

**Monika Anna Noga\***

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8459-148X>

# The gardener's topos based on the example of the poem *The Gardener* (Ogrodnik) by Czesław Miłosz (text analysis)<sup>1</sup>

*I think, I am here on earth,  
To report about it (...)*<sup>2</sup>

The Nobel Prize-winning Polish writer Czesław Miłosz uses the topos of the gardener in his poem *Ogrodnik* (*The Gardener*). The poem comes from one of the latest collections of poetry by Miłosz with the title *To* (*This*). The collection was published in 2001 and consists of over sixty poems that in terms of content are very distinct from one another. Miłosz mentions, among others, his grandfather as well as his friends Aleksander Wat, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, and Tadeusz Różewicz<sup>3</sup>. He

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\* PhD, Freiburg University (Switzerland), Faculty of Philology, Slavonic studies, Rue du Criblet 13, CH-1700 Freiburg, [monika.anna.noga@gmail.com](mailto:monika.anna.noga@gmail.com)

- 1 The present analysis is a part of my master's thesis with the title "The topos of the gardener in modern literature exemplified in poems by Staff (*The Gardeners*), Wierzyński (*The Gardeners*) and Miłosz (*The Gardener*). Functions and procedures", submitted to the Georg August University Göttingen (Germany). The analysis of the Staff's poem was published in 2016 in "Konteksty Kultury", (no. 13, 4, pp. 446–468).
- 2 Czesław Miłosz, *Świadomość* (*Conscience*) from the collection *Nieobjęta ziemia* (*Unattainable Earth* – 1984), in: Cz. Miłosz, *Wiersze wszystkie*, Cracow, Wydawnictwo Znak 2011, pp. 836–840. [The poems quoted according to the pagination of *this edition*]
- 3 Ibidem, *Mój dziadek Zygmunt Kunat*, pp. 1143–1144, *Krawat Aleksandra Wata*, pp. 1190; *Unde Malum*, pp. 1195; *Różewicz*, pp. 1196; *Wybierając wiersze Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza na wieczór jego poezji*, pp. 1177–1178.

also pays homage to John Paul II<sup>4</sup>. In addition, there is a number of poetic epiphanies in the cycle of poems *O!*

In relation to the poem *Ogrodnik* it is worth mentioning that Miłosz may have had a garden himself, about which Kazimierz Wierzyński writes in his letter to Tymon Terlecki. Wierzyński lived in a house, abandoned by Miłosz, on the outskirts of Paris. At that time, he wrote to Terlecki:

Jestem bardzo pod urokiem ich rodziny a w chłopcach zakochany.<sup>5</sup>

Przed biurkiem mam okno na sad, w którym są jeszcze jabłka i gruszki. Pani Miłoszowa powiedziała mi: spojrzysz pan w okno i wszystko się samo napisze. Patrzę – ale jakoś się nie pisze samo, tylko z największym trudem.<sup>6</sup>

Układ mieszkania jest taki, że przebywa się właściwie w kuchni i w pokoju, który był pracownią Miłosza i jest moją, wszystko wszędzie słyhać, dojdzie ze stacji uciążliwe (górze), ja z moją bezsennością i wstawaniem o 4–5 rano jestem destrukcją wszelkiego ładu dnia i nocy – słowem goście mogą ofiarować udrękę a nie szczęście.<sup>7</sup>

Ogród jego teraz jest zachwycający, pełno kwiatów, na drzewach owoce i ptaki, ptaki, ptaki. Wiosna przepiękna.<sup>8</sup>

Miłosz not only had a garden, he also created a poetic image of his property. To become acquainted with this image, it is necessary to analyse the poem *Ogrodnik*<sup>9</sup>.

1. Adam i Ewa nie na to zostali stworzeni,  
Żeby kłaniać się księciu i władcy tej ziemi.
2. Inna, słoneczna, ziemia poza czasem trwała.  
Im obojgu na wieczną szczęśliwość oddana.

4 *Oda na osiemdziesiątą urodziny Jana Pawła II*, ibidem, pp. 1179–1180.

5 The passages of the letters were made available by courtesy of Nina Taylor-Terlecka. Letter by K. Wierzyński to T. Terlecki of 11 October 1960.

6 Letter by K. Wierzyński to T. Terlecki of 21 October 1960.

7 Letter by K. Wierzyński to T. Terlecki of 2 December 1960.

8 Letter by K. Wierzyński to T. Terlecki of 17 May 1960.

9 The analysis is based upon the typology of Matthias Freise, *Vier Weisen, nach dem Text zu fragen*, in: *Finis coronat opus. Festschrift für Walter Kroll zum 65. Geburtstag*, Göttingen 2006, pp. 71–83. He distinguishes in every text four dimensions the historical (...), technical (linguistic) (...), aesthetic (philosophic) (...), and the cultural (...). The aesthetic dimension «Why» concerns the *sensus anagogicus* (symbolic meaning), and the allegoric meaning, *sensus allegoricus* concerns the cultural «Why». The literary meaning, *sensus litteralis*, is the historical «Why», and the *sensus moralis* corresponds to the technical «Why».

3. Siwobrody ogrodnik drzew na niej doglądał,  
Chociaż świat nie stał w blasku, tak jak tego żądał.
4. Na dni i wieki patrzył niby przez lunetę  
Na całe swoje dzieło, tak dobrze zaczęte,
5. Które z winy poznania obrócić się miało  
W nienasycenie duszy i ranliwe ciało.
6. Ostrzegł ich, ale wiedział, że to nie pomoże,  
Bo byli już gotowi i tak jakby w drodze.
7. Niewidoczny w listowie, dumał, zasmucony,  
Widział ognie i mosty, okręty i domy,
8. Samolot w nocnym niebie migający iskrą,  
Łoża z baldachimami i pobojuwisko.
9. O biedne moje dzieci, więc tak wam się spieszy  
Do piachu, w którym czaszka żółte zęby szczyrzy?
10. Do zamykania bioder w majtki, krynoliny,  
Do odkrywania ciągów skutków i przyczyny?
11. Oto zbliża się wróg mój i zaraz wam powie:  
Spróbujcie, a staniecie się jako bogowie.
12. Lokaje samolubnej miłości i zbrodni,  
I zaiste bogowie, tylko że ułomni.
13. Nieszczęsne moje dzieci, jaka długa droga,  
Nim zrujnowany ogród zakwitnie od nowa,
14. I lipową aleją wróćcie przed ganek,  
Gdzie na rabatkach pachną szałwia i tymianek.
15. I czy było konieczne nurzać się w otchłani,  
Systemata układać, zamiast mieszkać w baśni,
16. Nad którą nieustanna jest moja opieka?  
Bo prawdę mówi Pismo, że mam twarz człowieka<sup>10</sup>.

