

Summary of the doctoral dissertation entitled 'Non-Human Animals in the Poetry of Adam Zagajewski'

This doctoral dissertation, 'Non-Human Animals in the Poetry of Adam Zagajewski', explores a range of issues related to non-human animals in the poetry of one of the most acclaimed Polish writers of the second half of the 20th and early 21st centuries. The research was conducted using cutting-edge methods from broadly defined posthumanism.

The first chapter presents the most important research on Zagajewski's work. This includes research on topics such as the poet's early (New Wave) work, the identity of the lyrical subject in his poems, urban space, and references to works of art. It then points out that topics related to non-human animals have not been sufficiently researched. It outlines scholarly conclusions regarding non-human animals in the poetry under discussion, although they were usually not a separate research topic, being addressed in conjunction with work on the topic of "nature".

The second chapter of the dissertation presents the most important trends related to the selected research topic (posthumanism, ecocriticism, zoocriticism, animal studies). It also provides an overview of existing research on Polish poetry, conducted using methods familiar from the previously mentioned trends. The chapter concludes with a section that outlines the research methodology, lists the tools used in each section of the dissertation, poses the research questions, and presents the most important theses.

The third chapter begins with the history of humanity's delineation and eradication of differences between humans and other animals. Subsequent subchapters examine Zagajewski's poetry. They outline the divisions employed by the lyrical subject, distinguishing four groups: humans, animals, plants, and objects. It then demonstrates that the lyrical subject generally does not seek interspecies relationships, more often limiting himself to detached observation of other animals, although he places humans at the highest level in the hierarchy of beings as the "protector" of all other creatures. The next section of the third chapter demonstrates that interspecies communication in this poetry is presented as impossible to fully achieve, which contributes to the isolation of humans from other creatures. The final subchapter addresses the "animalness" of humans, which in Zagajewski's poetry is most often placed in negative contexts.

The fourth chapter concerns non-human animals, which appear as characters in the presented lyrical world. The cat from the poem 'Co godzina wiadomości' (L. OdW 42) is presented as an independent character, although it also serves a symbolic function. Next, cases

of non-human animals that can be considered domesticated are discussed. Next, the role of non-human animals in history is examined. The lyrical subject notes the presence of many other species in the brutal history of humanity. The next subsection of the fourth chapter concerns the habitats of non-human animals. They can occur in any space appearing in Zagajewski's works. Cities are a particularly important space.

The fifth chapter addresses, among other things, the "fantastic" behavior of non-human animals. The first part is devoted to instances where the lyrical subject indicates the existence of a mystical realm using examples of non-human animal behavior. The second part discusses examples of non-human animals "used" by the lyrical subject as a tool to mythologizing a human "story," including the story of himself. The final subchapter discusses non-human animals that the subject treats as intertextual references to another cultural work. Examples from various periods of Zagajewski's work are used to demonstrate one of the evolutions in the representation of non-human animals in the poetry discussed.