

Elżbieta Chrzanowska-Kluczevska\*

# Lost landscapes of childhood: An ecostylistic analysis of *The Issa Valley*

<https://doi.org/10.1515/jwl-2022-0031>

Received May 29, 2022; accepted December 9, 2022; published online December 29, 2022

**Abstract:** *The Issa Valley*, a novel by the renowned Polish émigré poet and writer Czesław Miłosz, is a partly autobiographical rendition of Miłosz’s early years spent on his family estate at Szetejnie in Lithuania. The omniscient narrator presents the early years and adolescence of a Polish gentry boy, Thomas Dilbin; the second, equally important protagonist of the novel is the eponymous Issa Valley. The book is an homage paid to the beauty of Lithuanian nature and to the world of childhood memories; as such, it invites an attempt at an ecostylistic interpretation, which is the main aim of this study. The methodology applied to analyze its English translation partly follows Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short’s taxonomy of linguistic aspects relevant when studying fiction, such as context, lexicon, syntax, and figuration. Furthermore, this ecostylistic analysis focuses on figuration and its imagistic potential in picturing the Issa landscape. Master tropes (simile, metaphor, synecdoche, irony, and antithesis) work at three textual levels: *micro-*, *macro-*, and *megatropical*. This scrutiny proves that the novel is an instance of what I call *existential ecology*, with *antithesis* as a dominant textual backbone; it also demonstrates that figuration reflects an intensely corporeal experience of nature by the young Thomas. The main contribution of this article to Miłosz’s scholarship is that it offers an ecostylistic reading of *The Issa Valley*, which has not been applied to the novel so far, specifically from lexical, grammatical, and tropological perspectives.

**Keywords:** antithesis; childhood landscapes; existential ecology; Lithuanian nature; micro-/macro-/megatropological

## 1 Introduction

In 1955, Institut Littéraire in Paris publishes a novel titled *Dolina Issy* by the then little-known Polish émigré poet and writer Czesław Miłosz. Its first translation into French appears in 1956, followed by the first German translation in 1957. The

---

\*Corresponding author: Elżbieta Chrzanowska-Kluczevska, Institute of English Studies, Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland, E-mail: elzbieta.chrzanowska-kluczevska@uj.edu.pl

situation changes dramatically after 1980, when Miłosz is granted the Nobel Prize in Literature and the eyes of the world turn with curiosity and interest toward his oeuvre. 1981 marks the first appearance of *Dolina Issy* in Poland, following a long period of political ban on Miłosz's writings imposed by the Communist regime, and the same year witnesses the first English translation, *The Issa Valley* by Louis Iribarne, issued in New York. Translations into other languages will crop up for several decades, with the first translation into Lithuanian, *Isos Slėnis*, appearing in Vilnius in 1991, a year after the re-establishment of the Republic of Lithuania as a nation-state independent from the Soviet Union.

By and large, what Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* stands for in the French literary tradition, *The Issa Valley* stands for in the Polish culture related to the former eastern and north-eastern Frontiers (Polish *Kresy*) of Poland. This borderland had a long and involved history, in the course of which Poles remained in not always easy contact with Ukrainians, Belarussians, Lithuanians, Russians, and Germans. The half-real and half-mythical Issa Valley, situated in the heart of ethnic Lithuania, is a symbol of the past shared for centuries by the Polish and Lithuanian inhabitants of the region. To this Land of Lakes of unusual beauty, we are transported by Miłosz, reviving the cherished memory of his childhood and youth experiences, to which social upheavals and the remapping of state borders as a result of two World Wars put a definite end.

Miłosz was born in 1911, in the vicinity of the village of Szetejnie (Lithuanian *Šeteniai*, near Kėdainiai, in the Kaunas region), on the River Niewiaża (Lithuanian *Nevėžis*, renamed Issa in the novel), into a family of Polish landowners. He stayed on their estate in his early years (1911–1913) and later, between 1918 and 1920, after which he moved to Vilnius to continue his education at a secondary school and at the John Casimir University. During World War II, he stayed in Warsaw, where he attended underground lectures in philosophy conducted by Władysław Tatarkiewicz and aided Jews. Following the war, he served as a Polish cultural attaché in Paris and Washington, D.C. In 1951, he defected to the West, becoming a voice lost to the Polish readership for three decades. His nonfiction book *The Captive Mind* (Miłosz 1953) became a classic of anti-Stalinism.

*The Issa Valley* was written in France, according to the author (Fiut 1981: 32) as an act of “autotherapy” in the period of his acute solitude as an émigré criticized by various milieus for escaping Poland, which coincided with an abatement of poetic inspiration. Paradoxically, this personal and creative torment resulted in the birth of a piece of poetic prose of unusual charm, a nostalgic tribute paid to the lost landscape of his homeland.

Later, Miłosz moved to the United States where, between 1961 and 1998, he acted as a Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of California at Berkeley. He became a U.S. citizen in 1970. In 1980, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for his poetic output, essays, fictional and nonfictional prose. In 1989, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, he divided his time between Berkeley and Kraków, becoming a voice regained by the Polish society. He visited Lithuania in 1992, trying

to spot the traces of the paradisiac childhood spent in his native manor house, amidst Lithuanian nature so dear to his heart. The poetic cycle *Lithuania, After Fifty-Two Years* (Miłosz 2008 [1996]: 402–419) offers an ambivalent summary of his “search of lost time”. He died in Kraków in 2004 and is buried there in the Graves of the Meritorious Poles in the Paulist Basilica “Na Skalce”.

In this article, *The Issa Valley*, the English translation by Iribarne of Miłosz’s original *Dolina Issy*, will be the object of ecostylistic analysis. Section 2 introduces the novel and the landscapes it depicts. More precisely, Section 2.1 presents the novel as, simultaneously, an existential treatise, addressing some basic issues related to the duality of human and natural life along the axes of GOOD VERSUS EVIL, ALIVE VERSUS DEAD, REAL VERSUS MYTHICAL, and an ecological work, a laudatory reminiscence of Miłosz’s Lithuanian homeland. Section 2.2 addresses the ecological question of how the cherished memories of childhood landscapes can and should be preserved. Section 3 outlines the theoretical foundation and the research methodology of the article, which follows a slightly modified and simplified taxonomy of Leech and Short’s (2007) categories for studying fiction, and combines them with an ecostylistic approach. Sections 4 and 5 focus on the stylistic analysis of the text, mostly on the rendition of nature in the novel. To be more specific, Section 4.1 draws an indispensable contextual setting for the novel, a sketch of the historical, social, and linguistic background of the Polish-Lithuanian milieu in which the story develops. Section 4.2 directs the reader’s attention to the very special lexicon used throughout the novel, marked by a regional stylization associated with the so-called Lithuanian Polish. From the perspective of ecostylistics, a rich specialized vocabulary, crucial in picturing the landscape of the Issa Valley, is the second lexical aspect worthy of attention. Section 4.3 provides a very brief list of the most conspicuous syntactic characteristics of Miłosz’s poetic prose, all contributing to the creation of a unique atmosphere of the Issa world. Section 5 tackles the pivotal issue of how the landscape of the Issa Valley is construed by figurative means. Section 5.1 presents a triple-level functional model of analyzing tropes in a literary text, developed by Chrzanowska-Kluczevska (2013b), informed by Vichian tropology, deconstructionism, and cognitive poetics, and adopted in the present stylistic analysis of the novel. Consequently, Section 5.2 discusses the overt level of predominant microtropes, that is, figures operative within the phrasal and sentential scope (simile, metaphor, synecdoche, antithesis, etc.). Section 5.3 turns to the overt middle-level of textual troping, at which macrometonymies, macrosynecdoches, and macroirony operate across larger stretches of text (paragraphs and chapters). Section 5.4 discusses the tacit level of megatropes that structure the entire text. Miłosz’s existential-ecological approach to nature becomes clearly visible in his consistent application of mega-antithesis. Section 5.5 concludes the aforementioned ponderings with a claim about the fundamental role of tropes as cohesion- and coherence-building mechanisms of artistic discourse. This is followed by a discussion and conclusions in Section 6.

Given these wide-ranging topics and the methodologies adopted in this examination, the article hopes to inscribe itself into the broader research program of ecostylistics, showing how the tools of stylistics and of a specific tropological paradigm can be applied in an analysis of a literary text that pays homage to nature and to the human presence in it.

