



Helena Garczyńska

orcid.org/0000-0001-8100-6428

e-mail: helena.garczyńska@ug.edu.pl

University of Gdańsk

Iconotext and Environment Protection. Ecocritical Analysis of Selected Norwegian Books for Children

Ikonotekst a ochrona środowiska. Ekokrytyczna analiza wybranych norweskich książek dla dzieci

KEYWORDS

ecocriticism,
climate crisis,
Norwegian picture
books, children's
literature, developing
ecological awareness
among children

ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to examine how environmental issues are presented from an ecocritical perspective in Norwegian children's picture books. Using the presented theory, I address the following research questions: What philosophical stance is presented in the selected books? What is the portrayal of nature in the iconotexts? How can the described environmental threat and its reasons be defined? How are the relationships between people and nature presented? Is the environmental crisis depicted in the books possible to mitigate? What future do the authors envision for humanity? The material for the analysis consists of *Blekkulf. Hval i trøbbel* by Bente Roestad, Jerzy Olszak and Magdalena Markiewka, *Under polarisen* by Line Renslebråten, and *Hva er greia med klima?* by Ole Mathismoen and Jenny Jordahl. The analysis shows that the books are dominated by the anthropocentric mindset; the image of nature and the relationship between humans and nature are diverse; the crisis exists and results from human activity, although its scope is presented differently. The different ways of featuring the crisis may or may not be related to the genre of the analysed books. The pastoral narrative is predominant, suggesting the possibility of returning to a pristine state of nature, although an apocalyptic narrative present in one text indicates irreversible climate change.

SŁOWA KLUCZE ABSTRAKT

ekokrytyka, kryzys klimatyczny, norweskie książki obrazkowe, literatura dziecięca, rozwój świadomości ekologicznej wśród dzieci

Celem artykułu jest zbadanie, w jaki sposób zagadnienia związane z ochroną środowiska są przedstawione z perspektywy ekokrytycznej w norweskich książkach obrazkowych dla dzieci. Korzystając z zaprezentowanej teorii, odpowiadam na następujące pytania badawcze: Jaka postawa filozoficzna jest przedstawiona w wybranych książkach dla dzieci? Jaki jest obraz natury ukazany w ikonotekście? Jak można zdefiniować opisywane zagrożenie dla środowiska i jego powody? Jak wyglądają relacje człowiek – natura? Czy przedstawiony w książkach kryzys dotyczący środowiska jest według autorów możliwy do zażegnania? oraz Jaka przyszłość ma luje się przed ludzkością wg autorów? Materiału do analizy dostarczają *Blekkulf. Hval i trøbbel* autorstwa Bente Roestad, ilustrowana przez Jerzego Olszaka i Magdalenę Markiewkę, *Under polarisen* Line Renslebråten oraz *Hva er greia med klima?* Olego Mathismoena i Jenny Jordahl. Z analizy wynika, że w książkach dominuje postawa antropocentryczna, obraz natury i relacja człowiek – natura są zróżnicowane, kryzys istnieje i jest skutkiem działalności człowieka, choć jego zasięg jest różnie przedstawiony. Odmienny sposób przedstawiania kryzysu może, choć nie musi, wiązać się z gatunkiem analizowanych książek (książka obrazkowa, książka obrazkowa będąca literaturą faktu, komiks). Dominuje narracja pastoralna, wskazująca na możliwość powrotu do stanu pierwotnego natury, choć obecna w jednym tekście narracja apokaliptyczna wskazuje na nieodwracalne zmiany klimatyczne.

Introduction

Recent decades have seen a wonderful bloom of children's picture literature in Scandinavia. The characteristic features of this literature undoubtedly include a previously developed innovative view of the child and numerous formal experiments emphasised both by such traditional features as parodying, intertextuality or metafiction, and by the "postmodern" intermediality, materiality, intervisuality, the dual address nature of children's literature or the reader's participation in the creation of meanings (Dymel-Trzebiatowska, 2017 pp. 205–207). It is not surprising, then, that the works that are part of this trend have earned the name "flagships of the North" (Dymel-Trzebiatowska, 2010 p. 2).

