

A Postpatriarchal Vision: Transmodern Themes of Unity, Gender Equality, and Sustainability in *The Perfect Nine*

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Abstract

This article aims to offer a transmodern analysis of the epic poem by Kenyan novelist, academic, and author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, who is often considered a strong contender for the Nobel Prize in Literature, with the author’s particular focus on feminism, unity, and critique of imperialism and Eurocentrism. In this effort, the study underscores the author’s emphasis on the significance of unity with nature, globalization, sustainability, and family values regarding transmodern philosophy. During a significant paradigm shift in the relationship between science, ethics, and society, some contemporary writers and theorists introduced “transmodernity,” a new philosophical and cultural term that aims to surpass and integrate elements of modernism and postmodernism. Transmodernism redefines and provides solutions to complex and contemporary fundamental perspectives on people’s beliefs, cultures, economies, and politics. Considering this information, this study aims to analyse *The Perfect Nine* through a transmodernist lens, which encompasses all of the aforementioned topics, even though each one is worth examining individually. In this regard, *The Perfect Nine* exemplifies transmodern writing in contemporary literature, offering essential principles that seek to create equal and wealthy civilizations founded on peaceful and virtuous interactions between humanity and the environment. Blending folklore, mythology, adventure, and allegory, the book delves into the essence of God and human existence while recounting the myth of the Gikũyũ people.

Keywords: transmodernism, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *The Perfect Nine*, Gikũyũ Myth, unity.

POST-PATRİARKAL BİR VİZYON:

THE PERFECT NINE'DAKİ BİRLİK, CİNSİYET EŞİTLİĞİ VE SÜRDÜRÜLEBİLİRLİK ÜZERİNE TRANSMODERN TEMALAR

Öz

Bu makale, Nobel Edebiyat Ödülüne güçlü bir aday olarak değerlendirilen Kenyalı romancı akademisyen ve yazar Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’nun destansı şiiri *The Perfect Nine*’in transmodern bir analizini, yazarın özellikle feminizme, birliğe ve emperyalizm ile Avrupamerkezcilik eleştirisine odaklanarak sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çaba kapsamında çalışma, yazarın transmodern felsefe açısından doğayla bütünleşmenin, küreselleşmenin, sürdürülebilirliğin ve aile değerlerinin önemine yaptığı vurgunun altını çizmektedir. Bilim, etik ve toplum arasındaki ilişkide önemli paradigma

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değişimi yaşanırken, bazı çağdaş yazarlar ve teorisyenler hem modernizm hem de postmodernizm unsurlarını aşmayı ve entegre etmeyi amaçlayan yeni bir felsefi ve kültürel terim olan “transmodernite”yi kullanmaktadırlar. Transmodernizm, insanların inançlarına, kültürlerine, ekonomilerine ve politikalarına ilişkin karmaşık ve çağdaş temel bakış açılarını yeniden tanımlar ve bunlara çözümler sunar. Bu bilgiler ışığında, bu çalışma, *The Perfect Nine* eserini her biri ayrı ayrı incelenmeye değer olsa da yukarıda belirtilen tüm konuları kapsayan transmodernist bir bakış açısıyla analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, *The Perfect Nine*, çağdaş edebiyatta transmodern yazımı örnekleyerek, insanlık ve çevre arasındaki barışçıl ve erdemli etkileşimlere dayanan eşit ve zengin medeniyetler yaratmayı amaçlayan temel ilkeler sunmaktadır. Folklor, mitoloji, macera ve alegoriyi harmanlayan kitap, Gikūyū halkının mitini anlatırken Tanrı'nın ve insan varoluşunun özünü araştırır.

Anahtar sözcükler: transmodernizm, Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o, *The Perfect Nine*, Gikūyū Miti, birlik.

INTRODUCTION

Transmodernism is an attempt to create a new synthesis by bringing together diverse cultural, philosophical, and social perspectives from multiple scholars. Enrique Dussel argues that the concept of “postmodernism” is insufficient to characterize the current state of humanity. Instead, he calls our age the age of “transmodernism” and defines it as a new era that merges different perspectives and ideas.

The transmodern project achieves with modernity what it could not achieve by itself—a corelization of solidarity, which is analectic, analogic, syncretic, hybrid and mestizo, and which bonds centre to periphery, woman to man, race to race, ethnic group to ethnic group, class to class, humanity to earth, and occidental to Third World cultures. This bonding occurs negation, but via a subsumption from the viewpoint of alterity [...]. (1995, p. 138)

Dussel asserts that the full realization of modernity will not occur by transitioning from potentiality to actuality, but rather by transcending itself through a blending with its previously denied otherness and through a reciprocal process of creative fertility. Thus, he posits that transmodernism prioritizes cultural diversity and integrity while striving to eradicate boundaries, categories, and ideologies.

In a similar vein, Susana Onega, an influential figure who conducts extensive research on the notion of transmodernism, underscores the capacity of transmodernism to foster a more comprehensive and interconnected comprehension through its ability to surpass modern and postmodern thought. This movement, according to her, presents a more holistic, dialogical, and inclusive worldview.