The poem reveals a regular profile. It consists of a quotation by<sup>11</sup> Martin Luther (*Comments on Galatians*, chapter 3) and sixteen distiches, that is double-verse strophes. Each verse has thirteen syllables. The poem utilizes Polish thirteen-syllable-verses caesuras after the seventh syllable (7 + 6)<sup>12</sup>.

Miłosz uses a simple pattern of paired rhymed verses. He shapes the poem by accumulating double-verse strophes that look like flower beds in the garden

<sup>10</sup> Cz. Miłosz, *Ogrodnik*, in: idem, *Wiersze wszystkie*, op. cit., pp. 1197–1198.

<sup>11</sup> The quotation functions as an introduction to the topic of the poem.

<sup>12</sup> The first verse (8+6) is an exception.

Adam i Ewa nie na to zostali stworzeni, 1    ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ / ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘  
Żeby kłaniać się księżcu i władcy tej ziemi. 2    ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ / ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘

separating the individual ideas from one another<sup>13</sup>. A different dominating motif or image, carrying a particular theme, can be assigned to each distich:

1. Adam and Eve
2. Earth
3. God
4. Time
5. Sin
6. Hiking/the path
7. Observation
8. Handicraft / works coming into being
9. Death
10. Mortality
11. Satan / devil<sup>14</sup>
12. Consequences of sin / imperfect gods
13. The destroyed garden
14. The divine garden
15. The contrast: the perfect and imperfect world
16. The image of God

The main theme of the work is the myth of the origin of original sin and the consequences of the disobedience of the first human beings, Adam and Eve<sup>15</sup>. The action in the poem takes place in a world at a time when there are no other people on the Earth than these two.

The poem is divided into two parts. In the first part of the text, there is an all-knowing lyrical subject existing outside the world described by him who recounts the joyous existence of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Theirs is the gift of an earth awash with sun; the atmosphere is idyllic, and nothing portends the coming tragedy. It is a garden where time does not exist. People live there in an ideal harmony, in their natural environment.

In this part, it is possible to recognize the physical image of the creator: He is a grey-bearded gardener with a human face. The reader could suppose that he is an infinitely good old man as represented in icons.

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<sup>13</sup> This is a presentation of the profile and contours of the land that introduces harmony and order.

<sup>14</sup> Roman Zajac (in: *Szatan w Starym Testamencie*, Lublin, Wyd. KUL 1998, pp. 24) points out an important difference in the etymology of "devil" and "satan". In the present text both words "devil" and "satan" are used interchangeably and have the same being.

<sup>15</sup> Miłosz ponders the problem of the original sin and the topic of Adam and Eve in, for example, the poems *Czytaliśmy w katechizmie*, pp. 1264 and *Tak więc Ewa*, pp. 1266 from the collection *Druga przestrzeń* (2002); *Adam i Ewa*, pp. 978 from the collection *Dalsze okolice* (1991); *Raj*, pp. 782 and *Ksiądz Ch., po latach*, pp. 852–856 from the collection *Nieobjęta ziemia* (1984); as well in his book *Abecadło*. Czesław Miłosz, (Cracow, Wydawnictwo Literackie 2001, pp. 17–18).

Exactly in the middle of the poem, namely in the ninth strophe, God himself becomes the lyrical subject. He speaks in the first person about himself. To this point he had been only a passive, “discontented” observer, as the following passage suggests:

Siwobrody ogrodnik drzew na niej doglądał,  
Chociaż świat nie stał w blasku, tak jak tego żądał.

It could be stated that the poem belongs to the so-called *liryka mieszana* (mixed lyric), because it serves as an example for the *pośrednia* (indirect) and *bezpośrednia*<sup>16</sup> (direct) lyric. The tone of the lyrical subject changes constantly, depending on who is speaking at the time. At first, it is the all-knowing lyrical subject, then it is God who speaks. In a short passage, one has the impression that the devil gets a word in edgewise<sup>17</sup>. The result is a polyphony of voices in the text<sup>18</sup>. The language of the lyrical subject in the first part of the text is elevated and distant as could be expected from God who constitutes a higher authority and has power over people. However, starting with the ninth distich God takes over the role of narrator as the lyrical “I” and uses the simple language of a caring and loving father.

To achieve Satan’s manner of speaking alliteration is used for expressive purposes: “Spróbujcie, a staniecie się jako bogowie”<sup>19</sup>. Thus, the tone of the utterance is more grandiloquent, exaggerated, and artificial. The repetition of the “S” gives the impression that the sentence sounds like the hiss of a snake. The notorious snake in the garden of Eden is obviously meant here, putting in doubt the devil’s word. It will turn out later that his words are only idle promises, because he falsely promises people that they are like God.

16 J. Sławiński, *Słownik Terminów Literackich*, edited by Janusz Sławiński, with the cooperation of Aleksandra Okopień-Sławińska, Wrocław–Warsaw–Cracow, Ossolineum 2002, pp. 278.

17 However, it appears to be more feasible that God takes over the speech of his opponent, namely the devil.

18 According to Aleksander Fiut, “(...) dialog silnie zindywidualizowanych postaci, stylów i postaw znakomicie wzbogaca i dynamizuje semantykę wypowiedzi, a ponadto stwarza sugestię jej zdarzeniowości. (...) teksty zachowują w tle delikaty ślad «cudzego słowa»”. Aleksander Fiut, *Poezja w kręgu hermeneutyki*, in: *Poznanie Miłosza. Studia i szkice o twórczości poety*, J. Kwiatkowski (ed.), Cracow, Wydawnictwo Literackie 1985, pp. 252. According to Joanna Zach, the early works of the poet are especially marked by polyphony. J. Zych, *Miłosz i poetyka wyznania*, Cracow, Universitas 1994, pp. 16. [čužaja reč'] is a term by Bakhtin and stems from М. М. Бахтин, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского* (1929), in: *Собрание сочинений в семи томах*. Vol. 6: Ред. С.Г. Бочаров, Л.А. Гоготишвили. Москва 2002 pp. 7–300; čužaja reč', in: *Глава пятая – Слово у Достоевского*. I. *Типы прозаического слова. Слово у Достоевского*, pp. 203–228.

