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## **The Banat Terrain as a Liminal and Post-Anthropocentric Space in Esther Kinsky's *Banatsko*\***

**Abstract:** The paper analyzes the depiction of the northern Banat region's landscape – a border area divided among Hungary, Romania, and Serbia – in Esther Kinsky's novel *Banatsko*. The author of the novel rejects the term “landscape” in her poetics and introduces the concept of a “disturbed terrain”, marked by traces, negotiation and stratification. The study investigates how literary representations of borderlands can destabilize anthropocentric narratives and binary oppositions such as nature/culture. The aim is to explore Kinsky's portrayal of liminal and post-anthropocentric space through the narrator's observations of border dynamics, hybrid terrains, slow-paced everyday life, nonhuman elements, and abandoned spaces. Grounded in border studies and ecocriticism, the paper applies close reading as its primary method. The analysis reveals that the novel reconfigures conventional notions of borders as static and fixed, instead presenting them as fluid and performative, and offers insights into the Banat terrain as a space of natural-cultural entanglement.

**Keywords:** Banat, border studies, contemporary German literature, ecocriticism, Esther Kinsky

### Introduction

Gottfried Benn (1956, 126) wrote that life consists of “building bridges over rivers that seep away”<sup>1</sup>. The landscape and the geography of Banat are inter-

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\* The paper, originally entitled *Landschaft des Niemandlandes als grenzüberschreitende 'Brücke' in Esther Kinsky's „Banatsko”* [Landscape of no man's land as a cross-border 'bridge' in Esther Kinsky's “Banatsko”], was presented at the 12<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Southeast European German Studies Association (November 6<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup>, 2019 in Maribor, Slovenia).

<sup>1</sup> “Brückenschlagen über Ströme, die vergehn”. The citations were translated from the German by the author of the paper, unless stated otherwise.

preted by Esther Kinsky as a different kind of bridge, a natural one that equally connects and divides people through time that seeps away and that witnesses the shifts in political borders, ethnic compositions, cultural influences, spoken languages, life circumstances, and ties between the inhabitants. The Banat landscape symbolizes cultural and historical transience, eroding identities as well as the changes in the physical world, but nevertheless, it establishes connections and provides its peoples with a nurturing ground, a source of food, and a way to escape the everyday boredom through agricultural work. Together with the word *border*, it becomes a key word in the novel *Banatsko*, and an exploration of the oppositions such as nature and culture.

The novel *Banatsko*<sup>2</sup>, the title referring to an adjective and a kтетик form in the Serbian language meaning *belonging to Banat*, was published in 2011 and was in the same year longlisted for the German Book Prize (Deutscher Buchpreis) (Rakusa 2011, 404), but it didn't reach wider popularity. A few reviews from 2011, when *Banatsko* was still Kinsky's latest book, expressed an overall positive reception of the novel. Kinsky's poetic language and the depiction of the atmosphere of the Hungarian *puszta*, the East European plains and the country life, were appraised. *Banatsko* was described as "the documentation of an affectionate appropriation of a stretch of land and its people in the reflection of one's own actions" (Hummitzsch 2011), „an 'exploration of a place within a narrative framework', something documentary" (Plath 2011) and „a small, and, once you have gotten accustomed to it, perhaps even an addictive manifest about the presence of things that are brighter at the edge of world than in large cities" (Sielaff 2011)<sup>3</sup>. Based on a careful observation of the space surrounding borders – an area that can even be characterized as no man's land, far from the center that dictates the dominant culture and thus inherently hybrid – Kinsky draws attention to an aspect that is often excluded from the study of borderlands: nature. She approaches it through the lens of traces, accumulation, layers, and the entanglement of objects, people, everyday life, and history (Ciardi 2023, 70), as well as what Rauscher (2024, 104) refers to as "the foreign and foreignness, the marginalized, the forgotten and the remote, the in-between realm of civilization and wilderness"<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> The geographical name *Banat* refers to "a land or region governed by a ban" (Loma 2006, 146). The *Etymological Dictionary of the Serbian Language* states that *ban* is a pre-Ottoman Turkishism that originally denoted a high military rank among the Avars, and on the Balkan territory it became a ruler's or noble title (Loma 2006, 142–144).

<sup>3</sup> "Das Dokument der liebevollen Aneignung eines Landstrichs und seiner Menschen in der Reflexion des eigenen Tuns"; „eine «Orts erkundung mit narrativem Gerüst», etwas Dokumentarisches"; „ein kleines, und wenn man einmal hineingefunden hat, vielleicht sogar süchtig machendes Manifest über die Präsenz der Dinge, die am Rande der Welt viel intensiver leuchten als in den großen Städten“.

<sup>4</sup> "Fremde und Fremdsein, das Marginalisierte, Vergessene und Abseitige, das Zwischenreich zwischen Zivilisation und Wildnis“.

In her poetics, Kinsky deliberately prefers the term *terrain* (*Gelände* in German) over *landscape* (*Landschaft* in German) because it is neutral and does not refer exclusively to either the natural or the urban, but rather designates the environment as a space of interference of both human and nonhuman (Car 2024, 112; Azou and Janssens 2021; Gerstner 2023, 181–182; Probst 2024, 278). The word *landscape* typically implies an aestheticized or idealized space and Pastuszka (2022, 144) explains that

“the term *terrain*, as used in the natural sciences, refers for the author to a surface to be explored, the most interesting kind of overlapping area, a human-impacted zone, disturbed land. [...] It is the coexistence of nature and human traces that makes terrain a special object of perception in the poetry and prose of Esther Kinsky – the openness of partially built-up, partially overgrown peripheral urban areas”<sup>5</sup>.

Probst (2024, 278) further elaborates on the *disturbed terrain* as the subject of Kinsky's writings that it is a term used in English natural history to refer to the processes “in which humans materially shape places and nonhumans reappropriate those very same places”. Her *terrain writing* can be connected to the concept of *natureculture*, in which the traditional divide is overcome and one might instead speak of a synthesis (cf. Haraway 2003). The insights into Kinsky's poetics will serve as a starting point, combined with the theoretical framework, to shed light on her novel *Banatsko* and examine the vision of the Banat terrain as a hybrid space of natureculture.

