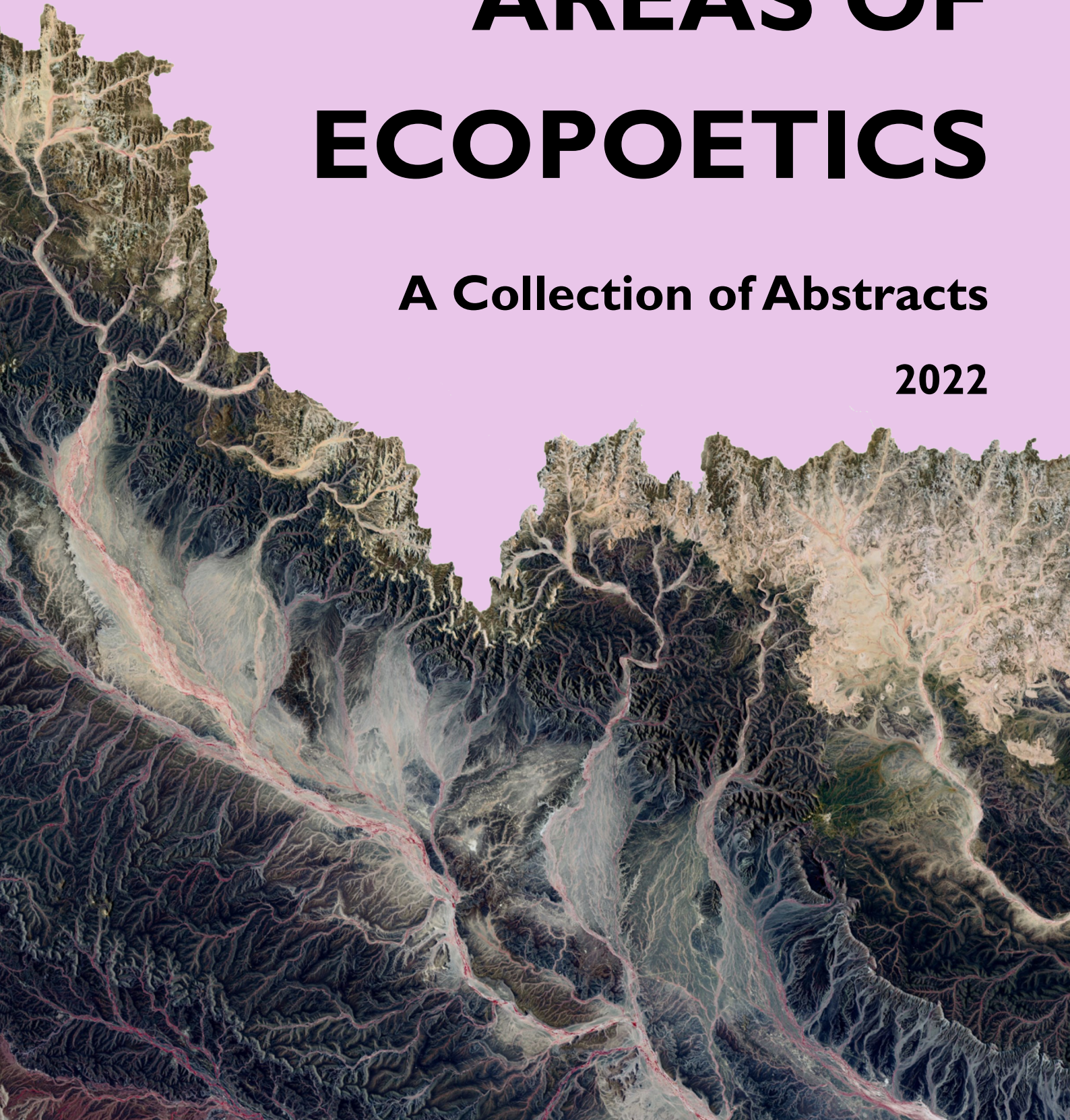


International Conference
The Broadening of Poetics 3

AREAS OF ECOPOETICS

A Collection of Abstracts

2022



UNIVERSITY
OF WARSAW

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AREAS OF ECOPOETICS

A Collection of Abstracts

from the International Conference *The Broadening of Poetics 3*

Mgr. Bogumiła Suwara, PhD.

Institute of World Literature SAS

Bratislava 2023



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POST-CONFERENCE REPORT

The international interdisciplinary scientific conference Areas of EcoPoetics — organized as part of the Broadening of Poetics conference series — took place on 24th and 25th of October 2022, both in person and online. The event was realized on the basis of an international agreement to promote cooperation in scientific research between the Institute of World Literature of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Polish Literature of the University of Warsaw. The event was organized by Ewa Szczęsna, Weronika Lipszyc and Anna Tenczyńska within the University of Warsaw and Bogumiła Suwara within the Institute of World Literature of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. Due to its international character, two individual panels were held simultaneously during both days of the conference.

