

Studying the Fear of Time in Paul Éluard's Imagination

¹Maryam Kiani Peikani, ²Ali Abasi,

¹1st Author, ²Corresponding Author,

¹Department of French language and Literature, ²Department of French language and Literature,

¹Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, ²Shahid Beheshti University

Tehran/Tehran, Iran

¹mkiani290@gmail.com ²Ali_abasi2001@yahoo.com

Abstract: *In this paper, imagination forms of time are studied in Paul Éluard's imagination. In Paul Éluard's imagination, time is a vital key and actual significant. In the poems of artistic images, we will see the figures of speech and descriptions of nature. This author deals with humans and humanity. The main feature of Paul Éluard's imagination is visually and metaphor. This feature makes the abstract concept of the time to be a concrete and real subject. The great quantity of the metaphorical process in Paul Éluard's method suggests that time plays an important role in his imagination. By studying some parts of the imagination of this surrealist poet, we reach to the deduction that two different concepts of time appear in his thoughts: some images express a universal fear of time and for the poet create images which generate human beings out of time. Such images transform time into a dynamic element in Éluard's mind. Therefore, time has a vital role in the Éluard's mind. To explore the fantasy world of Éluard, the Gilbert Durand's method in the field of imagination criticism has been used. The purpose of this article is to find an answer of the question, which arty images reveal the fear of time for Paul Éluard?*

Key Words: *Imagination, Time, Fear.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Imagination is a fountain of conception that has been plagued by philosophers for centuries, and now become a means of recognition: imagination allows us to reach unknown levels of reality. Nowadays, the concept of imagination cannot be ignored for the critique of artworks, and it seems to be the most important element of the art and literature of imaginings. Thus, the imaginative critique, which roots can be traced throughout history, and particularly in Romanticism, studies and reads the imagination of art-work. This criticism, deeply and systematically began with Gaston Bachelard's views, but continued with others. For studying the time in Éluard's imagination, we used Gilbert Durand's method which introduced in the book *Les Structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire, Introduction à l'archétypologie générale* as a research method, and also all Gilbert Durand's works represent a reading from the anthropology of imagination (Anthropologie de l'imaginaire) to mythical analysis (Mythanalyse). The work of Gilbert Durand is an attempt to explore human imagination through the knowledge. His method is a multidisciplinary approach which is included the history of religions, psychology and anthropology. In his perspective, imagination is a kind of reflection of human reaction to the time. In the book *Anthropological Structures of the Imagination*, he studies myths, symbols and archetypes and attempts to provide a detailed classification of the most important symbols of the imagination.

The Gilbert Durand's method is based on the symbolic representation of images. He believes, they are constructions of the imagination which define the human representation of the world. In Gilbert Durand's method, literature image has intrinsic meaning; which means, the image as a symbol has a primitive meaning and does not have the optional feature of sign. "This symbolism, the primordial, the ancient, forms our representation of the world while changing our semantic data"(Chelebourg, 2000: 58).

Gilbert Durand in his book represents a detailed typology of artistic images and divides them into two major groups: the "Le regime diurne" (The daytime system/ poem) and "Le regime nocturne" (The nighttime system/ poem). The daytime poem or system consists of two groups of symbols. These symbols are some methods of time (Les visages du temps) which are placed in this system in an opposite way (night/ day, dark/ bright, high/ low, sky/ earth). The first group contains symbols that show death; Fear is the main feature of this group: fear of animals and violence, fear of the night, and fear of falling. The second group is a collection of symbols showing the light, ascent and weapons of victory, such as the sword of justice.

In the first group, the main and primary function of images and symbols is an incitement to repel the human fear. This group of images represents the main feature of human fear which is the fear of death and loss of time. In fact, representing the death and time is a kind of attempt to cure this fear.

The symbolic representation of a frightening subject makes the imagination to find a solution to control it. For that reason, in the second group of the daily system we are confronted with completely opposite images of the first group. In fact, "imagination takes the time [as an enemy] to a land where it can easily be won" (Durand, 1992: 135).