## Methodology and Theoretical Concepts

The aim of the paper is to analyze the perceptions and reconfigurations of borders and boundaries, and the depictions of the more-than-human world in Esther Kinsky's *Banatsko*, using close reading as a method (with a focus on descriptions, themes, and symbols), and guided by the theories of border studies and ecocriticism. The hypothesis is that the novel reimagines the borderland as a site of entangled lives, where human and nonhuman agencies intersect – allowing the Banat terrain to appear as an interdependent, post-anthropocentric entity. The term *post-anthropocentric* emphasizes a shift beyond the centrality of the human subject, whereas *non-anthropocentric*, which was not chosen for

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<sup>5</sup> “Das Gelände als ein naturkundlicher Begriff bedeutet für die Autorin ‘die zu erkundende Fläche’, die interessanteste ‚Art von Überlappungsgebiet‘, ‚menschlich überprägtes Gebiet, Disturbed Land‘ [...] Es ist das Nebeneinander von Natur und menschlichen Spuren, das das Gelände zum besonderen Wahrnehmungsgegenstand der Dichtung und Prosa von Esther Kinsky macht, das Offene der teilweise bebauten, teilweise verwilderten Randgebiete der Städte“.

this paper, suggests a negation or absence of human-centeredness. The entanglement<sup>6</sup> of human and nonhuman agencies more accurately reflects Kinsky's narrative, which does not exclude the human but rather decenters it, situating humans among other elements of both the natural and cultural world.

The analysis is based on the theories of border studies and ecocriticism. Border studies are a multidisciplinary, and even post-disciplinary, field of research primarily within the frameworks of geography, history, political science, conflict studies, sociology, and anthropology, frequently bridging diverse perspectives, as it addresses issues that universally shape human lives and everyday experiences (Wastl-Walter 2016, 1; Wilson and Donnan 2016, 2–3; Scott 2020, 3). It examines the functions and roles of borders, which are no longer interpreted as static, but rather as dynamic, multidimensional, complex, and constructed on a daily basis through political discourses and institutions, media and artistic representations, school textbooks, stereotypes, and everyday forms of transnationalism (Wastl-Walter 2016, 1–2; Scott 2020, 3; Ditter 2025, 7). Beyond the predominantly social sciences, border studies have increasingly become part of the humanities – including fields such as art, media studies, and philosophy – since literature and the arts offer valuable insights into borderlands and border crossings, comparable to those provided by ethnographic or historical research (Scott 2020, 3). Stories about borders affirm where we are within the imagined visions of the border, where people are simultaneously connected and separated, which points, on the one hand, to a cultural and literary turn in border studies, and on the other, to a spatial turn in the study of literature and cultures (Konrad and Amilhat Szary 2023).

In the humanities, borders are to an extent understood as a metaphor for that which can be divided dichotomously and subsequently reconnected in various ways (Fellner 2023, 23). They are often associated with postmodern and postcolonial modes of thought, frequently invoking Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the

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<sup>6</sup> The term *entanglement* is most notably associated with Karen Barad, who argues that everything in the universe is fundamentally interconnected. According to Barad, entities do not exist independently but rather emerge through their relationships and interactions with others – a perspective grounded in the principles of quantum physics (cf. Barad 2007). Entanglement, along with Donna Haraway's concept of *natureculture*, has been applied in the analyses of Esther Kinsky's work: Lozinski-Veach (2023) explores the intertwining of Holocaust commemoration with the more-than-human world, while Probst (2024, 280) describes “a potentially never-ending mutual process of building layers upon layers” and the “continuous and complex entanglements of human and non-human processes”. He also concludes that “Karen Barad's agential realism reveals the study of bodies, traces, patterns, and matter (un)accounted for and (un)conscious, as an important dimension of reflection on memories and memory practices” in a neo-materialist reading of Kinsky's writings (Probst 2023, 115).

third space. It is a liminal space that simultaneously encompasses both central and marginal positions, as well as dominant and minority discourses; it is performative and transitional, both temporally and spatially (Kay et al. 2007, 9–10). Liminality<sup>7</sup> is a term derived from the Latin word *limen*, meaning threshold, and refers to spaces or states that are transitional or in-between, characterized by ambiguity and indecision (Viljoen and Van der Merwe 2007, 10). In literary studies, it appears as a concept used to describe existence at the borders, thus opening the possibility for cultural hybridity, as Bhabha (1994, 4) writes, challenging the idea of stability and clear boundaries.

Homi K. Bhabha's explorations of hybridity and Gloria Anzaldúa's portrayal of the borderlands<sup>8</sup> identity of the *New Mestiza* have paved the way for new research within ecocriticism that transcends national borders towards transnationalism or cosmopolitanism<sup>9</sup> (Heise 2008, 382). Ecocriticism is defined as a study of the relationship between literature and the environment (Glotfelty and Fromm 1996) and emerged as a consequence of the understanding that our orientation toward the natural world should fundamentally change, which can only happen if our understanding of nature would firstly change (Estok 2011, 93). Jelica Tošić (2006, 44) emphasizes the two main hypotheses of the ecocritical thought: (1) humans always exist within an environment and (2) during the last decades of the twentieth century, it became clear that the biggest problem of the 21<sup>st</sup> century would be our relationship towards the Earth, that is, the natural world. Such an insight stemmed not only from the natural sciences, but also from the social sciences and humanities.

The idea that human culture and the physical world cannot be separated and that they continuously influence one another (Glotfelty 1996, xix) became the

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<sup>7</sup> Liminality is a concept present in various disciplines, but generally represents the status of an event, state, or object, and in this case, a space, that is situated *in-between* and where standard rules do not apply.

<sup>8</sup> The term *borderlands* is associated with activist Gloria Anzaldúa and her text *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987), in which she describes them as zones of contact where there is an imbalance of power, but also a space that is vague (Fellner 2023, 22).

<sup>9</sup> Around the same time, Murphy (2010, 62) also emphasizes that ecocriticism is generating a transnational theory that is "situated and particular, rather than universalist". The development of ecocriticism is characterized by multiple waves – ranging from related ecofeminism, the study of *Nature Writing*, the examination of literary depictions of ecological injustice toward socially marginalized groups, and eco-cosmopolitanism, to posthumanism and new materialism. Today, interdisciplinary connections are continuously expanding, as evident in this study that aims to connect border studies with ecocriticism. FitzGerald (2020, 62) writes that "interdisciplinarity has emerged in the last decade as a key academic aspiration, driven by the realisation that disciplines are better equipped to address environmental challenges when they work together".

founding thought of the ecocritical movement. Even though the terms *nature* and *culture* in the Western tradition are oppositional, ecocritical theorists argue that nature should no longer be seen as an underprivileged part of this binary opposition (Krämer and Schierbaum 2015, 7; Haraway 2008). William Howarth (1996, 69, 76), who wrote one of the first ecocritical studies, also emphasized that while nature and culture can be interpreted as oppositional terms, they are better understood as entangled phenomena.