Transmodernism intersects with various facets of Marxist thought. Hence, the act of surpassing limits, classifications, and certain ideas is a highly significant aspect of the movement. Based on Rodríguez Magda's assessment that transmodernity forms a dialectic triad with modernity and post-modernity (Magda, 1989), Irena Ateljević, explains the concept as follows

transmodernism is critical of modernism and postmodernism while at the same time drawing elements from each. In a way it is a return to some form of absolute 'logic' that

goes beyond the Western ideology and tries to connect the human race to a new shared story, which can be called a global relational consciousness. (2013, p.4)

Ateljević, builds upon Magda's argument by asserting that transmodernism may be understood as a dialectical trio consisting of modernity, postmodernity, and transmodernity. This perspective involves incorporating components from each of these periods while also offering a critical analysis of them. She highlights the elements of transmodernism that seek to establish a connection between the entire human race through a shared narrative. She asserts her intention to establish a connection between the human race and global relational consciousness, which is a type of absolute logic that transcends Western ideology.

One of the other primary objectives of transmodernism is to infuse vitality and modernity into tradition, as opposed to eradicating or altering it. In contrast to modernism and postmodernism, it prioritizes reverence for antiquated modes of existence. In contrast to postmodernism, transmodernism places an emphasis on religion. Transmodernism, which exhibits remnants of numerous philosophical movements, is predominately shaped by transcendentalism and idealized various mid-19th-century American figures, most notably Ralph Waldo Emerson. Transmodernism, akin to transcendentalism, challenges the boundaries of modernism and endeavours to rekindle humanity's intrinsic principles, spiritual dimensions, and connection to the natural world. Thus, during a period when both the public and private spheres are disappearing, a transmodern discussion suggests the need to redefine concepts of selfhood and community without relying on a binary opposition to a particular external factor (Mura, 2012). In this sense, it can be considered "postsecular" since it establishes a new connection between religions and politics that revitalizes the world's interest in spiritual direction. This new approach encourages individuals to base their personal behaviours and governmental policies on spiritual principles, while simultaneously rejecting religious divisions and rigid beliefs.

In addition, and above all, transmodernism and feminism share a common perspective that surpasses the limitations of modernism. They both promote a more comprehensive, analytical, and equitable worldview. Transmodernism supports feminism's pursuit of "the utopian tradition of imagining a world without gender" (Haraway, 1987, p. 3). Within this frame, transmodernity is fundamentally "postpatriarchal," as it acknowledges the crucial importance of women's perspectives and insights in collaboratively devising new and necessary solutions. It is a collaborative endeavour by both men and women to strive for a more promising future by rejecting principles of authority and subjugation (Ateljević, 2013). The transmodern initiative aims to further the feminist agenda by integrating men, women, and all other species into its principles of care and relationality while simultaneously revaluing the caregiving qualities traditionally linked to women. Despite the current revival of patriarchal resistance to feminist ideals, the transmodern feminist ethos permeates our consciousness, promoting a more emotive, polyphonic, and relational perspective. The strength of contemporary feminist philosophy resides in its multiplicity, which is a defining quality of the transmodern era. In this sense, transmodernism incorporates the principles of eco-feminism to explore the negative outcomes of dualistic division and highlights the interconnectedness and fusion of various components. In that manner, this methodology, which

converges with posthuman feminist theory, questions the male-centric presumptions regarding human superiority and the hierarchy of species and acknowledges humans as an essential component of ecosystems, akin to other living organisms (Braidotti, 2016). Hence, the transmodern initiative seeks to realize its emancipatory objectives by dissociating the concept of liberation from the myth of European modernity and its developmentalist fallacy, emphasizing inclusivity, and promoting reciprocal, creative enrichment.

Within this framework, transmodernism is also characterized by its opposition to imperialism as well as its commitment to a shared viewpoint on cultural matters. It espouses anti-imperialist ideologies and opposes the uniformist, centrist and oppressive systems introduced by globalization and modernism. The impetus is to surpass Western ideology by embracing an absolute logic and to establish a new collective narrative, referred to as “a global relational consciousness,” (Rifkin, 2005) that unites humanity. Jeremy Rifkin expands on the proposition to adopt a greater focus on mutuality and interconnection by offering a detailed examination of empathy’s historical development. He argues that humans possess an innate capacity for empathy and that society has progressively gotten more empathic throughout time. Rifkin also questions whether humanity can “reach global empathy in time to avoid the collapse of civilization and save the Earth” (2009, p. 3) as he explores the concept of biosphere consciousness. Hence, he puts forward transmodernism as promoting a perspective that opposes the economic, cultural, and environmental influences of imperialism and argues for a more equitable, egalitarian, and environmentally conscious worldview.