19 The quotation is an allusion to biblical language.

The last eight verses are an apostrophe of the title gardener, seemingly directed only to Adam and Eve. The words are addressed to his children, namely mankind. Adam and Eva symbolize all of mankind here.

As already mentioned, in the second part, the lyrical subject, the gardener, is God himself. He is worried about the fate of Adam and Eve, because they are going to be led into temptation by the devil. The creator is presented as an omniscient being able to predict the future: “Widział ognie i mosty, okręty i domy, / Samolot w nocnym niebie migający iskrą, / Łoża z baldachimami i pobojuwisko (...)”. He can see the work of humans after their expulsion from paradise. He knows that suffering, pain, and death will soon prevail, and that the world will turn into a “pobojowisko”<sup>20</sup> (battlefield). Obviously, He considers himself Adam and Eve’s father who desires the best for them. Thus, their fate drives him to despair, because they almost willingly bring death to themselves, as shown by the following passage: “O biedne moje dzieci, więc tak wam się spieszy / Do piachu, w którym czaszka żółte zęby szczyrzy?”. He is aware of their imperfection, weakness, and nothingness, because when He created the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, He knew that Adam and Eve will ignore His ban. Despite that, He enabled them to make their own decisions<sup>21</sup>. Although He warned them of the devil’s temptations, they did not obey Him:

Ostrzegł ich, ale wiedział, że to nie pomoże,  
Bo już byli gotowi i tak jakby w drodze.

In this way, the story of Adam and Eve can be interpreted as a test, even if God might have known how they are going to behave. Perhaps it is merely the fulfilment of God’s plan. Thus, the following verses read:

Inna, słoneczna, ziemia poza czasem trwała.  
Im obojgu na wieczną szczęśliwość oddana.

As a result of the devil’s temptation, people choose unknowingly the world described by the lyrical subject as “zrujnowany ogród”, “otchłań” and “pobojowisko” (“destroyed garden”, „abyss”, and “battlefield”. This is an imperfect world where matter reigns<sup>22</sup> but in which people can decide about everything on their own. It contains the message of the free will as an act of God’s magnanimity. According to Genesis 1, man was created

<sup>20</sup> Cf. the collection of poetry with the same title by Kazimierz Wierzyński from 1944.

<sup>21</sup> “(...) stworzył istoty zdolne wybrać między dobrem i złem” – that wrote Miłosz in the poem *Teodycea* from the collection *Nieobjęta ziemia* (1984), pp. 878.

<sup>22</sup> According to Maximilian Rudwin, the devil was perceived up to the 16th century as a creator sui generis and the guardian of the material order of things, idem, *Diabeł w legendzie i literaturze*, translated by Jacek Illg, Cracow, Wydawnictwo Znak 1999, pp. 143.

as a good and totally innocent being who is the mirror image of God. God looked upon everything He created (even man on the sixth day) and said, it is “very good”<sup>23</sup>.

With the words “Nieszczęsne moje dzieci, jaka długa droga, / Nim zrujnowany ogród zakwitnie od nowa, / I lipową aleją wróćcie przed ganek, / Gdzie na rabatkach pachną szałwia i tymianek”<sup>24</sup> God emphasizes that people are responsible for the devastation of the garden. In the sense of *pars pro toto*, the garden symbolizes here the whole world. Furthermore, there is a “long road” – “**długa droga**” – to travel before they comprehend what they have done. They have to comprehend that a life which only imitates existence in paradise is never going to be as good as life in the real garden of Eden: “I czy było konieczne nurzać się w otchłani, / Systemata układać, zamiast mieszkać w baśni, / Nad którą nieustanna jest moja opieka?”<sup>25</sup>. Instead of using God’s gifts, man sets out on his way, a way that prolongs the sound of the epitheton “długa” (long) by the above marked double repetition (d...ga d...ga). Emphasizing the distance that has to be covered by every man during his migration is enhanced by the epitheton. However, he still has the opportunity to return to his father’s house. In that way, God introduces hope, because he conveys to the people that return to paradise is possible, as stated in the following passage:

Nieszczęsne moje dzieci, jaka długa droga,  
Nim zrujnowany ogród zakwitnie od nowa,

I lipową aleją wróćcie przed ganek,  
Gdzie na rabatkach pachną szałwia i tymianek.

## Explanation of the title

Considering the title of the poem, the following question arises: What does the work of the gardener consist in? At first, he tills land<sup>26</sup>, sows flowers, i.e. he creates

23 1. Moses / Genesis. 1, 31.

24 (In English: “My wretched children, such a long way / to the regained bloom of the destroyed garden / and along the linden avenue you come back to the courtyard / where the vegetable patch smells of sage and thyme”).

25 (In English: “Was it necessary to plunge into the abyss, to create systems, instead of living in a tale, / under my constant care?”).

26 It is important to emphasize that the word “culture” originates from the Latin word *colere* and means ‘cultivation, care, tilling, creation’, also in terms of ‘agriculture’ (*cultus agri*). Over the course of time, the meaning of culture has been expanded to include everything that man is able to ‘cultivate’ including his own development. Cicero characterizes philosophy as *cultura animi* – ‘cultivation of the soul’ (“*Cultura autem animi philosophia est*”), Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* II 5, 13. Quotation in: *Tusculanae disputationes. Gespräche in Tusculum. Deutsch und Latein*, edited and translated by E.A. Kirfel, Stuttgart, Reclam 1997.

life. Afterwards, he takes care of them so that they grow healthy and strong, and he does everything he can to attend to them with love and care. The relationship between God and people is similar.

