

# NARRATING BEYOND HUMAN: ECONARRATOLOGY IN CONTEMPORARY TURKISH LITERATURE

A Master's Thesis

by

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Ankara  
June 2023



*To my family*



NARRATING BEYOND HUMAN: ECONARRATOLOGY  
IN CONTEMPORARY TURKISH LITERATURE

The Graduate School of Economics and  
Social Sciences of  
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS IN TURKISH LITERATURE

THE DEPARTMENT OF TURKISH LITERATURE  
İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY  
ANKARA

June 2023

Narrating Beyond Human: Econarratology in Contemporary Turkish Literature

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I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Turkish Literature.

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## ABSTRACT

### NARRATING BEYOND HUMAN: ECONARRATOLOGY IN CONTEMPORARY TURKISH LITERATURE

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June 2023

This study presents eco-critical readings of ecologically conscious contemporary Turkish novels, based on current narratological approaches. Each chapter investigates the textual traces of the relationships between humans and non-human entities, examining how the texts represent the non-human world through narrative structures. It questions how these narrative representations establish emotional and cognitive connections with readers. The first chapter, which demonstrates the theoretical approach of the thesis, briefly explains the shared developments of eco-criticism and narratology, and it provides an overview of ecocritical studies conducted on Turkish literature. The second chapter focuses on the construction of the storyworld and the role of the experimental narrator in Faruk Duman's *Sus Barbatus!* trilogy. It discusses the role of local experience in environmental texts by establishing a connection between the traditional storytelling practices specific to Turkish local culture and the narrator in the novel. The third chapter analyzes the active roles of the second-person narration and non-human entities in the narrative structure of Sema Kaygusuz's novel *Yüzünde Bir Yer* (*Every Fire You Tend*). It

examines the use of non-human entities in representing historical traumas. The fourth chapter examines the narrative similarities between Latife Tekin's *Zamansız* (*Timeless*) and Deniz Gezgin's *YerKuşAğı* (*EarthBird*) together. It establishes a literary kinship between Tekin and Gezgin and discusses how the perceptual processes of the non-human narrators are conveyed in both novels.

**Keywords:** contemporary novel, ecocriticism, narratology, non-human



## ÖZET

### İNSANIN ÖTESİNİ ANLATMAK: ÇAĞDAŞ TÜRK EDEBİYATINDA EKOANLATIBİLİM

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Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğretim Üyesi H. Esra Almas

Haziran 2023

Bu çalışma çağdaş Türk romanındaki ekolojik anlamda duyarlı metinlerin güncel anlatıbilimsel yaklaşımlara dayalı ekoeleştirel okumalarını sunmaktadır. Her bölüm insanla insan dışı arasındaki ilişkilerin metinsel izleri sürer ve metinlerin insan dışı dünyayı nasıl anlatısal yapılar kullanarak temsil ettiklerini inceler. Bu anlatısal temsillerin duygusal ve zihinsel açıdan okurla nasıl ilişki kurduğunu sorgular. Tezin teorik yaklaşımını gösteren birinci bölüm ekoeleştiri ve anlatıbilimin ortak gelişimlerini kısaca açıklayıp Türk edebiyatı üzerine yapılmış ekoeleştirel çalışmaların bir özetini sunar. İkinci bölüm Faruk Duman'ın *Sus Barbatus!* üçlemesinde insan dışı çevrenin kurulumuna ve deneysel anlatıcı tipinin rolüne odaklanır. Türk kültürüne ve yerel coğrafyaya özgü geleneksel hikâye anlatıcısı tipiyle romandaki anlatıcı arasında bağ kurarak yerel deneyimin ekolojik olarak duyarlı metinlerdeki rolü tartışır. Üçüncü bölüm Sema Kaygusuz'un *Yüzünde Bir Yer* romanındaki sen anlatıcısının ve insan dışı varlıkların anlatısal kurgudaki etkin rollerini analiz eder. Tarihsel travmaların temsilinde insan dışı varlıkların kullanımının rolünü inceler. Dördüncü bölüm ise Latife Tekin'in *Zamansız* ve Deniz Gezgin'in *YerKuşAğı* romanlarını birlikte ele alarak anlatısal benzerliklerini ortaya



koyar. Tekin ve Gezgin arasında edebi bir akrabalık kurar ve her iki romandaki insan dışı anlatıcıların algısal süreçlerinin nasıl metne aktarıldıklarını tartışır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** çağdaş roman, ekoeleştiri, anlatıbilim, insan dışı



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I want to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Assist. Prof. H. Esra Almas for her unwavering support, patience, encouragement, and guidance. It was a pleasure to have her as my supervisor. Not only did she supervise my thesis, but she also helped me gain a new perspective on literature. I would like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Kalpaklı for being a part of my thesis committee and for his support in my last three years in this department. I am thankful that Assoc. Prof. Z. Gizem Yılmaz Karahan has kindly accepted to be a part of my thesis committee. I am grateful for her thorough reading and insightful comments, which have significantly enhanced my thesis and provided me with a more nuanced understanding of the field.

The professors at Boğaziçi University's Department of Turkish Language and Literature have greatly shaped my critical background and possibly influenced my inclination towards narratology. I thank every one of them for everything they taught me. I am grateful for the opportunity to have met and learned from Assist. Prof. Peter Cherry at Bilkent University. His classes helped me a lot to challenge myself and widen my research. And I want to thank Prof. Suavi Aydın, Prof. Özer Ergenç, Prof. Orhan Tekelioğlu, Assist. Prof. Etienne Charrière and Kudret Emiroğlu for everything they taught me.

For the past three years, ever since I sent my first e-mail to her, Dr. Deniz Gündoğan İbrişim has always been there for me to help and discuss anything

regarding my studies. I would like to thank her for her kind words and insightful ideas that always motivate me to keep working. It is doubtless that Prof. Serpil Oppermann is an inspiration not only for me but for all ecocritics. I am so grateful to her for kindly answering my questions and generously sharing her opinions and sources; it was a real privilege to hear her recommendations about my studies.

In 2022, Aslınur Memiş, Yeşim Kaya, and I organized the “Sustainability and Ecocriticism Graduate Conference” at Bilkent University. I am grateful for the valuable knowledge and experience we gained together. Their excellent teamwork deserves my sincere thanks. During my MA years, I was physically separated from my friends due to pandemic conditions. However, Burak Andıç and Mehmet Yılmaz were always there for me, just as they always have been. I am grateful to them for making the past decade of my life more bearable. And I feel lucky to have met with Irmak Ulaş and Elif Su Işık. I am thankful for their guidance in this process and the nice assistants’ room chats we had. I would like to express my profound gratitude to Duygu Zaptiye for bringing beauty into my life for many years. I couldn't have completed my thesis without her support, patience, and assistance. I must also thank my little companion Maya for purring on my lap during the stressful days and nights of writing. Finally, I want to thank my dearest family for always believing in me.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the iconic opening lines of *Molecular Red*, “[d]isparate times call for disparate methods,” says McKenzie Wark (1). The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the vulnerability of human beings and their dependence on ecosystems. It showed that the epistemologies that place humans above other forms of life are out on a limb. The ongoing environmental crisis originates from the same human-centric paradigm, thus resolving it entails more than just scientific endeavors, it requires a fundamental shift in human imagination. Reimagining the role of humans in our world has the potential to preserve our planet. Utilizing our imagination is a crucial tool in achieving this goal. Following this idea, many voices from world literatures tried various formal methods or thematical approaches to capture the ongoing environmental crisis. Modern Turkish literature also has a long tradition of eco-conscious storytelling from Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı, Sait Faik Abasıyanık, or Yaşar Kemal to contemporary writers. These pioneers approached non-human environments as complementary elements of the harmony of the multi-cultural Turkish cultural atmosphere, or they spoke for the degradation of the Anatolian landscape. In the last two decades, within the rising discourse of environmental crisis, there is an observable upsurge in Turkish eco-conscious writing.

After the early 2000s, contemporary Turkish writers took up the challenge to pen the environmental problems and the problematic anthropocentric discourses in their works. Following the steps of the former, they try to portray the tangled human/non-human relations in their works via various narrative strategies. In this

thesis, I analyze four contemporary Turkish novels, namely *Sus Barbatus!*<sup>1</sup> trilogy (2018-2021) by Faruk Duman, *Every Fire You Tend* (2009) by Sema Kaygusuz, *Zamansız (Timeless)* (2022) by Latife Tekin, and *YerKuşAğı (EarthBird)* (2017) by Deniz Gezgin through the lens of eco-narratology. I argue that they depict environmental problems and defy anthropocentrism through various narrative strategies challenging the conventional formal elements and without yielding literary aesthetics.

Ecocriticism emerged in the 1970s with the aim of finding a positive solution to the pressing environmental crisis and the cultural changes it brought about, by analyzing fiction. Ecocritics highlight the necessity of ethically responsible practices of writing and reading to grasp how significant the gravity of environmental problems is. Furthermore, they unveil the coincidence between the oppression of nature and of other marginalized groups employing the cross-fertilization of ecocriticism with feminist and queer studies, postcolonial studies, and minority studies. In the early periods, ecocriticism tended to employ a realist epistemology, then it aimed at widening the sights of human animals by challenging the dichotomies underlying Western thought, such as between nature/culture and human/animal.

Undermining these dichotomies requires questioning the very concepts of *human* and *nature*. At this point, new materialist philosophy and material ecocriticism offer a new dimension to ecocritical thought. The conceptual argument of new materialist philosophy is that just like living organisms, inorganic materials also emit distinct vibrations and are connected to a network of communication with

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<sup>1</sup> *Sus Barbatus* is the scientific name of a species commonly known as “bearded pig,” but “*Sus Barbatus!*” with “!” is also an imperative sentence in Turkish, meaning “hush *Barbatus!*” Since conveying the double reference is impossible in English, I choose not to translate the original title.

surrounding living beings like humans, plants, and animals. This network allows them to actively interact with their agential power (Oppermann, “Ekoeleştiri” 36-37). Accordingly, Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann came up with the idea of material ecocriticism, which “aims to open an interpretive horizon for the complex interrelations between discourse and matter” (2). Material ecocriticism emphasizes the dual nature of matter as *material* and *storied*. In other words, every material being has its own “capacity to produce its own meanings and constitute its own stories.” (Oppermann, “Material Ecocriticism” 91). Material ecocriticism “examines matter both *in texts* and *as a text*,” and suggests that “it is through all these natures, agencies, and bodies that all material bodies including non-living ones are alive through the stories in which they play an agentic role” (Iovino and Oppermann 1-2). Accepting the narrative power and agency of matter introduces an unfamiliar ethic to the field of environmental humanities, but it raises some key questions about narrative, too. If *storied matter* has an agentic power, how can it manifest itself in a literary text, which is, after all, a product of human language? How can a literary text convey the new material ethic without yielding to anthropocentrism? Or, if every material body is *storied*, who or what tells their stories and how?

Material ecocriticism’s answer to these questions is strategic anthropomorphism. If a literary text is unavoidably anthropomorphic by its nature, then it is possible to strategically use this anthropomorphism to close the perceptual gap between humans and non-humans (Ağın 346). This material ecocritical standpoint requires non-traditional formal analysis, though. Juha Raipula criticizes new materialist scholars for “remain[ing] silent about the failures of narrative in addressing the complex behavior of the material world” (265). As Lawrence Buell foresaw almost a quarter century ago in *The Environmental Imagination*,

“environmental interpretation requires us to rethink our assumptions about the nature of representation, reference, metaphor, characterization, personae, and canonicity”

(3). Ecocritical theory must therefore challenge itself to find new formal concepts for giving voice to non-human subjects. If all material entities are capable of creating their own stories, ecocritical and narrative theories have to develop new concepts and strategies to engage these stories. Therefore, this study employs econarratological scholarship to unfold the innovative narrative strategies in the selected novels.

James Phelean’s well-known definition of a narrative as “somebody telling somebody else on some occasion and for some purpose(s) that something happened” presumes a “human speaker” just like many other definitions of narrative (James and Morel 6). For example, in *Towards a “Natural” Narratology*, Monika Fludernik characterizes the narrative structures beyond experientiality as non-natural (1). The developing field of environmental humanities compelled us to rethink these traditional accounts of narrative forms and structures, though. As a result, narratologists and ecocritics started looking for new concepts to unfold the potentials and limits of storytelling to cover human/ non-human entanglements. In *The Storyworld Accord*, Erin James coined the term *econarratology* to see what literary structures might offer up environmental insight” (14). Accordingly, this study applies econarratological scholarship to discover the narrative worlds of the selected novels and it shows how they complicate the obsolete narratological concepts.

As Markku Lehtimäki reminds us, “[l]iterature is inherently part of the real world, but in literature and art, the sometimes messy realm of nature is given a certain design, a polished form” (138). In other words, narrative worlds are not mimetic representations of the real world; instead, they are imaginative environments shaped by specific authorial choices. This emphasis on extra-textual narrative design



shows that there might be other ways than realistic depictions to portray environmental concerns. Examining the narrative structures shows that non-mimetic representations of the physical world can help us discover the ways that we can overcome human bias in narrative as much as possible.

Each novel examined in this thesis goes beyond the traditional codes of realist fiction. Every applies various narratological or thematic choices, what they share is questioning the position of human animals in the material world and breaking the conventional writing codes. They do not explicitly depict environmental issues, natural devastations, or climate change; nor do they rhetorically convey environmental awareness. Due to the intersectionality that the selected novels address, I deliberately choose to use the term “eco-conscious writing” instead of “environmental writing.” I believe that environmental writing refers to a wide genre of works revolving around the environmental crisis we are going through. It encompasses immanent environmental issues like pollution, climate crisis, global warming, fossil fuel usage, etc. Since the novels analyzed in this thesis do not have environmentalism as their only issue, I choose not to categorize them under a specific genre. In this study, I refrain from discussing genre in a theoretical manner. Instead, I broaden the scope of my topic by referring to it as eco-conscious writing. Even though I consider the selected novels in a continuum with the former Turkish environmental literary works, I do not generalize them under a genre.

It is possible to date Turkish eco-conscious writing centuries ago, especially if we do not seek a systematic eco-political agenda in writing. The animism of ancient Turkic nomads, which is a belief that natural objects, natural phenomena, and the universe have spiritual powers, still influences contemporary authors and poets (Batur and Özdağ 236). Bütüner claims that the Turkish epic, *The Book of Dede*

*Korkut* indicates a symbiotic eco-ethical relationship between humans and non-humans (436). There are several elegiac Ottoman poems about scarcities or epidemics implying an eco-ethic. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı (a.k.a. the Fisherman of Halicarnassus, 1886–1973), Sait Faik Abasıyanık (1906–1954), Fakir Baykurt (1929-1999), Yaşar Kemal (1923-2015), Bilge Karasu (1930-1995) were concerned with the environment.

The various works criticized the viewpoint that prioritizes humans and provided detailed depictions of Anatolian land, its diverse ecosystems, and the exploitation of natural resources (Ergin 53). Many if not all of these writers used realist modes of fiction to portray environmental issues. However, as Ergin notes, in recent years, the field of literary ecology has become more varied as we have gained greater understanding of the environment. (55). Contemporary writers try to reflect their eco-understanding in their texts, too. For example, Buket Uzuner is arguably the most popular Turkish contemporary environmental writer. However, some writers convey their eco-ethic by experimenting with more complex narratological strategies. Thus, I composed this study of *Sus Barbatus!*, *Zamansız (Timeless)*, *YerKuşAğı (EarthBird)*, and *Yüzünde Bir Yer (Every Fire You Tend)* because they outspokenly demonstrate this experimental tendency in contemporary Turkish novel.

The thesis includes four chapters. The first chapter gives a short overview of environmental criticism and its intersection with modern narratology to draw a theoretical framework for this thesis. It also traces Turkish eco-conscious writing and criticism to show how the selected novels differ from or perpetuate them. In chapter two, I analyze Faruk Duman's novel trilogy *Sus Barbatus!* in terms of its experimental narrator type and the strategic anthropomorphization it displays. The novel tells the story of an unknown town named K. in eastern Turkey on the eve of

the 1980 military coup. A half-mad man hunts a wild boar to survive the cold and hunger in the opening and the ghost of this wild boar haunts several young revolutionists throughout the story. As the unpredictability of the anthropomorphically portrayed environment mesh with the political struggles against state violence, non/human and human entities perform, in Donna Haraway's terms, an "unexpected collaboration" to survive (*Staying with*, 4). In this regard, I analyze which narrative techniques the novel utilizes to endow the environment with human-like features to close the gap between humans and non-humans. Furthermore, narrative interventions and specific linguistic choices make it a self-reflexive novel. However, I believe that the narrator in *Sus Barbatus!* possesses certain qualities that set them apart from the typical intervening omniscient narrator. Namely, I argue that some linguistic preferences and local, culturally specific expressions make the narrator a local informer.

In chapter three, I assess Sema Kaygusuz's *Every Fire Your Tend* (*Yüzünde Bir Yer*) as a narrative that faces the old social traumas through a storied tree. The novel connects today's İstanbul to 1938's Dersim via the ancient narrative of a fig tree and the narratives of a family. As the *storied* tree lives and speaks through human memory and consciousness, it has a central role in human narratives, too. Moreover, the novel uses second-person narration which is a unique technique that is useful to disavow the otherwise inescapable discursive power of authority (Richardson 36). I demonstrate how these two narrative choices help Kaygusuz to decenter both anthropocentric worldview and official historical narratives about state violence.

Chapter four focuses on the non-human narrators of Deniz Gezgin's *YerKuşAğı* (*EarthBird*), and Latife Tekin's *Zamansız* (*Timeless*). In both novels, the

story is told by *homodiegetic*,<sup>2</sup> human-like animal narrators, but their storytelling and language are not strictly human-like. Both narrators try to make sense of the human-damaged world and anthropocentrism. They disarray regular word or sentence structures, and they mimic animal sounds. These deviations from standard language result in a defamiliarizing effect caused by the alternation between human and animal perspectives. In this chapter, my argument is that the two novels question the distinction between human and non-human existence, and they push the limits of anthropomorphic storytelling.

The experimental tendency of these novels comes from the local environmental experiences they enact. While *Sus Basbatus!* vividly depicts a specific local environment, *YerKuşAğı* includes some accentual attributions to the animals, or *Yüzünde Bir Yer* fosters its reader to picture a specific environment at a specific time. This local experientiality makes their narrative structures hardly agree with the conventional narratological concepts, but it also provides them with potential narrative tools to capture the environmental interrelations. Thus, while analyzing these four novels, I do not simply demonstrate how they fit into the current econarratological concepts, but I discuss how and to what extent they are in accord or discord with them. Although all these novels emerged from the local complexity of the Turkish literary environment, as well as the physical one, they are trans-nationally connected to the planetary imagination of the environment, namely the *eco-cosmopolitan* in Ursula K. Heise's conceptualization. According to Heise, a local sense of place is related to a global sense of environment, and humans' understanding of the environment through their surrounding place is undeniably

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<sup>2</sup> A narrative situation in which the narrator is also a character or protagonist in the work. See, (Genette 245).

connected to a global sense of environment (Heise 2008). The selected novels' narrative interplay between local and global perspectives enhances their potential to portray the environment. Accordingly, I discuss their local and global potentials in my conclusion, and I propose that analyzing the “peripheral” narratives involving culturally specific elements can promote not only to econarratological field of study but also the debates of world literature.



