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ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF ECOCRITICISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION

*Edited by Scott Slovic, Swarnalatha Rangarajan
and Vidya Sarveswaran*

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NOVELIST AS ECO-SHAMAN

Buket Uzuner's *Water* [Su] as requesting spirits to help the earth in crisis

Pınar Batur and Ufuk Özdağ

Introduction

The contemporary Turkish writer Buket Uzuner has been working on a four-book series on the nature, the myths, the history, and the culture of Anatolia in order to explore the confrontation between everyday existence and awareness of the world around us. The first three works in the series, *Water* [Su], *Earth* [Toprak], and *Air* [Hava], were published in 2012, 2015, and 2018. The last book, *Fire* [Ateş], is forthcoming. In her works, Uzuner focuses on shamanic traditions, which evolved from the mythological traditions of Central Asia and Siberia, specifically from the 11th-century Uighur document, *Kutađqu Bilig* [Wisdom of Royal Glory]. *Kutađqu Bilig*, authored by Karahanlı Yusuf Has Hacib, was written to convey an ideal vision of culture, politics, and the role of the ruler, along with the relationship between individual and society as a whole to the ruler of Eastern Karahan, Tabğaç Ulug Buğra Kara Han Ebû Ali Hasan bin Süleyman Arslan (Hajib 1983). For Uzuner, the world that the *Kutađqu Bilig* describes is a past that embraces the heroes of water and earth, air and fire, such as Umay (goddess of fertility), Ülgen (creator), Gök Tengri (father of the sun), and Su Ana (water mother), who represent the very essence of being as extensions of the cosmos which we, caught in the web of modernity, can no longer evoke. Despite all the changes that modernity has brought to the human imagination, Uzuner, in her work *Water*, argues that the pull of the Earth and nature and myth is far stronger spiritually than any other force in the universe, calling humanity to reclaim its own sense of being, the essence of our existence.

David Abram (1997), in "The Ecology of Magic," argues that as "intermediaries between society and earth, shamans ensure a proper flow of nourishment, not just from the landscape to the human inhabitants but from the human community back to the local earth" (7). Uzuner's narrative is about a temporal and spatial journey led by a shaman, out of the world of *Kutađqu Bilig* and the Turkic mythological past. Actually, Uzuner reinterprets the *Kutađqu Bilig* and Turkic mythology as a guide to assert that this journey is a journey of the mind: a journey from ignorance to awareness. The purpose of the journey is to mold one's mind to develop consciousness to find the truth in eco-wisdom for the future.

In the literature, Uzuner's work has often been discussed in terms of the trajectories of ecofeminism, linking feminist and environmental struggles. In this chapter, we argue that

Buket Uzuner also strives to be an eco-shaman who will lead the reader into a spiritual associations, to take them on a journey to foster a new way of seeing the pires a new way of envisioning an alternative future, to save the Earth. She suggests a journey of the mind has its rewards: a new awareness of the depth of one's own bei to nature. This journey to new consciousness will redefine the individual's place universe, according to Uzuner. Yet, this journey cannot be achieved without alternative knowledge. Ultimately, Uzuner wants the reader to comprehend "Earth I cal Knowledge" within the context of eco-consciousness collectively. She seems to h this collective awakening will lead to "eco-civilization," the establishment of a civil formed in the mystic tradition of the *Kutađqu Bilig* and the mythological framework Turkic past, but within present-day realities.

Environmental communications as a field concentrates on how information regard environment originates, transfers and perpetuates images, understandings, cultures and regarding the environment. A question for scholars is: does environmental awarene environmental communication; or does environmental communication usher in c mental awareness? The contentious debate on this topic is connected to understandi interpreting risk, the probability of harm to the environment and all the beings. Risk c way to look at past and future, and as Ulrich Beck argued, risk is not knowing the ris 2007: 7). For the reader, understanding the past and the future of environmental prol conceptualize the environmental risk is pivotal to understanding Buket Uzuner's nove Uzuner strives to convey the imminent risk surrounding the environment and the rea wants to achieve environmental communication as an eco-shaman, an environmental guide to the reader's journey into eco-consciousness. Throughout the pages of *W encourages the reader to see mounting evidence illuminating the path of eco-wisdom follow the footsteps of the novel's heroine, Umay.*

Shamanistic variations and the world of the *Kutađqu Bilig*

Kutađqu Bilig was written as an epic poem of about 6500 lines. It is written in ancient and was translated into Turkish in 1959. For the westernized Turkish reader, the *Bilig*, meaning "wise knowledge that brings good fortune," represents the Turkic past it was written, in the 11th century, it was meant to be advice for the ruler, sin Machiavelli's much later guide *The Prince* (2007). *Kutađqu Bilig* describes how to be leader in a just society. The narrative of the poem is built around the tension amc main characters—the king, the vizier, the sage and the mystic—and their competing f regarding politics, the ideal state, the just society and the terms of peaceful coexistence members of the society. Overall, the work as a whole is a guide to "civility" and the r establish a respectful and reverential society (Şeker 2016: 37). While focusing c politic," the narrative also describes a Manichaean alternative in the mystical cosmos alternative world, the king and vizier represent the sun and the moon, and justice from the harmony of the world. The didactic style of *Kutađqu Bilig* carries elements of myths, as mentioned in the *Orkhun Inscriptions*. These earlier works, the *Orkhun Ins date back to the 8th century, and are carved in stone in Chinese and Orkhun-Yenise The stone monuments were raised in the Orkhun Valley of Mongolia to honor the age of Turkic dominion in Asia, led by the brothers Kul Tigin and Bilge Khagan, two who united the Turkic peoples of Asia. They were known as the founding fathers Turkic political unity, coexistence and peace among Turkic people. Inspired by the t of this previous era, *Kutađqu Bilig* also advocates respect and peaceful coexistence*