Post-anthropocentrism and the Anthropocene have also become crucial ideas in ecocriticism, where humans are viewed not as the central entity belonging dominantly to culture, but as one part of a larger interconnected system, despite their significant and alarming influence on the natural world. The Anthropocene is a term coined by atmospheric scientists to describe a geological epoch marked by the fact that the human species has come to have a decisive impact on the ecology and geology of the entire planet, and it is typically used to refer to the period since the Industrial Revolution, beginning in the 1800s (Clark 2015, 1). In the humanities, it is used in a sense that is not geological but applies to other contexts as well, highlighting various aspects of the climate crisis. It could be said that climate change is only one part of human impact, while the creators of the term Anthropocene explain that other biogeochemical and elemental cycles fundamental to life on Earth have also been significantly altered, including modified water cycles on Earth, which are likely to lead to the sixth mass extinction in planetary history (Steffen et al. 2011, 842). Eva Horn (2020, 159–160) emphasizes that

“the notion of the Anthropocene implies a profound transformation of the human position within and relationship to the world. Living in the Anthropocene means a new form of *being-in-the-world*, and being in a radically changed world”

and she explores the key concepts interwoven into the aesthetics of the Anthropocene, namely: *latency*, the idea that transformation occurs through imperceptible and unpredictable processes; *entanglement*, the dissolution of the separation between humans and the world; and *a clash of scales*, the recognition that the environmental crisis of the Anthropocene unfolds across vastly different spatial and temporal scales.

The complexity of the issues addressed by ecocriticism requires interdisciplinary approaches that today surpass its original limitations and draw inspiration from numerous other disciplines (Brudin Borg, Wingård, and Bruhn 2024, 1–2). One possibility lies in the integration of border studies with the examination of the relationship between literature and the environment. Julia Ditter has significantly explored this with the example of Scottish literature. She argues that border studies today often focus on areas characterized by violence and conflict, where human lives are endangered, but the connection with ecocriticism opens new possibilities for understanding how narratives about borders are

linked to the natural world, which can either confirm or challenge depictions of borders, allowing for a departure from strictly anthropocentric research toward a multiperspective consideration of the interconnectedness of borders with both human and nonhuman lives (Ditter 2022). She emphasizes that nature is the most persistent of all border-crossers, yet it still fails to escape the effects of the existence of man-made borders, despite being excluded from mainstream discourses, and proposes a new approach that “tackles and deconstructs the problematic associations connected to the ‘natural’ borders debate by deconstructing both traditional notions of fixed borders and the conception of the natural” (Ditter 2025, 8; 10).

Based on the synthesis of both theoretical approaches, the analytical part of the paper will first examine the representation of the Banat terrain as a liminal space in the novel *Banatsko*, followed by an analysis of the perceptions and (re) configurations of borders. Ultimately, the borderland will be explored as a space where clear divisions are no longer viable, giving way to a multiperspective and post-anthropocentric understanding.

### The Banat Terrain as a Liminal Space

Banat is a geographical and historical region that today spans across three countries: Romania, Serbia, and Hungary. Geographically, it is a part of the Pannonian Plain, located between the Mureş, Tisza, and Danube Rivers and Transylvania. The terrain is mostly flat and monotonous, encompassing part of a plain that was formed after the waters of the Pannonian Sea receded several hundred thousand years ago, leaving behind fertile soil that contributed to the region's agricultural development. Banat's excellent soil supports the growth of various grains and industrial crops, and in previous centuries, agriculture was the region's primary economic sector (Neumann 2023, 2). Beyond its dynamic natural history, Banat also has a rich human history, beginning with the first settlements of Indo-European peoples of Thracian and Celtic origin. It encompasses Roman rule, invasions by the Huns, Avars, and Franks, the arrival of the Slavs, and the succession of ruling powers, primarily Hungarian, Ottoman, and Habsburg, up until the modern territorial divisions. Neumann (2023, 6) writes that “already in the Middle Ages, Banat was a multicultural region, since it was part of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. Orthodox Christians who spoke Romanian or Serbian, Turkish-speaking Muslims, Armenians, Sephardic Jews, and Roma lived here”<sup>10</sup>. Due to (or perhaps despite) the complexity of the historical developments, it is still inhabited by numerous ethnic groups.

<sup>10</sup> “Im Mittelalter bereits war das Banat ein multikultureller Raum, und zwar seit es Teil des Königreichs von Ungarn und des Osmanischen Kaiserreiches war. Hier lebten

In the literature of the German-speaking world, Herta Müller's stories about the lives of the German minorities in the Romanian Banat are definitely among the most famous. Friedrich Christian Delius described the Romanian Banat in a *Spiegel* article, more or less appropriately, as a "white-gray spot on the map"<sup>11</sup> and Müller contributed significantly to making the region more known to readers (Hummitzsch 2011). While Herta Müller depicts a bleak view of the Banat communities, Kinsky's portrayal is rather positive and full of impressions, although it inevitably also reveals the darker sides of everyday life in the region. In her review of the novel, Anja Hirsch (2011) notes that Kinsky's Banat differs from Müller's, "firstly as a geological, atmospheric, dense phenomenon, depicted as if with a sharp pen, which carries over to the paper water veins, brooks, rivers, silently and secretly, as if the illustrator stops by briefly at everything"<sup>12</sup>. Her portrayal of Banat is slow, almost lyrical, but observant and focused on the specific liminality of the borderland, imagining it as an environment to be explored. The Banat terrain is both a physical reality and an experience of space shaped by the narrator's perception. The author writes through internal focalization, immersing herself in the everyday events being recounted. However, the aim is not for the reader to gain access to the narrator's inner psychological world, but rather to view a human perspective that remains fragmented, incomplete, and intricately intertwined with the natural world.