## CHAPTER 1

### ECONARRATOLOGY AND TURKISH ECOCRITICISM

#### 1.1. Towards Econarratology: Form-Content Discussions in Ecocritical Studies

Although ecocritical analysis contributed to the rising awareness about the environmental crisis, some researchers find it naïve to see literature as a realm of ecological inquiry, given the severity of the matter and the supposed gap between art and scientific research. Indeed, “if factual accuracy, interesting political analysis, or wide public appeal is what we look for, there are better and more straightforward places to find them than novels and poems” (Heise, “Afterword” 258). However, the roots of environmental problems lie deep in anthropocentric cultural codes that can be observed in any cultural material, including literary works. A text can virtually transport a reader to an unknown storyworld. As Rob Nixon states, “the narrative imaginings of writer-activists may thus offer us a different kind of witnessing: of sights unseen” (15). Assessing literary texts can give clues about how to grapple with anthropocentric imagining and replace it with an environmentally oriented ethic. And Nixon calls for writer activism to achieve this common concern.

Like Nixon, many scholars underline the functionality and experientiality of literature. Adam Trexler believes that “[l]iterary studies can describe [the patterns of cultural transformation] without reducing their complexity to a monovocal account” (5). Or Richard Kerridge urges ecocritics to assess texts based on their relevance and effectiveness in addressing the environmental crisis (5). His call extends Nixon’s activism and Trexler’s optimism to the academic realm. Similarly, Heather Houser argues that affective identification with narratives can lead individuals to take

responsibility for environmental problems (223). However, this type of approach often causes us to overlook literary aesthetics and consider literary texts as if they are manifestos of an environmental agenda. Accordingly, Heise observes that “ecocritical analyses have often tended to assess creative works most centrally in terms of whether they portray the realities of social oppression and environmental devastation accurately, and what ideological perspectives they imply” (258). Evaluating literary texts only in terms of their capability to mimic social or environmental reality, though, can mean overlooking the aesthetic and cognitive aspects of the narrative. Although literature pre-supposes a utility, the literary aesthetic is what conveys its ethical concern.

In other words, “[b]eauty and utility are neither distinct nor mutually exclusive; rather, they are interdependent and together they establish the power of literature” (Tangney 146). For this reason, literary analysis of eco-conscious texts should pay attention to their formal structures. A literary text influences, leads, and affects its reader through its content and form. The interaction between these two elements forms the whole value and meaning of a text. Therefore, ecological consciousness in a literary piece depends not only on the ethical value of its content but also on its aesthetic value, which affects the readers the most.

Carrying an ethical responsibility while formally analyzing a literary work requires new formulas. Following Lawrence Buell’s vision (2), ecocritical scholarship turned its attention from seeking mimetic correspondences between literary imagination and environmental reality to exploring the tangled relations between narrative structures and the material world. Heise was one of the first voices calling creative and academic writers to challenge narrative patterns (*Sense of Place* 21-22). While Heise’s call, just like Nixon’s or Trexler’s, celebrates the power of

narratives, it also presumably implies the insufficiency of current narrative structures to capture the sheer scale of the crisis. For this reason, they call for new directions in storytelling and narrative theory.

Sharing the same idea of inadequacy, there are indeed leading ecocritics who uttered their outright disbelief in the transformative power of narrative to respond to the environmental crisis, but differently, they do not think narrative can reconstruct itself to comply with the new age. In *Ecocriticism on the Edge*, Timothy Clark states his mistrust of eco-conscious writing and reading practices, saying: “[e]nvironmental readings of literature and culture may need to engage more directly with delusions of self-importance in their practice, keeping alert to the need for more direct kinds of activism” (198). Timothy Morton also argues that this new, uncanny geological era of the Anthropocene cannot be represented by any human-made form of art, including narrative (37-50). Similarly, In *Death of the PostHuman*, Colebrook proposes the idea that narrative cannot broaden its perspective to represent non-human lives, for it is closely entwined with human perception (10).

Nevertheless, the environmental crisis is a crisis of human imagination, too. Greg Garrard states, [e]cocriticism explores the ways in which we imagine and portray the relationship between humans and the environment in all areas of cultural production (i). Serpil Oppermann also foregrounds that ecocriticism does not only investigate natural images in literary works but also examines how non-human lives and objects fashion human culture, language, and narratives (*Ekoleştirir* 25). So, ecological imagination and criticism inevitably pertain to human conceptual processes. Moreover, *the Anthropocene* itself is a human-made narrative that is criticized for masking the unequal responsibilities of different ethnic groups, classes, and genders with “the abstract ensemble of *Anthropos* as its main actor” (Raipula



273-74; emphasis in the original). Malm and Hornborg similarly criticize the narrative of the Anthropocene for being “so completely dominated by natural science” and ignoring socio-political aspects of the environmental crisis (63). There are, indeed, a number of alternative coinages to comprise the current age, such as *Capitalocene*, *Holocene*, *Chthulucene*, or *Neganthropocene*, among others. While *Capitalocene* foregrounds the role of the current unequal capitalist system in environmental crisis, *Holocene* traces humans’ impact on the planet to thousands of years ago. Or *Neganthropocene* offers a more optimistic narrative of human history to deal with the nihilism the Anthropocene brought (Moore 2016; Haraway 2015; Stiegler 2018). Such an abundance of narratives shows the inevitable narrativity of the academic or philosophical efforts to seize the phenomena. In other words, while even environmental theories are sorts of human-made narratives, literary or visual narratives cannot be overlooked in any ecocritical effort. With an upright belief in storytelling practices, some contemporary ecocritics and narratologists integrate narrative and ecocritical theories to expand their reach to aptly represent the non-human world.

The association between narratology and “nature” can be traced back to Monika Fludernik’s publication of *Toward a “Natural” Narratology* in 1996. Building on an anthropocentric narratological model, Fludernik regards anti-mimetic evocations that do not build on human experientiality as unnatural. For her, narrative, as a human product, is limited to human perspective. In the following years, “several scholars, most notably Brian Richardson and Jan Alber, sought to highlight the many narratives in the world-historical corpus that seem to violate or contradict this normative notion of a mimesis based upon human experientiality (Hegglund 28). These scholars adopted the term “unnatural narratology” as a field of inquiry to shed

light on anti-mimetic and experimental narrative structures. Although unnatural narratologists' emphasis on the subversive but generative aspect of anti-mimetic narratives, their insistence on totally breaking the correlation between fictional and real worlds made narratologists and ecocritics seek new methods (Klaubert 35).

After the second decade of 2000's econarratology, as "the paired consideration of material environments and their representations and narrative forms of understanding," emerged and expanded the long-standing narratological concepts and ideas to cover non-human environments by juxtaposing narrative theory and ecological thought (James and Morel 1). Econarratological scholarship aims at finding new ideas, concepts, or tools by which narrative forms portray non-human environments, non-human lives, or environmental problems. As one of the pioneers of econarratology, Markku Lehtimäki remarks, "[b]y providing new tools for analyzing textual designs, narrative theorists can extend the reach of ecocritical methods," and "[c]onversely, ecocritics can provide narrative theorists with new questions to address when it comes to the study of narrative forms (137). Building upon this understanding, econarratology searches for narratological concepts to expand the human narrative experience to the realm of non-human.

Erin James, who coined the term econarratology for the first time in her groundbreaking book *The Storyworld Accord*, describes it as follows:

Econarratology studies the storyworlds that readers simulate and transport themselves to when reading narratives, the correlations between such textual, imaginative worlds and the physical, extratextual world, and the potential of the reading process to foster awareness and understanding for different environmental imaginations and experiences (15)

The words "simulate" and "transport" marks the cognitive aspect of narrative in an ecocritical way here. Indeed, James coined the term "econarratology" upon David

Herman's concept of *storyworld*, which is also a cognitive idea of narrative (*The Storyworld Accord*). Herman states, "storyworlds are mentally and emotionally projected environments in which interpreters are called upon to live out complex blends of cognitive and imaginative response" (*Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, 570). Herman's experientiality is key to interpreting any environmentally concerned text. If a storyworld is an environment in which a narratee experiences an otherwise impossible world, then any eco-conscious text somehow immerses any reader in its imaginative world. As an autonomous artifact, an eco-conscious text urges its readers to empathetically observe and feel its imaginative environment. To incite this emphatic immersion, some eco-conscious texts foreground non-human creatures or non-living objects in their narrative structure without eradicating humans.

The "emotionally projected" aspect of a storyworld, that Herman emphasized, indicates a new vein of econarratological scholarship that brings affects studies and narratology together. Heather Houser's book, *Ecosickness in Contemporary U.S Fiction*, explores the concept of "narrative affect." Houser posits that emotions are linked to various elements of literary structure, such as metaphor, characterization, or plot development. According to her, environmental narratives appeal to the readers' emotions to promote environmental awareness (12-16). Similarly, Alexa von Mossner argues in her *Affective Ecologies* that vivid evocations of the materiality of a storyworld elicit emotional empathy. She highlights the role of embodied sensual experiences in literary texts in creating such an affective empathy (25-28). With these cognitive and affective views of the extratextual and inner dynamics of narratives, narratology and ecocriticism develop toward non-anthropocentric analyses of representation with an eco-ethical responsibility to our planet.

In this respect, econarratology, just like feminist or queer narratologies, points to the artefactual aspect of the eco-conscious texts, and it discovers the ways in which the authors undermine human-centric narrative arrangements. The ethical consciousness ecocritical studies provoked towards environmental crisis urges formal analysts to pay attention to non-human world in fictional works. Like the transformative consciousness in literature and film that feminist or queer studies sparked off, the transformative power of ecocriticism alters the way textual analysis is done.

This parallelism between ecocritical studies and other politically driven theories, such as feminist, queer, or post-colonial theories, is not a coincidence. Underscoring any hegemonic voice or agency in a narrative is what they all share in common. Indeed, Eric James's *The Storyworld Accord* is a book of post-colonial study. James shows how the settings of imaginative environments, namely storyworlds, in post-colonial texts can provide econarratological scholarship to understand the complex ecological, social, and political interrelations in narratives. I believe that it is critical to merge such politically driven critical approaches with narratology because the reciprocal relation between the textual and the extratextual is more significant for eco-conscious, feminist, or post-colonial texts. Following this idea, this study employs cognitive and affective narratological concepts to reveal the intersections between textual and extratextual worlds.

The meaning of “environment” or “non-human” varies for each individual based on factors such as cultural background, local environment, and level of physical or biological knowledge. The meaning of environment or non-human varies for each individual based on factors such as cultural background, local environment, and level of physical or biological knowledge. Therefore, appealing to the expected

reader's knowledge is important for an environmentally conscious text. In *Red Alert!: Saving the Planet with Indigenous Knowledge*, Daniel Wildcat emphasizes the significance of local knowledge in environmental studies by arguing that “stories are intimately tied to the places they are told, and vice versa” (73). Beyond the physical environment, the place here refers to all non-human entities composing it. Cultural codes and traditions mostly determine how we make sense of the non-human world. Consequently, narrative representations of local environments and the multicultural landscape of Turkey inspired the close readings in this study.

In *Sus Barbatus!* trilogy, Faruk Duman uses local places, foods, traditions, and language to simulate a vivid environmental storyworld. He deploys sensory descriptions to create the identification of his reader. Moreover, his experimental narrator seems like a traditional Turkish storyteller who directly engages with the narratee and responsively alters the story s/he tells. In *Every Fire You Tend*, Sema Kaygusuz writes the Dersim tragedy of Alevis and Kurds by employing various cultural elements from Turkish, Kurdish, and Alevi cultures. When conveying the novel's environmental background, she employs several myths and religious stories. Conversely, in *YerKuşAğı* (*EarthBird*) and *Zamansız* (*Timeless*), Deniz Gezgin and Latife Tekin challenge these cultural elements and take the issue as an interrelation between species in general. In the following chapters, I show how these elements intersect with narrative techniques and structures.

## **1.2. Ecocriticism in Turkey**

Although the term “ecocriticism” was coined in the late 70s and gained visibility in the US in the 90s, ecocritical debates in Turkish academia began in the

early 2000s (Ergin 52).<sup>3</sup> In 1999, Serpil Oppermann pens an article called “Ecocriticism: Natural World in the Literary Viewfinder” in which she introduces ecocriticism and discusses its possible theoretical shortcomings by analyzing two English novels (29-46). Notwithstanding that Oppermann does not discuss any Turkish text, this article is the first time a systematic ecocritical reading shows up in a Turkish academic journal. After a few years, Burcu Karahan contributes to *Varlık*, a non-academic literary journal in Turkish, by presenting the basic principles of ecocriticism in her article called “Yeşillenen Edebiyat Eleştirisi” (*Greening Literary Criticism*). And in 2005, Dilek Bulut presents another introductory article on ecocriticism called “Çevre ve Edebiyat: Yeni Bir Yazın Kuramı Olarak Ekoeleştiri” (*Environment and Literature: Ecocriticism as a New Literary Theory*).

Despite these introductory articles, Dolcerocca and Ergin date the beginning of Turkish ecocriticism to “The Future of Ecocriticism: New Horizons” conference organized by Serpil Oppermann, Ufuk Özdağ, and Nevin Özkan (Antalya, 2009) for it is the first time ecocriticism was discussed in a Turkish context by using Turkish fictional works (300). In 2011, the conference culminated in a book with the same title. *The Future of Ecocriticism: New Horizons* includes a whole chapter on Turkish ecocriticism(s) and a roundtable discussion of its co-editors on ecocriticism’s current state in Turkey. After that, *Ekoeleştiri: Çevre ve Edebiyat (Ecocriticism: Environment and Literature)* (2012), edited by Serpil Oppermann published as the first book-length ecocritical book in Turkish. In her introduction to this study, Oppermann gives the first detailed overview of ecocritical studies in Turkish. In the open desk discussion at the end of the book, the contributors discuss the future of

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<sup>3</sup> Ergin offers a detailed overview of the development of ecocriticism in Turkey. See; Meliz Ergin. “Ecocriticism in Turkey.” *Ecozone*, Vol:11 No:2, 2020.

environmental studies in Turkey and in the world. After two years, another co-editor of *The Future of Ecocriticism: New Horizons*, Ufuk Özdağ, published another book in Turkish called *Çevreci Eleştiriye Giriş: Doğa, Kültür, Edebiyat* (*An Introduction to Environmental Criticism: Nature, Culture, Literature*) (2014). These two books provide an introduction to ecocriticism and offer ecocritical interpretations of literary and visual works in Turkish. Additionally, they contextualize Turkish literary criticism within the broader discourse on environmental cultures and global literature (Ergin 53).

Within the following years, environmentally concerned criticism in Turkey gained visibility in accordance with the raising voices in environmental activism. In 2013, the Turkish government put yet another neo-Ottomanist plan into action and tried to demolish the last standing green area, Gezi Park, in the city center of Istanbul with its century-old trees. On 28<sup>th</sup> May, a dozen young protesters were tear-gassed and violently beaten up by the police. Eventually, the environmentally driven protests turned into a spontaneous nationwide revolt with the involvement of the opposition and many marginalized groups. The Gezi revolt resulted in many casualties, but it became a milestone for the Turkish people, too. After the protests, environmental concerns entered the political programs of the oppositional parties, and eco-conscious literary or visual works increased in number as well as academic works.

As many of their writers or editors explicitly stated, Gezi inspired many Turkish ecocritical studies. For example, six years after the Gezi resistance, *Animals, Plants, and Landscapes: An Ecology of Turkish Literature and Film* (2019), co-edited by Hande Gürses and Irmak Ertuna Howison, showed up as an international, multi-voiced book examining Turkish literature and film. Ertuna and Gürses mention

in their introduction that their “inspiration was the brave and spontaneous Gezi Park Protests that began in May 28, 2013, and resulted in countless fatalities” (1). In the same year, Kim Fortuny published her *Animals and the Environment in Turkish Culture: Ecocriticism and Transnational Literature* (2019), in which she discusses environmental and post-humanist readings of Turkish communist poet Nazım Hikmet Ran, and she traces his legacy to today’s eco-political activism. A few years later, *Turkish Ecocriticism: From Neolithic to Contemporary Timescapes* (2021), co-edited by Serpil Oppermann and Sinan Akıllı, facilitates a dialogue between the ancient Anatolian civilizations and the modern Turkish literature. The collection of Özlem Ögüt Yazıcıoğlu, titled *Shamanism in Contemporary Literature* (2022), includes some chapters on Bilge Karasu and Buket Uzuner. Furthermore, Sezgin Toska and Kerim Can Yazgünoğlu published two introductory works on genre-based ecocriticism in Turkish: *Ekokurgu (Eco-fiction)* (2020) and *İklimkurgu (Cli-fi)* (2022).

Along with these collections and several articles, some Turkish scholars contributed to the field of ecocritical theory, too. In 2014, Serpil Oppermann cemented her position as one of the theorizers of material ecocriticism by co-editing their book called *Material Ecocriticism* (2014) with Serenella Iovino. Meliz Ergin brought Latife Tekin and Juliana Spahr together to introduce her comparative ecocritical theory of entanglement in her *The Ecopoetics of Entanglement in Contemporary Turkish and American Literatures* (2017). Their theoretical contributions made Turkish literature a field of interest for international ecocritics and inspired many scholars and organizations in Turkey. Several academic or non-academic journals, including *Monograf*, *Cogito*, and *DoğuBatı*<sup>4</sup>, published special issues on ecocriticism.

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<sup>4</sup> “Yerküre Krizi,” *Cogito*, 93, 2019; “Ekoloji,” *Monograf*, 13, 2020; “Don Dönemeç: Ekolojik Kriz,” *DoğuBatı*, 95, 2020.



With all these efforts, ecocritical studies are emerging rapidly in Turkey. As the ecocritical readings of modern texts rise in number, academics gradually turn their attention to canonical texts, too. For example, some chapters in *Turkish Ecocriticism: From Neolithic to Contemporary Timescapes* —like Alexandar Shopov’s “Irrigating and Weeding the *Bostan* in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Turkish Literature,” or Donna Landry’s “Ottoman Ecocriticism and Political Ecology” — focuses on the Ottoman Turkish literature through the lens of ecocriticism. These studies bring attention to the often-overlooked environmental themes present in pre-Islamic, Ottoman, and modern Turkish literature.

Highlighting these environmental aspects can contribute to the positioning of Turkish eco-conscious writing in world literature. However, texts do not circulate without friction in the world literary sphere. In *Against World Literature*, Emily Apter demonstrates how untranslatability resists the monolithic concepts of literary world systems and foregrounds cultural plurality (15-35). Similarly, Rob Nixon delineates the distribution of environmental harm by using the phrase, “unevenly universal” (65). So, the environmental experiences differ, as well as the literary practices. “[P]articular literary genres, aesthetic modes, and narrative templates provide the forms through which human understandings of nonhuman nature and its dispositions are forged” (Wenzel 15). Thus, positioning Turkish eco-conscious writing practices in world literature is not an easy task. It requires noticing the inequalities in the world’s ecosystem, differences of cultural elements, linguistic specificities, literary modes, and the tangled interplay of all of them.