society's well-being and longevity. For Uzuner, the well-being and longevity of society, much as advocated in these centuries-old writings, depend on respect and peace, but not only among the people but also with nature. Therefore, the well-being of the society is embedded in the collective eco-consciousness and "Earth Ecological Knowledge," defining the terms of peaceful coexistence with nature, which set the foundations of the "eco-civilization." The question is whether the method of posing this model reveals Uzuner's understanding of the role and the influence of communication in environmental issues.

William Cronon, in his essay "The Trouble with Wilderness" (1995), points out that the imagination, community, and commitment are three crucial elements of the environmental movement. The challenge is how to develop environmental awareness to assure the connection between these three parts, and how to perpetuate society's commitment to the movement to foster the intensity needed to strengthen the bond between them. Perhaps what is needed is the sense of proportion, balance and harmony as guiding principles. Uzuner (2012) believes that to foster such eco-politics, and to defy the grip of the "rational" world of modernity, society needs ritual and magic, under the guidance of a seeker, a seer, a pathfinder, a shaman. Uzuner says "the shaman was the World's first environmentalist and organic healer" (70). But, how does a shaman communicate?

Crafft (2008) observes that "shamanism encounters a worldwide distribution on all continents" (197). Mihaly Hoppal (2012, 2016), who studied present-day shamans across Northern Eurasia, Central Asia, and the Far East, points out that shamans are special in their communities, acting as mediators between village and the world of spirits. Shamans are considered "chosen" by their community. Their chief function is to transfer the inherited knowledge of the past to the community members. Among Turkic peoples, particularly in Siberia and Mongolia, the shaman is often a woman, an esteemed member of a community of many related families. The shaman during the social ritual often meditates to journey to another state of consciousness—she has the power to go into a trance. According to Hoppal, "it is this very trance that legitimizes the whole ritual" (Hoppal 2012: 20; Hoppal 2016). Also, the shaman has an important social function in that she is the healer in a small community, where her advice has been given serious consideration as a spiritual protector. The shaman also has the power to foresee the future—in the past it was common practice to ask the shaman to predict the future. Also, Barbara Myerhoff (1976) describes a shaman as a "connecting figure,"

bridging several worlds for his people, traveling between this world, the underworld, and the heavens. He transforms himself into an animal and talks with ghosts, the dead, the deities, and the ancestors. He brings back knowledge from the shadow realm, thus linking his people to the spirits and places, which were once mythically accessible to all.

(VanPool 2002: 40)

A shaman travels beyond the commonplace to the extraordinary to bring the divine gifts of wisdom and alternative knowledge. The journey requires the shaman to undergo metamorphoses to be protected in the supernatural realm. This alteration might take the form of a totem animal, an icon of the spiritual god, or an object that spirits might mistake for a gift. A shaman's journey is never complete, for it has no beginning or end, but is rather an endless cycle of memory.

Shamans, in historical or present Turkic settings, legitimate their leadership by the general will of the public, by facilitating cultural symbols to generate a common language base, and by claiming exceptional powers for their delivery. The cultural metaphors and the iconography define the cornerstones of a shaman's message, while the will of the community

legitimizes the meaning and the significance. There is nothing particularly Turkic or about the method of delivery, for it can include verbal references, songs and dance shaman claims the leadership of the community at that given moment to generate co-behavior. Environmental communication requires the shaman to communicate with elemental signifiers, and their exceptional powers lie in the clarity of their delivery of directed knowledge. Shamans protect the community by delivering often alternative edge, directly confronting the conventional pragmatic vision.

Shamans are also advocates on behalf of their community against all things wicked, against "sorcerers, disease, malevolent spirits, and other threats..." (Charnela and 1996: 131). Shamans draw new boundaries and formulate new languages, which are connection between the sacred and the everyday, sometimes blurring the two, and so exaggerating the difference, therefore setting up the foundations of taboos. The great shamanistic universe comes from the transformation that it demands from the evanescence of imagination, community and commitment. The taboo here is the everyday-ordinary and the readily visible. Sacred is an antithesis. In this modern, consumption-high-paced and violent world, the sacred is about balance, harmony and proportion. A shaman's journey has no end; rather the journey itself is the goal, and understand sacred and the secret is integral to the journey. What facilitates the journey to the "unit is communication by using icons and metaphors.