In view of such information, in *The Perfect Nine*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o exemplifies transmodern literature by articulating essential principles aimed at fostering equitable and prosperous societies through harmonious and ethical relationships between humanity and the environment while recounting the myth of the Gikũyũ people. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o is a Kenyan academic and writer known as East Africa’s most influential novelist. He has written in English and Gikũyũ, covering various genres such as fiction, plays, memoirs, essays, and children’s literature. His latest work, *The Perfect Nine*, published in 2020, is his first attempt at epic poetry and a successful example of the genre. In the book, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o narrates the cosmogenic epic story of the Gikũyũ people of Kenya, blending folklore, mythology, adventure, and allegory in a highly feminist portrayal of Kenya. It provides a new visionary solution to the challenges posed by postmodern thought, which asserts that “the world is neither significant nor absurd. It is quite simply” (Robbe-Grillet, Howard, 1996, p. 37). By revisiting the primordial history of humanity and its teachings and virtues, Thiong’o believes this solution is feasible. When viewed from this standpoint, the Gikũyũ myth on which the author bases his epic poem holds significance in the realm of preserving and reviving indigenous cultural narratives that face the risk of vanishing due to the influence of modernism and globalization. However, of more significance, this myth can offer an alternate viewpoint on the ethical, ecological, and social challenges facing the contemporary world as part of a global cultural dialogue. The Gikũyũ myth not only provides significance to the local identity and heritage of the Gikũyũ people but also establishes a link to universal human experiences. This observation indicates

a strong correlation between the Gikūyū myth and transmodernism, a movement that aims to establish a connection between local cultures and universal values.

Within this framework, the concept of embracing cultural diversity, which brings transmodernism and *The Perfect Nine* on a common ground, might be viewed as a form of resistance against Western othering and discriminatory tendency. Thiong'o concurs with the assessment that the transmodern viewpoint confronts the anguish of our contempt for our very existence, while also providing a path and optimism for the future. An additional viewpoint supported by the author in this context is that by reassessing the cultural unconscious from a transmodernist standpoint and augmenting Jung's assessment of the worth of humanity by integrating postmodern critiques into our strategies for subjugating the other we can substantially broaden the spectrum of our emotions, thoughts, criticisms, and actions (Bilsel, 2022). Furthermore, from a posthumanist perspective, it is worth noting that the modern epic evokes archetypal heroic qualities including beauty, unity, harmony, courage, and resilience, which serve as symbols of hope. Given the aforementioned details, the objective of this research is to present a transmodern interpretation of *The Perfect Nine*. Within this frame, the study delves into the transmodern components that are considered feminist, anti-Eurocentric and anti-imperialist. It insists on the importance of unity, spirituality, family values, women's centrality, globalism, environmentalism, sustainability, and ecology in the development of liveable and healthy societies, as described by the Kenyan author in his modern epic.

A TRANSMODERN ANALYSIS OF NGŪGĨ WA THIONG'O'S *THE PERFECT NINE*

Maybe one day we and the others will unite,
 because
 All people born of humans,
 [...] They are our siblings, members of the human clan,
 Yes, proud sons and daughters of the human.
 [...] Come, let us embrace in friendship.
 [...] Every human is human because of other humans. (Thiong'o, 2020, p. 60-61)

Thiong'o recounts the cosmogenic myth of the Gikūyū people in *The Perfect Nine* from a strong feminist standpoint, stating, "The epic came to [me] one night as a revelation of ideals of quest, courage, perseverance, unity, family, and the sense of the divine in human struggles with nature and nurture" (p. x). In the narrative in verse that blends folklore, mythology, adventure, and allegory, the author tells the story of Gikūyū and Mūmbi, the male and female counterparts of Adam and Eve, and of Gikūyū's beautiful and accomplished daughters, each representing virtues such as kindness, loyalty, generosity, humility, and justice, who will become the matriarchs of the ten (perfect nine) clans. The girls, whose outer beauty manifests their inner nature, represent humanity's highest ideals of beauty. Consistent with the ancient myth, Thiong'o's narrative centres on the arduous ordeals endured by the ninety-nine suitors in order to secure the marriages of the ideal nine. Asked to make wise mate choices for themselves, the nine perfect daughters must embark on an arduous quest with their suitors to find a magical cure for their youngest sibling Warigia, who is afflicted with a mobility impairment. The challenge is initiated by Gikūyū and Mūmbi's journey to their ancestral abode of Mūkūruweinĩ, where they face hazardous ogre-filled adventures through

the Mountain of the Moon. Most aspirants are eliminated by these dangerous ogres that represent human frailties and shortcomings that they are either not good enough for or perhaps that the perfect nine reject. As they make their way up the mountain, the number of suitors dwindles, and the sisters test their wits and brave hearts, overcoming various ogres, doubt, and fear to return home. In this manner, the author employs Gikūyū wedding customs to reinterpret the history of his own people and the traditional culture of ancient Kenya in his own distinctive manner.

