

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Use of Postmodernist Elements from Children's Literature: The Sample of the Book "The Blue Donkey and the Idle Lion"

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which the postmodernist elements used in the book *Blue Donkey and Idle Lion* activate children's world of meaning and lead them to make active and creative readings. In contrast to traditional narratives, the author of the book deliberately leaves his stories unfinished at times, avoiding the role of dictating passive listeners to his heroes. Instead, he engages in conflicts with the characters and involves his readers in deciding how the stories should conclude. In an environment where the real and fictional worlds intertwine, a new perception of reality begins to emerge in the text, as writers, readers, and heroes pursue their stories together. For this reason, this multi-layered fictional world, in which the subject is activated with postmodernist elements, is considered worthy of examination. This study employed the document analysis method, one of the qualitative research methods. Purposeful sampling was used, focusing on the first book of the "Blue Donkey's Adventures" series, "Blue Donkey and Idle Lion." The narrative elements in the work were evaluated in line with postmodernist narrative techniques, and the analyses were examined using the content analysis method. In this context, the stories that employ postmodernist narrative techniques include readers in the text, elevating them to the level of authorship through the use of metafiction techniques. When the text is approached critically and questioningly, an environment is created where the reader can hear their voice within the narrative. Furthermore, the reader's perception of the heroes in the stories begins to shift and deviate from the traditional idealist positions, moving away from familiar roles. Finally, the author's stories break the mechanistic, specific, and measurable understanding of time and space, creating a work in which subjective, creative, and multiple readings can be made.

Keywords: Children's literature, postmodernist elements, short stories, creative and active reading.

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INTRODUCTION

Modernism, a product of the enlightenment era, emerged as a reaction against the mindset and lifestyles of the Middle Ages. It aimed to save the individual and society from the traditional way of thinking and to develop and transform people within the framework of scientific understanding. In other words, it means that people reject a transcendent authority outside their own will and reach intellectual freedom (Kahraman, 2002). Consequently, modernists aimed to transition from a God-centered world to a human-centered one, linking human happiness, progress, and perfection to scientific truths, and they also advocated that humans were the sole rulers of the universe, and there was nothing they couldn't solve on Earth. However, over time, this approach turned into an ideology and became a rigid and dogmatic attitude (Kahraman, 2002). The universe started to be explained through the metaphor of a machine, and nature was considered a mechanism operating according to specific laws (Bostan, 2013). Thus, the modern scientific understanding, in the latter half of the 19th century, reduced humans and society to mere objects, devoid of values. This situation also influenced the concept of education.

The unquestionable forms of knowledge produced by science laid the foundation for a behaviorist approach in education, where learning was understood as the process of repeating and memorizing objective information (Alemdar and Aydemir, 2022). During the era of modernism, humans were transformed into objects into which knowledge was implanted. In schools, knowledge became a control mechanism, leading to uniformity that diminished individual qualities. Educational institutions adopted an approach that damaged individuality, being harsh, overly controlling, and focused on conformity and grading (Kökten, 2013). Centralization, standardization, valuelessness, and rationalization became dominant aspects of the education system (Lionargun, 2007). Therefore, according to the modernist perspective, knowledge was independent of the individual, fixed, and did not vary from person to person (Ceylan, 2013). Consequently, the underlying rationality of education led to the standardization of the learning process, imposing a one-dimensional and limited view of learning on both teachers and students (Alemdar and Aydemir, 2022). However, with the advent of the postmodern perspective, the position and authority of the teacher were deconstructed, and the focus of education shifted from the teacher to the learner (Alemdar and Aydemir, 2022).

During the education process, students have become individuals who can quickly adapt to change, make critical decisions, cope with different events they encounter in their daily lives, and develop their perspectives (Kökten, 2013). Learning acquisitions of students have ceased to be a limited and monotonous phenomenon gained with a hierarchical structure in the classroom. Students began to choose how they would learn according to their subjective qualities. Thus, the idea of an information society brought by the modern understanding of education has left its place the continuous lifelong learning activity. According to Tezcan (2002), in the education system developed by the postmodernist understanding, the ability to think multidimensionally and adapt easily to the environment has a more important meaning in line with the requirements of the age. According to postmodernist philosophy, most of the modernist curricula do not meet the requirements of the age and do not carry the up-to-date skills that can help to survive in the storm of change in life (Kökten, 2013).

In the postmodernist understanding of education, there is a system in which interdisciplinary transitions can be made and standardization and uniformization can be prevented. This system creates content that cannot collect skills that are spread over a wide area, and this content is presented in a way to include predictions related to the unknown,

the possible, apart from the known. In such educational environments, pluralistic perspectives, possibilities, and differences can be put forward. Each individual can reach the information in line with his/her perspective in line with their experiences. In other words, there is no dominant and single learning approach in the postmodernist education approach. Each individual can learn by interpreting the information himself and can become the subject of knowledge. Therefore, individuals can create a learning process that they create by putting themselves in the center and becoming open to a pluralistic perspective on knowledge, and this situation allows the configuration of a new form of knowledge and language in a new world.