Consequently, this study aims to take up the challenge and fill a gap in Turkish ecocriticism by formally analyzing contemporary novels. I believe that formally investigating contemporary novels without overlooking their cultural

elements may reveal a lot on both the current literary tendencies in Turkish writing and changing environmental imaginations in Turkish culture. Though I confined this work to four novels, I believe that it can prompt extensive econarratological studies in Turkish literature.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE RETURN OF THE TRADITIONAL STORYTELLER: EXPERIMENTAL STORYTELLING AND WORLDMAKING IN FARUK DUMAN’S *SUS BARBATUS!*

Faruk Duman holds a significant position among the notable writers of contemporary Turkish literature. Since the early 90s, he wrote short stories, novels, and children’s books in Turkish. From his early short stories to *Sus Barbatus!* trilogy, nature has always been an influence on his work. In an interview, he mentions:

One should never look at nature as a nature-lover. Being with nature and loving nature are not the same. Since language is a man-made tool in the first place, [being with nature] may seem a nearly impossible attempt. So, you may need to make your language invisible. (*Cumhuriyet* 2019)<sup>5</sup>

In another interview, he contends, “[w]hat I try to do is, narrating trees and animals in their own words. Our language can express ourselves truly, only if our view of the outside changes” (*Sanatataak* 2017). As he openly explains, his understanding of nature shapes his view of literary language and style; and this literary language, I argue, shapes his narratological choices.

In an interview on his literary influences, he describes his childhood as such:

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<sup>5</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all citations from Turkish, including the citations from novels translated by me.

The environment we used to live in, with trees, animals, and nature, was an inspiration, an entity that I was impressed by. But in my family, there was of course a tradition of storytelling, of telling about nature coming from Kars and Ardahan.<sup>6</sup> I mean, *âşiks*<sup>7</sup> come to villages, they tell some stories but the roads would be blocked by snow. Long winter days, blocked roads... So, especially women, mothers, grandmothers, and sometimes grandfathers, they used to tell stories. And these stories would always include folk tales. (...) But at the same time, they used to include images of nature for they were intertwined with nature and animals.” (Cumhuriyet, 2019)

From the interviews, it is apparent that his literary understanding is greatly influenced by his perspective on nature and traditional storytelling practices. Duman aims to portray nature in a non-anthropocentric manner and draws inspiration from traditional storytelling to experiment with giving voice to the non-human world. In *Sus Barbatus!* trilogy, he takes this artistic approach to a more extensive narrative experiment with specific authorial choices such as environment-focused storytelling and experiential, intradiegetic narrative voice. In this chapter, I investigate the trilogy from a narratological perspective and analyze how the author's literary choices effectively convey an eco-ethical viewpoint. Accordingly, I do two things in the following section. First, taking my cue from David Herman's concept of *storyworld*, I discuss how literary worldmaking creates an affective relationship between the readers and the narrative by displaying autonomous agencies of non-human entities. Secondly, I examine the experimental narrator type in *Sus Barbatus!* and demonstrate how this narrator type allows Duman to bridge the divide between the implied human reader and the non-human imaginative world of the novel.

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<sup>6</sup> Two cities in Northeastern Turkey.

<sup>7</sup> Traditional Turkish poet-musicians. They semi-professionally tell folktales, epic, or they sing songs.

## 2.1. Object Orienting Worldmaking and Non-human Agencies

*Sus Barbatus!* trilogy begins in the last winter before the 1980 military coup and continues until just before the coup. It depicts the survival story of a group of revolutionists and some villagers between state forces and a harsh natural environment. A half-mad man, Kenan, hunts a wild boar for his family's survival. Since then, the wild boar's soul begins haunting several characters. Although the wild boar hunted at the novel's beginning gives the novel its name, there are no human or non-human protagonists. Instead, in a fragmented structure, overlapping stories of several characters, including non-human animals, frame the narrative. While the revolutionaries hide in the forests with some villagers' support, military forces and some villagers try to hunt them. In this setting, the natural environment joins every story with its own agency and supports the revolutionaries and villagers who are tortured, arrested, or killed. Thus, the worldmaking strategy of the novel presents the natural environment as an autonomous "character" that shapes the lives of other characters.

Throughout the first four pages, which are the first two chapters of the novel, the narrator mentions only the environment as a living, autonomous entity with all its parts. The narrator strategically positions the environmental forces as living, autonomous, human-like parties that affect human behavior and emotion. In *Affective Narratology* (2011) Patrick C. Hogan posits that our emotional systems play a fundamental role in shaping and orienting story structures (1). Alexa von Mossner maintains that the narratives "deliberately cue readers' empathetic and emotional responses to keep them immersed and involved in the story" ("Embodiment" 540). In *Sus Barbatus!*, Duman offers an affective simulation of the narrative world to stimulate empathy by utilizing both the natural environment's anthropomorphization

and the characters' subjective sensations of the physical world around them. This type of worldmaking betrays the traditional narratological view of the environment, which relies on the subject/object dichotomy. Roland Barthes' famous conceptualization of the *reality effect* posits that the detailed physical descriptions in a realist narrative serve to build realistic, immersive storyworlds (*Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* 492). Giving the accuracy of Barthes' observation in many cases, Marco Caracciolo suggests the notion of *object-oriented* plotting, inspired by object-oriented ontology initiated by Graham Herman and expanded by Timothy Morton. ("Object-Oriented Plotting" 46). In his Ph.D. dissertation in 1999, Herman rejects the prioritization of humans above nonhuman entities and argues that objects exist free from human perception (2). His speculative ontology challenged subject/object dichotomy and influenced many, including Timothy Morton. Building on Herman's ontological view, Morton employed the term *hyperobjects* in *The Ecological Thought* (2010) to describe an object or phenomenon whose temporal and spatial dimensions transcend human perception (130-135). Herman and Morton's insights undermine anthropocentrism by emphasizing the limitations of human perception and ontologically equalizing human and non-human.

Marco Caracciolo expands this philosophical reasoning to narrative and suggests the narratological concept of *object-oriented plotting*, which denies subordinating the non-human to the human by undermining the instrumentalization of the non-human in a narrative plot. According to Caracciolo, object-oriented plots do not completely remove the human element in narratives. Instead, as a narrative strategy for displacing narrative's bias toward human beings, they decenter humans' authority and foreground the interdependence and interconnection between human and non-human realms (45-48). In *Sus Barbatus!*, any living or non-living non-

human entity has a more active role than a background player; they change and react to the narrative progression.

Every subchapter begins with one or two-paragraph-long environmental descriptions. Duman characterizes the non-human environment through the strategic anthropomorphization of the environment.<sup>8</sup> At the very beginning, air, snow, and wind are described with human features. “The air ha[s] something dark and heavy in it, something determined to wipe out the earth, something descends blusteringly,” “the snow piled on the plain grow[s] impatient,” “the wind suddenly startled up by something,” or “the snow stop[s] blowing, tearing the sky, and crying”<sup>9</sup> (Duman 1: 9-11). These anthropomorphic and active descriptions of non-human environmental forces highlight their agentic power and undermine the idea that human beings are the only ones who are able to “affect”.

Sometimes the sky gets angry, and sometimes the forest mysteriously howls. When the sky gets angry or anxious, the human characters get nervous, too. For example, when “the air seemed dark blue, like it stands still, eased up in weariness,”<sup>10</sup> Kenan makes his last decision to hunt a wild boar to sell (Duman 1: 30-31). Furthermore, on a day when “a kind wind, as light as a goose feather sweeping a dinner table blows,” his wife, Zeynep, finally lets him go despite the blizzard (45). But a few days later, when “the sky ravingly burst out with a clamor” and “the wind screams out with froths,” Zeynep anxiously regrets her decision. As the narrator says, “She first thinks of the weather, the sky, and the storm, then of Kenan” (73).

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<sup>8</sup> See; *Material Ecocriticism* 2014.

<sup>9</sup> “Havada koyu, ağır, yeryüzünü yok etmeye kararlı, tehditle aşağı inen bir şeyler vardı,” “Düzlükte birikmiş kar sabırsızlanmaya başlamıştı,” “Kar üfleme, göğü parçalamayı, göğürüp ağlamayı kesti.”

<sup>10</sup> “Hava durmuş, yorulup sakinleşmiş gibi lacivert görünüyordu.”

Fleming and Jankovic claim that climate is not simply a physical phenomenon but an agentic element shaping the psychological or social aspects of life (qtd. in Yazgünoğlu 21). Changing moods of the characters in the novel show the active role of the climate. Indeed, the novel expands this effect to environmental entities other than weather or the sky. A. Forests are pictured as uncanny, beast-like, moving creatures. The forest “gets bigger by stretching and heaving” (Duman 2: 168).<sup>11</sup> Or “it sounds so wheezy that anyone gets scared stiff” (180)<sup>12</sup>. The villagers say it is no joke, especially in winter. In *The Ecophobia Hypothesis*, Estok states, “[w]e take agency outside of ourselves as threats.” He argues that the felt or imagined effects of the environmental agencies beyond us make us afraid (130). In order to describe this human reaction against the uncanniness of nature, Estok introduces the term *ecophobia*, which he defines as “a uniquely human psychological condition that prompts antipathy toward nature” (1). Although the narrator admires the natural environment in some cases, the narratives circulating within *Sus Barbatus!*’s storyworld clearly indicate a fear of the natural environment. Türkan Topçu reads these uncanny descriptions of the forests and other environmental entities as clues of ecophobia. On the other hand, she also highlights the different sensations of the forest for different characters. The revolutionaries take shelter in the darkness of the forest (400-401). After surviving the tremendous torture in a police station, Aynur, a guerilla woman, insists on returning to her village and the revolutionaries’ haven in the forest before fully recovering because she feels safe there (Duman 1: 252).

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<sup>11</sup> “Orman gerilip yaylanarak büyüyordu.”

<sup>12</sup> “[Ö]yle hırıltılı sesler çıkıp geliyordu ki insanın aklı şaşardı.”



This double meaning not only emphasizes the active, changing, and decisive effect of the environmental forces in the novel but also shows their narrative power.

Ç. Çake, A. Mountains, A. Forests, animals, and books show themselves through narratives and myths. According to Jale Özata Dirlikyapan, humans are able to comprehend and interpret the world of non-human entities by means of the myths and stories they invent (3). The affective power of the non-human entities manifests itself through the stories. When she is hiding from the military in the forest, Aynur cannot help thinking about boars:

“They hide out well, come rain or shine, they hide out well, and no way they die, she thought. A boar does not die. Even if it dies, it is somehow reborn and reborn again. Many armies and hunters had given their all and invented renewed bullets to defeat it.” (Duman 1: 369)<sup>13</sup>

She makes sense of the world through human-made local myths and narratives.

When she feels afraid in a survival situation, she empathetically identifies herself with a boar.

Mustafa also ponders on A. Mountains and Ç. Forests. His thoughts seem influenced by local narratives about the mountains, too:

Still, isn't there a tricky, immortal part of these trees and grass here? In these Ç. Forests, in the outskirts of A. Mountains, it seems like death, death was absent here. These were the places that have beaten death and obliterated it as well, they say. You could not burn these forests with a match. (Duman 2: 271)<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> “Bunlar yaz kış iyi saklanır, bunlar yaz kış iyi saklanır ve bir türlü ölmezler, diye geçiriyordu aklından. Domuz ölmez. Ancak ölse bile bir yolunu bulup yeniden dünyaya gelir. Sonra da yeniden gelir, domuzu öldürmek için nice ordular ve avcılar seferber oldu da onun için yeni kurşunlar icat etti.”

<sup>14</sup> “Yine de, burada ağaçların, otların yaman ölümsüz bir yanı yok muydu? Bu Ç. Ormanları'nın içinde, işte bu A. Dağları'nın çevresinde, ölüm, ölüm sanki yoktu, ölümü yenmiş hem de perişan etmiş yerlerdi de öyle söylenirdi. Bu ormanları kibrit çaksan yakamazdın.”

He gets impressed by the forests. That is, the forests impose their affective impression on human characters by circulation through the local stories. They are sometimes scared of and sometimes amazed by forests, mountains, or animals by recalling the stories they have been told. With these mostly surreal stories, characters own indigenous knowledge, which lets them become familiar with and survive in harsh nature.

Just like the other characters, the narrator also knows how to survive in the book's storyworld. S/he<sup>15</sup> is conscious of the dangers of the non-human environment and s/he warns her/his narratee about the uncanny features of the local environment by emphasizing the unpredictable nature of K. River, A. Mountains, or Ç. Forests. For example, when the narrative focus is DİLBER, the narrator describes where it is going. Then s/he intervenes for only one sentence to give the information that the place is perilous for hollows (Duman 2: 227). Or s/he warns the narratee about K. River in the spring season:

It would flow such that it would seem like a sea whose other side was impossible to see. One wouldn't see any nubble in it, too like a sea without an island. A sea without an island, would ghastrfully drag everything around it. It would be wise not to meddle in the spring months. It would be unpredictable, they say. (Duman 2: 14)<sup>16</sup>

The narrator reminds the narratee about the local stories about the river and warns everyone about its power. From the narrator's perspective, the river seems scary, and this emotional reflex is conveyed through the myths about it. In the following lines, the narrator again puts, "K. River would bewitch the young, and make them emulate

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<sup>15</sup> I argue that the narrator is portrayed as a human character within the story, and to emphasize their humanness without gender bias, I use the pronoun "s/he".

<sup>16</sup> "Öyle akardı ki, bir yandan bakıldıkta deniz sayılırdı da nehrin şu karşı kıyısı görülmezdi. Hem içinde bir ada da görülmezdi. Adasız deniz. Adasız deniz, köpükler saçarak, gürüldeyerek yanında yöresinde ne varsa alır, korkunç götürürdü. Bahar aylarında bu K. Nehri'nin işine karışılmazdı. Sağı solu belli olmaz, denirdi."

to it” (*ibid*)<sup>17</sup>. This mythical reasoning traces the high-spiritedness in the youth to the K. River. So, it reveals the river's affective agency and active influence on humans.

Animals also play a significant role in the novel. First, all animal names are written in capital letters. This strategy wakes the reader to pay attention to the animals as special characters. SUS BARBATUS, KARAGÖZ, GÖKYÜZÜ, CENNET, DİLBER, DAVUT, GÜMÜŞ, and COCO are positioned in the novel as the companion agents of human characters. People do not or cannot “own” them. Instead, the narrative underscores that they exist only as themselves. Kenan talks to SUS BARBATUS and “[h]ey you, he whispered, you got me into so much trouble but never mind. Never mind. You and me, we are lifelong companions as of today. As the old saying goes. As the old saying goes, for better for worse!” (Duman 1: 492)<sup>18</sup>. Similarly, Aynur talks about her dog KARAGÖZ. “This one and me, says, pointing to the dog, we’ve been blood brothers since the beginning. Real blood brothers, though; he bit me, as am I. We were playing, of course. Neither of us is savage” (Duman 1: 371)<sup>19</sup>. Aynur’s equal and interdependent “companionship” with KARAGÖZ embodies Donna Haraway’s *Companion Species Manifesto* (2003). Haraway's manifesto challenges the traditional hierarchical view of humans and animals and proposes a new perspective that emphasizes mutual and interconnected relationships. In this view, dogs are not inferior to humans but rather play an active role in shaping human cultures, identities, and lives. Haraway underscores that dogs have co-evolved with humans over thousands of years, forging close bonds and becoming entangled in our social, emotional, and technological networks (15-32). In

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<sup>17</sup> “K. Nehri gençleri büyüler, onları kendine benzetir.”

<sup>18</sup> “Ulan sen, diye fısıldadı, sen az iş çıkarmadın başıma ama olsun. Olsun. Seninle ben, bundan böyle kader ortağıyız. Eskilerin dediği gibi. Anca beraber kanca beraber.”

<sup>19</sup> “Bununla ben var ya, dedi köpeği göstererek, bununla ben taa ezelden beri kan kardeşiyiz. Gerçekten kan kardeşi ama, çocukken o beni ısırmıştı, ben de onu. Ama oynarken tabii, yoksa ikimiz de vahşi değiliz.”

the trilogy, both Aynur and Kenan display a hierarchy-free behavior towards SUS BARBATUS and KARAGÖZ.

These animal characters change and shape the course of the novel's plot by affecting the human characters through their own actions or the stories that forge their images in humans. In the second volume of the book, Kadir Ağa sends one of his men, Jilet, after a couple of revolutionaries. Jilet is pictured as a vigorous villager with an incredible path-finding talent. He feels safe and strong in the forest. When he goes after the revolutionaries, he saw a colorful bird and fascinatedly follows it. Instead of the revolutionaries, the bird, DİLBER, leads him to a helpless boy (Duman 2: 189-191). A little bird with capital letters changes the novel's expected plot and helps humans establish an "unexpected collaboration" (Haraway 4).

In the object-oriented plot and storyworld of the novel, the animals are not simply symbolic. In his "Storyworld/Umwelt: Nonhuman Experiences in Graphic Narratives," David Herman scales different methods of representing animals in narratives. He configures a continuum from animal allegories, anthropomorphic representations, zoomorphic projection, and umwelt<sup>20</sup> exploration. He argues that non-humans are only used to give a sense of human behavior in allegories. In anthropomorphic narratives, the focus shifts to the non-human, but human motives are still the main templates to explain non-human lives. In zoomorphic narratives, the non-human world is turned into human terms but for comparison. And the umwelt narratives are the ones that try to embody the consciousness presentations of animals (165-168).

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<sup>20</sup> Biologist Jakob von Uexküll coined the concept of *Umwelt* to describe the environments that are meaningful to their inhabitants. In other words, it refers to an environmental understanding that is specific to a species and meaningful only for it. (Herman, "Non-human Experiences").

In *Sus Barbatus!*, the novel does not use non-human representations allegorically when the narrative focus turns to the non-human world. Instead, it tries to shed light on the opaque mental processes of animals. The narrative engagement of SUS BARBATUS's mind inevitably enacts a hybrid mode of narration. The narrative does not translate their emotional and cognitive states into human terms. When SUS BARBATUS' soul begins to travel, it goes inside some characters to experience human life. Even in a human body and mind, however, it cannot make sense of human behavior. "SUS BARBATUS knows almost nothing about humans. Shadows. Shadows. A human was a shadow for it. Only since they would move and act cleverly, they were not like the other shadows," explains the narrator (Duman 1: 182).<sup>21</sup> Then it enters Commander Bekir's house and sees Faruk lying wounded and Aysel sleeping: "Suddenly, the scene seemed ridiculous to SUS BARBATUS. A hot, livable, and safe house. Two people lay dormant in it. Laughed" (ibid).<sup>22</sup> It watches Aysel sleeping in astonishment: "SUS BARBATUS moved close to the woman. It was wondering so much. It was there, before one of that dark, blue shadows. Not just before but just next to her. Moved close. It wanted to see the women up close and to find out what a human being is" (Duman 1: 184).<sup>23</sup>

Once it dies, SUS BARBATUS transforms into a hybrid entity that exists between the realms of life and death, embodying traits of both the living and the deceased, as well as the human and non-human. It haunts people and pushes them to act bravely and unexpectedly. When SUS BARBATUS sees Kemal, a poor peddler

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<sup>21</sup> "SUS BARBATUS, insanlar hakkında hemen hemen hiçbir şey bilmiyordu. Gölgeler. Gölgeler. İnsan bir gölgeydi onun için. Yalnızca hareket ettikleri ve pek akıllıca davrandıkları için başka gölgelere benzemezlerdi."

