

A Posthumanist Ecocritical Approach to Children's Literature: José Saramago's "An Unexpected Light," "The Lizard," and "The World's Largest Flower"*

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Abstract

Children's literature plays a significant part in children's imaginative and socio-emotional development, as it facilitates the shaping of their worldview, nurtures their imagination, fosters empathy, and cultivates environmental consciousness. Examining children's literature within the framework of posthumanist ecocriticism entails the process of (re)evaluating these literary works via the lens of posthumanist theories and ecocritical perspectives, with the aim of uncovering the ecological themes present within them. This sort of reading involves the posthumanist perspective, which challenges the conventional anthropocentric standpoint by interrogating the dichotomy between human and nonhuman entities and delving into the connectivity and interdependence that exists among all forms of life. Conversely, the ecocritical viewpoint investigates the interplay between literature and the environment, with a particular focus on ecological considerations, depictions of the natural world, and humans influence on the ecological balance. Currently, the convergence of children's literature and posthumanist ecocriticism aims to elucidate the portrayal of nature, technology, and the interplay between humans and the environment within children's literary works. This analysis examines the portrayal of nature in José Saramago's literary works, namely "An Unexpected Light," "The Lizard," and "The World's Largest Flower." The focus of this examination is to determine if human and nonhuman entities are shown as distinct entities or as interconnected entities within the narrative. This analysis will explore whether Children's Literature challenges the dichotomy between humans and nonhumans, and if it presents alternative viewpoints that promote empathy, responsibility, and interconnectedness between humans and nonhumans.

Keywords: Children's Literature, Posthumanism, Ecocriticism, José Saramago

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ÇOCUK EDEBİYATINA POSTHÜMANİST EKOELEŞTİREL BİR YAKLAŞIM: JOSÉ SARAMAGO'NUN “BEKLENMEDİK IŞIK”, “KERTENKELE” VE “DÜNYANIN EN BÜYÜK ÇİÇEĞİ”

Öz

Çocuk edebiyatı, çocukların dünya görüşlerinin şekillenmesini kolaylaştırdığı, hayal güçlerini beslediği, empati ve çevre bilinçlerini geliştirdiği için, onların hayal gücü ve sosyo-duygusal gelişimlerinde önemli bir rol oynar. Çocuk edebiyatını posthümanist ekoeleştirici çerçevesinde incelemek, ele alınan edebi metinlerin posthümanist ve ekoeleştirici bakış açıları üzerinden, metinlerdeki ekolojik temaları ortaya çıkararak bu metinlerin (yeniden) okunmasını içerir. Bu tür yakın okuma, insan ve insan dışı varlıklar arasındaki ikilemi sorgulayan, tüm yaşam formları arasındaki ilişkiselliği ve karşılıklı bağımlılığı araştıran ve geleneksel insan merkezli bakış açısına meydan okuyan posthümanist diskur üzerinden gerçekleştirilir. Öte yandan, ekoeleştirici diskur, edebiyat ve çevre arasındaki etkileşimi, özellikle ekolojik perspektiflere, doğal dünyanın tasvirlerine ve insanın ekolojik denge üzerindeki etkisine odaklanarak araştırır. Günümüzde çocuk edebiyatı ile posthümanist ekoeleştirici, çocuk edebiyatında doğa, teknoloji ve insan-çevre arasındaki etkileşimin incelenmesinde bir araya gelirler. Bu inceleme, José Saramago'nun “Beklenmedik Işık,” “Kertenkele” ve “Dünyanın En Büyük Çiçeği” eserlerindeki doğa tasvirlerine odaklanmaktadır. İnceleme, ele alınan eserlerdeki insan ve insan olmayan varlıkların birbirlerinden bağımsız ya da iç içe varlıklar olarak tasvir edilip edilmediğine odaklanır. Bu hususta, çocuk edebiyatının insanlar ve insan dışı varlıklar arasındaki ikileme meydan okuyup okumadığını, insanlar ve insan dışı varlıklar arasındaki empatiyi, sorumluluğu ve iç içe geçmişliği teşvik eden alternatif bakış açıları sunup sunmadığını inceler.

