction between the earthly and the aerial realm of birds, forms a basis for Tomasz's orientation and identification within the world. It constitutes the principle of his *dwelling*.

With reference to Heidegger's analysis of Georg Trakl's poem *A Winter Evening*, Norberg-Schulz points out the fundamental distinction Heidegger makes between the earth and the sky. He writes:

Like many fundamental insights, the distinction between earth and sky might seem trivial. Its importance however comes out when we add Heidegger's definition of 'dwelling': 'The way in which you are and I am, the way in which we humans *are* on the earth, is dwelling...'. But 'on the earth' already means 'under the sky'. He also calls what is *between* earth and sky *the world*, and says that 'the world is the house where the mortals dwell'. In other words, when man is capable of dwelling the world becomes an 'inside'. In general, nature forms an extended comprehensive totality, a 'place', which according to local circumstances has a particular identity. This identity, or 'spirit', may be described by means of the kind of concrete, 'qualitative' terms Heidegger uses to characterize earth and sky, and has to take this fundamental distinction as its point of departure. In this way we might arrive at an existentially relevant understanding of *landscape*, which ought to be preserved as the main designation of natural places.¹¹⁶

The distinction between the earth and the sky in these works of Miłosz has a symbolic dimension: the movement towards the sun, in the context of Miłosz's work, indicates the movement towards the divine realm – the realm of Heaven, that 'part' of space forgotten by human beings in the course of the scientific progress. The movement upwards is a

ruchomą ozdobę, ledwo raczą ją zauważyć – kiedy powinni byli całe życie poświęcić temu jednemu celowi, jeżeli znaleźli się razem z podobnymi dziwami na ziemi: rozpamiętywaniu szczęścia.' (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 104).

¹¹⁶ Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards the Phenomenology of Architecture*, p. 10.

poetic call, then, to restore the divine within the human system of references. Miłosz's argument about the spherical vision of space – where the world lies in-between the conceptual heaven and the underworld – echoes Heidegger's idea of the 'primal oneness of the earth, the sky, divinities and mortals':

human being consists in dwelling and, indeed, dwelling in the sense of the stay of mortals on the earth. But 'on the earth' already means 'under the sky'. Both of these *also* mean 'remaining before the divinities' and include a 'belonging to men's being with one another'. By a *primal* oneness the four – earth and sky, divinities and mortals – belong together in one.

Earth is the serving bearer, blossoming and fruiting, spreading out in rock and water, rising up into plant and animal. When we say earth, we are already thinking of the other three along with it, but we give no thought to the simple oneness of the four.

The sky is the vaulting path of the sun, the course of the changing moon, the wandering glitter of the stars, the year's seasons and their changes, the light and dusk of day, the gloom and glow of night, the clemency and inclemency of the weather, the drifting clouds and blue depth of the ether. When we say sky, we are already thinking of the other three along with it, but we give no thought to the simple oneness of the four.¹¹⁷

The division between the earth and the sky underlies the spatial organization of *Świat*. The movement from 'the road' towards 'the sun' becomes, however, circular, not linear. In the final poem 'Słońce' a reader's gaze is directed from the sun towards the earth again: the earth and the sun form one totality ('And the whole Earth is like a poem/ While the sun above represents the artist').¹¹⁸ And as the cycle closes: 'Whoever wants to paint the variegated world/ [...] Let him kneel down [...] And look at light reflected by the ground./ There he will find everything we have lost:/ The stars and the roses, the dusks and the dawns.'¹¹⁹ The movement to the sun is movement towards metaphysical space – the space which will be subject of the poet's scrutiny in *Druga przestrzeń* (2002). Movement is the medium through which matter, pertaining to the realm of the earthly, transcends itself and opens out onto the realms of culture, tradition and metaphysics. At

¹¹⁷ Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 149.

¹¹⁸ 'I cała ziemia jest niby poemat,/ A słońce nad nią przedstawia artystę'.

¹¹⁹ 'Ktokolwiek chce malować świat w barwnej postaci,/ [...] Niechaj przyklęknie, twarz ku trawie schyli/ I patrzy w promień od ziemi odbity./ Tam znajdzie wszystko, cośmy porzucili:/ Gwiazdy i róże, i zmierzchy i świty'.

the same time, movement is not a medium of escape from the earthly; it constitutes the principle of *dwelling* within the earthly realm.

As already mentioned, in the collection *Świat* the function of orientation within space is introduced in the poem 'Droga' which, at the same time, explores the notion of identification with the natural landscape. Both functions are portrayed by movement through space and the immediacy of the spatial experience. This immediacy is underlined by the use of the present tense – 'wracają' ('are returning'), in its English translation rendered through present progressive tense – which, in the context of the poem, suggests the immediacy of the captured moment. Camera-eye perspective is adopted: from an all-encompassing view of a valley, a road and an oak wood, a close-up follows to show a pencil-case and its vivid contents. The dynamism of description and the energy with which all the presented components of the poetic image reverberate create a discourse of vitality and motion which governs the poetic representation. The effect of motion is also created through the juxtaposition of different spatial perspectives: from the general view of the valley to the detail of the pencil-case, and back again to the general view of open space: 'a screeching jay hops in the branches/ And long clouds float over the trees.'¹²⁰ The imagery of plenty and the lexicon of words connoting life and vitality ('green valley' ['zielona dolina'], 'an oak wood beginning to bloom' ['gaj dębowy kwitnąć zaczyna'], 'bushy underbrush' ['puszysta krzewina'], etc.) create an idyllic image of space reverberating with vital potentiality where nature and human beings coexist within the same space.

Motion and vitality, yet perfect harmony, is reflected in the structure and the form of 'Droga' which, in its prosodic pattern, forms a model (with only slight variations) for all the other poems of the cycle. 'Droga', like other poems of *Świat*, is composed of cross-

¹²⁰ 'Sójka skrzekocząc po gałęziach lata/ I długie chmury nad drzewami płyną'.

rhymed quatrains, with eleven syllables (mostly) per line. This regularity corresponds to the sense of harmony within space, as aforementioned, and is a reflection of the rhythm which is ‘the highest expression of what we call *thought*, that is the constation and love of Movement.’ It has a mesmerizing effect and formally epitomizes the notion of order. In each line the conjunction ‘and’ (‘i’) is repeated, which device enhances the diegetic, story-telling character of the poem as a naturally floating lyrical narrative which formally reflects an undisturbed movement through the countryside to the house in a mode of an uninterrupted musical phrase. Uninterrupted, yet containing within itself multiple visions and changes of perspectives which fluctuate into one another, permeate each other and are vitally potent.

John Lennard, in his analysis of a poem by Robert Browning, points out that its ‘metrical oddity suggests mental oddity.’¹²¹ The reverse is true for *Świat, poema naiwne*, which emanates with idyllic peace and harmonious coexistence of its components. Even in the poem ‘Trwoga’, which will be analyzed later, the syllabic consistency (eleven syllables per line), the rhythmic scheme and the stanzaic regularity point to the firm foundations on which the world of *Świat* is built.

In *Dolina Issy* the rhythmic pattern is based on the cycle of the four seasons alongside which the protagonist’s development takes place. The novel – a Bildungsroman – progresses according to the twenty-four hour cycle of a day, and four-season cycle of the year. The date of Tomasz’s birth is given descriptively: ‘Thomas was born in the village of Gine at that time of year when a ripe apple thumps to the ground during the afternoon lull and when vats of freshly brewed ale stand in the hallway after the autumnal harvest’.¹²² Within the natural cycle there is also inscribed, as its integral part, religious

¹²¹ John Lennard, *The Poetry Handbook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 7.

¹²² Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 8. See: ‘Tomasz urodził się w Giniu na Issą w porze, kiedy dojrzałe jabłko spada ze stukiem na ziemię w ciszy popołudni, a w sieniach stoją kadzie brunatnego piwa, które warzy się tutaj po zakończeniu żniw.’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 10).

ritual: Easter Sunday is a time when ‘After a few doleful songs and litanies, the choir burst into an ‘Alleluia’ and the procession got under way [...] branches overhead, a matinal chill [...] a procession around the church and along the little stone wall. In time, all this became associated in Thomas’s mind with the advent of spring’,¹²³ whereas ‘Corpus Christi almost always fell on a hot day; by the time it was over, everyone was drenched, wrought from carrying all the banners and the reliquaries. But it was still one of the most festive of feast days: bright skies, the twitter of swallows, the chiming of bells, and lots of white, red, and gold.’¹²⁴ The natural rhythm provides, then, a pattern for the progressive movement of the protagonist’s development which takes place in literal reference to the space of the manor and the surrounding nature.

As already mentioned, the aerial realm of birds is of major significance in the dynamics of Tomasz’s development, symbolized by the ‘movement upwards’ of his exploration and perception of the world. Similarly, in *Świat*, ‘Królestwo ptaków’, preceded by ‘Wyprawa do lasu’, is a poetic continuation of the movement upwards. This movement, towards the sky within the aerial realm, could be interpreted through Gaston Bachelard’s ideas as expressed in his *Air and Dreams – an Essay on the Imagination of Movement*. As Steven Connor put it, Bachelard’s is ‘a soaring account of the cultural oneirism of air. For Bachelard, air signifies reach, sweep, aspiration and eminence. What he calls the dream of air dreams dream itself, in its Romantic aspect as the faculty of yearning, as we say, *longing*, of the imagination stretching to go beyond itself. But the airy imagination that Bachelard makes out is imagined predominantly in images – albeit

¹²³ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, pp. 28-29. See: ‘Po smutnych pieśniach i litaniiach buchał chór: Alleluja, ruszała procesja [...]. W górze przesuwały się gałęzie drzew, zimno, już zaczyna świtać, [...] pochód naokoło budynku, wzdłuż murku i głązów i to wszystko Tomasz przyzwyczaił się uważać za początek wiosny.’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 24).

¹²⁴ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 29. See: ‘W Boże Ciało jest prawie zawsze skwar, wszyscy są spoceni i przejęci noszeniem feretronów i chorągwi. Ale to radosne święto: jasność, ćwir jaskółek, brzękadła poczwórnych dzwonków, biel, czerwień i złoto.’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 25).

dynamic, or kinesthetic images, of flight and plummet. And these are always forms of peaceful longing, a longing that is in its element and at its ease.¹²⁵ Applying Bachelard's definitions, it could be said that the worlds of *Świat* and *Dolina Issy* are constructed by the imagination which is both 'dynamic' and 'material'.¹²⁶ Material because of the exploration of the essence of matter, dynamic because of its 'flights towards the summits'¹²⁷ – towards the sun.

In 'Królestwo ptaków' the division of space into the aerial realm and the earth takes place. Still, the link between the two is maintained: a dropped feather brings the news 'from a world that is bright, beautiful, warm and free'¹²⁸ – contrasted with 'a lake of darkness',¹²⁹ that is the earth as seen from above. Birds' 'homes and islands [are] saved by the light'.¹³⁰ The realm of the air, of the sky, is a privileged realm of illumination – of light.

The change of spatial perspective in *Świat* takes place in 'Trwoga', reminiscent of Goethe's 'Król Olch'. This poem changes the dynamics of the collection – the movement upwards is halted, entrapped within the realm of the forest where it becomes accumulated and condensed in the intensity of the experience of angst. As the space widens, from that of the house, upstairs, out into the open, the discourse becomes permeated by strictly philosophical reflection, culminating in this moment of Angst. 'Trwoga' is a crack in the imagery of *Świat* – the imagery of harmonious totality. E.A.

¹²⁵ Steven Connor, 'Sound and the Pathos of the Air' at <http://www.stevenconnor.com/pathos/> [accessed on 16 March 2012].

¹²⁶ For Gaston Bachelard's study of the dynamic and material imagination see Gaston Bachelard, *Air and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Movement*, trans. by Edith R. Farrell and C. Frederick Farrell (Dallas: Dallas Institute Publications, Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, 1988).

¹²⁷ Gaston Bachelard, *Air and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Movement*, p. 127.

¹²⁸ 'Gdzie jasno, ciepło swobodnie i pięknie'.

¹²⁹ 'Czym dla nich ziemia? Ciemności jeziorem'.

¹³⁰ 'Domy i wyspy światłem ocalone'.

Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher* comes to mind here as a direct analogy to the crack within the architecture of the represented world – of the edifice of harmonious reality.

At the same time, in 'Trwoga' there is a noticeable inconsistency in the register of poetic speech: the play between adult poetic perception and the child's reading of the world reveals significant tensions. 'Trwoga', if taken out of the discourse of a child's voice, reflects Christ's question to God-the Father while on the Cross: 'Father, why have you abandoned me.' The poem constitutes the climax of the cycle: the moment of uncertainty, of suffering, of fear.

'Odnalezienie' restores harmony in the world, reinstates a movement based on natural, regular rhythm. It constitutes a prelude to the final movement upwards – towards the sun. It is the voice of the father which breaks the darkness and introduces the contrast of light: 'But the dawn on bright stilts wades in from the shore/ And the ball of the sun, ringing, rolls.'¹³¹ The fear of 'Trwoga' proves to be a temporary lack of orientation and identification within the world, which is overcome with the presence of the sun. And it is the sun with which *Świat* culminates. Once again the poetic image is saturated with colours; the 'earth is like a poem',¹³² the sun above is the artist. The sun itself is not, however, an ultimate object of investigation: the reader's gaze is once again turned towards the earth – to see *reality* illuminated with the light – to find 'everything we have lost'¹³³ and not to lose 'the memory of things he [one] has seen'.¹³⁴ The movement towards the sun underlies *Świat*, yet this movement does not lead away from the very world itself in its materiality.

Dolina Issy likewise closes on the idea of movement. Tomasz embarks on a journey both physical and symbolical. Now initiated and strongly grounded in the world

¹³¹ 'Ale już w wodę świt na szczudłach wchodzi/ I dzwoniąc toczy się słoneczna kula'.

¹³² 'I cała ziemia jest niby poemat'.

¹³³ 'Tam znajdzie wszystko, cośmy porzucili'.

¹³⁴ 'Bo pamięć rzeczy, które widział, straci'.

(‘The devils along the Issa have fashioned you as best they could; the rest does not belong to them.’),¹³⁵ he leaves to enter a further stage of life, a stage of further illumination yet with strong grounding in the world: ‘for no one can predict how you will be shaped by the world that awaits you.’¹³⁶

Multiple spaces in *Świat* and *Dolina Issy*

The notion of space as theoretized and problematized by Miłosz in his essays, written conversations and poetry, is built upon a *matryoshka* structure. Miłosz’s methodological ‘approach to reality’ is based on the inseparability of the general, theoretical and abstract, from its particular realization in individual experience. This methodology applies not only to his treatment of space, but also to his treatment of history where individual biographies serve as an exposition of the history of the land, nation, country.¹³⁷

The representation of space in *Świat* and *Dolina Issy* is multilayered. Space in both works is first ‘confronted’ in its materiality. Objects within space, their mutual relationship and their interaction with the human subject are what interests Miłosz. The

¹³⁵ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 288. See: ‘Diabły znad Issy pracowały nad tobą jak mogły, reszta nie należy do nich’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 196).

¹³⁶ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 288. See: ‘i nikt nie odgadnie, co z ciebie zrobi świat, ku któremu dążysz.’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 196).

¹³⁷ As an example: in his written talk ‘Pamięć i historia’, included as a closing part of *Szukanie ojczyzny*, Miłosz speaks about, among others, the historical complexities behind the Polish-Lithuanian relations, especially in the context of the disputed Wilno region, and its ethnic dynamics. He points to the need to ‘search for the truth’: ‘and not only the truth about dates and events, but the emotional truth of particular people who used to live here. Perhaps an ability to empathise would constitute a test here, and thanks to the empathy – writing a biography of, for example, some Orthodox merchant from the sixteenth century or of some member of the ‘Gorliwy Litwin’ Masonic lodge in 1820’. See: ‘i to nie tylko prawdy o datach i wydarzeniach, ale emocjonalnej prawdy poszczególnych ludzi, którzy tu żyli. Być może sprawdzianem byłaby tu zdolność empatii i dzięki niej napisania biografii, na przykład jakiegoś prawosławnego kupca z szesnastego wieku czy członka loży masońskiej „Gorliwy Litwin” w roku 1820.’ (Miłosz, *Szukanie ojczyzny*, p. 255).

space of the manor and the surrounding landscape, as a dwelling space, is composed of multiple layers which correspond to the space of culture, tradition, history, metaphysics and religion – all anchored in a very material reality. The multilayered character of space has its ‘cause’ in quasi-objective representation of the nature of objects and their *allusional*ity, but also in the strongly subjectified mode of ‘poetic seeing’ which imposes certain spatial organizations through the faculty of imagination. The multilayered character of space is governed, then, by the pre-defined character of materiality, as discussed in the previous parts of the chapter, and by the ‘seeing’ eye which organizes space through the imagination.

Aleksander Fiut, in his analysis of *Świat* points to the ‘mythical space and time’ which opens in Miłosz’s collection with the poem ‘Droga’ with the initial word ‘tam’ (‘there where’). The openness onto the past is also suggested, according to Fiut, in the very title of the collection: ‘*poema*’ is an archaic form of the word ‘*poemat*’,¹³⁸.

This argument of the openness on the mythical space in *Świat* supports the thesis about the simultaneous existence of different spatio-temporal organizations in Miłosz’s work. The poem encapsulating the ‘theory’ behind the argument is ‘Przypowieść o maku’ which, according to Fiut, constitutes an illustration of the ‘relativity of space’.¹³⁹

Firstly, the poem is a parable, a form that points beyond its immediate meanings and opens up semantic chains of interpretation; it connotes a Biblical analogy. Parable is defined by *Oxford Dictionaries* as ‘a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson, as told by Jesus in the Gospels.’¹⁴⁰ Miłosz’s parable portrays a miniature self-contained world – an exact replica of the ‘real’ – contained within the space of a poppy head growing in the garden. A play between overlapping spatial perspectives and

¹³⁸ Fiut, ‘Poema nienaiwne’, pp. 171-172.

¹³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 176.

¹⁴⁰ *Oxford Dictionaries* in <<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/parable>> [accessed on 11 April 2012].

boundaries takes place. The notion of size and proportion is overturned to produce a grotesque effect. The first two stanzas refer to the poppy-head world which contains the universe: the infinite is confined in an enclosed space; two analogous parallel spaces are contained within each other. The poetic image is built on the principle of reduction and expansion: the first two stanzas refer to a 'reduced' miniature, the image of the third stanza expands onto the realm of a garden which itself contains the poppy-head world.

The poet's sharpened gaze penetrates the most minute details of the environment putting them under the magnifying glass of lyrical description. Through pointing to overlapping spatial realms, the poet defamiliarizes reality and enframes it within the parable form which suggests reference to some universal non-contingent truth. Miłosz's parable teaches a certain mode of perception of the world: a perception which is based on the ability to discover the multiplicity of spatial layers and realms within a seemingly homogenous reality.¹⁴¹

Parable as a form points to some meaning through symbolic primary signifiers. In Miłosz's *Świat* spatial objects point to something beyond themselves, each object is a parable per se: a poppy-seed head, a gate handle, pages of the book, furnishings and objects of the dining room, of the staircase, etc. They open up vistas of symbolism, of cultural wealth, of tradition, metaphysics and religion without necessarily referring to those realms directly.

The same principle of spatial organization that constructs the poppy-seed world is iterated in 'Przy piwoniach'. Peonies constitute the realm of universe for tiny beetles: with 'peony lands,/ Where one short instant equals a whole year.'¹⁴² Once again relativization of time and a shift of temporal perspectives take place as two spatial

¹⁴¹ This corresponds to the defamiliarizing function of poetry as defined by the Russian Formalists.

¹⁴² 'I długo patrzy w piwoniowe kraje,/ Dla których rokiem bywa jedna chwila'.

organizations of parallel worlds are superimposed and united within one holistic space. Here again we encounter, as in other poems of the collection, worlds which are ‘impossible yet as real as our world’ in a dialetheic sense, constructed in the context of the abundance of colour, play of shadow and light, omnipresent vital energy.

Superimposition of spaces as a consequence of the poetic perception of objects and their *reverberation* which points to various temporal, cultural and historical dimensions is clearly illustrated by the poem ‘Jadalnia’. It opens with a description of the painting on the wall, which gives an effect of a ‘multiple exposure’ within the poem, that is the superimposition of two spatial perspectives. Two spaces, belonging to different realms, become linked together within the poetic image of the temporal immediacy against the restrictions of time. The ‘real time’, whose *presence* is intensified by the second clock striking three times, clashes with the temporal planes existing beyond its restrictions: the image of the interior of the dining room as drawn in the first two stanzas seems to constitute a temporal *constant* of pure space outside and beyond the passing time. In some sense, the notion of an absolute and pure space beyond temporal restrictions, is analogous to Herman Hesse’s idea of the redemption of time: ‘the sacred sense of beyond, of timelessness, of a world which had an eternal value and the substance of which was divine’ where eternity is ‘the world of space’: ‘And the eternity was nothing else than the redemption of time, its return to innocence, so to say, and its transformation again into space.’¹⁴³ This temporal constant, or rather timelessness in Miłosz’s poem, is broken by the description of the second clock striking three times. A feeling of the immediacy of spatial experience is here created by the image of the mother serving hot soup.

¹⁴³ Herman Hesse, *Steppenwolf*, trans. by Basil Creighton (London: Penguin Books, 2001), p. 181.

The dining room is a *place*, then, where space is made of overlapping ‘pieces’ – different spatial organizations – which, having an interconnecting character, permeate each other and open into one another. It is a place containing other geographical locations (symbolized by the Danzig clock), a space of magic and folklore (smiling devils), a space of winter landscape, a space of temporal linearity symbolized by the clock inside which ‘lives’ a clock bird. And, finally, the space of the immediacy of the empirical real-life experience.

The parallel existence of two spatial organizations – of two different totalities – underlies the poem ‘Obrazki’. The pages of the book become the site of Hector’s death in the Iliad, which is set side by side with a flying moth. The high and the low, tragic pathos and banality, are juxtaposed on the same spatial level: on the page of the book. The story deriving from literary tradition is as real as the death of the moth. Two spaces: literary and ‘real’ overlap. The distinction between them is blurred. The final stanza takes the reader away from the battle scene and introduces a totally new perspective: of the sea and fields by the seashore. Space becomes expanded, universalized, individual death becomes a speck within the totality of the image. This aesthetic harks back to Bruegel’s painting ‘Landscape with the Fall of Icarus’.

As already mentioned, the ‘spaces’ which compose the total space of the worlds of *Świat* and *Dolina Issy* are grounded, first of all, in a very material reality. This ‘grounding’ is powerfully portrayed in the novel in Tomasz’s dream of Magdalena:

He saw Magdalena in the earth, in the solitude of the immense earth, where she had been dwelling for years and would go on dwelling forever. Her dress had rotted away, shreds of cloth had merged with dry bones, while the strand of hair that used to slip down over her cheek as she bent over the kitchen stove was now stuck fast to her skull. [...] And together they sank into the silent depths beneath the earth’s many crusts, to which worms make their way and pebbles sidle; only now it was he who was turning into a handful of rotten bones, lamenting through Magdalena’s lips, and discovering such questions as ‘Why am I me? Why am I destined to die, to stop being myself, when I possess a body, warmth, a hand, fingers?’ Or perhaps it was not a dream, for even as he lay at the bottom, under the surface of reality, he could still feel his bodily self- his doomed, disintegrating,

and posthumous self; and even as he was taking part in the annihilation, he perceived that the person below was the same as the one above. He woke up screaming.¹⁴⁴

The oneiric vision portrays a dreamscape alongside which the very corporeality and materiality of existence, subject to death and decay, is experienced and analyzed. Tomasz becomes scared, and on awakening his imagination takes shelter in the materiality of objects around him:

Relief came at daybreak. Anxiously, he opened his eyes; he was returning from far away places. Gradually, the light illuminated the crossbar joining the legs of the table – the bench, the chair. What a relief to rediscover the real world of objects, things made of wood, iron, and brick, so solid and full-bodied and rough to the touch. Things that only yesterday he had spurned were now a welcome sight, his private treasure. He feasted his eyes on all the knots, cracks, and crevices. Of that other world there remained only a delicious headiness, the remembrance of lands whose existence he had never dreamed possible.¹⁴⁵

What strikes here is the abundance of lexicon referring to the characteristics of pure matter. Physical objects are dissected, penetrated, as if imagination tries to anchor in them while seeking shelter and certainty. This act of imagination borders on desperate clinging to what is tangible and of empirically proven existence. However, the borderline between the two worlds, two different spatial organizations – the oneiric world of dream and the one empirically experienced – fluctuates. Magdalena – lying in the grave – but ‘at the same time she was close to him, looking exactly as she had that day he had seen her wade

¹⁴⁴ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, pp. 57-58. See: ‘Widział Magdalenę w ziemi, w samotności olbrzymiej ziemi I przebywała tam od lat i na zawsze. Jej suknia rozpadła się i płatki materii mieszały się z suchymi kośćmi a kosmyk włosów, który wyslizgiwał się na policzek nad kuchenną płytą przylegał do trupiej czaszki. [...] I Tomasz z nią razem wpadał w ciszę pod warstwami gleby, gdzie obślizguje się kamyk i robaki torują sobie drogę, on teraz zmieniał się w garstkę spróchniałych piszczeli, on skarżył się ustami Magdaleny i odkrywał sam, te pytania: dlaczego ja jestem ja? Jak to możliwe, żebym mając ciało, ciepło, dłoń, palce, musiał umrzeć i przestać być ja? Właściwie może to nie nawet sen, bo leżąc na najgłębszym dnie, pod powierzchnią realnych zjawisk, czułem cielesnego siebie, skazanego, rozpadającego się, już po śmierci, a zarazem biorąc udział w tym unicestwieniu, zachował zdolność stwierdzania, że on tu jest ten sam, co ona tam. Krzyczał i obudził się.’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, pp. 42-43).

¹⁴⁵ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p.58. See: ‘Dopiero brzask go uwolnił, otwierał oczy w trwodze. Wraczał z daleka. Powoli światło wydobywało poprzeczkę łączącą nogi stołu, zydle, krzesło. Jakaż ulga, że świat ten na jawie, składa się z rzeczy z drzewa, z żelaza, z cegieł i że one mają wypukłość i chropowatość! Witał sprzęty, które wczoraj krzywdził, ledwie je zauważając. Teraz wydały mu się skarbami. Wpatrywał się w rysy, w sęki, w pęknięcia. Po tamtym zostawał jednak rozkoszny czad, wspomnienie krain, których nigdy dotychczas nie odgadywał.’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 43).

into the water, and this merging was like the recognition of another time.¹⁴⁶ On waking up, Tomasz escapes from one world to take refuge in the other; yet both worlds possess for him the same status of reality: 'From then on, he swore never to scream if Magdalena ever approached him in the dark, confident that she would do him no harm. He even wished at times she *would* appear, though the mere thought of it happening was enough to give him goose pimples – the good kind, the kind he used to get when he ran his hand over a velvet ribbon.'¹⁴⁷

In both *Świat*, and in *Dolina Issy*, there are strongly marked separate layers of space which, however, are strongly embedded not in individual imaginative perception, but in collective imagination which ascribes the metaphysical spatial realms the status of the real.

Tomasz's dream of Magdalena is one of the indices of the existence in *Dolina Issy*, which is also true for *Świat*, of the space of folklore and superstition. Folkloric space lies in parallel relation to the empirically experienced reality and constitutes one of its dimensions. This 'layer' comprising part of the totality of the worlds of *Dolina Issy* and *Świat* may partly correspond to what Aleksander Fiut calls as mythical space. In *Świat*, the element of folklore, and superstition, is introduced with the notion of a 'copper penny saved by every child/To greet the first spring cuckoo.'¹⁴⁸ This seems to hark back to the findings of the cultural historian, Zygmunt Gloger who, in *Dolinami Rzek: Niemen* makes an analogy to the custom of saving copper pennies to greet a cuckoo: 'W lesie kowała kukulka, a kukanie jej rozbrzmiewało się daleko po rosie doliny niemnowej. Wiktor

¹⁴⁶ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 57. See: 'równocześnie była przy nim taka sama jak wtedy, kiedy wchodziła w wodę rzeki i w tej równocześnieści zawierało się poznanie innego czasu niż ten, jaki jest na zwyczajnie dostępny' (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 42).

¹⁴⁷ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 58. See: 'Odtąd, jeżeli by Magdalena zbliżyła się do niego w ciemnej alei, postanowił nie wrzeszczeć, bo nie zrobiłaby mu nic złego. Nawet pragnął żeby mu się zjawiała, choć dostawał na myśl o tym gęsiej skórki, ale nie nieprzyjemnej, takiej jak wtedy, kiedy gładził aksamitną wstążkę' (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 43).

¹⁴⁸ 'I grosz miedziany, który każde zbiera/ Na powitanie wiosennej kukulki'.

opowiadał, że każdy człek na wiosnę chowa tu w kieszeni kilka groszy na "zieziulkę" (kukulkę), aby miał czym brzeknąć, gdy pierwszy raz kukanie posłyszysz. Przypomni mi tem białoruskie przysłowie "Schawaj try hroszy na ziaziulku".¹⁴⁹

In *Dolina Issy*, the space of folk beliefs and superstitions possesses the status of the 'real' and its laws intrude on the laws of the empirically experienced world. The world of *Dolina Issy* is immersed in the supernatural: it is ruled by 'devils' whose 'presence' can be analysed on the symbolic level, yet, on the more immediate literal plane, the devils do constitute integral *quasi-real* part of the Issa Valley world. This fact is related in a matter-of-fact way by the narrator who assumes the role of chronicler, which entails the responsibility of narrating history in a truthful way. Though filtered through individual retrospection, this history possesses the status of objective knowledge related on the basis of the chronicler's personal experience: 'In narrating such a story, one never knows whether to use the past or present tense, as if what has passed has not really passed as long as it survives in the memory of generations – or in the memory of one chronicler.'¹⁵⁰ As in *Świat* the narrating voice enacts the role of an architect constructing parts of the fictional world and molding space according to his spatial imagination, in *Dolina Issy* a chronicler has a similar role of building a certain world, or rather nostalgically evoking the world which once was and is no more. He 'populates' space with various 'elements'. This space is inhabited and governed by devils who are not figments of the imagination, but the autochthonous inhabitants of the land. The space within which they exist does not

¹⁴⁹ The text is in dialect, therefore a working translation is provided: 'In the forest a cuckoo cuckooed, and its cuckooing resounded far across the dew of the Niemen valley. Wiktor said that every man, on coming of spring, hides a couple of pennies in his pocket for 'zieziulka' (a cuckoo) to have something to clank with on first cuckooing. Thus he reminded me a Belarusian saying: 'Schawaj try hroszy na ziaziulku' ('Hide three pennies for a cuckoo.').' (Zygmunt Gloger, *Dolinami rzek. Opisy podróży wzdłuż Niemna, Wisły, Bugu i Biebrzy* (Warszawa: Nakład Ferdynanda Hoesicka, 1903), p. 10, in Wirtualna Biblioteka Literatury Polskiej, <http://literat.ug.edu.pl/gloger/index.htm>), [accessed on 5 January 2012].