<sup>22</sup> "Birden, bu durum gülünesi geldi SUS BARBATUS'a. Sıcak, yaşanası, güvenli bir ev. İçinde hareketsiz iki insan. Gülümsedi."

<sup>23</sup> "Öyle merak ediyordu ki, o karanlık, o lacivert gölgelerden birinin karşındaydı işte. İyice yaklaştı. Karşısında da değil, hemen yanı başındaydı. İyice yaklaştı, kadını daha yakından görmek, insan nasıl bir şeydir anlamak istedi."

boy who tries to sell food to the passengers. An officer blames him for being a stowaway and tries to seize his goods. SUS BARBATUS is deeply saddened by this, causing it to flow within the little boy. Then, the boy shows courage and acts bravely.

Kemal stopped and looked at the man's face. Pretended to smile, but he didn't. He bolted out and butted the man's belly. Caught off-guard, the man was so stunned that he dropped back and fell on the car's passage. When he fell, Kemal bolted away. (Duman 3: 98)<sup>24</sup>

SUS BARBATUS gives strength to the little boy. It stands with those who are persecuted and fight against state forces. This magical realist narrative strategy of SUS BARBATUS's ghost enforces the non-human uncanniness by foregrounding its strength. However, the way it feels when it encounters Kemal is "human". The inevitable anthropomorphism in the narrative representation of SUS BARBATUS's affective process and the narrative endeavor to represent its non-human mind makes its representation "narratively" hybrid, too.

Seemingly, the narrative depicts SUS BARBATUS' mental processes before human beings in a defamiliarized way. SUS BARBATUS does not approach human behavior in a human manner. It constantly watches human animals in defamiliarized astonishment. The implied human narrator cannot clearly explain what SUS BARBATUS sees, thinks, or feels but s/he does not completely translate its mental and affective processes into human cognitive terms. This narrative approach turns SUS BARBATUS into a metonym for any wild boar.

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<sup>24</sup> "Kemal durdu, adamın yüzüne baktı. O da gülümseyecekmiş gibi yaptı. Ama gülümsemedi. Birden fırladı, işçinin karnına bir kafa attı. Adam öyle afallamış, öyle hazırlıksız yakalanmıştı ki, gerildi. Geriledi. Vagonun koridoruna düştü. O düşünce Kemal de fırlayıp kaçtı."

Building on the ideas of Herman, Caracciolo argues that “[umwelt] narrative engagement with animals calls for a shift from a symbolic to a metonymic mode of understanding” (“Strange Birds,” 2). In his analysis, animal consciousness explorations correspond to metonymic representations rather than symbolic or allegorical reflections. Since any animal's real mental or affective process is simply inaccessible for any human, the metonymic mode of reading works as the closest possible approach to an animal's narrative representation.

In *Sus Barbatus!*, the narrator tries to represent the mindsets and consciousnesses of animals and explicitly articulates the metonymic nature of the animal representations. In a subchapter, the narrator ponders on the consciousness of SUS BARBATUS:

Does SUS BARBATUS have a consciousness? Its consciousness does not easily get lost. Like the one in wolfs or in cats. It cannot know or remember its past on its own, but it can do it with others. With the other boars, through a collective recall. (Duman 1: 68)<sup>25</sup>

Sometimes, the narrator reflects on the behavior of SUS BARBATUS but does not mention its name. Rather, s/he uses “a boar” to refer to them as species. S/he says, “[a] boar recognizes these. The scent of a deer means everything for a boar,” (Duman 1: 39).<sup>26</sup>

Likewise, Kenan talks to the dead body of SUS BARBATUS and says:

My father would say, all animals are the same. One animal means all. A horse is another horse, too. See? You should understand best. One part of you is

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<sup>25</sup> “SUS BARBATUS’un bilinci var mıdır? Onun bilinci kolay kolay kaybolmayan bir bilinçtir. Kurtlarda ya da kedilerde olduğu gibi. Kendi geçmişini tek başına bilemez, anımsayamaz. Ama öbürleriyle birlikte bunu yapabilir. Öbür domuzlarla birlikte, ortak bir anımsama yoluyla.”

<sup>26</sup> “Domuz bunları çıkarır. Domuz için bir geyiğin kokusu her şey demektir.”

still in the forest. God knows where it is hiding. And its other part is also in the forest. Oh, they enjoy the day. (Duman 1: 439)<sup>27</sup>

These explicit reflections on animals are well-suit with the metonymic reading Caracciolo suggests. And they show how the novel's umwelt worldmaking works. The human character tries to make sense of what non-human experience is by identifying himself with the boar's body.

Other than animals, SOSYAL BİLİMLER ANSİKLOPEDİSİ (*The Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*) has a significant role in the trilogy as a material entity and a storied object. As one of the two non-living objects with capital letters, it shapes some characters' actions by exciting their feelings. On the eve of the military coup of 1980, the military already had significant power in the whole country.<sup>28</sup> At a time when the military forces confiscate banned books, Mustafa keeps SOSYAL BİLİMLER ANSİKLOPEDİSİ for it was a simple source of knowledge, even for the soldiers (Duman 1: 167). He does not have the heart to burn the book, for he values it. As Kenan criticizes him, he "lives on books."

Since they are in contact with revolutionaries, the military raids Gülşen and Mustafa's house and finds the encyclopedia. The sergeant orders Gülşen to bring all volumes of the military station for inspection (Duman 1: 217-218). After a few days of inspection, the sergeant blames her for being a communist for underlining the words Robin Hood and imperialism (Duman 1: 400). Seemingly, the sergeant, who

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<sup>27</sup> "Babam derdi ki bütün hayvanlar aynıdır. Hayvanın biri, hepsi demektir. Bir at aynı zamanda öbür attır. Anladın mı? En iyi senin anlamın lazım. Senin bir yanın hâlâ ormanda. Kim bilir nerede saklanıyor. Onun da öbür tarafı, yine ormanda. Oh, gününü gün ediyor onlar."

<sup>28</sup> The period between the military intervention in 1971 and the coup of 1980 has a bloody history in Turkey. Between 1978 and 1980, violence and instability were peaking. According to official figures, 1108 people died and 5467 were wounded in the clashes between rightist and leftist groups or by state violence only in 1979, the time the novel covers. Although the civil government remained, martial law was imminent at that time. Hundreds of books and journals were banned and confiscated. (see: *Cumhuriyet*, 2021; Turkish National Assembly's Research Report on 1980's Military Coup, 2013).



has no relationship with books, is confused by the encyclopedia. He sees it as a source of terrorism and excruciates people over his ignorance. Contradictive affective engagements of different characters with the encyclopedia unveil another narrative non-human agent's active role in the novel's plot.

In this regard, both the narrator and the human characters appear to be the expressive ground upon which the agencies of the non-human bodies flow and circulate. Humans see, make sense, and are affected by non-human agencies through the stories they made up. The narrator with his/her experimental nature plays a big role as the conveyer of these storied agencies. Ironically, however, the narrator does this in an overtly "human" manner. S/he always puts her/his subjective exposition and reminds us that s/he is always there by interfering in the narrative.

## **2.2. Intradiegetic Narration and Experientiality**

In *Narrative Discourse*, Gérard Genette characterizes the narration in which the narrator exists within the narrative's storyworld as *intradiegetic narration* (227-232). In *Sus Barbatus!*, although the narrator is not a character, it is always implied that s/he is a part of that particular storyworld. The experiential narration in the novel establishes the narrator's position as intradiegetic. S/he experiences and perceives the narrative environment and atmosphere in the novel and transmits his personal implications to the narratee. According to James Phelan, focalization is not about who sees but about who perceives. He argues that a narrator can also be a focalizer for s/he transmits her/his thoughts and beliefs to the reader (51-65). In *Sus Barbatus!*, the narrator works as a focalizer who perceives and visions the storyworld.

The narrator's perception works in an affective way; s/he experiences the storyworld from her/his perspective and conveys this feeling to the reader. In *Affective Ecologies*, Alexa von Mossner contends that a "narrative voice that at times conveys a decidedly experiential feel of the novel's virtual environment (...) is helpful also for a better understanding of the narrative strategies of nature writing" (27) For her, "conveying the material qualities and sensual feel of a natural environment (...) enables readers to imaginatively experience them" (29). Faruk Duman's narrator explicitly expresses her/his experiential feel of the non-human lives, objects, and environment from her/his own focal point. By doing this, s/he creates an embodied simulation for the narratee to imaginatively experience. When the focalization shifts from some other character to the narrator, s/he describes her/his own sensual and affective experience of the storyworld. S/he, for example, describes the mid-summer season in the local environment as such:

In mid-summer, when the fields are cultivated. Literally, everyone would peg away in this season. Fields are cultivated. Potatoes are harvested and stowed. Milk turns to butter and cheese. And these are put in the barrels set to be placed into the underground cellars. At that times, not only under the grass piles but mountains and stones would smell like grass. Grass on the field. Grass on the field. In fact, the smell of that grass is the smell of everything. Cheese would smell like it, so does butter. Tomato pastes and olive trees smell the same. If you ask why, because grass feeds them all. (Duman 1: 222)<sup>29</sup>

In the passage, the narrative does two things: first, it describes the local lifestyle in the virtual world by informing the reader about the local agricultural products, their

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<sup>29</sup> Yaz ortaları tarlalar biçildiği zaman. Ama herkes, herkes dur durak bilmeksizin çalışırdı bu mevsimde. Tarlalar biçilir. Patatesler toplanıp istiflenir. Eriklerle elmalar kurutulur, buğdaylar öğütülüp un çucalları hazır edilir. Sütten peynir, tereyağı yapılır. Bunlar yer altı kilerlerine konan fiçilerin içine yerleştirilirdi. O zaman yalnızca ot yığınlarının altı değil, dağ taş olduğu gibi yabanotu kokardı. Tarlanın otu, Tarlanın otu. Bu otun kokusu, aslına bakılırsa her şeyin kokusudur. Peynir de böyle kokar. Tereyağı da. Kaynatılmış domatesler ve zeytin ağaları da böyle kokar. Neden dersen, hepsini yabanotu besler de ondan.

harvest seasons, and how the locals treat them. This display of indigenous knowledge gives the impression of experience. Second, it embodies the sensory feeling of the storyworld through the smell of grass.

In addition to smell, s/he mentions her/his own taste in local food. When Gülşen cooks *kalacoş*,<sup>30</sup> the narrator intervenes and tells her/his personal experience and taste with it:

Gülşen would not only melt the cheese but also make *kalacoş* with it. Not with parsley or cilantro, like the others, though. She would sometimes make it with fresh thyme, so, it would have a tang, a disparate smell. Tastes of fresh thyme and melted cheese, when mixed together, spark one's power to evoke. And in that moment, you may imagine yourself in the Caribbean or somewhere like that, but one really needs some creativity and some darkness for that. (Duman 2: 192)<sup>31</sup>

With this sensory and individual relationship with a local dish, the narrator addresses the narratee's senses to make her/him imaginatively experience the storyworld, and s/he also asserts her/himself as the experiencer or the focalizer in narratological terms. Because, as Phelan reminds us, focalization is about who perceives (52). Thus, with this perceptual embodiment, the focalization shifts from Orhan to the narrator briefly because, during the intervention, the narrator clearly exposes her/his own perspective.

When defining what narrative is, David Herman foregrounds the experiential aspect of it. He compares facts and stories and says, “[s]cience explains how in

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<sup>30</sup> *Kalacoş* or *galacoş* is a local dish made with meat, bread, cheese or yogurt, and some fresh herbs. Although it is popular in the northeastern Turkey, it is not commonly known in any other part of the country.

<sup>31</sup> “Sonra peyniri yalnızca eritmezdi Gülşen, onunla *kalacoş* yapardı, ama öbürleri gibi kinzi ya da maydanozla değil arada *kalacoşu* taze kekikle de yapardı, çok keskin, farklı bir kokusu olurdu. Taze kekikle erimiş peynirin tadı, yani bunlar birleştiği zaman, insanın çağrışım gücü harekete geçer ve o dakika kendini Karayipler’de filan farz edebilirsin ama bunun için gerçekten biraz yaratıcılık, biraz da karanlık gerekir.”

general water freezes when (all other things being equal) its temperature reaches zero degrees centigrade; but it takes a story to convey what it was like to lose one's footing on slippery ice" ("Cognition" 3; qt in von Mossner, "Embodiment"). In *Sus Barbatus!*'s case, the narrator works as the one on slippery ice in Herman's analogy. The narrator's ability to take on a specific perspective is essential in immersing the reader in the story and allowing them to vividly imagine the world within the trilogy. The narrative embodies the storyworld through sensations and emotions to cue the reader to imagine it more precisely.

Along with this precise experience, though, the narrative does not let the reader to immerse in the story completely. The narrator continuously reminds us that s/he is still there narrating or storytelling as a "human being." S/he frequently uses a local expression and suddenly asks the narratee, "if you ask why" (*neden dersen*), and then explains, "that is because/ because ..." (... *da ondan*): "Even if the earth vanished, these thorns would not die, they say. If you ask why, against the obstinacy and sternness of these, humans are made of soft flesh and weak bones. And at the end of the day, snakes are the same" (Duman 1: 31).<sup>32</sup> S/he uses this expression in several instances. In some subchapters, the narrator explicitly comments on some canonic Turkish novels:

Of course, Yakup Kadri's *yaban*<sup>33</sup> did nothing wrong; in fact, ethically, it is nearly unquestionable. In this regard, it is possible to say that the author granted privileges to it. If you ask why; because it is impossible to write a character that we, the readers, find totally pure. (Duman 1: 186)<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> "Yeryüzü yok olsa bile, derlerdi, bu dikenler ölmeyecek. Neden dersen, bunların inadı ve katılığı karşısında insan yumuşak etten ve zayıf kemikten oluşur. Ve yılanlar da eninde sonunda öyledir."

<sup>33</sup> The narrator refers to Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's novel *Yaban* here. In Turkish, the word *yaban* both means wild/wilderness and strange/stranger. Here, the narrator refers to the protagonist of the novel.

<sup>34</sup> "Yakup Kadri'nin yabanı bir suç işlememiştir elbette, hatta ahlaki bakımdan neredeyse sorgulanabilir bir yanı da yoktur, bu nedenle yazarının bu bakımlardan ona ayrıcalıklı davrandığı bile söylenebilir. Neden dersen, bizim, yani okurun tümünden temiz pak bulabileceğimiz bir roman kişisi yazılamaz da ondan."

This signature expression allows the narrator to remind the narratee that s/he is immanent in there, talking directly to the narratee. Interestingly, other characters use the same expression in their direct quotations. For example, Kenan talks to Zeynep: “— No, no, I didn’t lose my mind. If you ask why, because nothing happened to me. What did I say? I said I will go hunting” (Duman 1: 42).<sup>35</sup> As Kenan talks, the narrator directly quotes his words with a long dash. Yet, Kenan uses the exact same phrase, which is not standard in Turkish.

Likewise, Aysel talks by using the exact phrases: “— It’s none of your business, said the girl. Nor my business now. If you ask why, because something came over me” (Duman 2: 35).<sup>36</sup> Many different characters use the exact same phrase throughout the novel. As one can see, the narrator’s narrative signature remains in many chapters and dialogs. With this strategy, the narrative turns our attention to the narrator’s self-consciousness and makes the reader feel like s/he is listening to a story from a local, human storyteller within the same diegetic level.

Faruk Duman mentions how he got inspired by the stories of the local storytellers in her interviews (2017; 2019). *Sus Barbatus!*’s narrator resembles these local Turkish storytellers. Turkish singer-songwriter tradition dates back to the shamanistic Turkish tribes in Central Asia. These were called *ozan*, *şam*, *baksı*, or *kam*, and they would tell folk stories in communities with or without their instruments (Boratav). Although they are almost extinct, some storyteller exists only in North Eastern Turkey, where Faruk Duman was born and the novel takes place.

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<sup>35</sup> “Yok yok, aklımdan zorum yok benim. Neden dersen, bana hiçbir şey olmadı. Sana ne dedim ben? Ava çıkacağım dedim.”

<sup>36</sup> “—Bu seni ilgilendirmez, dedi kız. Artık beni de ilgilendirmiyor. Neden dersen, bana bir haller oldu da onun için.”

Even if they repeat or retell well-known folk stories, one of the characteristics of these traditional storytellers is that they are considered wise, informed individuals of their local community (*TDV Islamic Encyclopedia*).

In the trilogy, the narrator displays her/his knowledge of the world, humanity, history, religion, and daily norms. This knowledge has roots in myths or religious supernatural stories that are irrelevant to reality. S/he retells them with small changes like a traditional storyteller to point out a moral or urge the reader to empathize with a character or to grasp the character's narrative situation. For example, when Kenan decides to go hunting in a blizzard, the narrator intervenes and tells a parable about the prophet Joseph. According to the story, just like Kenan, Joseph sets out to search for his father in a blizzard, despite his friends' objections. He freezes to death at night, but he returns to life in the morning (44). Through concise narrations like this, the narrator establishes an emotional bond between the reader and the character by comparing what they go through to those of mythical figures.

In addition to this strategical use of mythical figures, the narrator legitimizes the characters and what they do with her/his knowledge of humanity. In a passage, Emine feels complicated about what she thinks of the other women in the village, and the narrator explains why she thinks in this way:

But even then, she couldn't understand it in her dreams; she would have felt relieved if she had sensed that she was being treated unfairly. *If you ask why, it is because when someone experiences injustice, they feel good about themselves in a way. At least when they are alone, they don't blame themselves. Is there anything as beautiful as a person saying, "They treated me unfairly, I am right"?* (...) But it wasn't like that now. She couldn't understand who was right and who was wrong. (Duman: 1 196)<sup>3738</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Italic is not original.

<sup>38</sup> "Ama o zaman o rüyada bile anlayamıyordu; haksızlığa uğradığını hissetse rahatlayacaktı. Neden dersen, insan bir yerde bir haksızlığa uğradığı zaman kendini iyi hisseder. Tek başına kaldığı zaman kendini suçlamaz hiç değilse. Bir insanın, onlar bana haksızlık yaptı, ben haklıyım demesi kadar güzel bir şey var mı? (...) Ama şimdi öyle değildi işte. Bir türlü anlamıyordu kim haklı kim haksız."