The aim of the conference was to explore ecoPoetics as a tool providing insight into the relationship between humans and nature, or between humans and other living and non-living entities. That ecoPoetics is an interdisciplinary concept used in different discourses — whether it be artistic, media or scientific — can ultimately be seen in the example of poetry highlighting the destructive impact of humans on the environment where the scope of ecoPoetics largely exceeds human sciences, as in the case of bioethical questions that are often raised in the context of posthumanism.

In the Slovak panel, an unfavorable state of bioethics in the Slovak internet space was outlined as well as the ambiguity that appears even when regarding something as precise as the definition of the term. The intermingling of bioethics and eco-concepts with fiction was pointed out in several lectures dealing with literary works, such as J. M. Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals* (1999), Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* (2021), or Kateřina Tučková's *White Water* (2022).

Another subject of analysis was ecological discourse from the perspective of translation, language, and art along with names such as Justus Moser, Martin

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Heidegger, or Herbert Gruhl mentioned in the discussions. Because of the gradual move away from the anthropocentric view not only in art, such literary works were presented which rethink questions of social consciousness, the technologization of the world, posthumanism, and existentialism.

It has become almost a rule that if an author wants to decentralize the human being in their work and instead emphasize that human lives are closely interconnected with the environment, they put a certain non-human entity at the narrative's forefront or emphasize the relationship between the human being and such an entity. Thus, fiction often draws on the approach taken by Cary Wolfe and Rosi Braidotti, who critically deconstruct the concepts of posthumanism in a so-called relational perspective. This phenomenon could be traced in the conference lecture dealing with the symbiosis of human and non-human forms in Ian McEwan's *Machines Like Me* (2019), but also in lectures focusing on interspecies community in the works of Franz Hohler or in the analysis of *The Glasgow Climate Pact* (2021). Regardless of whether a given analyzed work focuses on ecology, bioethical issues, or contains elements of posthumanism, each in its own way rejects anthropocentrism. Fictional characters of humans have been relegated to the background by the author, thus avoiding the creation of a utopian image of homo sapiens as the savior of the Earth. Instead, it stresses out negative impact of humans on the environment or other animal species. Furthermore, a different utopian narrative emerges, especially in papers presenting posthuman and dystopian works. As a consequence of the departure from anthropocentric perception, new ethical practices will arise in a society intertwined with human and non-human entities. And it is precisely these ethical practices and moral dilemmas emerging in a fictional posthuman society that will need to be addressed and resolved in the real life as the technological progress advances.

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Overall, the conference uncovered themes far beyond the imaginary world depicted in the literary works. The ecocritical analysis showed that environmentalism is only one of several impending issues in contemporary social eco-discourse. On the one hand, the critique of anthropocentrism as a central concept of ecocriticism rewrites the philosophical perspective from which humans are viewed; on the other hand, this same change of perspective is caused by technological developments raising bioethical questions in relation not only to humans and animals, but also to emerging artificial intelligence. It is fair to ask, then, to what extent the moral dilemmas in the stories of given literary works should be brought into philosophical, political, medical or legal discussion in the real world.

Adam Škrovan

Institute of World Literature, Slovak Academy of Sciences

LANDSCAPE AS A POETIC METAPHOR IN THE PROSE OF FLANNERY O'CONNOR

Simona Bajáková

Comenius University in Bratislava

Landscape in literature illuminates narrative intentions that might otherwise remain hidden from the critical reader. Pastoral nature and landscape are generally considered mere settings, which have their well-established role in building a traditional narrative. According to environmental literary criticism, there is another way to grasp landscape in fiction. When the author intentionally bends their language towards natural phenomena, they create layers in the narrative by adding a complex spacial metaphor that can raise ecological or even anagogical questions. My presentation will discuss the shape of the landscape metaphor in later works by American author Flannery O'Connor. I will describe O'Connor's landscape as a poetic metaphor (Kessler, 1986) and discuss the repercussions of this theoretical framing according to ecocriticism.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY

Xi Chen

Polish Academy of Sciences

Our world is faced with many environmental problems. Those problems are urgent and should be the major focuses of our international efforts. However, these ecological emergencies are often underestimated, or in worse cases ignored. I am from China, where the citizens are enjoying rapid economic growth and increasing material abundance. At the same time, Chinese people are living under the extreme dangers of environmental deterioration. Charles Mills (2016) offers two categories of social contract theory: the descriptive aspect and the normative aspect. The descriptive dimension regards the contract as "a way of thinking, at a high level of abstraction, of the creation and ongoing workings of the society and social-political institutions"; the normative dimension of the contract is "a means for generating/codifying normative judgments on morality, our political obligations to the government, and social justice". Based on the normative aspect of social contract theory, I think environmental concerns are closely associated with our common goodness, and should be parts of our morality, social justice, and political obligations. Thus, the natural environment is included in the contract. This paper explains the relations between environmentalism and social contract theory. My argument is two-folded: 1) liberal traditions do not engender consensus for environmentalism; 2) both republicanism and cosmopolitanism are limited in promoting environmentalism.