Also, non-literary issues have also contributed to the development of children's picture literature in Scandinavia: scholarships and prizes for creators, a reduction in tax on books, compulsory purchase of books by libraries and royalties on book loans, and a great deal of academic research on picture books, facilitated by the support of institutions that enable collaboration and exchange of ideas between researchers and creators (Dymel-Trzebiatowska, 2017, p. 215).

This blooming also applies to Norway: it is enough to mention the names of the authors and illustrators of children's books, who are very often also known outside Norway. Svein Nyhus, Gro Dahle, Akin Düzakin, Per Dybvik, Øyvind Torseter, Stian Hole and Małgorzata Piotrowska are authors who have been many times rewarded for their works. However, it is worth mentioning that in Norway, what deserves special attention, apart from the distinguishing features already mentioned, is the artistic freedom of experimentation, both in terms of aesthetics and subject matter (achieved thanks to the aforementioned economic solutions supporting artists), which results in sometimes difficult, controversial and tabooed subjects being taken up (Tunkiel, 2020, p. 32). Such topics include loneliness, violence, parental illness, death, as well as environmental pollution and impending disaster, although it would seem that the latter topics do not refer to Norway, a country of beautiful, seemingly unspoiled nature.

Norway has dealt with environment protection in an impressive manner, using both legal solutions (e. g. the establishment of Europe's first Ministry of the Environment in 1972 [Tveterås, 1991, p. 824] and the inclusion of the right to a clean environment in the constitution [Kongeriket..., 2023, ch. 3]), organisational solutions (numerous state, municipal and social organisations), and economic solutions (subsidies, obligation to bear the costs of pollution) (Statens forurensningstilsyn, 1990).

Such attitude to the environment, however, does not come from nowhere, but is the result of centuries of tradition as well as contemporary activities. Norwegians have always been dependent on nature, practising industries such as farming, fishing, shipping, oil extraction, forestry, ranching; the terrain also forces them to respect nature. But that's not all, because the way they spend their leisure time is mainly being outdoors, hiking, going out into nature. Such leisure activities are possible due to the existence of the so-called *Allemannsretten* (Erikseni & Reusch, 2023), which used to be a customary law and now is a legal act, and which makes it possible for everyone to use nature, but also to respect nature and other people, emphasizing the balance between the man and the environment. To sum it up, one can be a Norwegian without reading the greatest Norwegian writers, as it is the bond with nature that co-creates the Norwegian national identity.

Children are brought up in the same spirit. The slogan for all schools and kindergartens is *outdoor education* through which children and young people are introduced into this Norwegian custom. But this is only one of the planned effects, because, apart from that, frequent being outdoors keeps young people fit, makes it possible for them to learn about nature "live" and not at a school desk, emphasises the importance of the man-nature relationship, and teaches respect for the environment and for other people as an element of this environment (Mańkowska, 2009, pp. 84–85). As Józefa Bałachowicz writes: "Since the 1980s, the Norwegian school has gradually started to move away from transmission education, based on a behavioural model of teaching,

and the direction of this change was determined by a transformative model of education aimed at supporting holistic human development in relationships with the world” (2017, p. 32)¹. Also, we cannot forget about the role of literature in shaping the ecological awareness in children².

Methodological Assumptions

The aim of the following article is to answer the question of how, from an ecocritical perspective, environmental issues are presented in selected Norwegian children’s books³. After presenting the basic concepts related to ecocriticism, I will analyse a selection of three children’s books containing text and images. Then I will formulate conclusions from the analysis.

Ecocriticism is a broad concept, variously defined by researchers. One of the definitions is as follows: “Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996, p. xvii). By ecocriticism, then, we usually mean an interpretative practice that foregrounds the issue of the relationship between humans and their environment and the ways in which this relationship is represented in texts (literary and others) (jfg, n. d.). Particular interest in this issue is a response to the ecological crisis, and thus grows out of a concern for the environment, and for our future as a species. It is highly probable that this interest can influence our life, raising awareness of the need for change in our relationship to the environment and opening our eyes to specific challenges and neglects.