Children's literature writers also aimed to develop reading styles in which the subject is active by using this new philosophy of knowledge and language, and they wanted to gain reading skills in which communication skills could be developed through interdisciplinary methods. Reading is one of the most important learning areas in the cognitive and affective learning processes of individuals (Epçaçan, 2018), and it is an active process and requires an active role. Thus, authors have tended to use postmodernist elements in children's literature books so that children can participate effectively in the reading process and contribute positively to their personality development. Children's books in which postmodernist elements are used have a structure that allows children to develop new thinking skills, realize that there can be different truths instead of focusing on one truth, think about the relativity of life, and make alternative readings. Therefore, the range of this journey of the reader with the author between the fictional layers differs a little compared to other books. The author's aim in postmodernist books is never to inform the reader or to instill a message. On the contrary, by sharing the fiction game with the reader, he includes them in the game and tries to activate their creative thinking skills. In doing so, it leaves the texts open and expects the pluralistic structure of the text to be reproduced by the reader and opens the door to new readings. One of these writers is Yalvaç Ural.

Yalvaç Ural both wrote his story and included himself figuratively in his fiction by using postmodernist narrative and fictional techniques in *The Adventures of the Blue Donkey*. At the same time, by including the reader in the fiction, it has prepared a different environment for the child to explore his world and make active readings with a new fiction technique in line with the principle of being suitable for the child. For this reason, it is thought that among the works of children's literature, there is a greater need for works that feed the fictional world of children by using such techniques. In this context, in this study, the first of the *Blue Donkey's Adventures*, *Blue Donkey and Idle Lion*, was found worth examining, considering that it could contribute to the field of children's literature. In the study, the evaluation of the work named *Blue Donkey and Idle Lion* in terms of postmodernist narration and fiction technique was carried out by seeking answers to the following questions:

- What kind of interpretation and reasoning skills does the narrator's becoming an enigmatic personality in the postmodern narrative *Blue Donkey and Idle Lion* give to child readers?
- How did the use of metafiction and language playfulness in the postmodern narrative *Blue Donkey and Idle Lion* contribute to the critical and creative thinking skills of child readers?
- What kind of contributions did the protagonists get out of their idealistic and perfect identities and make them ordinary in the postmodern narrative called "*Blue Donkey and Idle Lion*"?
- What kind of contributions did the understanding of relative time and space make to the ability of child readers to make connections between events in the postmodern narrative called "*Blue Donkey and Idle Lion*"?

METHOD

Research Design

In this study, which aims to analyze Blue Donkey and Idle Lion in terms of postmodernist narration and fiction technique, the document analysis method, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. Document analysis is a method used to systematically analyze the content of written documents (Wach, 2013). With this method, it is possible to collect and analyze various writings and documents written, prepared, or created about the research topic (Seyidođlu, 2016). The main purpose of the document analysis process is to review existing sources so that the information provided can be independently verified (Watkins, West Meierse et al., 2012). In studies related to education, course and reading books, curriculum instructions, internal and external correspondence, meeting minutes, student course assignments and exams, lesson and unit plans, and official documents related to education can be used within the scope of document analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008), document analysis is carried out in five stages, and these stages are "accessing documents, checking originality, understanding documents, analyzing data, and using data". In this context, these stages were followed in the study, and the postmodernist narrative and fiction techniques used in the work named Blue Donkey and Idle Lion were examined in terms of children's literature and their relevance to the child.

Study Group

The study group consists of the work called Blue Donkey and Idle Lion, the first book of the Blue Donkey's Adventures series, in which Yalvaç Ural applies the postmodernist narrative and fictional technique. The work was determined by purposive sampling. Purposeful sampling is the selection of a subgroup that is thought to be a typical sample of the population (Sencer & Sencer, 1978). In this framework, postmodernist elements in the work have been evaluated in various dimensions.

Data Collection Tools

The data were collected through a literature review. In addition, the document analysis form was used to obtain the data. The data obtained in the work were tabulated and divided into categories. The categories were discussed in terms of "the narrator, metafiction technique, playfulness in language, plot, heroes, time, space, and intertextuality". The criteria of this form were created by the researcher for the research. In addition, the determined categories are divided into sub-headings. Finally, the data obtained from the novel were determined by filing and categorizing, and the results were obtained by making interpretations according to the principle of child-appropriateness.

Data Analysis

The data of the study were analyzed by content analysis method. In content analysis, similar data, certain concepts, and themes are brought together and organized in a way that the reader can comprehend (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). The researcher then tabulates the words, sentences, concepts, or events that he has categorized in the data set he has

obtained through themes. In this way, content analysis analyzes texts through the use of both pre-existing categories and emerging themes to form a theory, systematically examines and reaches clear conclusions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In the study, a process for Cohen's data analysis was followed. For data analysis, first of all, postmodernist elements that are worth analyzing in the work named *Blue Donkey and Idle Lion* were collected. Then, postmodernist elements were divided into categories such as "person of the narrator, metafiction technique, playfulness in language, plot, heroes, time, space and intertextuality" and their coding was done. After the coding, data analysis was carried out and theoretical inferences were made.