By and large, the method that we are going to use in this paper is, the symbolic images section with negative valued for studying the concept of time in the Éluard's imagination.

2. Theriomorphic symbols:

The first section of images of the daily system are symbols which represent the negative features of animals: hostility, savagery, violence and attack. This brutality, which is a sign of death, is manifested in different cultures by images of animals or scary creatures. These imaginative images are two factors of time:

"Time and motion; destroying everything through time and imagery of animals has two characteristics: 1. The animal is something which is motion, escapes and cannot be captured, 2. On the other hand, the animal is what it rips and tears and eats and consequently kills" (Abbasi, 2011: 84).

The theme of time is repeated in *Capitule de la douleur*, associated with a subjective perception subject to the vagaries of an intimate meteorology, largely dependent on proximity or distance, presence or absence, beloved woman around whom the visible world and the intimate universe of affect are organized. This explains why time is alternately set for good or for bad, this dichotomy being materialized in a cleavage between the instant (or the moment) and becoming, which threatens a fantasized duration like a perpetuation of always new moments.

Euphoria is not the dominant tonal of a collection entitled *Capitale de la douleur*, where the perception of time lived is most often marked by regret for a time now abolished and by the apprehension of the future: "She says the future. And I am responsible for verifying it", writes the poet in the second of the two "Void" (Éluard, 1926: 30).

*Which says: I crossed the street so I was no longer in the sun.
It's too hot, even in the shade. There is the street, four floors and
my window in the sun. A cap on the head, a cap on
the hand, he comes to shake my hand. Would you not shout
like that, it's crazy!*

*

*Invisible blind people are preparing the sleep sheets.
The night, the moon and their hearts continue.*

*

*In turn a cry: "the imprint, the imprint, I don't see
plus, the footprint. In the end, I can no longer count on you!" (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur, 1926).*

The extract is a perfect illustration of anxiety and worry. In the first verse, the sun manifests itself as an unpleasant element, announces suffering. The heat of the sun makes the space unbreathable. The word shout also produces a brutal, violent effect and creates an unbearable atmosphere. In the last section expresses the anxiety of an I: supplants with the "he", anonymous seducer of the first section, with hair softer than a bird, he feels himself canceled and sinks like a drowned man:

My broken heart, painful soul, broken hands, white hair, prisoners, the whole water is on me like a bare wound.

"White hair" represents the early aging of a man who has lost control of time, now experienced as the instrument of a generalized alteration of body and soul. The poem states a type of confidence:

*In a few seconds
The painter and his model
Will flee.
More virtues
Or less misfortunes
I see a statue
A kind of almond
A varnished medal
For the greatest annoyance (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur, 1926: 31).
A shadow...
All the misfortune of the world
And my love on it
Like a bare butt.
Tears of the eyes, the woes of the unhappy,*

*Uninteresting misfortunes and colorless tears.
He doesn't ask for anything, he's not insensitive,
He is sad in prison and sad if he is free.
It's a sad time, it's a dark night
Not to put a blind man outside. The forts
Sit down, the weak hold the power
And the king is standing near the seated queen.
Smiles and sighs, insults rot
In the mouths of the dumb and in the eyes of the cowards.
Take nothing: this burns, it flames!
Your hands are made for your pockets and foreheads.*

*

*A shadow...
All the misfortune of the world
And my love on it
Like a naked beast. (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur, 1926: 70).*

The eagle in last poem, which is like to “birds shaking their deadly feathers” in “Paris during the war” (Éluard, 1926: 108). These vicious birds represent the death.