¹⁵⁰ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 8. See: 'Opowiadając nie wie się, jaki wybrać czas, terażniejszy czy przeszły, jakby to, co minęło nie było całkowicie minione dopóki trwa w pamięci pokoleń – tylko jednego kronikarza' (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 10).

yield to historical laws, but stands on its own, alongside empirically experienced reality.

Their space is endangered by the progression of history:

Are the devils and those other creatures joined in a pact, or do they simply exist side by side like the jay, the sparrow, and the crow? And where is that realm where both species would take refuge when the earth was plowed up by the tracks of tanks; when those who were about to be executed dug their own shallow graves by the river; and when, in blood and tears, Industrialization rose up, surrounded by the halo of History?¹⁵¹

The forces of history are seen as hostile to the ‘world of devils’ of Issa Valley. This is also expressed by the fact that in the popular imagery, another name for the Evil Spirit is ‘Niemczyk’ (‘the Little German’) – implying that ‘the devil is on the side of progress.’¹⁵²

Magic, superstition and mythical beliefs permeate the fabric of the Issa Valley. Tomasz’s grandmother – Babcia Misia – is said to have a huge interest in signs of presence of the supernatural:

Her ruling passion was magic, the world of spirits and the hereafter. The only books she ever read were the lives of the saints, though it was not the religious message as much as the language, the sound of those pious and godfearing sentences that charmed her. [...] At news that someone had been visited by a devil, that a house was feared to be uninhabitable owing to reports of clanking chains and rolling barrels, she was all smiles. Any sign from the other world – a proof that man was never alone on this earth but always in company – was enough to brighten her spirits.¹⁵³

Tomasz himself is said to be growing up among ‘Powers’ that facilitate his development:

‘Various powers would observe Thomas in the Sun and greenery and pass judgment on

¹⁵¹ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 7. See: ‘Czy diabły i te różne inne stwory mają ze sobą jakieś porozumienie, czy też po prostu są obok siebie, jak są obok siebie sójki, wróble i wrony? I gdzie jest kraina, do której chronią się i jedne i drugie, kiedy glebę gniotą gąsienice czołgów, kiedy nad rzeką kopią sobie płytkie groby, ci, co mają być rozstrzelani, a wśród krwi i łez w aureoli Historii wschodzi Uprzemysłowienie?’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 10).

¹⁵² Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 6. See: ‘diabeł jest po stronie postępu.’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 9).

¹⁵³ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 17. See: ‘Interesowała się przede wszystkim czarami, duchami i życiem pozagrobowym. Z książek czytała tylko żywoty świętych, ale chyba nie szukała w nich treści, a raczej upajał ją i wprowadzał w marzenie sam język, dźwięk pobożnych zdań. [...] Dowiadując się, że ktoś zobaczył diabła, albo, że gdzieś w sąsiedztwie dom nie nadaje się do użytku, bo coś dzwoni w nim łańcuchami i toczy beczki, rozpromieniała się. W dobry humor wprowadzał ją każdy znak z innego świata, czyli dowód, że człowiek na ziemi nie jest sam, ale w towarzystwie’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, pp. 16-17).

him, each according to his province. Those able to step outside of time would shake their diaphanous heads in dismay, for they could foresee the effects of the ecstatic state in which he lived.’¹⁵⁴ It is also the presence of the ‘magic powers’ which scare Pakienas by the river. It is the devils, that torment Baltazar in his pangs of conscience and lead to his violent death. Magdalena haunts the vicarage after her death and the only way to ‘exorcise’ her is to undig the grave and performing a proper ‘ritual’ as regards the corpse.¹⁵⁵ The space of the ‘otherworldly’ coexist in Issa Valley with the worldly space and determines its laws. For the reader, it belongs to the realm of superstition, but within the novel it possesses the status of the real. In the closing sentences of the novel, the devils of Issa Valley are evoked again, as agents governing its time and space: ‘The time has come, Thomas, to wish you luck. Your future can only be guessed, for no one can predict how you will be shaped by the world that awaits you. The devils along the Issa have fashioned you as best they could; the rest does not belong to them.’¹⁵⁶

The space of vivid folk beliefs and superstitions which become *real* in the context of the novel is connected with another ‘aspect’ of the poetic treatment of space by Miłosz: ritualization of space. In *Dolina Issy*, ritual is a constituent of life and has a collective dimension. In *Świat*, ritual is bestowed upon reality, its particular objects; it is restricted to individual experience of transferring the physical into the transcendental. In *Dolina Issy* ritual accompanies Tomasz’s religious education. In his hunting adventures, it imposes a strictly defined code of behaviour within the space of the forest, reflects extreme sensitivity to its peculiar ‘layout’, and determines ‘tuning’ oneself with the world

¹⁵⁴ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, pp. 18-19. See: ‘Rozmaite Siły obserwowały Tomasza w słońcu i zieleni i osądzały go według zakresu swojej wiedzy. Te z nich, którym dane jest wyłączać się poza czas, kiwały melancholijnie przezroczystymi głowami, bo zdolne były ogarnąć skutki ekstazy, w jakiej żył’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 17).

¹⁵⁵ Miłosz admitted in his conversations with Fiut that the figure of Magdalena and the surrounding events are factual. See: Miłosz, Fiut, *Autoportret przekorny. Rozmowy*, p. 36.

¹⁵⁶ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 288. See: ‘Pozostaje ci życzyć szczęścia, Tomasz. Twoje dalsze losy pozostaną na zawsze domysłem, nikt nie odgadnie, co z ciebie zrobi świat ku któremu dążysz. Diabły znad Issy pracowały nad tobą jak mogły, reszta nie należy do nich.’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 196).

of nature. Ritual is performed by Tomasz's friend Domcio in his rebellious act of putting God to test through desacralization. Domcio himself is for Tomasz 'the high priest of truth, because his sense of irony, his implied mockery, was a refutation of his, Thomas's, superficial knowledge, underneath which, he knew, there teemed something real'.¹⁵⁷ The ritual of desacralization of Holy Communion transforms the place where it takes place into a divine site. The stone becomes an altar:

By one of the Issa's steep banks there stood a moss-covered boulder, with a flat, altarlike surface. Dominic's ministers, now wearing shoes and clean shirts- they had just returned from Mass – sat on the grass facing the rock, puffing on little cigars, each trying to keep a poker face. Invisible creatures may also have been in attendance, their necks craned in anticipation of the performance.¹⁵⁸

In *Świat*, the ritualization of space takes place in the poem 'Ojciec w bibliotece'. The space of the library is turned into a site of magic; opening a book is a ritual. The exterior space is not excluded from the poetic image: 'a ray of sun falls from the window'¹⁵⁹ onto the father's 'tousled hair'. The ritual comprises the opening of the book. Seen through the child's eyes the scene loses its grotesque character (the father 'wears a bright fluffy crown')¹⁶⁰ and turns into a site of an elevated act. Compared to a wizard, the father 'murmurs his incantations'¹⁶¹ – an aura of magic prevails. The father becomes a high-priest of wisdom performing a ritual of reading. The physical entity – a book – becomes a key to another reality – another spatial organization of magic ritual.

¹⁵⁷ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 85. See: 'arcykapłan prawdy, ponieważ jego ironia, niewymówione naśmiewanie się, godziły w powierzchnię tego, co Tomasz wiedział, a wyczuwał, że pod nią coś się kłębi dopiero rzeczywistego.' (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 61).

¹⁵⁸ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 92. See: 'Niedaleko jednego z obrywów Issy leży wielki kamień obrośnięty chrzęszczącymi liszajami. Wierzch ma płatki, niby ołtarz. Ministrowie Domcia – w trzewikach i czystych koszulach bo po kościele – siedzieli naprzeciwko tego głazu na trawie i ćmili cygarki, nadrabiając miną jeden przed drugim. Nie jest bynajmniej wykluczone, że obok nich gromadziły się już istoty niewidzialne, które wysuwały szyje i obliżywały się w oczekiwaniu widowiska' (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 65).

¹⁵⁹ 'Włosy, na które słońce z okna pada'.

¹⁶⁰ 'I ojciec jasną ma z puchu koronę'.

¹⁶¹ 'Zaklęcia głosem przyciszonym mruczy'.

The poem 'Zaklęcia ojca' further explores the ritual happening in the library. The father's confrontation with the book, the essence of his reading experience, is presented in the form of direct speech. It is a trans-temporal implied conversation (though in the form of a monologue, yet with the implied presence of the author of the book) between two minds: of the father and the 'sweet master' ('słodki mędrzec'). The poem exposes Miłosz's 'interpretation' of the very act of reading. Two minds occupy the same space against the restrictions of time in their exchange of wisdom. Space becomes an absolute against the conditioning of time: the past and the present merge on the same plane – epitomized by the pages of the book.

Ritualization and endowing space with magic in *Świat* and *Dolina Issy* goes alongside another 'layer' of space which comprises the fabric of the worlds in both works: ancestral space. Ancestral space transcends time. It is evoked in the context of the material objects of the manor which are contextualized in the family history and history of the land, and brought, through the medium of matter, onto the plane of 'here and now'. The grandfather's library is a unique 'enclave' of ancestral space. Tomasz, as he grows older, escapes into this space in his thirst for knowledge. On one of such 'escapes' he encounters a book about his ancestor – Hieronim Surkont – and learns from his grandfather about religious differences, as well as the complex political situation at the time of the Swedish Deluge. The book found in the library, thus constitutes a bridge connecting the personal, private present with the ancestral past. The book spurs grandfather's story-telling which is followed by an observation:

Thus was the seed sown, and his grandfather had no way of knowing how long it would be nurtured in the vegetable sleep of seeds that patiently bide their time. The seed was sown: in it were contained the squeaking of wooden boards, the sound of footsteps slipping along bookshelves and numbered folios that glow among dark rows of leather bindings; elbows propped on the table in a ring of light

cast by a green shade; a pencil bobbing up and down in mimicry of thought, which in the beginning is nothing but a haze, a blur without shape or outline.¹⁶²

The library, but also the space of the manor, in *Dolina Issy*, as a whole, is contextualized within a larger historical field of the wealth of tradition in which the manor is anchored. Also, in its interior, objects are ‘tainted’ with stories, of greater or lesser importance. In the dining room Tomasz is slightly scared of ‘the portrait of a man clad in armor with purple trim, and so stern of gaze’. The ‘drawing room’ is marked by the invisible presence of someone, ‘the parquet floor and the furniture creaked even in the silence, and somehow the room always bespoke a human presence.’¹⁶³ The space is *inhabited* by his ancestors who are his ‘source of strength. Thanks to them, the clothing and the furniture of past epochs, the handwriting on yellowed documents, are not completely dead objects. The awareness of one’s origins is like an anchor line plunged into the deep, keeping one within a certain range.’¹⁶⁴ This space is a reservoir within which past and present are transcendently united, enabling an empirical experience of bygone years and the communion with the ancestors: ‘No one lives alone; he is speaking with those who are no more, their lives are incarnated in him; he is retracing their footsteps, climbing the stairs to the edifice of history.’¹⁶⁵

Ancestral myth and historical memory are the object of Miłosz’s unabating interest; the myth of the manor as functioning in the Polish collective memory had a

¹⁶² Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 108. See: ‘Tak oto rzucono ziarno i dziadek nie wiedział jak długo przechowa się ono w roślinnym śnie wszystkich ziaren, czekających na swój czas. Zwinięte w maleńki węzeł leżały tam skrzypienia posadzki pod krokami przesuwanymi się wzdłuż pól, z których świecą białe kartki z cyfrą na ciemnych rzędach oprawy i łokcie oparte o stoły, w kręgu światła padającego z zielonego klosza i ołówki – ręka na nim balansuje w powietrzu do wtóru pomysłowi, który jest z początku nie więcej niż mgłą, bez linii i granic’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 75).

¹⁶³ Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 10. See: ‘portret mężczyzny w zbroi, z rąbkiem purpurowej szaty, patrzący surowo’, ‘parkiety i meble trzaskały same w ciszy I jakoś wiadomo było, że tam przebywa czyjaś obecność’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 12).

¹⁶⁴ Miłosz, *Native Realm*, p. 20.

¹⁶⁵ Czesław Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, p. 108. See: ‘Nikt nie żyje sam: rozmawia z tymi, co przeminęli, ich życie w niego się wciela, wstępuje po stopniach i zwiedza idąc ich śladem zakątki domu historii’ (Miłosz, *Dolina Issy*, p. 75).

significant imprint on Miłosz's work. As he defines the notion of the 'Borderland' (*Kresy*) in *Szukanie ojczyzny*, he points out that 'it was a whole separate world of manors and gentry's hamlets ("zaścianki szlacheckie") which lasted longer than Soplicowo, and whose son I am.'¹⁶⁶ It is through his fascination with the ancestral myth that Miłosz explains his interest in the novels of *Rodziewiczówna*, about whom he writes: 'I haven't found in the work of any of the novel writers such a reflection of the reality of the Eastern territories of the Former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the second half of the nineteenth century or the beginning of the twentieth century [as in *Rodziewiczówna*'s works]. [...] Reading *Rodziewiczówna* is not unlike reading the diaries whose author conveys a lot consciously, but also a lot despite their will.'¹⁶⁷

The analysis of the question of the multi-layered character of space of *Świat* and *Dolina Issy* will be concluded with a reference to three poems, 'Wiara', 'Nadzieja' and 'Miłość'. They constitute, in a certain sense, Miłosz's poetic creed and express his view on the 'structure' of reality. They are preceded, in *Świat*, by the poem 'Przy piwoniach' and followed by 'Wyprawa do lasu'; hence their placement seems to 'disrupt' the development of the 'architectural line' of the cycle. Only seemingly. The three poems are anchored in the physical reality which is presented in the preceding and following lyrics. The direct analogy to three theological virtues raises the poems to a different dimension – to the space of metaphysics – which is still, however, anchored in the physical reality. Hence, the very materiality of space goes hand in hand with metaphysical space to which it points. The religious doctrine of the three virtues is rendered through the prism of

¹⁶⁶ See: 'to był cały świat osobny, dworów, dworków i zaścianków szlacheckich, który trwał dłużej niż Soplicowo i którego jestem synem' (Miłosz, *Szukanie ojczyzny*, p. 6).

¹⁶⁷ See: 'U nikogo z powieściopisarzy nie znajduję tylu realiów dotyczących wschodnich ziem dawnej Rzeczypospolitej w drugiej połowie dziewiętnastego wieku czy początku wieku dwudziestego. [...] Czytanie *Rodziewiczówny* przypomina więc nieco czytanie pamiętników, których autor wiele przekazuje świadomie, ale i wiele mimo woli.' (Miłosz, *Szukanie ojczyzny*, p. 21).

nature, almost pantheistically. The represented space is that of perfect harmony – harmony which has a teleological orientation.

Purposefulness of reality is accentuated throughout ‘Wiara’ (‘And you know that they are because they have to be’).¹⁶⁸ At the same time, the poem constitutes a testimony to the materiality of reality and its *real* existence – against solipsism and phenomenological representations (‘Even if you close your eyes and dream up things/ The world will remain as it has always been’).¹⁶⁹ ‘Wiara’ is about Kantian noumena-s, it is a testimony to *reality*, to the realness of reality. The poem safeguards *faith* in the reality of perfect harmony; with human coexistence, with nature, without any hierarchies (‘We and the flowers throw shadows on the earth’).¹⁷⁰ The vision of space here is, then, ahierarchical – human beings have their place within all-encompassing nature; no boundaries separate them.

‘Nadzieja’ is a continuation of ‘faith in *reality*’. Once again in the centre of the poetic imagery lies the very materiality of space: ‘The earth is not a dream but living flesh’¹⁷¹ – matter alive, and fathomable by the senses: sight, touch and hearing. It is not possible to penetrate ‘the garden’ of things to the core, but it is possible to ‘look more clearly and wisely’.¹⁷² ‘Nadzieja’ is a poetic call for a change of perception, for sensitivity, for the rediscovery of *things*; it is a call for renewed faith in the materiality of reality without withdrawing to the realm of pure phenomena (‘Some people say we should not trust our eyes,/ That there is nothing, just a seeming,/ Theses are the ones who have no hope’).¹⁷³ Miłosz claims the world and reality back ‘from the hands of thieves’.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁸ ‘I wie, że one są - bo są konieczne’.

¹⁶⁹ ‘Choćby się oczy zamknęło, marzyło,/ Na świecie będzie tylko to, co było’.

¹⁷⁰ ‘I nasz, i kwiatów cień pada na ziemię’.

¹⁷¹ ‘Że ziemia nie jest snem, lecz żywym ciałem’.

¹⁷² ‘Gdybyśmy lepiej i mądrzej patrzeli’.

¹⁷³ ‘Niektórzy mówią, że nas oko ludzi/ I że nic nie ma, tylko się wydaje,/ Ale ci właśnie nie mają nadziei’.

¹⁷⁴ ‘Jakby porwały go ręce złodziei’.

He tries to restore the very sense of *dwelling* within the world, not just *seeming* to be within the world.

‘Miłość’ defines human being’s place in the world through the notion of ahierarchical space (‘For you are only one thing among many’).¹⁷⁵ ‘Self-distance’ is linked to the ‘suspension of belief’, to paraphrase Coleridgean notion, which is to safeguard perfect order, harmony and fulfillment (‘Who serves best doesn’t always understand’).¹⁷⁶ Both in *Świat* and *Dolina Issy* space has a multi-layered character. The spatial organization of the worlds in both works extends beyond the immediate, empirically experiences reality, but expands towards the realms of culture, tradition, history and metaphysics. All the realms, though governed by their own laws, permeate each other, often against temporal restrictions. Both in *Świat* and in *Dolina Issy*, there takes place ritualization of the perception of the world and of the space itself. Every detail of space emanates with significance, carries certain meanings, opens itself onto another dimension of space. One can speak of allusionality of objects within space in both Miłosz’s works: objects laden with potent meanings opening vistas of semantic chains leading to different concepts. At the same time, the space is filled with magic, it is structured according to folk beliefs and superstition. Endowing space with magic together with its ritualization and allusionality of objects pointing to the realms of history and tradition are the primary ‘mechanisms’ which underlie the construction of the multi-layered space of *Świat* and *Dolina Issy*.

¹⁷⁵ ‘Bo jesteś tylko jedną z rzeczy wielu’.

¹⁷⁶ ‘Nie ten najlepiej służy, kto rozumie’.

2. Dwelling in *Miasto bez imienia*: place and an act of poetic building

With *Miasto bez imienia* Miłosz erects, among his oeuvre, an edifice in the form of built textual space: built in architectural terms on the foundation of memory and retrospection which surmounts distance and immortalizes the poet's *place* as a textual edifice. The very act of poetic building and surmounting space will be subject to analysis in this part of the thesis. Donald Davie refers to Miłosz's work: 'his writing will edify, in the sense of "educate", "instruct" – but also it will *build*'.¹⁷⁷

Miasto bez imienia was published in 1969, in the same year as *Widzenia nad Zatoką San Francisco* – a picture of sketches devoted to America, and *History of Polish Literature*. The poems of the collection were written between 1961-1969 in Berkeley (with the exception of the poems 'Rady', which was written in 1959 in Montgeron in France, and the poems 'W drodze', 'Kronika', 'Biel', 'Źródło'), and were mostly published in Parisian 'Kultura' and 'Oficyna Poetów'.¹⁷⁸

The collection is diverse thematically: themes and subjects range from those centred on bodily sensations, eroticism, materiality and physicality of existence, encompass issues related with language and poetic expression, and range to metaphysical and religious subjects. As far as the notion of space is concerned, *Miasto bez imienia* constitutes a bridge between Miłosz's treatment of space in *Świat, poema naiwne* and *Druga przestrzeń*. In *Miasto*, a reader can observe space interpreted through its materiality by means of sensual perception which constitutes a tool of organization and orientation within space, but space simultaneously opens onto metaphysical and religious

¹⁷⁷ Donald Davie, *Czesław Miłosz and the Insufficiency of Lyric* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986), pp. 58-59.

¹⁷⁸ Agnieszka Kosińska, *Czesław Miłosz. Bibliografia druków zwartych* (Kraków-Warszawa: Instytut Dokumentacji i Studiów nad Literaturą Polską, 2009), p. 89.

dimension, it is built according to the hierarchical division with God constituting an ultimate point of reference who rescues human being from the entrapment within alienated reality.

As placed against the methodological frame of contemporary literary studies with regard to the notion of space, *Miasto bez imienia* can be considered a powerful poetic voice within the discourse of geopoetics.¹⁷⁹ Also the collection itself constitutes a rich material for researchers focusing on topographical (spatial) turn in literary studies. The strong geographical anchorage, particularly visible in the titular poem, makes *Miasto bez imienia* a prism which ‘refracts the authentic loci into literary places.’¹⁸⁰ Regionalism and universal perspective encompassing a myriad of elements making up the space of the ‘city without a name’ make the collection occupy a unique place in the literary canon.

Miasto bez imienia holistically is treated in this chapter in architectural terms. The assumption is that the poet builds a *place* composed of the multitude of multifarious *places*. This assumption coincides with Norberg-Schulz’s idea of the connection between a piece of architecture and a poetic work of art, and his interpretation of the Heideggerian notion of *dwelling* poetically. Norberg-Schulz writes that ‘Architecture belongs to poetry, and its purpose is to help man to dwell.’¹⁸¹ In this chapter, poetic work will be looked at as a piece of architecture rendered through the process of the poetic *building*. Special attention will be paid to the workings of imagination and memory immersed in the most immediate environment; with both being considered as constituents and agents of the process of *building*.

¹⁷⁹ See, e.g. the work of Kenneth White <<http://www.geopoetics.org.uk>>.

¹⁸⁰ Robert Packard on the concept of literature and refraction as referred to by Elzbieta Rybicka in ‘Od poetyki przestrzeni do polityki miesjca. Zwrot topograficzny w badaniach literackich’, Central and Eastern European Online Library, Teksty Drugie, issue 4/2008, pp. 21-38 <www.ceeol.com>.

¹⁸¹ Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, p. 22.

Just as a work of architecture, *Miasto* is a built place concretized in a poetic form. The process is actually a manifestation of the concept of 'gathering' whose purpose is that of 'making the man-made place become a *microcosmos*.'¹⁸² As Norberg-Schulz points out, 'In general we may say that man "builds" his world.'¹⁸³ *Miasto bez imienia* holistically constitutes a representation of such a world.

First, a biographical context in which the poems are immersed will be presented. Although genetic interpretation of the poems is avoided, the biographical context constitutes an important background to the understanding of the representation and significance of space of *Miasto bez imienia*. It will bring to the fore two important notions underlying the construction of the poetic space constituting 'miasto': exile and distance.

Further in the analysis, the attention will be paid to the concept of *place*, with 'miasto', in its conceptual form, considered as a construct *place* characterized by the functions of orientation, identification, and *character* (aura).¹⁸⁴ In the process of *building the place* an important, perhaps most significant role, is played by imagination, the faculty responsible for the perception and understanding of space and the faculty determining a particular way of *seeing*. The connection between space and imagination in the context of the collection will be delineated against the background of both Miłosz's theoretical (essayistic) writings and the tradition of the phenomenology of space, especially the voice of Christian Norberg-Schulz, continuator of Heidegger's ideas which he applied to architecture.

¹⁸² *ibid.*, p. 51.

¹⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 51.

¹⁸⁴ See Norberg-Schulz and his definition of 'place' in *ibid.*

Biographical information

Miłosz moved to the United States in 1960 to assume the position of visiting lecturer in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of California, Berkeley, where, in 1961 he received permanent professorship. The next visit to Poland happened only twenty years later: in June 1981, the first visit since his defection. The poet visited Lithuania in 1992: on 26 May 1992 when he returned to Lithuania after over fifty years of absence. He was awarded the title of doctor *honoris causa* at the University of Witold the Great in Kovno; he was also awarded honorary citizenship of Lithuania. On that visit Miłosz went to Szetejnie.¹⁸⁵

In October 1993 Miłosz was awarded by the City Council of Kraków an apartment at 6 Boguslawska St.; he bought it in 1996. Since then, his life was divided between Berkeley and Kraków, with the latter constituting the place of his final departure. As Joanna Zach recounts ‘It was not when he came to Kraków, and then divided his time between our city and Berkeley, that Miłosz chose this place. No, he really chose it later, when he returned from the funeral of his wife [Carol Thigpen-Milosz] in 2002, knowing that this was going to be the place of his own final departure.’¹⁸⁶

To go back to Miłosz’s Californian experience, biographical portrayals of Miłosz, as presented in Cynthia Haven’s work, *An Invisible Rope*, abound in references to the poet’s loneliness, his ‘sense of abandonment’.¹⁸⁷ Across the poet’s biography, Haven singles out dominant themes: ‘the overwhelming loneliness of Miłosz’s pre-Nobel years;

¹⁸⁵ ‘Do rodzimej Litwy Cz. Miłosz powrócił 26 maja 1992 roku, po upływie ponad 50 lat nieobecności. Z tej okazji otrzymał stopień doktora *honoris causa* Uniwersytetu Witolda Wielkiego w Kownie, a Rada Najwyższa niepodległej Republiki Litewskiej nadała mu honorowe obywatelstwo. Odwiedził poeta również ojczyste Szetejnie; w czasach sowieckich dwór przyłączono do kołchozu – niszczycielskim działaniom nowych gospodarzy oparły się jedynie zapuszczony park oraz stuletnia stodoła’, Fundacja Miejsc Rodzinnych Czesława Miłosza <http://www.milosz.lt/miloszas_sateiniaipl.htm> [accessed on 10 Dec 2011].

¹⁸⁶ Haven, *An Invisible Rope*, p. 198.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 3.

his passionate and often conflicted friendships; his love-hate relationship with his home in exile, America; his dedication to the Polish language; his fight against oblivion.’¹⁸⁸ Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier draws parallels between two outsiders who found it difficult to find their place among the Polish émigré community: her father – Manfred Kridl and Czesław Miłosz. Manfred Kridl was professor of Polish literature at the Stefan Batory University in Wilno, Czesław Miłosz was his student. The poet refers to Kridl in his correspondence when both were in the United States after the War as ‘my Wilno guardian’.¹⁸⁹ Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier recounts: ‘The emigre establishment’s hostility continued after Miłosz’s break with the Communist government. The persistent ostracism did concern him, and he explained in a 1954 letter to my father that his independent, leftist opinions on matters of Polish culture and politics “did not mean that I am in the least attracted to some internationalism or cosmopolitanism. I am steeped in Polish literature and want to remain faithful to it.”’¹⁹⁰

Morton Marcus remembers his encounter with Miłosz in the fall of 1968: ‘In 1968, Miłosz was virtually unknown as a poet in the United States. His reputation here, if he had one, was based on a political volume in which he described the reasons for his defection from Communist Poland in 1951 and another volume, a novel, about the miseries of living under a Communist regime. [...] Like many other artists living in the United States in political exile, he was renowned in his own country but unknown and ignored here.’¹⁹¹ Isolated and lonely, it is one of the aspects of Miłosz’s life in California until the year when Miłosz received the Neustadt Literary Award and then Nobel Prize in literature.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. x.

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*, p. 97.

Marek Skwarnicki recounts, and in some way provides a partial summary of Miłosz's experience of exile: 'I remember also that [...] Miłosz said something that mystified me: "Dear God, how is it possible that I survived forty years in that country!" There, he buried two wives and lived as an exile. At the same time, he was a writer who belonged to the world. However, the motherland most dear to his heart was "City Without a Name." For Polish readers, it is clearly Wilno, today the capital of Lithuania. But it never was clear whether the motherland for Miłosz was Poland or Lithuania.'¹⁹²

Miasto bez imienia, as product of Miłosz's experience of exile, showcases both the poet's peculiar fascination with California, but it also displays a sense of alienation. At this point it is important to mention that the concept of exile, as Galin Tihanov points out, is a modern construct, romanticized construct which entails either hyper-suffering or hyper-artistic productivity.¹⁹³ In the case of the collection *Miasto bez imienia*, the poetic material seems to be an expression of the author's, to use Rybicka's term, 'nostalgic sensitivity'¹⁹⁴ which does not encompass only the poet's longing for a geographical place but also the poet's longing for a certain organization of reality, first of all through language and the reference to the sphere of sacrum. Andrzej Zawada points out that in Miłosz's poems written after he settled down in Berkeley, American motifs are accompanied by the Lithuanian motifs. 'The images of Lithuania will take over the function of memory, will open the historical dimension of the world. The images of America will denote the contemporary character of the world, its ahistoricity, materiality, as well as its future, seen not only from the catastrophic perspective.'¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² *ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁹³ Galin Tihanov, 'Narratives of Exile: Cosmopolitanism beyond the Liberal Imagination', in *Literary Thought*, 1-2 (2012), pp. 7-24, as accessed through the Central and Eastern European Online Library, <www.ceeol.com>.

¹⁹⁴ Elżbieta Rybicka: 'Geopoetyka (o mieście, przestrzeni i miejscu we współczesnych teoriach i praktykach kulturowych)', in: *Kulturowa teoria literatury. Główne pojęcia i problemy*, ed. by M.P. Markowski, R. Nycz (Kraków: 2006), p. 485.

¹⁹⁵ Andrzej Zawada, *Miłosz* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie: 1996), p. 162 [trans. by MM].

Miłosz poet creates in the collection a certain space to which he belongs and with which he identifies. It is a mythologized space built around the city of his youth and topographically branching out into many conceptual territories which, altogether, form the edifice of the conceptual ‘miasto’.