The leading character – the gardener – is God himself. Adam and Eve have dominion over the earth and are the further protagonists of the poem. They were not created to bow to the devil, namely “the prince and the lord of this world”<sup>27</sup>. This passage corresponds to the epigraph to the poem by Martin Luther: “Wszyscy więc ciałem i w sprawach naszych podlegamy diabłu i gościmy na świecie, którego on jest panem i bogiem. Dlatego pod jego władzą jest chleb, który jemy, napój, który pijemy, ubranie, które nosimy, nawet powietrze, i wszystko, czym żyjemy”<sup>28</sup>. Luther believes that the whole world belongs to Satan,<sup>29</sup> but Miłosz disagrees with Luther. According to Luther, a man will be in Satan’s power as soon as he sets out on his way in life. The devil’s character is manifest in human activities and their differences. He rules over the material world and becomes God on earth. By making the devil in the first verse “the prince and the lord of the world”<sup>30</sup> Miłosz concurs with Luther. However, this is only the introduction to the real topic of the poem, namely, the story narrated by God.

Returning now to Adam and Eve, it should be stated that they are tragic characters. Due to a bad decision they succumbed to the temptation of evil and had to leave the garden of Eden. The life they chose will be marked by the insatiability of the soul and the body’s vulnerability.<sup>31</sup> After expulsion from the garden of Eden the people are ashamed of their nakedness. They don clothes to hide their corporeality. In the poem *Ogrodnik*, they enclose their hips with pants and crinolines (“zamykania bioder w majtki, krynoliny”) and lose the life that would have been eternal happiness. Adam and Eve’s greed brought it about that they in fact became like Gods; ironically, however, they became frail, imperfect and mortal.

27 (In English: “To bow to the prince and the lord of this earth”). In the poem *Ksiądz Ch., po latach*, [pp. 852–856 from the volume *Nieobjęta ziemia* (1984)] Miłosz discusses the problem: “A ja, czy nie pokłoniłem się?”.

28 M. Luther, *Komentarz do Galatów* [Comment on Galatians], chapter 3, [epigraph to *The Gardener*] Cz. Miłosz, *Wiersze wszystkie*, op. cit., p. 1197.

29 Gnosticism perceived the whole objectively existing world as the devil’s work. Vide: M. Rudwin, *Diabeł w legendzie i literaturze*, op. cit., p. 143.

30 (In English: “the prince and the lord of this world”). This description is found in: G. Davidson, *Słownik aniołów w tym aniołów upadłych*, translated by J. Ruszkowski, Poznań, Wydawnictwo Zysk i S-ka 1998, p. 39; The “prince of this world” was mentioned by Miłosz in the following poems: *Ksiądz Ch., po latach*, pp. 852–856 from the collection *Nieobjęta ziemia* (1984), *Jeden i wiele*, p. 1199 from the collection *To* (2000), *Na próżno*, p. 1261 from the collection *Druga przestrzeń* (2002), *Antegor*, p. 1346 and *Sancitifetur* p. 1352 from *Wiersze ostatnie* (2006).

31 Corporeality can be defined as, among others, man’s belonging to the material world.



Thus, the dominant component is the contrast between God's wonderful, harmonic garden and the dreadful human material world that is the domain of Satan's power<sup>32</sup>. Divine eternity is contrasted with the "brief moment" of human existence. That contrast is transferred to the aesthetic structure of the poem by retaining rhymes between the verses to enable the analysis of the rhyme equivalences.<sup>33</sup> In that way, the main motif of the poem's composition on the semantic plane is apparent. This can be demonstrated by the following examples the choice of which was not random. The juxtaposition of the rhyme pairs enables the analysis and discussion of the oppositions: man – gardener/God; God – Satan; Earth – paradise; the spiritual – the material etc.

## [ 1 ]

1. Adam i Ewa nie na to zostali **stworzeni**,
  2. Żeby kłaniać się księżciu i władcy tej **ziemi**.
- stworzeni – ziemi**

The rhyme pair has to be seen in a broader context: "nie zostali stworzeni" – "tej ziemi". The following question arises: Which earth is meant? The next distich contains the answer. They were created for another, sunny earth beyond time. In the scope of the root meaning of the rhyme pair stands a pragmatic relationship: What they have in common is that, like Adam and Eve, the earth was created – "Stworzenia ziemi" (beings of the earth). Finally, in the Bible a further common feature can be found: "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt you return"<sup>34</sup>. At a first glance, this may not be entirely correct – the earth is a planet and creation a long-term process. However, both created people and the earth have a certain power to generate life. They create something, it can even be said that they give birth to something, for example culture.

## [ 2 ]

3. Inna, słoneczna, ziemia poza czasem **trwała**.
  4. Im obojgu na wieczną szczęśliwość **oddana**.
- trwała – oddana**

This rhyme pair, taken apart from the text, describes the earth: "trwała" and "oddana". In a broader context, it turns out that the rhymes are bound together, namely in the space beyond time, in eternity. This is exactly the space where the divine garden of Eden is located.

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<sup>32</sup> The poem's epigraph alludes to that.

<sup>33</sup> M. Freise, *Die Äquivalenzfunktion des Reimes*, in: idem, *Slawistische Literaturwissenschaft*, with the collaboration of Katja Freise, Tübingen, Narr Verlag 2012, pp. 146–150.

<sup>34</sup> 1. Moses 3, 19.

“The Earth existed (Ziemia **trwała**) beyond time” – which sounds very static, motionless, continuous; and understood entirely differently in the passage “im obojgu (...) **oddana**”. In the latter, the Earth is given over to Adam and Eva; this is punctual. A certain dynamism can be imagined here.

[ 3 ]

5. Siwobrody ogrodnik drzew na niej **doglądał**,  
6. Chociaż świat nie stał w blasku, tak jak tego **żądał**.  
**doglądał – żądał**

Those two verb forms, implying the past, are referred to the grey-bearded gardener. It is His primordial relationship to the Earth and its dwellers, Adam and Eve, that is described here. On the one hand, the gardener has the face of a caring and loving father, on the other hand, he demands respect for his works and obedience to his rules. Just as a man is characterized by good and evil, so God can be both merciful and cruel<sup>35</sup>. In this way, the similarity between God and man is highlighted.

