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## **“Vegetal Women” in Contemporary Polish Ecofiction: Ecofeminist Readings of Dominika S?owik’s Short Stories Wegetacja and Pn?cze from the Collection Samosiejki (2021)**

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### **Abstract**

Women’s connection with nature, historically grounded in patriarchal thinking that positions them as subjects of oppression, has been widely explored in recent literary production. Especially in response to the contemporary environmental crisis, a wave of ecofiction has emerged, foregrounding female characters as leading figures with regard to the vegetal realm. The worlds shaped by the authors – primarily women – tend to propose two main roles for feminine protagonists: the rebel heroine, acting in alliance with nature to seek revenge against its exploitation, or the custodian of ancient knowledge and an intimate bond with the environment, rooted in mystery and mysticism.

Within this framework, Poland has proven to be a fertile field for ecoliterature, with a strong presence of women authors, such as Olga Tokarczuk, Julia Fiedorczuk, Ma?orzata Lebda, Anna Adamowicz, and many others, who engage in environmental concern in their works. Among them is Dominika S?owik, a critically understudied writer, who, in her collection of short stories Samosiejki (2021), explores the relationship between human and nonhuman beings through the representation of extreme ecological conditions caused by anthropogenic environmental degradation, or bizarre interconnections, where women function as guardians of secrets related to the natural world.

Adopting the perspectives of ecocriticism and ecofeminism, this paper aims to examine Wegetacja and Pn?cze, two representative short stories, in which S?owik intertwines the identities of female protagonists with natural elements, creating “vegetal women”, namely, interspecies entanglements between human and plant life. The purpose is to analyze this literary strategy, based on metamorphosis,



as a form of women writers' ecological commitment that challenges the anthropocentric perspective underlying contemporary environmental issues.

**Keywords:** Women, S?owik, Ecofeminism, Ecocriticism, Nature