The aforementioned ecological crisis is the result of human activity. Today, the term Anthropocene is used increasingly more often when talking about the times in which we live. It was first used by Eugene Stoermer in the 1980s, and later by Paul

1 Józefa Bałachowicz deals with the idea of sustainable development in children’s education. Her insightful reflections are, among other things, the result of her cooperation with Norwegian educators in the project: “Education for sustainable development in view of the challenges of the society of knowledge”. Bałachowicz points to the need to move away from education as merely transmitting knowledge, instead pointing to opportunities for human development, but with respect for the environment. The author draws on the aforementioned Norwegian models of education (Bałachowicz, 2017).

2 Norwegian books which are directly related to the environment include, e. g. picturebooks, encyclopaedias for children, criminal picture stories (e. g. the series *Klodeklubben* by Ruth Lillegraven and Jens Kristensen), handbooks (*Klima – hvaskjer’a. Morsommefaktaogoyaleeksperimenter* by Steinar Myhr and Bjørn Gjefsen and activity books (e. g. *Hjelpkloden! Hvakandugjøre for miljøet, Miljøagentene*). The above information comes from the website of the Scandinavian Internet bookshop Adlibris: <https://www.adlibris.com/no/kampanje/barnebok-klima>.

3 The seriousness of this issue not only in Norway but also in other Scandinavian countries is confirmed by the publishing of the second volume of the three-volume series *Påtversaf Norden* (Goga & Eskebæk, 2021). This publication was the effect of meetings and experience-sharing by Scandinavian researchers of literature for children and youth.

Crutzen in 2000 (Rafferty, 2023). The term indicates the significant impact of humans, on a global scale, on the environment that has long been altered by humans. Now, in revenge, the environment is fundamentally altering our existence as a species, if only through droughts, flooding, typhoons, or melting glaciers.

Two opposing philosophical attitudes are associated with the concept of ecocriticism: anthropocentrism and ecocentrism⁴. The former emphasises man's privileged place in the world, while, at the same time, making him responsible for the environment; the latter excludes this privileging and emphasises the value of the biosphere itself⁵.

Originally, ecocritical analysis was only applied to texts about nature itself. Only later did it begin to open up to all texts, according to the assumption that every text, in a way, touches matters related to the human-environment relationship, even though there is no description of this relationship. Such "environmental unawareness" became another slogan making it possible to look at each text in an ecocritical manner. This may result in an increased involvement into environmental issues (Buell, 2001, pp. 18–27).

In conducting an ecocritical analysis, it is impossible to ignore the narrative. Two opposing currents can be discerned in it: the apocalyptic narrative and the pastoral narrative. The former suggests the impossibility of reversing change and points to a further dramatic development of the processes initiated, leading to an apocalyptic catastrophe. The positive feature of this narrative may be the encouragement to act to prevent such an apocalypse from happening because, as Lawrence Buell writes: "Apocalypse is the single most powerful master metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal" (1995, p. 285). The pastoral narrative, on the other hand, avoids descriptions of the negative effects of human activity or points to the possibility of a return to the pre-crisis state, i. e. the prospect of a solution to all dramatic ecological problems. A positive feature of this narrative is undoubtedly the placing of nature at the centre (Fiedorczuk, 2015, pp. 74–75). It is also important to

4 Due to the volume of the article, I will omit the biocentric attitude, as the terms 'biocentrism' and 'ecocentrism' are sometimes used interchangeably, since ecocritical terminology is not fully standardized (Fiedorczuk, 2015, p. 53).