In the passage, the character thinks or feels in an unexpected way. While the narrator describes how she feels, the narrative focus is on Emine. Then, in the italicized part, the narrator intervenes to explain why she thinks that way, and s/he legitimizes her thoughts by referring to the general human condition. Then the intervention finishes, and the focalization turns back to Emine. The narrator's legitimization through her/his observative knowledge of what humans do makes her/him talk in a species sense.

These reflections on the human species and the direct interventions of the narrator together reveal the eco-conscious sense of *Sus Barbatus!*. When the direct address turns to be performed in a first-person plural narrative voice, the narrative situation alters to a more peculiar style. When the narrator interferes to comment on a situation, s/he equalizes her/himself with the narratee by using direct or implied "we." However, this "we" does not imply a sense of group, ethnicity, or class. Instead, it refers to a sense of species as human animals. In a passage, s/he says that "[s]lowness and silence. We can bear the opposites of these. Yet, every time as if it has never occurred before, we fear them," s/he says<sup>39</sup> (Duman 1: 59).<sup>40</sup> Here, and in many passages, s/he refers to human nature in general. This strategy makes the novel's empathetic effect on the reader an ecologically aware one. In fact, some may love slowness or silence more than anything. So, as the former passage shows, when s/he talks directly, s/he imposes her/his own thoughts as a focalizer. The knowledge s/he displays comes from her/his own perceptual reality. S/he draws generalizations about human life.

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<sup>39</sup> Emphasis is not original.

<sup>40</sup> "Yavaşlık ve sessizlik. Bunlara aykırı olanı kaldırabiliriz kaldırmasına da. Yine de, her seferinde. Sanki böyle bir şey daha önce hiç yaşanmamış. Korkarız bundan."

When the implied “we” comes, the narrator specifically use “one,” “anyone,” or “hu/mankind” to generalize human behavior. According to the narrator, the screams coming from Ç. Forests “would cut one’s heart” (Duman 1: 1); or “one gets scared by the sound of bees” (*ibid* 49). In the novel, this frequent usage of the implied “we” refers to human animals as species. In some passages, the narrator thinks about human nature and compares it with other animals by overtly using “human beings”:

A human always gets hungry. Other creatures are the same, though. But a human gets deeper and more greedily hungry compared to the other creatures. A human does not get hungry only in his stomach but in his love or ambitions. I don’t want to exaggerate, but a human can’t help eating himself and his kin. (Duman 1: 151).<sup>41</sup>

Interestingly, in the Turkish language, “one” translates as “human” (*insan*). *İnsan* first means human species, and in some cases, it means anyone, one, or a person. Therefore, the narrator’s implied or direct “we” narration always implies a sense of species because of the nature of the Turkish language.

The intrusive “we” usage, argues Paul Dawson, “personalizes the narrator” as one of the members of the community which experiences the storyworld of the novel (26). Therefore, the implied or direct “we” narrations in *Sus Barbatus!* enables the reader to engage the narrative more directly but without getting immersed in the deception of reality. As shown before, the narrator always reminds the reader that s/he is there, narrating like a storyteller. S/he equalizes her/himself with the reader by using “we.” In other words, they meet at the common ground of humanness. The

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<sup>41</sup> “İnsan acıktır. Hoş, öbür canlılar da öyle. Ama başkalarına oranla insan daha derin, daha doyumsuzca acıktır. İnsanın sadece karnı değil, ruhu da acıktır. Hırsları da. Sevgisi de. Yani abartmayayım da, insan kendisini ve soydaşlarını yemeden duramaz.”



narrator transmits her/his own thoughts and perceptions about human nature to make the reader think of her/himself as a part of a particular species.

In fact, the human narrator continuously compares humans with other creatures. Although s/he equalizes her/himself with the reader in the sense of humanness, s/he always undermines anthropocentrism by glorifying anything beyond human. Several times, s/he highlights human beings' "bad" side and calls the reader to think about her/his position as a species. According to Alexa von Mossner, this strategic usage of insider perspective invites readers to empathize with a group of individuals by appealing to their emotions (79). In the context of *Sus Barbatus!*, the narrator presents her/his subjective perspective "on humans," "as a human" to instigate an emphatic response towards the non-human world.

In a subchapter, s/he describes how eagles fall from the cliffs of A. Mountains when they die, then continues as such:

Nothing is more gruesome than an eagle helplessly falling from cliffs, banging. When one sees the helplessness of these eagles, he sees his weakness. At that moment, one asks himself, who am I? What can I do in life? Is there any creature in this world more vulnerable and weaker than me? In this world, if there is any creature weaker than a human, it would only be another human. But no one notices. (Duman 1: 186)<sup>42</sup>

The passage disempowers human beings and replaces anthropocentrism with eco-centrism. The narrator degrades her/his own community as species and invites her/his human reader to compare humans with other species or non-living entities.

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<sup>42</sup> "Dünyada bir kartalın, kayalıkların tepesinden çaresizce, patırtılar çıkarak yuvarlanmasından daha korkunç bir şey yoktur. İnsan bu kartalların çaresizliğini gördüğü zaman. O zaman kendi güçsüzlüğünü anlar. O zaman anlar ki ben neyim? Benden ne olabilir? Bu dünyada benden güçsüz ve korunmasız bir varlık var mıdır? Bu dünyada insandan daha güçsüz bir varlık, olsa olsa bir başka insandır. Ama çoğunlukla kimse farkında değildir bunun."

By establishing her/himself as a member of the fictional community, s/he also gives the message that s/he is criticizing her/himself.

On the other hand, environmental descriptions uphold the idea of environmentalism through the autonomous, powerful images of the environmental forces. According to the narrator, just like SUS BARBATUS, the air reflects on human behavior: “There was something in the air, it was about to scream. The air would want to say everything in itself. But then, it would recede and pity for it saw these speechless, exhausted humans,” speculates the narrator (Duman 1: 105).<sup>43</sup> With these speculations, the novel consistently imposes the idea that the human species are just a part of the “complex web of agencies” in the material world. And the narrator reminds us that they are a weak part in many aspects.

In conclusion, I argue that *Sus Barbatus!* is an eco-conscious novel that conveys its ecocentric view through several narratological strategies. The narrative configuration of the imaginary storyworld of the novel pictures the non-human world as a constitution of autonomous agents. In addition, the role of the narrative voice is significant in the cognitive and affective setting of the novel. Local knowledge, culturally specific language usage, the intrusive narrative style, and the unique narrator type, which bears traces of Turkish traditional storytelling, give the novel an experimental nature. With these narrative strategies, *Sus Barbatus!* appeals emotionally to the readers and impels them to think about the humans’ position in the world ecosystem. Therefore, it takes on an environmentally responsible ethical stance against the anthropocentric worldview. Since the novel offers a variety of narrative techniques that challenge the conventional, mimetic-realist eco-conscious

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<sup>43</sup> “Havada yine bağırdı bağırarak bir şeyler vardı. Durup durup. İçinde ne varsa bir bir söylemek istiyordu hava. Ama sonra vazgeçiyor, karşısında mecalsiz, böyle sus pus insanları gördükçe merhamete geliyordu.”

narratives, narratological analysis helps a lot to reveal its ecologically aware background.



## CHAPTER 3

### NARRATIVE SILENCE AND SECOND-PERSON NARRATION

#### IN SEMA KAYGUSUZ'S *EVERY FIRE YOU TEND*

Prominent writer, editor, and activist Sema Kaygusuz always speaks out for women, non-human lives, or minorities. She challenges monolithic historical narratives, patriarchal social norms, and anthropocentric narrative styles. *Every Fire You Tend* (*Yüzünde Bir Yer*), traces a silent, unnamed woman's past by revisiting her grandmother's witnessing the Dersim exile of 1938. Considering Kaygusuz and her family's past that she mentions in the afterword, the novel also has an autobiographical character. The narrative revolves around the nameless protagonist's life in İstanbul, the fig tree in her garden, and her grandmother Bese's traumatic history. With its narrative strategies, the novel combines myths, personal histories, and non-human agencies. In this chapter, I analyze *Every Fire You Tend's* narrative structure to trace how it displays non-human narrative agencies through its narrative strategies.

The novel depicts three different stories from different times. One is the story of the unnamed woman protagonist of the book in modern-day İstanbul, and the other one is the story of her grandmother, Bese, who is a survivor of Dersim exile in

1938<sup>44</sup>, and the last one is the nested mythological story of fig tree and Hızır<sup>45</sup>. An ambiguous narrator tells the story in a second-person narrative voice by addressing the protagonist and telling who she and her grandmother are. In the first part of the novel, the narrator reminds the unnamed protagonist of her grandmother, Bese's agony when she is exiled from Dersim. The narrator also tells some Quranic narratives or local myths and forges links among the women in these narratives, Bese, and the protagonist. These intermingling narratives of women from different times mesh together through the story of fig, which is told mainly with embedded mythical stories. It links the stories of the protagonist and the other woman characters together to establish a connection between generations of women; humans and non-humans, and it displays how non-human bodies can narratively convey traumatic memories. With this narrative method, Kaygusuz establishes an upside-down hierarchy between human and non-human by giving creative agency to non-human entities.

In the afterword of the English translation, Kaygusuz emphasizes the importance of the fig tree in the narrative structure of the novel:

And I intended to write it with the language of figs, which I grasped by looking at my sister, at the fig tree whose fruit has, over the course of the history of civilization, seduced and destroyed, poisoned and healed, struck panic in those captivated by its pleasure, and been served like jewels at the tables of kings, pharaohs, and sultans — in order that I might set aside its vitalizing force, its enviable adventure, in writing. What I mean to say is that, over the course of this novel, I am not only my grandmother who survived the

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<sup>44</sup> In 1937-38, Turkish Armed Forces launched a military operation in Dersim (Tunceli) region in order to establish state control over rebellious Alevî tribes. As a result of the operation, more than 13.000 died and nearly 12.000 exiled. (Kürkçügil 59).

<sup>45</sup> According to Turkish and Islamic mythologies, Hızır is a holy man who shows up to test or help people. While some Islamic sources say that he is a prophet, others claim that he is Alexander the Great's right-hand man. According to common belief, he is immortal since he found the Adam's wine and became immortal, and he show up in different guises or shapes. In Alevî-Bektashî belief, which is the common İslamic cult in Dersim region, Hızır is seen almost equal to Ali. (Karakurt 250; Beydilli 240).

massacre: I am also her granddaughter, I am Hızır, and I am a fig, with its countless tiny seeds. Each of us has written the others into being. (164)<sup>46</sup>

As Kaygusuz mentions, the novel mixes three narrative labels together with flashbacks, flashforwards, and embedded stories; and fig, I argue, is positioned in the intersection of these three stories. Each narrative layer writes the other with cross-times, cross-species, and cross-cultural narrative compositions. The fig tree manifests itself in human narratives, myths, or personal histories of humans. As a narrative strategy, Kaygusuz silences the woman protagonist and replaces her narrative subjectivity with the non-human subjectivity of the fig tree.

Another important point in the above passage is the emphasis on the language of figs. Nicholas Glastonbury explains how Kaygusuz combines elements from Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, and Persian to create a multi-voiced literary language (157). Şule Akdoğan also emphasizes the same linguistic authorial choices and adds, “[e]specially considering that the language of figs is also the language of an archaic silence, Glastonbury translates not only various unsettling historical chapters but also the impressive array of emotions embedded in them” (“Bosphorus Review”). Indeed, it is possible to draw parallels between the protagonist and the fig due to their shared silence. Although both serve as the common points of several traumas, narratives, and cultures, they are silent agents on their own, in the novel’s storyworld. However, Kaygusuz uses second-person narration and embedding to echo their voices.

In the remarkable first sentence, the narrator directly addresses the protagonist: “I know your shame” (1). This second-person narrative mode remains until the novel's end and serves as the primary narrative strategy that makes the novel

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<sup>46</sup> I this chapter, I use the English version of *Every Fire You Tend*, translated by Nicholas Glastonbury.

eco-conscious. In *Style's* special issue devoted to second-person narration, Monika Fludernik argues that narrative scholars struggle with defining and analyzing second-person narration due to a lack of consensus on its precise definition. Then she proposes an extensive definition of it: “[A n]arrative whose (main) protagonist is referred to by means of an address pronoun (usually you)” (Fludernik, “Introduction” 288). Although Fludernik’s definition gives an idea of what a second-person narrative is, the identities of the narrator and narratee complicate this type of narratives. In order to apprehend the whole narrative situation in a second-person narrative, we have to ask some questions: who speaks to whom? Is the narrator the inner voice of a character, or is s/he an extradiegetic voice talking to a character? Does s/he address the reader with a second-person pronoun?

Matt DelConte proposes three types of second-person narrative modes to cope with the issue and he probes whether narrator, protagonist, and narratee, coincide or not. For him, in non-coincident narration, the narrator uses “you” to address another character or narratee. Conversely, in completely or partially coincident narrations, the narrator and the protagonist are the same characters. In this type, the narrator may talk to her/himself or to another narratee about her/himself. (208-213). Brian Richardson also distinguishes three types of second-person narrative modes: standard, hypothetical, and autotelic. According to him, in the standard form, “you” simply replaces “I” or “we” in the other narrative types. In this common type, the narrator usually designates both the narrator and the narratee; and focalization does not change. In the hypothetical form, the narrator serves as a reminder of the past. And in the autotelic type, the narrator talks directly to the reader as its narratee (17-36).

In *Every Fire You Tend*, however, the ontological and epistemological features of the narrator complicate these models. While the narratee is always the protagonist, the narrator's identity changes or remains ambiguous. Put differently, the narrator and the narratee sometimes coincide but sometimes do not. "I carry it with me, that shame, that most private part of you. Ever since I was entrusted with that cryptic emotion, I haven't taken my eyes off of you, off of the historic sacred inscribed on your face," contends the narrator in a passage (11).<sup>47</sup> This omniscient-like epistemological and affective stance indicates an intersection between the narrator and the narratee. As Yener suggests, it may be read as a conversation between the protagonist's interior and exterior. The narrative voice may be the inner voice that reminds her of past traumas (69-71).

In another passage, though, the narrator states that "[t]his morning when I arrived, you were lost in thought" (12). Or s/he mentions, "[y]ou were not there with me" to the protagonist. These may indicate that the narrator and the protagonist are not the same person, but the narrator is a homodiegetic voice from the same storyworld. Moreover, the narrator comments on events or situations from her/his own point of view as a focalizer. At a moment, s/he separates the protagonist from her/himself: "I don't know how long I hung in the air. Although the bed of flames I crossed was no more than the length of two men, I felt like I had crossed the Red Sea. (...) When I finally landed on the ground, you were gone" (108).<sup>48</sup> S/he does not display her/his knowledge about the thoughts and emotions of the protagonist;

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<sup>47</sup> "Benliğinin en mahrem parçası bende duruyor. O çetrefil duyguyu emanet alalı beri gözümü gözünden ayırmadım."

<sup>48</sup> "Atlayışım ne kadar sürdü bilmem. Hepi topu iki adam boyu bir alev yatağından geçmişsem de Kızıldeniz'i aştığımı sandım. (...) Gel gör ki yere indiğimde sen orada değildin."



instead, s/he talks like an observer. These narrative moments complicate the types of second-person narrative categorizations mentioned before.

With this specific, ambiguous narrative mode, Kaygusuz does not let the reader directly link the narrator and the protagonist together. In DelConte's formulization, if the narrator and the protagonist are the same but exist on different diegetic dimensions, they narratively do not coincide because they have distinct functions (210). In *Every Fire You Tend*, though, the narrator does not always exist in a different diegetic dimension. S/he both witnesses the now and the past of the protagonist. S/he observes the protagonist as an outsider but feels her. Hence, Kaygusuz does not entirely match the narrator and the protagonist to disrupt her traumatized subjects' silence. In other words, she does not directly let the narrator speak "as" the protagonist but "for" the protagonist. With this strategy, she creates a narrative silence for traumatized characters.

Since the novel revolves around three women's traumatic experiences and the silent aftermath of their traumas, it is vital to touch on the relationship between trauma and silence. Cathy Carut defines trauma as its unspeakability or unrepresentability (2-7). A traumatic experience commonly leads to unwitting silence in the traumatic agent. Because it is associated with trauma, silence works as a narrative tool to underline traumatic experiences. Barry Stampfl highlights the affective narrative function of silence and contends that "on encountering 'it was unspeakable', a reader tends to exit the narrative, disconnect empathy for the character, and activate their own" (21). Lorinda Tang also claims that narrative silence makes a reader face the truth about trauma and leaves her/him in discomfort (9-10). Thus, the narrative silencing of the traumatic subjects in *Every Fire You Tend* has the same influence on its reader.

Furthermore, according to Caruth, “[t]he traumatic experience (...) does not include the awareness of the event and it can only be recognized through repetition of the experience in its belatedness and intrusive return” (qtd. in Gündoğan İbrişim, “Human Sovereignty” 6). In *Every Fire You Tend*, Kaygusuz does not directly tell the story of the Dersim massacre in a way that the protagonist directly experiences it. Instead, she uses complex narrative strategies to show its sustaining effect on generations. Trauma reveals itself in repetitive embedded stories told by the narrator in fragments. Throughout the novel, the protagonist woman does not speak. The narrator explains her silence with the historical burden she carries: “That’s when I find you, aching from head to toe with the obscure memory of an event you never lived through” (1). As the protagonist struggles to make sense of her own trauma, the narrator “narrates” for her:

I am weaving you a memory. If a fish is going to be brought back to life, even if only through deftness of words, it is because I can see, when I look at your hands trembling in your lap, how that newly resurrected fish thrashes in the water. Every move you make cracks open the husk of a memory hidden inside me. I have no way of knowing if it is I who is recounting or you who are making me speak, no way of knowing which of us guards the memory of these stories. (62)<sup>49</sup>

Additionally, the narrator mentions that the grandmother had not spoken a word about what she had been through during the exile. When she faces the trauma for the first time, she takes on a complete silence: “Bese, now the sole survivor of all her extended family. Ever since seeing her brother’s body drifting along the Munzur River, she had taken a vow of silence, to be broken only when absolutely necessary”

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<sup>49</sup> “Bir bellek örüyorum senin için. Sözün maharetiyle de olsa az sonra burada bir balık dirilecekse eğer, o dirilecek balığın sudaki çırpınışını görebiliyorum kucağından sarkan elinde. Yaptığın her hareket, bünyemde saklı duran bir kabuklu anıyı çatlatıyor. Bunları ben mi anlatıyorum, sen mi söylüyorsun, acaba hangimiz anımsıyor hikâyeleri, tam olarak kestiremiyorum.”

(14).<sup>50</sup> Then, we understand that she could not talk with her granddaughter about her traumatic past: “[b]ut you realized as soon as you looked at their faces why your grandmother didn’t, couldn’t talk about those tragic events. You understood why, at each attempt, she would break off with a faint cry before she’d ever begun” (68). Thus, both the survivor and her heir react to a traumatic experience with silence.