Miasto bez imienia as a place

In Miłosz’s poetry, personal and universal elements interweave, permeate each other and point to one another. Grounded in personal experience, *Miasto bez imienia* has a universal dimension and constitutes a powerful manifestation of Miłosz’s conception of space. In this section I aim to demonstrate how ‘miasto’ as, in my interpretation, a container of enclosed space, conceptually guards against the concept of infinity and, in consequence, of nothingness as regards the ontological position of a human subject in the universe. The leading poetic voice will be defined as a persona of a homo viator, a persona in search of a place within space, as emerging out of Miłosz’s collection. An analogy can be drawn here with Krzysztof Dybciak referring to Miłosz as Odysseus of our times: ‘Laureat tegorocznej Nagrody Nobla przypomina Odyseusza wędrującego po burzliwym morzu dwudziestowiecznej historii, mającego jasno określony cel – dotarcie do trwałego gruntu rodzinnej ziemi, na której można żyć w zgodzie z niebem, ziemią i bliźnimi.’¹⁹⁶

‘Miasto’ is defined here in a twofold way: first of all, it is a *place* and spatial container of poetic imagination which encompasses all the components of the poetic space of the collection as a whole. The poetic space is treated in ontological terms as a building and a site of dwelling for the poetic ego of the poems. ‘Miasto’ is, therefore,

¹⁹⁶ Krzysztof Dybciak, ‘Odyseusz naszego czasu’, in Bożena Chrzastowska, *Poezje Czesława Miłosza* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1982), p. 161.

defined as a poetic construct, a conceptual site encompassing the space of all the poems of the collection. Second, 'miasto' refers to the titular poem anchored in a particular geographical location, with the title itself corresponding to Wilno of Miłosz's youth. In this section, the term 'miasto' will be used within the first delineated semantic field.

On the most immediate and literal level, the title of the collection and the titular poem grounds the whole in a specific geographical locality which becomes represented in minute detail in the titular poem. With the cartographer's eye, the poet draws a map of Wilno with its streets: Zamkowa, Nadbrzeżna, Niemiecka, Arsenalska, Bakszta, Mała Pohulanka ('Kiedy byłem mały'), the city's landmarks: Ponary Hills, library 'below a tower painted with the signs of the zodiac,' St. Peter and Paul's Church, Cathedral of Vilnius with the tomb of St. Casimir, St Nicholas Church, Basilian Church, Straszun's second-hand bookshop, Góra Trzykrzyska, Góra Bekieszowa. The reader becomes acquainted with the rivers and lakes: Zielone Jeziora, Wilija, Żejmiana, Mereczanka, and villages: Żegary. Also, Samogitia is mentioned.¹⁹⁷ The geographical detail objectifies the poetic vision adding a factual aspect of validity to it – the 'miasto' is a *real*, not only conceptual, place. The phrase 'Miasto bez imienia' refers to Wilno, yet symbolically all the poems of the collection are subsumed under its spatial category. 'Miasto' becomes a container framing the contents of the poetic worlds delineated in each poem. Going beyond the reference to Wilno, 'Miasto bez imienia' in its holistic aspect of the whole collection is a spatial form lacking the name, being beyond straightforward categorization, a maverick spatial organization of mutual interrelations which cannot be easily classified. Yet, it provides a certain enframed picture forming a vision of spatial organization which reflects the poetic imagination of the author.

¹⁹⁷ All those geographical references come from the titular poem 'Miasto bez imienia', with the exception of Mała Pohulanka ('Kiedy byłem mały').

The collection has a ‘matryoshka’ structure: the titular poem is ‘covered’ with multiple layers of various poetic visions which are contained within a larger ‘container’ – ‘miasto bez imienia.’ As if Wilno, the place of a particular geographical location, expands beyond its physical boundaries in its poetic representations and becomes emblematic and symbolic of the poet’s viewing and arranging reality. Under the ‘patronage’ of Wilno which becomes a nucleus of space, the poet’s imagination spins particular representations of reality and organizes space in a particular way. ‘Miasto’ as a place encompasses, then, geographical locations with their auras (i.e. ‘character’, in Norberg-Schulz’s terminology), the sacral space and the space of language to which Miłosz refers directly in his metalingual poems. Those are the major, though not all, constituents that make up *the place* called ‘miasto’.

Miasto bez imienia - an enclosure within space

‘Miasto’ is a textual unit. It is a construct of poetic imagination which contains a certain holistic representation of a cityscape with all the accompanying associations and connotations, historical, cultural and symbolic; this cityscape at some points becomes *imago mundi*. As a textual unit, ‘miasto’ is an amalgam of various references as arranged and assembled in accordance with a certain poetic vision, the poet’s characteristic way of *seeing*, interweaved with and filtered through memories, past experiences, but also the poetic ego’s most immediate experiences of the moment. Chronotopically, the represented poetic space of this textual unit is a spatial amalgam of nostalgically evoked past and the present.

In a sense, 'miasto' as a *place* composed of a multitude of places, with certain auras ('characters'), together with the space of sacrum and that preserved purely in language becomes the poet's personal *temenos*. It possesses some archetypal and universal qualities, also becomes a sacral space around which spans the poet's site of dwelling. This site of dwelling, engraved in the poet's personal memory, has a universal dimension and needs to be saved from forgetting and from removal from the collective memory of humankind, which mission the poet undertakes ('Why should that city, defenceless and pure as the wedding neckless of a/ forgotten tribe, keep offering itself to me? [...] It stands before me, ready, not even the smoke from one chimney is/ lacking').¹⁹⁸ This site of dwelling, the *place*, is part of a hierarchized space, as shown in the poems 'Veni Creator' or 'Jakże znosiłeś', which constitutes an antidote to the malady of nothingness, of unhierarchized space ('Jak było'). This site of dwelling is also in the process of acquiring full definition, as shown in the poem 'W drodze'. It is enclosed within the space of language, within the mothertongue ('Moja wierna mowa').

'Miasto' holistically is a space *enclosed*, therefore distinct. Norberg-Schulz defined the enclosure in architectural terms which can be applied to the construct of Miłosz's 'miasto':

The distinctive quality of any man-made place is *enclosure*, and its character and spatial properties are determined by how it is enclosed. [...] Enclosure primarily means a distinct area which is separated from the surroundings by means of a built boundary. It may also be manifest in less strict form as a dense cluster of elements, where a continuous boundary is inferred rather than positively present. An 'enclosure' may even be created by a mere change in the texture of the ground. The cultural importance of defining an area which is qualitatively different from the surroundings, cannot be overestimated.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ 'Czemu już tylko mnie powierza się to miasto bezbronne/ i czyste jak naszyjnik weselny zapomnianego plemienia?/ [...] Stoi przede mną, gotowe, nie brak ani jednego dymu z komina' ('Miasto bez imienia').

¹⁹⁹ Norber-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, p. 58.

The boundaries of Miłosz's 'miasto' are denoted by the poetic ego's memory, as in the case of the titular poem where the *place* is enframed by and constructed from memory. The boundaries are delineated by religious imagination: hence space spans between heaven and earth ('Veni Creator', 'Jakże znosiłeś', 'Im więcej'), it is the space occupying the meeting point of sacrum and profanum. The catastrophic vision brought about by the lack of the sacral element of space is shown in the poem 'Jak było'. Another type of enclosure constitutes language, 'mowa', which becomes a literal site of dwelling ('You were my native land; I lacked any other').²⁰⁰

It can be said that imagination is the faculty responsible for *enclosing* space; the enclosure can only be gained, though, when the function of orientation and identification within space is maintained with relation to the vertical points of reference, the sky, in both literal and symbolic sense.²⁰¹

It is already in the opening poem 'Rok' that the principle of enclosure is delineated. In 'Rok', time – the year – becomes a container within which a particular experience is gathered. Spatiality and temporality are closely bound. Time in the poem is represented in categories of space and equated with space: 'I looked around in the unknown year'.²⁰² Temporal categories are turned into spatial categories: 'That was a high year, fox-coloured';²⁰³ filled with 'the pulse of music'²⁰⁴ beating in its groves and chambers. Time is tangible. It was 'zamieszkały' [inhabited], and at its very border 'the same lessons were being/ learned, how to walk on two legs and to pronounce the signs/ traced in the always childish book of our species.'²⁰⁵ The imagery spun around the spatio-

²⁰⁰ 'Byłaś moją ojczyzną, bo zabrakło innej' ('Moja wierna mowa').

²⁰¹ Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, pp. 5 and 10.

²⁰² 'Rozglądałem się po nieznanym roku' ('Rok').

²⁰³ 'Był to wysoki rok, lisowatego koloru' ('Rok').

²⁰⁴ 'tętno muzyki' ('Rok').

²⁰⁵ 'uczono się chodzić na dwóch nogach i wymawiać znaki nakreślone w zawsze dziecinnej księdze rodzaju' ('Rok').

temporal container, that is the year permeated with colours and sounds, emanates with the intellectual and social climate of the times. Time and space chronotopically configured together constitute an enclosure, a container, within which reality as perceived by the poetic ego is gathered.

On the other hand, chronotopical dissengagement and introduction of a boundary/threshold within space is illustrated in the poem 'Okno'. The last stanzas reveal the oneiric convention, dream stylization of the poem. The disengagement of space and time takes place: space is a fixed solid container, whereas the time is marked by movement. The poetic ego belongs to the realm of space; from the solid grounding in space he observes the transitoriness affecting the apple tree. The window provides a boundary between the inside and the outside: between contained space and flowing time. The poetic image, however, is a dream within which the comforting space provides a shelter against the transitoriness of existence.

Similarly, the 'individuated' spatial position of the lyrical 'I' in relation to the enclosed time and space beyond which he finds himself, is represented in the lines of 'Na trąbach i na cytrze': 'I looked at fishermen's dinghies stopped at the other shore and the/ year once again turned over, the vintage season began.'²⁰⁶ Space is fixed ('czółna rybaków nieruchome') like a piece of an immobilized photographic image or a painting. Time and space become disengaged and space provides an anchorage and shelter against the cyclical temporal movement. That is the power that space possesses, as expressed in '„The wet grasses of fertile deltas cleansed me from time and changed all/ into a present without beginning or end.'²⁰⁷ Even if dispersion within space takes place ('I disappear in architectural spirals, in lines of a crystal, in the sound of/ instruments playing in

²⁰⁶ 'Patrzyłem na czółna rybaków nieruchome po drugiej stronie/ i znowu obrócił się rok, zaczynało się winobranie.' ('Na trąbach i na cytrze').

²⁰⁷ 'Mokre trawy żyznych dorzeczy odjęły mi czas i zmieniły/ wszystko w teraz bez początku i końca.' ('Na trąbach i na cytrze').

forests’),²⁰⁸ yet the need for enclosure, enclosed shelter is immediately expressed: ‘Once again I return to excessive orchards and only the echo seeks me/ in that house on the hill under a hundred-year-old hazel tree.’²⁰⁹

Enclosing space within the concept of ‘miasto’ constitutes, on interpretation, a poetic antidote to the notion of ‘infinite space’ which, with reference to the human ontological status within the universe, pushes a human subject into the ‘nowhere.’ ‘Miasto’ constitutes a subjectified enclosure, that is within the boundaries of its concept the poetic persona’s *world* is gathered. As a poetic vision, ‘miasto’ is a container of space which constitutes an ‘existential foothold’, a space of ‘dwelling.’²¹⁰

The notion of a ‘container’ is connected with what Norberg-Schulz refers to as ‘concentration and enclosure’ as ‘the basic property of man-made places.’²¹¹ He defines enclosure in following terms: ‘In a wider context any enclosure becomes a *centre*, which may function as a ‘focus’ for its surroundings. From the centre space extends with a varying degree of continuity (rhythm) in different directions. Evidently the main directions are horizontal and vertical, that is, the directions of earth and sky. *Centralization, direction and rhythm* are therefore other important properties of concrete space.’²¹² Also, he points out ‘We may conclude that dwelling means to gather the world as a concrete building or ‘thing’, and that the archetypal act of building is the *Umfriedung* or enclosure. [...] Man dwells when he is able to concretize the world in buildings and things.’²¹³

²⁰⁸ ‘Ginę w spiralach architektury, w liniach kryształu, w dźwięku/ niesionych lasami instrumentów.’ (‘Na trąbach i na cytrze’).

²⁰⁹ ‘Powracam w nadmiar sadów i tylko echo szuka mnie w domu,/ na wzgórzu pod stuletnią leszczyną.’ (‘Na trąbach i na cytrze’).

²¹⁰ See Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, p. 6.

²¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 10.

²¹² *ibid.*, p. 12.

²¹³ *ibid.*, p. 22. Also as far as his theorizing of the notion of a thing is concerned: Norberg-Schulz writes of ‘concentration and enclosure’ with reference to the concept of a *thing* which he theorizes as follows: ‘They are “insides” in a full sense which means that they “gather” what is known. [...] the man-made environments comprise artifacts or “things”, which may serve as internal foci, and emphasize the gathering function of

Enclosure guards against infinity because the notion of infinity cannot be grasped by human senses and lies beyond the capacities of human imagination.²¹⁴ To be able to identify oneself and orientate oneself within space, both conceptually and physically, a human being needs categories that can be contained by the faculty of imagination. That has been stressed by Czesław Miłosz with reference to religious imagination: ‘Let no one say that religion can manage without such primitive directions to orient people. Not the theologians’ dogma, but human images of the universe, have determined the vigor of religions. The Descent of God and the Ascension are two of the spatial poles without which religion becomes pure spirituality devoid of any toehold in reality, a situation not to man’s measure.’²¹⁵

In the epigraph to the chapter ‘Religion and Space’ of *Visions from San Francisco Bay* Miłosz quotes after his cousin, Oscar Miłosz (*Les Arcanes*): ‘a blasphemous identification of space with infinity. Since all our ideas have their origin in our idea of place, a psychology not based on an analysis of our conceptions of the physical universe must be subjective and erroneous.’²¹⁶ The idea of the place, highlighted in the given quote, is connected with the enclosure of space, of space enclosed into a place; through place, space becomes redeemed from infiniteness and, therefore, a human subject is not doomed to grope in the realm of conceptual nothingness.²¹⁷ It is from the idea of *place* that all our ideas originate.²¹⁸ It could be interpreted, then, that in the light of Miłosz’s

the settlement. In Heidegger’s words: “The thing things world”, where “thinging” is used in the original sense of “gathering”, and further: “Only what conjoins itself out of world becomes a thing”, *ibid.*, p. 10.

²¹⁴ See Miłosz paraphrasing Swedenborg: ‘man cannot believe what he cannot understand’, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 221.

²¹⁵ Czesław Miłosz, *Visions from San Francisco Bay*, trans. by Richard Lourie (Carcanet New Press: Manchester, 1982, p. 32.

²¹⁶ O.V. de L. Miłosz, *Les Arcanes*, as quoted in *ibid.*, p. 30.

²¹⁷ See here Stuart Kauffman, *The Search for Laws of Self-organization and Complexity* (London: Viking, 1995) and Stuart Kauffman, *Reinventing the Sacred: a New View of Science, Reason and Religion* (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

²¹⁸ Oscar Miłosz, *Les Arcanes*, as quoted by Czesław Miłosz, in *Visions from San Francisco Bay*, p. 30.

citation of his cousin's, the sense of *place* has a primordial character, the idea of *place* is a foundation of all perception and a primordial category.

Miłosz observes the historical changes that took place in the perception of space: the shift from 'przestrzeń zawierająca' ['container'] to relative space:

Nevertheless, when here at night in these hills, near the brightly illuminated atomic laboratory where experiments beyond my understanding are conducted, I analyze my imagination, I realize that it is no longer entirely of the nineteenth century and that, in any case, I have been freed from an image of space as a solid body and container.²¹⁹

And further:

Religion and space: but now the old is meeting with the new. The old; that is, space conceived by the imagination as an infinitely extended, all-embracing body in which the chunks of manifold worlds are stuck like raisins in a cake. The new means space-creating movement, for, since space is relative and not absolute, why would we ascribe to it the features of a cake or an elephant and be amazed by its grandeur? And here Movement, the destroyer of hierarchy, reveals talents which its enemies, who defend the hierarchy at any cost, never suspected. In his romantic frock coat, standing on a mountaintop, the solitary admirer of his own ego succumbed to panic when faced with his own insignificance beneath the stars.²²⁰

The eighth part of the titular poem 'Miasto bez imienia' is an illustration of Miłosz's idea of space as a container and its opposite: infinity, dispersion, dilution, nothingness, non-presence. 'Insubstantiality' ['Niekonsystencja'] in the poem, can be considered as a direct antipode of 'ciało zawierające' of which Miłosz writes in *Visions from San Francisco Bay*. Paradoxically, the poet refers to 'Niekonsystencja' by means of adjectives related to the very physical sense of touch and taste: 'Absent, burning, acrid, salty, sharp.'²²¹ He creates semantic boundaries, which refer to bodily sensation, to grasp the concept which is inherently boundary-less. Moreover, 'Niekonsystencja' is capitalized and brought onto the sacral level expressed through the Polish

²¹⁹ Miłosz, *Visions from San Francisco Bay*, p. 35.

²²⁰ Miłosz, *Visions from San Francisco Bay*, p. 34.

²²¹ 'Nieobecne pałace ostre cierpkie słone'.

‘świętowanie’, and a bit less accentuated in the English translation: ‘Thus the feast of Insubstantiality’.²²² That ‘feast of Insubstantiality’ takes place within the landscape of ‘gdziekolwiek’ [anywhere] and brings about dispersion and dillution, non-presence, relativism, dispersion of values, ideas, undermining of paradigms epitomized by *Summa* – that is ideas enclosed, gathered, solid (‘Even the *Summa* thins into straw and smoke’).²²³ The ‘reality’ of heaven is there, yet is not part of the human space; it belongs to the excluded, closed-off space: ‘And the angelic choirs fly over in a pomegranate seed/ Sounding every few instants, not for us, their trumpets.’²²⁴

In his *Visions from San Francisco Bay*, Miłosz stresses, in yet another way, the significance of enclosure for human existence, enclosure both in the physical and in the symbolic sense. Enclosed space, as opposed to vast natural vistas of open space, safeguards the meaning of human activity of any sort and establishes a cultural context with its system of significance:

We spread papers on a table beneath a tree and try to write or add columns of figures; the uneasy leaves, stirred by the wind, the birds in flight, the drone of insects – that incommensurability between open space and the operations of the mind - immediately drive us to a place with four walls where our activities seem to acquire importance and dignity. Cocoons, caves, rooms, doors, enclosures, lairs, those underground galleries where Cro-Magnon man ventured, though endangered by cave-dwelling hyenas, so that in the farthest, deepest corner, he could draw magical beasts by torchlight: only there did his work become enormous, only from there could it govern the fate of the live animals on the surface of the earth.²²⁵

Open space, reflecting the vastness and potency of nature, reveals a human being in a ‘pure state of nature’, without cultural layers in which one has been dressed by culture and civilization. One stands naked in front of nature, human endeavors and achievements of cultural kind are pushed to the background when confronted with natural space:

²²² ‘Takie jest Niekonsystencji świętowanie’.

²²³ ‘Rozrzedza się w słomę, dym, nawet *Summa*’.

²²⁴ ‘I chóry anielskie przelatują w pestce granatu/ nie dla nas powoli co chwila grając na trąbach’.

²²⁵ Miłosz, *Visions from San Francisco Bay*, pp. 10-11.

In the presence of the pines by the Feather River, or on rocky promontories spattered by the ocean's white explosions where the wind bears the barking of sea lions, or on the slopes of Mt. Tamalpais, where the border of ocean and land, shattered into promontories, looks like the first day of creation, I stand stripped and destitute.²²⁶

This 'nakedness' about which Miłosz speaks in his *Visions from San Francisco Bay*, brings to mind the 'nakedness' from his poem 'Na brzegu': 'nakedness only, nothing mine, ours',²²⁷ and further, 'And although God should have cried over the loss of each and every substance, he too remains indifferent, as nothing is less'.²²⁸

Enclosure is a product of the process delineating the realm of meaning and significance of any human activity in a cultural context. An act of enclosing can be viewed, then, as an empowering act which contextualizes a human being outside of the natural realm and bestows significance on human activity. Just like a physical enclosure delineates a space where human activity acquires meaning, in the same way textual space provides a conceptual enclosure of meaning and significance:

Now I seek shelter in these pages, but my humanistic zeal has been weakened by the mountains and the ocean, by those many moments when I have gazed upon boundless immensities with a feeling akin to nausea, the wind ravaging my little homestead of hopes and intentions.²²⁹

In a symbolic sense, a text – a writer's creation – is an enclosure, a hiding place from the overpowering nature, a *place* which bestows significance and meaning onto human existence, defines it and constitutes its shelter. *Miasto bez imienia* is such an enclosure which outlines the authorial world, the poetic way of seeing and organizing reality through referring not only to particular geographical locations but also to the

²²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 10.

²²⁷ 'nagość tylko, nic nie moje, nasze' ('Na brzegu') [trans. by MM].

²²⁸ 'I choć Bóg powinienby płakać nad utratą każdej substancji, on także obojętny, bo nic nie ubyło.' ('Na brzegu') [trans. by MM].

²²⁹ Miłosz, *Visions from San Francisco Bay*, p. 11.

metaphysical space of culture, language, religion. In this sense, *miasto* is a container, a textual shelter safeguarding a particular spatial organization in all its richness and complexity.

Miasto bez imienia and a 'character' of a place

According to Norberg-Schulz, character of a place is 'determined by *how* things are.'²³⁰ It is 'at the same time a more general and a more concrete concept than "space". On the one hand it denotes a general comprehensive atmosphere, and on the other the concrete form and substance of the space-defining elements. Any real *presence* is intimately linked with a character.'²³¹ *Miasto bez imienia* as a place is not only geographically anchored in a particular location, it emanates with 'symbolic spaces' which, in Norberg-Schulz terms, could be referred to as representative of 'the character' of the place, a component of a lived space. As he points out: 'The structure of place becomes manifest as environmental totalities which comprise the aspects of character and space.'²³² In one of his definitions of the 'character' of a place, Norberg-Schulz refers to the character depending on 'symbolic forms':

Whereas a cosmic order is visualized by means of spatial *organization*, characters are symbolized through formal *articulation*. Characters are more intangible than natural 'things' and spatial relationships, and demand particular attention from the builder. In fact, their concretization presupposes a language of symbolic forms (style). Such a language consists of basic elements which may be varied and combined in different ways. In other words, it depends on systematic formal articulation.²³³

²³⁰ Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, p.10.

²³¹ *ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

²³² *ibid.*, p. 15.

²³³ *ibid.*, p. 53.

Miasto bez imienia constitutes a structure of various formal styles; also its articulation encompasses multiple spatio-temporal domains. The titular poem, grounded in a geographical location, itself constitutes an amalgam of stylistic, formal and topical heterogeneity. It will be primarily the titular poem which will be subject to analysis in this part of the thesis, hence the ‘character’ of the place will be illustrated on the basis of the geographical place – Wilno, not in the context of the collection as a whole.

A connection might be drawn between the character of a place (the aura) and, what Aleksander Fiut referred to as a ‘symbolic space’. There is a significant overlap in the understanding of both concepts which lies in the reference to space beyond the immediate, physical, material and corporeal. In the context of *Miasto bez imienia* such a status is ascribed to the space of culture/tradition, the space of sacrum and the space of language. In the context of the titular poem itself, the character of the place and, at the same time, the symbolic space, constitutes culture, tradition, history and memory of the poet who constructs the city as part of the ‘higher’ project of saving the city from oblivion. The formal articulation of Wilno – presentation of its character – takes place on multiple poetic levels of both form and contents.

The aura of the place – of Wilno of the titular poem – is created through a collage of various elements. The city is captured how it was and had been and, therefore, *how it is* for the poet. Composed of twelve parts the poem constitutes an amalgam of images, voices, personas, aspects and themes addressed in various ways yet all linked together, cyclically, in the first and the last parts which both, in their opening lines, pose a similar question: ‘Who will honor the city without a name’, ‘Why should that city, defenseless and pure [...] keep offering itself to me?’.²³⁴

²³⁴ ‘Kto honorować będzie miasto bez imienia?’, ‘Czemu już tylko mnie powierza się to miasto bezbronne/ i czyste?’

Within this collage the reader can follow free verse; in part four – a vignette of a regular rhyming pattern; part five alludes ‘by its rhythm to Polish madrigals of the eighteenth century’, as the poet explains in the footnote to the English translation of the poem;²³⁵ in part seven – meditation written with mathematical precision of form, where six stanzas composed of three lines of eight syllables each, rhyme regularly a-a-a.

The city of ‘Miasto bez imienia’ is a prism refracting various lights which are cast through speaking personas of each part of the long poem. The speaking persona’s voice modifies the aura of the place showing it from different perspectives and through different voices. The perspectives adopted are those of a chronicler with a mission to save the city from oblivion (first part), the speaking ‘I’ shifts into ‘we’ in the fourth part, becomes immersed in a deeply personalized meditation in part seven, or philosophical reflection (part eight), or adopts the role of a cartographer of streets and buildings with minute precision (part twelve). The titular poem of the collection, ‘Miasto bez imienia’, is immersed in the discourse of regionalism, yet, at the same time, it transcends it and emanates with universal significance through reflection and meditation on universal themes, e.g. in part eight of the poem which is devoted to the analysis of the cult of ‘Insubstantiality’ in the absence of hierarchical space.

The poem constitutes a photographic image, like a Giorgione’s painting of which Miłosz writes in *The Land of Ulro*, of the *place* immortalized not only in aesthetic but, first of all, ontological terms. Apart from the abundance of the geographical details, historical and cultural references, the poem speaks of individuals, people who were part of the place, who made the place and created its intellectual aura. In the first part, written in the form of six tercets, the poet evokes ‘Pathfinders’ [‘Tropiciiele’], ‘Vagabonds’

²³⁵ Czesław Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems 1931- 2001* (London: Allen Lane and The Penguin Press, 2001), p. 763.

[‘Włóczędzy’], ‘brethren of a dissolved lodge’ [‘bracia z rozwiązanej łoży’], ‘a man in a visored cap’ [‘mężczyznę w czapce z kozyrkiem’] and ‘a woman in a kerchief’ [‘kobieta w chustce’]. History is omnipresent and coexists with the present: Ponary Hills, ‘a black grouse hooted/ Standing on a cuirassier’s helmet, a relict of La Grande Armee’,²³⁶ etc. Romantic tradition becomes evoked as the reader witnesses Mickiewicz’s and Maryla’s parade. Emotion becomes captured and immobilized as ‘In the library, below a tower painted with the signs of the zodiac,/ Kontrym would take a whiff from his snuffbox and smile’;²³⁷ thus historical figure becomes perpetuated with his emotion (Kazimierz Kontrym’s life spanned between 1792 and 1836, he was ‘a librarian at the university library in Wilno’ who ‘as a freemason acted as an intermediary between the city’s Freemasonic lodges and clandestine student organizations’).²³⁸ Multiculturality of the place is expressed by reference to buildings and names of streets (‘jechały żydowskie furmanki’, ul. Niemiecka, litewska Msza u Św. Mikołaja, Basilian church – Uniate).²³⁹ The aura of the place is conveyed through onomatopoeic device (‘Z flecikami, z pochodniami/ i bęben bum bum’) as the reader is led in a procession through the streets of Wilno. The *place* emanates with cultural and intellectual aura as the poet evokes ‘Humanities Students Club, Division of Creative Writing’,²⁴⁰ or inscribes his biography in the romantic tradition of the city, as he does in the vignette illustrating his youth. (‘Books, we have written a whole library of them./ Lands, we have visited a great many of them./ [...] Till we are no more, we and our Maryla.’²⁴¹

²³⁶ ‘cietrzew na kasku kirasjera Wielkiej Armii’.

²³⁷ ‘W bibliotece pod wieżą malowaną w znaki zodiaku/ Kontrym brał z tabakierki szczyptę i uśmiechał się’.

²³⁸ Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems*, p. 762.

²³⁹ As Miłosz points out in the endnotes to the English translation: ‘The religious order of St. Basil was Uniate, i.e. not Roman Catholic but Greco-Catholic. While Wilno was predominantly Roman Catholic and Jewish, large parts of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were Uniate’, Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems*, p. 763.

²⁴⁰ ‘Szekcja Twórczości Oryginalnej Koła Polonistów’ (‘Miasto bez imienia’).

²⁴¹ ‘A książek tośmy całą bibliotekę napisali./ A krain tośmy co niemiara zjeździli./ [...] Aż i nie ma, ni nas ni Maryli’.

The poetic 'I' fluctuates into 'we', at points becomes dispersed within the cityscape as the poet adapts a tone of a narrator-observer, or, at other points becomes immersed in his own thoughts and reflections, as in part seven of the poem. The poet evokes not only the 'high culture' of the place, he delves into the quotidian and enriches descriptions with the very base elements of human existence, as he does in part ten. So the character of the place, of Wilno of the poems 'Miasto bez imienia' and 'Na trąbach i na cytrze', is made by 'Retinues of homespun velveteen skirts,/ giggles above a railing, pigtails askew/ sitting on chamberpots upstairs/ [...] and pregnant sheep,/ and pigs, fast eaters and poor eaters,/ and cows cured by incantations.'²⁴² Local prejudice is evoked ('cows cured by incantations'),²⁴³ folk wisdom and superstition (devils ['diabły'] Duliban, Kostruban, Mędreła as evoked in the poem 'Na trąbach i na cytrze'), archaisms (gównowozy, kopytkowe), or the very atmosphere of St. Casimir's Fair (part eleven of 'Miasto bez imienia'). Sound, colour, flickering flame of candles are captured in very sensually powerful, synesthetic descriptions ('In the silence of stopped spinning-wheels, fear by the flame of two/ candles, a mouse scratching, a nuptial of phantoms').²⁴⁴ Evoking archaistic details the poet acts as a savour of the extinct place and creates a magical and mythical construct of the city. In the process of reconstructing the archaic aura of the city, a major part is played by language. Evocation of names is of particular significance here: 'Outlandish districts in mud up to the axle-tree, names I alone/ remember: Gineitai, Apytalaukis.'²⁴⁵

²⁴² 'Fraucymery barchanowych spódnic,/ chichoty nad poręczą, skośne warkocze,/ siadanie na nocniki na piętrze/ [...] i owce kotne/ i świnię jedkie i niejedkie/ i leczone zamawianiem krowy'.

²⁴³ 'leczone zamawianiem krowy' ('Miasto bez imienia').

²⁴⁴ 'W ciszy nieruchomych kołowrotek strach za płomieniem/ dwóch świec, chrobot myszy, zaślubiny duchów' ('Na trąbach i na cytrze', part nine).

²⁴⁵ 'Gminy zapadłe po osie, nazwy dla nikogo prócz mnie: Ginejty, Jaswojnie, Opitołoki.' ('Na trąbach i na cytrze').