## 2 Literature review

### 2.1 *The Issa Valley*: Existential treatise and ecological novel

Despite its English subtitle *A Novel*, *The Issa Valley* is a genological conundrum, described by Miłosz himself (Fiut 1981: 33) as an “oddity”, “a masked theological treatise”, but also a partly autobiographical rendition of his early years spent at Szetejnie. The protagonist of the novel, the young Tomasz (Thomas) Dilbin, lives in the village of Ginie (Gine), on the magical Issa River, whose fictive name refers to the real Niewiaża, in the manor house of his maternal grandfather Kazimierz (Casimir) Surkont. The omniscient narrator, who very consistently refers to himself as a “chronicler”, presents the early years and adolescence of Thomas. The story ends around 1921, when Thomas – almost 14 years old – is taken by his mother to Vilnius (or to Poland), to receive formal education. Several metatextual commentaries that make excursions into the future obliterate a distinction between the empirical author, narrator and Thomas, whose voices and thoughts seem to coincide (see also Łoziński 2011). The unhurried narration, similar to the flow of the eponymous Issa, proceeds in an irregular way, often broken by long descriptions and commentaries; its imagistic technique of presenting the plot has been claimed to possess some cinematographic qualities (Horbowicz and Skrzypek 2011; Rybka 2000).<sup>1</sup>

It soon appears that the second main protagonist of the novel, signaled by its title, is a fragment of the Lithuanian landscape with the Issa in the center. The place seems an idyll or Paradise, as some critics claimed (Bailey 1981, see also Marek Zaleski’s afterword in Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 268), yet, actually, it is a source of several antagonistic sentiments – a landscape as experienced by a growing-up boy, at first emotionally and with time also rationally. We soon realize that we are facing not just

---

<sup>1</sup> A feature film, *Dolina Issy*, with an excellent cast, appeared in 1981, directed by the well-known Polish writer and film-maker Tadeusz Konwicki, upon the request of the Miłosz family. Konwicki commented that the reason for deciding to create a screen adaptation of the novel was his own provenance from Lithuania. Even after 30 years of having departed from his homeland, he kept vivid memories of “the scent of forests, taste of water, shapes of clouds, hues of grass” (<https://culture.pl/pl/dzielo/dolina-issy>). These perceptual reminiscences are very close to Miłosz’s own experience of Lithuanian nature.

a realistically rendered post-glacial terrain of undulating hills, pristine forests, meadows, and farmland; indeed, the description of the Issa signals an unusual ambience of its surroundings:

It's time to pass from the general landscape to the Valley itself, which in many ways is an anomaly in the Land of Lakes. The Issa is a deep, black river with a lazy current, thickly bordered with reeds; a river whose surface is barely visible in places under the lily pads, which winds through meadows and between gentle slopes noted for their fecundity. [...] The Issa Valley has the distinction of being inhabited by an unusually large number of devils. (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 5–6)

Nature around the Issa contains not only human and animal life, but is pregnant with old, mysterious powers; it is nature personified and imbued with the presence of the supernatural, not solely the devils in several varieties, ironically described in Chapter 2. The magic surrounding the Issa has its source in a mixture of pagan beliefs that have wound their way into the folk tradition of native people from the ancient polytheistic pantheons of Lithuanian and Slavic deities, accompanied by demonic forces of various shapes, merged with – for ages – a rather superficial Christianity. The Christian God resides mostly in the village church and even the mound topped by an overgrown cross is a “spooky place” to the eyes of Thomas. We soon learn about the celestial couple, the Moon and his wife the Sun (Lithuanian *Saulė*), accompanied by Aurora (Lithuanian *Aušra*, ‘dawn’) and the Evening Star waiting on her (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 5, 202); the invisible witch Laume, changing her shapes at will (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 91); Ragutis, the “corpulent idol of liquor and lusty living”, seemingly a distant relative of Bacchus, or Liethua, a divine guardian of pagan liberty, to whom the words of an old song were addressed: “Little Liethua, precious freedom. Hidden in the sky, where are you?” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 143, referring to Narbutis’s 1805 *History of Lithuania*; see also Łoziński 2011, quoting Moszyński 1968–1969 [1929–1939] on pagan beliefs in old Lithuania).

Later, following the lore passed to Thomas by Antonina, a Lithuanian housekeeper in the Surkonts’ manor, we become acquainted with the noisy witch Ragana, mounted on a devil assuming the shape of a flying goat, apparently hidden in the whistling of the wind (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 169). Finally, the goddess Varpeia sits in heaven spinning the threads of fate, with stars dangling from them; a falling star accompanies the cutting of the thread of somebody’s existence (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 247).<sup>2</sup> Not only do the celestial bodies or more abstract concepts become personified

---

<sup>2</sup> Folk beliefs with pagan roots, either intertwined with or running parallel to Christian teachings, are nothing uncommon across Europe. Patrick Leigh Fermor, in his erudite travelogue *Mani* (1958), described the folklore of one of the most isolated and, at that time, archaic regions of the Southern Peloponnese, the mountainous Mani Peninsula, where villagers still cherished beliefs in ancient mythological personages – Charon, Nereids, gorgons, and most importantly the Three Moirae, or the Three Fates, to whom the Lithuanian Varpeia bears a strong resemblance.

as parts of nature, but also earthly creatures, such as water snakes, who are treated as “sacred beings”, never killed from fear of “tempting fate” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 95).<sup>3</sup>

The area is haunted by other non-human and non-animal powers, like a “column of vapor”, resembling a “white pillar” that chased a manor weaver, Pakenas, in the vicinity of the eerie place called *Borek* (‘a clump of trees’, preserved in its original spelling by Iribarne), where an old shepherd once choked to death and was buried (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 27). Another odd monstrosity was a log mounted with three Tartar heads, whose body was repulsively soft and which followed the steward Shatybelko to the Surkonts’ manor itself, a reminiscence of the presence of Tartar prisoners of war in the Gine area in the distant past.

A special place in this company of magical and supernatural forces is held by Magdalena, the sexy housekeeper of the parish priest Peiksva, who, after an indecent affair with him, is relocated to another parish, where she commits suicide out of utter despair. Her body, apparently not decomposed, returns to Gine, where Father Peiksva buries it/her near the cemetery grounds, in the non-sacred earth, according to the then-observed rules for dealing with suicidal cases. Yet, Magdalena – as a revenant and Poltergeist in one person – refuses to leave the earth in peace and starts haunting the new, elderly curate, clattering utensils and preparing unworldly meals in the rectory’s kitchen. She thus becomes an unwanted linkage between the living and the dead, getting more and more aggressive in her behavior. She even appears to forester Balthazar in the evening, riding stark naked on a white horse to bathe in the Issa.<sup>4</sup> The barbaric yet apparently efficient ritual (known also in the Slavic folk tradition), carried out by the elders of Gine at night, which consisted of decapitating the body of Magdalena, not violated by death, and piercing the coffin with an alder spike, puts an end to her annoying extravagances on the borderline of earthly and otherworldly existence. Since that time, Magdalena would return to Thomas only in dreams, lamenting over her lost carnality decomposing inside the grave, the motif

---

3 A very apt (and in a sense complementary to Miłosz’s account) description of all kinds of demonic powers peopling Russian folk tradition can be found in Langleben’s (2017) study of Turgenev’s “Bezhin Meadow”, a hunting story of the mid-nineteenth century. Langleben points out a coexistence of old Slavic beliefs with Russian Orthodox Christianity, a situation close to the one described by Miłosz for Lithuania, where paganism intermingled with Roman Catholicism.

4 Łoziński (2011) relates this incident to a wandering motif of the naked woman riding a horse, cropping up in the English eleventh-century legend of Lady Godiva; I would rather turn to the etymological connection of the noun “nightmare” with an evil mare which, according to Anglo-Saxon legends, bore on its back an incubus coming to suffocate a sleeper. Swiss painter Johann Heinrich Füssli (later Henry Fuseli), in the second version of his famous image “Nightmare” (1790–1791), shows a horrific white mare with unseeing, bulging eyes, peeping through the curtains while an incubus torments a sleeping beauty (see Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2020: 75–77).

which inscribes itself into one of the leading themes of the novel – the inescapability of ultimate demise.

*The Issa Valley* emerges as a work that pays homage to the half-real and half-mythical land of child memories seen from the perspective of an adult, a mixture of down-to-earth non-fictional prose and magical realism that poses very fundamental questions about the presence of the forces of good and evil in a world where living creatures constantly face death: “Whatever has been cannot endure; it fades, flickers, scatters” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 184). For this reason, I treat the novel as a masterpiece of what I call *existential ecology*, in which nature – mythologized and sacralized in a visibly pagan way – is a constant witness to the seasonal circle of birth and death: “Autumnal smells, the origin of which, the blendings of which lay beyond his or any other man’s power to describe: the rot of leaves and needles; the dank effluvium of fungi and white filaments embedded in black, beneath the slime of decaying, peeling debris” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 139).

## 2.2 *The Issa Valley*: Landscapes lost and regained?

As mentioned in the introductory Section 1, Miłosz’s voice remained lost to the Polish readership between 1955 and 1980, until the time when the Nobel Prize turned him into a “voice regained”. *The Issa Valley*, likewise, became a voice regained to the worldwide readership, including Lithuanian readers (since 1991). In her study devoted to Lithuanian literature and aimed at Western audiences, Paulauskiene (2007) talks about Lithuanian voices lost to the general readership and brings forgotten works by Lithuanian authors to the attention of her American (and Anglophone) receivers. She also quotes Miłosz, reminiscing on how exotic his personal ties with Lithuania appeared to Western audiences and how discouraged he felt in talking about his Polish-Lithuanian background to Americans: “How many times I had remained silent because, having come from those foggy expanses that books, even textbooks rarely provide information about [...] I would have had to start from scratch” (Miłosz 1968: 2, quoted in Paulauskiene 2007: 7).

Lithuania as a native countryside was lost to Miłosz for several decades, and his return to the country of his youth after 52 years of absence was a sentimental but also an equivocal encounter with the landscapes and places either partly preserved or utterly destroyed. The disappearance of the Miłosz family’s manor, pulled down in 1969, during the Soviet rule in Lithuania, brought to life the poem “The Manor” (Miłosz 2008: 405; see also Chrzanowska-Kluczewska 2012: 228), a resigned lamentation over the home and garden of his youth erased forever from the face of the earth.