*The beasts coming down from the burning suburbs,
The birds that shake their deadly feathers,
The terrible yellow skies, the naked clouds
Have celebrated this statue in all seasons.
She is beautiful, a living statue of love.
O midday snow, sun on all the bellies,
O sleep flames on an angel's face
And on all nights and on all faces.
Silence. The glaring silence of his dreams
Caress the horizon. His dreams are ours
And the hands of desire that she places on her sword
The delivered world intoxicates with hurricanes. (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur, 1926).*

It is one of the only birds in the collection whose species is specified, along with the swallows and owls "Denise said to wonders" (Éluard, 1926: 65).

*In the evening hung swallows. Owls
Shared the sun and weighed on the earth
Like the never tired of a loner
Lighter than life and sleeping upright.
The evening dragged knives on our heads.
Courage burned the women among us,
They cried, they cried like beasts,
The worried men were on their knees.
In the evening, nothing, a swallow sticking out,
A little wind, the leaves that don't fall any more,
A beautiful detail, a spell without virtues
For a look that has never understood space. (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur, 1926).*

Éluard obviously plays with the negative connotations which traditionally ascribed him: he is a raptor, a terrible hunter, disturbing by the size of his wings. The image of death is represented. The verb "fall" forms the image of the descent. The "grave" the "silence" and the verb "die" also cause a harmful and unpleasant effect. We can speak of an isomorphism because the image of bestiality and that of the fall overlap. Favoring the bird because of the richness of its connotations -without having had time to cite all the occurrences - we will not dwell on the other animals present in the collection: the butterfly, which shares with the bird the ability to fly, such as the one who “on a branch / patiently waits for winter”, “the construction game” (Éluard, 1926: 60).

*The man runs away, the horse falls,
The door cannot open,
The bird is silent, dig his grave,
Silence kills him.
A butterfly on a branch
Patiently wait for winter,
His heart is heavy, the branch leans,
The branch bends like a worm.
Why cry the dried flower
And why cry lilacs?
Why cry the amber rose?
Why cry tender thought?
Why look for the hidden flower
What if there is no reward?
- But for that, that and that. (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur,1926).*

The pun, by his own charge much appreciated by the poet, including when it is "easy", can also justify the mention of an animal name (Éluard,1926: 13).

*In a corner agile incest
Turn around the virginity of a little dress.
In a corner the sky delivered
To the thorns of the storm leaves white balls.
In a lighter corner of all eyes
We are waiting for the anxiety fish.
In a corner the summer green car
Still glorious and forever.
By the light of youth
Lamps turned on very late
The first shows her breasts which kill red insects. (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur,1926).*

The astonishing “red insects” on which the poem ends (“By the glow of youth / Lamps lit very late/ The first shows her breasts that are killed by red insects”) may suggest several hypotheses: a nod to the movie of Bunuel's 1929 *An Andalusian Dog* (the image of a hand dug from a hole full of ants); the allusion to a fantasy of sadistic violence; or the phonic and graphic transformation that the word “incest” undergoes from the first line, in the form of an anagram, the transposition of letters creating a new word from the graphic and phonic elements of another. Analyzing the expression “fish of anxiety” in “Max Ernst” (Éluard,1926: 13)

*In a corner agile incest
Turn around the virginity of a little dress.
In a corner the sky delivered
To the thorns of the storm leaves white balls.
In a lighter corner of all eyes
We are waiting for the anxiety fish.
In a corner the summer green car
Still glorious and forever.
By the light of youth
Lamps turned on very late
The first shows her breasts which kill red insects. (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur,1926).*

“In a corner clearer of all eyes / we are waiting for anguish fish”, Nicole Boulestreau (1985) suggests clarifying the meaning by reference to the expression “anguish pear”, which designates an ancient instrument of torture, a kind of small ball, sometimes provided with spikes, which, by springs located inside, came to open and widen; it was used buccally, anally or vaginally to punish homosexuals and women suspected of having had sexual intercourse with the devil: “The displacement of 'anguish pear', already catachretic, to “fish” refers, by the lexicon, to this ball which obstructs the throat, which blocks speech; but “fish” much less present in this poetry than “bird” has (in its rare

occurrences) a frequent relation to the word. We know that Éluard has retained as one of the most beautiful surreal images, that of Apollinaire: “Your tongue the goldfish in the jar of your voice” (Boulestreau, 1985: 63)