Within this frame, Thiong'o highlights the significance of women in *The Perfect Nine*, a modern reinterpretation of an ancient myth that illuminates the power dynamics of women in Gikūyū society by means of a remarkable transformation of the epic genre. In the contemporary epic, like an ancient myth, the nine daughters of Gikūyū and Mūmbi do not have any male siblings. Their parents provide them with a comprehensive education that encompasses various skills necessary for self-sufficiency, including weapon crafting, self-defence, and house construction. The author provides the following statement regarding the perfect nine; "Self-reliance was central to their character. Theirs was the union of mind, heart, and hands. The embodied wholesome beauty. The perfect nine would seem to be the original feminist" (Thiong'o, 2020, p. x). Each of the nine perfect girls possesses distinct attributes, including farming, handicraft, dancing, singing, and combat, which often overlap. In this context, the author, in his feminist-oriented work, assigns the role of clan leader to a female figure, similar to the ancient story. These ten matriarchs possess the qualities described above that enable them to be self-reliant, therefore negating the necessity for a man. The perfect nine express their independence and self-reliance, stating that they were raised to be capable of defending themselves. However, they still lament being labelled as "bewitched" (p. 101) due to patriarchal bias and the belief that "[Our] being able to endure and do things just like the men. Facing danger without complaint showed that we were witches" (p. 100). This quote is exactly in line with Kristeva's identification of women in philosophy as "demonic, a witch" (1986, p. 296) and Cavanagh's justification for this identification as "the male fear of seductive women on the one hand, and of strong, independent women on the other" (1994, p. 46).

In her book *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History and Our Future* (1987), Riane Eisler presents the argument that ancient societies, which were characterized by women's dominance over men, were founded on matriarchal principles that revolved around women's roles in nurturing and fertility. Nevertheless, she contends that in the present era dominated by male authority, these essential feminine qualities of giving life and nurturing have been supplanted by actions that cause death, annihilate life, oppress others, and enforce compliance (Eisler, 1987). In the book *Sacred Pleasure: Sex, Myth and the Politics of the Body* (1996), Eisler proposes a solution that advocates for the equal recognition of feminine and masculine features. This approach aims to address the exhaustion caused by the stagnant state of polarized thinking. In this regard, numerous references can be found to the prevailing egalitarian atmosphere in *The Perfect Nine*, thereby supporting Eisler's assertion that the epic employs an inclusive and unifying narrative perspective using the pronoun 'We.' For instance: "As it was now our tradition, there was no saying this is men's or women's work we did tasks according to ability and necessity and inclination" (Thiong'o, 2020, p.103). The author also draws attention to the fact that "Whether men or women, [we] were on the same journey" (Thiong'o,

2020, p.100). This is a remarkable observation, as it highlights the idea that everyone, regardless of gender, is part of the same human experience, facing similar challenges, desires, and goals.

Transmodernism challenges the linear and universalist interpretations of modernism, offering a more nuanced and multifaceted exploration of identity and reality. From a transmodernist perspective, individuals' social identities are shaped by a dynamic interplay of social, cultural, and personal factors, emphasizing their fluid and non-uniform nature. In this framework, feminism's advocacy for transcending rigid gender binaries to embrace diverse identities and experiences aligns with transmodernism's recognition of varied perspectives and pluralistic realities. Gender, viewed both as a biological characteristic and a socially and culturally constructed identity, benefits from this dual approach. Feminism, when enriched by transmodernist insights, deepens our understanding of the fluid and evolving nature of gender, identity, and individual existence. This synergy fosters a more inclusive approach to social equality and human experience. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, for instance, highlights the shared journey of women and men, emphasizing collaboration rather than conflict. He advocates for cross-gender partnerships to dismantle patriarchal structures. In *The Perfect Nine*, he underscores this ethos with statements such as "A boy has achieved as much as a girl" (p. 26), which affirms gender parity in strength and capability. The narratives of ogres in African traditions, particularly within Gikũyũ culture, further illustrate these dynamics. Such stories often serve as allegories, warning of societal collapse under unchecked male dominance and patriarchal excess (Kabira, *Daily Nation*, 2019). Thiong'o's work deconstructs these traditional myths, critiquing their hierarchical frameworks while envisioning a society rooted in equality and mutual respect. In *The Perfect Nine*, this vision of egalitarianism resonates with the principles of transmodernism, particularly its emphasis on addressing systemic deprivations, including the promotion of women's rights and dignity.

The concepts of respect for nature and sustainability, which transmodernism brings to the fore, are key themes that Thiong'o prioritizes in his book. The recognition of the interconnectedness between humans and nature, as highlighted in ancient myths and essential for the ongoing existence of humanity, is a crucial matter that is overlooked by the capitalist postmodern society. Gikũyũ's statement in his epic, where he underscores that "All citizens of nature - plants, animals, and birds - are our friends" (p. 79) might be interpreted as a universal appeal to all of humanity. Thus, the narrative is grounded on the principle of the interdependence between nature and humanity, and sustainability. In the Brundtland Report, which establishes the fundamental principles for sustainable development, the concept of sustainability is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (1987, p. 41). However, despite the Gikũyũ people's lack of familiarity with the concept of sustainability, they have long exhibited their understanding of the vitality of safeguarding future generations. This is evident in their old story, which advises against killing "an animal unless in defense of self or to satisfy hunger. [...] And if one uproots a tree, one must plant another to replace it" (p. 69). Thiong'o states in his epic narrative how sustainability is essential to the survival and development of the Gikũyũ people and, by extension, humanity as a whole. The Gikũyũ people recognize that their existence and welfare are contingent upon maintaining a harmonious

