



International Hybrid Conference
“The Environmental Turn
in the Study of Children’s and Young Adult Literature”



Reading – Experiences – Emotions.
Books for Children and Young Adults – Theory and Practice of Reception (VI)

June 17-19th of 2022

Organizers:

Institute of Polish Philology (University of Wrocław), National Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece), Marshall University (USA); Center of Humanistic Education (Silesian University in Katowice), Academy of Fine Art in Wrocław

Conference Venue:

Institute of Polish Philology, University of Wrocław, pl. Nankiera 15, Wrocław, Poland

The awareness that we are living in the Anthropocene has an increasing influence on the study of literature. One can even talk about a certain environmental turn in literary studies, in which a key role is played by ecocriticism, a field devoted to investigating “the relationship between literature and the physical world” (Glotfelty and Fromm 1996, xviii), literary animal studies (Ortiz-Robles 2016), and literary posthumanism (Clarke and Rossini 2017). These and related fields utilize instruments and conceptions developed in literary studies, philosophy, social





geography, anthrozoology, cognitive studies, historiography, sociology, and psychology to explore the pro-environmental and post-anthropocentric potential of literature (Barcz 2016); develop a new form of aesthetic sensitivity that would be open to experiencing a more-than-human world and its inhabitants; and put forward a new conception of the role of language and the imagination in environmental thought. Is the environmental crisis a crisis of the imagination or – quite the contrary – is our imagination expanded by it?

Although the scope of the environmental turn in literary studies is growing rapidly, “embracing previously neglected literary genres and national literatures as well as exploring new subjects, in particular those situated at the intersections of environmental politics and the politics of gender, race, and class,” aside from some notable exceptions, it has yet to devote sufficient attention to children’s and young adult (CYA) literature. This lacuna is particularly striking insofar as, due to CYA literature’s key role in socialization, its impact on shaping public attitudes toward the environment is probably greater than that of any other kind of literary writing (Goga 2018). The aim of our conference is to fill this lacuna. To this end, we invite researchers from across the academic spectrum (literary studies, linguistics, education, culture studies, communication, and other fields) as well as non-academics (teachers, educators, writers) to discuss how the study of CYA literature can profit from a greater attention to the environmental humanities and how the environmental humanities can profit from a greater attention to CYA literature:

- What functions and values are assigned to nature, including animals, plants, and other non-human beings, in CYA literature?
- What kinds of verbal and visual means are used to represent nature in CYA literature?
- What kinds of relations with non-human species are proposed by CYA literature?
- Can CYA literature sensitize readers to the needs and situation of non-human species?
- Can CYA literature contribute to debates on planetary devastation?
- How can teachers and educators best use CYA literature to discuss the environmental crisis and its consequences with their students?

Given how grave the environmental crisis is, the role of CYA literature in environmental education cannot be underestimated. Through strategies of empathic reading it might help raise environmental awareness among younger audiences and encourage openness to a more-than-human world. This is why we are particularly interested in the study of reception of environmental themes in CYA literature among young readers, school students among them, thereby applying the perspective of empirical ecocriticism (Schneider-Mayerson, Weik von Mossner, and Małeckki 2020) to the study of CYA literature.





We seek proposals for papers, panels, and other public presentations in English or Polish that address the intersections between CYA literature and the environmental humanities. All submissions should be sent **by March 30, 2022** to the following address:
ecological.return.literature@gmail.com

or:

dorota.michulka@uwr.edu.pl
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Please include your name, the title of your proposed presentation, an abstract of no more than 600 words in English or Polish, a biographical note of no more than 80 words, including your affiliation, degree, and preferred email address. The authors of accepted submissions will be notified **by April 15, 2022**.

The conference fee is 250 PLN (60 EUR) and should be paid by 15th of May, 2022.

The event will be held on June 17-19 2022 at the Institute of Polish Philology, University of Wrocław, Poland.

Scientific conference website:

<https://environmentalturn.wixsite.com/conference>

As it is planned to be a hybrid event, both speakers and delegates will be able to participate either remotely or at the Wrocław venue.





Confirmed plenary speakers:

Nina Goga (Norway)
Magdalena Rembowska – Płuciennik (Poland)
Jaana Pesonen (Finland)
Marek Oziewicz (USA)
Anna Barcz (PAN, IBL)
Kimberly McFall (USA)
Farriba Schulz (Germany)
Wojciech Małecki (Poland)
Małgorzata Wójcik – Dudek (Poland)
Tzina Kalogirou (Greece)
Björn Sundmark (Sveden)
Emilya Ohar (Ukraine)

Conveners: Wojciech Małecki (UWr) & Dorota Michułka (UWr) & Dariusz Dybek (UWr)

Organizing Committee:

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Kamila Kowalczyk (UWr)
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Małgorzata Wójcik – Dudek (UŚ)
Justyna Zając (UWr)





Advisory Committee:

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Emilya Ohar (Publishing and Printing Academy, Lviv)
Tzina Kalogirou (National Kapodistrian University in Athens)
Kimberly McFall (Marshall University, WV, USA)
Isaac Larison (Marshall University, WV, USA)
Xavier Mínguez-López (University of Valencia)
Jaana Pesonen (University of Helsinki)
Farriba Schulz (Freie University in Berlin)
Ana Margarida Ramos (University of Aveiro)

Works Cited:

1. Barcz A. (2016), *Realizm ekologiczny: od ekokrytyki do zookrytyki w literaturze polskiej*, Katowice.
2. Stewart K. and Cole M. (2014), *Our children and other animals: the cultural construction of human-animal relations in childhood*, Farnham, Surrey, Burlington.
3. *Ecocritical Perspectives on Children's Texts and Cultures. Nordic Dialogues* (2018), ed. by Goga, N., Guanio-Uluru, L., Hallås, B.O., Nytnes, A., Palgrave.
4. Ortiz-Robles M. (2016), *Literature and Animal Studies*, New York.
5. Schneider-Mayerson M., Weik von Mossner A., Małeckı W. (2020), *Empirical Ecocriticism: Environmental Texts and Empirical Methods*, "ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment", Vol. 27, s. 327–336, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isle/isaa022>.
6. *The Cambridge companion to literature and the posthuman. Cambridge companions to literature* (2017), ed. by Clarke B., Rossini M., New York.
7. *The ecocriticism reader: landmarks in literary ecology* (1996), ed. by Glotfelty Ch., Fromm H., Athens.

