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## BOOK REVIEW

**Buran, S. (Ed.). (2020). *Edebiyatta posthümanizm*. TPLondon.**

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The edition entitled *Edebiyatta Posthümanizm* [*Posthumanism in Literature*] is the first edition in the Turkish language which introduces the narrative of posthumanism in Anglo-American Literature and Culture. This edition is the first book of the Posthumanism Series by TPLondon, edited by Sümeyra Buran, that examines how posthumanism is conceptualized in literary writing by studying the western traditional binaries, e.g. human and nature, human and non-humans, and so forth, that have nurtured the ideology and mentality of western societies for centuries. This edition also examines the contribution of literature in presenting alternative ideas and thoughts by laying the ground of Posthumanities in Turkey by opening new doors for the readers to understand the changing status of man and the nature of the relationship (e.g. hybrid, parasitic, etc.) between the human and more-than-human world.

Sherryl Vint's Preface, 'Personhood Without Binaries,' which is published both in English and Turkish in double columns, addresses the distinctive remark of this edition which is to bring in a dialogue between the West and East by overcoming the binaries through various perspectives and offering comparative study cases, working on both English and Turkish literary traditions from the past until today.

The book is divided into six main parts which are: 1. Introduction, 2. Selections from American Literature, 3. Selections from British Literature, 4. Comparative Literature, 5. Selections from Turkish Literature and 6. Commentaries by Turkish Authors. In the first part, the chapters written by Sümeyra Buran and Francesca Ferrando are introductory as we study about the theoretical background of posthumanism itself and in pair with other narratives and literary theories such as transhumanism, antihumanism, metahumanism and new materialism respectively. Specifically, Buran examines the ways through which the narrative of posthumanism is translated and adopted in the Turkish vocabulary (19) and how this concept is studied in various literary works of both western and eastern literary traditions (26-27). Buran also explores how posthumanism has always been there since the first literary works appeared many years ago, by presenting the historical background, criticism and representations of posthumanism in each literary period of time. Ferrando's

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chapter is more apt to the theoretical background of transhumanism, antihumanism, metahumanism and new materialism (44). While working on posthumanism, we have to clarify all the aforementioned ones in order to envisage more on the differences and connotations between them and try to understand that we are in the midst of terms and narratives which are still in progress due to the 'unstable' current situation and rapid technological development (45).

In the second part, Pelin Kümbet examines posthumanism in Octavia Butler's title *Fledgling* by focusing on the otherness in terms of human and non-human life-forms (53). Would highlight her addressing of non-human creatures in *Fledgling* novel as vampires depicted 'inappropriate/d others'. Kümbet uses this term because Butler's *Fledgling* refers to a black vampire named Shori whose biological genetics have been modified and added human genes and DNA, while at the same time keeps the human characteristics and human emotions. Through this vampire figure all the boundaries, especially human / non-human dualities are totally 'disappeared' as Kümbet's analysis is oriented toward the speciesism as an allegory of racism, while working on the concepts of hybridity, mutualistic symbiosis and differences of agencies (64-65). The multiple agencies are a topic found in Murat Göç-Bilgin's study about the body and memory in Pat Cadigan's works. By offering new insights on the concepts of embodied experience and memory of human and more-than-human life-forms is a way to envisage more on the human and post-humanistic aspects that characterize various agencies (70, 75). This mapping is helpful in order to frame the life-forms' behaviors, actions and values. Göç-Bilgin also mentions the existential connotations of body and memory in Cadigan's works, expressed in terms of cyborg-bodies, bodies without organs, machine bodies, and so forth, as wishes to open the discussion about the future of bodies and minds in a post-modern era. In the line of Göç-Bilgin, Gül Koçsoy studies posthumanism in both theory and praxis in H.P. Lovecraft's title *Dunnwich Horror*, a horror novel which describes both human and more-than-human world in its premises (93). Koçsoy's analysis proves that posthumanism in Lovecraft's aforementioned book shapes a new world of thinking as perceived by the *ego* through its multiplicities. In the last chapter of the second part, Züleyha Çetiner-Öktem's comparative study case refers to the cyborg bodies and technology's effectiveness on subjective embodied experience. Studying Phillip K. Dick's work *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and Walter M. Miller's work *A Canticle for Leibowitz* proves that cyborg bodies and technological improvements are apt to a post-apocalyptic situation which affect both the human and more-than-human world. She also aims to highlight the toxic landscapes that occur as a result of nuclear fallout in post-apocalyptic science fiction texts (109, 115). Both science fiction's tales refer to technoscientific civilization, ending in an apocalypse where new norms rule the human extra-terrestrial colonies, ministered by androids and nomadic churches respectively.

The edition's third part opens with Barış Ağır who examines the posthumanism in Angela Carter's speculative fictions, perceived in terms of ambiguity (142), by focusing on the kind of impact on humanity that is raised. He examines the posthumanist features of Carter's science fiction novels in the context of socio-historical human condition, human subjectivity and gender identity. This kind of ambiguity raises the questions about the kind



of human and more-than-human world's relationships and the kind of society in which they both live. The second chapter is written by Evren Akaltun Akan who examines the narrative of posthumanism in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), a monster figure which entails both human and non-human characteristics, parasitizing the others (151). She focuses on this characteristic and sheds light on the embodied experience, embodiment and impact on others (156) while working on the concept of abject which describes a posthuman condition (Braidotti, 2018) of an undead figure (157) such as Frankenstein monster. Adopting the term of 'monster-human' Akan deconstructs the binaries of consciousness/body, subject/object, human/non-human. Studying more the nature of binaries Buran's chapter (on Anne Charmock's *Dream Before the Start of Time*, 2019) proves that posthumanism and biogenetics are relative to science fiction while working on the concept of gene as a techno-capital improvement of our time (164). The bio-genetic science fiction is a new kind of science fiction which is apt to be critical of its time and at the same time opens the dialogue for the study of posthumanism in literature and other disciplines such as biology, medicine, etc. (181). Buran, in fact, argues how a biogenetical future will offer a posthuman alternative family where organic pregnancy is seen as a "social abnormality" (178). Finally, she projects how a posthuman 'turn' will change our understanding of being human, member of a family and parent. Lastly, following the line of a reproductive biogenetic future, Şebnem Düzgün also examines (Phyllis Dorothy James' *Children of Men*, 1992) the dystopian reproductive perspective around posthumanist and feminist thought on non-human beings, human-nature beings, human-animal beings, perfect and unhealthy bodies, cyborg and zoe-centered politics in which men and women lose their roles in reproduction by sterilization in the time of pandemics (202).