relationship with their surroundings. In this manner, the aforementioned quote affirms the significance of environmental sustainability, a concept underscored by transmodern philosophy, which advocates for coexistence with nature rather than its exploitation. In this regard, the transmodern process, which Rifkin characterizes as “humanity finds itself, once again, at a crossroad between a dying old order and the rise of a new age” (2005, p.181), could be seen as the initial steps toward an all-encompassing and sustainable order that liberates humanity from the destructive constraints of materialistic thought. The impositions of the capitalist world order deprive humanity of numerous human-defining virtues, including equality, tolerance, respect, gratitude, trust, and sharing.

Regarding this matter, French anthropologist Etienne Le Roy cautions that mankind is currently facing a complex dilemma due to globalization and the dominance of the capitalist market system (Le Roy, 2016). In response, Thiong’o proposes solutions by drawing on the wisdom of ancient mythology. He constructs what he refers to as “the circle of life” based on complete egalitarianism and reverence, while also emphasizing:

Among water, earth, air, and sun, there is no superior.

Together they make the primal seed of life.

Life is one:

Humans, animals, birds, worms, creatures of the sea-

Every being takes its share from the common ocean of life. (2020, p. 39)

The aforementioned argument appears to be in accordance with the ethics of mutuality, as described by feminist writer Gloria Steinem as the circularity paradigm. She articulates her thoughts, which are also observed to be scattered throughout *The Perfect Nine*, in the following manner: “If we think of ourselves as circles, our goal is completion - not defeating others. Progress lies in the direction we haven’t been...Progress is appreciation. If we think of work structures as circles, excellence and cooperation are the goal - not competition” (1993, pp. 189-190). Steinem considers that progress evolves into mutual support and interdependence. By revering nature and each living being as a microcosm of the natural world, we concurrently recognize the remarkable marvel of our own life. Consequently, we have reverted to the origin.

In addition, Edgar Morin, the French philosopher and sociologist known for his contributions to transmodern philosophy using complexity theory, focuses attention on the notion that humanity should not merely perceive nature as a provider of resources. Emphasizing the presence of numerous living organisms in nature, he underscores the importance of individuals recognizing their obligations in preserving ecological equilibrium. Morin discusses the concept of ‘anthropo-ethics’ as a scientific field that seeks to humanize humanity. The notion entails the skilful management of the world in a harmonious and equitable manner, embracing the essence of life while also providing guidance, and attaining a state of cohesion amidst a range of differences. Furthermore, this concept emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and valuing the unique qualities and similarities of others, fostering unity, and advocating for mutual understanding. Morin also draws attention to ‘unity and vener,’ which serve as the fundamental tenets of transmodernity (1999, p.78). Similarly, Ken Wilber underlines that internal metamorphosis is crucial in comprehending the connection between humanity and the natural world. Being a proponent of

transmodern philosophy, he adopts a multifaceted perspective on sustainability and the interplay between humans and the natural world. He stresses the need to live in harmony with the environment and work towards a future that is both internally and externally sustainable (Wilber, 2000).

Within this frame, *The Perfect Nine* consistently draws crucial allusions to the importance of respecting and expressing gratitude towards nature, as reinforced by transmodernism. The song that Mũmbi and Gikũyũ perform to show their gratitude for the sun is highly significant:

Sun, the ruler of the universe,

Without you there is no light.

Without you there is no heat.

The sun keeps animals warm.

The sun keeps all plants warm.

The sun keeps men, women, and children warm. (Thiong'o, 2020, p. 127)

The secret they discover is that "Trees, fire, wind, human and animal alike- Everything owns a sound, loud or soft" (p. 80) denotes a harmony and orchestra made up of the musicality of entities inside the universe. Through these expressions of gratitude, *The Perfect Nine* not only emphasizes humanity's reliance on natural forces but also underscores a worldview in which all beings—living and non-living—exist in symbiotic unity, each contributing to the universal harmony that sustains life.

Moreover, transmodernism encompasses a wider array of societal issues; however, it evidently derives inspiration from transcendentalism, emphasizing personal autonomy, the natural environment, and inner consciousness, as mentioned above. The analysis of *The Perfect Nine* about its transmodern elements reveals that the work corresponds with the previously indicated viewpoints. In the epic, the author uses the pronouns "He, She, and It" to refer to God, who is perceived as the intrinsic nature of his creations rather than being distinct from them. He demonstrates an exceptionally inclusive and accepting attitude by encompassing the concept of God from various religions and cultures under the term "Giver Supreme." When discussing God, he underlines that the corresponding figure in all religions represents the identical concept:

In some parts of Africa, they call it Mulungu, but it
is the same Giver [...]