Anahtar sözcükler: Çocuk Edebiyatı, Posthümanizm, Ekoeleştirici, José Saramago

INTRODUCTION

Children's literature plays a pivotal role in the creative and socio-emotional development of children, as it promotes the formation of their worldview, develops their imagination, promotes empathy, and encourages environmental awareness. This is accomplished using a variety of literary genres, including as picture books, fairy tales, fantasy, and adventure stories, which are mainly designed to actively engage and attract the youthful audience. The analysis of children's literature via the lens of posthumanist ecocriticism involves the critical assessment of these literary works using posthumanist theories and ecocritical views. The objective is to reveal the ecological themes that are embedded within these works. Such reading encompasses the posthumanist viewpoint, which critiques the traditional human-centered position by examining the division between human and nonhuman things and exploring the interconnectedness and interdependence that occurs among all living forms, humans, and nonhumans. On the other hand, the ecocritical perspective examines the dynamic relationship between literature and the environment, with special emphasis on ecological concerns, portrayals of

the natural environment, and the impact of human activities on the ecological equilibrium. At now, there is a growing interest in examining the intersection of children's literature and posthumanist ecocriticism. Posthumanism and ecocriticism have a commonality in their exploration of crossing narratives and theoretical frameworks. Both fields bring about alterations in the conceptualization of materiality, agency, and nature. This essay critically examines how nature, technology, and the dynamic relationship between humans and the environment are depicted in children's literary works. It investigates the representation of human and nonhuman entities as separate or interconnected entities; explores the extent to which Children's Literature challenges the binary distinction between humans and nonhumans, and whether it presents alternative perspectives that foster empathy, responsibility, and interconnectedness between these entities. Furthermore, it underscores the significance and indispensability of posthumanist ecocritical readings in children's literature.

1. POSTHUMANISM AND ITS CONTENTS

The pervasive presence of technology in our daily lives has precipitated a significant change in shaping our understanding of human existence, including both our experience of isolation as human beings and our interactions with other nonhuman species. The intricate and interdependent connection that exists between human beings and nonhuman species offers an opportunity to reconsider and reinterpret conventional boundaries imposed on humans. This exploration involves an examination of the ways in which humans interact with and influence species outside their own. In posthumanist (ecocritical children's) literature, it is commonly noted that instances of entanglement, including humans, and nonhumans, the relationship between humans and nature, the interaction between humans and machines, and the connection between humans and animals, occur. Since they involve multiple connections and interactions, these relationships are characterized as "intra-active" (Barad, 2007, p. 815). The recognition of interconnectedness and shared interdependence between humans and nonhumans necessitates a holistic viewpoint. Therefore, it demands a critical reevaluation and recontextualization of the definition, comprehension, and perception of the human, which can only be achieved through a rigorous exploration of the fundamental characteristics that delineate the human and the inherent significance associated with what it means to be and/or to become human.

As a theoretical framework, posthumanism takes a more radical stance by recognizing the many and varied ways in which the notion of the human might be delineated (Vint, 2020, p.9). For example, in his seminal work "Prometheus as Performer: Toward a Posthumanist Culture?" Ihab Hassan asserts that it is imperative to recognize the potential end of five centuries of humanism (Hassan, 1977, p. 843). Hassan's stance might be seen as the dismantling of current boundaries, hierarchies, and standards, and viewed as the importance of variety, fusion, and adaptability. In my view, Hassan upholds the idea of discarding Eurocentric viewpoints, which overlook other frameworks and systems that promote the spread of other cultures and alternatives via technical advancements. Hassan questions the common notion of humanity in traditional humanism by exploring the ramifications of modern technologies including cybernetics, genetics, nanotechnology,

pharmacology, and artificial intelligence. During the twentieth century, academic fields surfaced, including feminist studies, decolonial studies, and anti-racist studies. The objective of these disciplines is to engage in a thorough examination and questioning of the dichotomous classifications and instances of marginalization that arise from considerations of race, gender, ethnicity, color, and species. Eco-studies, green and blue studies, and disability studies have likewise endeavored to critically analyze and redefine these dichotomies and instances of marginalization. Posthumanism, as an emerging topic in the twenty-first century, presents a critical examination of the conventional understandings of humanist ideals. It posits an inclusive framework that embraces a wide range of creatures, including both living and non-living, as well as human and nonhuman. The rationale for advocating for all-inclusivity is grounded in the assertion that the principles of humanism have given birth to several adverse outcomes, including but not limited to crises, despondency, conflicts, calamities, and acts of domination, control, and power towards humans from diverse racial, gender, ethnic backgrounds, as well as the nonhuman environment. This perspective questions the concept of human exceptionalism and acknowledges the profound interconnectedness among humans, nonhuman beings, and the natural world. According to Sherryl Vint, posthumanism challenges the anthropocentric frameworks that are based on humanism and have gotten entangled in the environmental crises and the brutality of colonial racialization (2020, p.10). Vint argues that posthumanism acknowledges the extensive environmental consequences of human actions and highlights how our anthropocentric perspective has worsened contemporary challenges, including climate change and the decline of biodiversity. It challenges conventional humanist frameworks to uncover fresh perspectives on how we fit into the universe and how we interact with other living things and the environment.