The opening sentence, which relates to the human condition, is a citation from the novel *The Legend of the Tear Snowman* by the Hungarian writer László Darvasi: "We all come from somewhere and are going somewhere, because we are humans" (Kinsky 2011, 5). However, in Banat, where existence at the margins feels slowed down, the statement at first seems contradictory (cf. Blum-Barth 2012). While one may have an origin, it feels as though one could get lost in a continual wandering through the urban and natural environment. The narrator comments:

"here, where all the streets lead into the distance, it seems that going, seeing, exchanging glances is an endless large movement, a showcase of the silent world theatre, a wind-up game that never ends"<sup>13</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 8–9).

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orthodoxe Gläubige, die rumänisch oder serbisch sprachen, türkischsprechende Muslime, Armenier, sephardische Juden und Roma“.

<sup>11</sup> "Weißgrauer Fleck auf der Karte“.

<sup>12</sup> "Zunächst einmal ein geologisches, atmosphärisch dicht aufgeladenes Phänomen, gezeichnet wie mit einem spitzen Bleistift, der Wasseradern, Bäche, Flüsse aufs Papier trägt, leise und heimlich, als schaute die Zeichnerin dabei an allem ein wenig vorbei“.

<sup>13</sup> "Hier, wo alle Straßen in die Ferne führten, schien das Gehen, Sehen, Kreuzen des Blicks eine unaufhörliche große Bewegung, ein Schaukasten des leisen Welttheaters, ein Aufziehspiel, das nie zu Ende ging“.

One never truly travels far, instead the horizon is merely observed, always seeming so distant, and the movement, while not absent, is cyclical or incomplete. Life in the flatlands is depicted as “a life lacking mountains, lakes, seas, the remoteness of the muddy roads brushed by apparitions of fleeting guests, stray chance visitors, who were pondered over and speculated about”<sup>14</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 78–79). The absence of natural features traditionally viewed as prominent symbols of nature, such as mountains and seas, contributes to a sense of monotony. Yet, despite the seeming ordinariness, nature and the interaction with it remain present, especially as everywhere, but most distinctly in the flatlands, there is always the sky to be seen (Kinsky 2011, 185), which surpasses the limits of human civilization and shows a different dimension of the natural world as well as the issue of scalability. The narrator focuses her gaze specifically on the horizon, which can be interpreted as a symbol of liminality itself, as it exists between the earth and the sky and highlights the distinction between the distance and the closeness. What becomes observable in the absence of a more dynamic natural terrain are the sunflowers in the vicinity:

“the horizon invites to a constant search for the distance in an expectation of an unknown change. The eye sees the sunflowers bloom, wither, and become black; it oversees with a stare their yellow, brown, black waving, then the rutted bog that they left behind, which freezes in wintertime and is covered by an uneven snow blanket”<sup>15</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 68).

It is impossible to fully comprehend natural cycles, just as it is with broader concepts such as nature or climate change. However, observing a small fragment of the natural world – like a flower and the terrain changing with the seasons – can be enough to reveal both transience and resilience. In the liminal space of the plains, change is inevitable but perceived as cyclical rather than teleological, mirroring the non-linear movement through space. What remains constant is the human tendency toward speculation and contemplation – a manifestation of the cultural dimension in which narratives and meanings continually revolve around the occasional visitors as well as the subtle, fleeting natural phenomena. The author states that, in a transcultural space, one could speak with each other using the eyes, the hands, and the mouth, which is different in

<sup>14</sup> “Ein Leben in Ermangelung von Bergen, Seen, Meeren, die Abgelegenheit der schlammigen Straßen gestreift von Erscheinungen flüchtiger Gäste, verirrter Zufallsbesucher, denen man nachsann und über die man spekulierte”.

<sup>15</sup> “Der Horizont lädt ein zum steten Absuchen der Ferne in Erwartung einer unbekannteren Veränderung. Das Auge sieht die Sonnenblumen erblühen, verwelken und schwarz werden, starrt über ihr gelbes, braunes, schwarzes Wogen hinweg, dann über den furchigen Sumpf, den sie hinterlassen, der im Winter gefriert und sich mit einer unebenen Schneedecke überzieht“.

her own country and here (Kinsky 2011, 24). Speaking through the mouth is certainly a natural human ability, but the cultural codes – gestures and facial expressions – are different, so unfamiliar and foreign to an outsider like her, yet understandable among the peoples who live close to each other in a hybrid space of the borderland.

Hybridity is observable in the interplay between natural terrain and human-made environments as well, particularly in the narrator's reflections on shrinking villages and increasingly scattered towns (Kinsky 2011, 43), which is a hint at ongoing changes in settlement patterns and shifts in the relations between culture and nature. In *Banatsko*, the terrain of Banat is set against the confines of the city, which the narrator describes in stark terms:

“I came from the city and looked for the wide areas. Everywhere there were groans, moans, cries, and laughter, in the small alleys, every sound bounced off the porous house walls, tore small pieces of brickwork, which fell apart to dark ashes. Each word, each movement bumped into borders”<sup>16</sup> (2011, 15).

The city is perceived as a terrain made of asphalt, chaos, and deprivation – a space saturated with *omnipresent* borders, both visible and invisible. Even in moments of apparent openness, the crumbling infrastructure and decaying surfaces produce new forms of enclosure, which contrasts sharply with the expansive openness of the Banat plain. Compared to urban environments, where boundaries are visible, Banat – despite its apparent integration of borders – functions rather as an *in-between* space.

## Border Perceptions and Reconfigurations

The perception of the space directly surrounding the border as a no man's land and an in-between zone becomes evident through the narrator's observation of a specific local area, where a sign lies in the grass bearing the word *border*:

“there was nothing here. No one lay between the reeds and grass, watching over the preservation of the division between this side and that side. No one came, no one went, the land here was empty”<sup>17</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 51).

The described border landscape is not idealized as untouched wilderness, but instead emerges as a third space – a zone containing traces of mutual influ-

<sup>16</sup> “Ich kam aus der Stadt und suchte das Weite. Überall ächzte, stöhnte, schrie und lachte es, in den schmalen Gassen prallte jedes Geräusch an den porösen Häuserwänden ab, riss kleine Stücke Mauerwerk mit sich, die im Fall zu dunklem Staub zerrieselten. Jedes Wort, jede Bewegung stieß an Grenzen“.