"THE ECOLOGICAL NICHE". THE RIGHT-WING POLISH POETRY OF THE 21ST CENTURY AND ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS

Marcin Czardybon

University of Warsaw

The tone of the ecological discourse — both in Poland and abroad — in recent decades has been given by researchers and authors who are situated closer to the left side of the political scene. This should come as no surprise. The environmental effects of the anthropocentric understanding of reality, proper, according to the prevailing doxa, for right-wing/conservative thinking have been (and still are) subject to consistent criticism — for example within the framework of considerations around the concept of the Anthropocene. However, the rudiments of ecological discourse and ecological anxiety remain heterogeneous in the context of their ideological subsoil (to mention, for example, such figures as Justus Moser, Martin Heidegger, or Herbert Gruhl). This anxiety is now also present in various ideologically discursive modes. That is why, I think, it is worth paying attention to how the concern for the "existential whole" manifests itself in the works of contemporary writers associated with the right-wing side of the Polish political scene. The aim of my speech will be an attempt to reconstruct and critically analyze this vision of human relations with nature (and to depict the fate of its animal and plant "citizens"), which emerge from the literary texts of, among others, Krzysztof Koehler, Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz, Wojciech Wencel, Jan Polkowski, and Przemysław Dakowicz.

TOWARDS A BORDERLESS COMMUNITY. THE INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN ACTORS IN FRANZ HOHLER'S STORY *DIE RÜCKEROBERUNG* AND HIS NOVELLA *DIE STEINFLUT*

Natalia Czudek

University of Wrocław

In the collective consciousness, there has been established an understanding of community as an association of people linked by their emotional ties as well as their common identity and tradition. However, this concept is being reconsidered in view of the changes taking place in the world today, the main consequence of which is a disturbed or even decentralized anthropocentric position of the human being as the measure of all things. The aim of this presentation is to share the results of ongoing research into the creation of a community of human and non-human actors in selected works by the Swiss writer Franz Hohler, namely the short story *Die Rückeroberung* (1982) and the novella *Die Steinflut* (1998). Using the tools provided by ecocriticism and Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory, I turn my attention to the non-human actors that co-construct reality by exploring the relationships between community members, the causal forces within networks, and human subjectivity. A preliminary analysis leads to the conclusion that the contact with non-human actors in both works by Franz Hohler is an impulse to reflect on the nature of present or future community relations and the deconstruction of interspecies boundaries. By placing non-humans at the center of events, the author reminds his readers that humans are not the only subjects affecting reality and that their lives are closely intertwined with their surroundings.

PLANT-PEOPLE CONSPIRACIES IN THE PLANTHROPOCENE

Martyna Dziadek

Jagiellonian University

Since E. F. Stoermer and P. J. Crutzen proposed the concept of Anthropocene in 2000, we could experience a real semantic boom of similar concepts with the suffix "-cene". Steve Mentz points to the importance of these multiple terminologies as long as they decode the categories of human mastery and agency rooted in the very concept of the Anthropocene. During my speech, I would like to propose a new episteme which is called Planthropocene: a hybrid of Anthropos and a Planta, as an exemplification of the interspecies connections between humans and plants. Plants produce the oxygen, which is so essential for life on Earth. This is enough reason for the plant kingdom to be invited into the concentric assemblage of relations — the proposition of a plants-and-their-humans hybrid marks out the trajectory for relational co-existence with our vegetal relatives in the face of the climate crisis. The leitmotif of the lecture will be an attempt to establish a plant contract (Gibson), consisting in letting nature speak through science and art, which highlight the communicative abilities of plants.

IS THERE A CORRELATION BETWEEN COGNITIVE AND MORAL ENHANCEMENT IN HUMANS?

Tomáš Gašpar

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava

In discussions regarding biotechnological enhancement of human moral capacities, one question is often repeated: what exactly is meant by the moral capacities that are to be enhanced? At first, what mostly emerges in discussions is the proposal to modify emotional capacities, with empathy and altruistic behavior being the main candidates. A wave of criticism came with the suggestion that emotions cannot be responsible for our moral reasoning. There is a vast array of cognitive and rational components of the human psyche upon which we form moral judgments, justify actions, and construct ethical systems. The authors who initially proposed improving morality through modification of emotions had to eventually accept the aforementioned criticism, although they did not abandon their original idea. And so the discussion of human moral enhancement began to resemble a much earlier discussion, namely that of cognitive enhancement. Although until then, modification of the actual moral reasoning had not been considered within the framework of technological cognitive enhancement. So are our moral capacities, our moral reasoning and action ultimately capable of improvement by improving our emotional capacities, or by improving our cognitive capacities? Or both?