Mohammedans call Him Allah, and he is the same
Giver [...]

God has many names, and they all point to the
Giver Supreme. (p. 15)

The idea of Oneness, as a fundamental conception and reality of the universe in Hinduism, Buddhism, and many other beliefs, is placed at the centre of the book as follows "God is Life. God is One. Life is One" (p. 17). The focus on the oneness of existence highlights the interdependence of all life forms and questions the dualistic views that frequently influence human thinking. It encourages readers to rethink the distinctions between the self, others, and the divine.

In view of this, *The Perfect Nine*, with its profound comprehension, transcends being only a narrative of extraordinary battles against giants, as it encompasses the ideals of affection, empathy,

cooperation, and reverence for nature, to which all paths converge. The text possesses profound wisdom that can be seen as a guidebook, a framework, or even a holy scripture bestowed upon humanity to achieve a sustainable and habitable world, which is also the central focus of transmodernism. The book, characterized by its chapters' consistently positive outcomes, serves as a catalyst for reviving humanity's waning optimism amidst the pervasive influence of corrupt materialism. The author presents a fusion of remnants of the spirituality observed in indigenous African communities with insights from many religious systems. The striking resemblance between the messages conveyed and the understated manner in which they are presented in *Wizard of the Crow* is rather astounding: "All life is one and it flows like a river or the waters of the sea. Plants, humans, animals down to the creatures that crawl, all draw their share from the one indivisible river of life, just as they all draw breath from the air" (Thiong'o, 2006, p. 3). In this vein, Thiong'o rejects the principles upon which colonial powers and totalitarian regimes were established, aligning himself with transmodern ideology. This statement is in line with the perspective of British cultural theorist Couze Venn, who argues that modernity sprang from colonialism and that transmodernity necessitates the rejection of all types of exploitation associated with colonialism, such as capitalism, patriarchy, and racism (Venn, 2002).

In *The Perfect Nine*, the author's political perspective is to delve into the past and trace the footsteps of their ancestors in order to dismantle the exploitation of Africa and the recurring negative patterns on the continent, which aligns with the concepts advocated by Waita (2020). In this context, the chapter titled "Ogres in White Masks" is identified as a manifestation of resistance against colonialism, drawing inspiration from Franz Fanon's influential work *Black Skin, White Masks* (Raia, 2021, p. 5). The chapter vividly portrays the challenges faced in a society where the dominance of white beauty is prioritized over black beauty, as exemplified by the question "when does chalk beauty beat black beauty?" (Thiong'o, 2006, p. 164). The fact that one of the monsters they encounter disguises itself as white chalk and leads the suitors to their doom refers to a subplot in *Wizard of the Crow* in which a greedy businessman is cursed with the desire to be white. This subplot delves into the ongoing identity difficulties that persist in post-colonial Africa, as well as the enduring fascination with the West and the resulting consequences. The greedy businessman's ambition for whiteness ultimately leads to his physical and spiritual demise, thereby presenting the reader with a profound irony. This narrative irony not only critiques the internalization of colonial values but also serves as a powerful commentary on the psychological impact of colonialism, illustrating how the desire to emulate Western ideals can distort one's identity and lead to self-destruction.

In this particular framework, in *The Perfect Nine*, there is a clear critique of dominant power dynamics, highlighting a perspective that aligns with transmodern thought. Transmodernism posits that racism is a consequence of modernism and ideologies that are centered around the Western world. It argues that modernism, which has historically prioritized human reason and enlightenment, has also been used to justify Western hegemony over other cultures. This defies the hierarchies established via colonial strategies and refutes the Western assertion of universality, which is the basis of racism. Accordingly, Thiong'o posits that the progress and destiny of a country can only be achieved by cultivating individuals who are deeply dedicated to the customs and

heritage of that nation (Mutahi & Kabira, 1987). The wind of truth, with its exceptional expertise, dispels the illusion created by chalk, so revealing the concealed and empty decay. In a similar vein, Dussel proposes the substitution of postmodern criticism with a transmodern viewpoint. He argues for the development of a marginalized metanarrative that will subvert the Eurocentric endeavour, allow for the inclusion of the modern project, and confront its shortcomings. In *The Perfect Nine*, Thiong'o makes a point of the importance of narratives that uplift and advocate for individuals who have been marginalized, oppressed, and condemned by modernism and post-modernism, instead of aligning with these movements (Dussel and Martinez, 2003).