A shaman always sets herself apart, because the shaman is the seeing-eye, the seeker, the guide of the journey, the protector of community, and the defender of the power of a shaman comes from the shaman's knowledge and the shaman's ignorance. The knowledge that a shaman possesses, as well as the knowledge the rejects, is communicated by the shaman with words that constitute acts: a shaman travels, words, molding imagination and defining passion regarding the sacred. Language and edge, as well as the shaman's access to the transformative universe, is the source of a power. The language becomes a key in defining, naming, and explaining an alternative alternative past and future, an alternative universe and community, and an alternative sense and the way to co-exist with the sacred (Charnela and Leed 1996: 133).

A shaman exists as an outsider. By being an outsider, the shaman is the defining of the community by being different, an extraordinary being, thus designating ordinary, mundane and normal. This difference allows the shaman to confront the community's existing rules, norms, and conditions. David Abram, in his "Ecology of Magic," out that a shaman, by being both a member of society and the "other," maintains the perpetual traveler and tries to establish a balanced and reciprocal relationship between society and a larger society of beings. Thus, a shaman represents the link between the and socially constructed world, and the "extraordinary one." This connection is to maintain "continuous practice of 'healing' or balancing the community's relation: surrounding land" (Abram 1997: 7). In this expanded universe, disease signals instability of relationships that is a threat to balance, harmony and proportion. Disease is the of respect and peaceful coexistence. Nature, in this relationship, is no longer a backdrop scenery, but becomes integral to how the world around us is reimagined. The supernatural and the sacred is the "natural world." It is an ecology of everything there is, v exist as equals with other beings. Therefore, a shaman, through communication with symbols, tries to convince society that "deeply mysterious powers and entities" are they demarcate our relationship with nature. If magic is "the ability or power to alter consciousness at will," the magic that a shaman employs is about altering relationships "extraordinary" nature and "ordinary" human community. This connection is inte

persuade humans to “experience their own consciousness as simply one form of awareness among many others” (Abram 1997: 8). Abram describes magic as “the experience of existing in a world made up of multiple intelligences” (8). It is an alternative perception, and according to Abram “modern humanity’s denial of awareness in nonhuman nature is borne not by any conceptual or scientific rigor, but rather by an inability, or refusal, to fully perceive other organisms” (10). Thus, such awareness is what enables the “extraordinary” and magic. Shamans communicate this complex web of associations. Shamans regulate the complex of relationships with extraordinary nature through magic, empathy, and a ritual reverence for the world around us, to provide an alternative window to reality and an unconventional look at the future.

What enables a shaman is the community surrounding the shamanistic practice, made up of three pillars: empathy/understanding, alternative knowledge, and new ways of connecting past and future. What makes a novelist an eco-shaman is bringing them all together within the context of the natural universe, and making the reader part of the extraordinary. These all three culminate as the belief in alternative existence that allows shamans to mold the relationships to all beings, the natural world as well as to the future. In a way, the temporal metamorphosis is as much part of the ritual of the shaman as the spatial metamorphosis that shapes the world around us. The past and the future are magical lands, the journey to which enables power and inspiration and an alternative sense of being awakened to an awareness of self and a sense of belonging. James Lovelock (2000) points out that in Gaia, we live in a “world that is the breath and bones of our ancestors.” Past and ancestor worship means receptiveness to nonhuman forms, and the acceptance of life and decay as parts of existence, together enabling faith in the wisdom of the past, as a contrast to the banality of the modern world (Abram 1997: 829). On the other hand, the future brings the possibility of bending the normal of the present, to re-adjust possibilities by making alternative connections. Uzuner, as an eco-shaman, tries in the pages of *Water* to bring all these components together, to reject the present banality of the world, and to generate an alternative togetherness setting the foundation of eco-civilization based on empathy and understanding of all beings, a mystical past, an alternative common future, and the “Earth Ecological Knowledge.”

Uzuner’s *Water* [Su]

It is very hot in Istanbul, the humid air choking everyone. Uzuner’s novel, *Water*, begins on a hot summer day in Istanbul at the police station of Kadıköy, a neighborhood on the Asian side, as we are introduced to Defne Kaman’s family in the pages of the novel. Defne Kaman’s grandmother, mother and sister are at the police station filing a missing person’s report for Defne, who has not been seen for about 39 hours. She is a child of a family with secrets. But, instead of solving every riddle and understanding the meaning of all the secrets, the reader is encouraged to embrace them, for secrets are part of the cosmos that Uzuner invites us to enter. The reader is encouraged to accept this “extraordinary” and “secret” world. In order to appreciate the completeness of the universe, the reader needs to transcend the “ordinary” and “mundane” and make peace with this extraordinary cosmos of extraordinary and magical secrets. This is the first step to finding out that the fabric of the universe is made of acceptance, respect, empathy and love. Uzuner advocates that acceptance, respect, empathy and love together culminate in the rebirth of new consciousness, in which we all accept the value of life in all its different forms and reality in all its different interpretations. In the pages of *Water*, Uzuner argues that this is the road to eco-enlightenment, a path that leads society to establish eco-civilization. In this challenging journey, the guides are Defne and her

grandmother, Umay. Defne has vanished, because she entered a different realm of reality the key to this alternative world has been possessed by Umay, her grandmother.