LEBDA/SEBALD: TO BE FROM THE WORLD OF CATASTROPHE

Mateusz Kaliński

University of Warsaw

The paper aims to show and define the thematic similarity between the prose of W. G. Sebald and Małgorzata Lebda's poetry. In a broad sense, the works of both authors represent entanglement in the non-anthropocentric relation to the world, which I intend to present in the light of "ecopoetics of reparation". Coined by Enda McCaffrey, this term might help to describe Sebald's and, by analogy, Lebda's turn to ecopoetics in hope of rethinking the experience of one's trauma. Both in the works of the presented authors, the correlation between personal complexes and global traumas is determined by the logic of hauntology, out of joint catastrophe — looming not only in the past but also on the horizon — that is reorganizing the experience of reality.

THE INTERVENTIONS AGAINST HUMAN NATURE IN UTOPIAN SOCIETES IN LITERATURE

Tomáš Károly

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava

From the start of reading some sci-fi utopian literature, the reader is confronted with some mistrust which is present in these utopian images. The reader is recognizing a main factor (e.g., suppressing of emotions, eugenics, human enhancement, discrimination of others, overestimating machines...), which is artificially added into the social system. The factor that this reader recognized is still something against the human nature. It's only a matter of time that this intervention against the human nature will lead to a bloodshed. It is imperative that the scenarios of these fictional societies be analogical to historical and contemporary systems applied to social praxis. The reading of the utopian literature is helpful to recognize threats to the current social systems which any ideal schematism may lead from utopia to dystopia.

"ECOPOETRY", "GREEN POETRY" OR "ENVIRONMENTAL/ECOLOGICAL POETRY"? AN OVERVIEW OF POSITIONS AND NAMING PROPOSALS

Katarzyna Koza

University of Warsaw

In the 1990s, the accepted definitions of romantic nature poetry proved insufficient and the category of "nature writer" began to be too restrictive, so the existing canon began to be rewritten. On this occasion, a new concept has appeared — ecopoetry, or "nature poetry", which is characterized by ecological (self)awareness. In my presentation I would like to look at the development of this concept and alternative nomenclature. I will review emerging proposals in English-speaking countries — from Lawrence Buell, Terry Gifford and Leonard Scigaj through J. Scott Bryson, David W. Gilcrest, John Shoptaw, Jonathan Skinner to Sarah Nolan or Jonathan Bate. My presentation will be an overview, and the goal will remain to develop clear concepts in relation to foreign discussions.

ECOCRITICISM, TRANSLATION, AND ONOMATOPOEIA. TRANSLATING LITERARY SOUNDSCAPES IN POLISH RENDITIONS OF KENNETH GRAHAME'S NOVEL *THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS*

Agata Klichowska

Children's Book Museum

Despite the growing attention onomatopoeia receives in linguistics, it remains peripheral in translation studies. While the researchers focus on the semantic, phonological, and expressive features of onomatopoeias, their ecopoetic function in literary soundscapes remains neglected. Therefore, this presentation makes an attempt to open an ecocritical dialogue between the evolving field of acoustic ecology and the emerging paradigm of eco-translation. I seek to demonstrate that not only linguistic competence and creativity, but also awareness of the sonic environment is needed in translation. For this purpose, an ecocritical methodology will be tested in a case study of onomatopoeia translations in three Polish versions of Kenneth Grahame's novel *The Wind in the Willows* (Godlewska, 1938; Drozdowski, 2009; Placa, 2014), which represents the Golden Age of Anglophone children's literature. This theoretical framing will be a starting point for a discussion of how eco-translation may preserve the diversity of sounds in both the target language and the actual soundscape.

DYSTOPIAS PAINTED WITH ASHES AND COFFEE — ABOUT THE LITERARY FILM AFFINITIES OF THE PICTURE

Anna Kujawska-Kot

University of Warsaw

The paper will reflect on the possible dystopian worlds described by Cormac McCarthy and filmed by John Hillcoat. The novel *The Road* uses a cinematic way of framing the image and an interesting use of filters and apertures. How and with what objects do the heroes experience images of the agonal world? Is there still room for a sensual relationship of man with (residual) nature, with the gifts of nature? Or is it already a mediated relationship (birds in the book)? What is the function of traces (own and other people's)? Is man compared to an animal humanized in a dystopian world? Other issues that will be examined are: determining the functions of monochromatic colors in a literary and film work; reference to the technique of painting with coffee in the interpretation of Hillcoat's work. In order to expose the theme of ecological tragedy and at the same time outline a variant of the ecocentric way of thinking, the paper will also include references (on the basis of a compositional framework) to Marie Pavlenko's novel *And when the desert disappears*.