<sup>17</sup> “Hier war nichts. Niemand lag zwischen Schilf und Gras und wachte über die Wahrung von Hüben und Drüben. Niemand kam, niemand ging, hier war das leere Land“.

ence between nature and culture. Initially, through the narrator's anthropocentric gaze, the terrain appears uncultivated and abandoned, lacking any visible human authority to maintain the border. However, the sign with the written word disrupts the image: someone, at some point, decided that the border would be located precisely there, and marked it using human language. The narrator's repetition of "no one" and references to "emptiness" signal that the border is not perceived as a threshold but rather as a site of absence – functioning in reality as an empty symbol.

The ambiguity surrounding the border is also present in the local inhabitants' perceptions: "there, they said unanimously, there is the border and beyond it already lies the other land. Their hands pointed vaguely towards a field where red poppies bloomed"<sup>18</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 7). Although there is a general collective agreement about the border's location – since the people from the Banat region speak of it unanimously – the German word used in the narration, *ungefähr* (vaguely, approximately), suggests imprecision. Either they are unsure of the border's exact location, or they are indifferent to it, as its material presence holds little significance in their daily lives, where, despite official designations, it remains vague and unstable. Sheren (2023, 25) notes that borders can be characterized not only as spaces of marginality and liminality, but also as holes, blind spots, places distant from the center that function according to their own internal logic. The semi-wild space of the Banat border is a blind spot: present yet not clearly visible and ambiguous, as it exists in language and in politics, but is elusive in place. Even the red poppies blooming in the field escape geopolitical categorization – they belong to the void in human spatial conceptions and reveal the performative aspect of borders, which are brought into being through language and speech, while nature itself remains indifferent to human divisions and continues to bloom regardless of where a line has been drawn. Associated with remembrance and transience, the flowers symbolize the passage of time in a region of shifting identities – overlooked spaces, the white and gray spots on the map.

The narrator further elaborates on the enigmatic nature of the border, which is presumed to lie somewhere within the poppy field, by comparing it to a lifeless snake: "[at the border] there is something peculiar because it is so unremarkable, it lies somewhere on the ground like a very long, lifeless snake and it wants to determine destinies"<sup>19</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 61). The border's inconspicuous

<sup>18</sup> "Dort, sagten sie wie aus einem Mund, dort ist die Grenze und dahinter schon das andere Land. Ihre Hände wiesen dabei ungefähr auf ein Feld, auf dem Klatschmohn blühte".

<sup>19</sup> "Da ist die Grenze etwas Merkwürdiges, weil sie so erscheinungslos ist, irgendwo liegt sie da im Land wie eine sehr lange leblose Schlange und will das Schicksal entscheiden".

ousness – its lack of visual confirmation in the surrounding terrain – highlights its abstract and arbitrary character. The comparison to a snake is deliberate: like borders, snakes often go unnoticed in the grass and they can represent danger. The narrator articulates the threat through the suggestion that the border “wants to determine destinies”, thereby ascribing agency to something that, in reality, lacks autonomous power. Rather than being an active force, the border is a complex, constructed object of human decision-making and the structures of power. The arbitrariness of the concept is revealed through language use as well, as the narrator observes that the Hungarian word for border – *határ* – is short, sharp, clear, and definitive, in contrast to the Romanian and Serbian terms like *frontiera* or *granica*, which convey a sense of fluidity (Kinsky 2011, 60). The different languages help us experience borders as sharp, artificial separations that often disregard the natural world, but also as spaces where the land is connected, continuously evading final divisions into *this side* and *the other side*.

Engagement with the blurred dichotomies is a central aspect of the narrator’s border perceptions, as well as a distinctive feature of Esther Kinsky’s poetics. Her novel *River* (*Am Fluß*, 2014), which has received more extensive scholarly attention than *Banatsko*, similarly explores the notion of boundaries. In *River*, the narrator moves along riverbanks, maintaining the ever-present gaze toward the opposite shore, and the novel, accompanied by the photographs of urban landscapes that resist conventional urban categorization, actively deconstructs binary oppositions – particularly the one between nature and culture (cf. Pestell 2020, 8; Sommerfeld 2024, 82). In *Banatsko*, the internal impulse of the narrator is likewise to move through the *disturbed terrains*, where “stratification emerges” (Probst 2024, 277). One example of such a space is the cemetery:

“From the Jewish cemetery at the periphery of Battonya, I saw for the first time more distant mountains, on the other side of the border. They appeared gentle, as if a torn veil got lost in the horizon or as if a dream from the flatlands saved and attached itself to the skies”<sup>20</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 78).

Drawing on the tradition of the medieval hierarchical ensemble of places that Foucault (1986, 22–23, 25) discusses – sacred versus profane, protected versus exposed, urban versus rural – the cemetery comes to symbolize a heterogeneous space, especially through its spatial shift toward the suburbs and the periphery. It represents a liminal zone and a form of third space marked by disturbance and stratification – situated between the sacred and the profane, between life and death, between memory and forgetting, and between

<sup>20</sup> “Vom jüdischen Friedhof am Rand von Battonya sah ich zum ersten Mal in weiter Ferne die Berge, jenseits der Grenze. Sie sahen zart aus, als hätte sich ein zerrissener Schleier an den Horizont verirrt, oder als hätte sich ein Traum aus den Ebenen dort hingereitet und an den Himmel geheftet“.

nature and culture, whose binary opposition it ultimately reveals as illusory. Positioned at the margins of Battonya and filled with traces of nature and the remnants of the past, it bears multiple layers reflecting the structures and values of the society at whose periphery it lies – much like the border space with which it can be meaningfully compared. The narrator's gaze from the Jewish cemetery toward the distant mountains beyond the border is rooted in a heterotopic reading: the cemetery becomes a peculiar vantage point from which the otherwise abstract other side of the border briefly becomes visible and thus functions as a site of mediation. She further reflects on the space that is geographically near, yet perceived as different: "I wanted to head off to this close otherland, to see how this here-and-there or here-but-there looks like on the other side"<sup>21</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 79). The compound words she uses, *Hierunddort* and *Hieraberdort*, express a confusion of spatial categories, as there seems to be an overlapping and a coexistence of both *here* and *there*, which highlights their instability and the liminality of the border zones. The narrator alludes to the ever-shifting nature of boundaries and their inherent strangeness. What once appeared as a gray spot on the map – the unknowable, the Other, the enigmatic – can become visible and audible, as the distance and the dichotomy is reconfigured. The border thus emerges as a dynamic, performative zone of contact and transformation:

"One did not think much about the land on the other side of the edge. It was as dark as a sea, but dry and vast, a continent without a name that had accidentally bumped into this land. Today, that's different. Today, one sees and hears the passersby who are traveling from over there to here and from here to over there"<sup>22</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 88).