The arcadian memories of nature seen and emotionally experienced in our childhood may never return to us in our adult life in their original shape for a variety of reasons, political and social changes being only one of the factors responsible for this loss. And yet, “Such scenes remain fixed forever in one’s memory” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 174), a precious receptacle for holding and sharing with others the natural imagery once dear to our hearts. Recollections in literature may also prove to be a life-saving strategy, allowing nature, pristine and unspoiled, to stay alive within language after its disappearance from reality. Ecological literature thus plays a role similar to other efforts to preserve natural areas and safeguard them against the often soulless decisions of passing regimes and mindless fashions. “Let there be wooded lands where animals could run wild”, was one of Thomas’s dreams about the closed Kingdom of Forest he wanted to establish in the future. Fortunately, such dreams resurge nowadays in the ecological programs of “rewilding” Europe, introduced in several European countries.

### 3 Theoretical foundation and research methodology

The novel by Miłosz boasts a vast critical literature, mostly in Polish, presented mainly from literary-theoretical, philosophical, ethnological, and anthropological perspectives. More formal linguistic studies have dealt so far mostly with the Lithuanized language of the novel, while stylistically-oriented analyses are due to Rybka (2000) and Dyszak (2005), the latter – presenting the “linguistic image of the world” of Miłosz’s childhood and youth – being the closest to the perspective adopted below. We are in a vicarious position so far, as our textual analysis will be carried on the English translation by Iribarne.<sup>5</sup> Yet, despite a partial disappearance of the overlay of regional features characteristic of Lithuanian Polish which – of necessity – will be lost in any translation, I consider this translation excellent from an esthetic viewpoint and faithful enough to allow us to ponder on those linguistic aspects of the novel that remain in a direct relationship with its ecological message.

In my stylistic analysis, I propose a mixed methodological paradigm, following partly Leech and Short’s (2007) taxonomy of categories relevant when studying fiction, namely: (1) context, (2) lexicon, (3) syntax, and (4) figuration. I combine them with an ecostylistic approach, influenced by Goatly’s (2017) study of Edward

---

5 Louis M. Iribarne (1940–2020), born and educated in the USA, was a Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Toronto. He knew Miłosz personally and translated several of his major works into English. He translated also the works of “exacting” Polish writers such as Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Witold Gombrowicz and Stanisław Lem.



Thomas's poetry. In accordance with this theoretical and analytical framework, it is important to explore the context, lexicon, and syntax of the novel, particularly in the editorial and scientific context of the *Journal of World Languages*. Lithuanian Polish, which is still alive in some parts of Lithuania, deserves some scholarly attention. Although its syntax does not directly relate to the ecostylistic profile of the novel, the regional stylization by means of its lexicon remains an inextricable value of the novel; hence, as a regional stylization employed in a literary text and as an archaic sociolect, it belongs to both the area of stylistic studies (Adamson 2016; Hodson 2016) and the Haugenian tradition of ecolinguistic studies (Haugen 1972). The discussion of the lexicon will be divided into two parts, with the first one briefly devoted to the regional and sociolectal aspects of Lithuanized Polish, and the second one to the specialized vocabulary in its ecostylistic aspect (Section 4.2). A very concise mention of the most conspicuous syntactic effects utilized by Miłosz complements his regional and archaic stylization evocative of the north-eastern Frontier Polish ("Lithuanian Polish") (Section 4.3).

Section 5, devoted to figuration, is purely ecostylistic in nature. All the examples of troping selected for analysis co-create the unique landscape of the Issa Valley and point to a complex network of relationships between nature, human beings, animals, and plants. Methodologically speaking, the analysis will follow my own model (Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2013b) of a triple-tiered functional approach to figuration (explained in detail in Section 5.1 below), in order to show that Miłosz's ecological troping follows an intricate textual pattern, expanding gradually from phrases and sentences to cover paragraphs and larger sections, to ultimately construe a holistic, tacit megatropical interpretation of the text.

This article is meant as a continuation of my previous ponderings on the Proustian motifs of happy childhood memories in Miłosz's poetic output; in fact, Miłosz's poems devoted to his Polish-Lithuanian motherland and the novel-treatise on the symbolic Issa should be taken as complementary to each other (Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2012, 2019).

## 4 Analysis: Context, lexicon, and syntax

### 4.1 Context

The natural setting of the Issa Valley stages a variety of human activities for the simple reason that the biosphere can never be separated from the semiosphere – the area where language and ideology belong. Consequently, a brief contextual setting, a sketch of a wider frame of reference, is needed to help the reader understand rather entangled historical, religious and social undertones of the narration. The plot of the

novel is situated on the territory that historically belonged to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, formed in 1240 and since 1385 united into one political organism with the Kingdom of Poland. This union was strengthened twice, in 1413 and 1569, into what was ultimately dubbed the Republic of Two Nations, extending over a huge territory inclusive of the contemporary states of Belarus and Ukraine. Over the ages, several Polish noble families migrated to the Lithuanian territory, partly on the invitation of the princely Radziwiłł family, and settled there for centuries. Even if, with time, their way of life deteriorated and made them fall into the class of yeomanry, often hardly distinguishable from native Lithuanian peasants, their feeling of Polishness remained very strong, likewise their social affiliation with the landed gentry. Some of the Lithuanian noble families underwent Polonization, as did several townspeople and Catholic priests. The Republic of the Two Nations ended its life in 1795, when the Lithuanian territory and a part of the Polish Crown fell into the hands of Tsarist Russia.

The historical setting of the novel includes the period of World War I and its termination, with the Republic of Lithuania being declared an independent state in 1918. In 1920, in the wake of the success of the Polish army in the Polish-Bolshevik War, Poles took over Vilnius and its environs and held them until 1939; that disputed military-political act resulted in the breaking of diplomatic connections between Lithuania and Poland. A meandering motif of an age-long and sociologically unsurprising animosity between the Polish lords (Polish *pan*, ‘master’, ‘lord’) and the native peasantry forms the background of the relationship between the Surkont and the Bukowski families, both sturdy in their Polishness, and the local peasantry. Paradoxically, Thomas Dilbin is instructed in Polish by a local teacher, a Lithuanian nationalist, Joseph the Black, full of hatred towards the Slavs (Poles and Russians alike) (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 81). It has to be remembered, however, that the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were ethnically quite complex – Casimir Surkont had German ancestors, as did Grandmother Dilbin (born Ritter); several villages and towns had also their Jewish communities. The narrator emphasizes that Thomas was largely ignorant of those national antagonisms, and compares his situation to that of a young Englishman brought up in Ireland or a Swedish boy raised in Finland (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 32). Even in his adult life, Thomas felt a “distrust whenever heated reference was made in his presence to any flags or emblems” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 33). Miłosz himself possessed a double identification, clearly Polish as far as the language of his literary creation was concerned, but with a high dose of affinity with Lithuania, the stance that engendered several controversies among his critics, continuing after the author’s death. Like Socrates, who preferred to be “a citizen of Cosmos” rather than of Athens, Miłosz thought of himself as “the last citizen of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania”,<sup>6</sup> in which context it comes as no surprise that he was granted an Honorary Citizenship of Lithuania in 1992.

---

6 <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/inmemoriam/czeslawmilosz.htm> (accessed 10 October 2022).

## 4.2 Lexicon

Against this historical, social, and linguistic background, Lithuanian Polish, spoken both by the gentry of Polish descent and by Polonized Lithuanians, had two variants: (a) The “high” variety, used by the upper and middle classes, that is, nobles and educated town dwellers, was the general Polish with several regional elements typical of north-eastern Frontiers (Polish *Kresy*); (b) The “middle” variant was spoken by the yeomanry and was closer to the language of local peasants, with Lithuanian borrowings.

Lithuanized Polish in variants (a) and (b), despite its strong regional flavor, has been classified as an independent linguistic system, a *gentry sociolect* rather than a dialect. Apart from regionalisms, it contained dialecticisms common to other areas of ethnic Poland, archaisms, and neologisms (Sawaniewska-Mochowa 1985; Sawaniewska-Mochowa and Zielińska 2007).<sup>7</sup> In turn, peasants used the “low” variety, which was a specific mixture of Lithuanian with strong Polish and noticeable Belorussian influences. In *The Issa Valley*, Lithuanian was the mother-tongue, while Polish an acquired language for the bilingual children of Akulonis, Józciuk, and Onutė, who played with the young Thomas, as well as for bilingual servants on the Polish manors.