BIOETHICAL ISSUES IN FICTIONAL NARRATIVES — KAZUO ISHIGURO'S *KLARA AND THE SUN*

Ivan Lacko

Comenius University in Bratislava

This contribution seeks to discuss the narrative approach in Kazuo Ishiguro's 2021 novel *Klara and the Sun* whose first-person narrator, Klara, is not human, but an artificial being, designed to be a social companion to people. Applying a series of texts addressing bioethical issues, such as Kantian autonomy as discussed by Louise Campbell (2017) and the considerations about virtue(s) and moral justification presented by Tom L. Beauchamp and David DeGrazia (2004), the paper will endeavor to contemplate how (bio)ethical issues become prominent in Ishiguro's narrative.

ANCIENT MARINER BIG READ AS A MULTIMEDIA ECO-READING OF S.T. COLERIDGE'S BALLAD

Marcin Leszczyński

University of Warsaw

The paper analyses a multimedia project *Ancient Mariner Big Read* which is a contemporary interpretation of S.T. Coleridge's ballad *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798). Coleridge's text tends to be read as a depiction of a deliberate destruction of nature by a human and subsequent reprisals from the natural world. *Ancient Mariner Big Read* is constructed in a similar vein, presenting 40 fragments of Coleridge's ballad, recited by celebrities and accompanied by contemporary pieces of art, most of which emphasize a motif of the human influence on the natural environment.

THE RESORT CITY NEAR THE EXCLUSION ZONE: THE PECULIARITIES OF KYIV URBANISM BY ATTYLA MOHYLNYI

Wiaczesław Łewycki

National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine

Emphasizing images of nature is one of the important trends in the artistic understanding of Kyiv. It is noticeably revealed in the poetry of Attyla Mohylnyi, a Ukrainian urbanist of the generation of the 1980s. This decade as a whole is of interest, because it manifests the transition from the established idea of the capital of Ukraine — the center of harmony to the awareness of the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster for the city. The purpose of the study is to highlight the features of Kyiv's naturalness, represented in Mohylnyi's writings. Corresponded problems are considered in the actual figurative (anthropogenic loci are a continuation of nature), historiosophical (Kyiv is likened to the soil, where the "seeds" of various ethnic cultures are brought), as well as mimetic aspects (organicity is accentuated thanks to the spontaneous form of free verse).

AREAS OF RATIONALITY. HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE CLIMATE CRISIS?

Weronika Lipszyc

University of Warsaw

The climate crisis is a phenomenon that is difficult to grasp within any discourse: due to its multi-faceted nature, it can only be described from a transdisciplinary perspective, and an exhaustive approach within one field turns out to be problematic. The language used to express it also raises doubts. The enormous amount of literature that has been written over the past few decades offers us completely different solutions: from escapism to immersion in a catastrophe. Which choice (will the election) proves to be the most legitimate? These doubts seem particularly relevant in relation to the scientific literature, which tries to be intersubjectively understandable and submit to methodological and rhetorical rigor. However, given the importance and urgency of the climate challenges, it seems necessary to reform the scientific idiom so that it can be heard outside the narrow circle of specialists. In this paper, I will try to look at the most important aspects of building a reflection on the climate crisis.

PLAYING, DEVOURING AND GETTING OUT OF TROUBLE, OR WHAT FUTURE THE COMMON ACTIVITY OF HUMANS AND BACTERIA MAY HAVE

Sabina Macioszek

University of Opole

Bacteria: people's allies in the fight against certain types of waste — plastic garbage or oil spills. They help in restoring priceless works of art. Their promising "musicality" in the field of medical science has recently been found. Most film productions and literary texts present them one-sidedly — as undesirable, dangerous organisms. Should that change? Bacteria and humans, often juxtaposed at opposite ends of evolution, more and more often collaborate in various scientific and artistic projects. The common future built on the basis of these cooperation promises to be quite successful. In the presentation, I will present selected examples of the latest research and artistic activities in which bacteria are active agents that change the existing reality.

MORE-THAN-HUMAN LANGUAGE. POSTHUMANIZATION OF THE LANGUAGE OF THE GLASGOW CLIMATE PACT TEXT

Maria Pieniżek

Jagiellonian University

"The limits of our language are the limits of our imagination" — in pursuit of real change, we must begin by changing the language. The research problem explored in the presentation is the experimental posthumanization of the language and transmission of selected excerpts from Glasgow Climate Pact, with the intention of including non-human actors in the discourse of the document. This allows us to highlight their agency and dignity, which we take as a *sine qua non* condition for moving away from the exploitative way of organizing the world in the Anthropocene. The aim of the study is to consider the posthumanization of official language as a tool to help respond to the challenges of the cluster of crises of the Anthropocene, in particular the climate-ecological crisis and — the crisis of imagination. The presentation will feature excerpts from the original and excerpts from the post-humanized.