[ 4 ]

7. Na dni i wieki patrzył niby przez **lunetę**  
8. Na całe swoje dzieło, tak dobrze **zaczęte**,  
**lunetę – zaczęte**

Looking through a telescope brings the observed objects within reach. However, this close distance is only apparent, because the observer is in fact far from the object. What stands between them is a lens that transfers the image of the object to the more distant part of the device. The eyepiece is an optical element close to the eye of the observer and brings the distant object into view. Both the lens and the eyepiece are optical components of equal value and importance. This is how the image in the telescope is processed.

On the one hand, the telescope sets up a distance between an observer and the object, on the other hand, it establishes contact between God and man. The telescope brings closer something that, though theoretically distant, is something well known, because God himself is the architect of Earth, the Earth is his work<sup>36</sup>. The telescope has an eyepiece that only an eye can look through. When the whole distich “patrzył (...) przez lunetę” is taken into account, then this turns out to be only apparent: “niby”<sup>37</sup>.

35 In Polish „okrutny”.

36 Cf. footnote 26 (“agriculture”).

37 It recalls the dominance of feelings over reason in the ballad *Romantyczność* by Adam Mickiewicz: “Czucie i wiara silniej mówi do mnie / Niż mędrca szkiełko i oko”, A. Mickiewicz, *Wiersze*, Cz. Zgorzelski (ed.), Warsaw, Czytelnik 1983, p. 27.

It seems paradoxical that God's work upon which the lyrical "I" looks down is being created just in that moment, and God is already using a human invention, the telescope. He is holding in his hands a tool created by humans in the distant future. Looking through the telescope can also mean a view from the stars. Telescopium is namely a minor constellation in the southern celestial hemisphere<sup>38</sup>. Thus, the stars are God's telescope, his eyes looking down at Earth.

## [ 10 ]

19. Do zamykania bioder w majtki, **krynoliny**,  
 20. Do odkrywania ciągów skutków i **przyczyny**?  
**krynoliny – przyczyny**

This rhyme pair consists of two nouns in plural. The first word in the rhyme pair "krynoliny" (crinolines)<sup>39</sup> refers to a concrete object. A garment for women during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were stiff petticoats designed add volume to skirts. These unwieldy skirts were worn first of all by women of higher social standing, those from noble and wealthy families<sup>40</sup>. Crinolines were subject of many jokes and satires<sup>41</sup>. The opponents of this fashion thought that such a steel cage was in the truest sense of the word a prison for women. Figuratively speaking, things such as crinolines symbolise human imprisonment in the material world<sup>42</sup>.

The second word of the rhyme pair is "przyczyny" (causes) that represent something abstract and are connected with "skutki" (effects). The search for causes and effects<sup>43</sup> is an attempt to comprehend the artificial, stiff rules of the world<sup>44</sup>, that is, the "przyczyny" are as stiff and firm as "krynoliny".

<sup>38</sup> *Moja astronomia*, <http://www.maribert.com/index.php/Teleskop.html> [access: 24.08.2011].

<sup>39</sup> Similar to the previous example („luneta”), Miłosz's attention to detail is manifest here, as highlighted by J. Błoński, *Miłosz jak świat*, Cracow, Wydawnictwo Znak 1999.

<sup>40</sup> It was patented for the first time in 1846, however it differed from antecedents due to the fact that it was Worn by women of almost every social standing, even though it was quite uncomfortable.

<sup>41</sup> Examples: Bolesław Leśmian – *Lalka, Wiatrak*; Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński – *Dary deszczu jesiennego*.

<sup>42</sup> Crinolines as pieces of clothing refer to the epitome of the poem, namely, according to Luther, pieces of clothing worn by people are under control of Satan.

<sup>43</sup> This refers to the rapid development of science and therefore the suppression of spiritual and moral spheres from man's interests, the topic of Miłosz's book *Ziemia Ulro* (1977). Czesław Miłosz, *Ziemia Ulro*, Cracow, Wydawnictwo Znak 2000, pp. 252–267.

<sup>44</sup> All that is a result of human's activities, that, according to Luther [epitome], are also subordinated to Satan.

## [ 15 ]

29. I czy było konieczne nurzać się **w otchłani**,  
 30. Systemata układać, zamiast mieszkać **w baśni**,  
**w otchłani – w baśni**

People had to convince themselves that they would not be better off in the abyss, where they would have to make a fresh start and create systems. It will be “a long way”, before they comprehend this. Miłosz idealises paradise. He presents it as a perfect land that “smells of sage and thyme”. He emphasises the beauty and the utopian character of the world created for but abandoned by man on the day of the knowledge. This is the world of prosperity and love, a perfect place, a “fairy tale”, the “sunny earth”. These rhymes represent two immeasurable spaces facing each other: “otchłań” (the abyss) represents hell. “baśń” (the tale) represents paradise, heaven.

## [ 16 ]

31. Nad którą nieustanna jest moja **opieka**?  
 32. Bo prawdę mówi Pismo, że mam twarz **człowieka**.  
**opieka – człowieka**

The next rhyme pair consists above all of a pair of contradictions: “opieka” stands for the abstract, “człowiek” for the concrete. However, a man is a being created by God, and God’s care is something he accepts. What is at issue here is the human nature of God, his human face. In this way, the Miłosz concludes the polemic against Luther with which the poem began. It turns out that man is not wholly bad; his “connection” to evil is only the consequence of a false choice at the beginning of his existence. Even if Satan does have his say in steering the affairs of the human world, man comes back from the „abyss” to God. The sphere of the spiritual and divine life is not subordinated to Satan, only the earthly and material sphere.

The foregoing examples show that the author employs simple and clear language. At the same time, his words convey a beautiful and elevated style. The artistic plane is underscored by the above mentioned epithets: “Siwobrody ogrodnik”, “ranliwe ciało”, “zrujnowany ogród”, “lipową aleją”<sup>45</sup>. The epithets “biedni” and “nieszczęsne” refer to man. Moreover, some metaphors occur in this poem: “O biedne moje dzieci, więc tak wam się spieszy / Do piachu, w którym czaszka żółte zęby szczyrzy?” or “I czy było konieczne nurzać się w otchłani, / Systemata

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<sup>45</sup> (In English: “The grey-bearded gardener”, “the vulnerable body”, “the destroyed garden”, “the linden avenue”). Then linden is regarded as a Slavic tree, the oak as a Germanic one. In that way, reference to the linden tree is reference to what is Slavic, whereas Luther represents what is German, while Luther represents the Germanic.

układać, zamiast mieszkać w baśni (...)”<sup>46</sup>. Numerous verbs, for example “doglądał”, “patrzył”, “dumał” present a certain image of God. God is thoughtful, he observes people; however, it seems that he does not interfere in their lives and their sleepy world. At the same time, the verbs present him as a material being. God is personified, which serves to emphasize that man was created in his image. This idea will be mined more deeply in the part on intertextual connections.