Within this emerging discourse, it is necessary to engage in a critical examination of established frameworks that disrupt and infringe upon the integrity of the environment, as well as perpetuate inequalities based on race, gender, color, and species. This examination should be accompanied by a consideration of alternative approaches and perspectives. Specifically, it raises inquiries about the dichotomies of human/animal, organism/machine, and virtual/material (Haraway, 1985, pp. 50-57). These dichotomies present an alternate viewpoint about the concept and comprehension of the human in the contemporary day and beyond. It posits that humans may be classified as cyborgs, embodying a combination of organic and mechanical components. Haraway's theoretical framework on cyborgs provides insight into the interconnected and mutually influential dynamics of biological organisms, machines, physical and non-physical environments, as well as human and nonhuman entities that rejects centralization by recognizing the presence of several centers of interest. Nevertheless, it should be noted that these centers exhibit a dynamic and ever-changing nature, characterized by their ability to migrate, and exist temporarily (Ferrando, 2013, p. 30). These perspectives are distinguished by their diversity, fluidity, nomadic nature, and emphasis on transience, which highlights a process of co-evolution and change resulting in the displacement and reestablishment of borders. They suggest that the concept of "human" extends beyond the traditional division of body and mind, and instead encompasses a broader assemblage of both humans and nonhumans, which pertains to the concepts of "trans-corporeal assemblages"

(DeLanda, 2016), “trans-corporeality” (Alaimo, 2010), “intra-active” (Barad, 2007), and “companion species” (Haraway, 1994), which propose the connectivity and interdependence of both human and nonhuman entities in the process of constructing and altering the environment, and which contends the importance of recognizing the complex interconnections among people, animals, plants, objects, and other elements of the environment when conceptualizing the notion of human conception. Likewise, the notion of ‘becoming’ in the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari (1988) underscores the continuous fluctuation and underlying vulnerability of life and explains how organisms, systems, and surroundings (referred to as ecologies) continuously experience alterations and transformations. Building on these conceptions, in this paper, close-reading Saramago’s works from posthumanist ecocritical perspective might serve as a pivotal notion for reevaluating and reconceptualizing the human condition concerning other species. It might also bring alternative perspective that might eliminate the longstanding human paradigm that places human dominance above nature, and ecological systems have persistently contributed to the degradation of the world over an extended period.

2. POSTHUMANIST ECOCRITICISM AND CHILDREN’S LITERATURE

Cheryl Burgess Glotfelty posits that ecocriticism may be described as the examination of the interconnection between literature and the natural environment (1996, p. xviii). During its initial development, ecocriticism seeks to accomplish many aims, such as creating an academic community that would provide recognition and credibility to the efforts of up-and-coming literary scholars who were involved in the examination, analysis, and understanding of literary texts related to the environment, examining the portrayals of nature and the representation of environmental ideals in literary works, studying the interrelationship between the natural environment and human civilization, and finally tackling environmental concerns and actively contribute to the rehabilitation of the environment, using the knowledge and influence of literary professors (1996, p. xxi). Glotfelty posits that the transition towards a multi-ethnic movement will transpire through fostering stronger connections between the environment and issues of social justice, while also encouraging the inclusion of various viewpoints in active engagement with the discussion (1996, p. xxv).

Posthuman ecocriticism explores the literary, cultural, and philosophical consequences that emerge when technology, biology, and the environment intersect. This refers to the process of creating inorganic nanomaterials for biophysical systems, and the resulting ecological impacts that occur as a result (Parisi, 2008, pp. 294-297). Furthermore, this becomes obvious in many biophysical systems, rapidly developing biotechnological frameworks, and other entities that have been generated via the utilization of techno-scientific strategies. These entities, which include robots among others, exhibit narratives that are as intricate and multifaceted as those of biological beings. From the posthumanist ecocritical perspective, many components of the planet, including elemental, biological, geological, climatic, and technological forces, exhibit complex interconnections with the human mind, introspection, and creativity. This, for Latour, pertains to an “ecology of collectives consisting of both human and nonhuman entities” (2004, 61). This approach expands the notion of nonhuman entities to include more than only biological species, such as intelligent robots that play