Three concentric narratives shape the novel. The first concentric chamber is defined by the main story, delineating the flow of the novel, and is deceptively simple. It begins with the backdrop of the Kadıköy police station. The reader learns that the family’s last “Kaman” means “shaman” in old Turkish (see İnan 2015: 72), and the police officer, who files Defne’s missing person report, surprisingly shares the family’s last “Kaman.” The family provides Defne’s picture, a likeness of a woman of 30, will be delicate, average height, adorned with freckles and red hair. Defne is an independent journalist who writes about neglected issues, such as the illegal medical trade, an trafficking of women and children, and environmental problems—and therefore she is one of the few genuine, conscientious, investigative reporters left in this country.” It is no wonder Defne was reported “lost” and “found” before, because she “disappears” often because of her investigative reporting, such as the Black Sea villagers protesting the building and operation of a hydroelectric dam “to protect their rivers, their water, their own lives and those of coming generations” (39). This time, it is suspected that Defne is busy with a case of a missing woman. The policeman receives a report that recently Defne was seen on a ferryboat, but no one witnessed her getting off the ferry. Police detective Umit gets more involved with Defne’s case, interfering with his upcoming vacation to the coast to flee the “devilish heat” of the summer of Istanbul. In his endeavor to search for Umit finds a companion. Semahat is a complex woman who owns a secondhand boot shop in the Kadıköy market. It is at this stage that three seemingly unrelated stories converge: complications of Semahat’s life as a single woman in a male-dominated world, the entrance of a wounded dolphin in the Bosphorus, and the unending story of Umit’s longing for his life, Tasvir, from whom he has been separated for two years because of the differences of their families. The book ends as the stories collide with Defne’s resurfacing, together with the near escape of the wounded dolphin under sad and mysterious circumstances, Semahat’s return to the bookstore in the Kadıköy bazaar, and the violent destruction of Umit and Tasvir.

The first chamber of the novel provides the context, but the second chamber offers content. The second chamber of the concentric narrative that Uzuner offers the reader about the sacred journey: Defne’s journey to become a shaman, and Umit’s journey to the footsteps of Defne. As the narrative unfolds, Uzuner makes it clear that Umit’s grandmother, is Uzuner’s persona in the novel, while Umit represents the novice. Uzuner takes care to give names to the characters in the novel to designate their affiliation. Umay is such a name. In ancient Turkic mythology, Umay, meaning “placenta and umbilical cord,” was considered a goddess, protector of women and children, and represented virgin fertility. In other words, she represents Gaia. Her last name “Bay-Ülgen” also represents the creation of earth, sky and all beings, claiming water, food, bountifulness and the richness of the earth. Umay and Bay-Ülgen are related, and also related to “Ay Tann,” representing the Moon, the source of lunar powers. Umay’s older daughter, Aytan, “moon faced,” represents the shifting characteristics of the lunar cycle—light and dark is a name akin to Daphne in Greek mythology, and it is the name of the nymph who was turned into a laurel tree to maintain her purity. It is no wonder that Uzuner, whose interest is the conversions between human and non-human beings, gives this name to one of the heroes of this novel.

In the novel, Defne is staged as extraordinary, a heroine for all readers to admire and emulate. But, she would be hard to imitate, because she is enigmatic. For example, I

appearance in the novel is brief and mysterious. She shows up in a crowded street to give a piece of paper revealing coded words from the *Kutadgu Bilig* to Ümit, the police sergeant. This is how Ümit's journey to Defne's universe begins as he tries to decipher the series of notes in the pages of the old book, and Semahat, who has the old manuscripts and the knowledge of how to interpret them, helps. This alternative reality is reflective of Defne's sense of being. The first note from Defne reads, "Oh, my hope, you are my own hope/Oh, my hope, I won't lose hope in you" (86). Defne calls out for Ümit, his name meaning "hope" in Turkish, and others to follow her, but to what end? This puzzle has not been revealed. The following notes from Defne are equally perplexing, such as: "If a pearl is never taken from the sea/It might as well be stone;" "Not one of the creatures that flies, walks or swims in water/Can be saved by your hand, oh one of formidable black temper" (140–41). But, all in all, they are not intended to help Ümit find Defne, but rather to follow her in his imagination. But Ümit is afraid that this journey might take him to dangerous places, and he feels that Defne is in danger. Danger is usual for Defne, as her mother claims "Defne's imagination is out of control..." (144).

In the words of her family, Defne is a "misfit," a rebel, an oddity. According to her grandmother Umay Bayülgen, Defne is just simply different because she was born "with a sixth sense," which bestows her with "the talent and the insight to hear the right things at the right place and the right time" (25). According to the grandmother, on the day Defne was born, the beech tree in the garden, "the tree considered to carry the voices of all for thousands of years," and the tree that defines the split in the universe by standing between ordinary and extraordinary in Turkic mythology, was struck by lightning. The grandmother considers a beech tree "holy," and the lightning strike was a sign of good luck (128). In accordance with mythology, she associates "kayın," beech tree, and "kadın," woman, because the beech tree has a nourishing milky substance, much like a woman (Çobanoğlu 2011: 246).