5 I deliberately omit issues involving non-anthropocentric pedagogy, although it will not be difficult to see some parallels in the approach to the human-nature relationship. Maximilian Chutorański argues that "the non(only)human pedagogy of which I write is an attempt to respond to the challenges associated with the post-human condition. The starting point includes changes concerning the development of modern technologies, environmental crises, the increasing complexity of the world, etc." (2020, pp. 211–212), and "the pedagogy I dream of seeks to see pedagogical acts for what they are. To delight in the associations of people, animals, things and all entities, to look at their actions (adding to the world) (2020, p. 215), but the books I have analysed represent a typical anthropocentric stance, so they do not fit directly into such reflections on pedagogy (2020, p. 215).

mention the possibility of creating an open ending in stories, which allows for different interpretations, often depending on the assumed choices of the characters.

Using the presented theory, I want to answer the following research questions:

- what philosophical attitude is portrayed in selected children's books,
- what image of nature is portrayed in the iconotext,
- how the described threat to the environment can be defined and what are its reasons,
- what the human-nature relationship is like,
- whether the environmental crisis presented in the books is, according to the authors, possible to solve,
- what the authors think the future is for humanity.

The method I wish to use is a qualitative analysis of the iconotext in selected Norwegian picturebooks. What I mean by iconotext is, following Kristin Hallberg, the "real text" of a picturebook, which only reveals itself while reading, and constitutes a kind of play, interaction or synthesis of text and image (Hallberg, 1982 p. 165). The two elements are thus not treated as opposing each other, but together attempting to give meaning to the world. In the analysis I intend to look at both elements of the iconotext in order to answer the questions presented above.

The material for the analysis is provided by the following three books for children: *Blekkulf. Hval i Robbel* by Bente Roestad (2021), illustrated by Jerzy Olszak and Magdalena Markiewka, *Under polarisen* by Line Renslebråten (2020) and *Hva er greiamedklima?* by Ole Mathismoen and Jenny Jordahl (2020). The analysed material is, on one hand, uniform due to the iconotext included in it, but, on the other hand, it represents variety, being consisted of a picturebook, a factual picturebook and a comic book, which makes us faced with the question whether the issue is presented in a similar way in all the genres.

Analysis

The first book is *Under polarisen* [Under the Polar Ice]⁶ (Renslebråten, 2020) published in 2018, which is a part of the series presenting various ecosystems to children. It is a factual book, presenting, through text and images, detailed information about the Arctic ecosystem, mainly that under the polar ice. The book consists of 90 pages. The descriptive language is balanced and scientific, yet, at the same time, adapted to the level of a child. The full names of animals are given in both Norwegian and Latin

⁶ The books are not translated into Polish, so I provide their titles in my translation because the meaning of the title is important for the content of the book and for its analysis.

versions. However, it is not the text that dominates, but the pictures, which are mostly painted in calm colours.

While looking at the relationship between people and nature, we may distinguish its four stages.

The first stage is positive: the text is dominated by the description of an ecosystem undisturbed by external factors, with the emphasis on the existence of a “balance since millions of years”⁷ (Renslebråten, 2020, p. 5⁸) referring to the life of all creatures under the ice. However, it is not the text but the image that dominates here. The magnificently presented sea depths, full of the fish, crustaceans, mammals and plants that live there, fascinate the reader with various shades of blue. Although other colours also appear, it is this blue, combined with delicate grey and white, that builds a mood of tranquillity and eternity. The contrast to the tranquil Arctic nature is provided by man and his artefacts (a research vessel, a diver, a hand with a test tube) painted in strong colours, but here man merely acts as an observer, in no way disturbing the peacefulness of the underwater world (pp. 3–27, 32–75).

The second stage is neutral, as it indicates the fact of man’s drawing on the riches of the sea: the text mentions the size of the shrimp catch, compared to the weight of cars, presumably to help the child understand the data (p. 28). The use of marine resources may also be indirectly evidenced by the fish presented on the following pages, familiar to readers from dishes on their tables. However, there is no signal that the said fishing (probably moderate) is too much of a burden on the environment. The image is dominated by a fishing vessel hauling nets containing a modest amount of shrimps (pp. 28–29).