In *Words and Witness*, L.W. Fridman states, “foregrounded silence involves a very specific kind of unrepresentability, one that is linked to traumatic historical experience” (34). Kaygusuz foregrounds the unrepresentability, or unnarratability, of their traumas by silencing the voices of the protagonist and Bese, and she uses second-person narration and non-human narrative engagements to give them indirect narrative voices. In Şule Akdoğan’s words, “the writer takes silence as a disorienting narrative device in chronicling the suffering of Dersim and its unsettling memories” (2). In addition to second-person narration, the fig tree’s narrative agency has a significant role in the narrative structure of *Every Fire You Tend*. Silencing the human characters gives way to non-human narrative subjectivities.

Deniz Gündoğan İbrişim argues that “the main character in the novel seeks ways to understand shame, hiding, forgetfulness, why a grandmother, whose face is marked by a historical secret, remained silent, and what she remained silent about. She searches for these answers through a fig tree ““sprouting from beneath a lapis stone on a silvery Syrian cliffside overlooking the Mediterranean”” (“Lüferin Sızıısı, İncirin Kederi” 40-41). Thus, the fig becomes the very base of non-human subjectivity in the novel at the narrative level. It affects and is affected, poisons and gets poisoned. Gives and takes lives. All circulate through the embedded stories that

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<sup>50</sup> “Şimdiyse koca sülalesinden bir kendisi sağ kalmıştı Kardeşinin cesedini Munzur Nehri’nde sürüklenirken gördüğünden beri, mecbur kalmadıkça kimseyle konuşmuyordu.”

the narrator tells. Kaygusuz uses non-human subjectivity to blur the representation of the human self. The narrator links several narrative layers by using the narrative agency of fig. Fig ties three women from different eras by evoking their memories and arousing their emotions.

Throughout the novel, the narrator draws parallels between the protagonist and the fig several times. At the beginning of the novel, the s/he declares the parallelism between the subjectivities of the protagonist and fig by saying that “your ‘I’ had shrunk in that ancient agony, all the time you’d lived through condensed into a fig seed” (12) or “the only thing you will ever see in the tree is a semblance of yourself” (17).<sup>51</sup> With reference to the “ancient agony,” the narrator denotes that the fig connects the protagonist to her past. This “past” includes not only her grandmother but a woman as a category. The narrator indicates that by saying “our matriarchs” (23) and building her narration about fig on its mythical relationship with women.

With these references, the narrator expands this parallelism to an eco-feminist view by using embedded stories. Before moving on to the eco-feminist and posthuman aspects of the novel, it is essential to discuss what an embedded story is. According to *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, an embedded story is “the literary device of the ‘story within a story,’ the structure by which a character in a narrative text becomes the narrator of a second narrative text framed by the first one” (134). As a common example, several stories told by Sharazad in *A Thousand and One Nights* can be considered embedded stories. According to general theorization, an embedded story is told by “a character” within the same diegetic

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<sup>51</sup> “Kadim bir ıstırapla benliğin küçülmüş, yaşadığın onca zaman bir incir çekirdeğinin içine sığmıştı.” “[İ]ncirde görüp görebileceğin bir tek kendi suretin.”

level of the narrative. In other words, a character or a homodiegetic narrator tells a story framed differently from the first, metanarrative level of narration.

However, in *Every Fire You Tend* second-person narration complicates this narratological phenomenon, for the narrator is not a character in the novel. So, the novel can be seen as a simple metanarrative told by an extradiegetic narrator.

However, experiential references given by the narrator make her/him an inner agent of the narrative. S/he tells both the main and secondary, embedded, stories not as an omniscient, outer voice but as a witness who experiences the same diegetic level or storyworld. S/he tells her/his own experiences from her/his own focal point. And this makes the secondary stories embedded in the novel's case. These embedded stories consist of Bese's exile, Myths about Hızır, Eliha's story, and the mythical story of fig. Although Hızır has a significant role in the plot, I focus here on Bese, Eliha, and the protagonist, three women with fig in common.

By placing fig in common of these three, Kaygusuz weaves a *trans-corporeal* web in Stacy Alaimo's terms. By trans-corporeality, Alaimo means that "all creatures, as embodied beings, are intermeshed with the dynamic material world, which crosses through them, transforms them, and is transformed by them" (2). Emphasizing the reciprocal relationship between human and non-human can be useful to explain the dynamic narrative relationship among the embedded stories in the novel. As Gündoğan İbrişim reminds us, Alaimo does not exclude social phenomena such as race, class, or ethnicity ("Rethinking the Subject," 108). Thus, *Every Fire You Tend* lumps past traumas, ethnic carnages, gendered violence, and human exceptionalism together in one storyworld. In this context, fig plays a key role with its significant influence on humans.

At some point, the narrator says, “[h]ow do you think fig trees were born?”

(18), and starts to tell the ancient narrative of fig based on several cultures from Turkish to Persian:

It’s almost as if we exist because figs do, think of it that way. (...) Over time, the shadow of the fig tree became the gathering place for punishment and praise, for poison and antidote, for arousal and calm. Eventually, its roots meandered underground. It emerged among humans in strange places, splitting the walls and cracking the foundations of derelict homes across the four corners of Mesopotamia. In time, of course, the fig became something of a demigod. In an age when innumerable gods and goddesses and human-animal hybrids began to converge in the fabric of a singular creator, the fig held its place in the world with a terrifying depravity, a -symbol of the singularity in the plural and the plurality in the singular. (18-19)<sup>52</sup>

The passage shows two functions attributed to fig in the novel: first, it shows how discordant narratives about fig circulates throughout history, and second, how it affected human imagination via these narratives. With its relationship with women in the narrator’s historical narrative, fig becomes a ground of criticism against anthropocentrism and patriarchy. Fig binds women’s traumatic experiences under patriarchy.

In Bese’s story, fig becomes a destructive force on woman body. While she is exiled from Dersim with her tribe, she briefly disappears. On the morning of the third day, she appears out of nowhere with bruises and wounds; and it turns out that she is pregnant by an unknown man who she says is Hızır (14-15). After this implicit, untold rape, the elders of her tribe abort her with a fig branch. The narrator reveals another role of fig:

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<sup>52</sup> “Sanki incir var diye biz varız, bir de böyle düşün. (...) Cezalandıran ve ödüllendiren, zehirleyen ve iyileştiren, baştan çıkaran ve sakinleştiren güçler incirin gölgesinde toplanıyor yavaş yavaş. Derken, kökleriyle yeraltında gezinmeye başlıyor. Mezopotamya’nın dört bir yanındaki duvarları yararak, metruk evlerin temellerini çatlatarak olmadık yerlerde insanların arasında belirliyor. Zamanla kahramanlaşıyor tabii. Tam da bir dolu tanrı, tanrıça, yarı insan yarı hayvan varlık, tek bir yaradanın bünyesinde erimeye yüz tuttuğu bir çağda, teklikle çokluğun çoklukla tekliğin simgesi olarak toprağı yıldırان bir azgınlıkta yerleşiyor dünyaya.”

It also fell to the fig to remove fetuses from the wombs of women impregnated outside of marriage. This secret remedy was known only to midwives. They would stick a freshly cut shoot from a fig tree into the womb and poke around, causing a miscarriage. In those days, it was considered sorcery to pierce through the cervix and slough off the uterine membrane without killing the woman. As a consequence, the fig tree's creative and destructive power began to spread by word of mouth. (20)<sup>53</sup>

After telling the fig's story, the narrator also explains what Bese had gone through:

[A]s she was about to insert a fig branch into Bese's cervix, Bese locked her legs together with all her might, telling, "Don't Don't ruin the fig for me!" She got to her feet and brushed her skirt with the back of her hands, refusing to let anyone violate the pact between her and the tree, and from that day forward, they broke neither her spirit nor the fig's. (34)<sup>54</sup>

This narrative highlights the noxious manipulation of fig, spreading through the stories and myths. Bese, though, displays an ethical stance against human manipulation of the fig and shows respect to the fig. Nevertheless, another woman's experience with fig undermines the destructive myth and replaces it with a productivity myth about fig:

It took quite a long time for people to get used to this solitary woman who lived hours away from the nearest village in a single-story house she had built herself, right next to an androgyne fig tree. (...) The purple figs she left behind were enigmatic and enticing, becoming objects of lust in the village. (...) Together, the fig tree, the well, and Eliha formed a universe of their own[.] (25)<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> "Ne ki, evlilik dışı gebe kalmış kadınların rahmindeki cenini söküp atmak yine incire düşmüştür. Yalnızca kocakarıların bildiği bir sırdı bu. Kocakarı, ağaçtan kestiği sürgünlerden birini gebe kadının rahmine sokup kurcalayarak düşük yapmasını sağlardı."

<sup>54</sup> "[B]ir incir dalını tam Bese'nin rahip ağzına sokacağı sıra Bese bacaklarını var gücüyle birleştirip "Yapmayın, incirle aramı bozmayın!" diye haykırdı. Ağaçla arasındaki yasayı kimseye çiğnetmeden usulca ayağa kalkıp elinin tersiyle eteklerindeki tozu silkelediği gün, ne kendi huyunu bozmuştu ne de incirinkini."

<sup>55</sup> "En yakın köye saatlerce uzakta, çift eşeyli bir incir ağacının hemen yanına yaptığı tek göz evinde yaşayan bu yalnız kadını kabullenmeleri epey zaman aldı. (...) Geride bıraktığı mor incirler denli cazip, dilden dile dolaşan bir arzuydu artık. (...) İncir, kuyu ve Eliha, başlı başına bir evren misali"

Here, unlike Bese, Eliha and her figs become symbols of lust and productivity. While the fig symbolizes death in Bese's story, here it represents life. As the narrator indicates, "She had built a civilization out of the fig" (36)<sup>56</sup>, Eliha's relationship with her fig betrays the evil-like myth attributed to it. Through these contradictory narratives, the narrator creates a blurry relationship between the protagonist and the fig tree in her garden.

She admires the fig so much that she seeks a house with a fig tree. However, the narrator thinks that her naming of the tree is a human-like, anthropocentric behavior against non-humans and directly criticizes her: "Knowing full well the repugnance of every name you levied at it, you fell short as soon as you began to hope that the fig could ever be human," (153)<sup>57</sup> So, her inherited memory and sympathy for figs are disrupted by the anthropocentric environment in which she lives and internalize. However, the narrator implies that her sympathy and affective bond with fig prevails:

It isn't all that surprising that your Zevraki doesn't bear fruit. It's as if the two of you have innate symmetry. When I look at you like this, from above, I can see you form a geometric whole, a curving shape that winds from you to Zevraki, and from Zavraki back to you. (41)<sup>58</sup>

The passage shows how strong the bond between the fig and the protagonist is. Although she names and impropriates the tree, its inherited affective agency on her carries on. Similarly, the narrator establishes another link between Eliha, whose "true home was with her fig seedling" (33), and the protagonist, who chooses a house only

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<sup>56</sup> "İncirden bir uygarlık kurmuştu çünkü."

<sup>57</sup> "Kondurulmuş her adın üzerinde sakil duracağını bile bile, incirden insan olmasını beklemekle başlıyor eksilişin."

<sup>58</sup> "Senin Zevraki'nin meyve vermiyor olmasına aslında hiç şaşmamalı. Gizil bir uyum var aranızda. Şöyle yukarıdan bakınca yarattığınız geometrik bütünlüğü kolaylıkla görebiliyorum. Senden dolanınca Zevraki'ye, Zevraki'den dolanınca sana varan kıvrımlı bir şekil oluşturuyorsunuz."



for the fig tree in its garden: “You look like you’ve calmed down a bit. Your face has started to loosen up. Your irises are trembling, trying to bring Eliha to life in your mind. That’s exactly the effect of these time-honored, ancient stories,” (27).<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, the narrator reveals that s/he made Eliha and Bese resemble to each other by saying that “Eliha is a real woman, you know that. All I did was change her appearance a bit, to make her resemble the wounded and irascible Bese” (27).<sup>60</sup>

Hence, the narrator establishes an ecofeminist collaboration among three women from different times with all these explicit expressions. They share a collective memory of victimhood.

Modern eco-feminism contends that “important connections exist between the treatment of women, people of color, and the underclass on one hand and the treatment of nonhuman nature on the other” (Warren 3). Yet, ecofeminists do not simply repeat the long-standing dichotomy of Western thought that categorizes women and nature together as inferiors to men and culture. On the contrary, they highlight how patriarchy discriminates against the non-human world, women, and queer bodies in an intersectional model of thinking, including race, class, and ethnicity (Gaard xiii). In the novel, the imbricative memories and knowledge of three women from different times denote an ecofeminist alliance among them. Their experiences of patriarchal violence, ethnic discrimination, and their relationship with the environment, embodied in the portrayal of fig undo the established, anthropocentric dichotomies.

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<sup>59</sup> “Bakıyorum da sakinleştin biraz. Yüzün gevşemeye başladı. Eliha’yı zihninde canlandırmaya çabaladıkça gözbebeklerin titriyor. Kadim hikâyelerin böyle bir etkisi vardır işte.”

<sup>60</sup> “Eliha hakiki bir kadın, sen de biliyorsun. Biraz görünüşünü değiştirdim, o kadar. Bese’nin yaralı ve hırçın haline benzesin diye.”

In the novel's narrative structure, this embodied alliance expands to a trans-corporeal collaboration devitalizing the hierarchy between humans and others with the functional involvement of fig. The novel portrays fig as a narrative agent whose agency is shown by the plotting and the narrator. According to Palabıyık, the fig is pictured almost as a character that exists "only as fig," free of the evil or beauty attributed by humans (46). At the end of the first chapter, mentioning an olive tree, the narrator remarks: "It is a tree after all. Trees always act differently from humans. It can't forget, nor can it remember" (84)<sup>61</sup>. This statement, of course, applies to fig. It narratively binds three generations of women together with its influences on the meaning-making processes of humans.

Turning back to material ecocriticism's argument that the world is a web of meaning in which the stories of humans and non-humans are tied together, Fig, with its narrative function in *Every Fire You Tend*, glues several embedded stories of humans and non-humans together within the "combined mesh" of matter and meaning, nature and culture, or human and non-human. (Iovino & Oppermann 5). By using second-person narration's ability to silence the human voice, Kaygusuz enhances the narrative voice and authority of the non-human world and its stories to display an ethical response against anthropocentric and patriarchal narrative patterns. *Every Fire You Tend*, with its unique narrative structure, not only explores the complex relationship between humans and non-humans but also delves into the complicated history of Turkey by shedding light on the brutal Dersim massacre of 1938.

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<sup>61</sup> "Ağaç bu, hep başka eyliyor insandan. Unutmuyor, ama hiçbir şey hatırlamıyor da."

Within this complex narrative structure of the novel, Kaygusuz's dynamic utilization of various types of second-person narration has a significant role. She uses various narrative strategies like narrative silence, embedding, and strategic empathy to increase the narrative power of the non-human, and she uses this increased non-human narrative power to juxtapose several narratives. This strategic narrative structure enables her to build "a web of meaning" composed of both human and non-human agents.



## CHAPTER 4

### CAN THE NON-HUMAN SPEAK?: INTERSPECIES ENTANGLEMENTS IN DENİZ GEZGİN'S *YERKUŞAĞI* AND LATİFE TEKİN'S *ZAMANSIZ*

This chapter offers an econarratological reading of Deniz Gezgin's *YerKuşAğı* (*EarthBird*) and Latife Tekin's *Zamansız* (*Timeless*). These two eco-conscious contemporary novels challenge realist, mimetic narration styles with complicated narrative structures. Both novels similarly deploy non-human narrators or characters, hybrid linguistic experiments, and storytelling practices from non-human views. In this chapter, I show how they narratologically and ecologically accord or discord. Moreover, I use econarratological concepts of non-human narration, umwelt narration, and linguistic hybridity to highlight their eco-conscious agenda.

Latife Tekin gained an esteemed position in Turkish literature with her *Dear Shameless Death* (1983) and *Berji Kristin: Tales from The Garbage Hills* (1984) in the 80s. In these novels, Tekin mixed social realist narration of subaltern classes and ecological awareness in a worldly sense. In the following years, she has taken on an eco-feminist approach toward similar issues. For instance, she pictures women's struggles in ecologically and politically corrupted, patriarchal environments in her *Muinar* (2006) or *Manves City* (2018). However, she diverts to a much more intense and tenuous narrative style with *Zamansız* (2022), which she had written during the lockdown days of the Covid-19 pandemic. The coexistence of interspecies

characterization, anti-mimetic environmental depictions, and vivid enaction of emotional responses in a trans-species sense makes *Zamansız* a rich narrative in terms of narratological and ecocritical analyses.

Although *Zamansız* and *YerKuşAğı* are contemporary novels, Deniz Gezgin is one of the latest modern Turkish eco-fiction novelists, of which Latife Tekin is one of the first. She maintained what Tekin embarked on with her first novel *Ahraz* (2012) in which she tells the story of a marginalized woman, her deaf-mute son, and their magical alliance with the non-human world against anthropocentrism and discrimination. After *Ahraz*, she also changes her narrative style to a multilayered, “non-humancentric” one with *YerKuşAğı* (Altuğ 28). *YerKuşAğı* critically pictures the destruction human beings caused through the eyes of non-human creatures. While it criticizes anthropocentrism, it applies narratological strategies to avoid anthropomorphism.

Since I consider Tekin and Gezgin’s literature in a continuum and see parallels between their mentioned novels, in this chapter, I investigate *Zamansız* and *YerKuşAğı* in a dialog. Both novels delve into the issue of human-centrism on a planetary level and utilize deterritorialized imaginative narrative environments to expand their ethical considerations to encompass the entire planet. Considering Tekin’s former work, *Zamansız* is a more non-human-based novel. It blurs the boundaries between non-human and human agents. There are only two human characters, and they do not speak “as humans” in the standard Turkish language. Similarly, *YerKuşAğı* also blurs the species boundaries with characterizations and language. Both novels imply a Gaia-like togetherness among all living or non-living bodies on the planet, and they try to find ways to narratively represent this

understanding. This indicates a shift in both the writers' style and in contemporary Turkish novel toward innovative narrative modes.

Consequently, in this chapter, I first show how Tekin represents love through a multispecies narrative structure, then I explain how Gezgin blends human and non-human agents together to criticize human impact on the environment. I offer econarratological close readings of each novel and reveal the parallels and differences in their narrative styles. Finally, I believe that reading these two novels in dialog discloses the new directions in Turkish eco-conscious writing.