A regional and dialectal stylization present in conversations and folk songs forms an inalienable attribute of the atmosphere created in *Dolina Issy*. The translator had to cope with it either by standardizing regional expressions (*ajer* is rendered as “sweet flag” or “calamus”) or explicitation (*skierdź* as “old shepherd”; *bitnik* from Lithuanian *Bite* “bee” as “bee-keeper”). Some Polish words are kept in the original (*pan* “master”, “lord”; *baba* – an augmentative for a “country woman”). Few Lithuanian expressions appear as well, with explanation added: *shutas*, a vulgar Lithuanian epithet, and the exclamation of boys jumping into water *Ei virai!* (“Forward, men!”). Male Christian names have been translated into English whenever their equivalents exist (Polish *Tomasz* “Thomas”, *Kazimierz* “Casimir”, *Dyonizy* [archaic Polish] “Denis”), while female names are kept in the original Polish spelling (*Misia*, *Antonina*, *Bronisława*, *Barbarka*), and so are the names of Romuald

---

<sup>7</sup> An average contemporary Polish reader of *Dolina Issy* would probably be struck by its exotic linguistic stylization of the spoken parts and some folk songs, and would be unable to distinguish the regionalisms proper only to Lithuanian Polish from more widespread dialecticisms or archaisms. For this reason, Jędrzejewski (2011: 171–175) appended a very useful “Small Lithuanian Dictionary of Miłosz” to his study, where no distinctions are drawn between particular categories of expressions. Interestingly, Lithuanian Polish is still used by the Polish minority in Lithuania (ca 6.6% of the population, according to Apanasewicz, Kłopotowski and Lubina 2015), residing mostly in the Vilnius and Kaunas regions (Sawaniewska-Mochowa and Zielińska 2007).

Bukowski's hunting dogs (Zagray, Dunay, Lutnia, Karo, with the first two marked by a slight phonetic-orthographic adaptation to English).

A regional flavor is carried by the diminutive suffix *-uk*, borrowed from Belorussian and Ukrainian, used as a term of endearment placed on Christian names like *Józiuk* ("young Joseph"), which the translator keeps in the original (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 20). However, the same suffix employed on *psiuk* (from "dog") or *kudłuk* (from "curly"), functioning as terms of endearment for hunting dogs, was replaced with "hound". The same *-uk* suffix was also used in the sense of "the son of", thus Thomas is called *Dilbiniuk* by the Lithuanian villagers, which becomes "the Dilbin kid" in translation (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 82).

Another salient regional quality was a high amount of exclamations, often reduplicated, where the translation strategies differ: *Oje, oje*, a lamentation of Grandmother Dilbin, is dropped altogether; *Ojejeje!*, uttered by Luczek Juchniewicz, becomes "Oh, oh, oh!"; a common religious exclamation, *Jeżus Maria!*, is either dropped or substituted with "Holy Jesus!"; and the onomatopoeic rendition of hounds barking in the forest, *Ach, ach*, becomes "Arf, arf".

The only linguistic feature that has disappeared from the translation altogether is the so-called *akanie*, typical of Lithuanian Polish, which results in the leveling of inflectional suffixes into *-a: -ę>-e>-a*. The *-a* suffix is employed on verbs; for instance, *Prośza, prosza zakąsywać*, instead of standard Polish *Proszę, proszę zakąsywać*, is standardized into "Please – help yourselves" (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 36), an unavoidable translation technique for non- or weakly inflected languages.<sup>8</sup>

From the angle of our ecostylistic analysis, however, of greatest import seems to be the *specialized vocabulary* used by Miłosz to recreate the abundance of all forms of life in the Issa Valley. Miłosz is very particular about being truthful to reality in his description of the Issa habitat. He emphatically stresses the absence of beech trees and even criticizes Adam Mickiewicz for some inadequacies in presenting Lithuanian nature in the famous Polish national epic poem *Pan Tadeusz* (for instance, not *greyhounds* but *hounds* were kept there for hunting) (Fiut 1981: 121). Let us divide this specialized vocabulary into categories and mention the most important terms, referring to plants, birds, and animals of that part of Lithuania as thriving in the early decades of the twentieth century:

- (a) *trees*: alder, birch, blackthorn, bird cherries, hazel, hornbeam, linden, maple, oak, pine, spruce;

---

<sup>8</sup> An analysis of *The Issa Valley* from a translation perspective would require a separate study. It is worth noting that Horbowicz and Skrzypek (2011), in their contrastive analysis of the translations of the novel into Swedish and Norwegian, come to the conclusion that the latter, based on standardization rather than on applying dialectalisms, which occurred in the Swedish version, appears more successful. We should be wary of imposing the dialects of target languages onto the source language, as this may easily engender unwanted connotations.

- (b) *crops*: buckwheat, clover, flax, hops, oats, potatoes, rye;
- (c) *fruit*: apples, pears;
- (d) *garden flowers and plants*: asters, gillyflowers, cowslips (“keys of St. Peter”), dahlias, lilacs, mallows, night-scented stocks, peonies, reseda, rue;
- (e) *wild plants*: daphne, globe flowers, morning glory, mulleins, orchids, plantain;
- (f) *domestic animals*: dog, hound, pointer;
- (g) *domestic fowl*: duck, goose, hen;
- (h) *wild animals*: bear, buck, ermine, fox, hare, marten, roe, squirrel, wild pig, wolf;
- (i) *waterfowl*: grebe, mallard, garganey, snipe, wild duck;
- (j) *birds*: black cock, black grouse, bullfinch, cuckoo, goatsucker, goshawk, hazel grouse, hoopoe, jay, kinglet, oriole, eagle owl, ptarmigan, sparrow, starling, stork, swallow, thrush, wild pigeon, woodgrouse, woodpecker (dappled and black);
- (k) *reptiles and amphibians*: adder, black snake, frog, water snake;
- (l) *insects*: bee, beetle, hornet, spider, wasp.

As can be inferred from this list, of all these groups the young Thomas’s greatest fascination goes to birds – he even produces his own *Book of Birds* with detailed ornithological descriptions (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 150). This highly specialized ecolexicon is one of the outstanding features of Miłosz’s prose; it also requires some kind of specialized knowledge of the biosphere on the reader’s part.

### 4.3 Syntax

The novel is an instance of poetic prose, well cadenced as Miłosz was concerned about the rhythmicity of his text. The most striking stylistic features are as follows:

- (a) *non-canonical word order* – several sentences are marked with *fronting (topicalization)*, e.g. “Of the customs and cares of those who stir in realms above us, we know very little” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 202);
- (b) *elliptical constructions* that may call to mind theatrical or cinematographic didascalies (Horbowicz and Skrzypek 2011: 295, quoting Rybka 2000), e.g. “No luck” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 36, about Balthazar’s spiritual torments); “Tall for his age” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 99, about Thomas’s appearance);
- (c) *sequences of nominal constructions, often asyndetic*: “A blue dress, a bronzed face, surrounded by a disk of real gold” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 43, a description of Virgin Mary in a holy picture); “A flock of ducks: a floating city, a concentration of blotches wrapped in mist” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 197), which – additionally – plays on a double nominal metaphorization;

- (d) *frequent questions*, either (i) *rhetorical (erotesis)* or (ii) cases of *aitiology*, when the answer is provided: (i) “And why were bears thought to be so nice and gentle? Was it because they were so hairy?” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 104); (ii) “Was it God who had decreed that its life should be spared? If it was God’s decision, then He must have whispered to Thomas not to shoot” (of the wild duck Thomas decided not to kill) (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 200);
- (e) *archaic or regional constructions*, used by the protagonists in conversations in the Polish original, are either stylized (“She’s picked it up, but it’s a weak ‘un, she’s gonter have to work at it”, about the bloodhound Lutnia finding the weak smell of a hare: Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 139) or, more frequently, replaced with a standard English syntax.

The above-mentioned syntactic devices yield a complex stylistic effect of peculiar instrumentation combined with an archaic and regional aura, at times presenting actions and imagery in a filmic or theatrical fashion.

## 5 Analysis: Figuration

In this section, our attention will go to the way Miłosz rendered the landscape of the Issa river and its environs by tropological means. The presence of tropes seems natural in the genre of poetic prose; however, it is worth reminding the reader that Miłosz was critical of poets that tended to overuse figurative devices, calling bluntly such stratagem “a diarrhea of metaphors” (Fiut 1981: 58). Indeed, the prose of *The Issa Valley* presents us with a balanced ratio of literal and figurative descriptions of nature.

### 5.1 Analytical methodology

The methodological paradigm I assume in this section is the one I elaborated in detail in my monograph (Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2013b), and which is a slightly eclectic approach to figuration. It is cognitive at its core, as I believe that nothing can exist in language that has not received a prior conceptual realization in the mind. The starting point for my description of the leading tropes of human language is the “poetic logic” of Neapolitan philosopher of language and historiographer Giambattista Vico, as expounded in his treatise *The Second New Science* (1984 [1744]). Vico was not only a follower of an earlier stylistic tradition, especially the Renaissance rhetoric of Petrus Ramus, but can be rightly called an early precursor of cognitive poetics. The Vichian tetrad of metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony was claimed to

reflect not only the main modes of human consciousness needed to “tame” the world, but also a discursive pattern in the development of social consciousness – from metaphoric thinking in terms of similarity of events, to the metonymic dispersal and reduction of the world into fragments, to the reconstructive force of synecdoche as the figure of integration, to the decadent trope of irony – the figure of falsehood substituted for truth, of skepticism and self-criticism. The Vichian paradigm found two outstanding contemporary American continuators – Kenneth Burke (1962 [1945]), who famously renamed these four leading figures *master tropes*, defining them as *styles of thought* rather than mere linguistic embellishments. In turn, Hayden White (1987 [1973]), in his ponderings on the nature of historical and literary discourses, defined the basic tropes as “paradigms, provided by language itself, of the operations by which consciousness can prefigure areas of experience that are cognitively problematic in order subsequently to submit them to analysis and explanation”.