The third stage includes eight pages and paints a decidedly negative picture of nature’s imbalance (pp. 76–83). There is more text, explaining difficult issues, than before, but the image still dominates. The story is relatively dynamic: the melting of Arctic ice is a consequence of climate warming caused by pollution from factories and cars, and is leading to serious consequences, not only locally but globally. For the Arctic, this means the extinction of many animal and plant species and the displacement of old species by new ones; the melting of Arctic ice, in turn, enables the creation of new transport routes for ships, allowing increased fishing and increasing pollution, including with plastic. For the world, in turn, the effect of melting ice in the Arctic is drought and also species extinction. The images in the book also signal a problem: although blue is still the dominant colour, the viewer will notice less animals and ice. The strong colours, which are mainly characteristic of man and his activities, are more intense and appear more often, and the images show many of the negative sides of

7 The quotations were translated by me unless I mention the authors of them.

8 Because of the lack of page numbers, I start counting the pages from the title page.

these activities: rubbish on the sea bed, and the effects of climate change and predatory fishing, such as almost empty nets (pp. 82–83). Particularly dramatic is the double-page showing drought: the yellow colour of the desert and a skeleton of a tree (pp. 80–81).

The last step in the relationship can be called positive, as it contains specific suggestions for solutions (pp. 84–87). The text points to the cooperation of scientists and politicians, but it also gives many ideas for combating pollution that are possible to implement by an ordinary person, including the child. It answers the question of what we can do by asking us to support environmental organisations, but, above all, to live in an eco-friendly manner (to use a bicycle or trains, to reduce mindless consumption, to sort rubbish, to encourage others to think in an eco-friendly way, etc.). The suggested slogan: “No one can do everything, but everyone can do something” (p. 84) is a good encouragement to stop being passive. The imagery, on the other hand, is reminiscent of the first pages, as we see the researchers’ ship and the scientists at work against a blue, seawater landscape. Which path the reader chooses is up to them, and it is also to be hoped that the aforementioned collaboration of scientists and politicians will be successful, so we see that the ending is open and full of hope.

Answering the questions posed above and summarising the analysis, it should be stated that, in *Under polarisen*, the image of nature is one of harmony, although it is not an idyllic, idealised image; and man’s use of nature’s goods is possible as long as it does not become a robbery economy. Man, therefore, benefits from these goods, but, in his own interest, he has to take care of the environment. There is a threat to nature and the author defines it clearly: greenhouse gas emissions. There is already an emergency situation because of emissions, and if the amount of gases is not reduced, the crisis will grow. Fortunately, there are ways of dealing with the situation, both top-down and bottom-up, but we do not know whether they will be implemented. Most of them are up to the readers.

The second item analysed is the thirty-something-page picturebook *Blekkulf. Hval i trøbbel* [*Squid. The Whale Is in Trouble*] (Roestad, 2021) written in 2020. It is a part of the series telling the adventures of personified sea animals behaving like playful children. They are brought to life by the title *Blekkulf*. The dynamically paced plot recounts dramatic events concerning the pollution of the sea. The language of the story is colloquial, the sentences are simple and the text is dominated by dialogue. At first glance, there is a balance between text and image, which, incidentally, is dominated by bright colours.

The relationship between man and nature has two stages in the story.

The book is dominated by the negative part at the beginning of the book, which occupies almost 90% of the volume. The text is the story of a game of hide-and-seek of sea creatures, hiding among all sorts of rubbish in the sea. The game quite quickly turns from a carefree activity into a dangerous one. Later it even becomes a deadly

threat when the whale starts choking on plastic, from which his stomach hurts. Fortunately, he manages to be saved thanks to the cooperation of his friends. The colourful, even overly bright picture shows not only the animals, but a lot of rubbish visible both in the water, on the bottom and on the surface. It is the kind of rubbish that children are very familiar with, as food packaging predominates. What is very interesting, however, is the lack of contrast between rubbish and nature, of which the characters are, after all, a part: everything is presented in the same colours, which may indicate that, according to the authors, rubbish has become the most ordinary part of the marine ecosystem (pp. 3–27).