God addresses Adam and Eve directly twice. The first time he resorts to an apostrophe: “O biedne moje dzieci” and “Nieszczęsne moje dzieci”. The second time he asks some rhetorical questions: does it pay to renounce paradise, would not be better to live an honest and godly live instead of propagating a sinful existence, or to discover causes and effects. What is more, he imitates the language of his opponents, as in the announcement in the text „Oto zbliża się wróg mój i zaraz wam powie:”<sup>47</sup>. Also, the use of the colon introduces the *oratio recta* (direct speech) before the sentence: “Spróbujcie, a staniecie się jako bogowie”.

This is followed by verses with the same initial sound:

**Do** piachu, w którym czaszka żółte zęby szczyrzy?  
**Do** zamykania bioder w majtki, krynoliny,  
**Do** odkrywania ciągów skutków i przyczyny?

Use of the anaphora in this passage combined with the above mentioned rhetorical questions serves not only to enumerate the things a human strives after, but also to emphasize the absurdity of these strivings. It is also intensified by unusual expressions: “czaszka żółte zęby szczyrzy”, “zamykania bioder w majtki”<sup>48</sup>. The repetition of the first parts of the verses combined with rhetorical questions emphasizes God’s point of view, his ever deeper doubts about man and the consequences of his actions. The double anaphora intensifies the impression of increasing doubt that man may well have chosen an earthly life instead of the paradise.

The garden of Eden symbolises above all the feeling of happiness of the first parents before they committed the original sin. It is an ideal state that people try unsuccessfully to regain. This wish is present each time man attempts to regain the lost paradise through travel. The motif of the lost paradise comes from the Book of Genesis. *Paradise Lost* is a religious-philosophical poem by John Milton published in 1667, consisting of twelve volumes in blank verses, that concerns the biblical story of the original sin, its causes, and effects – exactly as the poem by Miłosz

46 [In English: “Oh, my poor children, why are you in a hurry to get / to the earth, where the scull bares its yellow teeth? (...) Was it necessary to plunge into the abyss, / to create systems, instead of living in a tale (...)”].

47 (In English: “Behold, my enemy approaches and he is going to speak soon:”).

48 (In English: “The scull baring its yellow teeth”, “enclosing the hips in pants”).

analysed here. In the ninth volume, this issue is raised: Eve succumbs to Satan's temptation and eats the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For love of her Adam does the same. The punishment for disobedience is expulsion from paradise and life in sin and mortality. However, before the "first parents" abandon the garden of Eden, Michael (the Archangel) shows Adam the future with the hope for salvation (volumes 11–13). God does the same in Miłosz's poem; he attempts to warn people and fill them with hope.

As mentioned above, Miłosz idealises paradise in a certain way. The road to paradise leads through the linden avenue. With the epitheton "linden" he refers possibly to Jan Kochanowski's poem *Na lipę* (*The linden tree*). In this work, the *wieszcz* from *Czarnolas* draws allusions to the mystical garden of Hesperides, where trees with golden apples grow and the divine drink ambrosia springs from a source. The comparison of the linden with the tree of Hesperides reveals its uniqueness and importance. The linden is a tree with valuable features, close to divinity and symbolising security, happiness, and harmony. As Ewa Bienkowska has written:

W środku koszmaru zrealizowanego próba schronienia się, w bajkę o dzieciństwie, próba zaczarowania bólu obrazami dawnego przeddorosłego szczęścia: ganek z widokiem na łąki, piwonie na grządce, ojciec jak dobry Pan Bóg wyprowadza zgubione dzieci z lasu.<sup>49</sup>

Therefore, the words: "I lipową aleją wrócić przed ganek" can be understood as if the linden avenue was a reliable path to divine harmony<sup>50</sup>.

As far as the design of the text is concerned, there is a significant parallel with Kochanowski's work. The poem *Na lipę* consists of thirteen-syllable verses. This verse pattern occurs as well in his cycle *Treny*<sup>51</sup> that is also related topically to Miłosz's poetry. With reference to the poem by Miłosz, the *Tren V* is especially worthy of attention, because here Kochanowski compares God to the gardener. While zealously cleaning his orchard, he cuts down an olive tree, which can be read as Kochanowski's complaint about the premature death of his little daughter. The girl (= olive tree) grows peacefully alongside his parents / old trees. The tree is small, it has neither twigs nor leaves, it is weak and defenceless, but the parents are proud

<sup>49</sup> E. Bienkowska, *Przestrzeń ocalenia*, „Więź” 1981, no. 3, pp. 28.

<sup>50</sup> This harmony is highlighted by two-verse strophes and the constant caesura of each verse (with the exception of the first one) and the harmony is in contradiction with the tension of the whole poem. The allusion to the cycle *Świat poema naiwne* (1943) becomes obvious here.

<sup>51</sup> However, the verse structure of various poems in this cycle is rather differentiated:

Thirteen syllables (7+6), e.g. *Tren VII*

Thirteen syllables (8+5)

Twelve syllables (7+5)

of it. Thus, the parallels between the tree and little Urszulka are obvious. She has been cut down by the gardener like a little tree “sadownik podciął ukwapliwy”<sup>52</sup>) and falls dead at the feet of the bewailing parents (“rodzicom troskliwym u nóg martwa upadła”<sup>53</sup>).