an active role in integrating themselves into the collective existence of hybrid beings. It highlights the complex ethical considerations surrounding emerging advancements, such as the creation of life forms using inorganic or synthetic materials, as currently explored in nanotechnologies (Oppermann, 2016, p. 32). The posthumanist ecocriticism seeks to maintain a sustainable ecological analysis of the material interactions that occur between human and nonhuman entities, including both living and non-living elements, within the framework of a technologically sophisticated society. This adopts the new materialist viewpoint, which recognizes the nonhuman as an essential component of human life and emphasizes the interdependence between bodies and nature. The core concepts of material ecocriticism, namely “storied matter” (Iovino and Oppermann, 2014, p. 1-2) and narrative agency, provide a helpful theoretical structure for comprehending the dynamic characteristics of organic matter via its stories. These have particular significance in the examination of the developing agencies within the realm of posthumanism, namely in the context of technological manifestations of posthumanism. The examination of matter variations enables an ecological interpretation of the ethical and social implications of existence, extending beyond living forms dependent on carbon, via the transversal analysis of the biosphere and technosphere. This perspective is based on the recognition of the interdependence between the acts of agents and the many forms of life, namely a comprehensive network of interconnections and interdependencies across all things, resulting in a complex web of linkages, such as the intriguing depictions of the interrelated progression of animals, inorganic matter, perception, and imagination inside appealing blended surroundings (Bennet, 2010, p. 13). Posthumanist ecocriticism also investigates the intricate dynamics of environmental anomalies arising from climate change, anaerobic conditions, pesticide application, the proliferation of invasive species, the presence of dangerous creatures, the emergence of hybrid ecosystems, the advent of and sophisticated artificial intelligence. Given the complex web of linkages, posthuman ecocriticism explores the interrelated interactions of emerging naturecultures with the aim of developing new discourses that go beyond anthropocentrism. As defined by Jeffrey Cohen, the objective of posthuman ecocriticism is to consider various entities such as animals, water, stones, forests, and the world. Cohen argues that these entities should not be deprived of force, thought, agency, emergence, or the ability to develop. He also argues that “all matter [...] is a “storied matter” (Iovino and Oppermann, 2014, p. 1-2), active and capable of producing stories, thereby challenging the notion of rigid divisions and fixed boundaries between human and nonhuman realms (2016, p. 25-44).

Ecocritical literature, specifically in the context of children’s literature, explores the relationship between culture and nature through its exploration of the boundaries between humans and nonhumans. It also delves into the ways animals are portrayed, including their subjectivity, objectivity, and agency. This serves as a basis for investigating the interrelationships of interactions between human and nonhuman species (Gaard, 2009, p. 325), which might serve as a type of ecopedagogy, focusing on promoting knowledge and awareness among its audience. It also aims to build core environmental literacy, particularly bioregional literacy, by promoting knowledge of the complicated interactions between local, regional, and global ecologies, in both the good and negative expressions of those dynamics. Ecopedagogy, likewise promotes cultural ecoliteracy, which

encompasses a critical examination of cultures that are not sustainable, along with their characteristics. Additionally, it involves an investigation into sustainable cultures, enhancing community bonds, and creating suitable technologies. This also includes an analysis of the construction of human identity, which often manifests as a hierarchical relationship with other entities, such as lesser humans, animals, and the natural environment.

Despite our prolonged coexistence and shared experiences with animals, our interactions failed to have any discernible impact. The primary concern is on our perspective on animals, namely if it is anthropocentric or whether we acknowledge each animal as a distinct being. In the realm of animal identification, a distinct distinction may be seen between species that are acknowledged as distinct entities and those that are distinguished based on numerical designations and anatomical traits. In the course of human history, there has been a persistent pattern of marginalizing and objectifying nonhuman entities, with a particular focus on animals. These entities have often been subjected to mythologization and metaphorical exploitation, rather than recognizing the interconnectedness and reciprocal interactions between the human and nonhuman realms. Donna Haraway's book, *The Companion Species Manifesto*, explores the relationship between humans and nonhuman entities, particularly dogs, to expose and challenge the ongoing marginalization and objectification of these beings. She examines the junction of nature and society to provide insight into the intertwined existence of dogs and humans. This relationship is marked by a deep connection that may be described as a condition of "significant otherness" (2003, p. 6). According to Haraway, dogs have considerable significance when examining their complex historical background. In accordance with her assertion, these entities possess a function that extends beyond their role as simple embodiments of theoretical concepts and do not just exist for the sake of intellectual contemplation. Dogs have a significant role beyond being mere pretexts for other themes; they embody concrete material-semiotic entities inside the domain of technoscience. They have come with the purpose of cohabitating with our community. Those participating in the process of human growth are essentially present in the garden from its birth, displaying cunning qualities like those of the Coyote (2003, p. 4). For instance, pets have a particularly intricate position within the field of human-animal studies. Philosophers, such as Jacques Derrida, have recognized that the actions and persistent gaze of one's pet provide a distinctive and intimately acquainted obstacle to anthropocentrism. In his literary work titled *The Animal That Therefore I am* (2002) Derrida recounts his daily encounter with a feline creature, with an almost ritualistic consistency. The feline companion proceeds to follow him from their bedroom into the lavatory. The feline is an authentic representation of a little domesticated cat, rather than a simple depiction or symbol of a cat. The narrative intensifies when Derrida encounters a moment of vulnerability, whereby he is naked and confronted by a little feline. This meeting exposes him to the relentless observation of the animal's gaze (Sliwinski, 2012, p. 61). Derrida's observation of the cat provides insight into the perspective of animals, namely the time when the cat gazes at humans, reversing the typical dynamic of humans gazing at animals (p. 62). As Derrida puts it: "An animal looks at us, and we are naked before it" and "Thinking perhaps begins there" (2002, p. 29). This explains that the human becomes aware of the reciprocal nature of the cat's gaze, prompting contemplation on the often-