FROM INTERFACE GARDENS TO ENVIRONMENTALISM: HOW NATURE WAS USED, ABUSED AND RESCUED IN DIGITAL LITERATURE

Mariusz Pisarski

University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów

The early days of the digital revolution were abundant in spatial metaphors: cyberspace was a city to live in and network with your global neighbors, the Internet was an ocean inviting us each day to do some surfing, and the literary hypertext was a garden of forking paths. On their own, these conceptual metaphors present harmless, neutral or even friendly attitude towards nature. However, combined with notions of virtuality and immateriality of the digital, they can relegate reflection on environmental impact of digital technologies to the background of public and academic discourse. Whispernet, the cloud, the Metaverse — names and labels for digital services obscure the presence of server farms, digital waste, and energy consumption needed to get a smartphone to every person on the planet. When hypertext garden is destroyed by information highway, digital art is no longer innocent. In this paper I reflect on environmental awareness in the Eco-poetics section of the journal *Electronic Book Review*. Founded in the early nineties, EBR has been a leading place for critical theory on the Web for over 20 years. A reflection on the evolution of ideas and a change in circulation of major descriptive metaphors can shed a light on how the discourse surrounding digital technologies changed from the initial optimism of the pioneers of the digital frontier ("electronic book does not need to be printed so it is eco-friendly") to the anxieties of the Anthropocene perspective.

A STORY OF A POLISH GIRL AGNIESZKA HAVING AN ABORTION AND FINDING REFUGE IN MONASTERY OF HERETICAL SISTERS IN BOHEMIA

Pavol Rankov

Comenius University in Bratislava

Using the method of narrative analysis, we studied how the Czech writer Kateřina Tučková approached the topic of abortion in her novel *Bílá Voda* (2022); we used a discourse analysis of the interviews the author had given to the media (newspapers, journals, websites, radio) after the novel was published. In her media interviews, Tučková claims to support feminism and admits that feminism is also present in her novels. She criticizes the Catholic Church from a feminist standpoint, because the Church does not give women enough space to express their opinions. In fact, the main idea of this novel is that the church needs women priests. In her media interviews the writer even claims that in the novel *Bílá Voda* she criticizes the church for the authoritative way in which the church treats women's decisions about their bodies and pregnancy. This author's statement repeated in her interviews is highly paradoxical, because pro-choice arguments are completely absent in the text of the novel. We looked for psychological explanations of the contradiction between findings of the narrative analysis of the novel and the discourse analysis of the author's interviews. T. Bastick describes the intuitive creativity that regresses the ego of the author. C. G. Jung explains that the poet is only a tool and therefore we cannot expect her to interpret her own work. We consider these psychological explanations only hypothetical.

THE ROLE OF LITERATURE AND THE ETHICS OF WRITING PRACTICES IN ROB NIXON'S CONCEPT OF *SLOW VIOLENCE*

Michał Piasecki

University of Warsaw

The concept of "slow violence" created by Rob Nixon has become an important part of the vocabulary of eco-criticism. Nixon called "slow violence" a time and space-delayed way of manifesting the effects of environmental disasters. In my article I would like to look at the epistemological capacity attributed to literary language by Nixon, which makes literature one of the important responses to the "lack of drama and spectacle" problems of local environmental crises.

SYMPATHETICS, ETHICS AND POETRY IN COETZEE'S *THE LIVES OF ANIMALS*

Andrej Rozemberg

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava

Despite Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals* (1999) being arguably the first work of fiction which, being situated at the crossroads of philosophy and (meta)fiction, consciously gives priority to 'sympathetic imagination' over argumentative strategy (ch. Philosophers and Animals), only a few early works have addressed the implications and paradoxes entailed by such a change or a shift in narrative strategy. At least two reasons for such a shift can be identified in Coetzee's text. One of the reasons is the author's conviction that the language of poetry can do what is not within the power of the abstract and denatured language of philosophy and science — to take place of the other subject (according to Coetzee's protagonist, the basic premise of the shared bodily experience that allows one to find oneself in the body of an animal is "exposure to death"). By contrast, the language of philosophers, for whom poetic art has been a rival since the times of Plato, and for whom to know means to listen to the universal, to the logos – what gives the soul its fixed contours (eidos), which protects it from contradictions, indeterminacy and ambiguity of a poetic image — is a place to which the animal simply has no access. The second reason for Coetzee's explicit rejection of reason (rational argumentation) in the matter at hand is his inability to achieve the required emotional and ethical response: I can be theoretically convinced that one is suffering and yet be unaffected by their suffering. In what follows, I will attempt to explain why both reasons are problematic, and why Coetzee's rejection of reason is in fact a rejection of a certain type of rationality, namely the one that identifies reason with a criterion of moral status. At the same time, I argue that a poetic, empathetic approach in regard to the animal question can often prove inadequate, especially in those cases where we cannot simply apply our moral sense, say when confronted with a robotic animal from Boston Dynamics, a humanoid from Spielberg's *A.I.* or with unknown biotic forms.