The above mentioned thirteen-syllable verses are also an allusion to Adam Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* in which the idyll and the garden also play an important role. In that way, dynamic, fulsome images are created that the reader can easily represent. When one enters the orchard in *Pan Tadeusz*, one is surrounded by overwhelming peace, a blissful silence, where everything seems to be in the right place. The plants, too, are relaxed and calm, they have resigned themselves noticeably to their fate. The trees are like disciplined soldiers, ordered in rows by the hand of the gardener. The scent of the flowers is in the air and is so intense that it is overpowering for the reader himself. Through the use of numerous metaphors, similes, epithets and personifications, the poet ascribes the characteristics of humans and living things to these phenomena. E.g. the garden and the described plants observed secretly by the count possess many human properties: “(...) tu kapusta, sędziwe schylając łysiny (...)”, “(...) płacząc strąki w marchwi zielonej warokoczu (...)”, “(...) otyłego widać brzuch harbuza (...)”<sup>54</sup>.

The alternation between anthropomorphism and animalization serves Mickiewicz to connect the world of humans and the world of nature. Nature cannot be separated from man. The descriptions of nature were intended to deepen those relations. Thus, the garden is like a house in which all dwellers live in harmony. It is a house full of the atmosphere of security, where no enemy can invade, as attested by the words “(...) ich liście i woń służą grzędom za obronę, bo przez ich liście nie śmie przecisnąć się żmija (...)”<sup>55</sup>. Indeed, the garden in *Pan Tadeusz* is presented as an ideal, idyllic landscape, but in contrast with Miłosz's garden it remains in human keeping, which guarantees its perfection.

As in Miłosz's description of the garden explicit details are missing from the description of the Lithuanian landscape, so that it is not possible to assign it to a concrete place. In this way, Mickiewicz wanted to convey only the general impression of a landscape image on the *Neman*<sup>56</sup>. Thus, this description cannot be considered a photographic image of a certain place. It may contain only characteristics that are universal.

The verse: “Niewidoczny w listowie, dumał, zasmucony” refers to the gardener, however this can be established only by considering a broader fragment. The use

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52 J. Kochanowski, *Fraszki, pieśni, treny*, Cracow, Wydawnictwo Sowa 2000, p. 91.

53 Ibidem.

54 A. Mickiewicz, *Pan Tadeusz*, K. Górski (ed.), Warsaw, Czytelnik 1988, p. 56.

55 Ibidem, p. 56.

56 “On the Neman” – the river Neman is meant here.

of ellipsis, omission of the subject blurs the boundary between God and nature. When he finds himself in the foliage, on the one hand his divinity is removed from him, on the other the mutual belonging of both parts is highlighted. With the hidden God<sup>57</sup> in the background, nature becomes an observer of human activities. In the same manner Tadeusz observes in secret the garden of Zosia.

Miłosz alludes to the idyll in the works of his great predecessors of the Renaissance and Romanticism and in that way he enhances, in his poem, the image of paradise. The author refers constantly to the Bible. It is not only a collection of motifs, parables and allegories, but over the course of many centuries a source of inspirations for artists. Miłosz draws extensively on the Christian tradition. This is hardly surprising given that he translated the Bible from Hebrew. The poem *Ogrodnik* is primarily a paraphrase of the parable of the lost paradise. The biblical background can be found in the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament. It contains among others the story of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. That means that the poem *Ogrodnik* is stylized to be a biblical description of the original sin. The sentences: "O biedne moje dzieci (...) Nieszczęsne moje dzieci" are examples of how Miłosz imitates biblical syntax. According to *Zarys teorii literatury* by Michał Głowiński (et al.), stylization is present "when the writer forms the language of the work so that it is similar to the style of a certain other work or literary genre"<sup>58</sup>. Thus, its purpose is not blind imitation, but the creation of a new work that contains the "stylized" language. In his poem, Miłosz demands the creation of a new style ingrained in the biblical tradition. The sources of stylizing a language are among others: archaisms, e.g. "zaiste"<sup>59</sup> "ułomni"<sup>60</sup> „nieszczęsne”; dialectal variants, colloquialisms, and jargon used by a particular group of people (e.g. "do piachu"); short, often compound sentences joined by a conjunction, inversion, division into verses, expressive symbolism, use of maxims and adages, a ceremonial and solemn tone.

<sup>57</sup> The hidden God refers to another poem by Miłosz, *Wiersze dla opętanych?* from the collection *Wiersze rozproszone* (1930–1936), p. 31. The character in the text of the youthful poet is convinced that man has been abandoned by God. Another image of God is presented in the poems *Jeden i wiele* and *Ogrodnik*.

<sup>58</sup> Michał Głowiński, Aleksandra Okopień-Sławińska, Janusz Sławiński, *Zarys teorii literatury*, Warsaw, Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne 1975, p. 138 (in Polish: "wtedy, gdy pisarz kształtuje język swojego utworu na wzór stylu określonego dzieła, typu dzieł lub określonego gatunku literackiego"). Cf. J. Sławiński, *Słownik Terminów Literackich*, op. cit., pp. 538–540.

<sup>59</sup> An example: „**Zaiste** próżna jest nadzieja w pagórkach i w mnóstwie gór; zaiste w Panu, Bogu naszym, jest zbawienie Izraelskie" ("Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel"), Jeremiah 3, 23.

<sup>60</sup> An example: „Tak iż się on lud dziwował, widząc, że niemi mówią, **ułomni** uzdrowieni są, chromi chodzą, a ślepi widzą; i wielbili Boga Izraelskiego" ("Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel"), Matthew 15, 31.



The biblical style is also manifest in parallelisms such as the synonymous parallelism in the following passage of the text:

O biedne moje dzieci, więc tak wam się spieszy  
Do piachu, w którym czaszka żółte zęby szczyrzy?  
Do zamykania bioder w majtki, krynoliny,  
Do odkrywania ciągów skutków i przyczyny?

The antithetic parallelism:

I czy było konieczne nurzać się w otchłani,  
Systemata układać, zamiast mieszkać w baśni,

or the synthetic parallelism:

Na dni i wieki patrzył niby przez lunetę  
Na całe swoje dzieło, tak dobrze zaczęte  
Lokaje samolubnej miłości i zbrodni,  
I zaiste bogowie, tylko że ułomni.

As in the case of the Bible's God, nor does God in Miłosz's poem lose confidence in the people and improvement of their behaviour. He hopes that they, like the prodigal son, will come back to paternal protection (*Parable of the Prodigal Son*, Luke 15: 11–32, 21–25).