3. Nyctomorphic symbols:

Another group which show the fear of time are images of darkness and blackness, scary nights and black water are in this group. Elements like "snow" and "sun" are the symbols of purity but according to the expression of Ducasse (Isidore Lucien Ducasse, a French poet) this kind of snow which symbolizes the first radiance, is seen "put in the evil", in "Pablo Picasso", the poem published in literature in 1919, which says the end of the idyll and the pain of separation:

*The weapons of sleep have dug in the night
The wonderful furrows that separate our heads.
Through the diamond, all medals are false,
Under the bright sky, the earth is invisible.
The face of the heart has lost its colors
And the sun is looking for us and the snow is blind.
If we abandon it, the horizon has wings
And our glances in the distance dispel errors.*

The face of heart has lost its colors, a negative transformation which is perhaps an encrypted allusion to the lost paradise, and which returns the subject to nothing. The following verse stating: “the sun is looking for us and the snow is blind”; obscuration, discoloration and blindness, as well as deprivation of light, signal a vital loss of both the world and the self. Similarly, in “Perfect” the abandonment of colors is associated with the loss of the “face”. Therefore, it will be in its singularity, blindness, silence and “emptiness”.

*Everything is finally divided
Everything is distorted and lost
Everything breaks and disappears
Death without consequences.
Finally
Light no longer has nature
Gourmet star heat fan
She gives up the colors
She abandons her face
Silent blind man
It is everywhere similar and empty. (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur, 1926).*

The loss of love literally destroys the world, plunges it into the shadows and into the night, and even more makes it lose the essential quality that is visibility in “À Côté” (Éluard, 1926: 33).

*Trembling sun
Empty signal and clock fan signal
To the caresses united with one hand on the sky
To the birds opening the book of the blind
And from one wing after another between this time and the other
Drawing the horizon turning the shadows
Who limit the world when I have my eyes lowered? (A côté II), (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur, 1926).*

Everything, even the sun, becomes “empty signal”, and the birds, constantly valued in the imagination as light-conducting aerial agents (see Problematics / The bestiary), participate in the subject's desire to erase. The fall of the evening and the arrival of the night causes anxiety and fear in the subject. The street loses its potential for wandering to restrict itself to a closed place:

*Close your eyes black face
Close the street gardens
Intelligence and boldness
Boredom and tranquility
These sad evenings anytime*

*Glass and glass door.
Comfortable and sensitive
Light and fruit tree
The flowering tree the fruiting tree
Leaking. ("The sheep", p. 27), (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur, 1926).*

“Do not share it anymore”, which associates the “walls” with the jaws in the same negative connotation according to the logic of a vice which tightens extends to the whole world and not to the only closed space of the room, a negative transformation which affects both the space and the subject who is trapped there:

*In the evening of madness, naked and clear,
The space between things has the shape of my words
The shape of a stranger's words,
Of a vagabond who unties the belt of his throat
And who takes the lasso echoes.
Between trees and barriers,
Between walls and jaws,
Between this great trembling bird
And the hill that overwhelms him,
Space is shaped by my looks.
My eyes are useless,
The reign of dust is over,
The hair of the road has put on his rigid coat,
She doesn't leak anymore, I don't move anymore,
All the bridges are cut, the sky will never pass there
I can't see it anymore.
The world stands out from my universe. (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur, 1926: 89).*

This text reproduces the images of an opacification of an obscuration of the real, under the gaze deprived of light and life of an *I* who agrees to no longer see, and to secede from this world to which he used to give visibility and mobility: the free space is now crisscrossed with “barriers” and “walls”, the extent is limited to a narrow perimeter, the sky itself is no longer the natural environment of a happy circulation, the bridges are cut as they are with the woman, according to the colloquial expression which represents a rupture; no more crossing is authorized, any road sees itself deprived of its power of opening, become itself "rigid" Non-sharing replaces "the lived space of bestowal" (Richard, 1964: 108), which has become a devitalized environment where the circulation of the elements is denied; the “trembling bird” is the analog of an “I” which has lost its seat and its path, “afflicted” that it is then by the hill term to be heard in its material double sense, which is crushed by a weight, moral and obsessed with fatigue or pain.