What I found of special attraction in this post-Vichian approach to figuration was the escape from the limiting metaphor-metonymy bipolarity advocated by Roman Jakobson, David Lodge, and a number of cognitive linguists following Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). Inspired by a wealth of insights into the tropics of human language voiced by leading deconstructionists (James Hillis Miller, Geoffrey Hartman, Paul de Man), as well as by the ideas of Jurij Lotman (1977 [1970]) developed within his cultural semiotics, I have decided to extend the list of master tropes into a ten-member set inclusive of: (1) *metaphor*, (2) *metonymy*, (3) *synecdoche*, (4) *irony*, (5) *simile*, (6) *antithesis*, (7) *catachresis* (generalized semantic abuse, like paradox, oxymoron, etc.), (8) *hyperbole*, (9) *euphemia* (generalized understatement), and (10) *suppression* (passing over, omission, silence). I assume these figures to function not only in the capacity of stylistic universals, whose presence may be expected across natural languages, but also of *semiotic universals*, that is, figures shaping non-verbal artistic modes of expression, especially the visual arts.

The second methodological assumption I have been developing for years is a recognition of the fact that all figures, and master tropes in particular, possess their own *functional domain of operation* within a text. Consequently, I postulate a triple (and not dual, like in Werth 1994 and 1999) subdivision of tropes according to the level of their occurrence in text:

- (1) *Microtropes* (small figures, overt, conceptual, and verbal), whose scope varies from phrases to clauses and, at most, simple sentences;
- (2) *Macrotropes* (big figures, overt, conceptual, and verbal), whose scope is textual, including sequences of sentences, larger stretches of text, and even entire texts (typically poems); macrotropes often form *figurative chains* that meander through text (see also Semino 2008: Section 1.2.3 on various patterns of metaphors in discourse);

- (3) *Megatropes* (large figures, covert, conceptual), whose scope is discursive (holistic interpretation, “higher meanings”); they have to be read off the entire text and require a more mature literary competence to be recognized; they contain a subset of *metatropes* (reflexive figures that talk about themselves or comment on other figures). The megatropical level of interpretation may enjoy independence from the tropological structure of the two lower levels.

To briefly illustrate how this tropological paradigm can be applied in practice, let us turn to William Wordsworth’s famed poem, known by its incipit “A Slumber did my Spirit Seal” (1798–1799), a part of the collection *Lucy Poems*:

A slumber did my spirit seal;  
I had no human fears  
She seemed a thing that could not feel  
The touch of earthy years.

No motion has she now, no force;  
She neither hears nor sees;  
Rolled round in earth’s diurnal course,  
With rocks, and stones, and trees.  
(Wordsworth 2004 [1798–1799]: 332)

Superficially of a very limited scope, this two-stanza poem is very rich from a figurative perspective. We begin our search for *microtropes* in the first verse. “A Slumber did my Spirit Seal” contains two separate micro-metaphors that together build a *compound metaphor*: a personification of slumber and the concurrent reification of a spirit. “She seemed a thing” is a micro-simile verging on a reifying metaphor. In turn, the subordinate clause “that could not feel/The touch of earthy years” contains a personification of “earthy years” capable of touching the girl. The nominal phrase “earthy years” instantiates periphrasis that refers to the span of human life spent in this world. And so within the first stanza, we come across very typical micro-figures: metaphor, simile, and periphrasis.

The second stanza is a description of the dead Lucy, already interred, whose corpse undergoes the revolution of the Earth as a planet. At the micro-level, we can notice that the poem becomes quite literal, the only personification being the description of the dead body of the girl as “she”. The nominal phrase “earth’s diurnal course” is another periphrasis denoting “the daily revolution of the Earth around the Sun”. However, considering the subject of this stanza, we quickly realize that it is a description of the girl’s fate after her death. Consequently, the entire second stanza can be recognized as an *extended metaphor*, a *macro-metaphor of death*, although the lexeme “death” does not appear in the poem.



We enter now the third level of interpretation, the holistic *megatropical level* of covert meanings. At this level, the whole poem can be assumed to be a *mega-antithesis*: ALIVE VERSUS DEAD, with the first stanza devoted to Lucy in her lifetime and the second reflecting on her state after death. Noticeable is the fact that nowhere on the overt level of troping do we meet pairs of opposites and that antithesis reveals itself to us only upon reflection, imparting the structure to the entire text. Hillis Miller (1986) suggested the following pairs of antinomies that can be deciphered from the text at this stage of interpretation: ALIVE/DEAD OR LIFE/DEATH (the pivotal distinction), WAKING STATE/SUMBER, MASCULINITY/FEMININITY, PAST/PRESENT, IGNORANCE/KNOWLEDGE.

Hartman (1985) discovered the presence of yet another megatrop in Wordsworth's lyric: *mega-euphemy* (*mega-understatement*). Indeed, the description of the departed girl demonstrates an emotional distance of the lyrical ego – a very reserved attitude towards what has happened to him, peaceful sadness and resignation, patient endurance of the fate without any stronger empathy with the dead girl. The feelings of the poetic persona themselves are slumber-like – slowed down, with no signs of despair.

With this tropological paradigm at hand, explicated in relation to the Wordsworthian lyric chosen for the reason that will become clearer further on, we can now turn to a brief overview of the figurative tactics deployed by Miłosz throughout the novel to create the landscape of his youth. Worth emphasizing is a very intense corporeality, intermingled with figurative language, of all the descriptions of the Issa Valley offered to us, as seen through the eyes of both Thomas and the omniscient chronicler. Miłosz (2008 [1996]: 221) called it “the opening of the five senses” in the poem “An Hour”, thus proving an obvious advantage enjoyed by a verbal picturing over a visual representation – the language in its endeavor towards multimodality can refer to visual, acoustic, olfactory, tactile and gustatory perception of the world, which modern neurobiological studies have extended to cover additionally the feeling of temperature, the feeling of space and kinesthetic abilities.

## 5.2 Microtropes

Moving from the theoretical and analytical background outlined in Section 5.1, this and the following Sections 5.3 and 5.4 scrutinize carefully selected examples from Miłosz's novel and relate them to an ecological reading of the book. At the level of microtropes, unsurprisingly, similes and metaphors are found to dominate, as is often the case in the literature for children or trying to recreate the child's perception of the world (see Hughes 2008 [2005]). Some instances of metonymy and synecdoche occur, as does irony, which – however – appears only in commentaries uttered by the narratorial voice. From the extended Vichian set, antithesis crops up in several

places, while hyperbole is relatively infrequent. Let us quote some instances of this low-level overt figuration:

### 5.2.1 Similes

- “[...] like human cities, the tree colonies have their own distinct character – forming islands, zones, and archipelagos” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 3)  
The simile is aptly combined with metaphor, forming the so-called *hybrid comparison*, which presents the forest landscape in terms of a geographical map;
- “the twigs of bushes standing out like bouquets of gold, lightly tinged with gray and bluish purple” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 24)  
A striking feature of this description is its visuality, with a gamut of hues involved;
- “white orchids as luminescent as the white of the narcissus” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 119)  
This comparison adds a light effect to the coloring of flowers;
- “First there was the stem, the meatiness of their [the orchids’] bodies, contiguous with flowers concealing a multibranching candelabrum and smelling vaguely of something rotten, wild” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 118–119)  
The anthropomorphic metaphor of orchids overlaps with their reification, invoking the sensations of vision, touch (“meatiness”) and an olfactory experience of the antithetical scent and odor.

### 5.2.2 Metaphors

- “With his grandfather, [...] he wandered through the wonderland of seeds that germinated underground – of shoots, crowns, petals, pistils, and stamens” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 100)  
The metaphor, instantly, gives way to a very realistic description of the anatomy of plants; indeed, the close observation of nature had a strongly educational effect on Thomas’s life, who soon started his own herbarium, to be followed by the *Book of Birds*;
- “One proud and self-respecting bear was still remembered in the village of Gine – a bear so partial to sweet pears that if the master of the house invited him to sit at a table, he had to be careful to share everything fairly [...], for, if his pears were too soft or too green, the bear roared with indignation” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 101)  
This is an instance of *personification*, a type of metaphor that seems to prevail in the novel; this anecdote of old is also a carrier of benevolent *irony*;
- “It was then that Thomas, for the first time in his life, heard the music of the hounds. [...] a choir muffled by distance” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 139)

The two auditory metaphors refer to one of numerous hunting scenes, presenting dogs personified as singers;

- “Thomas had a kingdom all his own – a paper kingdom, admittedly, but one that could be assembled and reassembled at will” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 147)  
*Reifying metaphors*, like the one describing the imaginary “Kingdom of Forest” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 181) that Thomas construed at the manor, are quite frequent in the novel, forming a counterbalance to personifications of nature;
- “The moorland was a kingdom of fragrance” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 235)  
The metaphor of nature as a kingdom is a reappearing theme, in this case with olfactory perception placed in focus;
- “Touch was also a kind of ecstasy – the feel of naked feet [...]” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 19)  
This haptic metaphor refers to one of the ways in which Thomas absorbed natural things around him, sometimes combined into a synesthetic experience: “savoring with his toes the slab of ice”;
- “a ballet dancer of remarkable grace and agility [...], a white sickle, arching and straightening” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 24)  
This description of an ermine, an apt combination of personification and reification, adds the kinesthetic apprehension of the surrounding world to the list of the traditional senses.