The last strophe of the poem ("bo prawdę mówi Pismo, że mam twarz człowieka") constitutes a kind of the message of the whole text. What does it mean that a man was created in the image of God? Many passages from the Bible need to be quoted in order to answer that question. On the one hand, the similarity between man and God is presented here, on the other hand, the image of God is compared to the image of the gardener, as displayed in the following passage. On the last day of the creation God said:

"Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground". So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground". Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all

the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground – everything that has the breath of life in it – I give every green plant for food”. And it was so.<sup>61</sup>

And so, God finished his work. Man by no means belongs to the world of animals. God assigned him the role of the “lord”, the role God wants for him. He makes it possible for man to communicate with him. There is a spiritual, moral, and social similarity between them. God creates man from dust and gives him life through his breath: “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”<sup>62</sup>.

God’s creation of man in his image and likeness does not mean that man was created to be similar to God. In physical terms, God has no flesh and no blood. According to the Bible, “God is a Spirit”<sup>63</sup> and therefore he exists without flesh<sup>64</sup>. Thus, the image of God concerns the immortal part of man:

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.<sup>65</sup>

A further confirmation of the fact that man was created in the image of God is Adam’s ability to make independent decisions. Although his nature was marked by justice, Adam, when he rebelled against the creator, made a false decision, because he sought the system of cause and effect. In that way, he destroyed the divine image in himself and passed on this “damaged” similarity to his children:

Wherefore, as by one man’s sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.<sup>66</sup>

“Systemata układac̃” implies a further intertextual reference and means that in society various means are introduced to regulate life and maintain order. That is

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<sup>61</sup> 1. Moses / Genesis 1, 26–30.

<sup>62</sup> 1. Moses 2, 7.

<sup>63</sup> John 4, 24; “God is a Spirit”.

<sup>64</sup> “Bez rąk i bez oczu, jednak rzeczywisty”, in: Cz. Miłosz, *Jeden i wiele*, in: idem, *Wiersze wszystkie*, op. cit., p. 1199.

<sup>65</sup> John 4, 23 --- 24.

<sup>66</sup> Romans 5, 12 --- 15.

in the contradiction to the primordial state that is similar to the image from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

Aurea prima sata est aetas, quae vindice nullo,  
sponte sua, sine lege fidem rectumque colebat.  
poena metusque aberant, nec verba minantia fixo  
aere ligabantur, nec supplex turba timebat  
iudicis ora sui, sed erant sine vindice tuti.<sup>67</sup>

There is similarity between Ovid's portrayal and, on the one hand, the image of *Soplicowo*, on the other hand, the divine garden, as presented by Miłosz, and, finally, the antique golden age (the age of mankind's greatest happiness when there were no wars, no violence, and no laborious work). In idealizing paradise, Miłosz refers to one of the great myths in the history of mankind: the myth of the golden age and the lost paradise. The past is being mythologised.

In summary, it can be said that the poem is backgrounded by a dualistic conception<sup>68</sup>. It presupposes the existence of two equal powers: "good" and "evil", "light" and "darkness", "good God" and "bad God". Dualistic doctrines combine matter with the element of "evil" and the spiritual element with the "good". Thus, the visible world is the result of the struggle of both powers, as recapitulated by Aleksander Fiut in his thesis *Pragnienie wiary*:

(...) ludzki dramat egzystencjalny odbywa się w poezji Miłosza na Ziemi w obliczu Nieba i Piekła. W nieustępliwej obecności diabłów. Jednakże w XX wieku hierarchie upadły, a aksjologiczny podział przestrzeni zawirował. Niebo wydaje się niedosiężne, Piekło zagościło na ziemi.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Finally, the motif of the *homo viator*, i.e. of a man on the way ("Bo byli już gotowi i tak jakby w drodze") should be mentioned.

<sup>69</sup> A. Fiut, *Pragnienie wiary*, „Tygodnik Powszechny” 2001, no. 11/12, <http://www.tygodnik.com.pl/kontrapunkt/60-61/fiut.html> [access: 18.06.2009].

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Monika Anna Noga

## Topos ogrodnika na przykładzie wiersza *Ogrodnik* Czesława Miłosza. Analiza tekstu

### *Streszczenie*

Artykuł prezentuje szczegółową interpretację wiersza Czesława Miłosza pt. *Ogrodnik*. Głównym przedmiotem hermeneutycznej i strukturalnej analizy jest „topos ogrodnika”. Analiza ma na celu scharakteryzowanie toposu ogrodnika i wskazanie roli współczesnego poety i współczesnej polskiej literatury.

**Słowa kluczowe:** topos, topos ogrodnika, ogród, utopia, Bóg, Szatan, raj, Adam i Ewa

## The gardener's topos based on the example of the poem *The Gardener (Ogrodnik)* by Czesław Miłosz (text analysis)

### *Summary*

„The gardener's topos based on the example of the poem *Ogrodnik* by Czesław Miłosz (text analysis)”. The article is a detailed consideration of a poem by Czesław Miłosz entitled *Ogrodnik* [*Gardener*]. The main object of the hermeneutic and structural analysis of this poem is the “topos of the gardener”. The analysis is meant to characterize the topos of the gardener and point to the role of a modern poet and modern Polish literature.

**Keywords:** topos, topos of the gardener, garden, utopia, God, Satan, paradise, Adam and Eve

**Monika Anna Noga**, dr. des., absolwentka slawistyki na Uniwersytecie Georga-Augusta w Getyndze w Niemczech, doktor slawistyki (specjalność literaturoznawstwo) Uniwersytetu we Fryburgu w Szwajcarii. Autorka pracy *Stanisław Brzozowski w kręgu „Kultury” paryskiej*. Publikacje w „Kontekstach Kultury” i „Das Kindler Lexikon”.

**Monika Anna Noga**, Dr. des., a graduate in Slavic Studies from the Georg-August University, Göttingen, Germany, PhD in Slavic Studies (speciality in Literary Studies) at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, has defended a dissertation devoted to the reception of Stanisław Brzozowski within the group around the journal „Kultura” in Paris. Publication in „Konteksty Kultury” and „Das Kindler Lexikon”.