Moreover, transmodernism provides a fresh viewpoint on the essence of humankind and society, reevaluates the mechanics of individual and societal relationships, and scrutinizes the importance of familial principles. Transmodernism views the family as both an establishment and an environment that fosters the social and personal development of individuals. Duane Elgin defines humanity as a family and suggests that; "With its inclusive and reconciling nature, an integral perspective offers the hope that the human family will overcome its many differences and work together to build a sustainable, satisfying, and soulful future" (1997, p. 21). Upon analysing the work within this particular context, it becomes evident that the notion of the family holds great significance. The ninety-nine suitors face a stringent examination to acquire a mystical feather from the ogre's tongue, believed to possess curative qualities for Warigia, the youngest and tenth daughter of *The Perfect Nine*. The sisters embark on a challenging voyage with their suitors in order to find a cure for Warigia. Therefore, the story's premise revolves around the collective commitment and solidarity demonstrated in assisting a family member. The author highlights the need for strong familial connections based on love, respect, empathy, teamwork, inclusivity, generosity, trust, gratitude, equality, positivity, perseverance, hard work, and unity. The narrative emphasizes the need for robust familial cohesion in fostering resilient societies, while also highlighting the notion that all of mankind ought to be regarded as one family. It stresses the necessity of preestablishing a connection with the essential emotions, concepts, and ethical attributes that characterize our humanity, often overlooked by modern society. Thus, the story shows the vitality of humanity returning to a pure state, free from the misdeeds that often plague us. Hence, Mũmbi's instruction to her daughters and their potential partners before their arduous journey is of utmost importance.

"Did you come here for love or War?

[...] In my house blood will not be spilled over any of
the nine,

unless that of a goat for food or blessing." (Thiong'o, 2006, p.58-59)

Gikũyũ, in this respect, articulates his aspiration for the younger generation to cultivate a tranquil and harmonious atmosphere inside their future families and clans. He excessively underlines the significance of unity, interdependence, and collaborative efforts as a team for the betterment of all. He also states that he and his only wife came from far away "in search of peace" (p. 60). Like his wife, he also underscores the significance of "combined power" (p. 96), unity, and mutual dependence in regard to humanity as a family. The following quote from the epic poem holds significant meaning within this context:

A human is human because of the other humans.

All people are people because of other people.
 that is the meaning of greetings.
 Your hand and my hand shake in a union of friendship.
 Small and big, man and woman, husband and wife,
 We built a new community, a new tomorrow.
 He who does not accept that ruling, let him leave in peace. (p. 67)

Additionally, *The Perfect Nine*, representing the resurgence of the African nation, might be considered a noteworthy instance of transmodern literature due to its universal and timeless teachings in the transition process of humanity. It provides instructions on establishing wholesome and righteous connections between nature and humans, as well as between humans themselves, leading to just, equal, and successful civilizations founded on interdependence and harmony. The author emphasizes that the violence humans perpetrate against each other significantly exceeds the harm that animals can inflict on humans. He concludes his study by emphasizing the efficacy of hope, which is reassuring. The book concludes with Gikuyu's final testament to his daughters and sons-in-law, which is as follows:

I leave you with these words:
 Don't look for me in wicked deeds.
 Don't look for in theft and robbery.
 Don't look for in idleness
 Don't look for in senseless violence.
 Don't look for in hatred.
 Don't look for meaningless wars.
 Don't look for bloodletting strife. (p. 226)

Thus, as can be inferred from the aforementioned quote, the author seeks not only to safeguard Gikūyū cultural traditions but also to illustrate to contemporary society the means of cultivating thriving communities marked by valour, integrity, harmony, solidarity, and respect, as reflected in the ancestral wisdom of the Kenyan people. As a result, *The Perfect Nine* places a significant emphasis on global interconnectedness, ecological considerations, sustainable practices, feminist ideals, familial dynamics, and an appreciation for cultural diversity. The text, utilizing ancient myth, acts as an important signal to humanity of enduring principles such as aesthetics, harmony, tranquillity, bravery, and adaptability, which will empower us to transcend the challenges posed by the capitalist postmodern system we currently inhabit.

CONCLUSION

Thiong'o's epic poem *The Perfect Nine*, based on the teachings of the ancient Gikūyū myth, can be regarded as a remarkable instance of transmodern writing that explores the essence of divinity and human existence. The book espouses the fundamental principles of transmodernism, promoting a feminist perspective on achieving gender equality as the basis for a thriving, secure, self-reliant, and environmentally-friendly society that highlights the interconnectedness of nature and humanity. Within this frame, the author lays stress on the importance of women in Gikūyū society by reinterpreting the influence and authority of females using the epic literary style. Prioritizing women's centrality the modern epic explicitly traces transmodernity, which acknowledges the vital

significance of women's perspectives and insights in the joint development of new and necessary solutions and is considered postpatriarchal in this sense. In consequence, it challenges the dominant patriarchal perspective by drawing a parallel between the masculine gender and a woman who possesses the strength and capability to be independent without relying on a man.

The Perfect Nine also recounts the Gikūyū tale while emphasizing the quest for beauty, the value of individual bravery, the relevance of human and familial connections, and the presence of a divine benefactor. The divinity of the Giver Supreme symbolizes the harmonious coexistence of various global religions. The book integrates folklore, mythology, adventure, and allegory, underscoring humanity's ancient origins and teachings and proposing a transmodern solution to the challenges posed by the postmodern capitalist order. This is accomplished by alluding to the rudimentary, unadulterated condition of Kenyan society. Thiong'o revives the traditional epic qualities of unity, peace, courage, and perseverance, providing a glimpse of hope for a world that is more conducive to living.