4. Catamorphic symbols:

The image represents the collapse descend of the third group of the negative-valued daily system. This image illustrates a man driven out of paradise and, moreover, reminds the instability of life to the man. “Descend” expands the psychological impact that remains in our unconscious. The fear of descend is the initial fear. This fear is found as part of a wider spectrum. It is the fear which creates the dynamic element of terror of the dark, blackness and falling. Falling into blackness makes simple dramas for the unconscious imagination (Bachelard, 1948: 107).

Gilbert Duran believes that “the descend is the true essence of any black force, and in the cause of descent, Bachelard has a right to see a primeval and obvious metaphor. (Duran, 1992: 122). This metaphor relies on symbols of darkness and suffering, summarizing the gruesome dimensions of time and gives us a glimpse of appalling times (Bachelard, 1948: 353). The images of blood also belong to catamorphic symbols. In this section we will look at descend images.

Nostalgia is not an éluardien feeling: there is no regret for him. The past must remain in the past. The source of this rejection is fear (a very personal fear) of one's own past. Psychoanalysis would have to say: what is the event in the poet's childhood that marked him so much that he refuses any search for his lost time? We ignore it. Did he know it himself?

The fact remains that the imagination denotes a visceral dread in the face of "bad memory". It is the title of one of the poems in the collection *The Immediate Life*, which "leads to the depths of the mists on the past". The rise in time is perceived by Éluard as a descent into infernal darkness, height of misfortune for a poet who sees in the luminous

ascend the perfect metaphor for bliss. We would find more than one verse where memory is associated with the negative double image of fall and darkness. For instance:

*Memories of green wood, fog where I sink
In the absence of silence, "Your mouth with golden lips"
Your mouth with golden lips is not in me to laugh
And your halo words have such a perfect meaning
That in my nights of years, youth and death
I hear your voice vibrate in all the noises in the world
In this dawn of silk where the cold vegetates
Lust at risk regrets sleep,
In the hands of the sun all the awakening bodies
Shiver at the thought of finding their heart
Memories of green wood, fog where I sink
I closed my eyes on myself, I'm yours,
All my life listens to you and I can't destroy
The terrible leisure that your love creates for me. (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur, 1926).*

The "forest" is the immaturity of childhood and early youth, it is also cold sterility, because "forest" burns badly and gives more acrid smoke than invigorating heat. The past is therefore a dangerous time. Éluard who is a being of the free air and of the clear conscience, refuses to allow himself to be engulfed by an abyss which he feels populated by monsters. The past is also seen as the time of illusions and errors. We have said it and will say it again. The imagination of Éluard must be read as an indictment drawn up against itself. He makes himself implacable judge of the naive that he was, the one who did not think enough of others, who, lyrically, brewed the "pink ideas of fifteen years".

*If sad about his miscalculations
Let him write his numbers backwards
And falls asleep.
A more beautiful woman
And never found,
Looked for the rosy ideas of barely fifteen years old,
Laugh without knowing it, without a compliment
To the youth of time.
To the meeting
What was missing
The other day,
Of the bored woman,
Hands down,
Under a cloud.
The lamp lit up against the evils of the storm
In the heyday of August without failures,
The caress kissed the air, the cheeks of her partner,
Closed my eyes
And like the leaves in the evening
Getting lost on the horizon.
Also, with him, the "there was" he rarely calls a happy continuation:
There were multifaceted colors
The swamp borders
Everyday time
In an abandoned room a failed room
An empty room
Immediate Life, "Evil". (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur, 1926).*