The meaning of the border and of the land on the other side is shaped by movement, historical changes, and perceptions. The narrator herself is one of the passersby, a foreigner in the Banat region, whose viewpoint differs to the one belonging to the inhabitants of Banat. While she compares the Hungarian village of Battonya to Germany as her homeland and England as her "previous land", there are both uncanny similarities to her past experiences and a sense of newness in what she observes. Her own liminal positioning allows her to reflect on the border as "a rampart, which perhaps could only be overcome with a running start and from the foreign [land], or with great composure in the face of the adversities of

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<sup>21</sup> "Ich wollte mich in dieses nahe Andersland aufmachen, sehen, wie dieses Hierunddort oder Hieraberdort auf der anderen Seite erschien".

<sup>22</sup> "Man dachte nicht viel an das Land auf der anderen Seite des Randes. Es war dunkel wie ein Meer, aber trocken und weit, ein Kontinent ohne Namen, der durch Zufall an dieses Land stieß. Heute ist das anders. Heute sieht und hört man die Vorüberreisenden, die von drüben hierher und von hier aus nach drüben unterwegs sind".

history”<sup>23</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 78). The border is thus understood as a place that destabilizes established identities and allows for alternative modes of belonging.

### More-than-Human Terrain

The decentered perspective through which the narrator observes the Banat region is further developed in another reflection on what traditionally belongs to the center and the margin: human and nonhuman elements (landscape, animals, waste, and industrial ruins). Ditter (2022) writes that by examining the space through more-than-human agents, texts enable

“a move away from the anthropocentric focus on nation-state sovereignty as the primary locus of the border and open the border up to an investigation that takes into account its multiple effects on human and nonhuman lives”.

Car (2024, 115) argues, in her analysis of the novel *Am Fluß*, that the element of water – more specifically, the river as a metonym for the question of the human’s placement in nature, occupies a special place in Kinsky’s writing. Rivers, indeed central to Kinsky’s poetics, are presented as natural phenomena with cultural significance, marking boundaries and shaping narratives (Kinsky 2011, 147). The land between rivers reflects nature’s agency, as it bears the imprints of floods, droughts, and historical events (Kinsky 2011, 133–134). In *Banatsko*, the focus shifts to a bridge that mediates between human presence and the natural world:

“A bridge crossed the Mureş. With every car that drove onto the bridge, a dull, loud thud echoed, reverberating briefly and delivering a short, sharp jolt to every passerby, even the most hardened ones who likely came here every day and clung to some absent time, in winter, to the mild summer evenings, in summer, to the blue-hazy winter days and the glittering frost on the willow trees”<sup>24</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 102).

The bridge over the Mureş, a human-made structure, resists being reduced to a symbol of anthropocentric mastery over nature. Instead, it serves as a site

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<sup>23</sup> “[...] war die Grenze ein Wall, der sich vielleicht nur mit Anlauf und aus der Fremde überwinden lässt, oder mit einer großen Gelassenheit gegenüber den Unbilden der Geschichte”.

<sup>24</sup> “Über den Mures führe eine Brücke. Bei jedem Auto, das auf die Brücke fuhr, ertönte ein dumpfer lauter Schlag, der ganz kurz nachschwang und jedem Passanten einen kurzen Nackenhieb versetzen musste, selbst den abgebrühtesten, die wohl jeden Tag hierher kamen und irgendeiner abwesenden Zeit nachhingen, im Winter den lauen Sommerabenden, im Sommer den blaudunstigen Wintertagen und dem glitzernden Raureif an den Weidenbäumen”.

where infrastructure, natural rhythms, sounds, materials, and air converge. More than a threshold between two riverbanks – neither fully *here* nor *there* – the bridge connects atmospheric conditions and seasons, highlighting spatial and temporal hybridity as well as a post-anthropocentric perspective, since it is depicted not as a passive backdrop, but as an active presence embedded within both natural cycles and human experience.

Plants are also not depicted as merely part of the background to human activity – on the contrary, they occupy a prominent place in the narrative, as is evident in the portrayal of agricultural labor typical of the Banat region, where the narrator describes the melon pickers. Their interaction with the melons is intimate and sensory, revealing a deep attunement to the local environment:

“During the melon season, their fingers learned every tiny peculiarity of the melons’ skin, they felt the differences in scent, the shades of green and gray on the rind, every sound that arose when their hands touched the fruits or the fruits touched each other”<sup>25</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 34).

The act of gathering is vivid and immediate, but then the perspective shifts outward, zooming out and creating distance, as the narrator observes that the agricultural workers appear very small against the vast fields (Kinsky 2011, 44). What is portrayed is a clash of scale – a disproportion between human presence and the broader ecological or planetary dimensions. From this angle, the natural world in which the humankind operates and on which it depends, since the melons are harvested for sustenance, is not a backdrop or a resource. Instead, it emerges as a more-than-human entity, decentering anthropocentric perspectives and positioning the activity as embedded within larger ecological systems. Clark (2015, 72) explains that

“the Anthropocene itself is an emergent ‘scale effect’. That is, at a certain, indeterminate threshold, numerous human actions, insignificant in themselves (heating a house, clearing trees, flying between the continents, forest management) come together to form a new, imponderable physical event, altering the basic ecological cycles of the planet”.

Although the narrator does not explicitly engage with the ecological implications of agricultural practices, the juxtaposition of a close-up view of melon picking with a broader, more distanced perspective invites reflection on the various scales through which the Banat terrain can be perceived and understood: from the personal, embodied perspective of the picker, to the historical and cultural context of agriculture in the region, and finally, to the planetary scale.

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<sup>25</sup> “In der Melonenzeit lernten ihre Finger jede kleinste Besonderheit der Melonenhaut kennen, sie spürten die Unterschiede der Düfte, die Schattierungen von Grün und Grau der Schale, jeden Ton, der entstand, wenn die Hände auf die Früchte oder die Früchte aufeinander trafen”.