The grandmother contrasts Defne with her other granddaughter, Aysu, and her own daughter, Ayten, both of whom are consumption oriented, living very much in the present reality of greed. On the other hand, Defne seems to grow up under the tutelage of her grandmother, living in the world of philosophy, imagination and empathy, shaped by her grandmother's shamanistic teachings. This was not without conflict in the family. Thinking Defne's imagination is "out of control," Ayten, Defne's sister, exclaims:

This misfit Defne is just plain weird! I'm telling you that there's something really strange about that girl. Do you know what she does? She sits down and cuts up pieces of paper into hundreds of strips, you know, like those strips of paper to learn reading and writing. And then she writes on every one of them "Nature is the center of the Universe. And she is a woman! Anyone who doesn't know this is ignorant."

(145)

Defne sees her grandmother, Umay, as "a shaman" and describes her as "wise, and she knew herbs, poetry, healer, story teller and she was Mother Nature and has a sixth sense" (313). Defne's grandmother is a link in a chain of shamans who were part of the family for hundreds of years. Umay remembers her own mother, now helping Defne to become shaman, perhaps with the hope that Defne will carry the calling and the commitment to the next generation. This commitment to nurture the alternative in Defne's imagination is one of the pivotal points to understand why Defne is different from ordinary people. For instance, when asked to draw in her classes, her unusual sketches would always irritate her elementary school teacher:

None of my friends were human; they were more trustworthy and loveable, I friends were half animal-half human and that's how I drew my classmates so that imaginary friends wouldn't feel bad, which really drove my teacher crazy.

(1)

Her belief in this world as well as in this complex universe, which allows her to be "better human being," is very strong. Ümit feels that he needs to enter this universe. Her writings as "she seemed almost supernatural as an enchanted creature from a fair (35), while he asks himself, "as someone sensitive to tragedies afflicting the modern age could he resist dreaming of one day meeting a hero from a legend or an enchantress fairy tale?" (35–6). And as Ümit reads Defne's investigative reporting on the resist Black Sea villagers to the hydroelectric power plant, he gets pulled into her universe. Black Sea villagers are protesting the hydroelectric plant because they want to themselves and their future (39). Ümit also believes that Defne is an amazing journal works on neglected issues, giving voice to the under-represented, dominated and via Defne's early education, which shaped her journey, is a complex one. Her ped. experience was designed to teach her respect, peace and awareness of the world and "Knowledge for Happiness," a game that her grandmother Umay played with her grand in the past, is one of the examples that Uzuner gives. The game has a single rule, which that the player keep a secret from people who would be unhappy if they knew the knew their secrets. Defne was allowed to share these secrets with Umay only, along imaginary companion, a famous Turkic fable teller, Dede Korkut. In reflection, Defne that this game was designed to protect her from others, who are short-sighted and minded. Other than it being for the child's protection, the game also taught Defne e along with accountability, respect and reflective self-awareness, and most importantly it

Defne grew up thinking that "Nature is the center of the Universe. And she is a w (145). Her grandmother also taught her mythology and the importance of myth beings, from Eriik, in Turkish mythology, to the Swan Princess in Nordic mythology. In contrast to Aysu, the "beautiful sister," Defne grew up being proud of beauty the with intelligence (151). Also, Defne was raised to embrace a range of emotion, in melancholy, instead of pointless cheerfulness, meaningless happiness, and purpose (154). She remembers that she embraced her quality of being different from other though she felt lonely and isolated from other children at times. According to her mother Umay, "everyone needs to be themselves," advice that Defne took to heart, "that way you respect yourself and others" (158). She decided that

everyone was created as a unique person, everyone was different, but no one better than anyone else. A tree, a rabbit, a bird, an apple, a drop of water, a hanc of dust, a breath of air and every living being—they were all different and equ important.

(1)

Defne later reflects about the importance of teachers in one's life: "there is only one in life, and that is to find a good teacher at a young age" (158). Defne criticizes education is rigid, unimaginative, intolerant, arguing that this kind of education does not possibilities but sets up barriers in people's lives. The miracle in her life was her grand. Umay. The way Defne describes her, "she was a kam [shaman], a wizard, a sage, a healer, a storyteller, she was common sense, she was Mother Nature, she was another she saved me" (158).

Along with the account of the rich interaction between the grandmother and Defne, the commentary from Uzuner enhances the flow of the novel, which is *the third concentric chamber* for the reader to enter. The third chamber is the heart of the novel. These sections, distinguished from others by being printed in italics, are written in the style of the *Kütahya Biliç*. In these sections, Uzuner offers her own viewpoint, without the help of any intermediary character in the novel. These sections are written with a didactic voice, elaborating on the finer points for the reader's attention. In the rest of the novel, she distinguishes herself by claiming the persona of Umay. She emphasizes that Umay, Defne's grandmother, whose name in Turkic mythology connotes universal mother and a healer that protects nature, is a teacher and traveler like the novelist (Uzuner 2012: 38). This way, she places her own voice among the continuum of history.