#### **4.1. Latife Tekin's *Zamansız***

Latife Tekin's *Zamansız* was published in 2022, just after the lockdown days of the Covid-19 pandemic. Tekin mentions in an interview that she wrote the novel by traveling to and observing the lakes in Southwest Turkey during the pandemic period (Ergenç 10.13-10.25). Based on that information, it can be inferred that *Zamansız* is a mimetic novel that endeavors to depict the wildlife in lakes. Contrarily, the novel challenges mimetic and realist conventions. Without linear plotting, the novel portrays the nebulous and interspecies love story of a snakefish and a weasel. While the weasel talks as a homodiegetic narrator, an extratextual omniscient narrator intervenes to tell at times. The extradiegetic narrator talks in standard Turkish, but the weasel's hybrid language challenges standard "human" language. A human couple's blurry love story constitutes the novel's other narrative layer. The woman with a white dress and her lover argue near the lake where the weasel and the snakefish live. Their text messages and letters, manifested in different fonts and typesets, complicate the novel's narratological disposition. In this subchapter, I

analyze Tekin's experimental style and argue that the narrative deployment of a trans-species love story defamiliarizes love from its human context and extends it beyond the human realm.

On the first page of the novel, an unknown narrative voice problematizes notions of subjectivity and identity through an allegoric sentence in quotations marks: “‘If it is not us who got lost in the shadows of the mountains, then who are those cannot find the lake at dusk,’” and “‘If it is not us who drive the car, deceived by the road lined with cut-down trees, into the clouds, then who are those swept away by the light reflected from the lake to the sky’” (13)<sup>62</sup><sup>63</sup>. According to the limitedly narrated storyline, the lake is the living space of the weasel and the snakefish, so it is an animal geography. Driving a car and cutting down trees are human practices. Here, the narrator implicates the vulnerability of human lives before non-human agents by referring to their ability to “sweep away.”

In the following pages, the same narrative voice directly refers to the pandemic experience from a human perspective:

We bid farewell to spring for the first time with such fiery solitude, quiet and devoid of people.

— These restrictions will last longer; they will lock us down entirely.

Taking the road is over, is it? No, I don't want to believe this. How the reshaping death makes our lives deserted by leaping from shape to shape. (14)<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Unless otherwise stated, the passages from the novel are translated by me.

<sup>63</sup> “Dağların ötesinde kaybolan biz değilsek, alacakaranlıkta gölü arayıp bulamayanlar kim peki?” “Ağaçları kesilmiş yolun şaşırttığı arabayı bulutlara süren biz değilsek, gölgen göğe yansıyan ışıkla savrulanlar kim öyleyse?”

<sup>64</sup> — Uzayacak bu yasaklar, kapatacaklar tümüyle. Yola çıkmak bitti öyle mi? İnanmak istemiyorum buna, hayır, dönüşümler geçiren ölüm biçimden biçime sıçrayarak nasıl da ıssızlaştırdı hayatımızı.”

Like the homodiegetic narrator of *Sus Barbatus!*, the omniscient narrator of *Zamansız* uses we in a species sense here. S/he talks as an extradiegetic, authorial voice on extratextual pandemic conditions. In another passage, s/he reflects on the problematic human/non-human relations and the pandemic, again:

— Death is gaining strength rapidly; this can turn the scales.

Grass and insects will blossom and take flight in favor of humans, is that so? I wanted to believe in this, but the connection between plants, animals, and living beings has already become thin and severed. I can't imagine us coming together against death at all, it's a naïve fantasy. (46-47)<sup>65</sup>

The extradiegetic narrator utters her/his disbelief on the amendability of human/non-human relations. As the destructive reality of the Covid-19 pandemic showed the vulnerability of human beings and the collapsing world ecologies (Oppermann, “What Matters”), these authorial reflections directly linked to the anthropocentrism that the novel problematizes. They urge readers to take ecological responsibility and question her/his own position in the world ecosystem, and blame humans for breaking these ties. In other words, Tekin’s narrator re-writes the nature/culture dichotomy to undermine its anthropocentric bias. Although s/he is hopeless, she implies an entangled ecosystem of humans and non-humans once existed. Furthermore, the novel establishes an affective bond between the authorial voice and the reader who experience the pandemic.

Although these authorial passages form an eco-ethical background, they are not the main narrative layer of the novel. The most obvious narrative of the novel is the love story between the weasel and the snakefish. The weasel talks to its lover in

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<sup>65</sup> “—Ölüm güçleniyor hızla, dengeleri değiştirebilir bu.

Otlar böcekler insandan yana çiçeklenip kanatlanacak öyle mi? İnanmak isterdim buna ama bitkisiyle hayvanıyla canlılar arasındaki bağ inceliyor çoktan, ölüme karşı birlik olacağımızı düşünemiyorum hiç, saf hayal.”



an autodiegetic<sup>66</sup> narrative voice, so we know that they two are in a trans-species love relationship. They use expressions like “my love,” “my wild weasel,” or “my liar fish” to each other. The weasel tells their first encounter:

You don't remember our first night, don't you? Red lights were emanating from your mouth, my tooth suddenly sparkled, and with the excitement burning inside me, I swam closer. Just as you were about to get caught on a hook, I quickly pulled you into the reeds by your tail. With a sudden struggle, you dunked my head underwater and threw yourself onto me. While you were struggling, I felt that the slipperiness exceeded the fluidity of the water. I became soaked in a shimmering color that water couldn't wet, and I wanted you to stay on top of me with a pleasure that water couldn't provide, but the lake was filling in my mouth. (18)<sup>67</sup>

The way they first meet sets the tone for their entire relationship; their love is portrayed in a distinct and non-traditional manner. It differs from the anthropogenic understanding of romanticized “love.” In their unique, animal-like relationship, they hurt each other deliberately or mistakenly. Later, the weasel describes their relationship as a poem titled “**Blood and Teeth.**”<sup>68</sup> In the main plot, the narrative pictures two wild animals with an intimacy, including violence, hunting, and lust. In the first half of the novel, they maintain their relationship, and they show an example of *becoming-with* in Donna Haraway's terms (*When Species Meet*).

In *When Species Meet*, Haraway points to the cross-species connectivity and suggests that “becoming is always becoming *with*, in a contact zone where the outcome, where who is in the world, is at stake” (257). Referring to a human and non-human assemblage, she, again, introduces a response to the ongoing

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<sup>66</sup> A narrative mode in which the narrator is also the protagonist of the narrative. (See; Genette 248).

<sup>67</sup> “Hatırlamıyorsun demek ilk gecemizi, ağzından kırmızı ışıklar saçılıyordu, dişim parladı birden, heyecan ateşiyle yüzüp yaklaştım kuyruğundan, bir oltaya takılmak üzereyken hızlıca kamışların arasına çektim seni; ters bir çarpınıyla başımı suya bastırıp üstüme atıldın, çarpınırken hissettim ki kayganlığın suyun akışkanlığını aşıyor, suya renk veren bir parlamayla ıslandım, suyun ıslatamayacağı bir zevkle, sonsuza dek üstümde kalmanı istiyordum ama göl ağzıma doluyordu.”

<sup>68</sup> Emphasis is original.

environmental crisis with her famous term *oddkin* in *Staying With the Trouble*: “Staying with the trouble requires making oddkin; that is, we require each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations, in hot compost piles” (4). In both influential works, she emphasizes the entanglement of different species on the same planet, which is in jeopardy.

To represent the unique complexity of their animal relationship, which is opaque to human cognitive ability, several narrative strategies. One of them is the linguistic hybridity between humans and animals. For example, the weasel narrator frequently observes other animals near the lake and mimics their sounds. Describes the sounds of the egrets as uncanny and mimics them: “*Frii-iii-er-frii-ii-frii*,” or “*ciyovk ciyovk tiki tiki tiki*.”<sup>69</sup> Similarly, it cuts its own sentences or their dialogs with the snakefish lover to switch from human language to its own sound: “*Vov vov vov! Higgri hii hii!* If you don't console me, my love, who will console my heart?” (56)<sup>70</sup>. These linguistic interventions foreground the impossibility of fully immersing into the non-human imagination, and they show the limitations of the human linguistic realm.

Turning back to the fundamental question of econarratologists, here we should ask, can a human-made narrative represent animal life without falling into anthropocentrism? Regarding this, David Herman states that “[b]y modeling the richness and complexity of ‘what it is like’ for nonhuman others, stories can underscore what is at stake in the trivialization—or outright destruction—of their experiences” (“Non-human Experiences” 159). Therefore, if it is impossible to engage in non-human reality, then it is essential to represent its complexity and

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<sup>69</sup> Italic is original.

<sup>70</sup> “*Vov vov vov! Higgri hii hii!* Sen avutmazsan kim avutacak gönlümü sevgilim?”

opacity. Herman categorizes the narrations of this complex cognitive process of non-humans as umwelt narratives (ibid). In these narratives, the animal characters do not allegorically reflect human mental processes. Instead, they represent how unfamiliar animal mentality is.

Besides this umwelt narrative strategy, the lives of the two animals dramatically change when human influence takes place. When the intricate love relationship between the two animals goes on, the woman with the white dress throws a blue bag into the lake. The snakefish wonders what she threw but the weasel warns it: “— That woman is not real my love, she is a dream!” However, the snakefish answers: “— She is as real as the reality of the lake we fell into, my weasel!” (28).<sup>71</sup> According to the snakefish, the bag contains a pink box in which there are two rings, letters, and little notebooks. After the chapter called “TWO RINGS,” the two animals fall under human influence.

When they start reading the love letters, their intimacy becomes more “human.” The weasel fears this human influence and warns again: “— Let's forget and erase this bag from our minds. Let's throw it back. I wish you hadn't found it. Even the story I've created seems too complicated to you. Let's not confuse our minds and hearts” (35). However, the snakefish’s mind confuses, and it says, “— We are already human.” (38).<sup>72</sup> With the influence of letters, rings, and text messages, which can be seen as the love language of humans, their relationship goes wrong and they separate. After that moment, the snakefish goes away and the weasel’s grief days begin. In numerous chapters called “Day ... of Grief,” it waits for its lover to come.

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<sup>71</sup> “—Geçek değil o kadın sevgilim, hayal.” “—İçine düştüğümüz göl kadar gerçek Gelinciğim!”

<sup>72</sup> “İnsanız biz zaten.”

The latter part of the book focuses on the weasel's grief pictured with love letters and text messages from human characters, and the narrative becomes more and more blurry. It gets harder to say who talks to whom, or who speaks by mimicking non-human voices. While the authorial passages and human influence on the plot urge the reader to question humans' position on the planet, these blurry sections problematize the boundaries between species, and the interaction across species turns upside-down. The human effect on non-human lives and the environment is a familiar situation that one can observe in everyday life. However, the way non-human lives and objects shape our cultural norms or behavioral patterns is not always observable in life or fiction.

After days of separation and grief, the weasel takes the blue bag to the woman with the white dress. Then, human love language starts to change. The narrative voice shifts from the weasel to the woman, and she addresses her lover. "Our letters to each other have been torn apart as if they were read by fish, waterfowls, and predators," (95) she says, "The letters we've written to each other smell like algae. (...) The words of our love were covered with the lake's mud" (90, 98).<sup>73</sup> With this non-human influence embodied by material entities, the love language between the woman and her lover gets closer to the language of the weasel. The woman starts mimicking non-human sounds of birds, fishes, or the lake: "*Gov gov gov! Cuv cuv cuv!* Now, I need to go to my room to pack up. (...) *Gıg gırı gu gov gov gov!* When I was going to Lakeside Restaurant, the same thought stuck into my forehead" (102-103).<sup>74</sup> Moreover, this time the woman gets puzzled about her identity: "So, you are

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<sup>73</sup> "Birbirimize yazdıklarımızı balıklar, su kuşları, yırtıcılar okumuş gibi mektuplarımız paralanmış[.]" "Birbirimize yazdığımız mektuplar yosun kokuyor. (...) Aşkımızın sözcükleri gölün çamuruna bulanmış."

<sup>74</sup> *Gov gov gov! Cuv cuv cuv!* Şimdi odama geçip eşyalarımı toparlamalıyım. (...) *Gıg gırı gu gov gov gov!* Sahil lokantasına yürürken yine o uğursuz düşünce saplandı alınma."

a weasel, and I am a fish, *kıkır kıkır hah hah ha!*” (98).<sup>75</sup> With this upside-down influential relationship, Tekin embodies the transformative power of the non-human world.

Although the novel’s multi-layered plot is challenging to follow, this narrative strategy indicates a worldly ontology rooted in the entanglement of species. While the book critically portrays human intervention and environmental destruction, it also attributes narrative power to non-human animals and material objects. Animals are given voice with narrative voice and the material entities are given power with their effects on both humans and non-humans. With the hazy intertwinements among species and the blurry dialogs in which it is not clear who speaks, the second half of the book offers an eco-conscious ontology that reminds Donna Haraway’s *oddkin*.

In her famous work *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Donna Haraway offers a way of survival depending on multispecies relationality. She sums up her argument with these words:

Staying with the trouble requires making oddkin; that is, we require each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations, in hot compost piles. We become-with each other or not at all. That kind of material semiotics is always situated, someplace and not noplac, entangled and worldly. Alone, in our separate kinds of expertise and experience, we know both too much and too little, and so we succumb to despair or to hope, and neither is a sensible attitude. (4)

What Haraway suggests is a multi-species kinship in times of planetary turmoil to mend the world’s ecosystem. This kinship refers to reciprocal care among species. I think that the Covid pandemic is an obvious indicator of Haraway’s “trouble.”

Although Haraway refers to a larger planetary discussion, the pandemic impelled us to remember that we are a vulnerable element in the larger web. This ontology that

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<sup>75</sup> “Derken sen Gelincik, ben Balık, *kıkır kıkır hah hah ha!*”

foregrounds cross-species interdependence and interrelations is embodied in *Zamansız*'s vague narrative structure. The novel not only delineates the interrelation between two wild animals but also pictures their unclear entanglement with human agents. The narrative, enriched with the utilization of different textual forms like letters, messages, and poems, displays the complex web of subjectivities in a small habitat. So, it displays the confluent destiny of humans and non-humans on a small scale.

#### 4.2. Deniz Gezgin's *YerKuşAğı*

Deniz Gezgin's *YerKuşAğı* (*EarthBird*) tells the story of Moy, a rejected girl who fell from a hornbeam tree, Şuri, a seagull with one injured wing covered in oil, Hagrin, a half-animal, half-vine creature, and a deer who accompanies them on their journey. These unexpected friends embark on their journey to find no-land (*yokyer*), a dream place free from human impact. In the later sections of the novel, it is revealed that Şuri and Moy are dead, so perhaps the no-land refers to the afterlife. Gezgin uses an omniscient narrative voice, but she gives voice to the characters by frequently using direct speeches. Focalization often changes among the characters to convey their non-human views. Besides, similar to *Zamansız*, *YerKuşAğı* problematizes language as a human communicative tool and creates a common among several species, or unidentified species, by foregrounding "sound." The novel displays a linguistic defamiliarization through direct speeches and it uses sound as an embodied experiential tool to engage with its reader affectively. In this chapter, I analyze these narrative strategies and their role in representing a non-human view of the world and of humans.

With direct references to the destruction of the world ecosystem, *YerKuşAğı* is perhaps the more explicitly environmental one in the novels this thesis covers. Yet, it does not mimetically represent this destruction but creates a multi-layered narrative of multi-species entanglement. What demonstrates this entanglement most conspicuously is the characterization of Hagrid. In Moy's first encounter with Hagrid, the narrator describes Hagrid in her focal point as such: "A pair of black eyes, as if eyes of a vine, eyes of a thorny savage with dark leaves, and sourish fruits" (16).<sup>76</sup> However, when she lay her eyes on it, she sees a pair of hooves. Then, again, the narrative voice describes Hagrid from Moy's focal point as such: "Strange! The one before her was neither old nor young, neither a woman nor a man, neither a human nor a plant. It had hooves, but it was not an animal, either" (16).<sup>77</sup>

The narrator cannot describe Hagrid in her/his own focal point, too:

Who was this Hagrid? Something, or someone? What was it? It was Hagrid, the vine with hooves, the echo of all sounds, who splatters seeds where it walks on, something from anything. It was not formless, but not in one form. Its body, like a tree gradually expanding, or an awakened volcano with its black sides, or like a fault line passing through salty waters. Now, it is mingled with this place they are in. As much as this place is non-existent, so existent is Hagrid." (31-32)<sup>78</sup>

Hagrid embodies an existence or knowledge beyond materiality. It displays the timeless planetary knowledge of any living or non-living material being, including human animals. "Ancient people would hear," it says, "what they hear and say at the beginning blended into language. When it was stamped on time, it put on a meaning"

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<sup>76</sup> "Karşısında bir çift kara göz, sanki bir sarmaşığın gözleri, koyu yeşil yapraklı, dikenli ve mayhoş meyveli bir yabaninin."

<sup>77</sup> "Tuhaf, karşısındaki ihtiyar değil genç değil, kadın değil adam değil, insan değil bitki değil, toynaklı ama hayvan da değildi."

<sup>78</sup> "Kimdi bu Hagrid, biri miydi, bir şey mi, ne? Hagrid'di, toynaklı sarmaşık, tüm seslerin yankısı, yürüdüğü yere tohumlar saçan, her şeyden bir şey. Ne biçimsiz ne de tek biçimde. Gövdesi halka halka genişleyen bir ağaç gibi, uyuyup uyanmış etekleri kara bir volkan, tuzlu sulardan çekilmiş bir fay kırığı. Şimdi oldukları bu yerle haşır neşir, burası ne kadar yoksa Hagrid öyle var."

(31).<sup>79</sup> It heals Şuri and Moy by using plants, seeds, salt, clay, and mud. Shows a caring attitude towards other species and objects. Considering its non-gendered identity, this caring attitude goes beyond the long-standing identification of woman and nature. Having a grasp of the whole material mesh in the world, it guides others to break free from human impact and to reach no-land. Besides, Hagrın's usage of the language also promotes its unique character. It frequently uses *ha* and *oy* exclamations. With these small expressions, Hagrın defamiliarizes the standard Turkish language with small alterations to give the sense of being non-human. With all these elements, Hagrın's characterization makes it a significant narrative agent in the novel's setting.

Conversely, Moy has no identity when she first encounters the others, she does not even remember her name. In the passages where her father speaks, we see that she is a disabled little girl who is poorly treated. Her family locks her down in a room, isolating her from the world. She never learns the names of animals but knows their voices. "I am not one of them," she says (31), and her father also tries to integrate her into their family table but cannot achieve it. Without a grasp of "humanity," she falls from a tree to Hagrın's world. From that point on, the novel is mostly built on the dialogs between Hagrın and Moy. With characterizations of these two, the novel establishes a narrative dichotomy to engage the reader.

Although the narrator interferes and comments on what they say, dialogs occur between Moy and Hagrın. Moy continuously raises philosophical questions about humans, non-humans, and their relationship with each other. Considering that she is the only human in the companionship of four, she is the one with whom the

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<sup>79</sup> "Eski insanlar duyardı, onların başta duyup da söylediği dile kaydadı, zamana zımbalanınca anlam kuşandı."



reader identifies the most. In David Herman's words, the novel locates "the human agent in a transspecies constellation of selves, many of them non-human."

According to Herman, in this type of narrative, the human agent "begins to reacquire agential selfhood, defined in part as an ability to generate a self-narrative, by recognizing her status as 'only one lost thing among so many others'" (*Narratology beyond the Human* 49-50). Just like Herman's description, Throughout the story, Moy's character progressively adopts an eco-conscious mindset, and her development is depicted by Hagrin's answers.