overlooked phenomenon of animals observing humans, a subject that has been neglected within the realm of philosophical discourse (2002, p. 369-418). The recognition of the existence of animals' external gaze, which remains mostly unknown and may forever be uncertain, initiates a divergent line of thinking. In this discussion, animals cease to be seen as just objects of observation, but rather as entities with their own perspective and agency. This stage holds significant importance in the emancipation of animals as it presents a different perspective on the treatment of individuals, whereby humans are seen as a collective entity referred to as a herd, categorized and numbered based on their exploitation by humans. Within the framework of animal gaze, it is pertinent to consider the potential ramifications that would arise if animals were to engage in introspection regarding their past exploitation within a hypothetical future marked by their liberation. This inquiry necessitates a dialogue between humans and animals, wherein their historical encounters are explored alongside our current treatment of them. Furthermore, it requires contemplation of our own perspective from the vantage point of animals, as well as an examination of the resultant consequences and whether we recognize and appreciate animals' distinct modes of gaze.

3. JOSÉ SARAMAGO: 'THE PLEASURE OF AS-IF'

The Nobel Prize-winning writer José Saramago's fairy tale "The Lizard" (2018) narrates the tale of a gigantic lizard that suddenly emerged in the Chiado neighborhood and caused quite a stir. A lizard with black, crystal-like eyes, a scaly curve, a long, wriggling tail, and quick, nimble feet. He's in the center of the road, mouth open, forked tongue sticking out, skin of his neck pulsating white. He braces himself slightly, as if he were about to charge forward, and stands in front of moving traffic and pedestrians. Everyone is trembling with fear. All movement comes to a halt. Everyone who saw it was frightened. The shops quickly closed their doors, and the streets were deserted. Firefighters, police, and troops barricaded the roads. The sky was filled with aircraft, and tanks rolled into the area. Everyone moved in to kill the lizard, but as they did, it transformed into a red rose. This rose bloomed and spread, its sweet scent cleaning the grime off the buildings. Saramago's story exhibits a Humanist and anthropocentric portrayal that fails to include a diverse array of beings, including nonhuman entities. Humanism, as posited, places humans as the focal point of all considerations, excluding non-human entities, and does not question the dominant anthropocentric perspectives that have contributed to the rise of problems such as interspecies inequalities. Moreover, it fails to acknowledge the inherent interconnectedness between humans, non-human beings, and the natural environment. Saramago's tale demonstrates that all individuals shown therein, such as inhabitants, firemen, police, and military personnel equipped with planes and tanks, exhibit a collective lack of acceptance towards the lizard, seeing it as an extraterrestrial being, fundamentally distinct, monstrous, and objectified. This manifests that it also fails to recognize a more comprehensive collection of humans (the locals) and nonhuman (the lizard) phenomena, which suggests the interconnectedness and interdependence of these entities (the locals and lizard) in the act of transforming and affecting the environment. That is, the locals are unfamiliar with the significance of the complex interactions between humans and animals, as well as how creatures, systems, and habitats, often known as ecologies, are always changing, evolving, and

becoming. From another perspective, the locals are exposed to the relentless observation of the lizard's gaze. In this story, the lizard gazes at the locals, reversing the typical dynamic of their gazing at the lizard. In Derrida's words, the lizard looks at the locals, and they are naked before it. However, (the locals') thinking does not begin there. That is, the lizard has not ceased to be seen as just an object of observation, and as an entity with its own perspective and agency. It also manifests that 'thinking (only) begins there' for the lizard. That is, the lizard sees the treatment of humans to animals, and their exploitation by humans. The lizard's gaze at the outside world offers an idea that the locals do not undergo any changes in thought or shifts in perspective that are indicative of the lizard's ability to coexist with, have a connection to, or have interactions with, the residents.