Stage two in the story is positive. The text informs readers that the characters don't want rubbish in their environment (the sea), so they dump it on the shore, where gloved children stand and sort it, placing it in the appropriate bins. In the process, the reader learns what can be made out of rubbish, all of which is summed up as follows: "Rubbish becomes rubbish when it lands in the wrong place" (p. 33). The work ends with the children and sea creatures playing together, during which other important slogans are given (already known from the previous book): "No one can do everything, but everyone can do something" (p. 29) and: "Use your head, we only have one Earth" (p. 29). In the imagery, on the other hand, no change from the previous part can be discerned; the same bright colours are still used, only the faces clearly show contentment, and, of course, there is no longer any rubbish in the sea (pp. 28–33).

Summarising the analysis of *Blekkulf. Hval i trøbbel* (2021), one has to conclude that the book is dominated by the image of nature already contaminated by man, with clear traces of his activity; in order to change the situation (to return to the natural state), some work has to be done. There is no doubt who is to blame for the pollution: the presence of rubbish in the sea is man's work; the lack of sorting of rubbish is also a consequence of man's idleness. The author of the book does not suggest that the crisis is likely to repeat itself, at least not in the reality described. Also, according to the author, there is a simple, bottom-up solution to the crisis: the rubbish needs to be cleaned up and sorted. This is done by people (children), with the help of sea creatures. Then the sea becomes clean. The ending offered is an idyllic representation of the future.

The last of the analysed books: the comic book entitled *Hva er greia med klima? [What's the Deal with the Climate]* (Mathismoen & Jordahl, 2020) was created in 2019. It is a part of a series presenting various environmental issues. The comic is over 70 pages long and tells the story of two characters' journey through time and space, depicting climate phenomena at different times and in different places around the world. The characters talk to each other, pose questions and give answers, explaining climate phenomena. As in other parts of the series, a didactic tone dominates in this comic book. The language of the dialogues themselves is quite simple, but difficult

concepts and complex content are introduced, so the text is uneven. Both text and image are characterised by high saturation: words, sentences and various visual details fill and even overflow the frames of the comic. There is a balance between image and text: neither one nor the other element dominates the frames and pages. Also interesting are some attempts to distinguish with colour between safe content, namely natural phenomena, and described or signalled climatic threats.

Again, there are two parts in this book, but its construction is different from those previously discussed. The first part is a mixture of positive, neutral and negative stages, consisting of individual stories, very similarly structured, in which – after a description of the richness of the ecosystem – climate change is presented, which, in turn, leads to catastrophe. The number of stories is determined by the type of narrative as the changes discussed affect all ecosystems. The changes are occurring all the time, so the characters take us on a journey across the globe and different historical times, moving by means of a miraculous vehicle. Many frames are occupied by scientific data or conversations with scientists. The entire text contains a very detailed discussion of the causes and effects of climate change. The imagery, too, is very intense, saturated with a lot of details: in this section there is no clear distinction between positive and negative details, although with the negative ones we do notice a little more dark colours (pp. 3–59⁹).

It is difficult to unequivocally characterise the second part, as the positive, negative and neutral elements in it appear in a kind of chaos again (pp. 60–71). Common to the last ten pages or so is the depiction of two alternative cities. One of them is the city of those who do not care about the environment. In this city numerous advertisements encourage shopping, meat consumption, air travel; texts report high energy and water consumption. This bleak scenario of the present and perhaps the future is depicted with the use of clearly negative, dirty colours such as grey, black and dirty shades of brown (pp. 62–63). The alternative is another city of the future. Texts on the double-page point to ecological means of transport, recycling, saving, reducing shopping and travel, using green energy sources, etc. The colours of the image also emphasise the difference of this city from the previous one: both are almost identical in drawing and a large amount of detail, and the frames are constructed in the same way, but here the dominant colours are green and blue (2020, pp. 64–65).