All symbols in Anatolian life today as well as those of our ancient Shamanistic tradition, whose influences are still alive in all our rituals, can be traced to ancient Turks who migrated from the Pacific to the Mediterranean 2000 years ago. (39)

Within this context, Uzuner laments: "why do people in Turkey today take craftiness for cleverness, a wallet for a consciousness, greed for pride?" (39). And here lies the conflict that she emphasizes in the third concentric chamber: between present reality, made up of the chaos, greed, profit, destruction and individualism of neoliberal society, and the alternative, imaginary possibility of Turkic ideals of balance, harmony, and respect, augmented by shamanistic empathy and eco-consciousness. This conflict is depicted in Uzuner's exemplification of rural life, and its sharp difference from the city: idyllic, calm and balanced countryside, sheltered from the self-indulgence, decadence, ruin and disarray of the city. Throughout the novel, Umit desires to go to the countryside, and his inability to get out of the matrix of the city is representative of this conflict. This conflict is also evident in the journey that requires Umit to leap into an alternative understanding of his own existence in the alternative universe. According to Uzuner, the shaman's journey is about the beauty and complexity of this alternative existence, the alternative altered universe, and the knowledge that it represents: it is about harmony, respect, love and empathy, in contrast to the daily "rat race" of the city. It seems for Defne, this alternative universe is not far away, but here. If looked at differently, Earth becomes a new, an alternative place.

Defne sees the Earth as a witness, even in its exploited and abused state. Earth is a witness to the past as well as the future, and the source of all knowledge of understanding us and all other life forms. Earth awareness is the beginning point of the cosmic vision leading to enlightenment. Defne argues this awakening into eco-consciousness needs to develop within the context of "secular humanism" (270). Uzuner asks readers to extend their imagination to reach this alternative understanding, in the same way Umay asked Defne while she was growing up. The section regarding the "Peach Pit" is a good example of this imaginary journey into alternative experience. Uzuner talks, through Defne, about how each pit has the potential to be a tree, such as each being has the potential to grow just like the peach tree (273). Umay suggests that each person's journey is somewhat different, because "every pit, just like every person, has its own story" (273). Yet, she asks "how could such a unique fruit that was both beautiful and delicious and whose seductive fragrance brought happiness to so many have a poisonous center?" (274). And she remembers what Umay advised her to consider: "everything was carrying its opposite inside, everything, all of us! Nothing was as it seems" (274). This binary opposition is what sharply differentiates Defne from her sister, as much as they also carry this contradiction within themselves. Even though they are "two

similar fruits from the same tree," they carry each other's opposite, as Defne desires as "smart, tasteful and creative," but with the capacity to be "an opportunist, and selfish..." (265), and she points out that "I was, from the beginning, inappropriate" to her value system and aesthetics" (265). Just like the sisters or the I Uzuner suggests that the reader carries the opposite of herself or himself, perhaps a greed and individualistic ambitions, but the reader also has a kernel of empathy, a love. The world of direct opposites fascinates Uzuner: the mundane versus the extraordinary contrast to the presumed clarity of the present, the mundane versus the extraordinary countryside and the city, this "world" in contrast to an alternative universe. She states that the opposite is not an opposite, but half of a whole; and why live with just one? In the last section of the book, Uzuner talks directly with the reader, suggesting the end of the novel suggests the end of one journey, but the beginning of another. She states that "wisdom is madness" and "wisdom is the light, the brilliance that swirls in the hand of the traveler at the end of a long journey, a traveler who has struggled with courage and sincerity along his heart's way" (375). Uzuner signals the reader that the beginning of a journey, and the reader needs to decide whether or not this journey is part of their destiny. Uzuner also has a journey ahead of her as well, because no one has these stories of her journeys but herself. It is clear that the journey that Uzuner is about developing the sense of being of the reader, according to shamanistic teachings; teachings advocate an alternative to the consumption-driven, monotonous and ord of everyday neoliberal capitalism present to a path to future eco-consciousness.

"Earth Ecological Knowledge"—just the opposite of consumption-driven, opportunity in the neoliberal economy. Perhaps these two binaries complete the whole, but it is the universe that is worth living with!

The novelist as eco-shaman

Deep ecology, as a philosophical approach, has been celebrated for raising awareness and the interconnectedness of beings in the universe. As an eco-centric theoretical deep ecology is meant to be crucial of the anthropocentrism of the everyday capitalist worldview. Yet, as an approach, it has been criticized for being far too individualist an approach, it embraces the individual's self-awareness and consciousness to alter belief resist capitalistic, materialistic, dominating, violent existence. Uzuner, as an environmental thinker and a novelist, is not opposed to deep ecology, but she is advocating more of classic deep ecology offers: collective eco-consciousness and the radical alteration of nature. Uzuner tries to persuade the reader that we are all members of a shamanistic sacred with possibilities, capable of defining our future path. *Kütahya Biliç* integrated argument as a spiritual guide, without entering into the contextual discussion about be a good leader in a just society. It provides an understanding into "civility" and the to establish a respectful and reverential society (Seker 2016: 37).

Throughout *Water*, Uzuner emphasizes three components which she feels dominate shaman's role in society: first, shamans act as intermediaries, enabling connections; shamans act as providers of alternative knowledge and understanding; third, shamans exist for balance and harmony to restore peaceful coexistence with nature.