**Synecdoche** at this level can also be spotted, like in the descriptions below of the young Lithuanian woman Barbarka, Romuald Bukowski’s housekeeper, or of Thomas’s hunting trophy:

- “that lambent stare of hers” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 136)  
This nominal phrase is descriptive of a salient bodily feature of Barbarka that had a particular appeal to Thomas;
- “a metallic sheen, a crimson brow, an ivorylike beak” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 176)  
A woodgrouse shot down by Thomas and held by the head is depicted via a classical three-part list based on body-part synecdoches. The physical beauty of the dead bird implicitly points to moral problems related to hunting and its inherent cruelty.

**Irony** appears mostly in connection with the devils peopling the Issa Valley or with some narratorial metatextual commentaries about humans rather than nature itself:

- “Well, you talk to him [a devil], see, real polite-like, then you invite him along” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 125)  
This is an instance of how Romuald Bukowski teases Helen Juchniewicz;
- “Dominic emerged as a high priest of truth, because his sense of irony, his implied mockery, was a refutation of his, Thomas’s, superficial knowledge” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 85)

Dominic was a poor village boy, highly intelligent and inquisitive but prone to cruel experiments performed on animals and blasphemous towards God.

**Antithesis**, the play on opposites and antinomies, often paradoxical, expressed at the microlevel, is an indicator of the reappearance of this trope at the highest level of interpretation:

- In “a sweet and powerful dream, but also horrifying”, Magdalena – already interred – appears to Thomas, asking in a dirge: “Why am I alive, yet not alive?” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 57);<sup>9</sup>
- “Why was it that a superabundance of light always resulted in a diminishment of being?” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 119).

**Hyperbole**, interestingly, is not a frequent trope, albeit it might be expected in a child’s experience of mysterious and overpowering nature:

- “For Thomas, the river was gigantic and always full of echoes” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 20)

The exaggeration reflects a childish vision of the natural world that, with time, will lose its magnitude and charm, as testified by the sad statement expressed by Miłosz (2008 [1996]: 163) in his poem “Rivers Grow Small” composed in 1963: “Rivers grow small. Cities grow small. And splendid gardens/Show what we did not see there before: crippled leaves and dust”.

### 5.3 Macrotroping

Macrofigures operate across longer passages and can even structure entire chapters. In Chrzanowska-Kluczevska (2013a), I discussed at some length macrosynecdoches present in Miłosz’s poems; unsurprisingly, they appear in his prose as well.

#### **Macrosynecdoche/macrometonymy (a metonymic-synecdochic chain)**

- “To name a bird, to case it in letters, was tantamount to owning it forever. The endless multiplicity of *colors, shadings, mating calls, trills, wing sounds* [...] *The way the light modulated their feathers in flight, the warm, yellow flesh lining the*

---

<sup>9</sup> A comparison with Wordsworth’s *Lucy* (see Section 5.1) is striking – whereas *Lucy* interred is only a dead corpse, completely mute, Magdalena seems to be still alive and asking existential questions. In Zbigniew Żakiewicz’s view (quoted in Maciej Żakiewicz 2021: 37), *The Issa Valley* can also be interpreted as a “fascination with femininity”, yet nostalgic for the passage of time. Such is also Wordsworth’s *Lucy* cycle.

*bills of the young feeding in deeply sequestered nests*” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 151, italics mine)

The whole paragraph is structured by the chain of the body-part synecdoches that summarize the essence of birds’ beauty and mysteriousness;

- A longer chain appears in the description of the eagle owl, called Squeaky, that Thomas kept as a pet and looked upon with great affection: “*A soundless flight, a rush of air [...] a real owl hoot [...] The softness of his feathers, the russet-gold eyes, the way he nodded, like a farsighted person*” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 104, italics mine)

This figurative macrostructure organizes two consecutive paragraphs, picturing the bird through its salient body parts but also through the noise he made, with the “rush of air” standing metonymically for his flight. The image of the bird of prey combines the visual, acoustic, and tactile elements that call to mind the way Miłosz describes a magpie in the poem “Magpiety” (Miłosz 2008 [1996]: 128) or a bird of prey (hawk) in the “Ode to a Bird” (Miłosz 2008 [1996]: 134; see also Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2013a: 242), all testimonies to his lifelong fascination with “birdiness”.

**Macroirony**, as mentioned before, appears conspicuously in the imagery related to all kinds of devils that inhabit the Issa Valley and pester their inhabitants (see the entire Chapter 2). Similarly, irony forms the backbone of Chapter 11, in which Balthazar, a tragic figure of a forester haunted by the memory of a pointless crime he committed in the past, converses with his personal devil, appearing in the late eighteenth-century guise of Herr Doktor, the “Little German”, with “a goatee, a flickering glance, the meekly folded hands of a city dweller” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 37). Irony helps the narrator/chronicler to maintain his distance from folk superstitions that mingle the Christian belief in the personified evil in the shape of fallen angels with pagan echoes of demonic powers that stay close to human beings, especially at the time of trauma or when death is approaching.<sup>10</sup>

## 5.4 Mega-antithesis

Not without reason did Miłosz define his novel as a Manichean treatise (Fiut 1981: 33), for at the highest level of interpretation the book comes as a pondering on two major antipodal conceptual pairs: GOOD VERSUS EVIL, LIFE VERSUS DEATH. These two overarching

---

<sup>10</sup> It is worth noting that the present-day city of Kaunas boasts an unusual Museum of Devils, with their representations collected from all over the world, executed as handicrafts or artworks.

antinomies include also several other opposites. “We are given to live on the border of the human and the bestial, and it is good so” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 284).<sup>11</sup>

To the young Thomas, the mystery of ever-present death in Nature comes as the more important of the two structuring opposites: “God: why had He created a world where there was only death and death and death” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 247). This dramatic tricolon is the child’s cry in the face of the imminence of passing away, not only among his family members (Grandmother Dilbin) but, even more prominently, in the seasonal course of nature and in the human intrusion into it. A beautiful antithetical prayer over a dying person does not bring much consolation to Thomas: “It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 205). The presence of the pervasive antithesis LIFE versus DEATH as a structuring megatropé makes *The Issa Valley* comparable to the Wordsworthian meditation on a similar subject in the lyric “A Slumber did my Spirit Seal” discussed in Section 5.1 above, albeit the childish sensitivity of Thomas is much more emotional than that of Wordsworth’s poetic persona, a mature man apparently better prepared to cope with the death of the beloved person through resignation. Fiut, a Polish literary critic and a distinguished expert on Miłosz’s life and work, points to a more philosophical aspect of the LIFE versus DEATH antagonism. He claims that Miłosz was intrigued by the status of human beings as “biological creatures that on the one hand belonged to nature, and on the other, paradoxically, were no longer a part of it, owing to their awareness of death” (Fiut and Kaźmierczyk 2021: 3, translation mine).

One of Thomas’s early metaphysical worries remains his involvement in hunting, a traditional pastime of the gentry that, together with fishing, was also a regular occupation of the native inhabitants of the land. Thomas’s attitude towards hunting presents a cognitive dissonance, an internal conflict shown as a fluctuation between the thrill of being a part of the hunting company, ravishment with nature, and a desire to become its master, all the way down to repeated disillusionment while examining a shot bird or animal: “But as he picked it up by the feet, as the wings unfurled and a drop of blood beaded the jay’s beak, he experienced a letdown he was not eager to acknowledge” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 134). Thomas offers antipodal arguments in favor or against hunting: “But one had to be manly, to stifle any squeamishness, if one was to earn the title of hunter and naturalist” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 134). This is contrasted with his rapture at the beauty of an ermine and a decision to spare its life: “[...] no, it was better to feast one’s eyes and let it go at that” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 24). On the one hand he experiences “some magical bond between himself and

---

<sup>11</sup> See also Lotman’s (1977 [1970]: 66) description of the multi-level structure of oppositions that build the ultimate antithesis in a literary text. Lotman considered antithesis as a major figure, similarly to Roland Barthes (1999 [1970]: 61–62), who claimed it to be one of the most persistent tropes.

the animal hunted” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 238), on the other he has to cope with the utter cruelty of the hunt. The climactic moment comes with the senseless killing of a young squirrel by Thomas himself and his participation in its heart-rending agony, which brings a feeling of guilt and an acute remorse: “A being, unique, never to be repeated, never to be resurrected” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 243). This incident stands as the last among Thomas’s hunting “feats”, making him realize that at the moment of killing an animal “the entire landscape would be altered” (Miłosz 2011 [1955]: 89).<sup>12</sup>

The entire texture of the novel should be taken as an antagonistic, antithetical rendition of the Issa Valley, the place torn between the manorial and rural reality, between the real world and magic powers. Christianity confronts several pagan reminiscences of the old Lithuanian and Slavic beliefs, the Polish gentry is confronted with the Lithuanian population that regains its nationhood. The description of the Issa Valley, represented as the heroine of a basically ecological story, makes us realize that every landscape contains the human element within its confines and that the separation of the natural habitat from its inhabitants, with all their historical, social, cultural and ideological problems, is hardly possible.

## 5.5 Summary

In *The Tropics of Discourse*, White (1985 [1978]: 2) offers the following summary of his ideas, which is the best way to finish our – of necessity – brief sketch of the figurative potential of *The Issa Valley*: “And troping is the soul of discourse, therefore, the mechanism without which discourse cannot do its work or achieve its end”. Indeed, Miłosz’s novel should be looked upon not only as a simultaneously autobiographical, philosophical, historical, and ethnographic venture, but also as a text in honor of nature, which is presented as neither friendly nor hostile towards people, just a powerful presence within which human histories are deployed (but see Section 6).