Moy asks several questions: "Tell me, is there a way to leave the world but survive, or find a place without taking lives?" (35). "Can there be a world within the world?" (38). "Well, how can it be without language and place?" (43) "Is this a day, then what were the others that we count until today?" (48). With all of them, she tries to make sense of the new environment she is in. Hagrin's long answers guide her to understand non-humans' critical views about anthropocentrism and establish bonds with non-humans:

Oy Moy! Look at this jagged-leafed plant and see. It is sweating blood, isn't it? So the clouds are full, coming. You are sensing the smell of the dust and the leaves gathering moisture, but you don't feel it because you have forgotten. That's why humans prefer to forget instead of licking and healing their pain. Even if you could hear the sounds, you cannot make sense of what is left unspoken. It's the same for all of humanity anyway, since the time when your ancestors started uprooting bushes to sow seeds. Since the time they stopped sleeping on tree branches and inside caves. Since the time they got trapped on a ship as tamed couples. There is neither water nor wind outside, but no one knows. When the supplies run out, it's evident that the ship will settle on the peak of a mountain. (38)<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> "Oy Moy, şu yaprağı tırtıklı bitkiye bak gör, boncuk boncuk terlememiş mi, öyleyse bulutlar dolmuş geliyor. Nem toplayan yaprakların, yapışan tozun kokusunu alıyorsun da unuttun diye hissetmiyorsun. İnsan bu yüzden, acısını unutmayı yalayıp iyileştirmeye yeğliyor. Sesleri duyabiliyor olsan da sana söylenilmemişi anlama çeviremiyorsun, bu bütün beşerde böyle ya. Ataların tohumu ekmek için çalıları sökmeye başladığından bu tarafa hem. Ağaç dallarında, mağara yuvarlarında uyumaktan vazgeçtiğinden beridir, adı olan, ehli çiftlerle bir gemiye tıklandığından bu yana. Dışarıda ne su var ne yel ama kim bilecek. Ambarındakiler bitince geminin bir dağın sivri tepesine oturacağı belli."

With references to prophet Noah's narrative, Hagrin explicitly objects to the way human beings live and criticizes anthropocentrism that cuts the ties between the non-human world and human beings. With the reference to the supplies running out, it reminds us how weak and dependent human beings are. Just like its own hybrid, non-determined being, it teaches Moy an entangled ontology of all worldly beings. It indicates the essential sameness of every material being by saying that "you can be an animal if you want, you can be a plant if you try" (37). With references to multi-species planetary entanglement, Hagrin's emphasis on "togetherness" crosses all boundaries and shows its longing towards an animist unity of all material forces.

Gezgin mobilizes a specific dichotomy to depict the breaking ties between human and non-human realms. The dichotomy between sound/voice and language lies at the heart of the novel. Hagrin accuses human beings of being so dependent on language, and it insists that sound should prioritize attributed meaning:

All newborns come to sound; they whimper the song that they know by listening to the water. Babies are somehow animals, too. When words start filling their ears, and they begin to imitate and speak them, their waters are drained, like their soul. Yet, children can pass through closed doors or walls, see the night, and hear the unnamed sounds. (...) This endless possibility of wilderness makes you neither existent nor nonexistent; you are on earth or in no-land before you know it. I am asking your voice, Moy. Not the echo of what you heard from me, from trees, or from a black bird, but the one coming from your nature. Humans make noise because they echo in vain. No other living being gets involved in this nonsense. The wind blows by gliding through the air, grumbling as it hits the rock, and if it wraps around a tree, it makes sounds from its leaves or, in the winter season, from its dry branches. Whatever it touches, it adds a part of itself to it, and takes a part of it for itself. Sound is eternal. (36-37)<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> "Bütün yeni doğanlar sese gelir, sulardan duyup bildikleri şarkıyı mırıldanırlar. Bebekler de öyle böyle hayvandırlar. Kulaklarına kelimeler dolmaya, onları taklit edip de konuşmaya başladıkça canları su gibi çekilir. Çocuklar yine de kapalı kapılardan, duvarlardan girip çıkabilir, geceyi görebilir, ad verilmemiş sesleri duyabilirler. (...) Bu sonsuz yabancılık imkânı, seni ne varlardan ne yoklardan kılar, bir bakmışsın yerdesin, bir bakmışsın yokyerde."

Hagrin's answers to Moy clearly use sound as a sign of "naturalness." Hagrin refers to a dichotomy between nature and human or nature and culture. However, it does not support or repeat this dichotomy, on the contrary, it blames human beings' anthropocentric attitude towards the non-human world for creating this boundary. Its identification of animals and children shows that human beings are not anthropocentric by their "nature," but they develop an arrogant attitude towards others throughout their life, by the influence of the cultural atmosphere. In other words, *YerKuşAğı* does not simply reproduce the long-standing dichotomy between nature and culture. Instead, it criticizes human beings for establishing this dual thinking and damaging the togetherness of all material agents.

Accordingly, Deniz Gündoğan İbrişim argues that *YerKuşAğı* offers an entangled existence of human and non-human realms through narrative boundary crossings among species. For her, this entanglement reminds Donna Haraway's *natureculture* ("Ekolojinin Yazısı" 446). In accordance with her idea of kinship, Haraway suggests a non-hierarchical interdependence among all inhabitants of the world. Since this entanglement includes humans, it also indicates a unity of nature and culture. In Haraway's theorization, *natureculture* does not prioritize human over non-human. (*Staying With the Trouble*). Hagrin's caring and friendly attitude toward Moy shows that *YerKuşAğı* does not go against human beings or human cultures but against human-centrism.

In the novel, Moy's father, Asil Derbentçi, embodies the human-centric worldview through his characterization. The narrator describes him as a nobleman who enjoys hunting.<sup>82</sup> He gathers his noble friend in dinners and tells his hunting

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<sup>82</sup> His name, Asil, means noble in Turkish.

stories. For the narrator, “the stories he tells skim the animals he shot from their flesh,” and does not call the animals by their known names but by their scientific names in Latin (27). With this attitude, he degrades non-human lives to objects of human beings. Yet, ironically, the narrator describes him as a lover of nature and shows what he dreams about:

One day, he will sleep at night with *Asio otus* sounds and go hiking with his guests. While they digest the dead animals in their stomachs, Asil Derbentçi will walk ahead of them, talking about fauna. As he raises his voice, his guests, who get more worried as they move away from the house, will line up with herd instinct, and Asil Derbentçi will be the leader of the forest. (27-28)<sup>83</sup>

He sees the environment as a spectacle for the human gaze and considers animals as foods for human taste. After Moy’s death, he calmly says, “we’ve seen the impossibility of keeping an incapable one alive” (62). However, Hagrın and the narrator speak against Asil Derbetçi’s human-centric view. Although it talks to Moy, Hagrın criticizes his view: “Don’t think that you are in an ordered place, Moy, ha! Seeing the wild as a mysterious spectacle is a human deception” (48). And the narrator also rejects human objectification of the non-human environment and defines current times as such: “[i]n a century in which humans build surrounded wild parks, they sell sleeping with lions as a commodity. (...) They admire a dream in the deeps of the wilderness. This is a nature surrounded by language” (76). By referring specifically to the century, the narrator takes on a critical attitude against the Anthropocene.

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<sup>83</sup> “Bir gün gelecek ormana nazır evinde, geceleri *Asio otus* sesleriyle uyuyacak, misafirleriyle yemek sonrası doğa yürüyüşleri yapacaktı. Onlar midelerindeki hayvanı sindirirken Asil Derbentçi hepsinin önünde ağır adımlarla yürüyüp faunadan bahsedecekti. Evden uzaklaştıkça tedirginliği artan misafirleri, o sesini yükselttikçe, sürü içgüdüleriyle sıraya girecek ve Asil Derbentçi ormanın lideri olup çıkacaktı.”

The passage that Gündoğan İbrişim says is the heart of the novel tells what happened to Şuri, the wounded bird covered in oil (446). Because of the oil leaks, sea and ocean surfaces are covered with oil, and migratory birds cannot land on their usual paths. The ones who get tired and land, cannot fly anymore with clammy oil on their wings and die. The narrator tells what happened to the others:

Those who remained until the very end flew as long as the horror they witnessed. They flew with their lungs burning from thirst, in order to reach beyond the ocean. The herds scattered, and those that fell to the ground went directly to earthbird. The few remaining birds, when they reached the farthest point, were forced to land on an island that appeared in the middle of the water while their breath was running out. Desperately, they landed on a gigantic trash shell that grew larger as they descended. This was an island made of garbage, where all the floating trash clung together and turned into land, a nylon island. It must have been there for a long time because a giant ecosystem had formed on it. Crustaceans, birds, insects, and plenty of carcasses... (...) In a place where humans had not set foot, an entirely human-made island from beginning to end. It devours and grinds up anything approaching it. Birds will perish with the trash in their throats, and when worms and insects devour their flesh, the nylon that emerges will mix back into the island, causing its surface area to grow even larger. (45-46)<sup>84</sup>

In the passage, the narrator uses a more direct and realist narrative style to portray the destructive human impact on the planet and engage with the reader empathetically. The reader identifies with the birds and emphasizes their anxiety and fear. According to Alexa von Mossner, humans have an impulsive tendency, or an unreflective response, to alter the aversive situations in which they feel fear or anxiety. So, if a narrative stimulates these feelings in a reader, the reader's emotional

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<sup>84</sup> “Son ada dek kalanlar, gördükleri dehşet denli uzun uçtular. Okyanusun ötesine varmak uğruna ciğerleri susuzluktan yanarak havada taş kesildiler. Sürüler dağılmış, düşenler yer kuş ağını boylamıştı. Gerideki tek tük kuş en uzağa vardığında solukları tükenmek üzereyken suyun ortasında görünen bir adaya inmeye mecbur kaldılar. Alçalıp yaklaştıkça devleşen bir çöğ kabuğuna çaresizce kondular. Yüzebilen tüm çöplerin birbirine yapışıp karaya dönüştüğü naylondan bir adaydı bu, çöp ada. Uzun zamandır orada olacak ki üzerinde dev bir yaşam oluşmuştu, kabuklular, kanatlılar, böcekler ve bolca leşle. (...) İnsanın ayak basmadığı bir yerde baştan sona insan ürünü bir ada. Ona yaklaşan ne varsa yutup öğütüyor. Kuşlar kursaklarındaki çöple can verecek, etlerini solucanlar, böcekler sıyrınca boşa çıkan naylonlar yine adaya karışacak, yüzölçümü daha da büyüyecek.”

response can lead to an actional outcome (36). Therefore, the embodied emotions of the birds have an affective function. Moreover, the passage portrays the destructive human impact through non-human animals' lenses and depicts the bodily and sensory responses of the birds. The vivid representations of the sick bodies and emotional responses of the birds in this passage offer an ecosickness narrative beyond the human realm.

Heather Houser suggests that utilizing narratives of sick bodies, known as ecosickness narratives, can effectively engage readers' emotions and increase their environmental awareness. In Houser's theorization, "'affect' designates body-based feelings that arise in response to elicitors as varied as interpersonal and institutional relations, aesthetic experience, ideas, sensations, and material conditions in one's environment" (2-3). Based on Houser's readings, narratives about ecosickness typically depict how the destruction of ecosystems by humans leads to illnesses in human bodies. However, I argue that the narrative affect that the shown passage deploys through non-human bodies has a similar affect on the reader. They make the reader engage with the text emphatically. *YerKuşAğı* shows how "environmental manipulation and contamination disrupt ecologies and produce sick bodies that materialize the damages of detachment" (Heather 154). Gezgin employs non-human bodies that are affected by human-made contamination and toxicity, and she foregrounds their anxiety and horror as they approach the toxic island.

To sum up, like *Zamansız*, *YerKuşAğı* is also a text that is built on interspecies entanglements. It deliberately establishes a dichotomic narrative structure between a cosmos-like *natureculture* and human "culture" to show the negative aspects of anthropocentrism for both humans and non-humans. Furthermore, Gezgin locates Moy, the only human agent in the novel, among other non-human agents. Since Moy

does not know anything about the non-human world, her questions to Hagrín guide the human reader to identify with her and face the human-made destruction of the planet.



## CONCLUSION

Since my bachelor's years, I have always tended to read and work on literary works that address environmental problems. Before this study, I was planning to investigate the outburst of eco-conscious writing in Turkish literature in the last two decades. However, the more I studied contemporary novels, the more I realized that contemporary writers have a tendency to challenge conventional narrative structures and experimentally engage with environmental problems. I choose to conduct this thesis on the selected novels because of their non-conventional narrative styles.

These novels address environmental problems and anthropocentrism in complex intersectionality with other social issues like gender inequality, discrimination against minority groups, state violence, and coups. So, I classify these books as eco-conscious novels that delve into environmental issues and the intricate connections between humans and non-human beings, within the framework of wider social problems.

In parallel with this framework, I give an overview of ecocritical studies focusing on formal structures of literary works, in the first chapter. After briefly discussing some ecocritics' calls for focusing on aesthetics and form, I specifically explore econarratological research to show how ecocritics and narratologists exchange their ideas to develop theoretical concepts regarding the representations of the environment and the non-human world. Accordingly, I conclude that eco-conscious writers often engage with their readers through affective and cognitive narrative strategies. In order to make them question human beings' position in the



world ecosystem, they try more complex narrative techniques than conventional, realist representations. In the second part of the first chapter, I give a brief overview of ecocritical studies in Turkey or Turkish literature. In this subchapter, I show that though there are numerous ecocritical studies on Turkish literature, almost any, if not of them, investigates Turkish literary works with an econarratological approach. Therefore, I argue and hope that this study offers a new approach to Turkish ecocritical studies.

In the second chapter, I offer an econarratological reading of Faruk Duman's *Sus Barbatus!* trilogy, and I came to two conclusive arguments. First, Duman creates a living storyworld with anthropomorphic features to give a narrative agency to the non-human entities, and secondly, Duman's experimental narrator directly addresses the reader with interventions and remarks on human nature. Furthermore, the narrator resembles a Turkish traditional storyteller, and this makes the novel's narrative structure challenge the Western narratological concepts and shows that culturally specific analyses are needed to reveal non-Western novel's narrative strategies. In the third chapter, I discuss non-human narrative positioning in Sema Kaygusuz's *Every Fire You Tend*, and I argue that while the novel copes with a historical traumatic experience, it establishes timeless bonds via ancient stories of fig. Finally, in the fourth chapter, I analyze Latife Tekin's *Zamansız (Timeless)* and Deniz Gezgin's *YerKuşAğı (EarthBird)* together. In this chapter, I unfold the kinship between Tekin and Gezgin, and I argue that they use unfamiliar linguistic and narrative structures to criticize anthropocentrism. With my analyses in this chapter, I came to the conclusion that *Zamansız* and *YerKuşAğı* deterritorialize the sense of place in their storyworld and exchange it with a planetary sense of multispecies entanglement.

Yet, in this study, I take one more step and ask “how” these literary works do this. How do they connect or disconnect the environmental cosmopolitan on a global scale? What narratological techniques do they employ to juxtapose human and non-human, reality and imaginary, or local and global? To answer these questions, I use current or classical narratological concepts and reveal how these novels communicate with their readers. Considering the narrative characteristics of these novels and their integration of human-centric thinking with social issues, I conclude that contemporary eco-conscious Turkish novelists search for new narrative methods and strategies to articulate environmental and social problems. They do not apply to reader immersion through the reality effect, but they employ reader empathy toward non-human entities by, for instance, blurring the boundaries between species, addressing directly with interventions or second-person narration, or using “we” narration to give a sense of species, among other techniques.

I did not anticipate delving so deeply into emotions and affective narratological theories before my close readings and theoretical research on narratology and environment. Throughout my readings, I realized that econarratological strategies mostly appeal to the readers’ emotions and empathy. Since developing a non-anthropocentric environmental ethic requires identification and empathy towards other species, I have explained many aspects of the selected novels by using affective narratological concepts. I learned that emotions play a significant role in shaping the narrative techniques of contemporary eco-conscious Turkish literature, and I came to the conclusion that a deeper analysis of Turkish eco-conscious writing based on affect studies may reveal a lot.

As I discuss and show in my close readings, some of these narrative techniques or their thematic backgrounds are specific to Turkish culture or Turkish

historical and political atmosphere. In my analysis, I saw that contemporary writers turn their attention to local, cultural elements or Turkish literary conventions. Thus, I think that while they preserve their local sense, they are also connected to a global environmental understanding. In *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global* by Ursula K. Heise, it is argued that environmental writing is predominantly an American genre. When considering non-American environmental texts, Heise comes to the following conclusion:

All of these works, implicitly or explicitly, highlight the imbrication of local places, ecologies, and cultural practices in global networks that reconfigure them according to a logic that recent theories of globalization label “deterritorialization.” But unlike many more explicitly “environmentalist” texts written in the United States, these works take an ambivalent stance toward this process, suggesting that it might sometimes need to be resisted by some form of “reterritorialization,” but that it might in other cases become the basis for cosmopolitan forms of awareness and community, both ecologically and culturally. (...) They thereby participate in the search for the stories and images of a new kind of eco-cosmopolitan environmentalism that might be able effectively to engage with steadily increasing patterns of global connectivity, including those created by broadening risk scenarios. (210)

Based on the research conducted in previous chapters, the novels examined in this study address the interconnections and disparities between local, regional, and global forms of inhabitation. They may not be explicitly environmental, but they participate in the planetary web of writing through their environmental concerns. *Sus Barbatus!* and *Every Fire You Tend* foreground local and cultural elements by using specific narrative strategies and structures. *Zamansız* and *YerKuşAğı* convey the same ethical stance in a more planetary sense. Therefore, I argue that they all foster environmental connectivity, eco-cosmopolitan in Heise’s terms, on the whole planet through their foregrounded cultural ecologies or deterritorialized local environments. They all affectively urge the reader to identify with their storyworlds and they inspire an ethical approach that sees human beings as only a part of a large ecosystem.

To conclude, this study investigates four contemporary Turkish eco-conscious novels and shows how they convey environmental ethics through their narrative strategies and authorial choices. Through my studies, I saw that the ecocritical readings of Turkish texts generally focus on what these texts offer thematically and ethically. I hope that this study will enhance the research on eco-conscious writing in Turkish by emphasizing the significance of aesthetics and form. The rising interest of Turkish writers in environmental issues requires more detailed and interdisciplinary research. Additionally, comparative econarratological analyses of contemporary eco-conscious novels from Turkish and world literatures can show how cultural elements influence narratological choices and contribute to the eco-conscious writing practices in the world. Furthermore, the experiments in narratology presented in this thesis also demonstrate the limitations of traditional narrative forms that emerged during the era of anthropocentrism such as novels or short stories. Despite attempts to experiment with narrative structures and techniques, they exist within a paradigm based only on human imagination. While I recognize the importance of these efforts and the potential of narrative, I believe that the current trend towards experimentation in literature may lead to the emergence of new, alternative narrative forms.

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