Totally, the past is the time of the weak, "the tired, the desperate". The regret of yesterday is, for Éluard, only fear of living in the present and desire to relapse into an unconscious of irresponsible. In his moments of disarray, he lets himself go to evoke a past of ease, and once again, poor Gala is put on the bench:

*... I regret (...) the time also when I was blind
and mute in front of the incomprehensible universe and the*

*inconsistent agreement system that you proposed to me.
Immediate Life, "Shared Nights", I. (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur, 1926).*

To be locked up is, therefore, to be isolated and to be in the dark. It is also sinking properly, speaking of falling into the dark. For Éluard, the fence, the night and the fall are inseparable reasons. From there, an instinctive repugnance for the earth and water, elements mainly perceived in the imagination as abysses where the being risks being forever engulfed:

*I was like a boat sinking in closed water
Like a dead man I only had one thing
I made a fire, the azure having abandoned me,
A fire to be his friend,
A fire to bring me into the winter night,
A fire to live better.
I gave her what the day had given me
Forests, bushes, wheat fields, vines,
The nests and their birds, the houses and their keys,
Insects, flowers, furs, parties.
I lived at the mere sound of crackling flames,
The only scent of their warmth;
I was like a boat sinking in closed water,
Like a dead man I had only one element. (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur, 1926).*

The sudden disappearance of Nusch (Éluard's love) arouses in the desperate a desire for annihilation which takes the same forms. It is interesting to remember that "to live here" is a act of youth since it dates of 1918. The poet had kept it in his drawers. Twenty-eight years later, Éluard finds the same images to express his distress which is not indisputable proof in the phobia of terrestrial and aquatic abysses is a constitutive datum of the personality.

*[...] I would like to see my forehead
Like a pebble far in the ground
Like a boat melted in the water
Time overflows, "Living and dead separated". (Éluard, Capital de le Douleur, 1926).*

We could increase the cases. Let us confine ourselves to making this observation. The descent into the earth is always conceived as an "earth"; the descent into the waters, like a drowning. In the Éluard imagination, earth and water. Indeed, as we will see below, Éluard especially dreads dormant and/ or suspicious depth water. The beneficial water for him will be river or stream. They are fundamentally bad elements, they carry death.

5. CONCLUSION:

This research represents a world of symbolic images which circling around one axis: fear of time. The main feature of the language of Paul Éluard is its visual metaphor and image. This feature makes the abstract concept of time a concrete and tangible subject. The abundance of the metaphorical process in Paul's language suggests that time plays an important role in this great poet's imagination. By studying part of the imagination of this surrealist poet, we have concluded that two different concepts of time appear in his imagination: some images express a universal fear that, by facing time and poet, creates images which represent and keep the man away from the current of time. Such images transform time into a dynamic element in Éluard imagination.

REFERENCES:

1. Abbassi, Ali (2012). *Imaginary System of Structures from Gibert Durand's View, Function and Methodology of Imagination*. Scientific and Cultural Publications, Tehran.
2. Bachelard, Gaston. (1948). *La Terre et les Reveries de la Volonte*. Jose Corti Library, Paris.
3. Boulestreau, Nicole. (1985). *La Poesie de Paul Eluard: la rupture et le partage, 1913-1936*, Paris, Klincksieck, "Bibliotheque du xx siècle.
4. Chelebourg, Christian. (2000). *L'imaginaire littéraire, Des archétypes à la poétique du sujet*. Nathan, Paris.
5. Durand, Gilbert. (1992). *Les Structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire, Introduction à l'archétypologie générale*. Dunod, Paris.
6. Eluard, Paul. (1926). *Capital de la Douleur*. Gallimard, paris.
7. Richard, Jean-Pierre. (1964). *Onze etudes sur la poesie modern, Ed. Du Seuil, "Pirres vives", p. 105-139*, Paris.