The story is exquisitely construed as far as its tropological schema goes. In the triple functional model of figuration I have assumed, the lower overt levels of troping – whether isolated microtropes or their chains and sequences in the form of macrotropes – play a major role in building the overall *cohesion* of the text. In fact, one of my concluding remarks on the role of macrosynecdoche as a structuring device in several of Miłosz’s poems can be repeated here as well (Chrzanowska-

---

<sup>12</sup> The hunting dilemma calls to mind several of Ted Hughes’s poems for children and teenagers. A skilled hunter himself, but also a devout nature poet, Hughes discloses the waste of hunting in “Somebody” (Hughes 2008 [2005]: 183–185), with the picture of a fox, “an elegant gentleman”, shot for his beautiful black tail as a trophy, with the rest of his body treated “like picnic rubbish”. Hughes (2008 [2005]: 100–101) reverses the scenery in “A Moon Man-Hunt”, where foxes hunt down the gentry turned game who experience an animal scare.

Kluczevska 2013a), namely, the gamut of figures discussed above at the level of micro- and macrotroping should be treated as a *cohesive instrument* per se, in addition to a classic list of such devices postulated in text and discourse studies. The situation differs at the highest level of figuration, which is latent and has to be read off the entire text, like the mega-antithesis discussed above. It is a conceptual enterprise and a *coherence-building mechanism*, either related to or quite autonomous from the tropological mechanisms operative at the lower levels. In Miłosz's novel, it happens to be the former case – antithesis appears at the overt levels in several places but is not as salient as the organizing existential opposition of life facing death or good facing evil that becomes prominent at the mega-level of interpretation.

## 6 Discussion and conclusion

Even if the world of *The Issa Valley* may appear slightly archaic to the present-day reader and its language – due to stylization effects – not always easy to follow, even if the novel may seem to be overly descriptive and of uneven narratorial tempo, it communicates to us a very modern message. It argues for a need to understand nature from an early age and for being open to genuine fascination with it, which is especially important in an era when technological advancement and a prolonged stay in virtual realities created by it frequently deprive our contemporaries of a direct contact with the richness of the natural life around us. At the time when Miłosz wrote his work, ecological discourse did not exist in the form it has assumed today, but we know that Miłosz remained sensitive to ecological questions and in his later life spoke in defense of the Puszcza Białowieska, the primeval forest on the border of Poland and Belarus (Fiut and Kaźmierczyk 2021: 3). All this encourages an interpretation of the novel through ecostylistic lenses, with due respect paid to the writer's beliefs and care taken not to easily overinterpret his works.

The stylistic analysis proposed in this article remains introductory and selective, due to the space limitations imposed by the format of such a study. However, it should be emphatically stressed that any kind of stylistic approach to a text as rich as Miłosz's literary prose cannot be one-sided. It is impossible to select specific stylistic features without paying attention to the overall content of the work and its contextual setting, especially in the case of a novel such as *The Issa Valley*, which tackles an entire gamut of issues and conceptions, not exclusively related to nature but also to the societal and political problems of the inhabitants of this particular "small homeland".

For this reason, a mixed methodological paradigm was chosen – that of Leech and Short's (2007) stylistic schema for prose fiction in general, combined with an ecostylistic viewpoint. Hence, in Section 4.2 Miłosz's lexicon is briefly discussed first



from a regional, dialectal perspective – the stylization into Lithuanian Polish (partly lost in translation) imparts to the novel a unique atmosphere of an archaized world. Then, in the same section, an ecostylistic perspective is applied, which points to the richness of Miłosz’s vocabulary related to the natural world, both domesticated and wild. A brief commentary on the most conspicuous syntactic features of Miłosz’s language (Section 4.3) has been included in order to point out not only its regional and archaic flavor but its cinematic qualities as well – the Issa Valley is presented as if it were a montage of stills meant to immortalize its landscape and its denizens, human and non-human alike. The most ecostylistic, in my intention, remains Section 5, which discusses the way in which a construal of the Issa imagery has been achieved by tropological means operative at three levels of textual description: micro- and macrofigurative (both overtly given), followed by an implicit megafigurative reading, an “undercurrent” running through the whole work (to use Werth’s formulation; see Werth 1994: 79) that awaits being deciphered from the totality of the text’s structure and content.

Zbigniew Żakiewicz, a Polish Frontier writer of the second generation (born in Vilnius and repatriated to Poland in 1946), comments as follows on Miłosz’s novel, which must have been an inspiration for several of his memoir-like novels:

The paradisiac side of existence consists of the beauty of the world that manifests itself in smells, sounds, colors, unique gestures of people, unique things and works of the manor. In hunting, in mysterious backwoods, in swamps and depths of lakes [...]. (Żakiewicz 2017 [2007]: 464–465, translation mine).

Macrotropes (Section 5.3) are operative at the lowest functional level of the text (of phrasal and sentential scope), as well as of their larger sequences endowed with the macrotropical power of structuring paragraphs and chapters (mostly instances of similes, metaphors, synecdoches, ironies, with only few cases of antithesis or hyperbole; see Section 5.2). My own selection of macrotropes has been carefully drawn from across the entire text of the novel to exemplify descriptions and commentaries on the Issa landscape and the human activities embedded in it. Several of them well illustrate the carnal, sensory experience of nature by the protagonists of the novel, in corroboration of Żakiewicz’s apt remark on the creation of the paradisiac world of the Issa. Obviously, the list of ecologically directed micro- and macrotropes is not complete, yet representative enough to underscore the role of figuration in picturing the Issa land and its inhabitants. This kind of eco-figurative analysis has not been done for this text before and, to my mind, it opens a new path in approaching Miłosz’s works from an eco-perspective.

Crucial for the interpretation of the entire novel is the tacit figure of mega-antithesis. It is not astonishing that this very trope of opposition, not particularly frequent at the lower overt levels of figurative structuring, emerges as its ultimate

backbone. Fiut, in an interview conducted by Zbigniew Kaźmierczyk, claims that “a fundamental principle that Miłosz consistently obeyed was the continuous application of antinomies, pondering on opposing approaches and different answers to the same questions” (Fiut and Kaźmierczyk 2021: 3, translation mine). Antithesis in the Issa world relates not only to human existence in nature (what I call *existential ecology*) but to a wide range of metaphysical, social, ethnic, and national issues.

In 2021, the year marking the 110th anniversary of Miłosz’s birth, the theme of the writer’s attitude towards nature as reflected in his entire oeuvre resurged in the academic discussions held at the University of Gdańsk, collected in the special issue of the journal *Gazeta Uniwersytecka* titled *Świat Miłosza* (*‘Miłosz’s World’*). Bogusław Żyłko (2021: 48–49), a well-known Polish semiotician of culture and theoretician of ideas, recalls his own article of 1999 in which he described the vision of nature in Miłosz’s poems and essays. Some of them expressed a pejorative, even extreme evaluation of nature as a merciless power that regularly deprives of life several, especially weak, creatures.<sup>13</sup> In turn, according to a more moderate opinion voiced by Fiut, Miłosz’s attitude towards nature was ambivalent rather than straightforwardly negative. Although the order of nature seemed cruel to him, it simultaneously “aroused his delight by its richness, multiplicity of forms and stunning beauty” (Fiut and Kaźmierczyk 2021: 3, translation mine). I fully agree with this opinion in reference to the representation of nature in *The Issa Valley* (see Section 5.5). Yet, further ecostylistic research on the entirety of Miłosz’s pronouncements on natural life could possibly uncover his more complex vision of the biosphere.

In sum, Miłosz’s novel teaches us a valuable lesson that the beloved, precious landscapes, sanctuaries of memory, deserve preservation – whenever possible – over and above ethnic, national, social, and political divides. This ecological message is masterfully inscribed into the novel’s poetic prose, in which the rendition of the scenery and its aura have been achieved owing to a gamut of linguistic means drawn from all the levels of linguistic description. Phonological effects, showing both in the regional stylization and in the overall rhythmicity of the text, have been deftly integrated with syntactic structures. The richness of lexical means, particularly of the specialized vocabulary, has allowed the writer to create the imagery of the natural and the human world as closely intertwined. A palette of stylistic means, especially of tropes, well-balanced in number and deployed functionally from the microlevel of phrases and sentences, via the macrolevel of paragraphs and chapters,

---

<sup>13</sup> Such a somber, ominous aspect of nature is highlighted in Langleben’s (2017) discussion of Turgenev’s story “Bezhin Meadow”, where the nocturnal landscape breeds hostile, devilish forces and plays an active part in evoking the atmosphere of dread and anxiety among the protagonists. Langleben (2017: 149, Footnote 26) quotes also from Turgenev’s essay “Nature” (1879), in which the titular elemental force is personified as a merciless albeit majestic woman.

to the covert mega-level of the ultimate interpretation, construe the figurative backbone of the text, imparting to it additional cohesion and coherence. From this emerges an enchanted vision of Lithuanian nature in the early decades of the twentieth century, described through Miłosz's Polish eyes.