THE WORLD OF NATURE IN THE WORKS OF ELIZA ORZESZKOWA — AN AUTONOMOUS OR A PATRIOTIC STORY?

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Eliza Orzeszkowa's love for nature, especially in the patriotic context, is a fact well known to researchers. However, the author of *Nad Niemnem* explored this topic in other ways, for example in the collection *Chwile* or the novel *Ad Astra*. By analyzing these two, I investigate to what extent it is possible to find in Orzeszkowa's work an autonomous story about nature and its relationship with man. Is it possible to go beyond the patriotic context? Using the close-reading method and the context of the author's journalistic texts and epistolography, I recreate her strategy of perceiving and telling about nature. On this basis, I prove that Orzeszkowa grants the world of nature a lot of autonomy as a being of value in itself. At the same time, however, this perspective does not completely exclude the patriotic context, which remains complementary to it.

NARRATIVE BIOETHICS... AND BEYOND!

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Bioethics as an interdisciplinary field of research has reached, among other things, into the field of literature and criticism (M. Talbot, B. Mepham). In this context, narrative bioethics is particularly well-known, the beginnings of which have been associated with the penetration of structuralism and narrative theories into the sphere of humanities and social disciplines since the middle of the last century. The main contribution of narrative bioethics was the comparison of rational argumentation, taken from legal discourse, with fictional narration and tolerance of emotionality. Since the field of literature and criticism has also been influenced by other methods and theories, it is high time to start investigating the degree of the response they caused within bioethics, narrative bioethics theoretical dominants of postmodernism, posthumanism and other trends (for example: feminism and gender studies). The first insight into this issue will be an examination of similarities and differences in the presentation of biotechnology in the area of: 1.) modern textbooks on bioethics, where topics related to the development of biotechnology appear: artificial life, genetic manipulations, environmental systems, and anthropocentrism; 2.) representations of biotechnologies in bioart and in art criticism (cultural and critical posthumanism). The second insight will be connected to the investigation of the presence or absence of bioethical topics in bioethical manuals in the contexts: art@science, speculative science fiction, and especially the reflection of the conditions for public debates dealing with the impact of biotechnology, as well as forms of dialog with society about direction (and necessity) of biotechnological impact on homo sapiens. Especially in connection with climate changes and changes in the environmental conditions of the life on Earth.

BIOETHICS IS NOT APPLIED ETHICS

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Bioethics is often considered as an example of one of several applied ethics and tends to be classified at the level of such applied professional ethics as medical or health care ethics. In this report, I will show that bioethics is a transdisciplinary research area defined by a range of issues in connection with human and non-human life rather than by the boundaries of medicine. Therefore, bioethical discourse involves not only ethics, but also philosophy, including ontology and metaphysics or epistemology, also history, sociology, psychology, anthropology, environmental sciences, political science, and others. When Van Rensselaer Potter (1911-2001) coined the new term — bioethics — in his book *Bioethics, the Science of Survival* (1970) what he had in mind was not another applied ethics, but "a new interdisciplinary approach, combining the science of living systems, biological knowledge (bio) and knowledge of human value systems, philosophy (ethics)."

REGARDING BIOSEMIOTICS. SOME REMARKS ON LITERATURE AND ITS MEDIA

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The starting point for the considerations is the thesis of biosemiotics, which talks about the interweaving of natural and cultural signs, about human culture as a result of the evolution of human nature. In the context of biosemiotics, literature and literariness (as a cultural phenomenon) are aspects of human nature. They participate in meeting human needs, contributing to the duration and development of the species. At the same time, literature itself proves this thesis by creating textual representations of the way in which the human subject perceives the world — including the one that it considers non-/beyond human. Literary representations of this world are saturated with the perspective of the subject — they are the result of the human tendency to transform the perceived natural being into a cultural sign/text (human tendency to cultural appropriation). The presentation proves that both the literary gestures of using elements of the non-/beyond-human world for their own purposes and the gestures of restoring the subjectivity to this world, which can be found in literature and its media, are gestures that do not go beyond the framework of our natural culture (biologically conditioned culture).