Zoe Jaques argues that there is an inherent connection between children's literature and its intended audience. The genre of children's fantasy serves to bring to life and provide agency to a wide range of imaginative, fantastical, and real entities, so blurring the distinction between what is true and what is fictional. This deliberate blurring of boundaries challenges the dominant and strictly human-centered understanding of reality, aligning with the objectives of posthumanist thought (2015, p. 6). Jaques contends that those found within children's literature, including both human and nonhuman characters, possess a distinct material nature as they emerge from the realm of fantasy and imagination. However, these entities might be characterized as "unactualized possibilities" (ibid). That is, children's literary writings have the potential to inspire and motivate their readers in these unactualized possibles (ibid). The notion of "actualized possibilities" as posited by Jaques provides insight into the potential confluence of children's literature and posthumanism. In this context, both realms possess the ability to cultivate a forward-looking agenda that amalgamates imaginative aspects with real social transformation. The two realms exhibit a shared interest in the concept of "pleasure in the confusion of boundaries" (Haraway, 1985, p. 66) and "the pleasure of *as-if*" (p. 225). They explore the notion of absolutes and definitions that highlight the elusive nature of their solidity. The exploration captivates children, as they exhibit a keen interest in the delineation or lack thereof between humans and nonhumans, as well as between animate and inanimate entities. This fascination arises from the pure pleasure derived from experiencing unforeseen possibilities and alternate modes of existence (Gubar, 2010, p. 224, 225) in that children have characteristics that are consistent with the posthumanist viewpoint, as they possess a unique capacity to embrace and get pleasure from the potentiality of many consequences, while simultaneously rejecting rigid absolutes. The notion that children inherently have ontological instability aligns with its inherent potency. Namely, children possess a perception that views humans and nonhumans as sharing similarities while also recognizing their differences (Gubar, 2013, p.450). This viewpoint is consistent with the ideology of posthumanism, which questions the established boundary that has historically separated humans from other nonhuman entities. As a result, it redefines the human role within the ecosystem and challenges the inherent distinctions between various beings, promoting a greater sense of equality.

In Saramago's narratives "The World's Largest Flower" (2013) and "An Unexpected Light" (2021), a discernible theme emerges wherein the interdependence between nature and human society is explored. This exploration is facilitated through the portrayal of main characters who

embody posthumanist ecocritical perspectives. These perspectives acknowledge the intricate network of connections between humans and nonhumans, recognizing the agency and story-telling potential of entities such as animals, water, stones, forests, and the world at large. For example, "The World's Largest Flower" reads when the child reached the edge of the territory he was exploring, he ventured out of the house's backyard and wandered down the riverbanks, surrounded by trees and birds. Mars proper starts at this point. The child wandered through large olive groves, intriguing hedges covered with white bluebells, woods full of high ash trees, and broad fields covered in lush grass, all with no sign of man or animal to be seen. As she traveled, the trees surrounding him thinned out until he was confronted with a flat steppe covered with sparse, dry shrubs and a circular, desolate mound in the center that resembled an upside-down bowl. As she reached the peak, she saw a withered flower in the distance. As the protagonist, she felt it was his duty to prevent the flower from withering. However, there was nowhere to get a drink. Though the Holy Nile River was far away, the child returned to this river again and again to water the flower. The youngster collapsed at the flower's base from exhaustion, and the massive bloom's expansive leaves protected him from the chill. And José Saramago's story "An Unexpected Light" reads a twelve-year-old child tells the tale of a journey to the Santarem market to sell pigs with his grandparents and uncle. The child, his grandpa, and his uncle rested in a barn after covering some ground with the pigs in front and they in behind, and then they continued their journey at dawn. They stopped to eat whatever fruit they could find along the way. When they arrive at the Santarem market, they find that the pigs are not selling. Then, a journey back home begins. As the main character and speaker of the story, the child says: "As night struck, a dark circle of clouds formed above us, and the rain began. However, a ring of water created a barrier around us, and for a while, not a drop fell on us. It sounded like a continuous dialogue among the animals. My uncle was walking in front of us and whistling softly. It was overwhelming, and I wanted to weep. I was invisible to everyone else, yet I could see everything. At that moment, I made a promise to myself: I would never die."