The edition's fourth part opens with Muhsin Yanar's comparative study case about Don DeLillo's *Zero K* and Ian MacEwan's *Machines Like Me*. Yanar deals with the concept of futurity and posthumanism by comparing works from American and English literature. He examines the issue of how a superhuman faces problems arising from the mentality (e.g., anthropocentric, racist, sexist, discriminatory) and bodily (existence-from-flesh) of our time by crossing the machine-human borders. These two aforementioned works examine human supremacy and power towards others in a world full of ambiguities and potentialities (p. 219). The potentialities and ambiguities are also raised by Ülfet Doğan Arslan who examines in her chapter the relationship between humans and fauna in the context of posthumanism, as it is perceived differently by the western and eastern models of thinking. This chapter compares a folk tale of western literature, *Beowulf* and a symbol of old Turkish folk literature, *Legend of Konur Boga*. Following Donna Haraway's concepts of cyborg (4, 21) and companionship (2, 11-12, 15, 20-22, 30), Arslan examines the agency of the characters in these two epics within the framework of posthumanist thought. In her concluding remarks, Arslan traces that posthumanism corresponds to the heroes' daily practices, and refers to the power mechanisms that are depicted in different cultures by offering information about the non-human animals (222-223).

The edition's fifth part opens with Seda Uyanık's chapter about the bodily transformations in the Ottoman future, working on the narratives of posthumanism and transhumanism

respectively (on 'Latife-i Edebiyye' by Celal Nuri İleri (1882-1938), and 'Hülya Bu Ya...' by Refik Halid Karay (1888-1965), and highlighting the urgency of the problems which humans must confront. The supreme *ego* seeks for the perfection of body and world in terms of approaching the more-than-human world in a time that is transcended (258). This transcendence is also a study case in Dinçer Atay's chapter about post-humanism's effects on oral history particularly in the works of Cengiz Aytmatov (eg. *Beyaz Gemi*, 1970); *Gün Olur Asra Bedel*, 1980); and *Kassandra Damgası*, 1995) who ultimately embodies a balanced network of relations between agency, memory and imagination. Atay's analysis of these works results that there is a critical stance toward posthumanism. However, the multiplicities raised by these binaries can be fruitful in the dialogue about the relationships between human and the more-than-human world (282). Lastly, Nurseli Gamze Korkmaz's chapter focuses more on the relationships between humans and non-human agencies in Nobel Prize winner Turkish author Orhan Pamuk's work *Masumiyet Müzesi* [*Museum of Innocence*, 2008] as getting through the ontological premises of posthumanism. Korkmaz examines the relations between subject and objects, adopting a comparative perspective of both Object-Oriented Ontology and posthumanism, which are found in Pamuk's novels such as animate-inanimate, human-non-human, intangible-concrete objects, found in a museum (309). The mutual accord between art, life and imagination is the mechanic to understanding the complex matter of relationships between human and the more-than-human world (309) in both bio-sphere and artistic one as a museum is both a space and place where we can think beyond any binary.

In the edition's final section, we read commentaries of contemporary Turkish authors who critically analyze their own novels from a posthuman philosophical perspective. Authors' commentaries are included in an academic editorial study for the first time by offering insights on posthumanism in personal novels. Turkey's first queer-feminist author of science fiction and cyberpunk, Şeyda Aydın focuses on the possibilities of our existence to live within multiverses as her posthuman characters are blurred within the boundaries of mythological elements and human-god(dess), human and non-human spheres, etc. Aydın also studies the matter of future communities and generations in multiverse praxis. Her perspective toward the future of posthuman communities is oriented by the mutual accord of all life-forms in order to grasp the binaries and achieve a new form of our societies - depicting a utopian queer society- of the future. The mutual accord, or in other terms, the symbiosis of both bio- and techno-spheres is the key to the entrance or even imagining the future communities (331). Lastly, in the same line as Aydın, Sadık Yemni's (Turkey's first Sufi science fiction author) study case examines the mutual accord in terms of posthuman love, an emotion that brings together different life-forms toward their binaries. Yemni uses some examples from Aldous Huxley as commentaries on his own works and characters by presenting a genderless and disembodied posthuman future which can 'bring in love' all the binaries. Terms such as post-sapiens, Robot-Homo Sapiens, and A.I.-Homo Sapiens (345) are articulations of a posthuman love which can not only perceived in terms of emotion, but also as a *modus vivendi* of entering more concretely the world of Others.



This interdisciplinary edition offers new data and insightful perspectives on posthumanism in various literary texts, and it also reminds us that posthumanism is an in progress and complex by its nature narrative which promises to shape our future, and sheds light on our present while thinking more about our past. In this edition, these time lapses (past, present and future) are profound as it opens the discussion for why posthumanism is connected with our past, still thinking about it now, and opens new avenues for our future. In conclusion, the discussion about western and eastern models of thinking toward the traditional binaries, rejuvenates the traditional thought imposed by the past and renewing it in the present.

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