The suggested ending is open, although, pessimistically speaking, it is unclear how much can be done. On the one hand, the grey and gloomy city of the present and the future overwhelms us with its realism, and the incentive to do anything is the mentioned fate of the dinosaurs that awaits humans if nothing changes. On the other hand, however, the vision of a green city is outlined, and the message is given that it is

9 Because of the lack of page numbers, I start counting the pages from the title page.

necessary to comply with climate agreements in order to achieve the goal, but that the aim is to slow down change, not to return to the idyllic, pastoral past (p. 69).

While summarising the analysis of the comic book, it is important to note that it is dominated by the description of climatic processes, both natural and influenced by man, although the latter are dominant. The authors point to the imbalance of nature now: we are facing a massive climate crisis and it will get worse; the only thing we have influence on is the pace of the change. To ensure that climate change does not happen so quickly, mainly top-down solutions are needed, such as adherence to climate agreements, designing the cities of the future; but also bottom-up solutions: environmental awareness (sorting rubbish, reduced consumption, use of bicycles and collective means of transport, less long-distance travels, more green places, etc.). It is man who is responsible for the environment and only he can bring about good changes. However, due to the already existing climate catastrophe, any work undertaken does not inspire hope for the return to an idyllic past, so the suggested conclusion is rather pessimistic, although open for other scenarios.

Research Conclusions

The conclusions that arise from the text and image analysis of the selected Norwegian children's books should begin by identifying the philosophical approach. Anthropocentrism is prevalent everywhere, i. e. humans have a privileged place in the world, which, however, makes them responsible for the environment. In the first book (Renslebråten, 2020), nature has admittedly existed for millions of years, but man is supposed to take care of it and think about the future. Similarly, in the second book (Roestad, 2021), man uses nature and, for his own sake, should respect it. In the third book (Mathismoen & Jordahl, 2020), the privileging of man and the need to plan for his future also indicates anthropocentrism.

Another question referred to the image of nature. In all the books, its image varies, as it oscillates from a clean environment to a polluted one in the first book and in the comic book, while in the second book the order is reversed. However, common to all the publications is the changing image of nature. In the first book it is mainly the image that is used to present it; in the second book the text plays an increasingly important role; and in the comic book both the text and the image represent the image of the environment.

The threat that is described was caused by human activity, although it is not always mentioned: in the first book it is definitely mentioned as a cause of pollution; in the second book it is not named, but from the illustrations one can be sure that it is also man's activity. In the comic books, both the picture and the text point to man, but

other, earlier disasters of a different (natural) origin are mentioned (a comet, volcanic eruptions, etc.). Everywhere, too, the threat is defined: in the first and third books it is climate change, while in the second it is throwing rubbish into the seas.

The next issue is related to the presentation of the human-nature relationship. All the books are linked by a multi-stage relationship, although the number and sequence of stages varies. It is also noteworthy that, while in the first two books the stages are clearly structured and thus transparent, in the comic book the relationships are presented in a confusing way. What unites them, however, is an anthropocentric view of these relationships.

No book denies the existence of the crisis; it is just more or less elaborated, i. e. showing more or less detail. In books one and three the causes and effects of climate change are discussed in detail; in book two the crisis is very simple, it is just littering the sea. In book 3, the description of the processes is somewhat confusing in contrast to the clear narrative in the first and second books. What the analysed books have in common is the possibility to solve the crisis.

Despite the definition of the crises, a pastoral narrative dominates, pointing to the possibility to return to nature's original state; only in the comic we can read that there is no way back from the existing crisis and we can only try to slow down the pace of dramatic climate change. This apocalyptic narrative, however, allows for an open-ended ending as in the first book, encouraging the readers to decide what the characters and the readers themselves will do. In book two, the crisis is a one-off event, and the ending is an idyllic vision of the future.