In these narratives, it becomes evident that humans transition from viewing animals just as objects of observation to recognizing them as independent creatures with their own agency. When examining animals' journey home, namely pigs, and their continued inter-animal communication, it becomes apparent that the concept of the animal gaze may be identified. This concept acknowledges the presence of animals' outward gaze, specifically their observation of human beings, their treatment by humans, and the exploitation they endure. Within the framework of the animal gaze, it is essential to consider the potential ramifications that may arise when animals engage in contemplation over their previous subjugation inside an imaginary future wherein, they achieve liberation. One may perhaps raise inquiries pertaining to the concept of the animal gaze, such as contemplating the hypothetical scenario when animals, having achieved liberation, reflect upon their history of subjugation. Moreover, it is essential to contemplate the possible ramifications that may arise from our hypothetical involvement in a direct confrontation with animals, as it would provide us insights into their previous encounters and our contemporary handling of them. Furthermore, it is essential to consider the potential insights that may be obtained by adopting the viewpoint of these living creatures while reflecting on ourselves. In Saramago's narratives, "The

World's Largest Flower" and "An Unexpected Light" highlight the symbiotic relationship between humans and non-human entities, underscoring the need for their coexistence. The theme of fostering and recognition of nature is evident in these narratives. In the former, the story revolves around a child's arduous endeavor to safeguard a sprouting flower through consistent watering. Meanwhile, the latter portrays the profound celebration experienced both by a twelve-year-old protagonist and by the cloud and rain, upon the preservation of pigs from being sold. By considering the child, the largest flower, and the interrelationships between humans and nonhumans, one could assume that children in these narratives have the potential to consider 'actualized possibilities' that embraces the idea that humans and nonhumans evolve through interconnected interactions, leading to their continual transformation and becoming. Within these narratives, children as protagonists have a notable inclination towards the 'pleasure in the confusion of boundaries' and 'the pleasure of as-if.' The concept of absolutes and definitions, which emphasizes the inherent instability of their solidity, appears to be rendered fluid. The children demonstrate a strong curiosity about the distinction, or potential absence thereof, between human and nonhuman beings, as well as between living and nonliving entities. Consequently, their sources of pleasure stem from the inherent pleasure obtained from encountering unexpected possibilities and other forms of existence. This viewpoint is in accordance with the tenets of posthumanism, a philosophical paradigm that questions the traditional distinction between humans and other nonhuman entities. As a result, it encourages a reconsideration of the human's role within the environment and presents a difficulty in classifying various creatures, thus promoting a greater understanding of equality. This viewpoint recognizes the inherent interconnectedness between humans and the natural world, asserting that the very nature of human existence is deeply entwined with the surrounding environment.

CONCLUSION

Saramago's narratives emphasize the interdependent connection between humans and non-human creatures, emphasizing the imperative of their mutual existence. The narratives clearly demonstrate a focus on nurturing and acknowledging the natural world. They hold the space to contemplate "actualized possibilities." Children as protagonists in these tales have a distinct preference for the enjoyment derived from the 'pleasure in the confusion of boundaries' and 'the pleasure of as-if'. The idea of absolutes and definitions, which highlight the underlying fragility of their solidity, appears to be fluid. The children display a profound inquisitiveness about the differentiation, or possible lack thereof, between human and nonhuman individuals, as well as between living and nonliving elements. Thus, their sources of pleasure arise from the inherent pleasure derived from experiencing unexpected alternatives and other modes of being. Saramago's narratives also assumes a significant role in reshaping humans' understanding of their connection with their environment. Moreover, they present a formidable challenge to the prevailing demarcations that delineate distinct entities, therefore fostering a heightened perception of parity, and serves to redefine the position of humans within the environment and presents a challenge to the established delineations between different entities, thus fostering a keen perception of equality.

Reading such narratives from posthumanist ecocritical perspective challenges oppressive hierarchies and acknowledges the intrinsic worth of diverse human and nonhuman beings. This viewpoint recognizes the inherent interconnectedness between humans and the larger universe, which encompasses entities outside the human realm. It posits that the very nature of being human is deeply entwined with the surrounding environment. The motifs found in children's literature, which symbolize innocence and the natural world, prompt reflection on the delicate nature of the relationship between humans and the environment, as well as the complex connections between ecology and children's literary works. It also become evident that children have traits that align with the posthumanist perspective, as they possess a distinct ability to accept and get pleasure from the possibilities of many outcomes, while also rejecting inflexible certainties. The concept that children possess intrinsic ontological instability, which is in line with their innate potency, provides more than simply a fantastical world of imagination that is eventually surpassed (Jaques, 2014, p. 9). The notion that children have a perception that acknowledges both the similarities and differences between humans and nonhumans aligns with the principles of posthumanism, which challenges the longstanding boundary that has traditionally distinguished humans from other nonhuman entities. Consequently, it serves to redefine the position of humans within the environment and poses a challenge to the intrinsic disparities that exist among different entities, fostering a heightened feeling of equality.