## References

- Adamson, Sylvia. 2016. Sociolinguistics and stylistics. In Violeta Sotirova (ed.), *The Bloomsbury companion to stylistics*, 263–285. London: Bloomsbury.
- Apanasewicz, Agnieszka, Kłopotowski Andrzej & Michał Lubina. 2015. *Litwa. W krainie bursztynu [Lithuania. In the land of amber]*. Helion: Gliwice.
- Bailey, John. 1981. Return of the native. *The New York Review*. <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1981/06/25/return-of-the-native/> (accessed 12 July 2022).
- Barthes, Roland. 1999 [1970]. *S/Z*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo KR.
- Burke, Kenneth. 1962 [1945]. *A grammar of motives*. Cleveland & New York: Meridian Books.
- Chrzanowska-Kluczevska, Elżbieta. 2012. “Remembrance of things past” – the lost landscapes of Marcel Proust and Czesław Miłosz. In Marta Gibińska & Władysław Witalisz (eds.), *Poetry and its language: Papers in honour of Teresa Bela*, 217–233. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Chrzanowska-Kluczevska, Elżbieta. 2013a. Synecdoche – an underestimated macrofigure? *Language and Literature* 22(3). 233–247.
- Chrzanowska-Kluczevska, Elżbieta. 2013b. *Much more than metaphor: Master tropes of artistic language and imagination*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Chrzanowska-Kluczevska, Elżbieta. 2019. Remembering landscapes lost through voices lost and regained – *The Issa Valley* of Czesław Miłosz. Paper presented at the International Symposium of Modern Language Association of America (MLA) “Remembering voices lost”, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Lisbon, 23–25 July.
- Chrzanowska-Kluczevska, Elżbieta. 2020. The aesthetics of *Frankenstein*. Nightmarish landscapes in European Romantic and Symbolic fantasy literature and fantastic painting. In Dieter Petzold & Klaudia Seibel (eds.), *Frankenstein 1818–2018 – Parabel der Moderne: Symposium 2018 in Ingolstadt [Frankenstein 1818–2018 – Parable of the modern age: Symposium 2018 in Ingolstadt]*, 73–90. Berlin: Peter Lang.
- Dyszak, Andrzej S. 2005. Czesława Miłosza językowy obraz krainy lat dzieciństwa i młodości [Czesław Miłosz's linguistic image of the land of childhood and youth]. In Józef Banaszak & Wiesław Trzeciakowski (eds.), *Wspominając Miłosza ... Czy zamknięta epoka? [Remembering Miłosz ... A closed epoch?]*, 55–73. Bydgoszcz: Klub Profesorów “Wierzenica”.
- Fermor, Patrick L. 1958. *Mani: Travels in the southern Peloponnese*. London: John Murray.
- Fiut, Aleksander. 1981. *Rozmowy z Czesławem Miłoszem [Conversations with Czesław Miłosz]*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie.
- Fiut, Aleksander & Zbigniew Kaźmierczyk. 2021. Miłosz – jest – jak świat”. Z prof. Aleksandrem Fiutem rozmawia dr hab. Zbigniew Kaźmierczyk, prof. UG [Miłosz – is – like the world. Prof. Aleksander Fiut interviewed by Zbigniew Kaźmierczyk]. *Gazeta Uniwersytecka* 6(170). 2–4.
- Goatly, Andrew. 2017. The poems of Edward Thomas: A case study in ecostylistics. In John Douthwaite, Daniela F. Virdis & Elisabetta Zurru (eds.), *The stylistics of landscapes, the landscapes of stylistics*, 95–122. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

- Hartman, Geoffrey H. 1985. *Easy pieces*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Haugen, Einar. 1972. The ecology of language. In Anwar S. Dil (ed.), *The ecology of language: Essays by Einar Haugen*, 325–339. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Hillis Miller, James. 1986. On edge. The crossways of contemporary criticism. In Morris Eaves & Michael Fischer (eds.), *Romanticism and contemporary criticism*, 96–126. Ithaca & New York: Cornell University Press.
- Hodson, Jane. 2016. Dialect in literature. In Violeta Sotirova (ed.), *The Bloomsbury companion to stylistics*, 416–429. London: Bloomsbury.
- Horbowicz, Paulina & Dominika Skrzypek. 2011. Filmowa kronika dzieciństwa. *Dolina Issy* w przekładzie na język szwedzki i norweski [Newsreel about childhood. *The Issa Valley* in Swedish and Norwegian]. *Przekładaniec* 25. 290–307.
- Hughes, Ted. 2008 [2005]. *Collected poems for children*. Illustrated by Raymond Briggs. London: Faber & Faber.
- Jędrzejewski, Tomasz. 2011. *Strony rodzinne Czesława Miłosza. 7 spacerów* [Czesław Miłosz's homeland. Seven walks]. Warszawa: Agora.
- Langleben, Maria. 2017. Landscapes as a dominant hero in “Bezhin Meadow” by J. S. Turgenev. In John Douthwaite, Daniela F. Virdis & Elisabetta Zurru (eds.), *The stylistics of landscapes, the landscapes of stylistics*, 123–152. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Leech, Geoffrey & Mick Short. 2007. *Style in fiction: A linguistic introduction to fictional prose*, 2nd edn. Harlow, UK: Longman.
- Lotman, Jurij. 1977 [1970]. *The structure of the artistic text*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Łoziński, Łukasz. 2011. Demonologia Czesława Miłosza. *Dolina Issy* w perspektywie etnologicznej [Demonology of Czesław Miłosz. *The Issa Valley* in an ethnological perspective]. *Polisemia* 6(2). <https://www.polisemia.com.pl/numery-czasopisma/numer-22011-6-wielokulturowo%C5%9B%C4%87-etniczno%C5%9B%C4%87-i-narodowo%C5%9B%C4%87-w-literaturze/demonologia> (accessed 23 May 2022).
- Miłosz, Czesław. 1953. *The captive mind*. London: Martin Secker & Warburg.
- Miłosz, Czesław. 1968. *Native realm: A search for self-definition*. Catherine S. Leach (trans.). New York: Doubleday.
- Miłosz, Czesław. 1982 [1981]. *The Issa valley: A novel*. Louis Iribarne (trans.). New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Miłosz, Czesław. 2008 [1996]. *Poezje wybrane. Selected poems*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie.
- Miłosz, Czesław. 2011 [1955]. *Dolina Issy*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie.
- Moszyński, Kazimierz. 1968–1969 [1929–1939]. *Kultura ludowa Słowian. Część 2. Kultura duchowa* [Slavonic folk culture. Part 2. Spiritual culture]. Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza.
- Paulauskiene, Aušra. 2007. *Lost and found: The discovery of Lithuania in American fiction*. Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi.
- Rybka, Małgorzata. 2000. *Ukształtowanie składniowo-stylistyczne powieści Czesława Miłosza* [Syntactico-stylistic formation of Czesław Miłosz's novels]. *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne. Seria Językoznawcza* VII(XXVII). 191–232.
- Sawaniowska-Mochowa, Zofia. 1985. O polszczyźnie „litewskiej” w „Dolinie Issy” Czesława Miłosza [“Lithuanian” Polish in “Dolina Issy” by Czesław Miłosz]. *Studia z Filologii Polskiej i Słowiańskiej* [Studies in Polish and Slavonic Philology] 23. 65–85.
- Sawaniowska-Mochowa, Zofia & Anna Zielińska. 2007. *Dziedzictwo kultury szlacheckiej na byłych Kresach północno-wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej. Ginąca część kultury europejskiej* [The heritage of the nobility's culture on the former north-eastern Frontier of the Polish Republic. A vanishing part of European culture].

- Warszawa: Instytut Sławistyki Polskiej Akademii Nauk [Institute of Slavonic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences].
- Semino, Elena. 2008. *Metaphor in discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vico, Giambattista. 1984 [1744]. *The new science of Giambattista Vico*. Thomas G. Bergin & Max H. Fisch (trans.). Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.
- Werth, Paul. 1994. Extended metaphor – a text-world account. *Language and Literature* 3(2). 79–103.
- Werth, Paul. 1999. *Text worlds: Representing conceptual space in discourse*. Harlow, UK: Longman.
- White, Hayden. 1985 [1978]. *Tropics of discourse: Essays in cultural criticism*. Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- White, Hayden. 1987 [1973]. *Metahistory: The historical imagination in nineteenth century Europe*. Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Wordsworth, William. 2004 [1798–1799]. A slumber did my spirit seal. In Harold Bloom (ed.), *The best poems of the English language: From Chaucer through Robert Frost*, 332. New York & London: Harper Perennial.
- Żakiewicz, Zbigniew. 2017 [2007]. *Dolina Issy* dwukrotnie czytana [The *Issa Valley* read twice]. In Maciej Żakiewicz & Katarzyna Wojan (eds.), *W czasie zatrzymane. Wybór szkiców literackich z lat 1977–2008* [Stopped in time. Selected literary sketches from the years 1977–2008], 464–466. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego.
- Żakiewicz, Maciej. 2021. Mój Ojciec mówił o Miłoszu ... [My Father spoke about Miłosz ...]. *Gazeta Uniwersytecka* 6(170). 36–39.
- Żyłko, Bogusław. 2021. Temat “Miłosz i natura” po latach [The theme “Miłosz and nature” years later]. *Gazeta Uniwersytecka* 6(170). 48–49.