



ANNA CZARNOWUS

Uniwersytet Śląski w Katowicach
Wydział Filologiczny

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Ekomodernizmy [*Ecomodernisms*] is the second volume of the Green Literary History series. The volume editors claim that the series has been inspired both by green cultural studies that originated in the United States and by the tradition of nature writing. The ecological turn of the 1970s led to the development of ecocritical humanities, and this volume of articles illustrates the necessity of practising these humanities also on the ground of Polish literature and in the literary periods previous to the present-day one.

Izabela Poniatowska studies Polish literary history and criticism in the latter half of the nineteenth century and discovers that interdisciplinary research leads to extending the range of ecocritical issues that are worth discussing. She argues that this results in more objectivity in studying culture. When reading texts written in the nineteenth century, she realises that literary history has come full circle as the topics analysed these days were already present in criticism over a century ago.

Agata Zawiszewska characterises the work of the Society for Animal Care in its Warsaw branch in the last decade of the nineteenth century. She emphasises the modern dimension of postulating that animal rights should be observed and elaborates on the priorities of the Society. She places the emancipation activist Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmit in the centre of her attention, since Kuczalska-Reinschmit was also an important activist who participated in the activities of the Society for Animal Care. She believed in both the importance of women's

rights and that of animals' rights. Yet another role that Kuczalska-Reinschmit's activities played was that of educating working class people about the significance of limiting the suffering of animals.

Anna Wietecha explores the world of flowers and animals in Bolesław Prus's *Emancipants*. She argues that even though the world of nature functions on the margins there, it provides a counterbalance for the human world. She calls *Emancipants* a *summa* of knowledge of humans who lived in the cities in the latter half of the nineteenth century and of those who lived in the country. References to flowers and animals appear in the parts of the plot that discuss the most important characters in the novel. They exemplify a general relationship between the humans in question and the surrounding reality. This is how the characters can be defined, and they can be contrasted with one another on the basis of their attitude to nature.

Dariusz Piechota analyses Eliza Orzeszkowa's *By the Niemen River*, where he searches for traces of the literature of ecological justice. He views the novel protagonists as characters who inscribe themselves into the continuum "from empathy to cruelty." Orzeszkowa was fascinated with the world of plants herself, which led her to enumerating the types and names of flowers in the novel in question. All the descriptions of places there abound in references to the world of nature. This is a feminist gesture, since Orzeszkowa overcomes the limitations that are observable in the writing by men.

Iwona E. Rusek reads Waclaw Berent's less known novel by presenting metaphorical images of animals. The text satirises journalism at the end of the nineteenth century and the bourgeois liberalism of the time. The language of the novel is full of imagery that refers to the world of animals.

Ireneusz Gielata returns to the idea of a literary character as a "hollow man" affected by modernity. He focuses on flowers and insects in the work by Herman Broch, Anatole France, and Maurice Maeterlinck, and notices the following regularity in literary texts: their authors wish to create an ethical counterpoint for the all-embracing modernity. What they discuss in great detail are insects.

Agnieszka Trzeźniewska studies the concept of a "small world." She reads Maurice Maeterlinck's "insect trilogy" and notices there a questioning of human superiority in the ecosystem. Furthermore, she observes the existence of parallels between humans and animals in the texts in question. She relates this to the discoveries in biology, which allowed both scientists and writers to see that such animals as insects embodied the concept of difference.

Anna Jeziorkowska-Polakowska interprets Franciszka Arnsztajnowa's *Wspomnienia Meranu* [*Memories of Merano*] from a green perspective. Arnsztajnowa was a poet and independence activist of Jewish origin, whose poetry may be subject to "green reading." Jeziorkowska-Polakowska grounds her interpretation very firmly in the ecocritical approach to literature and concludes that

Arnsztajnowa's works are Romantic in spirit and can be perceived through the lens of geopoetics.

Hanna Żbikowska discusses Tadeusz Nowak's use of the nature/culture dichotomy, which is problematised by complex relationships in the space between humans. Nowak's poetry is immersed in his experience of a peasant child who grows out of the childhood. The work is close to magic realism and locates humans among animals.

Aleksandra Smusz departs from the anthropological perspective in favour of studying animal-like characteristics of Bruno Schulz's short stories. In Schulz's stories there are as many as around 120 animal species represented or mentioned. Most of them appear either as physical characters or in metaphors, but there are also those that are indispensable for defining human characters.

Aleksandra Kronenberg moves within the field of geopoetics and supports her arguments with Kenneth White's theory. She emphasises the importance of the ecocritical turn and argues that it primarily stems from political initiatives. She also tests the usage of geopoetics on the ground of Polish criticism.

The editors of the volume declare that they are interested in ways of defining and perceiving nature, and they focus on Polish and other modernisms as a literary period. Again this proves that presenting nature and the environment as ahistorical phenomena is incorrect. Other themes that are of interest for the authors are perception of the natural environment, portrayal of animals in their natural habitat, and relations between humans and the environment.