Homo viator of *Miasto bez imienia*. On the way towards the *place*. Call for the
restitution of the hierarchical space

The persona of a *homo viator* appears already in the opening poem 'Rok' where the Ovidian experience of the speaking 'I' is delineated within the boundaries of the 'unknown year'. The Columbus-eye curiosity in the face of the 'unknown' is accompanied by the assertion of the Ovidian fate: the poet-speaker is 'aware that few are those who come from so far.'²⁴⁶ Anchoring the reading of the poem in Miłosz's biography, which seems justifiable in the light of Aleksander Fiut's 'The Identity Game', where 'he identifies the mechanisms by which Miłosz's "I" wanders in "human history but also within his private autobiography"',²⁴⁷ the speaking persona is an exile. In the poem, however, exile is turned into an experience of discovery with the simultaneous maintenance of the natural distance between the pilgrim 'from so far' and the newly encountered reality of the 'unknown year'. The poetic heterotopy merges the speaking persona's experience of the unknown time with the specific experience of the particular space enframed within delineated time, yet from a distance. There is a distance between the *homo viator* who comes from so far, and 'a generation clad in patterned robes trimmed with little bells'.²⁴⁸ The distance between 'I' and 'them' is broadened by the metaphoric evanescence of the poet's presence from among 'a generation': 'I repeated their guttural songs of ecstatic despair walking by the sea/ when it bore in boys on surfboards and washed my footprints/ away.'²⁴⁹ The impersonal forms of verbs: 'uczono się chodzić [...]

²⁴⁶ 'wiedząc, że niewielu przybywa z tak daleka'.

²⁴⁷ Aleksander Fiut, 'The Identity Game', as quoted by Carmen Bugar, *Seamus Heaney and East European Poetry in Translation: Poetics of Exile* (London: Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing, 2013), pp. 98-99.

²⁴⁸ 'pokolenie ubrane w szaty wzorzyste obszyte dzwoneczkami'.

²⁴⁹ 'Gardłowe jego pieśni ekstatycznej rozpaczę powtarzałem idąc/ wzdłuż morza kiedy przybój niósł chłopców na deskach i zmy-/wał mój ślad'.

i wymawiać’ broaden the perspective separating the speaking ‘I’ from the described reality, but also add to the irony accumulated in the omniscient-eye representation of the times: ‘At the very border of inhabited time the same lessons were being/ learned, how to walk on two legs and to pronounce the signs/ traced in the always childish book of our species.’²⁵⁰ The speaking persona draws the reader’s attention to himself – presenting his role of a witness to the times; witness, yet somehow incapacitated: ‘I would have related, had I known how.’²⁵¹ He sings out, in the final stanza, a eulogy for being in a hierarchical space which echoes with Sanctus of Catholic liturgy: ‘O sun, o stars, I was saying, holy, holy, holy is our being beneath/ heaven and the day and our endless communion.’²⁵² It is this general perspective of being *with reference to* the heaven which provides a sense of orientation for the speaking persona within space where he finds himself. It is the space of the ‘unknown year’, in the place which, although the speaking persona is physically part of it, is distant. This place is, however, part of the hierarchically arranged space. Therefore the speaking persona, although distanced from the delineated reality, is not alienated from it. He is part of that reality thanks to the metaphysical point of reference. Formally, the final stanzas constitute a pastiche of the Christian liturgy hymn – Sanctus of the Eucharystic Prayer of consecration of bread and wine. In the poem, the hymn of the final stanza consecrates the very being, being beneath heaven ‘and the day and our endless communion.’

Looking at the collection *Miasto bez imienia* as a whole, the speaking ‘I’ of the poems is the persona coming from a distant place and fascinated with the unknown (‘I looked around in the unknown year, aware that few are those who/ come from so far, I

²⁵⁰ ‘Na samej granicy zamieszkałego czasu uczono się chodzić na/ dwóch nogach i wymawiać znaki nakreślone w zawsze dziecin-/nej księdze rodzaju’.

²⁵¹ ‘Opowiadałbym gdybym umiał’.

²⁵² ‘O słońce, o gwiazdy, mówiłem, święty, święty, święty, byt nasz/ podniebny i dzień i wieczne obcowanie’.

was saturated with sunlight as a plant with/ water’),²⁵³ but also constantly looking back in a nostalgic reminiscence of the place left behind which needs to be saved from oblivion. This mission has both personal and universal dimension of inscribing the place in the collective memory of humankind. The speaking persona is the ‘I’ crying out to the Holy Spirit to make Him show some visible signs of His existence (‘Veni Creator’). The poetic ‘I’ is driven by the urge to define his place within the world as a human subject, but also to define himself (‘when I do not remember who I am and who I was’).²⁵⁴ It is the ‘I’ on the way – a *homo viator* who refers to his experience: ‘I disappear in architectural spirals, in lines of a crystal [...] Once again I return to excessive orchards and only the echo seeks me/ in that house on the hill under a hundred-year-old hazel tree.’²⁵⁵ It is the ‘I’ on the way towards the *place*. The place of identification and belonging which is there as a geographical entity, but also a mythologized construct which combines the regional and the universal and is woven into a particular philosophical outlook and shaped by the particular way of perceiving reality. All of the aforementioned delineate the grid of coordinates of the poetic persona’s place within the world in a holistic context (‘on the roads of my terrestrial homeland turning around with the/ music of the spheres’),²⁵⁶ within ‘the estate of the world to manage’.²⁵⁷

Homo viator is on the way towards the *place*. Norberg-Schulz defines *place* in the following words: ‘The place represents architecture’s share in truth. The place is the concrete manifestation of man’s dwelling, and his identity depends on his belonging to places.’²⁵⁸ *Place* is therefore a site where *being* and *dwelling* are realized. It cannot be

²⁵³ ‘rozglądałem się po nieznanym roku, wiedząc że niewielu/ przybywa z tak daleka, blask napoił mnie jak woda roślinę’.

²⁵⁴ ‘jeżeli nie pamiętam,/ kim jestem i kim byłem?’ (‘Na trąbach i na cytrze’).

²⁵⁵ ‘ginę w spiralach architektury, w liniach kryształu [...] Powracam w nadmiar sadów i tylko echo szuka mnie w domu/ na wzgórzu pod stuletnią leszczyną.’ (‘Na trąbach i na cytrze’).

²⁵⁶ ‘na drogach ziemskiej ojczyzny obracającej się z muzyką sfer’ (‘Na trąbach i na cytrze’).

²⁵⁷ ‘wspólne gospodarstwo świata’ (‘Zakłęcie’).

²⁵⁸ Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, p. 6.

defined in strictly functional and material terms, it is not a location. *Place* is ‘a totality made up of concrete things having material substance, shape, texture and colour. Together these things determine an “environmental character”, which is the essence of place. In general, a place is given as such a character or “atmosphere”. A place is therefore a qualitative, “total” phenomenon, which we cannot reduce to any of its properties, such as spatial relationships, without losing its concrete nature out of sight.’²⁵⁹ *Place* is a site of dwelling, it possesses an ontological dimension. According to Norberg-Schulz:

To dwell between heaven and earth means to “settle” in the “multifarious in-between”, that is, to concretize the general situation as a man-made place. The word “settle” here does not mean a mere economical relationship; it is rather an existential concept which denotes the ability to symbolize *meanings*. When the man-made environment is meaningful, man is “at home”. The places where we have grown up are such “homes” [...]. From the beginning of time man has recognized that to create a place means to express the essence of being. The man-made environment where he lives is not a mere practical tool or the result of arbitrary happenings, it has structure and embodies meanings. These meanings and structures are reflections of man’s understanding of the natural environment and his existential situation in general.²⁶⁰

The aforementioned definitions of place highlight the relationship between a human subject and environment which results in converting space into a meaningful place of ontological significance. At the same time, Norberg-Schulz points to the act of creation with reference to the place. A *place*, as a result of creating and understanding, is an effect and product of human agency.

Miasto bez imienia can be considered illustrative of the process of the active search for the *place* and of bestowing and perpetuating meanings inherent in space, through the very act of perception, understanding and organization of reality. This process is illustrated via the persona of the *homo viator*. The process takes place on multifarious levels: of both identification with the material space, immediate and distant, past and present, but it also has a universal dimension of a human pilgrimage on earth, of

²⁵⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

²⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 49.

defining human ontological status within the universe. That universal aspect of a human dwelling on earth is expressed in the poems 'Rok': 'holy, holy, holy is our being beneath/ heaven',²⁶¹ also in 'Na trąbach i na cytrze': 'And on the roads of my terrestrial homeland turning around with the/ music of the spheres'²⁶² or in 'Zakłęcie': 'Giving us the estate of the world to manage.'²⁶³

The process of an active search and creation of the *place* within the world is spurred by the need for anchorage in a geographical location. It is expressed in the poem 'Na trąbach i na cytrze' through the languishing gaze towards the idyllic place of the past: 'Once again I return to excessive orchards and only the echo seeks me/ in that house on the hill under a hundred-year-old hazel tree.'²⁶⁴ It is also expressed through the representation of the plight of an exile. The plight of a torn and divided ego with the need to *belong* which accumulates in the 'drive' *ad fontes* is powerfully portrayed in the imagery of the speaking 'I' as lying on many shores at once surrounded by an ocean: 'Then how can you [my consciousness] overtake me, you, weighing blame and merit, now/ when I do not remember who I am and who I was?/ On many shores at once I am lying cheek on the sand and the same/ ocean runs in, beating its ecstatic drums.'²⁶⁵

The need for geographical anchorage is accompanied by the need for establishing one's place within the space of the earth conceptually, with reference to heaven; otherwise human existence is marked with *absence*, and, what follows, apocalyptic *nothingness*, powerfully portrayed in the poem 'Jak było':

²⁶¹ 'święty, święty, święty, byt nasz podniebny'.

²⁶² 'I na drogach ziemskiej ojczyzny obracającej się z muzyką sfer'.

²⁶³ 'W zarząd oddając nam wspólne gospodarstwo świata'.

²⁶⁴ 'Powracam w nadmiar sadów i tylko echo szuka mnie w domu/ na wzgórzu pod stuletnią leszczyną' ('Na trąbach i na cytrze').

²⁶⁵ 'I jakże dogonisz mnie [świadomości – my note], uroczysta, odważająca winy i zasługi,/ jeżeli nie pamiętam kim jestem i kim byłem?// Na wielu brzegach równocześnie leże z policzkiem na piasku/ i słyszę jak bijąc w ekstatyczne bębny nadbiega ten sam ocean.' ('Na trąbach i na cytrze').

I saw absence; the mighty power of counter-fulfillment; the penalty of a promise lost forever.

[...]

No eagle-creator circled in the air from which the thunderbolt of its glory had been cast out.

Protective spirits hid themselves in subterranean beds of bubbling ore, jolting the surface from time to time so that the fabric of freeways was bursting asunder.

God the Father didn't walk about any longer tending the new shoots of a cedar [...].

His son did not know his sonship and turned his eyes away when passing by a neon cross flat as a movie screen showing a striptease.

This time it was really the end of the Old and the New Testament.²⁶⁶

The process of one's personal identification with the particular place, which involves sense of belonging geographically, and of establishing one's ontological status in the world conceptually, go hand in hand together. The specificity of the local and the regional is contained within the ontologically universal. In a sense, as a digression here, one can approach this statement from the standpoint of the discourse of *new regionalism*, to which E. Rybicka refers quoting Salman Rushdie: 'each place is part of all other places',²⁶⁷ which reconciles the discrepancy between local and universal. The poetic persona of the poem 'W drodze' directly experiences the positionality within the universal sphere of sacrum with the physical anchorage in the particular geographical

²⁶⁶ 'Widziałem nieobecność; mocarstwo przeciw spełnieniu; karę/ utraconej na zawsze obietnicy./ [...] Żaden orzeł-stwórca nie szybował w powietrzu z którego wytrą-/cono piorun jego chwały.// Opiekunckie duchy skryły się za podziemne łożą bulgoczącej/ rudy i targały niekiedy powierzchnią, aż pękała materia auto-/strad.// Bóg Ojciec nie przechadzał się doglądając latorośli cedru, [...]// Syn jego nie znał synostwa i odwracał oczy mijając krzyż neonu-/wy, płaski jak ekran strip-tease.// Tym razem był to naprawdę koniec Starego i Nowego Testamentu.' ('Jak było').

²⁶⁷ 'każde miejsce jest częścią wszystkich innych miejsc' [trans. by MM], Salman Rushdie as quoted by Elżbieta Rybicka, 'Od poetyki przestrzeni do polityki miejsca. Zwrot topograficzny w badaniach literackich', Central and Eastern European Online Library, Teksty Drugie, issue 4/2008, pp. 21-38 <www.ceeol.com>.

location: 'Disinherited of prophecies, eating bread at noon under a tall pine/ stronger than any hope.'²⁶⁸

Positionality, both physical and conceptual, of a homo viator within space, is illustrated in Miłosz's essayistic writing together with the experience of exile. The experience does not, however, entail conceptual lack of the sense of place, but rather intensifies the spiritual longing for the place of belonging. This can be seen on the basis of the parallels Miłosz draws between himself and his cousin, Oscar Miłosz, whom he perceived as a man in 'quest for a homeland, for *place*.'²⁶⁹ The two poets had in common the experience of exile. They both had a very strong sense of a homeland, which, in both cases, was extended onto the level of the philosophical enquiry into the nature of space, its materiality and its metaphysical dimension. They shared the desire to find a certain mode of perception of space in an attempt to grasp its essence; they both searched for the definition of a human status within space. In their experience of the fate of exile, they accentuated the need for physical homeland, physical point of anchorage within space which would provide a sense of identification with a particular tradition through a particular *place*. Czesław Miłosz quotes in the *Land of Ulro* a letter written by Oscar Miłosz to Prozor in which Oscar Miłosz, on the basis of the imagery of their parallel fates, draws an evocative image of his experience of being an exile:

two Lithuanian artists, exiled from our physical homeland – both in the historical sense, such as has existed for centuries, and personally, such as we have been for decades- and forced to invent one of the spirit, no less Lithuanian but located in a past and future so remote as to be almost imaginary. When you mention a hotel on the rue de Rivoli, my memory evokes another from the past, this one on the rue Helder in 1889, and the mirage of distant childhood, which suffuses the pages you devote to me with such nostalgia, haunts me too, because I am a man who wills for the future and lives always in the past. [...] By allying me with my own tribe, with my ancient people, you have cast my personality in striking perspective, filling a void which I myself have laboured so hard to fill. You alone have appreciated that need of mine for a genuine homeland, a need which is the primary impulse of my work; by assigning me a fixed place on earth, you have physically grounded my art and my work.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ 'Wydziedziczony z prorocstw, spożywając swój chleb w południe/ pod sosną wysokopienną mocniejszą od nadziei.' ('W drodze').

²⁶⁹ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 76.

²⁷⁰ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 72.

Miłosz recounts Oscar Miłosz's and the Prozors journey to Lithuania in 1922 and writes that with the Lithuanian independence of 1918, Oscar Miłosz and the Prozors 'had sworn allegiance to the new state, and their expedition in 1922 was a journey in quest [...] of their ancestral land.'²⁷¹ At some other point Miłosz refers to Oscar Miłosz's experience:

Note that in reflecting on his life he discovered a symbolic equivalence of his vision and his ancestry. Homelessness, in the tribal as well as the geographical sense, became a *correspondence* of the spiritual exile of modern man, and his own quest for a homeland, for *place*, acquired a double meaning. That the notion of homeland is born of the same realm as myth and fable we, above all, can appreciate- we as readers of *Pan Tadeusz*, a work that, paradoxically, can be said to 'reflect' reality only on the sociological, novelistic plane. (Even as a student at the Gymnasium, I was sensitive to the work's license in its treatment of the Lithuanian landscape, until I finally understood it for what it was: a realized fairy tale). Miłosz's avowed aspiration for 'genuine homeland' suggests a conscious playing with a self-created myth, and not surprisingly the two volumes of Lithuanian fairy tales which he adapted are full of a charming humour. But fairy tales and myths do not lie – and Maurice Prozor was not lying when he portrayed both himself and Oscar Miłosz as exiles of the century.

Not all who are homeless wish to remain so, and we are presently witnesses to a nostalgic revival on behalf of the regional homeland – whether it be a Wales, Brittany, or Provence. Yes those in Carcassonne who publish novels in *langue d'oc* must be aware of the mythmaking, legendmaking aspect of the enterprise. I can sympathize with them; indeed, it seems to me now, when my own exile compares in many ways to that of Oscar Miłosz, that even as a Wilno schoolboy in sympathy with the 'regionalists', I understood that a homeland was both very much a need and a product of the imagination.²⁷²

The statement that 'Homeland was both very much a need and a product of the imagination' corresponds to the parallel drawn by Miłosz between space and imagination: 'Man is above all an organizer of space, both internal and external, and this in fact is what is meant by imagination. We are that pulsation of blood, that rhythm, that organism which transposes external spatial structures into internal spaces.'²⁷³ One's homeland is a map drawn conceptually within one's mind. It is this 'act' of imagination which decides on one's anchorage within the world, full *dwelling* and *being*. It could be gathered then, in the light of Miłosz's writing, that exile from homeland, from the *place* one identifies

²⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 73.

²⁷² *ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

²⁷³ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 245.

oneself with, does not entail what constitutes an antithesis to *dwelling*, that is alienation. On the contrary, it can lead to the fuller development of one's sense of anchorage, of one's sense of *dwelling*.

To go back to the collection *Miasto bez imienia*: in a broader, metaphysical sense, homo viator of *Miasto bez imienia* is in search of the points of orientation within the space of the world, of the earth in general. This search has validity only in the context of the hierarchical space within which a guidance of directions for orientation is provided. The guidance is looked for by a homo viator who faces the question: 'To what summoned?' – 'Disinherited of prophecies, eating bread at noon under a tall pine/ stronger than any hope.'²⁷⁴ The search for guidance is implicitly present in the poetic 'I's meditation and reflection on divided life, on being en route: 'Time cuts me in two.// Monuments covered with snow,/ Accept my gift. I wandered;/ And where, I don't know.'²⁷⁵

The search does not imply alienation. The homo viator of *Miasto bez imienia* does not belong to the realm of Ulro, of uprootedness and spiritual disinheritance, but, on the contrary, he tries to define his place in the holistic picture of the world which includes second space. He is a traveller *out of* the Land of Ulro, out of the placeless place, the shadow of which is 'felt' and can be seen at some points in *Miasto bez imienia* when the call for the restoration of the hierarchical space is intensified. The vision of space which spans between heaven and earth constitutes an ontological orientation which safeguards against alienation within the world which is lamented by Miłosz in *Visions from San*

²⁷⁴ 'Do czego powołany?' – 'Wydziedziczony z prorocstw, spożywając swój chleb w południe pod sosną wysokopienną mocniejszą od nadziei.' ('W drodze').

²⁷⁵ 'Czas mnie na dwoje rozdziela.// Zaśnieżone monumenty,/ Niech dar mój będzie przyjęty,/ Wędrowałem, nie wiem kędy.' ('Miasto bez imienia').

Francisco Bay: 'They have experienced the collapse of hierarchical space, and when they fold their hands and lift up their eyes, 'up' no longer exists.'²⁷⁶

The catastrophic landscape in which 'nie ma już góry' is presented in the poem 'Jak było'. The poetic persona, in search for hope, ascends a mountain, which points to the symbolic hierarchization of space: 'Stalking a deer I wandered deep into the mountains and from there I/ saw.'²⁷⁷ There spans a vision of Godless space: 'I saw absence [...]// No eagle-creator circled in the air from which the thunderbolt of its/ glory had been cast out.'; 'God the Father didn't walk about any longer [...]// His son did not know his sonship [...]// This time it was really the end of the Old and the New Testament.'; 'And those who longed for the Kingdom took refuge like me in the/ mountains to become the last hairs of a dishonoured myth.'²⁷⁸

The call for the restoration of the hierarchical space is expressed in the poem 'Veni Creator', a pastiche of the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* – invocation of the Holy Spirit, parodizing the hymn's loftiness and abstraction, and anchoring it in the realm of the earthly. Religious dimension is brought here onto the level of the factual, the material and the realistic. 'I tire easily, building the stairway of abstraction,'²⁷⁹ as the poet states. In another long poem, 'Na trąbach i na cytrze', the symbolic space of sacrum is opened by formal biblical stylization. The poetic ego expresses the need for orientation and identification when the boundary between the ego and the surrounding space becomes effaced: 'I disappear in architectural spirals, in lines of a crystal, in the sound of/

²⁷⁶ Miłosz, *Visions from San Francisco Bay*, p. 32.

²⁷⁷ 'Ścigając jelenia zapuściłem się daleko w góry i stamtąd widziałem'.

²⁷⁸ 'Widziałem nieobecność. [...]// Żaden orzeł-stwórca nie szybował w powietrzu z którego wytrącono piorun jego chwały.'; 'Bóg Ojciec nie przechadzał się [...]// Syn jego nie znał synostwa [...]// Tym razem był to naprawdę koniec Starego i Nowego Testamentu.'; 'A którzy tęsknili do Królestwa, jak ja dziczeli w górach, potomkowie zhańbionego/ mitu'.

²⁷⁹ 'Nużę się prędko budowaniem schodów abstrakcji'.

instruments playing in the forests./ Once again I return to excessive orchards and only the echo seeks me/ in that house on the hill under a hundred-year-old hazel tree.’²⁸⁰

The need for identification within the infinite space is connected with an almost obsessive groping for the physical and tangible manifestations of space, for the *place*, which entails descending from the realm of the abstract onto the realm of the concrete. In the ninth part of the titular poem ‘Miasto bez imienia’, the speaking poet displays his almost pantheistic enchantment with nature, with the physically perceptible and tangible, in juxtaposition with the abstract ‘high light’: ‘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.’²⁸¹ Or, as in the eleventh part of the poem: ‘Not the Last Judgement, just a kermess by a river./ Small whistles, clay chickens, candied hearts./ So we trudged through the slush of melting snow/ To buy bagels from the district of Smorgonie.’²⁸²

Second space is, then, taken from the level of abstraction and it is inscribed into the quotidian, the everyday, the most immediate reality. The conceptual stratification of space between heaven and earth finds its reflection in physical reality: ‘At dawn the expanse takes its rise, a high horizontal whiteness up to/ the slopes of Tamalpais.’²⁸³ Human body itself is inscribed into the natural order of horizontal space: ‘Height, length,

²⁸⁰ ‘Ginę w spiralach architektury, w liniach kryształu, w dźwięku niesionych lasami instrumentów./Powracam w nadmiar sadów i tylko echo szuka mnie w domu na wzgórzu pod stuletnią leszczyną’.

²⁸¹ ‘Jednak co za jasne i za wysokie to nie dla mnie./ Więc kiedy różowieją obłoki myślę o świetle niskim,/ jak w krajach brzozy i sosny obleczonej chrupkim porostem,/ późną jesienią, pod szronem, kiedy ostatnie rydze/ dogniwają w borkach i psy gonią z echem,/ a kawki krążą nad wieżą bazylińskiego kościoła.’

²⁸² ‘Nie sąd ostateczny a kiermasz nad rzeką/ Świstawki, kogutki, serca lukrowane./ Na to chodziliśmy po tającym śniegu./ Smorgońskie obwarzanki kupowaliśmy’.

²⁸³ ‘Świta początek obszaru, wysoka horyzontalna biel aż po krawędzie góry/ Tamalpais.’ (‘Na trąbach i na cytrze’).

and width take in their arms a sleeping caterpillar of a/ rolled body./ And carry it over a frozen waste of the Sierras to the most distant/ province of the continent.²⁸⁴ Again, in the poem 'Jak było', the speaking persona is, as if, physically lifted upwards to gain a metaphysical insight: 'I wandered deep into the mountains and from there I saw.// Or perhaps it was for some other reason that I rose above the setting sun.// Above the hills of blackwood and a slab of ocean and the steps of a/ glacier, carmine-coloured in the dusk.'²⁸⁵

The need for hierarchized space in which a human being can orientate themselves with reference to the sky and the earth was recognized by Norberg-Schulz who makes a diagnosis of the crisis which has its roots in the 'loss of the sense of place' by a human imagination. It is symptomatic of what he calls the 'environmental crisis' which, although presented in the context of architecture, has broader ontological ramifications and corresponds to the state of alienation of a human subject on earth – a diagnosis that Milosz makes and analyses in the *Land of Ulro*. Norberg-Schulz's architectural definition of the 'environmental crisis' can be looked at as a manifestation of a human condition in more general terms:

In general, the symptoms indicate a loss of place. Lost is the settlement as a place in nature, lost are the urban foci as places for common living, lost is the building as a meaningful sub-place where man may simultaneously experience individuality and belonging. Lost is also the relationship to earth and sky. Most modern buildings exist in a 'nowhere'; they are not related to a landscape and not to a coherent, urban whole, but live their abstract life in a kind of mathematical-technological space which hardly distinguishes between up and down. The same feeling of 'nowhere' is also encountered in the interiors of the dwellings. [...] In general, all *qualities* are lost, and we may indeed talk about an 'environmental crisis.' It has often been pointed out that the modern environment makes human orientation difficult.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ 'Wysokość, długość, szerokość biorą we śnie na ręce gośsienicę/ zwiniętego ciała.// I unoszą ją nad zamarzłą pustkę Sierra do najdalszej prowincji//kontynentu.' ('Na trąbach i na cytrze').

²⁸⁵ 'zapuściłem się daleko w góry i stamtąd widziałem./ Albo może z jakiegokolwiek innego powodu wzniosłem się nad zachodzące słońce.// Nad stoki czarnoboru i płat oceanu i karminowe o zmierzchu stopnie lodowca.' ('Jak było').

²⁸⁶ Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, p. 190.

In Norberg-Schulz's words, 'The environmental crisis, therefore, implies a human crisis.'²⁸⁷ Its solution lies in the 'recovery of place'²⁸⁸ and education of imagination, which, on interpretation, equates with the return to being and dwelling, restoration of meaning and, therefore, gaining a sense of direction within the world. As he points out:

Today man is mainly educated in pseudo-analytic thinking, and his knowledge consists of so-called 'facts.' His life, however, is becoming ever more meaningless, and ever more he understands that his 'merits' do not count if he is not able to 'dwell poetically'. 'Education through Art' is therefore more needed than ever before and the work of art which above all ought to serve as the basis for our education, is the *place* which gives us our identity. Only when understanding our place, we may be able to participate creatively and contribute to its history.'²⁸⁹

The idea crucial to Norberg-Schulz's thought – to *understand* the *place* – appears, as well, to be one of the main threads of Miłosz's conception of space. Both of the thinkers recognize detrimental effects of scientific and functional dogmatism and both point to the way out of the crisis which lies in the specific formation of imagination. The imagination needs to acknowledge the verticalism of human existence spanning between heaven and earth, which corresponds to recognition of one's *place* on earth. The placelessness, as theorized by Norberg-Schulz in the architectural context, is overcome, conceptually and materially, by Miłosz in his poetic edifice which *Miasto bez imienia* constitutes.

Space and detail

The construction of *Miasto bez imienia* as the *place* is governed by, what I perceive as a literary device in the context of the collection, of a *detail recaptured*.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 191.

²⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 201.

²⁸⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 201-202.

²⁹⁰ See Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 11.

Joanna Zach refers to Miłosz's poetics of detail as linked with his notion of Imagination from before the Fall,²⁹¹ a notion which will be elaborated in the final chapter of this thesis.

Capturing detail within space is what underlies the interaction between the speaking persona of the poems and the delineated world. It also defines a characteristic way of *seeing* – seeing attentively with the simultaneous ascribing of *meaning* onto what is being perceived. This interaction is a constituent of the process of arriving at the truth of reality: 'It seems to me that from such a strong mutual attraction/ The ultimate truth should issue at last.'²⁹² It also underlies the poetic creed as expressed by Miłosz at the World Poetry Conference in Montreal, Sept, 1967: 'I am convinced that the only reason for the poet's existence is to reveal a new dimension to his reader so that the very business of life among people should become more intense and interesting.'²⁹³

Norberg-Schulz points to the importance of *detail* in our surroundings for the experience of meaningfulness of dwelling. Meaningfulness is, in turn, considered by him as the most fundamental need of human existence: 'In general meaning is a psychic function. It depends on identification, and implies a sense of 'belonging'. It therefore constitutes the basis of dwelling. We ought to repeat that man's most fundamental need is to experience his existence as meaningful.'²⁹⁴ He writes of the meaningfulness of dwelling:

To dwell between heaven and earth means to 'settle' in the 'multifarious in-between', that is, to concretize the general situation as a man-made place. The word 'settle' here does not mean a mere economical relationship; it is rather an existential concept which denotes the ability to symbolize *meanings*. When the man-made environment is meaningful, man is 'at home'. The places where we have grown up are such 'homes' [...]. From the beginning of time man has recognized that to create a place means to express the essence of being. The man-made environment where he lives is not a mere practical tool or the result of arbitrary happenings, it has structure and embodies meanings.

²⁹¹ Joanna Zach, *Miłosz i poetyka wyznania* (Kraków: Universitas, 2002).

²⁹² 'Wydaje mi się, że z tak wielkiej wzajemnej skłonności/ Mogłaby wreszcie wyniknąć prawda ostateczna' ('Kiedy książyc').

²⁹³ As quoted by Judith A. Dompkowski, *Down a Spiral Staircase, Never-ending: Motion as Design in the Writing of Czesław Miłosz* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), p. 111.

²⁹⁴ Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, p. 166.

Theses meanings and structures are reflections of man's understanding of the natural environment and his existential situation in general.²⁹⁵

There is a strong connection between the experience of meaningfulness and the function of a detail within space. Norberg-Schulz points out: 'The things [...] "explain" the environment and make its character manifest. Thereby the things themselves become meaningful. That is the basic function of *detail* in our surroundings.'²⁹⁶ To experience existence as meaningful one needs to rediscover detail within space; one needs to learn how to *see*. As Swedenborg remarked pointing to the correlation between *seeing* and *being*: 'You see as you are.'²⁹⁷ According to Norberg-Schulz, the ability to *see* entails *participation* in the environment²⁹⁸ which, in turn, involves 'sympathy with things':

Participation presupposes sympathy with things, to repeat the word of Goethe, and sympathy necessarily implies suffering. In our context sympathy with things means that we *learn to see*. We have to be able to 'see' the meanings of the things that surround us; be they natural or man-made. Things always tell several stories; they tell about their own making, they tell about the historical circumstances under which they were made, and if they are real things, they also reveal truth. The ability of a thing to reveal truth depends upon *how* it is made, and the next thing to learn is therefore *making*. Seeing and making are united in inspiration and concretization. Thus Louis Kahn said: 'Inspiration is the moment of possibility when what to do meets the means of doing it'. Seeing and making constitute the basis of *dwelling*.

The results of creative participation constitute man's existential foothold, his *culture*. They make manifest what he has managed to make out of his existence. Some of the results illuminate a wider range of phenomena than others, and deserve the name 'work of art.' In the work of art man *praises existence*.²⁹⁹

The process of rediscovery of the thinghood of things, through seeing and making, is illustrated by Miłosz in his *Miasto bez imienia* where the poet 'voraciously' looks at

²⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 49.

²⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁹⁷ Emanuel Swedenborg, as quoted by Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 174.

²⁹⁸ 'In our context "creative participation" means two things: firstly the realization of a private "inside" which concretizes the identity of the individual by gathering the meanings which constitute his personal existential content, and secondly the creation of a public "outside" which gathers the institutions of communal life and makes the meanings (values) manifest on which this life is based. The private domain is the home of man, in the narrower sense of the word. It is personal, but not singular. Personal "foothold" implies an understanding of a shared environment (a common place), and therefore has to be concretized as a variation on a theme. The theme consists in a typical spatial relationship between inside and outside, and in certain locally meaningful motifs.' Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, p. 182.

²⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 185.

reality which becomes dissected into meaningful elements. Such a dissection takes place in the poem 'Kiedy księżyc', written in Berkeley in 1966. It is a poetic exposition of a play with various spatial perspectives on the canvas of which there are 'caught' sharp details synecdochic of an image of a woman. From the moon on the sky, there comes a close-up to the flowery dresses, eyes, eyelashes which are projected against the 'whole arrangement of the world.' Imagery representative of a woman is impersonal and, in fact, the woman is reduced and dissected to her bodily parts, face, garment. All that constitutes a source of wonder for the poet who, out of the fascination with the *details* on the canvas of lunar space, makes his metaphysical reflection.

Capturing detail within space also constitutes the basis for the poet's mission of saving from oblivion, of perpetuating reality in its totality and wholeness; of capturing all that constitutes its meaning. It is a task of making the lasting inscription of a detail within collective human memory. In the titular poem, 'Miasto bez imienia', the speaking 'I' remarks: 'In Death Valley I thought about styles of hairdo,/ About a hand that shifted spotlights at the Students' Ball/ In the city from which no voice could reach me.'³⁰⁰ The styles of hairdo, the hand, constitute the mnemonic link with the place of anchorage – the city without the name. The image of the place is evoked through the reminiscence of the very mundane and quotidian, dirty elements of human existence, the details which often pass unnoticed in the everyday routines: homespun velvet skirts, giggles above a railing, pigtails askew, children's sot, milk boiling over, etc. (part ten of 'Miasto bez imienia').

The reconstruction of the place, of the city without the name, takes place through capturing the detail within its space. To a reader, it is a textual museum which provides the experience of seeing the place, and its aura, live. Miłosz's idea of the 'sensual

³⁰⁰ 'W Dolinie Śmierci myślałem o sposobie upinania włosów,/ O ręce która przesuwała reflektory na studenckim balu/ w mieście skąd żaden głos już nie dosięga'.

relationship with a detail', euphoric joy and curiosity about detail in space almost points to the state of intoxication with space. Space has a life-giving quality, a potential of nourishment:

Happiness is also a host of small impressions which strike us, though we spare them no attention – the buttresses of a castle, a tree, sand, a dishevelled woman selling vegetables. Try this experiment: on your way to work, take a route that run by large buildings on time, and another time, take one through a noisy marketplace like the rue St.-Jacques in Paris. The same ten minutes will either be sterile or life-giving. Is there anything exceptional in my need for a sensory connection with details? The streets of Paris have given me much happiness, as have the valleys and hills of the French provinces, where a slate roof in a cluster of green, a field, a footbridge, a grove, almost burst with the density of their unique, particular existence, every kilometre abounding with things to see and touch. This is not the same as zooming down three hundred miles in California freeways situated amid menacing, monstrous vistas, the light lurid on the bare mountains. There is nothing equally exalted, equally grandiose in Europe; its wildest panoramas are small and tame by comparison.³⁰¹

'Sensual relationship with detail' determines human ontological status: a human subject becomes an agent of meaningful perception within space against the vastness of nothingness:

Today I cannot deny that in the background of all my thinking there is the image of the 'chain of development' – of gaseous nebulae condensing into liquids and solid bodies, a molecule of life-begetting acid, species, civilizations succeeding each other in turn, segment added to segment, on a scale which reduces me to a particle. I do not like this and I would prefer that chain to be another human fiction, because the resultant compulsion to renounce my faith in my five senses corrupts me, Adam.³⁰²

Recognizing detail in space entails and defines positionality of a subject with reference to the environment in which he/she finds themselves: that is being 'in', or being 'beside' (being part of it, or being a passing-by observer of space). In *Visions from San Francisco Bay* Miłosz illustrates the aforementioned on the basis of a distinction between the perception of the American and European space. Europe-ness or America-ness appears to be an innate characteristic which space may possess. The former entails the positionality of the perceiving subject 'within' space; the later – 'beside' it. Miłosz writes:

³⁰¹ Miłosz, *Visions from San Francisco Bay*, pp. 37-38.

³⁰² *ibid.*, p. 32.

Europe's landscapes are a metaphor of its entire past – its byways, its emotional attachment to what is foolishly local, the slow build-up of towns and principalities into larger complexes. The abstract city and the abstract theatre of nature, something one drives past, are the American metaphor. Everything is on the outside, and the airplane passenger may as well be watching television as the mountain chains, deserts, and cultivated plains pass by beneath him. The initial causes of the illness 'ontological anemia,' which torments the inhabitants of this country, should be sought in the lack of details in their lives from childhood on, a vacuum filled by prefabrications (for the automobile prefabricates what we see through the window). Among this illness's symptoms is the nothingness sucking from the center in, a sense of chronic hunger, the sort which occurs when an organism deprived of food begins to consume itself or, to put it another way, a sense of futility in striving for one's center, so one can never be sure if that center truly exists or is identical with oneself.³⁰³

The malady the author diagnoses is that of 'ontological anaemia'; its roots lying in the detachedness from space, instead of identifying with it as its part. The process of identification is connected with recognizing a detail within space and establishing one's position in relationship to it. Otherwise, one is trapped in nothingness, unable to orientate and identify themselves within space. Miłosz in the poem 'Rady' warns against immersion in conceptual 'infinity'. What safeguards against it is the ability to see a detail within space and to experience the thinghood of things:

No, I would even advise to keep further from Nature,
from persistent images of infinite space,
of infinite time, from snails poisoned
on a path in a garden, just like our armies.

There is so much death, and that is why affection
for pigtailed, bright-coloured skirts in the wind,
for paper boats no more durable than we are...³⁰⁴

³⁰³ *ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

³⁰⁴ 'Nie, nawet doradzałbym dalej od natury,
od upartych obrazów nieskończonej przestrzeni,
nieskończonego czasu, od ślimaków otrutych
na ścieżce w ogrodzie, niby nasze armie.

Jest bardzo dużo śmierci i dlatego tliwość
dla warkoczy, spódnic kolorowych na wietrze,
łódeczek papierowych nie trwalszych niż my sami....'

The physical experience of space, of „affection for pigtails, bright-coloured skirts in the wind, for paper boats’, stands in a sharp contrast to the ephemerality of existence within infinity. The colour, the movement of skirts in the wind, that is detail captured, renders space alive, real, not abstract. *Detail* ‘rescues’ from the ‘ontological anemia’.

Recognition and capturing the detail entails a specific type of experience which grounds and anchors a human subject in spatial reality. It saves a human subject from entrapment in the realm of abstraction. The experience is subjective and personal. It makes space tangible, touched, made one’s own. ‘That can be described only which has a tangible shape’ as Miłosz writes in his essay ‘Niemoralność sztuki’, which, as Joanna Zach points out is the ‘basis of Miłosz’s theory of representation’ present in the poet’s whole post-war oeuvre.³⁰⁵ It translates into what Miłosz writes about as ‘what I have actually experienced on my own, what I myself have touched’:

I have read many books, but to place all those volumes on top of one another and stand on them would not add a cubit to my stature. Their learned terms are of little use when I attempt to seize naked experience, which eludes all accepted ideas. To borrow their language can be helpful in many ways, but it also leads imperceptibly into a self-contained labyrinth, leaving us in alien corridors which allow no exit. And so I must offer resistance, check every moment to be sure I am not departing from what I have actually experienced on my own, what I myself have touched. I cannot invent a new language and I use the one I was first taught, but I can distinguish, I hope, between what is mine and what is merely fashionable. I cannot expel from memory the books I have read, their contending theories and philosophies, but I am free to be suspicious and to ask naïve questions instead of joining the chorus which affirms and denies.³⁰⁶

The ability to *see detail*, which equates with the recognition of the thinghood of things, renders all human experience authentic. It makes it real, and saves existence from abstraction.

³⁰⁵ Zach, *Miłosz i poetyka wyznania*, p. 155. See also Czesław Miłosz, ‘Niemoralność sztuki’ <<http://www.milosz.pl/przeczytaj/esej/38/niemoralnosc-sztuki-zycie-na-wyspach>> ‘Opisywać da się to tylko, co ma dotykane kształty’ [trans. by MM].

³⁰⁶ Miłosz, *Visions from San Francisco Bay*, p. 4.

Space, distance and memory

‘Distance is the soul of beauty’ is one of Miłosz’s favourite sayings which he quoted after Simon Weil.³⁰⁷ Cynthia Haven investigated the interpretation of the aforementioned quotation, and she points to Jonas Mekas’s collection *There Is No Ithaka: Idylls of Semeniskiai and Reminiscences* which has a foreword by Miłosz:

‘Distance is the soul of beauty.’ This sentence of Simone Weil expresses an old truth: only through a distance, in space or in time, does reality undergo purification. Our immediate concerns which were blinding us to the grace of ordinary things disappear and a look backward reveals them in their every minutest detail. Distance engendered by the passing of time is at the core of the oeuvre of Marcel Proust. Distance in space and awareness that borders with their barbed wire separated him from his country allowed a young Lithuanian to write his *Idylls*.³⁰⁸

Distance constitutes one of the components of the process of building *Miasto bez imienia*. ‘Miasto’ is a construct which becomes ‘reality purified’, that is reality stripped of ‘immediate concerns’, *seen* beyond the constraints of the strongly subjectified human perception yet captured in a minute detail. It could be interpreted that, as space and imagination are interwoven, distance purifies reality but also cleanses the very faculty of imagination.

Distance has ramifications for the status of the speaking persona in a poem, especially as relates his confrontation with the immediate space. In the poem ‘Rok’, distance in perspective constitutes a privilege which also entails fascination and ‘devouring eye’ approach towards the ‘here-and-now’ context. Distanced poetic ego touches upon the present reality with voracious sensibility: he embraces colours, sound, shapes, which all form into an imagery of vital potency of the aura of the presented *place*.

³⁰⁷ See Kosińska in *An Invisible Road. Portraits of Czesław Miłosz*, p. 234.

³⁰⁸ Cynthia L. Haven, “‘Distance is the soul of beauty’”. Finally. He explains.’

<<http://bookhaven.stanford.edu/2012/08/distance-is-the-soul-of-beauty>> [accessed 13 May 2013].

Distance in Miłosz's poems is often expressed formally through adopting a universal perspective which constitutes an interpretation of a personal recollection. One of the very many instances of the aforementioned is the treatment of the motif of the forest – the motif which becomes an archetype of Miłosz's poetry and is rooted in the poet's nostalgic return *ad fontes*. On the one hand, the poet refers to the trees which are endemic to the natural landscape of his land with a nostalgic sense of a personal recollection: 'The Wilia winding among pines',³⁰⁹ 'So when the clouds turn rosy, I think of light that is level/ In the lands of birch and pine coated with crispy lichen',³¹⁰ 'and only the echo seeks me/ in that house on the hill under a hundred-year-old hazel tree'.³¹¹ On the other hand, the forest adopts an archetypal significance, as in the case of the collective dream of humankind described in the tenth part of 'Na trąbach i na cytrze'. The imagery of the two-legged occupying the primordial forest ('The two-legged [...] / [...] they move on their stilts, longing after a forest home, after low/ tunnels, after an assigned return to It')³¹² might be linked to that of 'Rok': 'At the very border of inhabited time the same lessons were being/ learned, how to walk on two legs'.³¹³ The personal recollection of nature, of trees and forests, enters a universal dimension as a reflection on the primeval roots of human nature.

Distance as a prerequisite for *seeing* 'purified reality' defines and shapes the relationship between a human subject and space, which is mediated by the faculty of imagination. It is inevitably connected with memory and recollection, of which Miłosz writes:

³⁰⁹ 'Tam sosnę objęła Wilija'.

³¹⁰ 'Więc kiedy różowieją obłoki myślę o świetle niskim,/jak a krajach brzozy i sosny objęzionej chrupkim porostem'.

³¹¹ 'i tylko echo szuka mnie w domu/ na wzgórzu pod stuletnią leszczyną' ('Na trąbach i na cytrze').

³¹² 'Dwunodzy [...] / posuwają się na swoich szczydłach tęskniąc do leśnego domu,/ do niskich tuneli, do wyznaczonego im powrotu w to.' ('Na trąbach i na cytrze').

³¹³ 'Na samej granicy zamieszkałego czasu uczono się chodzić na/ dwóch nogach'.

Memory was once regarded as the mother of the Muses: *Mnemosyne mater musarum*. I can testify that it is really so, that when perfection summons, it is untrappable except as the detail recalled: the polished wood of a handrail, towers glimpsed through a breach in the green, a sunbeam on a very particular lake bay. From what does ecstasy come – in a poem, in a painting – if not from the detail recaptured. And if distance is the essence of beauty, that distance by which reality is cleansed – of life's willing (*Lebenswillen*), of our grasping lust for power and possession, Schopenhauer, that great theoretician of art as contemplation, would have said – then there is also a distance to be gained by bodying forth the world in recollection.³¹⁴

Recollection becomes an act of immobilization of space and of experience. It is an act of creation of a *place* as a work of art which has a painting-like quality:

Because a moment is not movement, or duration, is in fact its opposite; and just as a group of men and women in a Giorgione painting is the more evocative for its being fixed, arrested, so it would lose much of its power as soon as it, their *moment*, were to speed by like a film frame. The past conceived as movement, as duration (be it the past of a nation, a continent, or a civilization, known to us secondhand, or our own past, that of an individual), is a realm where those who once lived are as shadows, so that the closing centuries of Assyria or Babylon, disposed of by Friedrich Hegel in a single page, might stand as a caricature of every past. And what power can restore life to shadows? It is here that imagination 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. So perhaps it is another, more bountiful memory, one twinned with Imagination, which is the mother of the Muses. In victory, works drawn from the stuff of memories are a store of living images; in defeat a 're-creation' of movement, of characters' thoughts, emotional states, internal rhythms – 'fiction', in other words- and unless an author expressly intends a fairy tale, the whole is subverted by that dullness proper to the pallid existence of shadows.³¹⁵

In the context of the aforementioned quotation, where the notions of distance, memory and imagination are linked together, a reference needs to be made to Miłosz's 'project' of saving from oblivion; of 'restoring life to shadows.' Robert Hass recollects:

He [Miłosz] truly thinks it's horrible that everything just passes away into oblivion. He hates it. [...] There's that terrific sense of urgency, and one of the things that goes with it is: if he can't remember and get down on paper the hairstyle of his piano teacher who was crushed in a bombing when she was an old lady, if her life goes unmarked into oblivion – then oblivion won./ He doesn't think literature is eternity [...], he thinks it's a pathetic makeshift, and that language can't really get at experience, but he thinks it's the only tool at his disposal.³¹⁶

³¹⁴ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, pp. 10-11.

³¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

³¹⁶ Haven, *An Invisible Rope*, pp. 247-248.

Wilno of the collection *Miasto bez imienia* is ascribed the mythical status of an extinct place: it is a city ‘skąd żaden głos już nie dosięga.’ To perpetuate its existence, the poet reconstructs the place through retrospection, recollection and reminiscence which are all mediated by distance. Distance and memory become crucial tools, then, in creating the textual edifice of the place with its historical, geographical, and cultural richness.

The poem ‘Miasto bez imienia’, constitutes a beautiful and very consistent exposition of Miłosz’s idea of distance as presented in the poet’s essayistic writing referred to above. The first part of the twelve-part poem opens with the question, almost a lament, which delineates the poetic mission and the teleological orientation of the poem inscribed within the ‘project’ of saving from oblivion: ‘What shepherd’s horn [...] / Will sound [...] the memory of the absent [...]?’.³¹⁷ Out of the consecutive parts there emerges an image of Wilno presented through various prisms, different poetic forms and various poetic voices. Wilno is not idealized. It is shown with all the dirt and mud, in its parochialism, and almost primordial character; immersed in nature, like a far-away mythical land where beauty and ugliness are equally part of the quotidian; a wild place, with its people belonging to a different time. The poet does not flinch from talking about ‘sitting on chamberpots upstairs’, ‘Female humanity, / children’s snots, legs spread apart, / snarled hair, the milk boiling over, / stench, shit frozen into clods’, ‘And palisades, / and pregnant sheep, / and pigs, fast eaters and poor eaters, / and cows cured by incantations.’³¹⁸

The poet is preoccupied not to miss any single particle of life that made up the place. At the same time, however, the perspective of a distance is enhanced with the introduction of the Californian imagery of the Death Valley in the second part of the poem which, in contrast to the first part, delineates a catastrophic landscape of vastness

³¹⁷ ‘Jaka surma [...] / otrąbi pamięć nieobecnych [...]?’.

³¹⁸ ‘siadanie na nocniki na piętrze’, ‘Ludzkość kobiecości, / włosów skudłanych, rozstawiania nóg, / smarków dziecinnych, mleko wykipi, / smrodu / kup zamarzłych w grudzie’, ‘I palisady / i owce kotne / i świnie jedkie i niejedkie / i leczone zamawianiem krowy’.

and emptiness devoid of living presence: 'Minerals did not sound the last trumpet./ There was only the rustle of a loosened grain of lava. [...] Defend, defend yourself, says the tick-tock of the blood./ From the futility of solid rock, no wisdom.'; 'I looked long at the rearview mirror: there, the one man/ Within three hundred miles, an Indian, was walking a bicycle uphill', 'no hawk or eagle against the sky.'³¹⁹

The contrast between Wilno and Californian imagery, which intensifies not only the physical but also conceptual distance between the two locations, will again be stressed in the last, the twelfth part: 'Perhaps Anna and Dora Drużyno have called to me, three hundred/ miles inside Arizona, because except for me no one else knows that they ever lived.'³²⁰ In the same part, the distance as the essence of beauty, is evoked with reference to Wilno in the lines: 'It stands before me, ready, not even the smoke from one chimney is/ lacking, not one echo, when I step across the rivers that separate us.'³²¹ The city becomes immobilized and captured as if in a photographic image – or a Giordioni's painting to which Miłosz refers in his *Land of Ulro* – a pure representation of a cleansed reality. The city 'defenseless and pure as the wedding necklace of a/ forgotten tribe' offers itself to the poet.³²² 'Here there is no earlier and no later; the seasons of the year and of the day are simultaneous.'³²³ The city needs to be captured, like a painting, not only aesthetically but, first of all, ontologically. The poet is aware of the grandness of his mission, yet concedes, in the very last lines of the closing stanza, the inadequacy of language to save the place: 'In the immobile light I move my lips and perhaps I am even

³¹⁹ 'Minerały na sąd nie trąbiły./ Osypywało się z szelestem ziarnko lawy. [...] Broń się, broń się, mówi tykot krwi./ Z litej skały nadaremnej żadna mądrość.'; 'Długo patrzyłem w lusterko, tam jeden na trzysta mil/ szedł człowiek: Indianin prowadzący rower pod górę.', „na niebie ni orła ni jastrzębia’.

³²⁰ 'Może Anna i Dorcia Drużyno wezwały mnie z trzechsetnej mili Arizony, bo nikt prócz mnie już nie wie, że raz kiedyś żyły?’

³²¹ 'Stoi przede mną, gotowe, nie brak ani jednego dymu z komina,/ ani jednego echa, kiedy przestępuję dzielące nas rzeki’.

³²² 'bezbronne,/ i czyste jak naszyjnik weselny zapomnianego plemienia’.

³²³ 'Tutaj nie ma wcześniej i nie ma później, wszystkie pory dnia i roku trwają równocześnie’.

glad not to find the desired word.³²⁴ The inadequacy of linguistic expression is referred to, by the poet, in part ten of 'Miasto bez imienia': 'Unexpressed, untold./ But how?'³²⁵ Paradoxically, this artistic preoccupation with inadequacy of linguistic expression is followed by the avalanche of various details of the place as if the poet voraciously captures whatever can be saved through his poetic memory with whatever means he has at his disposal, in the face of the transitoriness of life ('The shortness of life/ the years quicker and quicker').³²⁶

In a similar way, the artistic impotence to capture and perpetuate the experience of detail in its fullness is expressed in the poem 'Na trąbach i na cytrze':

I wanted to describe this, not that, basket of vegetables with a
redheaded doll of a leek laid across it.
And a stocking on the arm of a chair, a dress crumpled as it was, this
way, no other.
I wanted to describe her, no one else, asleep on her belly, made secure
by the warmth of his leg.
Also a cat in the unique tower as purring he composes his memorable
book.
Not ships but one ship with a blue patch in the corner of its sail.
[...]
In vain I tried because what remains is the ever-recurring basket.
[...]
And the street will always be only one of many streets without name.³²⁷

Miasto bez imienia is not, however, only devoted to space revived in poetic memory, it is also about confrontation with the immediate space that the poetic ego experiences. The opening poem 'Rok' abounds in Californian imagery, and expresses

³²⁴ 'W nieruchomym świetle poruszam ustami, rad może nawet/ że nie składa się żądane słowo'.

³²⁵ 'Niewyrażone, nieopowiedziane. / Ale jak?'

³²⁶ 'Ta krótkość życia, /lata coraz szybsze' ('Miasto bez imienia, part 10).

³²⁷ 'Opisywać chciałem ten, nie inny, kosz warzywa z położoną z poprzek rudowłosą lalką poru.

I pończochę na poręczu krzesła, suknię zmiętą tak, a nie inaczej.

Opisywać chciałem ją, nie inną, śpi na brzuchu upewniana ciepłem jego nogi.

Także kota na jedynej w świecie wieży, jak układa mruczając wielkie dzieło.

Nie okręty, jeden okręt z siną łatą w kącie żagla.

[...]

Nadaremnie próbowałem, bo ostaje wielokrotny kosz warzywa.

[...]

I ulica będzie zawsze jedną z wielu nienazwanych ulic'.

not only the features of the environment, but also ‘the aura’, the character of it: the Redwood – native to California, the pulse of music, banging of conga drums, generation clad in patterned robes trimmed with little bells, tributaries entangled and ‘running down from dark mountains’, boys on surfboards, ‘guttural songs of ecstatic despair’. It is the California which in *Visions from San Francisco Bay* was presented as:

California, washed by the Pacific, opening onto the islands of Japan and the Ur-land of Asia, belongs to the continent – or perhaps it is a separate portion of the globe, for California is more than just a state in North America reached by winds from across the sea, from the Far East. A mecca for seekers of mystical unity, for consciousness-expanding drugs, ecstatic sects, publications devoted to Hinduism and Zen Buddhism, for prophets preaching wisdom borrowed from Tibetan monks; that is, the capital of everything that is turning against Western man’s fondness for intellectual precision, dear to Thomas Aquinas and his secular successors, and now supposedly useless and pernicious. Is this the beginning of a great crisis? After all, the science and technology that California’s prophets depend upon for food developed precisely at that point when both the scholastics and their opponents began from a common assumption postulating a harmony between the operations of the intellect and the workings of the world.³²⁸

Miłosz stressed at some point that the workings of imagination in the construction of space depend on the immediacy of the experience at hand. In *Visions from San Francisco Bay*, Miłosz describes the workings of his imagination on confrontation with a different geographical location:

There are many cities and countries in my mind, but they all stand in relation to the one which surrounds me every day. The human imagination is spatial and it is constantly constructing an architectonic whole from landscapes remembered or imagined; it progresses from what is closest to what is farther away, winding layers or strands around the single axis, which begins where the feet touch the ground. Many consequences flow from the spatial nature of the imagination, and I will return to them frequently. Now I will limit myself to saying that for me, awake or dreaming, the four corners of the world begin with the forms almost within reach of my hand.³²⁹

Space is a mode of seeing, of organizing ourselves around the axis which goes through the point where our feet touch the ground. The contents of human memory builds further layers and projects itself on the immediacy of the spatial perception. It is, however, the

³²⁸ Miłosz, *Visions from San Francisco Bay*, pp. 85-86.

³²⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

very immediate material and physical reality which forms the kernel of spatial perception: 'Now I will limit myself to saying that for me, awake or dreaming, the four corners of the world begin with the forms almost within reach of my hand.'³³⁰

Distance purifies reality, but the most immediate space provides a *sense* of anchorage in a certain 'somewhere', although conceptual anchorage might be rooted someplace else. It could be said that the sense of 'grounding' in the most immediate physical/material space is an adaptive characteristic of a *homo viator*. While conceptually the place of belonging might be distant, the sense of *dwelling* is realized in the awareness of the most immediate space. It is an expression and manifestation of the need for orientation and identification with the environment that a human subject possesses:

Whereas identification is the basis for man's sense of *belonging*, orientation is the function which enables him to be that *homo viator*, which is part of his nature. It is characteristic for modern man that for a long time he gave the role as a wanderer pride of place. He wanted to be 'free' and conquer the world. Today we start to realize that true freedom presupposes belonging, and that 'dwelling' means belonging to a concrete place.³³¹

It could be said that a speaking persona whose poetic voice embraces distance, memory and imagination as confronted with the most immediate space, has the characteristics of a heterotopous identity. *Miasto bez imienia* is a site of confrontation of multiple spaces. They are often accessed from the perspective of a distance when the poetic ego, in his memories, bridges over to a distant *place* from the standpoint of here-and-now: 'It was like in a distant land, very distant land/ of his childhood, when he knew nothing/ of those who wanted to save their „I”/ adding, at night, by candlelight, word to word.'³³² The poetic ego spinning his vision confronts places anchored in various

³³⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

³³¹ Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, p.22.

³³² 'Było to jak w dalekim, bardzo dalekim kraju/ jego dzieciństwa, kiedy nic jeszcze nie wiedział/ że jacyś tam ratować chcieli własne ja/ dodając nocami przy świecach słowo do słowa.' ('Słowa') [trans. by MM].

geographical locations and located in different realms of space, including the sacral space. This spatial multiplicity is a source of a heterotopous identity.³³³ Dorota Kołodziejczyk writes about the concept of heterotopia, as defined by Michel Foucault, in the light of identity formation with reference to spatial categories: ‘identity as heterotopia – a site where a few, often incompatible or totally different spaces meet.’³³⁴ Referring to Miłosz’s theoretical work, a direct example here can be drawn from the poet’s autobiographical reflection on his confrontation with California:

No gypsy woman predicted that I would leave my native land forever. The people I now live among could never guess that I come from a place without automobiles, bathrooms, or telephones, that on our roads, dusty in summer, muddy in spring and fall, five miles was a considerable distance, and people managed without doctors, trusting instead to home remedies, charms and spells. The scope of the cataclysms estroying traditional ways of life, driving people from their homes, has already been assimilated and is now taken for granted, but it still makes me dizzy from time to time. California is not the same to me as it is for the majority of its residents, immigrants from other parts of North America. I am still that same small boy who on his first visit to the big city was alarmed by the sound of water in the toilet bowl, thinking that he had broken that unfamiliar device by pulling the chain. Any car I drive is still the suspiciously apocalyptic beast which had been tamed by the only man in our district to own one, Count Zabiello.³³⁵

And at some other point he writes:

This is not the same as zooming down three hundreds miles of California freeways situated amid menacing, monstrous vistas, the light lurid on the bare mountains. There is nothing equally exalted, equally grandiose in Europe; its wildest panoramas are small and tame by comparison.³³⁶

Miasto bez imienia has a heterotopous character and the collection could be interpreted in Foucault’s terms. According to Foucault, ‘Utopias are sites with no real place’,³³⁷

³³³ As referred to by Dorota Kołodziejczyk, ‘Trawerssem przez glob: studia postkolonialne i teoria globalizacji’, *Er(r)go*, 1 (2004), p. 21.

³³⁴ ‘tożsamość jako heterotopia – miejsce, gdzie spotyka się kilka różnych, często niekompatybilnych lub wzajemnie obcych przestrzeni.’ In *ibid.*, p. 21 [trans. by MM].

³³⁵ Miłosz, *Visions from San Francisco Bay*, p. 36.

³³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 38.

³³⁷ Michel Foucault, ‘Of Other Spaces: Heterotopias’, translated from the French by Jay Miskowiec, in *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité*, 5 (1984). Accessed online <<http://foucault.info/doc/documents/heterotopia/foucault-heterotopia-en-html>> on 10 March 2012.

heterotopias are ‘something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality.’³³⁸ Foucault points to a ‘mixed, joint experience’ between those two types of sites – the mirror:

The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there.³³⁹

It could be said that in the light of Foucault’s arguments, *Miasto bez imienia* as a *place* is a mirror for the poetic ego and constitutes a site of utopia and heterotopia at the same time. With this *place* the poet identifies, this place the poet wants to honour and eternalize, to save it from oblivion but also to give it a particular shape. It is the place which at the same time is and is not. For the poetic ego it is a reality lived which, with its historicity, must be saved from oblivion.

³³⁸ *ibid.*

³³⁹ *ibid.*

3. SECOND SPACE

Renata Gorczyńska asked Czesław Miłosz about the relationship between *The Land of Ulro* and his poetry: ‘R.G.: The main motifs of *Ulro* occur also in your poetry. Can we treat this book as your own commentary to your poems? C.M.: Yes, but only to a certain extent. We cannot forget that intellectual structures and poems move alongside their own tracks. Poems do not translate these structures into the language of poetry. Poems have their own laws.’³⁴⁰ Yet, *Druga przestrzeń*, the last volume of poetry published during the poet’s lifetime,³⁴¹ is a poetic work where the author’s ‘intellectual structures’ reflected in the *Land of Ulro* and the poems themselves move alongside the tracks which seem to run parallel to each other as the collection constitutes the most literal poetic illustration and poetic transcription of Miłosz’s ideas on space which he exposes in *The Land of Ulro*. Both works are connected by the figures of Oscar Milosz, to whom a separate part of *Druga przestrzeń* is devoted (‘Czeladnik’); similarly, Mickiewicz, Boehme and Swedenborg who, in *Druga przestrzeń*, are referred to in the contexts of the ‘Treatise on Theology’, are strongly imprinted in both works.