Uzuner emphasizes that shamans are intermediaries and peacemakers of different and she seems attracted by how shamans guide the individual and society through the spiritual connections to facilitate a journey. She, as an eco-shaman and striving to be an intermediary, wants to take the reader on a journey. The journey defined in *Water*

end, because it is about learning and understanding "Earth Ecological Knowledge" within the context of gaining "eco-wisdom." Her protagonist Defne is missing because she is traveling away from the mundane and ordinary, to another, exceptional world, where she talks with animals, to be with nature and the ancestors. Her metamorphosis is part of this process: "Long live Defne the Dolphin!" (214). Defne's transfiguration into a dolphin is not just physical, but spiritual. This unworldliness is what Uzuner argues lies in the tale of the Prophet Yunus (Jonah): he, who repented and was forgiven by God, was allowed to come back from the sea to serve God to save all souls. According to the religious scripts, the atonement of Yunus (Jonah) takes place in the belly of the giant fish. It is no coincidence that the Turkish word for dolphin comes from Jonah. The dolphin is a central icon for Uzuner, representing penitence and atonement. But, in the context of Uzuner's novel *Water*, remorse stems from the awareness of distance from nature, the goddess of all. When Umay expresses concern about Defne's disappearance from the present realm, she laments that "the human body was not made to stay in the water for long periods of time" (237). She is alluding to Defne's conversion into a dolphin, meaning she can only be saved by coming back to shore to rescue all souls. But for Umay, not only Defne, but also Ümit the police sergeant, and Semahat the bookseller, are conduits. She tells Semahat, "you are the messenger Semahat. Your sergeant friend is the vehicle" (239). Being a connecting rod is an important shamanistic function, in this case being a point of transformation between society and nature. Uzuner, through her character Umay, tries to convince others to become as such. While the story of Jonah is about holding on to faith and hope in service to god, in *Water*, it becomes about relations to nature and the future of humanity. At the conclusion of the book, Defne, seeing the future with dolphin's eyes, comes to the shore to lead humanity away from the destruction of nature, and the ruination of our future.

The second interconnected function of a shaman is the presentation of alternative knowledge to contrast with existing dogma. Uzuner reminds us that the world is suffering from destruction, violence and greed, and she believes that humans need to face up to their destructiveness and violence to confront the era of the Anthropocene. Issues such as extinction, depicted by the dolphin, and pollution and resource depletion, represented by the protests against the hydroelectric dam, are frequently presented in the novel. Another issue raised in the novel is climate change, presented as the unusually hot summer, a "devilishly cruel" heat that grips Istanbul throughout the novel and is the backdrop to everything:

It was July and Istanbul had surrendered herself unconditionally to the cruel reign of an especially merciless summer. . . . The heat wreaked havoc on human emotion, too. . . . This heat was more tyrannical than a dictator.

(15–16)

Along with the effects of climate change, Uzuner's multi-layered plot structure converges around a desire to foster balance and harmony to restore the peaceful coexistence with nature. This is the third function of Uzuner's trilogy. She longs for "a more truthful, useful, better" life, one that is an alternative to our present materialistic, consumerist, alienating existence, choked with media sensation. Rooted in the past, in the Turkish legends, this alternative existence embraces harmony, peaceful coexistence, and nature, led by shamans and shamanistic leadership and teachings. Indeed, the two primary protagonists of the novel, Defne Kaman and her grandmother Umay Bayülgen, represent a way toward this different possibility. To reinforce these ideals, Uzuner intervenes in the flow of the story, and addresses the reader directly throughout sections of the book with the icons and metaphors of shamanistic teachings. In these sections of metanarrative, the readers are expected to unveil

the message of the writer: that is, what guidance the shaman writer, as a mediator, is bringing to our times. Thus, the writer as shaman, narrating a long past tradition, takes the reader on a journey, claiming that at the journey's end "we will never be the same." The narrator reveals

Oh good reader, grant me but a minute of your time. With all due respect, what I wish to say is this: a person who has lived at least twenty-five years at any time in the course of human history knows for certain that our world is a living hell and that human beings can be their own greatest enemies. When you finish (the book), you will never be the same. . . . [You] will achieve enlightenment.

(56)

Throughout the book, the journey is represented by water, since water also represents "the passage of time" (99). Uzuner, in *Water*, in accordance with ancient Turkic cosmology, celebrates water as the essence, the origin of all beings (98). "Water is the mother's womb. Water is fertile (98). Water "has been seen as the cosmic element to end all." Also, according to the mythology "after a worldwide tsunami, destroyed world rebirth in water to start anew" (quoted in Yih 2015: 103). Water is nature, for "water never dies" (69). "The Book of Water" that Uzuner remarks upon in the novel defines why this novel, the first in a series of four, is named *Water* because water is the spirit of the universe. Defne writes in her "Book of Water" that Umay tells her "the secrets of water," and she understood that she is a "particle of water." She relates to when she understood that water circulates between the body, nature, and the world, understood "many other things," including her own presence in the universe. In Uzuner's novel, water is the universe, thus, awareness of water becomes the beginning step toward consciousness. Sharing water, and keeping the water pure, is a collective action, and water becomes the foundation of eco-civilization. Uzuner presents herself as an eco-shaman because she wants the reader to recognize the possibilities of the universe and wants to convince them to move into this alternative realm by understanding, embracing and trusting "water."