During a brief excursion to the Serbian Banat, the narrator encounters a self-appointed “specialist for border rocks”<sup>26</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 137), whose understanding of nature also suggests the transcendence of human-imposed boundaries and reflects the vast, indifferent scale of natural time. He tells her that the rocks – not the borders themselves – are the most important element and asserts that “in the rocks we find the embodiment of every conceivable pain, which the human heart is able to suffer”<sup>27</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 138). While stones are natural objects, they are imbued with cultural and emotional significance. Their formation, a result of friction and time, mirrors human suffering and resilience, particularly in the context of borders and border-crossings. The specialist devised a plan to make a catalogue and decipher all the mirror images of nature (Kinsky 2011, 139), attempting to impose order and cultural meaning on the natural world in an effort to comprehend it from the human perspective. However, the war interrupted his project, leaving these reflections of nature undeciphered and beyond human control. The rocks ultimately point to nature’s agency and the limits of human dominance.

The abandoned spaces of Banat – the dust-covered streets, the zones of waste, and the industrial ruins – in a similar way testify to the failure of human control and the persistence of nonhuman elements. Armiero (2021, 9) argues that “at the very core of every Anthropocene story lies some kind of waste. Apparently, the Age of Humans is marked by a techno-stratigraphy of wasted matter”. This develops the argument that disturbed terrains are spaces marked by traces of human activity layered across time, prompting broader reflections on how everyday life is inscribed and experienced in the post-industrial age (Car 2024, 110). The dust represents cultural residue, covering and transforming the world: “a thin layer of dust covered everything; with every step, a small cloud rose up, a wind picked up, forming small whirlwinds that hovered just above the ground”<sup>28</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 9). Even within this altered world, nature remains active, with winds and whirlwinds displaying vitality, albeit one altered by human intervention. Pastuszka (2022, 149) notes that in an abandoned peripheral area, the narrator witnesses a process where culture is gradually reclaimed by the natural world, revealing their enduring entanglement. The narrator also mentions a dump near the border and writes about sorting the usable, whereas the unusable had no name anymore (2011, 215–216). The dump occupies itself a liminal position – it is neither part of the sphere of the cultural, productive, or usable, nor part of untouched nature. It is also a site where discarded objects, stripped of

<sup>26</sup> “Spezialist für Grenzgestein“.

<sup>27</sup> “Im Gestein nämlich finden wir die Verkörperung eines jeden erdenklichen Schmerzes, den das menschliche Herz zu erleiden vermag“.

<sup>28</sup> “Dünner Staub bedeckte alles, bei jedem Schritt wirbelte eine kleine Wolke empor, ein Wind kam auf, kleine Trichter bildeten sich, schwebten dicht über dem Boden”.

their cultural identity and reduced to “namelessness”, confront natural processes like decomposition and fire. Their namelessness represents a cultural distancing from the unusable and an unwillingness to acknowledge their material after-life. Sorting through the waste is yet another human attempt to impose order, but despite systems designed to manage and categorize it, nature asserts itself unpredictably. Waste, as the most visible marker and “the essence of the Anthropocene” (Armiero 2021, 9), epitomizes humanity’s lasting impact on the environment<sup>29</sup>. In addition to the dump, the narrator concentrates on a more visceral depiction of the burning of animal carcasses, which also happens in a peripheral space near the border (2011, 32). It is a space of rejection, designed to isolate the unwanted, like the dump, yet the sensory details, the bitter and the burnt-rotten smells, challenge the boundaries and show how natural processes invade the human realm, refusing to remain hidden. The dump and the oven, though isolated from human settlements, reveal how waste and decay are still part of a broader both cultural and ecological system. The descriptions of the dogs in Banat further exemplify the theme of marginalization. These animals, relegated to roadsides and ditches, reflect both domestication and abandonment: “On the roadside, wet dogs trotted along, and in the ditch lay the bodies of dogs that had been run over” and “they were damaged dogs, one-eyed, three-legged, with stubby ears and ulcers in their dirty, matted winter fur”<sup>30</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 79; 109). Their damaged bodies symbolize nature altered by human intervention and subsequently returned back to nature – *companion species*, nurtured to live affectionately alongside humans, are discarded when deemed inconvenient (cf. Haraway 2003, 38), left to survive on their own. While their “purposeful yet hopeless” (Kinsky 2011, 79) movements embody vitality, they also represent despair, emphasizing the Anthropocene’s toll on nonhuman life.

Ultimately, the abandonment extends to the industrial sites. The narrator recalls the decline of a once-thriving factory, which reminds her of her childhood:

“The large, beautiful complex sank into neglect. Pulled-out machine parts rusted in reddish puddles. Windows gaped darkly where the glass had been broken out. The wind whistled through the halls, driving leaves, dirt, twigs, and paper waste across the floor”<sup>31</sup> (Kinsky 2011, 86).

<sup>29</sup> A forthcoming monograph by Hanne Janssens, *Von Müll und Menschen: Ökologische Imaginationen in deutschsprachiger Erzählprosa der Gegenwart* (announced for 2025), will include a study of the depictions of waste in Esther Kinsky’s literature, but at the moment of writing the paper, it is not available for reading yet.

<sup>30</sup> “Am Straßenrand liefen nasse Hunde, und im Straßengraben lagen die Körper totgefahrener Hunde”; “Es waren beschädigte Hunde, einäugig, dreibeinig, mit Ohrstümpfen und Schwären im schmutzkrassen Winterfell”.

<sup>31</sup> “Das große schöne Anlage versank in Verwahrlosung. Herausgezerrte Maschinenteile verrosteten in rötlichen Wasserlachen. Fenster gähnten dunkel, wo das Glas

The factory belongs to the Anthropocene pattern, as it shows how humans constructed structures that provided life and purpose, only to be forsaken. It demonstrates, like discarded objects and dogs, a transition from cultural utility to obsolescence. Nature infiltrates the space through reddish puddles, darkened windows, and leaves and debris blown across the halls. The ruined factory like the dump previously becomes a liminal space, as it used to be a site of labor and production, but even though it is left to decay in nature, it is not entirely natural either, blurring and reconfiguring the boundary between nature and culture. In the interplay between abandonment and reappropriation, between cultural residue and natural resurgence, the portrayal of disturbed terrains invites a reflection on how spaces are continuously negotiated across both human and nonhuman dimensions.