Druga przestrzeń is structurally divided into five parts: the first, untitled, loose collection of poems opening with the titular poem ‘Druga przestrzeń’, second part – ‘Książd Seweryn’ (which might have been written as a poetic dialogue with Zbigniew Herbert’s poem ‘Homilia’),³⁴² third part – ‘Traktat teologiczny’, and the fourth part – ‘Czeladnik’ devoted to Oscar Miłosz and constituting a poetic biography and documentary of his life; the fifth, ‘Metamorfozy’, does not appear in the English

³⁴⁰ Renata Gorczyńska, *Podróżny świata* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002), p. 239. [quotation trans. by MM].

³⁴¹ Andrzej Franaszek, *Miłosz: Biografia* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2011), p. 630.

³⁴² Marek Bernacki, *Wyprowadził mnie z ziemi Ulro: szkice o twórczości Czesława Miłosza* (Bielsko-Biała: Wydawnictwo ATH, 2005), p. 132.

translation of *Druga przestrzeń* by Miłosz and Robert Hass,³⁴³ it is, instead, substituted by ‘Orpheus and Euridice’ as a closing part to *Second Space*.

The first part of the collection, composed of diverse poems, is underlain by a chain of recurring motifs which form the texture of this poetic composition as a whole: the motif of memory and dream, the motif of a mask, of a mirror, the motif of Eden, of passing time. All of them are approached from the privileged standpoint of the poet-narrator: privileged because grounded in the vantage point of a lived-through life and providing an omniscient-eye perspective and ontological interpretation based on hindsight, accumulated knowledge and experience. The voice of the aged poet is objectively given an authoritative tone as a witness of bygone time, yet facing the ever-present ontological and theological questions of universal validity. The personal dimension of the voice reconciling with life is linked with reflections of universal character.

Friedrich Schleiermacher developed a concept of a hermeneutic circle of interpretation of a literary work. The whole can be understood through the knowledge of its constituent parts accumulated together and looked at holistically: ‘To understand the whole text [...] one must understand each part; but to understand each part, one must understand the whole.’³⁴⁴ This concept can be projected on the structure and composition of *Druga przestrzeń* in the context of Miłosz’s whole oeuvre. The poet addresses the themes which already occurred in his work from the standpoint of a lived-through life when the hermeneutic circle of the poet’s life, the process of ontological experience and interpretation, is drawing towards its completion: ‘I tak się niedorzeczny/ Żywot i w sobie

³⁴³ See *Selected Poems 1931-2004*. Selected by Robert Hass. Foreword by Seamus Heaney. New York: Ecco/HarperCollins Publishers 2006. And Czesław Miłosz. *A Second Space. New Poems*. New York: Ecco/HarperCollins Publishers 2004.

³⁴⁴ *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, General Editor – Vincent B. Leitch (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), p. 611.

sprzeczny/ Zamyka'.³⁴⁵ Theology, religion and God were the main subjects of Miłosz's interest in the last two decades of his life.³⁴⁶ When asked, in 1986, by Aleksander Fiut what is most important in life, Miłosz replied: 'Salvation.'³⁴⁷

In each of the five parts of *Druga przestrzeń* the notion of second space is addressed through various perspectives and from various standpoints embracing the array of notions which second space encompasses. Religion (personal and institutionalized), metaphysics and theology, religious imagination, that is the openness of mind onto the sphere of transcendence where God and divine realm constitute an ultimate point of reference, comprise the notion of second space in the light of the collection *Druga przestrzeń*. They are each addressed by Miłosz in a distinct way.

The first part of *Druga przestrzeń* is a loose collection of poems, many of which revolve around particular persons. In this part the motif of memory of the Garden of Eden as an archetypal part of human psyche occurs. The second part is a treatise on religion as experienced individually, faith, and a study of human relationship with God stripped of the veils of ornament and religious rite. Written from the standpoint of the priest, Ks. Seweryn, the poems show the workings of a religious imagination in the dynamic process of a growth in faith which comprises doubt and hope at the same time. 'Traktat teologiczny' is an exposition of Miłosz's view on theology in the context of intellectual history, the ideas of Boehme, Mickiewicz, and Swedenborg. It also addresses the problematics connected with the tension between personal religious experience and organized ritual. The fourth part is a portrayal of the figure of Oscar Milosz and an illustration of the poet's intellectual relationship with him. The collection closes with the poem 'Metamorfozy' which, thematically, refers to the closure of life.

³⁴⁵ See poem 'Metamorfozy' in *Druga przestrzeń*.

³⁴⁶ Franaszek, *Miłosz: Biografia*, p. 628. He points to the significance of Miłosz's friendship with Sadzik, Merton, and Miłosz's written correspondence with Turowicz.

³⁴⁷ Franaszek, *Miłosz: Biografia*, p. 637.

In *Druga przestrzeń*, Miłosz, showing faith as a process, a journey and a search which does not provide definitive answers, yet endows one with hope, addresses the eternal questions such as ‘unde malum’, the nature of God and his place within the world, in the light of the theology rooted in various traditions of thought.

The following chapter will address the notion of memory and forgetting of second space. It will be analyzed in the context of the interplay between the personal recollection of a home and the archetype of Paradise, the home of mankind as presented in the Book of Genesis which lies at the foundations of Western culture and is present in our collective memory. The loss of second space will be compared to, what in my view could be looked at, as the second expulsion from the Paradise leading to human spiritual estrangement and alienation on earth. Concentrating mainly on the parts ‘Książd Seweryn’ and ‘Traktat teologiczny’, an attempt will be made to present Miłosz’s answer to the question: ‘Why religion? Why theology?’ It will be followed by the illustration of how second space in Miłosz’s portrayal is human-centred and human-focused; in this context Miłosz develops his theology of the body.

Dream and memory. Second expulsion from the Paradise

According to Oscar Miłosz,

Proto-memory, or latent memory, is preserved in the blood, in that ‘living cosmic matter endowed with spontaneous movement’: we remember because we are living beings. What do we remember? Another, higher reality, which is not unknowable because through intuition we are given access to the archetypal world. The language of religious cults and myths evokes in us such a strong response because we recognize in them what is known unconsciously.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁸ Oskar Miłosz as paraphrased by Czesław Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 210.

With the erosion of religious imagination, the realm of metaphysics, religion and theology became a source of cognitive estrangement for a human; a source of radical conceptual disorientation. Without the cognitive faculty that religious imagination constitutes, metaphysics becomes an alien realm. In *Druga przestrzeń* Miłosz shows, however, that second space is an archetypal part of a human psyche, inscribed in it, and manifesting itself through memory. Miłosz makes references to Jung's analytical psychology in the light of which human need for religion can be scientifically justified.³⁴⁹ This need for justification of the validity of the place of religion as part of human existence is a demand of contemporary world. Miłosz recognizes the shallowness of everything that the void created by the erosion of religious imagination is filled with. Andrzej Walicki quotes one of Miłosz's letters (dated 4 November 1960). In its postscriptum Miłosz wrote [it is here quoted in original]:

Gdzie jest miejsce dzisiaj na to, co odgadywał Brzozowski? Mną nieraz trzęsła szewska pasja, kiedy czytałem w polskiej prasie literackiej różne zachodnie pomyje podawane za objawienia 'nowoczesności.' 'Nowoczesność' jako manifestacja swobody duchowej (podczas kiedy tak często jest wyrazem 'utonczenia,' czyli także niewoli), katolicyzm jako broń narodowa i trochę partyjnych tępaków. [...] człowiek jaki wyłania się ze współczesnej poezji zachodniej, jest skurczony i zmystyfikowany. [...] Czego potrzebuje człowiek? Co robić? Zadając te pytania zdaję sobie sprawę, że zakwalifikuje mnie Pan do inteligentów rosyjskich połowy XIX wieku, ale to chyba nie przynosi ujmy?³⁵⁰

The diagnosis of the times as proposed by Miłosz is pessimistic. However, as seen in the context of Miłosz's work, although religious imagination as a cognitive faculty has undergone a radical erosion, yet the memory of second space remains. Forgetting second space is, as could be interpreted, second expulsion from Eden, the state into which humans have thrown themselves. This happened as a result of a cultural process, instigated by scientists such as Locke, Bacon or Newton, and opposed by, among others,

³⁴⁹ See Introduction to this thesis.

³⁵⁰ Miłosz's letter to Andrzej Walicki, as dated 4 November 1960, quoted in Andrzej Walicki, *Spotkania z Miłoszem* (Londyn: Aneks, 1985), p. 164.

Mickiewicz, Boehme, Swedenborg, Blake and Oscar Miłosz, to whom Miłosz refers in *Druga przestrzeń*. The effects of this process are manifested and perpetuated in language which is devoid of ‘reality’ and ‘meaning’. As Miłosz appeals in ‘Traktat teologiczny’: ‘Let reality return to our speech./ That is meaning. Impossible without an absolute point of reference.’³⁵¹

Memory in the first part of the collection *Druga przestrzeń* is one of the focal subjects around which the poetic persona’s voice revolves. Memory has different forms here. Most generally, it can be divided into personal and collective memory; nostalgic retrospection of home, of people, of locations; it is historical memory which imposes upon the poet the duty of witness; it is also the memory of Paradise, manifestation of the collectively shared archetype. In the same way as Miłosz felt obliged to capture and perpetuate in writing human presence and experience, he felt obliged to perpetuate the memory of second space. As Zdzisław Łapiński points out: ‘Skoro w naszym wspomnieniu przedmiot, roślina, zwierzę lub człowiek trwają dłużej w swym zmysłowym kształcie niż ich pierwowzór, to chyba wolno przyjąć hipotezę, że w boskiej Pamięci – czy Wyobraźni? – ów świat doczesny bytuje nieprzerwanie, poza czasem i bardziej naprawdę niż tutaj. Jest naraz cały. Poeta chciałby uczestniczyć, w sposób ułomny, w owym boskim akcie tworzenia i chronienia bytu.’³⁵² In his Charles Eliot Norton lectures, Miłosz expresses his belief in collective memory of the past:

Earlier I spoke of the lessons of biology and of reductionist *Weltanschauung* professed universally today. I expressed the hope that it will be superseded by another vision better adapted to the complexity of the world and of individuals. It seems to me that this will be connected, in one or

³⁵¹ ‘Oby do naszej mowy wróciła rzeczywistość. To znaczy sens, niemożliwy bez absolutnego punktu odniesienia’.

³⁵² Zdzisław Łapiński, *Między polityką a metafizyką. O poezji Czesława Miłosza* (London: Odnova, 1981), pp. 32-33.

another way, with a new dimension entered on by elemental humanity – and here I expect some surprise from my audience – the dimension of the past of our human race.³⁵³

In *Druga przestrzeń*, memory has different forms and manifestations, ranging from deeply personal to collective. Topically, poetic recollection can be broadly categorized as that based on personal individual experience of the speaking voice, as in the poems 'Koleżanka', 'Pobyt', 'Emigrować', 'Anioł Stróż'. Poetic recollection, however, takes its material also from a more universal source of collective memory which is still filtered through and particularized by the individual experience of the poetic voice. Recollection of personal home and human genesis manifested in personal memory and dream, are rooted in one common source: the universal archetype of Paradise as preserved in the collective memory.

Memory has many forms and poetic embodiments, as if the poet looks for the perfect framing of the totality of the past, the concern which he expresses in the poem 'Oprawa': 'I had to write, Patrick',³⁵⁴ 'no water/ Could wash away what was branded in our memories./ And something had to be done with it. Something had to be done.'³⁵⁵ Memory, therefore, is not only enclosed within the personal space of the poetic ego, as he ponders: 'Memory composes a story of shames and amazements.'³⁵⁶ Memory has an ennobling and edifying power upon the poetic ego: 'The shames I closed inside myself, but the amazements,/ at a sun-streak on a wall, at the trill of an oriole, a face,/ an iris, a volume of poems, a person, endure and return in/ brightness.// Such moments lifted me

³⁵³ Czesław Miłosz in Charles Eliot Norton lectures published under the title *The Witness of Poetry*, as quoted by Edward Możejko, 'Between the Universals of Moral Sensibility and Historical Consciousness. Notes on the Writings of Czesław Miłosz', in *Between Anxiety and Hope. The Poetry and Writing of Czesław Miłosz*, ed. by Edward Możejko (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1988), p. 22.

³⁵⁴ 'Musiałem pisać, Patrice'.

³⁵⁵ 'Żadna woda/ Nie zmyłaby ze mnie stygmatów pamięci./ I trzeba było coś z tym zrobić. Coś zrobić'.

³⁵⁶ 'Pamięć układa historię wstydy i zachwyceń.' („Powiniem teraz”).

above my laments.³⁵⁷ Memory also constitutes a personal space in its totality of experiences, it denotes the realm of the personal universe in its spatial- temporal dimension: 'Where is the memory of those days that were your days on earth/ And effectuated joy and pain and were for you in the universe.'³⁵⁸ It encloses the whole person, with both the Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde aspects of human nature: 'When the sun rises/ it illuminates stupidity and guilt/ which are hidden in the nooks of memory/ and invisible at noon.'³⁵⁹

Memory, above all, imposes a certain duty, a mission of a universal character upon the poet: a duty of description and mimetic perpetuation of reality in writing. The poet of 'Późna dojrzałość' describes the writing process: 'And the countries, cities, gardens, the bays of seas/ assigned to my brush came closer/ ready now to be described better than they were before.'³⁶⁰ The aforementioned duty is strongly accentuated in the previously analysed 'Miasto bez imienia': 'Who will honour the city without a name [...]?', 'Why should that city, defenceless and pure as the wedding necklace of a/ forgotten tribe, keep offering itself to me?'³⁶¹

The material of memory needs to be turned into a chronicle of the times, a record of witness, which is about perpetuating the past in written form. This poetic duty has a haunting character, it persecutes the poet, 'a chaplain of shadows',³⁶² who needs to tackle 'what was branded in our memories'³⁶³ with continues fear, and guilt, of letting things

³⁵⁷ 'Wstydy zamknąłem w sobie, ale chwila zachwyty/ pręgą słońca na ścianie, trelem wilgi, twarzą, irysem,/ tomikiem wierszy, człowiekiem trwa i powraca w blasku.// Ta chwila mnie podnosi nad moją ułomność.' ('Powienieniem teraz').

³⁵⁸ 'Gdzie jest pamięć dni, które były twoimi dniami na ziemi,/ I sprawiały radość i ból, i były tobie wszechświatem?' ('Notatnik').

³⁵⁹ 'Kiedy wschodzi słońce,/ oświeśla głupoty i winy/ schowane w kątach pamięci/ i niewidoczne w dzień.' ('Człowiek wielopiętrowy').

³⁶⁰ 'Ukazywały się, przyznane mojemu rylcowi, kraje, miasta,/ ogrody, morskie zatoki, dla opisania ich lepiej niż dawniej'.

³⁶¹ 'Kto honorować będzie miasto bez imienia [...]?', 'Czemu już tylko mnie powierza się to miasto bezbronne/ i czyste jak naszyjnik weselny zapomnianego plemienia?'

³⁶² 'kapelan cieni' ('Przewaga').

³⁶³ 'stygmata pamięci' ('Oprawa').

fall into oblivion: 'I was left with many unwritten odes in honor/ of men and women.// Their incomparable bravery, devotion,/ self-sacrifice passed away with them, and nobody knows of it./ Nobody knows for all eternity.'³⁶⁴ Jan Błoński pointed to Miłosz's late oeuvre as being marked with 'sacralisation of personal experience.' Miłosz's project of saving from oblivion is not only, according to Błoński, 'saving oneself for oneself, it becomes saving others for others.'³⁶⁵ The poetic duty of witness is underpinned with the constant sense of urgency: 'I should be dead already, but there is work to do.'³⁶⁶ As if the poet wages his war against oblivion, about which Robert Hass talked when referring to the poem 'Meaning': 'There's that terrific sense of urgency, and one of the things that goes with it is: if he can't remember and get down on paper the hairstyle of his piano teacher who was crushed in a bombing when she was an old lady, if her life goes unmarked into oblivion – then oblivion won.'³⁶⁷ Miłosz remarks in 'Koleżanka': 'And I ask myself why it is constructed so perversely:/ So that life is vague and only death is real.'³⁶⁸ In the poem 'Werki', the speaking persona visits the land of those who have passed away. It is a journey through the conceptual space of abstract geography: 'Yet I think mostly of the, and they have all died./ Also about their unknown country./ Its geography, says Swedenborg, cannot be transferred to maps./ For there, as one has been, so one sees./ And it is possible even there to make mistakes; for instance,/ to wander about/ Without realizing you are already on the other side.'³⁶⁹ One could describe this

³⁶⁴ 'Zostałem z nie napisanymi odami na chwałę wielu/ kobiet i mężczyzn.// Ich nieporównana dzielność, ofiarność, oddanie/ przeminęły razem z nimi, i nikt o nich nie wie. Nikt nie wie na całą wieczność.' ('Powinienem teraz').

³⁶⁵ Jan Błoński as quoted by Marek Bernacki in *Wyprowadził mnie z ziemi Ulro: szkice o twórczości Czesława Miłosza* (Bielsko-Biała: Wydawnictwo ATH, 2005), p. 53 [trans. by MM].

³⁶⁶ 'Powinienem już umrzeć, a ciągle nie skończona praca.' ('Notatnik').

³⁶⁷ Haven, *An Invisible Rope*, pp. 247-248.

³⁶⁸ 'I zapytuję, czemu tak przewrotnie bywa:/ Życie mało wyraźne, tylko śmierć prawdziwa'.

³⁶⁹ Miłosz refers to this quote in the *Land of Ulro*, p. 164: 'To repeat the Swedenborgian maxim: "You see as you are"'. Polish original from the poem 'Werki': 'Ale myślę głównie o nich, a wszyscy umarli./ I o ich nieznaną krainę./ Jej geografia, mówi Swedenborg, nie da się przenieść na mapy./ Ponieważ tam każdy jaki był, tak i widzi./ A nawet zdarzają się pomyłki, na przykład wędrujesz/ I nie wiesz, że już jesteś po drugiej stronie'.

space with quotation from Herman Melville: 'It is not down in any map; true places never are.'³⁷⁰

The material enclosed within memory is conveyed and shaped through various means, as seen in the first part of *Second Space*: writing – controlled tool of expression – ('I had to write, Patrick.' ('Oprawa')), or a dream – uncontrolled means through which memory manifests itself. Writing and dream enframe memory, provide an enclosed space within which memory is contained. As far as the factuality of writing and dream is concerned, they both have the same status of the real, which is evident in the poem 'Oczy': 'My most honorable eyes, you are not in the best of shape./[...] Now what you have seen is hidden inside me/ And changed into memories or dreams.'³⁷¹

The topos of a dream and a direct reference to a dream as a container of memory underlies the poetic landscape of the first part of *Second Space*. Dream is a space within which archival material becomes relived and through which memory is mediated and shaped. Dream here is not a symptom of the unconscious sphere according to the Freudian tradition. It is reality relived, it has the same validity as a recollection in the immediacy of its factual form which provides immediate represented contents, not the contents manifested symptomatically.

Direct reference to dream is made in 'Anioł Stróż' – the poem which, in its oneiric convention, paradoxically outlines the carnal nature and bodily impersonifications of the spiritual being: 'In my dreams my guardian angel takes the form of a woman.'³⁷² The dreamscape becomes the ground where faith as an opening onto the spiritual and metaphysical realm, materializes itself: 'I never believed in the presence of angels, but

³⁷⁰ Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick; or The Whale* (London: Vintage Classic, 2007), p. 60.

³⁷¹ 'Szanowne moje oczy, nie najlepiej z wami./[...] Teraz coście widziały, schowane jest we mnie/ I przemienione w pamięć albo sny'.

³⁷² 'Mój anioł stróż przybiera we śnie kształt kobiety'.

my dreams have/ changed'³⁷³ Dream can be a source of peace: 'I asked him/ For one moment of the dream, which gave me peace.'³⁷⁴

Dream also becomes a carrier of the past, of the factual, often painful, personal events. It is a space mediating the confrontation of the present and the past. As the poetic voice of 'Emigrować' confesses: 'The years spent in exile come back to me in dreams./ And only then I know how much I suffered.'³⁷⁵

Dream is also a carrier of the memory of people, as in the poem 'Koleżanka': 'I was walking toward her, carrying a half-opened rose./ [...] Does the dream mean I desired her?'³⁷⁶ The past is seen as a dream in the poem 'Pobyt': 'My stay in that city was like a dream/ And the dream lasted for years.'³⁷⁷ Dream becomes an extension of the poetic ego, a container of the past which accompanies the poet and comprises his being in the present.

The aforementioned examples illustrate the concept of dream and memory as constituents of a personal and collective space, and as containers thereof. This space becomes enframed through writing. Of particular significance here is the located-ness and strong geographical anchorage in Miłosz's treatment of dream and memory. In the same way, the expression of the collective memory of the Garden of Eden is contextualized in the particular physical representations of the place, the Paradise, as the primordial home of humankind. Those representations are intertwined and shaped in Miłosz's poetry by the poet's personal memory of home.

Jungian psychology offers a justification of the 'religious instinct' as a basic human need. Miłosz refers to Jung in *The Land of Ulro*:

³⁷³ 'Nie wierzyłem w obecność aniołów, ale sny się odmieniły' ('Anioł Stróż').

³⁷⁴ 'a ja prosiłem/ O jeszcze chwilę snu dającego spokój' ('Anioł Stróż').

³⁷⁵ 'W snach powracają do mnie lata na obczyźnie./ I tylko wtedy wiem, ile cierpiałem.' ('Emigrować') [trans. by MM].

³⁷⁶ 'Szedłem do niej i niosłem nierozwitą różę. [...] Czy ten sen tyle znaczy, że jej pożałowałem?'

³⁷⁷ 'Pobyt w tamtym mieście był podobny do snu./ A sen trwał dużo lat'.

An empiricist who passionately defended the empirical method, Jung, on the basis of his numerous clinical studies, adduced formulations more or less identical to those of the great laborers of the Imagination. Ignoring the question of whether the phenomenon of religion was a remnant of the 'animistic tradition', he took the religious impulse to be as primary to man as hunger or the sexual urge. At the same time he observed the gradual fading of Christian symbols in the Western imagination, along with the disorders traceable to that disappearance, and the vicarious role played by various 'isms', which emerged merely as the cruel gods resurrected. Jung's writings are a vindication of what I said a moment ago by way of paraphrasing Blake.³⁷⁸

In the light of Jungian psychology, Miłosz makes a reference to his Lithuanian childhood as a factor shaping his religious imagination:

I feel an equally profound gratitude for my Lithuanian childhood. Whether Jung was right in making the subconscious dependent on geographical and therefore telluric conditions, this based on correspondences which he discovered between the dreams of American Indians and those of white settlers, I cannot judge. If correct, I would lend credence to the Positivist thesis of a 'mystical Lithuania'. Whether or not we assent to that thesis, my religious experience was other than it might have been if I had been Warsaw-bred.³⁷⁹

Similarly, in the poem, 'Wysokie tarasy', Miłosz reminisces: 'In King Sigismund Augustus High School/ We used to begin each day with a song about dawn./ *I wake to light that warms/ My eye/ And feel Almighty God/ Nearby.*'³⁸⁰

The anchorage of the childhood world in a particular geographical and cultural context interplays, then, with the vision of second space that imagination forms. In 'Werki', Miłosz goes back to his homeland in the idyllic representation of the landscape: 'As I, perhaps, just dream those rusty-golden forests,/ The glitter of the river in which I swam in my youth,/ The October from my poems with its air like wine.'³⁸¹ Consequently, there takes place projection of the image of home onto the vision of heaven and Paradise.

³⁷⁸ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 184.

³⁷⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 183-184.

³⁸⁰ 'W gimnazjum Zygmunta Augusta dzień zaczynaliśmy pieśnią/ *Kiedy ranne wstają zorze*'.

³⁸¹ 'Tak i ja, może tylko śnię te rudozłote lasy,/ Błysk rzeki, w której pływałem za młodu,/ Październik moich wierszy z powietrzem jak wino'.

The representation of Heaven through functional categories of space, where Heaven is reduced to an enclosed spatial category of a room, or rather halls, corresponds to the already mentioned, in the previous chapter, notion of space as an enclosure: to comprehend the sublime vastness of the infinite, it needs to be enclosed and contained, condensed within a represented image. In the poem 'Druga przestrzeń', heaven is portrayed in terms of spatial categories of a house. The second space is pictured as an enclosed edifice, a vast house of 'spacious heavenly halls'³⁸² to which aerial stairs lead, and which are surrounded by hanging gardens, an image analogous to the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The movement upwards alongside stairs might remind of the imagery of the movement through the house, up the stairs, and outside, towards the Sun, as presented in *Świat, poema naiwne* as the expression of the universal Icarian desire of aspiring towards the sky, towards Heaven. Human existence is realization of work in God's vineyard: 'I knew, always, that I would be a worker in the vineyard,/ as are all men and women living at the same time/ whether they are aware of it or not.'³⁸³ The rootedness in primordial Eden is powerfully presented in 'Nieprzystosowanie':

I was not made to live anywhere except in Paradise.// Such, simply, was my genetic inadaptation.// [...] I pretended to work like others from morning to evening,/ but I was absent, dedicated to invisible countries.// For solace, I escaped to city parks, there to observe/ and faithfully describe flowers and trees, but they changed,/ under my hand, into the gardens of Paradise.³⁸⁴

³⁸² 'przestronne niebiańskie pokoje'.

³⁸³ 'Zawsze wiedziałem, że będę robotnikiem w winnicy, tak samo/ jak wszyscy ludzie żyjący równocześnie ze mną, świadomi tego/ czy nieświadomi.' ('Późna dojrzałość').

³⁸⁴ 'Nie nadawałem się do życia gdzie indziej niż w Raju.// Po prostu takie było moje genetyczne nieprzystosowanie.// [...] Udawałem, że jak inni pracuję od rana do wieczora,/ ale nieobecny, powierzony niewidzialnym krajom.// Dla pociechy uciekałem do miejskich parków, żeby patrzeć/ i wiernie malować kwiaty i drzewa, ale te z rzeczywistych/ zmieniały się w rośliny rajskiego ogrodu'.

And further: 'I have not loved a woman with my five senses./ I only wanted from her my sister, from before the banishment.'³⁸⁵

There are Edenic manifestations of God's presence in the world. In the poem 'Kraków', God is present not only through the symbolism of incense and wax candles, but, first of all, 'His scent of apples, saffron, cloves, and incense'.³⁸⁶ Therefore, in his prayer, the poet pleads to God: 'Protect me from the day of dryness and impotence.// When neither a swallow's flight nor peonies, daffodils and irises/ in the flower market are a sign of Your glory.'³⁸⁷ The poet's Credo in Deum is grounded in the beauty of the natural world: 'I loved God with all my strength on the sandy roads that wound/ through forests.'³⁸⁸ The cold rationalism of science threatens the ability to see nature as manifestation of God's presence in the world: 'The beauty of nature is suspect./ Oh yes, the splendor of flowers./ Science is concerned to deprive us of illusions./ [...] There was a time/ When disinterested beauty by its sheer superabundance/ Gratified our eyes. What have they left us?/ Only the accountancy of a capitalist enterprise.'³⁸⁹ The poet stands against that, and expresses his persistent faith: 'Yet I repeat "I believe in God," and I know/ that my belief has no justification.'³⁹⁰

Human history is the history of forgetting the roots, forgetting the Genesis: 'We forget – I kept saying – that we are all children of the King.// For where we come from there is no division/ into Yes and No, into is, was, and will be.'³⁹¹ The memory of the

³⁸⁵ 'Nie pokochałem kobiety moimi pięcioma zmysłami, chciałem/ w niej widzieć jedynie siostrę sprzed naszego wygnania.' ('Nieprzystosowanie').

³⁸⁶ 'W jego zapach jabłek, szafranu, cynamonu, goździków' ('W Krakowie').

³⁸⁷ 'Uchroni mnie od dnia oschłości i niemocy.// Kiedy ani jaskółki, ani piwonie, żonkile i irysy na rynku/ kwiatowym nie będą dla mnie znakiem Twojej chwały.' ('Wysłuchaj').

³⁸⁸ 'Kochałem Pana Boga ze wszystkich sił swoich na piaszczystych/ drogach przez lasy.' ('Notatnik').

³⁸⁹ 'Piękno przyrody jest podejrzane./ No tak przepych kwiatów./ Nauka dba o pozabawienie nas iluzji. [...] Kiedyś cieszyło nam oczy/ Bezinteresowne piękno, z samego nadmiaru./ A co nam zostawili? Tylko rachunkowość/ Kapitalistycznego przedsiębiorstwa.' ('Uczeni').

³⁹⁰ 'A ja powtarzam: "Wierzę w Boga" i wiem,/ że nie ma na to żadnych usprawiedliwień.' ('Wbrew naturze').

³⁹¹ 'zapomnieliśmy, że jesteśmy wszyscy dziećmi Króla.// Bo przychodzimy stamtąd, gdzie nie ma jeszcze podziału/ na Tak i Nie, ani podziału na jest, będzie i było.' ('Późna dojrzałość').

common primordial origin has a unifying aspect where the interhuman boundaries are abolished, reality becomes atemporal and not divided between binaries. Faith and religious imagination have a unifying and universalizing force. Each human being 'contains' in themselves the archetype of Paradise, just as each human being is a reservoir of history and tradition: 'Moments from yesterday and from centuries ago [...] [...] they dwell in us,/ waiting for a fulfillment.'³⁹² Forgetting the roots brings about particular ramifications for human condition: 'We were miserable, we used no more than a hundredth part/ of the gift we received for our long journey.'³⁹³

The act of remembering, of opening onto the 'second space' is a source of consolation and peace. Even when the rational question 'what if God does not exist' occurs, the poet confronts it with an answer in the tradition of the Pascal's Wager, as in the poem 'Jeżeli Boga nie ma'. Similarly, the question of faith as consolation and source of peace, occurs, in an ironic context, in the poem 'Lokator': 'Most appropriate perhaps to keep silent about religion, for he/ disappeared without a trace among the millennia of the planet Earth,/ together with the uncountable others who have never ascended to/ any consolation.'³⁹⁴ At some other point, the poet admits: 'I respected religion, for on this earth of pain/ it was a funeral and a propitiatory song.'³⁹⁵ The loss of second space, brought about by the erosion of religious imagination, constitutes a real and factual deprivation for a human subject resulting in the condition of alienation; it is a self-imposed disinheritance from Paradise, a second expulsion that scientific mindset has imposed on our civilization: 'Without unearthly meadows how to meet salvation?/ And

³⁹² 'Chwile z wczoraj i sprzed wieków [...] [...] mieszkają w nas i czekają/ na dopełnienie.' ('Późna dojrzałość').