POSTHUMAN ELEMENTS OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY. THE REPRESENTATION OF DIGITAL IN LIVING ORGANISMS AND HUMAN ELEMENTS IN MACHINES

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There are just a handful of examples in the history of technology where a device developed to perform a given task ends up taking on a completely different function and radically transforming human existence. This is what happened with computers. The change can be described in two metaphors. The first is that the giant computers created in the 1940s still had their operators walking around in their bellies. In the present, 80 years later, we carry our most personal computer, the smartphone, in the palm of our hand. The transformation at the physical level is therefore spectacular, the interaction between the body of the device and the body of the individual has changed radically, in a way that is visible to the naked eye. But more exciting is the change that is taking place at the mental level, which I will talk about in my presentation. The interaction here is also two-way. In one direction there is an extension of human minds into computers. Our memories are being outsourced to external storage, while our consciousness is being molded into artificial intelligence. In the other direction, human decision-making and action is now based on the suggestions of artificial intelligence, with machines often thinking for us. Through digitalization, we have therefore moved into the posthuman age, where human and machine memory and consciousness are augmenting each other. I will also look for parallels by pointing out that the external memory spread by the printing of books, built into the subsystems of society, has changed not only the thinking and 'memory techniques' of individuals but also of society.

THE SYMBIOSIS OF HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN FORMS: PERSPECTIVES ON CRITICAL POSTHUMANISM

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The progressive complexity and autonomy of intelligent technologies on the one hand, and the growing ecological and environmental crisis on the other, confront us with a situation for which previous discursive and interpretive frameworks are no longer sufficient. For this reason, the humanistic image of man, which is closely linked to anthropocentrism, has been the subject of extensive criticism in recent decades. The question is, what other concept could be the answer to the current post-anthropocentric turn? In this paper, we will examine selected concepts elaborated within critical posthumanism (Wolfe, Braidotti) that consider the constitution of the posthuman subject in a relational perspective, that is, about other human and non-human forms. In addition, Braidotti also explores the ontological presuppositions of such an approach, which he finds in the extension of the notion of life towards the dynamic principle of *zoé*. What practical implications follow from the change in understanding of subjectivity? What implications will the symbiosis of human and non-human forms have for ethical and socio-political practices within society? In a literary context, the English writer Ian McEwan, for example, offers inspiring answers to these questions in *Machines Like Me* (2019).

CAN SCIENTISTS REGULATE THEMSELVES?

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The regulation of scientific research and experimentation only began to be addressed in bioethical discourse after the Manhattan Project. In biology, a similar situation arose in 1975 with the Asilomar conference, where scientists discussed the risks of recombinant DNA technology and the moratorium itself. 40 years later, with the discovery of CRISPR-Cas9 technology, the analogous situation occurred again. Since the discovery of CRISPR-Cas9, scientists have tried to self-regulate — they have held various conferences and started to issue various recommendations. Despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of scientists disagreed with germline gene editing, in 2018, Chinese scientist He Jiankui announced that he had successfully conducted such an experiment. Therefore, my aim of this paper will be to analyze scientists' self-regulation in biological research.

THE FLOOD MOTIF IN KATHRIN RÖGGLA'S PLAY *DAS WASSER*

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Climate change is one of the burning global issues of our age; and is often tackled in contemporary literature. As a part of the preparatory work for her environmentally themed play *Das Wasser* (2022), Austrian author Kathrin Röggla spent time in Saxony researching the alarming aspects of water scarcity. The play would have its premiere on April 7, 2022 in Dresden; and as a follow-up to this theatrical event, the politically committed author organized a conference at the KHM-University in Cologne — from June 22nd to 23rd — which featured talks and discussions about deforestation and the destruction of other natural environments as a result of mining, which also happens to be causing water shortages. This talk will look to show that Kathrin Röggla's *Das Wasser* can not only be seen as an example of ecocriticism, but also inscribes itself in the catastrophe discourses of the 21st century; encompassing also its numerous references to the Flood motif, and its meaning in the Christian tradition.

METAPHOR IN THE ECOCRITICAL PERSPECTIVE. ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CONCEPTS

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"An important task of ecopoetics is to revise the understanding of the nature and function of language, inherited from poststructuralism," write Julia Fiedorczuk and Maciej Rosiński. One of the areas of such revision is reflection — often entering the area of ontology — on the function, performance and nature of the metaphor. There are various concepts, but they have some common features, resulting from holistic thinking about reality. In my speech I would like to analyze and sometimes criticize selected ecopoetic/ecocritical approaches to the metaphor.

"I SEE IN THE UNDERSEA NATURE THE ENTIRE FIRST OUTLINE OF MAN" — ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE ECOPOETIC READING OF THE GENESIAN WORKS OF JULIUSZ SŁOWACKI

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There is no doubt that the work of romantics is closely linked with the natural environment, and nature plays an important role in it. Nature was often treated by them as a way to transcend the "I", to fuse the subject with the world. One of the romantic authors, in whose writings, especially the so-called mystical texts, nature played an extremely important role, was Juliusz Słowacki. In my speech, I would like to look at selected genesian texts by Słowacki through the prism of eco-poetics. In the view of this romantic writer, however, the Spirit embraced and worked also through the natural world. I believe that this perspective will allow for the ennoblement of the role of nature in Słowacki's work — nature which in the readings so far played mainly a servant role — it was not perceived as the force of creative activities in the genesian world.

Heidegger, or Herbert Gruhl