

# ***Lost Landscapes and Broken Human-Animal Bonds: Literature as an Environmental Historiography of Soviet Eastern Europe***

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*Lost Landscapes and Broken Human-Animal Bonds* is a book project aimed at reconstructing the environmental history of Soviet Eastern Europe with particular interest in the ecocritical perspective.

Representing environments and non-human animals in environmental history from a non-anthropocentric perspective poses various methodological problems and interesting questions about the language we use to tell histories. Literature can serve as a revisionist and inspirational tool to reimagine the past and reconstruct the memory of the environmentally challenged future, which will be shown through the example of the wounded history of Central-Eastern Europe.

The lost environments and non-human animals in the memory and historical studies of Soviet Eastern Europe are subordinated to the history of multinational communities falling apart and the experience of the sovietisation of culture and nature. The essentially anthropocentric character of this narrative leads to nature's exclusion from the cultural memory when the human need to commemorate seems to be used too aggressively in the case of the natural sites of crimes and non-human companions by neglecting their voice and environmental status.

The traumatic events of the Soviet period, deposited in the natural landscapes (such as the Katyn or Bialowieza forests) and broken human-animal relations (the collectivized villages), are interpreted here as the potential resources for bringing an environmental perspective into memory studies and inverting the hierarchy of interest in studying places of memory from human-oriented to nature-oriented.

The ecocritical analysis of literary fiction includes:

- studying the colonized voice of non-humans
- presenting the literature of resettled people who lost their cultural landscapes
- incorporating the memories of animals of the Soviet past
- reconfiguring cultural memory by asking how non-humans encroach on memory and the environmental imagination, how it affects how we tell our stories, and how literature can contribute to environmental historiography.