³⁹³ 'Jesteśmy nieszczęśni, bo robimy użytek z mniej niż setnej części daru, który otrzymaliśmy na naszą długą podróż.' ('Późna dojrzałość').

³⁹⁴ 'Stosowniej będzie zamilczeć o religii, jeżeli zniknął bez śladu/ w milleniach planety Ziemi, razem z bezgraniczną liczbą/ innych, którzy nie dostąpili pocieszenia'.

³⁹⁵ 'Religię cenilem za to, że na tej ziemi bólu/ była pieśnią żalobną i prośbą.' ('Nieprzystosowanie').

where will the damned find suitable quarters?’³⁹⁶ The alienation therefore springs from the fact that second space is inscribed in human memory, yet rigid rationalism undermined the faith in it. Still, the eternal ontological and existential questions, which used to be looked at and related to in the context of faith, remain. They are, however, uprooted from their metaphysical context. Although the second space is forgotten, the consequences of the expulsion from the Paradise remain, as the poet illustrates. In the poem ‘Nieprzystosowanie’: ‘Here on earth every prick of a rose-thorn changed into a wound./ Whenever the sun hid behind a cloud, I grieved.’³⁹⁷ The most tangible consequence of the expulsion from Paradise is the passage of time, when ‘High notions of oneself are annihilated/ by a glance in the mirror,/ by the impotence of old age,/ breath held in the hope that some pain/ won’t return’;³⁹⁸ ‘My body doesn’t want to take my orders./ On a straight path it stumbles,/ It has a hard time getting up stairs.’³⁹⁹ The body is subject to the work of ‘beauticians of Time’;⁴⁰⁰ ‘The mirror fades, the eyes hardly see. How difficult it is to believe that/ for the angels we are a singular event and not a number submitted/ to a universal law.’⁴⁰¹ In contrast, in the poem ‘Ja’, a powerful image of Paradise is portrayed: ‘There is not the slightest doubt that the couple in Paradise were/ a one-time event.// Just think! Not to be committed to any law of dissolution!// Nor to the law of cause and effect.// Neither to the law of disagreement between the flesh and the

³⁹⁶ ‘Bez łąk pozaziemskich jak spotkać Zbawienie?/ Gdzie znajdzie sobie siedzibę związek potępionych?’ (‘Druga przestrzeń’).

³⁹⁷ ‘Na ziemi ukłucie się kolcem róży zmieniało się w ranę,/ za każdym razem, kiedy za obłok chowało się słońce,/ czułem smutek.’ (‘Nieprzystosowanie’).

³⁹⁸ ‘Wysokie wyobrażenia o sobie zostają poniżone/ spojrzeniem w lustro,/ niemocą starości,/ wstrzymywaniem oddechu w nadziei, że ból/ nie powróci.’ (‘Degradacja’).

³⁹⁹ ‘Ciało nie chce słuchać moich rozkazów./ Przewraca się na równej drodze, trudno mu wejść na schody.’ (‘Wiek nowy’).

⁴⁰⁰ ‘kosmetyczki Czasu’ (‘Ja’).

⁴⁰¹ ‘Lustro dogasa, oczy ledwo widzą, jak trudno uwierzyć, że dla /aniołów możemy być jednorazowym zdarzeniem, nie cyfrą/ w wypełnieniu powszechnego prawa.’ (‘Ja’).

will.// There was no “I”. Only wonder.’⁴⁰² The expulsion from Paradise resulted in the need for a mask and mirror: ‘What’s worse, consciousness or lack of consciousness?/ Well, there weren’t any mirrors in Eden.’⁴⁰³

Mask and mirror, as well as the charade of *theatrum mundi*, are features of the world outside of Eden; of the reality which imposes upon itself a second expulsion through stifling the faith in second space. The question of mask and mirror in relation to the second space will be analysed further in the thesis in the context of theology of the body.

Why religion, why theology?

Within the notion of second space espoused by Miłosz, religion, faith and theology occupy most significant part. As *Druga przestrzeń* shows, there are thin lines between those inherently different notions, yet they constitute elemental parts of the same edifice. They are approached in the collection ‘methodically’ by the poet who portrays faith as a personal experience anchored in individual mind sometimes in conflict with the official, public ritual of religion which, however, constitutes an important part of the religious experience.

In presentation of his views on theological questions, faith and religion, the poet does not provide fixed solutions. He wanders along the tracks of various doctrines, often touches upon heresy; he confesses his doubts and portrays the depth of his personal

⁴⁰²‘Najniewątpliwiej tamtych dwoje w Raju było jednorazowym/ zdarzeniem.// Pomyślcie tylko! Nie podlegać żadnemu prawu przemijania!// Ani prawu przyczyny i skutku.// Ani prawu niezgody między wolą i ciałem.// Nie było Ja. Było zapatrzenie.’ (‘Ja’).

⁴⁰³‘Co gorsze? Świadomość czy brak świadomości?/ No tak, żadnego lustra nie mieliśmy w Raju.’ (‘Degradacja’).

communion with God. Marek Bernacki points out that most of the eschatological poems of *Druga przestrzeń* have a dimension of 'the poetry of the future' as postulated by Mickiewicz. Bernacki quotes from Mickiewicz's letter to Hieronim Kajsiwicz (31 October 1835) [original, as quoted by Biernacki]: 'Mnie się zdaje, że wrócą czasy takie, że trzeba będzie być świętym, żeby być poetą, że trzeba będzie natchnienia i wiadomości z góry o rzechach, o których rozum powiedzieć nie umie, żeby obudzić w ludziach uszanowanie dla sztuki, która nadto długo była aktorką, nierządnicą lub polityczną gazetą.'⁴⁰⁴

In the poem opening 'Traktat teologiczny', Miłosz justifies the validity of theological thought: 'Why theology? Because the first must be first.'⁴⁰⁵ Theology is about *truth* and *reality* which is conveyed through language. As Miłosz points out in *The Land of Ulro* the universal secularization which is concomitant with the cult of reason, led to the erosion of theological language. The poet stipulates that our language, our speech is devoid of the absolute, theological, point of reference, hence, devoid of meaning: 'Let reality return to our speech./ That is, meaning. Impossible without an absolute point of reference.'⁴⁰⁶

Arriving at the truth and reality is part of Miłosz's project of the 'passionate pursuit of the Real'⁴⁰⁷ where language is meaningful. The history of the second expulsion from paradise, which is the history of forgetting second space, is reflected in language. It became a language of phantasmagoria, detached from *reality*, devoid of meaning: 'It is poetry, precisely,/ With its behaviour of a bird thrashing against the transparency/ Of a windowpane that testifies to the fact/ That we don't know how to live in a

⁴⁰⁴ Marek Bernacki, *Wyprowadził mnie z ziemi Ulro: szkice o twórczości Czesława Miłosza* (Bielsko-Biała: Wydawnictwo ATH, 2005), p. 121, after Adam Mickiewicz *O przyszłej poezji*.

⁴⁰⁵ 'Dlaczego teologia? Bo pierwsze musi być pierwsze.' ('Takiego traktatu').

⁴⁰⁶ 'Oby do naszej mowy wróciła rzeczywistość./ To znaczy sens, niemożliwy bez absolutnego punktu odniesienia.' ('Takiego traktatu').

⁴⁰⁷ See, Aleksander Fiut, *The Eternal Moment*, p. 194.

phantasmagoria.⁴⁰⁸ Theology should open the door into the realm of reality and truth. It should save from illusion and restore the balance, the hierarchy of values with the absolute point of reference, which has been forgotten. To refer to the poet's biography, his work on translation of the Bible in the twilight of his life, was a 'return to the source of true language, one supported by metaphysical sanction.'⁴⁰⁹ As Aleksander Fiut points out in his interpretation of Miłosz's work: 'The testimonies of culture changing throughout history offer some consolation. They record the memory of a different language and a different knowledge – a true and holy one. In Miłosz's poetry an intuition persistently recurs – or is it rather hope? – that he will attain the full truth when either his own life ends or humanity ceases to exist.'⁴¹⁰

Speech without meaning corresponds to the 'emptiness' of certain sacral symbols whose symbolism is rooted in the Biblical tradition. Aleksander Fiut writes, with reference to one of Miłosz's poems, that 'For the "disinherited mind" sacral symbols no longer reveal their value-laden power but instead recall their absence or their forgotten metaphysical foundation. Miłosz turns to them with the proper respect, never just as part of a game but also not without some distance'.⁴¹¹ The disinherited mind is, therefore, no longer able to recognize *truth* and *reality*, which is a drama: 'the drama of the loss of God, constituting (not for Miłosz alone) the most important drama of our civilization', '(It) is consistently enacted by his poetry in the attitudes that it directly expresses as well as in its poetics. It is precisely this drama that is [...] the great theme of Miłosz's poetry, its very basis, and the source of all its other themes.'⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁸ 'I właśnie poezja/ swoim zachowaniem przerażonego ptaka/ tłukącego się o przezroczystą szybę, poświadcza,/ że nie umiemy żyć w fantasmagorii.' ('Takiego traktatu').

⁴⁰⁹ Fiut, *The Eternal Moment*, p. 194.

⁴¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 194.

⁴¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 189.

⁴¹² *ibid.*, p. 189.

Druga przestrzeń illustrates not only the post-expulsion human condition, but also the workings of religious imagination open onto the second space. The poet does not smuggle apologetic arguments through his poetry and does not adopt a homiletic role with a proselitistic aim. Rather, he speaks in favour of the legitimacy of the place of religion (or rather faith) in human society, simultaneously exposing the workings of religious imagination through the minds of particular poetic personas, especially Fr Seweryn, or through other speaking voices; he also contextualizes his argument in the thought of Mickiewicz, Boehme, Blake, Swedenborg, Oscar Miłosz, and other traditions of thought. Hence, personal, bordering on confessional, representation of human confrontation with God's presence, or rebellion against Him, is shown side by side with the strict theological exposition of the poetic argument in rational terms.

In the poem 'Kasia', Miłosz answers the question 'why religion': 'Because what would you introduce in place of religion?/ Perhaps the idiotic rituals of the Party,/ Or football games ending in a brawl?// Pallas Athena was our goddess./ We sent delegates to the oracle at Delphi./ We walked in procession for Diana at Ephesus./ As it should be. The philosophers/ Have not taken from the gods the glory due them.'⁴¹³

Pragmatically, the validity of the place of religion in human society is based on palliative function of religion. Religion is a source of hope, which, at times is referred to in an ironic context of blind folk faith, as in the case of a bitter soliloquy of the priest: 'They needed me only in misfortune,/ To conjure heavenly powers./ So they could come and be saved/ From a tumor in the lungs or a viral infection.'⁴¹⁴ Yet, at other times, the

⁴¹³ 'Bo co wprowadzić na miejsce religii?/ Chyba głupawe partyjne obrzędy,/ Albo burdami kończone igrzyska?// Palla Athene była naszą panią./ Staliśmy posłów do wyroczni w Delfach./ Procesją szliśmy do Diany w Efezie./ Tak być powinno. I filozofowie/ Nie odjęli bóstwom należnej im chwały.' ('Kasia').

⁴¹⁴ 'Byłem im potrzebny tylko w nieszczęściu./ Do zaklinania niebieskich mocy./ Żeby przybyły i uratowały/ Od guza w płucach albo wirusowej infekcji.' ('Dziecko').

poet shows how the genuine desire to go beyond the limitations imposed by human cognition and turn towards God is, at the same time, the source of hope:

I have been mocked because of Swedenborg and like nonsense,/ For I transgressed the rules of literary fashion.// The louts grimaced sarcastically/ As they discussed my pious, childish superstitions.// Which did not want to accept the only knowledge/ Accessible to us: that people are created by people,/ And that they, together, create something that they call truth.// While I wanted to believe in Adam and Eve, and in the Fall,/ And in the hope of Restoration.⁴¹⁵

At another point the poet states: 'I respected religion, for on this earth of pain/ it was a funeral and a propitiatory song.'⁴¹⁶

Religion and faith is not governed by categories of reason, the theological dogmas deny rational explanation: 'Yet the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the mystery of Original Sin,/ the mystery of the Redemption are well armoured against reason.'⁴¹⁷ The poet points to the act of faith, as an act of humility, of recognizing the limitations of one's rational perception and cognition, as through the voice of Fr Seweryn: 'I raise above the altar bread and wine./ Humbled, since my reason does not comprehend what I do.'⁴¹⁸

Religion and faith transcend rationality, yet, at times of purely pragmatic approach to the justification of the validity of religion, the poet enters rational discourse, as in the poems 'Jeżeli nie ma' which, syllogistically, bears some correspondence to the Pascal's wager. The poem 'Religię bierzemy' provides, in an ironic way, a cold calculation resulting in the answer to the question 'why religion': 'To be human is to be completely alien amid the galaxies.// Which is sufficient reason for erecting, together

⁴¹⁵ 'Mnie wyśmiewali za Swedenborgi i inne ambaje,/ ponieważ wykraczałem poza przepisy/ literackiej mody.// Wykrzywione w szyderczym grymasie gęby/ małpoludów rozprawiających o moich zabobonach/ pobożnego dziecka.// Które nie chce przyjąć jedynej dostępnej nam wiedzy,/ o wzajemnym stwarzaniu się ludzi/ i wspólnym stwarzaniu tego, co nazywają prawdą.// Podczas gdy ja chciałem wierzyć w Adama i Ewę,/ Upadek i nadzieję przywrócenia.' ('Mnie zawsze podobał się').

⁴¹⁶ 'Religię ceniłem za to, że na tej ziemi bólu/ była pieśnią żalobną i proszalną.' ('Nieprzystosowanie').

⁴¹⁷ 'Ale tajemnica Trójcy Świętej, tajemnica Grzechu/ Pierworodnego i tajemnica Odkupienia/ są opancerzone przeciw rozumowi.' ('Przepraszam').

⁴¹⁸ 'Podnoszę nad ołtarzem chleb i wino./ Pokorny, bo mój rozum nie zgadnie dlaczego.' ('Kasia').

with others, the temples/ of an unimaginable mercy.’⁴¹⁹ As in the case of Pascal’s wager, one can interpret that religion adheres to the ‘nothing to lose, only to gain’ logic. In the poem ‘Religię bierzemy’ no language of dogma is involved, only cold calculation, factual response of a rational mind to a human condition within the discourse of reason.

On the other side of the spectrum of the rational argument, there comes the empirical dimension of religion. The personal experience and intuition of God’s presence is presented, in *Druga przestrzeń*, as one of the deepest experiences bringing one to the *truth* and *reality*.

This experience allows one to reason with God, to pose the eternal question ‘unde malum’ and delve into the *mysterium iniquitatis*, to marvel at the world full of good, but also full of evil, as the poetic ‘I’ prays: ‘A wandering rabbi who called You his Father,/ A man defenseless against the laws and the beasts of this earth,/ Disgraced, despairing,/ Let him help me/ In my prayers to You.’⁴²⁰

The pure empirical experience of God is portrayed in the poem ‘Obecność’. It is a prayer which constitutes a counterweight to the poems that preceded it, full of doubt, apocalyptic imagery of the world marked with sorrow and death. As a counterimage, ‘Obecność’ is an epitome of serene peace. There is no doubt in the *real* presence of God (‘Lord, Your presence is so real’).⁴²¹ The poem’s imagery is that of empirical, sensual experience of God: ‘On my neck and my shoulders I felt Your warm breath.’⁴²² It stresses the human divinity of God’s nature: ‘I pronounce the words of Your book, which are human,/ Just as your love and hate are human./ You yourself created us in your image

⁴¹⁹ ‘Człowieczeństwo oznacza zupełną obcość pośród galaktyk.// Dostateczny powód, żeby wspólnie z innymi wznosić świątynie/ niewyobrażalnego miłosierdzia.’ (‘Religię bierzemy’).

⁴²⁰ ‘Wędrowny rabbi, który nazwał Ciebie ojcem naszym,/ Bezbronny człowiek przeciw prawom i bestiom tej ziemi,/ Pohańbiony, rozpaczający,/ Niech mnie wspomaga/ W moich modlitwach do Ciebie.’ (‘Jak mogłeś’).

⁴²¹ ‘Panie, Twoja obecność tak bardzo prawdziwa’ (‘Obecność’).

⁴²² ‘Na moim karku i plecach poczułem Twój ciepły oddech’ (‘Obecność’).

and semblance.’⁴²³ This experience of God is most direct and personal, outside and beyond the realm of theological doctrine. It is unmediated. The poet states: ‘I want to forget the subtle palaces created by theologians./ You do not deal in metaphysics.’⁴²⁴ The prayer contains a plea to God for redemption from earthly suffering: ‘Save me from the images of pain I have gathered wandering/ on the earth,/ Lead me where only Your light abides.’⁴²⁵ Contrary to the poems of the part ‘Książd Seweryn’ preceding ‘Obecność’, of whose subject were arcana, dogmas of faith, human doubt, the question *unde malum*, ‘Obecność’ points to the most direct experience of the presence of God by a human being. The relationship between God and the world, as defined by theological doctrines, is left aside; the poem concentrates on the relationship human being-God, most deep source of peace.

The validation of second space as part of human existence is done by the poet in his exposition of the workings of religious imagination in the realm of faith. Miłosz portrays individual interpretations of theological dogmas and individual encounters with divinity. The poet becomes interested then both in God as He is experienced, or rather as a subject of one’s understanding, and God as a subject of doctrine and dogmatic faith. The figure of Father Seweryn, torn between doubt and belief, is linked with the experiences of people he confronts in their doubts and hopes. It is significant to stress here, that the doubt plays a part in the dialectic of faith, yet does not testify against the very existence of God. For Miłosz ‘the existence of God (even if constantly undermined) constitutes for him a certainty that returns meaning and order to existence.’⁴²⁶ The part

⁴²³ ‘Wymawiam słowa Twojej księgi, ludzkie, tak jak ludzkie są/ Twoje miłości i gniewy./ Sam nas przecie stworzyłeś na swój obraz i podobieństwo.’ (‘Obecność’).

⁴²⁴ ‘Chcę zapomnieć o misternych pałacach, które wzniesli/ teologowie. Ty nie uprawiasz metafizyki.’ (‘Obecność’).

⁴²⁵ ‘Wybaw mnie od obrazów bólu, które zebrałem, wędrując po/ świecie, zaprowadź tam, gdzie mieszka Twoje tylko światło.’ (‘Obecność’).

⁴²⁶ Fiut, *The Eternal Moment*, p. 107.

‘Książd Seweryn’, especially significant in the exposition of the workings of religious imagination, makes the mind of the priest, his observation and reflection central to the poetic universe and turns the sequence of eleven poems into a personal treatise on theology, religion and faith. Just as in the case of the first part – the loose collection of poems – the standpoint of the speaking persona is significant: it is the priest who confronts the arcana of theology and religion.

The workings of religious imagination against the background of theology and religion are governed by conflicts. In *Druga przestrzeń*, tensions are marked in multiple places by the poet who develops his poetic arguments alongside the binary opposition lines as he portrays the nuances of ‘moving’ within second space. The inherent tension is one of the characteristics of Miłosz’s poetry, or, as Aleksander Fiut points out it refers to ‘the two fundamental rules of Miłosz’s thought and expression: antithesis and ambivalence’, ‘the breaking of barriers between the language of poetry and the language of philosophy, earthly speech and sacred speech.’⁴²⁷ The collection *Second Space* abounds in clashes, tensions and binaries. In many cases they are based on the conflict between the speaking voice - ‘I’ and ‘them’: ‘I’ and fellow believers (‘Poeta, którego ochrzczono’), the poet and ‘Polish compatriots’ [‘polscy współwyznawcy’] (‘Nie jestem’); poet and the theologians (‘Przepraszam’, ‘Nie z frywolności’); poet and the ritual (‘Obciążenie’); poet and Darwinism (‘Na próżno’, ‘Coś się narodził’), poet and the literary fashion (‘Mnie zawsze podobał się’); poet’s private religion and the religion of the rite (‘Mieście zrozumienie’). Similar clashes govern the belief and disbelief present in Fr. Seweryn’s poetic voice, and the people he confronts.

The powerful account of the workings of religious imagination points to the fact that the openness onto the sphere of the divine is not only a tumultuous process, but it

⁴²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 190.

is a process which is a journey of believing and disbelieving, both being constituents of the dynamic of faith. The tensions governing the representation of the workings of the religious mind are underlain by the conflict between the official doctrine and personal religious experience. This conflict, which is inevitable, and often reconciled, springs from the *homo ritualis* side of human nature.

This conflict cannot be avoided, but it can be recognised. It is a source of inspiring force, whether of doubt or belief, which is the driving force of faith. Echoes of Blake's thought are heard here: 'Without contraries is no progression.' The aforementioned tensions which characterize the workings of the religious imagination describe the process which the openness onto second space entails but they also play a significant part in bringing us closer to the truth, to the *reality*. The poet has the hope that at the end of human history

only then will the chasm between the subjective and the objective, the sign and the signified, be bridged. Only then will nature once again become a garden. There will be no history; the clocks will stop. The multitude of languages will disappear, sensory perception will attain fullness, and the individual, overcoming his 'I', will immerse himself in the perfection of the Word which was in the beginning.⁴²⁸

The conflicts within religious imagination involve the tensions between religion experienced subjectively and the religion of ritual. It is prominent both in the poems with the voice of Father Seweryn, but also in some personal, as if confessional, poems of 'Traktat teologiczny'. Subjective experience of religion is a form of translation of the doctrine into personal language. It is subjective filtering of theological dogmas into individual understanding and experience, as in the poem 'Obecność', where God's presence is experienced empirically, yet denies rational explanation. It sometimes conflicts with the religion of rite, which belongs to the *theatrum mundi*, of the theatre,

⁴²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 195.

mask and robes: 'I put on the burden of ecclesiastical robes/ And the mask of a benevolent smile.'⁴²⁹ As already pointed out in the previous part of the chapter, mask is a consequence of the expulsion from Eden, as is a robe and a mirror ('there weren't any mirrors in Eden').⁴³⁰

Human estrangement is intensified by the mask, ornament and theatre: 'There are days when people seem to me a festival/ Of marionettes dancing at the edge of nothingness'⁴³¹ ponders Fr Seweryn in 'Kawki na wieży'. Or he confesses: 'My robe, of a priest and a confessor,/ Serves to cover up my uncertainty and fear.'⁴³² Mask, at other times a tool of empathy and compassion used by the poet to identify with the experience of the other, as in 'O starych kobietach', in case of religion constitutes a certain shield, a human boundary in the divine realm.

The world as a stage, a theatre ('There is only our/ ecstatic dance, a diminutive part of a great totality.// They are born and die; the dance doesn't stop')⁴³³, is the place of belonging of *homo ritualis* ('Perhaps I only appropriate the gestures, words, and actions, proper/ to the small patch of time assigned to me.// *Homo ritualis*. Aware of it, I do what is prescribed for a one day's/ master').⁴³⁴ The ironic stanza on ritual is presented by Fr Seweryn in one of his reflections as a priest: 'There is a legion of us, intermediaries between what is high/ And what is low./ We sprinkle water, we bless, we mumble.'⁴³⁵ Similarly, in the case of the poet's reflection on catholicism ritualized: 'And Roman Catholicism, is it not better to leave it alone?// So that the custom of sprinkling holy water

⁴²⁹ 'Poznałem ciężar liturgicznych szat/ I maski w dobrotliwym uśmiechu.' ('Kawki na wieży').

⁴³⁰ 'Żadnego lustra nie mieliśmy w raju.' ('Degradacja').

⁴³¹ 'Są dni, kiedy ludzie jak bał marionetek/ Wydają się tańczyć na skraju nicości' ('Kawki na wieży').

⁴³² 'Moje szaty, kapłana i spowiednika,/ Są po to, żeby ukryć mój strach i niepewność.' ('Dziecko').

⁴³³ 'jest tylko/ ekstatyczny nas taniec, drobin wielkiej całości.// Rodzą się i umierają, taniec nie ustaje' ('Tak naprawdę').

⁴³⁴ 'Być może tylko udaję gesty i słowa, i czyny,/ zatrzymany w wyznaczonym dla mnie zagonie czasu.// *Homo ritualis*, tego świadomy, spełniam/ co przepisane jednolitego mistrzowi.' ('Tak naprawdę').

⁴³⁵ 'Oto legion nas, pośredników między tym, co wysoko, i tym, co tutaj nisko./ Kropimy, poświęcamy, mamrocemy.' ('Dziecko').

is preserved, and the/ observation of holidays, and carrying the dead to carefully tended cemeteries.// Of course, there are people who would treat it seriously, i.e., politically.⁴³⁶ Yet, the ritual is an inevitable part of religious experience. Next to the questioning of it, the Fr Seweryn poses a rhetorical question regarding the presence of a priest as a mediator between God and human: 'Yet are we not His voice that is like the voice of a man?'⁴³⁷

Aleksander Fiut points out that

ritual is not a momentary phantasmagoria for him [Miłosz] but one of the most important forms of perpetuating culture, enabling it to survive through different human gestures, costumes and words. Ritual creates an intermediate sphere between our animal nature and our immortal human essence, and it centres symbolic and sign-making activity around itself, making dialogue with the historical past possible. It concentrates everything that emanates from man and at the same time surpasses him.⁴³⁸

Referring to the *Land of Ulro*, Aleksander Fiut quotes: 'If man is a Homo ritualis, then ritual, which takes us into the realm of the sacred, is not a value to be easily dismissed.'⁴³⁹

And further the critic argues:

Building a bridge to transcendence, ritual is as much an expression of human helplessness before the mystery of existence as a testimony to a power stronger than time. Ritual frees man from historical conditions without isolating him from the flow of history, since one of the basic characteristics of ritual is the search for a metaphysical sanction of existence. It allows man to avoid the trap of the egotistical 'I' by creating the possibility of seeing others as sovereign individuals. At the same time, ritual transcends national and generational division and guards against the anonymity of the crowd.⁴⁴⁰

There exists, then, a constant tension in the representation of ritual as part of religious experience. The poet prays, therefore: 'Hear me, Lord, [...] // Protect me from the day of dryness and impotence.// [...] // When I will seem to myself an impostor and

⁴³⁶ 'I katolicyzm, czyż nie lepiej zostawić go w spokoju?// Żeby zachowany był rytuał kropienia święconą wodą/ i obchodzenia świąt, i odprowadzania umarłych/ na szanowne cmentarze.// Zawsze znajdą się tacy, którzy będą go traktować/ poważnie, to znaczy politycznie.' ('Obciążenie').

⁴³⁷ 'Ale czyż nie jesteśmy Jego głosem, który jest jak głos człowieka?' ('Dziecko').

⁴³⁸ Fiut, *The Eternal Moment*, p. 107.

⁴³⁹ *The Land of Ulro* as quoted by Fiut, *The Eternal Moment*, p. 106.

⁴⁴⁰ Fiut, *The Eternal Moment*, p. 106.

swindler because I take/ part in religious rites.⁴⁴¹ There exists a danger of reducing religious experience *only* to ritual, or, a habitualized rite devoid of the involvement of faith grounded in theology. As the poet points out in 'Nie jestem': 'My Polish compatriots have always liked the language of ritual/ and disliked theology.'⁴⁴² There exists a danger of reducing religious experience to the external forms of representation, for the sake of public display; this is powerfully expressed in 'Przerażenie' which points to the Divine love in the light of Christ's suffering and human indifference: 'To tell the truth, they believe and disbelieve. [...]// He dared to think they might be like that/ That night when He knelt in the Garden of Olives// And felt on His back the cold sweat of dread.'⁴⁴³

Ritual and sacral symbol are necessary parts of one's personal religious experience. As signs, they also play a unifying part: 'Naturally, I am a skeptic. Yet I sing with them,/ thus overcoming the contradiction/ between my private religion and the religion of the rite.'⁴⁴⁴ As signs, they are artefacts. There exists, therefore, an enormous gap between the signifying and the signified – which cannot be conceptualized nor defined. This gap can be filled by personal experience, rationally unjustified, as illustrated in the poem 'Obecność'.

The customized representation, shaped through tradition, of the divine realm may at some points, as evident in *Druga przestrzeń*, hinder the personal experience of divine presence: 'I used to turn for help to the Virgin Mary,/ but I had difficulty recognizing her/ in the deity elevated into the gilded fretwork of altars.'⁴⁴⁵ Manipulation with the

⁴⁴¹ 'Wysłuchaj mnie, Panie, [...]// Uchroń mnie od dnia oschłości i niemocy.// Kiedy wydam się sobie oszustem i szalbierzem, ponieważ/ biorę udział w religijnych obrzędach.' ('Wysłuchaj').

⁴⁴² 'Moi polscy współwyznawcy lubili słowa kościelnego obrzędu,/ ale nie lubili teologii'.

⁴⁴³ 'Tak naprawdę to trochę wierzą, a trochę nie wierzą. [...] // Odważył się myśleć, że tacy kiedyś będą/ W tę noc, kiedy klęczał w Oliwnym Ogrodzie/ I czuł na plecach zimny pot przerażenia.' ('Przerażenie').

⁴⁴⁴ 'Naturalnie, jestem sceptyczny, ale razem śpiewam,/ pokonując w ten sposób przeciwieństwo/ pomiędzy prywatną religią i religią obrzędu.' ('Miejcie zrozumienie').

⁴⁴⁵ 'Przyzwyczajony zwracać się o pomoc do Matki Boskiej,/ z trudem tylko ją rozpoznawałem/ w Bóstwie wyniesionym na złoto ołtarzy.' ('Nie jestem').

‘signifier’ of the divine may lead in its extreme form to the abuse of the sign, distortion of religion and turning religion into a commodity, as evident in the poem ‘Przekupnie’.

Human-centredness of second space

Second space is rooted in the earthly world, with God as an ultimate point of reference. Miłosz, in his reflections on human divinity or divine humanity of Jesus, refers to the Blakean Human Form Divine. The imagery of God as having human nature makes the concept of divinity accessible to human understanding. As the poet marvels at the theological mystery: ‘To place such a man at the center of the cosmos!’, ‘Yet the man from the town of Nazareth/ Who initiated all this was not a spirit./ His body, stretched on the tree of shame,/ Suffered real torture, about which we try every day to forget.’⁴⁴⁶ The concept of Human Divinity and Divine Humanity was already discussed in the introductory chapter of the thesis. Therefore this subchapter will focus on the analysis of the silhouettes of the poetic personas populating Miłosz’s second space.