Finally, the issue of the environment is presented in a similar way in two of the three books: the first and the second one. Admittedly, the crisis, its consequences and its ending are more serious in the first than in the second book, but this may be due to the different age of the potential readers (there is no information in the books as to what the target group is). The comic book, on the other hand, presents the crisis comprehensively, but in a very detailed and rather chaotic way, and is additionally pessimistic, which may be due to the age of the possible readers or to the decision of the creators. Regardless of the similarities and differences, it is to be hoped that books with such themes will shape the environmental awareness of children and young people.

Bibliography

- Bałachowicz, J. (2017). Idea zrównoważonego rozwoju w edukacji dziecka. *Prima Educatione, 1*, 21–38.
- Buell, L. (1995). *The environmental imagination: Thoreau, nature writing, and the formation of American culture*. Harvard University Press.

- Buell, L. (2001). *Writing for an endangered world: Literature, culture and environment in the U.S. and beyond*. Harvard University Press.
- Chutorański, M. (2020). *Nie(tylko)ludzkie wymiary edukacji. W stronę pedagogiki nieantropocentrycznej*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego.
- Dymel-Trzebiatowska, H. (2010). Flagowe okłady Północy. O książce obrazkowej w Skandynawii. *Ryms. Kwartalnik o książkach dla dzieci i młodzieży*, 10, 2–3.
- Dymel-Trzebiatowska, H. (2017). *Książka obrazkowa w Skandynawii dawniej i dziś. Od drzeworytów po medium dla wszystkich*. In M. Cackowska, H. Dymel-Trzebiatowska & J. Szyłak, *Książka obrazkowa. Wprowadzenie* (pp. 191–234). Instytut Kultury Popularnej.
- Eriksen, G., & Reusch, M. (2023, June 12). *Allemannsretten*. Store Norske Leksikon. <https://snl.no/allemannsretten>
- Fiedorczuk, J. (2015). *Cyborg w ogrodzie. Wprowadzenie do ekokrytyki*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe Katedra.
- Glotfelty, C., & Fromm, H. (1996). *The ecocriticism reader: Landmarks in literary ecology*. The University of Georgia Press.
- Goga, N., & Eskebæk, M. (Eds.). (2021). *På tværs af Norden 2. Økokritiske strømninger i nordisk børne- og ungdomslitteratur*. Nordisk Ministerråd.
- Hallberg, K. (1982). Litteraturvetenskapen och bilderboksforskningen. *Tidskrift för litteraturvetenskap*, 3–4, 163–168.
- jfg. (n.d.). *Krytyka ekologiczna (ekokrytyka)*. Instytut Anglistyki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego. <https://ia.uw.edu.pl/instytut/struktura/zaklad-literatury-amerykanskiej/badania-literaturoznawcze-w-zakladzie-literatury-amerykanskiej/krytyka-ekologiczna-ekokrytyka>
- Kongeriket Norges Grunnlov. (2023). Norwegia. <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1814-05-17>
- Mańkowska, A. (2009). *Przemiany nauczania obowiązkowego w Norwegii*. Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu.
- Mathismoen, O., & Jordahl, J. (2020). *Hva er greia med klima? Ena – Vigmostad & Bjørke*.
- Rafferty, J.P. (2023, October 2). *Anthropocene Epoch*. Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/science/Anthropocene-Epoch>
- Renslebråten, L. (2020). *Under polarisen*. Cappelen Damm.
- Roestad, B. (2021). *Blekkulf. Hval i trøbbel*. Egmont.
- Statensforurensningstilsyn. (1990). *Framtiden er nå. Et sammendrag av SFTs langtidsplanlegging 1990–1993*. Statens forurensningstilsyn.
- Tunkiel, K. (2020). Ti år med norske bildebøker i Polen. Noen betraktninger fra et – litteraturformidlingsperspektiv. *Folia Scandinavica Posnaniensia*, 29, 30–41.
- Tveterås, E. (Ed.). (1991). *Bokklubbens tobindsleksikon*. Vol. 2. Kunnskapsforlaget.