## Conclusion

The aim of the paper was to examine, through the frameworks of border studies and ecocriticism, how the border and the terrain of the borderland are represented in Esther Kinsky's *Banatsko*, and to offer insight into a reconceptualization that encompasses not only the socio-political, but also the ecological and material dimensions. The central hypothesis focused on how the novel questions the traditional anthropocentric worldview.

The analysis revealed that Kinsky's narrative destabilizes fixed conceptions of space and binary oppositions – particularly between nature and culture, here and there, but also between self and the other. Borders are not depicted as rigid lines or walls, but as layered processes shaped equally by absence, memory, and nature as well as by presence and power. The decentering is further realized through the narrator's attention to the nonhuman other – whether living, inert, ruined, or discarded.

The novel ultimately presents a form of terrain writing that merges successfully ecocritical insight with border poetics. *Banatsko* does not simply describe a marginal geographical region – it actively participates in theoretical debates by presenting a vision of the world in which human and nonhuman existences are deeply entangled and it contributes to the growing discourse that recognizes the complexity of living in an era shaped by overlapping crises. Kinsky's poetics urges us to rethink how we understand culture, nature, and ecology in the Anthropocene, the significance of the marginal and the liminal, and the ways in which we perceive, live in, and relate to the world we inhabit.

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herausgebrochen war. Der Wind pfiff durch die Hallen und trieb Laub, Schmutz, Reisig, Papierabfall über den Boden”.

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*Banatski predeo kao liminalan i postantropocentričan prostor  
u romanu Banatsko spisateljice Ester Kinski*

U radu se razmatra prikaz granica i predela severnog Banata između tri zemlje – Rumunije, Srbije i Mađarske – u romanu *Banatsko* nemačke spisateljice Ester Kinski. Cilj je da se na osnovu teorijskog okvira iz oblasti proučavanja granica i ekokritike prouče karakteristike liminalnosti i postantropocentričnosti opisanog prostora, razotkrivajući isprepletanost humanog i ahumanog. Kinski se udaljava ciljano od termina *Landschaft* (krajolik) i u svojoj poetici se zalaže za upotrebu termina *Gelände* (predeo ili teren) jer smatra da je neutralan i jer ne želi da se u književnim tekstovima fokusira na idealizovani prostor netaknute prirode, već na okruženje koje percipira kao slojevito, poremećeno i oblikovano tragovima ljudskog i neljudskog prisustva. Kroz opise marginalnih nastanjenih mesta pokraj granice, napuštenih i odbačenih prostora i otpada vrši se rekonfiguracija tradicionalnih binarnih opozicija poput prirode i kulture, centra i periferije, ovde i tamo, te čak i sebe i Drugog, dok se granice ne predstavljaju kao statične linije, već performativni procesi, odnosno kao fluidne, višeznačne, a neretko i neprimetne u fizičkom svetu, iako su duboko ukorenjene u jeziku, sećanjima i percepciji. Decentriranjem ljudskog i naglašavajući vitalnost sveta koji obuhvata kako čoveka, tako i biljke, životinje, vremenske prilike i druge pojave u prirodi, do izražaja dolazi postantropocentričnost prostora. Naratorica obraća pažnju na lokalne aspekte koji nisu isključivo vezani za kulturu, istoriju ili politiku, već doprinose razmišljanju o tome kako se doživljava i književno-kulturološki konstruiše prirodni svet pograničnog predela. Zaključuje se da je *Banatsko* meditacija na temu nestabilnosti granica i međusobne povezanosti ljudskih i neljudskih elemenata, te da ovakav pristup koji je utemeljen u interdisciplinarnom, ekokritičkom proučavanju granica omogućuje usredsređivanje na aspekte prostora na periferijama koji prevazilaze hijerarhijske podele i dualizme, te i njihovo tumačenje kao liminalnih, odnosno hibridnih zona.

**Ključne reči:** Banat, ekokritika, Ester Kinski, proučavanje granica, savremena nemačka književnost

*Le terrain du Banat comme espace liminal et postanthropocentrique  
dans le roman Du Banat de l'écrivaine Esther Kinsky*

Dans le présent travail est discutée la représentation des frontières et du terrain du Banat du nord entre trois pays – Roumanie, Serbie et Hongrie – dans le roman *Du Banat* de l'écrivaine allemande Esther Kinsky. À l'aide du cadre théorique relevant du domaine de l'étude des frontières et de l'écocritique, les caractéristiques de liminalité et de postanthropocentrisme de l'espace décrit ont été mises en relief, faisant ressortir l'intrication de l'humain et de l'a-humain. Kinsky s'éloigne volontairement du terme *Landschaft* (paysage) et plaide dans sa poétique pour l'utilisation du terme *Gelände* (étendue ou terrain) car elle le considère comme neutre et ne veut pas se concentrer dans les textes littéraires sur l'espace idéalisé de la nature intacte, mais sur l'environnement qu'elle perçoit comme stratifié, déréglé et façonné par des traces de présence humaine et non-humaine. À travers les descriptions des localités marginales habitées près de la frontière, des espaces abandonnés et rejetés et des décharges, l'on effectue une reconfiguration des oppositions binaires traditionnelles comme celles de nature et culture, centre et périphérie, ici et là, et même soi et l'Autre, alors que les frontières ne sont pas présentées comme des lignes statiques, mais comme des processus performatifs, c'est-à-dire comme fluides, plurisignifiantes, et souvent comme imperceptibles dans le monde physique, bien qu'elles soient profondément enracinées dans la langue, les souvenirs et la perception. Par le décentrement de l'humain et l'accentuation de la vitalité du monde qui englobe aussi bien l'homme que les plantes, les animaux, les conditions climatiques et d'autres phénomènes dans la nature, c'est le postanthropocentrisme de l'espace qui est mis en relief. L'on conclut que *Du Banat* est une méditation sur le thème de l'instabilité des frontières et le lien mutuel des éléments humains et non-humains, puis qu'une telle approche fondée sur une étude interdisciplinaire et écocritique des frontières permet de se concentrer sur les aspects de l'espace dans les périphéries qui dépassent les divisions hiérarchiques et les dualismes, et enfin leur interprétation comme des zones liminales, c'est-à-dire hybrides.

**Mots clés:** Banat, écocritique, Ester Kinski, étude des frontières, littérature allemande contemporaine

Primljeno / Received: 9.01.2025.

Prihvaćeno / Accepted for publication: 15.04.2025.