In *Druga przestrzeń*, second space, with theology, religion and faith as its components, is characterized from the standpoint of human subjects, their understanding or experience which constitutes the starting point for reflections on God. Second space comprises the voices of the aged poet, of Father Seweryn, of thinkers such as Mickiewicz, Boehme and Swedenborg, or Oscar Miłosz, and other poetic characters whose silhouettes populate the second space.

⁴⁴⁶ ‘Tak postawić człowieka w centrum kosmosu!’, ‘Ale człowiek z miasteczka Nazaret, sprawca tego wszystkiego,/ nie był duchem./ Jego ciało rozpięte na drzewie hańby naprawdę cierpiało/ męczarnie,/ O czym my co dzień próbujemy zapomnieć.’ (‘Karawele’).

The poetic persona emerging out of the loose collection of the poems of the first part of *Druga przestrzeń* is an elderly man, nearing his ninetieth year. Throughout the poems the personal and universal perspectives overlap. Personal recollection of homeland is interspersed with the recollection of Paradise as springing from the collective memory of human Genesis. The poet's personal place on earth is contextualized in the universal place on earth of a human being, with reference to heaven and hell.

The poetic persona of the first part is elderly, faced with the developing physical disability: 'High notions of oneself are annihilated/ by a glance in the mirror,/ by the impotence of old age,/ breath held in the hope that some pain/ won't return.'⁴⁴⁷ 'My body doesn't want to take my orders./ On a straight path it stumbles,/ It has a hard time getting up stairs./ My attitude toward it is satirical. I laugh/ At the flaccidity of my muscles, my dragging feet, my blindness,/ All the parameters of deep old age';⁴⁴⁸ 'My most honourable eyes, you are not in the best of shape./ I receive from you an image less than sharp,/ And if a color, then it's dimmed.'⁴⁴⁹ Yet, the physical disability connected with age, is inversely proportional to the lucidity of mind and spirit, which leads to ontological and metaphysical epiphanies, but also brings about ontological clarity and understanding. Like a human stepping out of the Plato's cave of shadows, the poet describes his experience: 'Not soon, as late as the approach of my ninetieth year,/ I felt a door opening in me and I entered/ the clarity of early morning.'⁴⁵⁰ At another point, in the poem 'Oczy', the act and ability of seeing is internalized: 'Now what you have seen is hidden inside

⁴⁴⁷ 'Wysokie wyobrażenia o sobie zostają poniżone/ spojrzeniem w lustro,/ niemocą starości,/ wstrzymywaniem oddechu w nadziei, że ból/ nie powróci.' ('Degradacja').

⁴⁴⁸ 'Ciało nie chce słuchać moich rozkazów./ Przewraca się na równej drodze, trudno mu wejść na schody./ Mam do niego stosunek satyryczny. Wyśmiewam/ Sflaczał mięśni, powłóczenie nogami, ślepotę,/ Wszystkie parametry głębokiej starości.' ('Wiek nowy').

⁴⁴⁹ 'Szanowne moje oczy, nie najlepiej z wami./Dostaję od was rysunek nieostry,/ A jeżeli kolor, to przygniony.' ('Oczy').

⁴⁵⁰ 'Nieprędko, bo dopiero pod dziewięćdziesiątkę, otworzyły się/ drzwi we mnie i wszedłem w klarowność poranka.' ('Późna dojrzałość').

me/ And changed into memories or dreams',⁴⁵¹ but also turned into a metaphysical act of gaining insight in the spiritual dimension: 'Without eyes, my gaze is fixed on one bright point,/ That grows large and takes me in.'⁴⁵²

The epiphany is also brought about by the context of particular places. Place anchors poetic memory and experience and, in some ways, constitutes a link between the factual, geographical space, and the metaphysical realm. There is a privileged city, Kraków ('On the border of this world and the beyond, in Kraków./ [...] Here I came to understand/ Something of the habits of my brothers and sisters'⁴⁵³ where a real geographical place is seen as possessing a mystical power of providing insight into metaphysical dimension. The poem 'Werki' literally refers to Werki by Wilno which the poet reshapes and constructs anew from his memories. The place is, however, contextualized in a more abstract space of the 'unknown country' whose geography 'cannot be transferred to maps.' In the poem 'Pobyt', the poet refers to the 'miasto' through an oneiric prism: 'My stay in that city was like a dream/ And the dream lasted for years'⁴⁵⁴ just as the poet abandons himself in envisaging abstract localities ('dedicated to invisible countries'.⁴⁵⁵ Whereas at another point, the land of the poet's memories is descriptively referred to: 'What country is this? Funereal wreaths, devalued medals,/ a general avoidance of remembering what happened.'⁴⁵⁶

The significance of geographical anchorage and of place-ful-ness of poetic imagery is also marked in the poem 'Oprawa' which is preceded with an epigraph from *Geography of Europe according to the French* which, on the one hand pre-contextualizes

⁴⁵¹ 'Teraz coście widziały, schowane jest we mnie/ I przemienione w pamięć albo sny.' ('Oczy').

⁴⁵² 'Bez oczu zapatrzony w jeden jasny punkt./ Który rozszerza się i mnie ogarnia.' ('Oczy').

⁴⁵³ 'Na granicy świata i zaświatów, w Krakowie./ [...] Tutaj coś zrozumiałem/ Z obyczaju moich sióstr i braci.' ('W Krakowie').

⁴⁵⁴ 'Pobyt w tamtym mieście był podobny do snu,/ A sen trwał dużo lat'.

⁴⁵⁵ 'powierzony niewidzialnym krajom' (Nieprzystosowanie').

⁴⁵⁶ 'Jaki to kraj? Żałobnych wiązanek, leku przed pamiętaniem/ jak to było, krzyżów zasługi tracących wartość.' ('O starych kobietach').

conceptually the geographical space of the poem, but, on the other hand, points to space as being constructed, shaped and created.

The poetic persona of the first part of the collection is coming to terms with the 'stigmas of memory': 'no water/ Could wash away what was branded in our memories./ And something had to be done with it./ Something had to be done'⁴⁵⁷ and the memories of 'a country hardly hear of,/ for its sadness has no hands, no faces.'⁴⁵⁸ At the same time, he preserves, however, the idyllic memories of his homeland which are often shrouded in the oneiric veil of a dream: 'As I, perhaps, just dream those rusty-golden forests,/ The glitter of the river in which I swam in my youth,/ The October from my poems with its air like wine.'⁴⁵⁹

The poet has a very strong sense of a mission: 'I still want to correct this world'⁴⁶⁰ but also reconciles with suffering ('W snach powracają do mnie lata na obczyźnie./ I tylko wtedy wiem, ile cierpiałem.' ('Emigrować'); 'One after another my former lives were departing,/ like ships, together with their sorrow'⁴⁶¹ as he participates in the *theatrum mundi* and actually tries to point to the antidote to the 'reality of a mask' – to the real and true, as well as to what has been lost, that is the sense and faith in the second space. Taking a walk through the world of mask ('Invisible, dressed in clothes too big for me,/ I take a walk, pretending I am a detached mind')⁴⁶² with a sneak peek on a beautiful stranger who is being dressed: 'They hung on you layers of ridiculous fabrics/ So that

⁴⁵⁷ 'Żadna woda/ Nie zmyłaby ze mnie stygmatów pamięci./ I trzeba było coś z tym zrobić. Coś zrobić' ('Oprawa').

⁴⁵⁸ 'Kraju, o którym niewiele wiadomo,/ Bo jego smutek nie ma rąk ni twarzy.' ('Oprawa').

⁴⁵⁹ 'Tak i ja, może tylko śnię te rudozłote lasy,/ Błysk rzeki, w której pływałem za młodu,/ Październik moich wierszy z powietrzem jak wino.' ('Werki').

⁴⁶⁰ 'Ciągle jeszcze chciałbym poprawiać ten świat.' ('Werki').

⁴⁶¹ 'Czułem, jak oddalają się ode mnie, jeden po drugim,/ niby okręty, moje wcześniejsze żywoty razem z ich udręką.' ('Późna dojrzałość').

⁴⁶² 'Niewidzialny, ubrany w za duże dla mnie suknie,/ spaceruję, udając oderwany umysł.' ('O starych kobietach').

you could take part in their theatre/ Of pretended ecstasies, smutty allusions’,⁴⁶³ the poet asks himself: ‘And I, am I now liberated/ From those rituals, masks, the floodlights of the ball?/ Have I escaped the law that draws me/ Into frozen fashions, half-dead manners?’⁴⁶⁴

The first part of *Druga przestrzeń* is populated with silhouettes of concrete people, real people, yet gone, often anonymous, constituting particular ‘types’, and often referred to as ‘shadows’. It is, at the same time, a reconciliation with the poet’s past: with the people he knew, women and men, who were part of his life. But it is also a chronicle of mankind, as the poems not only show various types of people, but also pay homage to those departed as victims of historical tragedies. The poet becomes ‘chaplain of shadows’ as he sits at table with the departed, on one summer, just before the war. He has the power to ‘do with them whatever I want, even make them memorable’. They are ordinary, common, ironically referred to as ‘mortal monads, servants of the flesh.’⁴⁶⁵ Some are addressed directly: ‘Nino’, ‘Edku’.

At another point, we see as the poet, dressed as an old woman, one of those ‘silently fingering past days/ of your lives like the beads of your rosaries’,⁴⁶⁶ emphatically reenacts their plight (‘It had to be suffered, endured, managed./ One had to wait and not wait, one had to’).⁴⁶⁷ As some other point, we become acquainted with ‘Koleżanka’ – ‘Piórewiczówna’ – unwanted shadow (‘Farewell Piorewiczowna, unasked-for shadow./ I don’t even remember your first name’).⁴⁶⁸ The poet portrays the tragedy of a suicidal death of a certain ‘Lokator’, a tenant in Wilno, just after the June 1940: a huge Russian,

⁴⁶³ ‘Zawieszali na tobie pasma śmiesznych szmat./ Żebyś brała udział w ich teatrze/ Udanych szalów, sprośnych niedomówień.’ (‘Piękna nieznajoma’).

⁴⁶⁴ ‘A ja czy jestem teraz wyzwolony/ Z obrzędów, maszkar, reflektorów balu?/ Czy urwałem się prawu, które wciąga mnie/ W zastygłe mody, śnięte obyczaje?’ (‘Piękna nieznajoma’).

⁴⁶⁵ ‘Śmiertelne monady, hołdownicy ciała.’ (‘Przewaga’).

⁴⁶⁶ ‘które milcząc przebieracie/ dni swego życia jak paciorki różanca’ (‘O starych kobietach’).

⁴⁶⁷ ‘Trzeba było wytrwać, wycierpieć, poradzić sobie,/ czekać nie czekać, trzeba było.’ (‘O starych kobietach’).

⁴⁶⁸ ‘Żegnaj Piórewiczówna, nieżądany cieniu/ O zapomnianym na zawsze pierwszym imieniu.’ (‘Koleżanka’).

‘No one knew of what, exactly, his work consisted; perhaps it was of a kind calling for discretion’.

The poet marvels at the beautiful stranger standing in front of a mirror. He also devotes one of his poems to the Master of his craft – Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz (‘Mistrz mego rzemiosła’). At the same time, having populated his poetic space with various memories, the poet admits to his feeling of unfulfilment: ‘I was left with many unwritten odes in honor/ of men and women.// Their incomparable bravery, devotion,/ self-sacrifice passed away with them, and nobody knows of it./ Nobody knows for all eternity.// When I think of this, I need an immortal Witness/ so that he alone knows and remembers.’⁴⁶⁹

Druga przestrzeń is very deeply immersed in life. It is a chronicle of life, of personal memories of the poet, but also a ‘chronicle of people’, of the poet’s homeland and of the primeval homeland of humankind – the Garden of Eden. Rooted in life, it opens onto the metaphysical dimension of second space. The human-centredness of *Second space*, not only of particular poems of the first part, but of the collection as a whole, testifies to Miłosz’s view of second space – of religion and metaphysics, as never abstract and detached, but always grounded in ontological particularities of ‘here and now’, in the very materiality of existence of which one aspect, in relation to second space, will be next analysed in the following sub-chapter on the theology of the body.

⁴⁶⁹ ‘Zostałem z nie napisanymi odami na chwałę wielu/ kobiet i mężczyzn.// Ich nieporównana dzielność, ofiarność, oddanie/ przeminęły razem z nimi, i nikt o nich nie wie. Nikt nie wie na całą wieczność.// Kiedy o tym myślę, potrzebuję nieśmiertelnego Świadka, /żeby on jeden wiedział i pamiętał.’ (‘Powiniennem teraz’).

Theology of the body

As already pointed out, out of the first part of *Druga przestrzeń* there emerges an inversely proportional relationship between body as subject to the passing of time, and body gaining of spiritual insight, the whole process resembling the journey out of the Plato's cave of shadows. Body is a significant constituent and has a special place in Miłosz's theology, which, to a certain extent, could be looked at separately as the theology of the body.

In the *Land of Ulro* Miłosz makes a reference to Blake and his concept of Human Form Divine, which points to the connection and relationship between divinity and humanity, the spiritual and carnal aspects of human existence:

To repeat the Swedenborgian maxim: 'You see as you are.' Blake placed man at the centre, and just as the artist bodies forth his work from the essential thing in him, so God, in fashioning man, gives proof of His essence: His divine humanity. God (Jesus) beholds Nature through human eyes, but not through the eyes of fallen man. Blake's Jesus was not the bearer of lofty moral precepts but the whole man; by emulating Him, we exchange our flawed physical perception of the world for a whole one. A scientist of the Baconian, Lockian or Newtonian school suffers the illusion that knowledge is something impersonal, disembodied – that, in other words, only one faculty, the rational, suffices. The image of the world adduced by this science is a false one. To be free of its coercive power is to refute that false eternity (an endless succession of moments lapsing into nothingness) and false infinity (of illusory space, indefinite duration), and to know true eternity and infinity as the eternal Now. This is the message of the Blakean maxim:

The desire of Man being Infinite, the possession is
Infinite and himself Infinite.

Application. He who sees the Infinite in all things,
sees God. He who sees the Ratio only, sees himself only.

Therefore God becomes as we are, that we may be as
he is.⁴⁷⁰

In the light of the aforementioned quotation, where boundaries between the divine and human become abolished, theology encompasses not only the spiritual, but also the corporeal, both being aspects and manifestations of the same reality.

⁴⁷⁰ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, pp. 174-175.

The carnal and the divine are united in a human being: 'The nakedness of a woman meets the nakedness of a man/ And completes itself with its second half/ Carnal, or even divine, Which is likely the same thing,/ As revealed to us in the Song of Songs.'⁴⁷¹

The image presented here blurs the boundaries between the Eternally Living and the human bodily existence. Humanity and divinity permeate each other, constitute oneness in perfect harmony. This is visible in the *Song of Songs* to which Miłosz refers directly in the poem.

Miłosz's understanding of *Song of Songs* is conveyed through his translation thereof. In a review of the monograph devoted to Miłosz's Biblical translations, Karina Jarzyńska refers to the work by W. Felski in which the author points to Miłosz's understanding of the place of the carnal within the divine plan [as the following quotation refers to linguistic nuances, it is left untranslated]:

Zastanawiając się nad rozumieniem przez Miłosza wymowy *Pieśni nad Pieśniami*, Felski w niewielkim stopniu opiera się na własnej analizie. Zamiast tego przypomina, że sam poeta opowiedział się w swoim wstępie do tej książki za alegorycznym rozumieniem przedstawionej w niej relacji; autor monografii zauważa jedynie, że decyzję tę potwierdza wpisanie się przez Miłosza w tradycję określania bohaterów książki mianem 'oblubieńców' – a nie na przykład 'kochanków' – co sugeruje duchowy wymiar ich relacji (oblubieńcami byli dla siebie m.in. Józef i Maria z Nowego Testamentu). Badacz zwraca też uwagę na bogactwo i precyzję 'sztafażu językowego', jaki wykorzystuje w swym przekładzie Miłosz, i stwierdza, że w ten sposób generowana jest w tekście 'atmosfera ekstatycznego upojenia miłością'.⁴⁷²

In a certain sense, the poem 'W Krakowie' overcomes the Cartesian dualism, the precipice between body and soul which in the poem are looked at holistically, where the carnal and the divine homeostatically permeate each other, in fact, constitute one thing. In this theology of corporeality, the divinity of the Eternally Living permeates the world

⁴⁷¹ 'Nagość kobiety spotyka się z nagością mężczyzny/ I dopełnia siebie swoją drugą połową/ Cieleśną albo i boską./ Co pewnie stanowi jedno./ Jak nam wyjaśnia Pieśń nad Pieśniami.' ('W Krakowie').

⁴⁷² Karina Jarzyńska, 'Miłosz biblijny oczami teologa (recenzja W. Felski *Biblijne przekłady Czesława Miłosza*, Pelplin 2008).' Accessed online: <http://www.academia.edu/2298456/Milosz_biblijny_oczami_teologa._Rec._W._Felski_Biblijne_przeklady_Czeslawa_Milosza> [5 June 2013].

and it is Him who receives the human, reaches out to the human, not the other way round. The divinity of the Eternally Living is, in its representation, reduced to the symbolic forms: glowing wax candles, communion wafer, but also the natural objects: apples, saffron, cloves, and incense.

In 'Koleżanka' the poet praises the miracle of the human body, of the corporeality, and it also illustrates Miłosz's notion of Eros as a creative, not purely sexual, force. The poem, which has traces of a fantasmagoria and a tale ('This happened in another country, in a lost century')⁴⁷³ is a reenactment of a journey through evocation of a person, a semi-anonymous woman of forgotten first name. The poem is written with faithfulness to the regularity of form and rhyming pattern, which contributes to the aura of peacefulness of the oneiric retrospection that the poet enacts. At the same time, however, what underlies the poem, is the movement (the poet uses the past continuous form of the verb – 'szedłem i niosłem', the very process of walking *towards* the woman is accentuated) and some form of desire – not necessarily for that particular woman (she is recalled 'now' as 'unasked-for shadow'), but for the womanhood of the woman. Just like in the poem 'Piękna nieznajoma', where the poet strives to rescue a beautiful stranger, a woman, from the shroud of conventions, masks and charades – from the 'theatre/ Of unpretended ecstasies, smutty allusions', and return her to the pure natural state: 'I would like to save you, beautiful stranger. [...] That you are your own,/ And not arrested by the exactness of a fate.'⁴⁷⁴ The same is powerfully expressed in the poem 'Nieprzystosowanie': 'I have not loved a woman with my five senses./ I only wanted from her my sister, from before the banishment.'⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷³ 'Było to w innym wieku i przypadłym państwie'.

⁴⁷⁴ 'Chcę ciebie uratować, piękna nieznajoma [...] Swoją, nie zatrzymaną dokładnością losu' ('Piękna nieznajoma').

⁴⁷⁵ 'Nie pokochałem kobiety moimi pięcioma zmysłami, chciałem/ w niej widzieć jedynie siostrę sprzed naszego wygnania.' ('Nieprzystosowanie').

Similarly in the poem 'Powinienem teraz', amazement at the details surrounding us (sun-streak on a wall, the trill of an oriole, a face, an iris, a volume of poems) – amazement which is an ennobling force and which 'lifted me above my lameness',⁴⁷⁶ is juxtaposed with the following reconciliation with the women of the poet's past, which is marked by erotic fascination with the female body: 'You, with whom I fell in love, approach, and forgive me/ my trespasses because I was dazzled by your beauty.// You were not perfect, but just that arch of eyebrow,/ that tilt of the head, that voice, reticent and seductive,/ could only belong to a perfect creature.'⁴⁷⁷ Just after this eulogy of womanhood the poet switches, however, towards the praise of human virtues of forgotten men and women and their heroic greatness: 'I was written with many unwritten odes in honor/ of men and women.' This development of existential eulogy is underpinned by amazement and marvel – which are constituents of Eros, driving force to experience the world as closely as possible.

'Anioł Stróż' is an actual illustration of how the spiritual and the corporeal coexist, permeate each other. The poem portrays the union and harmony between the spiritual and the carnal. The title itself, referring to the tutelary deity of the Christian tradition, points to the religious, mystical realm which, in the poem, is delineated as a dreamscape in which the poet and the angel who has the form of a woman, meet. The angel – the spiritual being – adopts in the poem a corporeal nature. The explicitly erotic, yet not sexual, nature of the encounter refers to the corporeal side of human nature: 'He knows that I, a fleshly creature,/ Need a lover's touch.'⁴⁷⁸ The oneiric encounter with the angel fills the poet with inner peace: 'I asked him/ For one more moment of the dream,

⁴⁷⁶ 'podnosi nad moją ułomność'.

⁴⁷⁷ 'Wy, w których się kochałem, zbliżcie się, przebaczone mi/ moje winy z uwagi na moje olśnienie waszą pięknnością.// Nie byłyście doskonałe, ale dla mnie ten wykrój brwi,/ to pochylenie głowy, ta mowa zalotna a wstrzemięźliwa/mogły należeć tylko do istot doskonałych.' ('Powinienem teraz').

⁴⁷⁸ 'Wie, że ja, cielesny,/ Potrzebuję miłosnego dotyku' ('Anioł Stróż').

which gave me peace.’⁴⁷⁹ The coexistence of divine spirituality and human corporeality is beautifully portrayed in an image of the poet and the angel moving together sacks with treasure, when they find an underground grotto. At this point, a reference needs to be made to Miłosz’s mention of nature of angels in the *Land of Ulro*:

A Swedenborgian concept that had a great appeal for the Romantics was the *arcenum* of marriage, which referred as well to the marriage of spirits, in Swedenborg’s heaven, angels were of both sexes. The literature of Romanticism has accustomed us to interpreting his ‘bonding of souls’ in an asexual way, even though Swedenborg advocated rather a purified sexuality. For Swedenborg, earthly marriage was a ‘correspondence’ central to Christianity, corresponding to the celestial marriage between love (Amor) and wisdom (Sapientia). Hence, too, the importance attached by him to a monogamous union, which, when it yields a harmony of the spiritual-carnal, is heaven on earth.⁴⁸⁰

The spiritual and the corporeal are often, however, shown in Miłosz’s poetry also as two conflicting aspects of human nature. Angelic human, a vision, as the poet points out in ‘Wbrew naturze’, promoted by romantic literature, and supported by the hagiography, ceases to be such once contextualized in the quotidian. The poet’s ironic take on the romantic stereotype highlights the body-soul conflict: ‘Man, notwithstanding his animal nature,/ should have had a spiritual life of great richness,// Should have been directed in his behaviour/ by motives considered noble and sublime.// He earned respect by becoming a near-angel// This is the image I found in the pages of romantic literature,// Backed by the biographies of martyred saints’⁴⁸¹ and, more powerfully, ‘Many misfortunes resulted from my belief in God,// Which was a part of my notion of the splendour of man.’⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁹ ‘a ja prosiłem/ O jeszcze chwilę snu dającego spokój.’ (‘Anioł Stróż’).

⁴⁸⁰ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 154.

⁴⁸¹ ‘Człowiek, nie bacząc na swoją zwierzęcość,/ powinien mieć bogate życie duchowe,// Kierować się w postępowaniu pobudkami zaliczanymi/ do wzniosłych i szlachetnych.// Zasługiwał na szacunek, stając się niemal aniołem.// Taki wizerunek znalazłem na stronach literatury/ romantycznej, //Wspieranej żywotami świętych męczenników’ (‘Wbrew naturze’).

⁴⁸² ‘Wiele nieszczęść wynikło z mojej wiary w Boga, // Która była częścią moich wyobrażeń o wspaniałości człowieka.’ (‘Wbrew naturze’).

The 'disagreement between the flesh and the will' of which the poet writes in the poem 'Ja' is one of the consequences of the expulsion from Paradise. After the expulsion body has become a *masked* body. The communion between the human and the divine, the spiritual and the corporeal is accompanied and underpinned by the human charade of a mask, mask which often recurs in the collection *Druga przestrzeń* as an integral part of the human theatrum mundi: 'They wear masks of silk, porcelain, brass, and silver,/ So as not to mislead with their own, ordinary faces.'⁴⁸³ Miłosz refers to the question of mask within theatrum mundi in the *Land of Ulro*:

With the law of hierarchy goes the law of travesty and parody. There is no inspiration, no idea, or discovery that, when mirrored in a lower intelligence, at a lower level of the 'interhuman church', does not lose proportionately in value. If only something of the original, however weakened, however dimmed, would endure! But since the difference of degree is often one of absolute quality, the diluted version becomes a parody of the higher. Inspiration, its parody, and the parody of its parody: they surround us in constant and clamorous collision. Or, to use another metaphor, everything of substance is undermined, hollowed out by the termites of inferiority. By endowing masks and facades with a real existence, we find ourselves one day the victims of an illusion. A priest nurtured on the Freudian-Marxian-Charadinian dregs will be a priest in name only; a teacher, though able to read and write, an illiterate and a corruptor; a politician, an outlaw; artists and poets, the helpers of circus managers who stage spectacles with real blood and live copulation, exactly as in those Roman circus-theatres described by Tertullian.⁴⁸⁴

The subject of mask and mirror constitutes a recurring theme of the first part of the collection. In 'Pobył', mask and charade becomes a subject of self-accusation: 'Some people believed that I was theirs,/ So they put trust in my disguises.// I reproach myself for that, For I wanted to be different,/ Trustworthy, brave, noble-minded.// Later on I would only say: why reach so high?/ I am and will be lame,/ Which is no one's concern.'⁴⁸⁵ The most direct treatment of the subject of mask and theatre within the world

⁴⁸³ 'Noszą maski z jedwabiu, porcelany, mosiądzu i srebra,/ Żeby nie myliły twarze, pospolite.' ('W Krakowie').

⁴⁸⁴ Miłosz, *The Land of Ulro*, p. 88.

⁴⁸⁵ 'Niektórym wydawało się, że jestem z nimi,/ Dawali więc wiarę moim przebraniom.// Wyrzucałem to sobie, bo chciałem być inny:/ Prawdomówny, dzielny, szlachetny.// Potem już tylko mówiłem: za wysokie progi,/ Jestem i będę krzywy, co komu do tego?' ('Pobył').

comes in the poem 'Piękna nieznajoma' which highlights the power of the artificiality of cultural conventions and constructs.

Mask and mirror as a veil to reality is presented in the poem 'Kufer' which constitutes a powerful poetic statement against phenomenology, and postulates essentialism. 'Where does the Good Lord hide these images? [...]// Laughing into His beard at the wise men who maintained that there/ are only reflections and nothing else.'⁴⁸⁶ Or 'Perhaps the world was created by the Good Lord to reflect itself/ in the infinite number of eyes of living creatures, or, what is more/ probable, in the infinite number of human consciousnesses.'⁴⁸⁷ Reflections, illusions, mirrors, simulacra compose the *theatrum mundi*. In contrast to this image, the poet remarks: 'Well, there weren't any mirrors in Eden.'⁴⁸⁸

Miłosz's quest for reality, for the truth which was concealed by the 'reality' of Ulro, involves discarding of masks, illusions, reflections, mirrors. Mask and mirror are components of the self-inflicted second expulsion from Paradise. They are artefacts of the reality which was called by Blake 'a vegetative mirror', as opposed to the reality of truth. The way out of Ulro leads through cleansing reality of illusion. That cleansing takes place in Miłosz's poetic work.

⁴⁸⁶ 'Gdzie Pan Bóg chowa te odbicia? [...] // Podśmiewając się w brodę z medrków, którzy utrzymywali,/ że są tylko te odbicia i nic więcej.' ('Kufer').

⁴⁸⁷ 'Może świat został przez Pana Boga po to stworzony, żeby/ odbijał się w nieskończonej liczbie oczu istot żywych albo, co/ bardziej prawdopodobne, w nieskończonej liczbie ludzkich/ świadomości.' ('Kufer').

⁴⁸⁸ 'No tak, żadnego lustra nie mieliśmy w Raju.' ('Degradacja').

V.

CONCLUSION

Miłosz's philosophy of space, which found one of its most evident expositions in *The Land of Ulro* (1977) and is strongly rooted in the tradition of Blake, Swedenborg and O.V. de L. Miłosz, spans, as a network of regular and logically interwoven correspondences, across his whole oeuvre. *Trzy zimy* constitutes a 'legend' to the map of Ulro. Further poetic collections constitute a map *out of* Ulro which includes details of human interaction with space in all its aspects. In *Świat, poema naiwne*, and *Dolina Issy* it encompasses the images of the house (manor) and its surrounding landscape. In this respect Miłosz assumes the role of an architect modelling and mythologizing space, creating parallel worlds – through retrospection and return *ad fontes* to the world of childhood, the Niewiaża Valley, which is object of the poet's topophilia and *arche* of Miłosz's work.¹ *Miasto bez imienia* is, in turn, an intellectual construct reflecting a poetic act of building and dwelling.

As compared diachronically, throughout the collections *Trzy zimy*, *Świat, poema naiwne*, *Miasto bez imienia* and *Druga przestrzeń*, there is noticeable a certain spatial turn: the collection *Trzy zimy* – with the portrayal of catastrophic landscapes – encapsulates the notion of space as a certain vastness without bounds not always geographically defined in terms of clear delineations of a place, whereas in *Świat, poema naiwne* the poet's attention switches towards a *place*, towards particular details of space which is geographically and topographically delineated, organized, hierarchized. The shift goes further in *Miasto bez imienia*: here *places* with their geographical details and

¹ Jan Kott, 'Ty silna noc', in *Trzy zimy & Głosy o wierszach* (London: Aneks, 1987), p. 103 (with reference to the importance of Lithuanian landscape in Miłosz's work).

material elements put under a magnifying glass, figure side by side with the metaphysical, and religious space which has an all-encompassing character. *Druga przestrzeń* constitutes a eulogy of a hierarchical space, not necessarily of a particular place – a restitution of verticality of space and restitution of a *meaningful* space. It is a call for an apocatastasis the need for which poetically echoes in *Trzy zimy*.

In drawing his map out of the Land of Ulro, Miłosz does not provide a model of reality as it should be: but rather as it is, yet has been forgotten and hidden. As Charles Taylor wrote: ‘Miłosz captures the sense of threat to the central meanings of life, as well as the refusal to confine these to a lost past, and the determination to recover a new way of expressing and validating these meanings.’² As an emissary of Being, an apostle of Imagination, Miłosz is a proponent of a meaningful existence which can be experienced in its holistic form, not reduced to the laws of scientific determinism.

Miłosz’s philosophy of space which encompasses all aspects of human existence, is a call for remembering values while advancing with scientific and technological progress which, followed blindly, leads to human uprootedness and alienation. It is a call for a culture of sensitivity and imagination. Miłosz’s map out of Ulro is a map out of *nowhere* to the *somewhere*. It shows us how to feel at home in the world again.

² Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass., London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 593.

VI.

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