It is important to mention that shamanism is more of an academic discussion in Turkey than it is in Turkic Central Asia and Siberia, because of historical circumstances leading to suppression of Islam in the latter regions. Even though there are symbols of shamanistic rituals existing in Turkish culture, the basic understanding dictates that they were informed in by the Ottoman or village past. Uzuner is not posing shamanism or shamanistic inventory as a part of everyday life in Turkey. In fact, her proposal is that shamanism is a marginal issue, far from the public's mind: she is hoping that the exceptionality of her argument will capture readers' imagination. What we are arguing here is how Uzuner, with the *Kutadgu Bilik* in hand, and environmental and social concerns in her heart, shoulders the task of posing "path finder," a guide to the journey into eco-consciousness. As a guide, Uzuner utilizes shamanistic cultural icons and metaphors, and legitimizes their delivery with the *Kutadgu E* to reorder the world around environmental and human needs. In order to achieve this, she presents the reader with two undetailed futures: one, based on eco-civilization, and the other apocalyptic. Scholars in the field of environmental communication have been discussing apocalyptic models have the power to generate public focus and motivation in collective action. Indeed, fear combined with action in environmental movements has been used as a motivator as well as a resource. Shamans perhaps have traditionally used fear of "unknown" to create focus in their communities, but in this case fear becomes a tool to develop awareness of risk. Yet, this approach has its limits. As Ulrich Beck points out the always denial and apathy prior to transformative awareness, consciousness, and collective action. Another problem, as Robert J. Brulle points out, is that the elite typically lack communication regarding environmental issues. This type of communication has a potential

to fail because it does not allow any form of civic engagement or collective knowledge-finding or public dialogue. From this comes Uzuner's dilemma: how can an eco-shaman generate interest in eco-civilization without public dialogue or collective political discourse?

As for the narrator's difficult task of "enlightening" the reader as an eco-shaman, this is powerfully presented in the final page of the book. It is in the final chapter Uzuner claims "for as you know already, there is no one else who can tell these stories but me," promising to continue in her tale on the element of *Earth*, and forthcoming volumes on *Sky* and *Fire* (376). Uzuner, in the last chapter, reaches out to the reader in her own voice, not to offer a farewell, but to meet with the reader's heart and mind, just like a shaman after a ritual. Her purpose is to convince the reader that "wisdom is the light, brilliance that swirls in the palm of the hand of the traveler at the end of a long journey, a traveler who struggled with courage and sincerity along his heart's way" (375). She also advises the reader that if the world is considered to be "sane," then we should become "mad," because "wisdom comes in madness." What the reader needs is to believe in the novelist as an eco-shaman, and travel with her on a journey. Madness, it might seem, but the journey promises to lead to a future world of eco-civilization: "Power to the people!" (39).

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ENVIRONMENTALISM IN THE REALM OF MALAYSIAN NOVELS IN ENGLISH

Zainor Izat Zainal

Environmentalism in Malaysia

Environmentalism in Malaysia can be traced back to the British colonial administration (1957). Protest in the form of armed resistance by the locals whose livelihood in the threatened to unjust British laws that pertained to land rights and access was common then, though not many records are available. Tok Bahaman's 1891–1895 in Pahang exemplified these protests (Kathirithamby-Wells 2005: 128). Haji Abdu in Terengganu, who represented 43 peasants who refused to bow down to the system of getting permits to plant hill paddy, contested the British notion of land Land Office (Mohideen 2000: 246). Discontent over land rights grew, which culminated in a Malay peasant uprising in Terengganu in 1928, led by To' Janggut. This resistance was quashed "swiftly and ruthlessly by British guns" (Idris 2000: 7).

Environmentalism during colonial times was crudely informed by scientific disc botanical studies that were carried out throughout the Empire. Scientific disc botanical studies were rooted in European Enlightenment values, which valorized the priority of the rational human mind over non-rational matter, including nature. P. nature in the colonies, therefore, were seen as "uncivilized" by the British Empire need of being brought to order and rationality, named and labelled so as to enlighten of the world (Adams and Mulligan 2003: 3). Forest sustainability, however, became concern throughout the British Empire because of hunting, commercial plant scientific research. To this end, conservation was seen as extremely crucial. The idea of King George V National Park in 1939 (renamed as National Park in 1957), a for that stretches over three states, Terengganu, Kelantan, and Pahang, reached the pi conservation efforts carried out by Theodore Hubback, a British officer who was concerned about wildlife preservation and the survival of the Orang Asli (aborigin forests of Malaya (Kathirithamby-Wells 2005: 199). Hubback's efforts were common not uncommon during colonial times. Coinciding with forest conservation measures out throughout the British Empire, especially in Africa, India, and Burma, Hubback were premised on the philosophy of Empire at that time, which was "the con protection and preservation of the biological realm were congruent with good ge