

Some places are more interwoven with history, culture, and literature than others. The Vistula River is an example of an extraordinary space saturated with stories. However, as in the case of spaces that belong not only to human culture but also to the natural environment, the Vistula is an exceptional example of converging languages where Polish human history meets with its natural environmental ally.

The conglomerate of cultural references in the case of the Vistula River is particularly extensive due to its part in formulating the national identity of both Poles and the inhabitants of peripheral regions. It is an exceptional river, since its wavy ribbon geographically passes along the whole country, flowing through the Poland of three partitions and the Poland of today. The Vistula has historically provided a link between what is Polish and what is regional and what is separated and what is connected. That is why the literary map of references to the Vistula will contain texts not necessarily written by people who were in direct contact with the river, and in the creation of the Vistula as a symbol, the river element will often be overused.

The predominantly national character of the Vistula, as described by literature has been extensively studied by the renowned Polish historians of literature (e.g. Waclaw Borowy's *The Vistula in Polish poetry* from 1921 is one of the most notable examples). However, what is missing in this polonising image of the river is its environmental dimension. Although the physical geographers study the material river and biologists, hydrologists are included in planning and engineering projects, I advocate for representing the river as a subjective being, as a side for making decisions in the space to which she belongs.

This project aims to develop the language of speaking about the river subjectively. It is going to be performed by the ecocritical reading of literary texts referring to the Vistula River, both in the past (beginning with Jan Kochanowski's *Na Most Warszawski* [On the Bridge at Warsaw]), as well as today (Maciej Płaza's *Skoruń*). This variant of rereading the Vistula River is called aquacritical (I introduced this term in my research on the Odra River).

Literature, whose aim is to find the right language to express the complexity of the world, uses fiction and expression always already in an experimental way. However, since we are dealing with the specific, material and spatial character of the river, my task will be to recreate the representation of the river following the method of ecological realism, which I described in my monograph published in 2016. In this project, however, I would like to combine the method of ecocritical literary research, which I have developed so far in isolation from the methods used in interdisciplinary research of digital and environmental humanities, with the so-called deep mapping method. In the language of ecocritical literature The Vistula River has not been described, nor has it been spatialized using concepts of deep mapping. Both of these methods, when merged, will achieve a multidimensional and multilayer model of the river as a cultural and natural object, and at the same time formulate the postulate of treating the river as a social actor, which, like other water arteries, has been voluntarily transformed over time (i.e. regulated, changes in depth of the bottom, constructed with dams) regardless of its landscape and environmental character.

However, I am not asserting that all hydroengineering activities are detrimental to the natural environment, I believe though that we live in a space of constant negotiations between the interests of people and nature. This project aims to visualize this dynamic, show its cultural and social complexity and the missing language in which the river would function as an active voice in the historical debate involving climate change.

The results of the project will be published in one of the leading international journals for environmental humanities. Another publication will comprise submission of the collection of articles for a special issue of a scientific and leading journal for the field. All visual materials, regarding deep mapping design, will be consulted with Polish museums of the Vistula (in Tczew and Kazimierz Dolny), as well as with the international audience (with the environmental historians and digital humanists in Dublin and Munich) and finally, promoted through open access for the broader public.