The Perfect Nine emphasizes the preservation of nature, unity among all beings, and the importance of sustainability, echoing transmodernist ideals by uniting "all citizens" of the cosmos on an equal basis—an inclusive view that contrasts sharply with postmodern notions of human superiority. In the context of transmodern thought, which is influenced by transcendentalism, there is an emphasis on individual freedom, the natural world, and inner reality. God, considered the essence of his creation, is expressed as "Giver Supreme" with the pronouns "He, She, and It." Transmodernism's philosophy of dealing with different cultures, religions, and beliefs on a universal basis is confirmed in the epic embracing, tolerant, and respectful language and view. In his works, the author frequently employs the notion of 'hope,' particularly in relation to African women who have suffered prolonged exploitation and to his own community. However, this concept can be seen as a means of addressing the plight of humanity, which has become entangled in a web of corrupt materialism. Notably, in this particular work, with a happy ending in every chapter. Thiong'o uses a straightforward and concise style in his story to convey impactful truths that challenge notions rooted in colonial governance and autocratic systems. He adopts a discerning perspective on dominant power dynamics and associates himself with the transmodern philosophy. As a result, he believes that a nation's future can only be developed and safeguarded if it is deeply rooted in its customs and practices. The author's transmodern viewpoint on his nation's history serves as both a metaphor for the African people's rebirth and a valuable contribution to all of humanity. Therefore, this study's argument concludes that *The Perfect Nine*, by transcending and integrating elements of modernism and postmodernism, is a noteworthy transmodern piece that offers novel approaches in the process of a significant paradigm shift in the relationship between science, ethics, and society.

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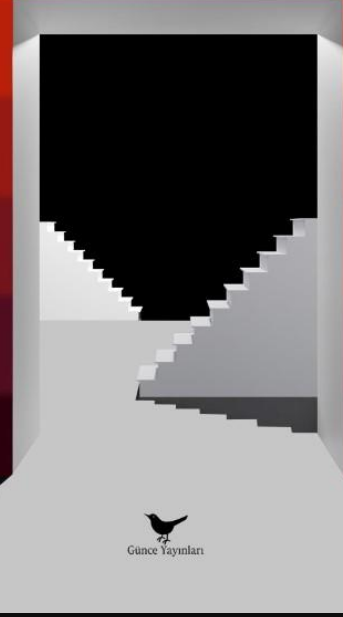
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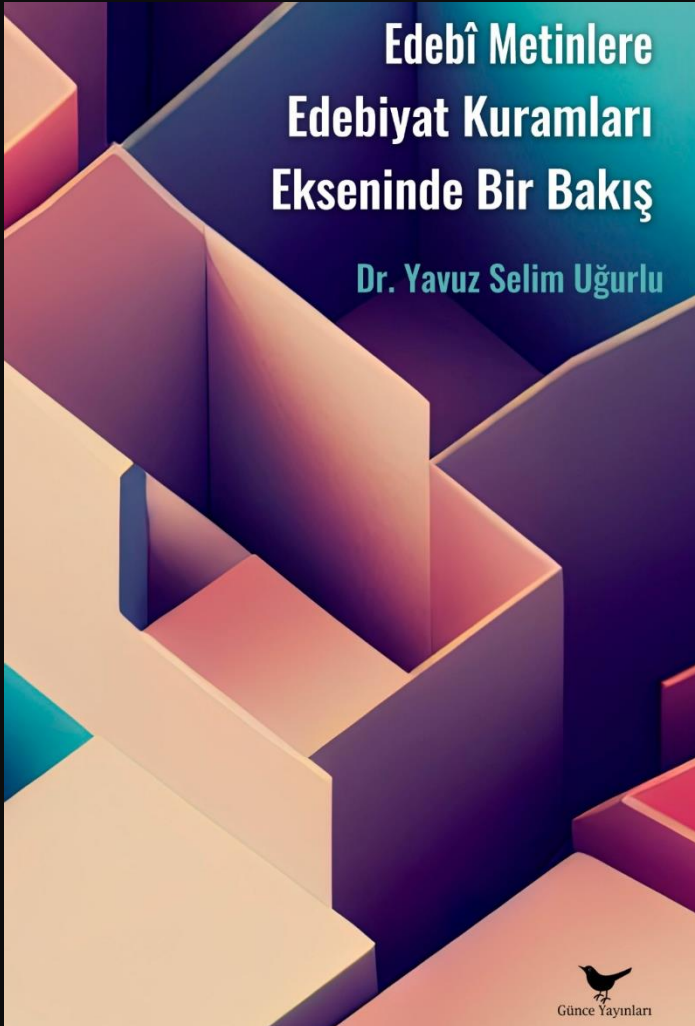
Türk Romanında Arzunun Görüngüleri

Ömriye Bayrak



Edebî Metinlere Edebiyat Kuramları Ekseninde Bir Bakış

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Türk Romanında Narsisizm