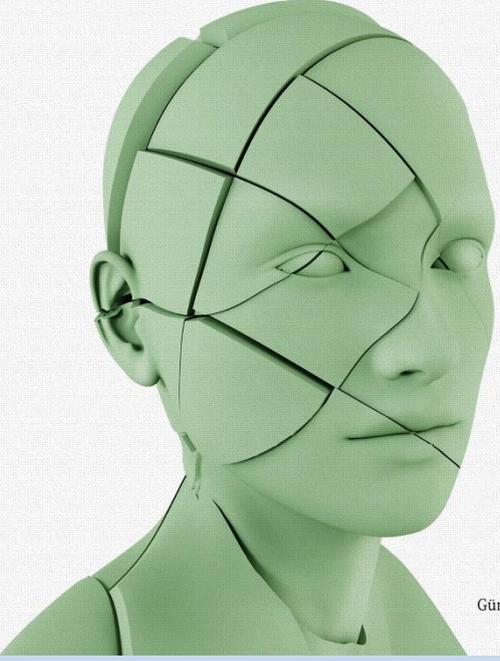
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TÜRK BİLİMKURGU EDEBİYATI VE ARKETİPLER

DR. VELİ UĞUR



Günce Yayınları

Oktay Yivli

Öykü Nasıl Okunur

modern öykü ve yöntem



Günce Yayınları

MAKSUT YİĞİTBAŞ

Edebiyatın Ebemkuşağı

Halit Ziya Hikâyeciliğinde

Renklerin Dili

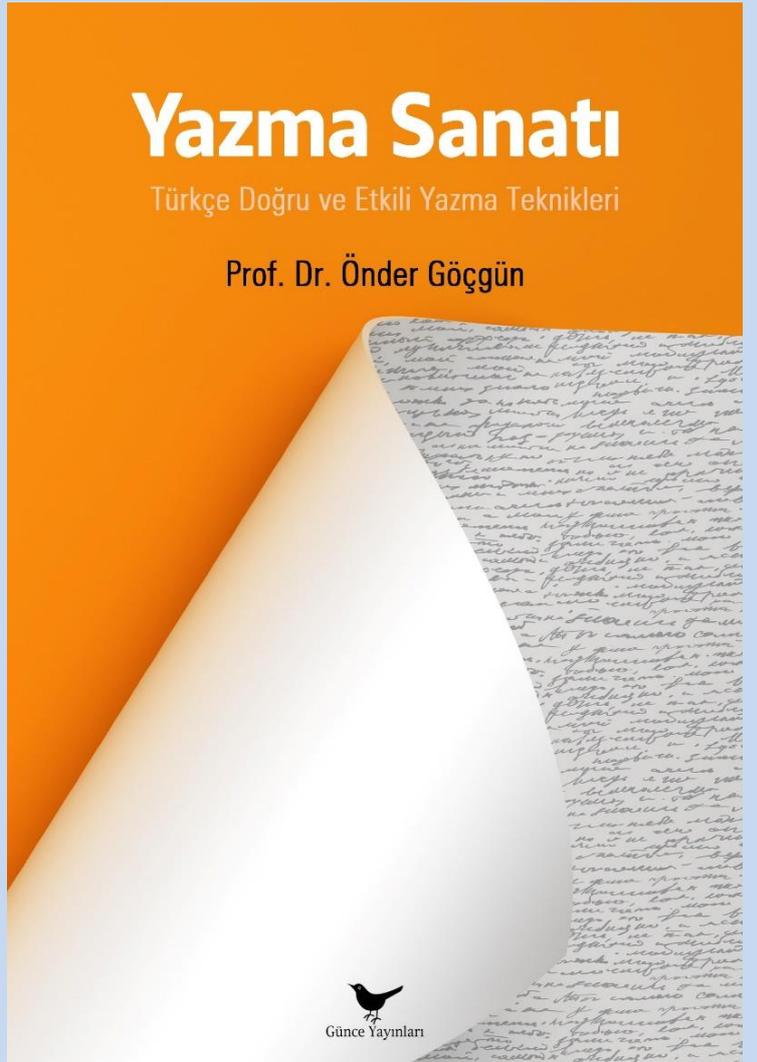


Günce Yayınları

Yazma Sanatı

Türkçe Doğru ve Etkili Yazma Teknikleri

Prof. Dr. Önder Göçgün



Günce Yayınları