FINDINGS

The data obtained through data collection tools in the conducted research has been evaluated using the specified data analysis methods. The acquired information has been interpreted under four main headings within the context of children's literature, following the principle of being suitable for the child.

Findings Regarding the Narrator's Becoming an Enigmatic Personality

In traditional narratives, authors have built impenetrable walls between themselves and their readers to convey reality perfectly. For this reason, the narrator in the works did not interfere with the work in any way and tried to hide his existence as much as possible. However, with the postmodernist narratives, the existence of the narrator began to be clearly shown to the reader. In this process, the narrator has become a part of the fiction by taking an active role in the novels and has done his best to emphasize that the text held by the reader is fiction. Therefore, the distance between the narrator and the figure has disappeared in the texts and the author wandering between the fictional layers has begun to appear before the reader as a figure in another place, while the author is a narrator in one place (Koçakoğlu, 2010). There is a similar situation in the episode of *A Paper Plane*, which constitutes the first story of the *Blue Donkey* and the *Idle Lion*. The author started to wander between the fictional layers by being included in the story and created an ambiguity between the real and the fictional.

The story begins with the story of King Lion, who listens to the problems of the animals in the forest one by one, and the Blue Donkey, who is tired of walking with him all day. King Lion decides to teach a lesson to the jackal, hyena, magpie, fox, and crow that all animals complain about. But, being tired, he leaves the decision of the punishment for an hour later and goes to his hammock, and lies down. Fiction begins to change from this moment on. The writer and the illustrator, as characters, get involved in the story by riding on a fly among the heroes in the narrative. Lion is stunned when he sees the writer and illustrator who came to see him. Then, Blue Donkey begins to introduce the writer and illustrator of the story to Lion in a dream;

"Sir, here is the author and illustrator of our story... This man with glasses is our writer. This bearded is our illustrator. He also draws our pictures." (p.12)

As seen, in a narrative that continues its course, unlike modern novels, the author and illustrator have been brought to the forefront as figures of the fictional world as much as possible. The narrative persona, which in traditional narratives tried to conceal its existence flawlessly, has gained visibility far from perfection and, together with the postmodern narrative, can almost be as aware of events as the reader. The story has become a part of reality, and reality has become a part of the story. The author and illustrator have now become parts of the fictional world. However, even

though both have become figures, as can be understood from the dialogues of Lion and Blue Donkey, they continue to steer the story and maintain their positions that still influence the course of the story.

-Do they make us walk if they want, or put us to sleep if they want?

-Yes. They make us sleep, run, and talk.

-They can fly us if they want, at least

-Yes that's right." (p.12)

Although the narrator is a real being and the figurative writer is a fictional personality, it is understood that the threads of the story are in the figurative writer. This situation causes ambiguity about the narrator in the story. There is no longer an authority of the narrator in fiction as in traditional narratives. On the contrary, a fictional personality becomes able to interfere with the story. For example, the figurative illustrator of the book can make various interventions by stopping the plot of the narrator, as in the example below;

"The lion asked the rabbit,

-Did you see the lizards?

"They are not lizards, Mr. Lion," said Illustrator, Crocodile..." (p.15)

Although the lion expressed that what he saw were lizards, the figurative illustrator interrupted the flow of the fiction by interfering and emphasizing that they were crocodiles. In this contrast, the reader has the right to comment on what the truth and the truth are. Because with the intervention of the figurative illustrator, the story told by the narrator and the flow of the fiction began to differ and reality became relative. Similarly, while the narrator tries to tell the story of Idle Lion, the figurative writer states that this story belongs to the Blue Donkey, *"But this is the story of the Blue Donkey."* (p.17), he created relativity in the flow of the story. Because the reader has to decide for himself whether he wants to read the story of the Blue Donkey or King Lion. Therefore, from this point on, fiction has become an element that starts to change according to the voice of the reader. Another part that varies according to the voice of the reader is experienced during Lion's awakening from sleep.

In the story, while the figurative writer and illustrator jumped on their paper airplanes and disappeared, Lion lay down in the hammock again and a fly landed on his nose while watching the paper airplane disappear into the horizon. Uncomfortable with this situation, Lion started to say that when he starts to fly, he will kill the fly. When the Blue Donkey heard Lion's clamor, he was surprised, and asked "What kind of fly?". In contrast, a contradictory dialogue developed between Lion and the Blue Donkey;

"Ask the illustrator and you will find out!" said Lion angrily.

-To the illustrator?

-Yes, to the illustrator!

-Who is he?

-They were just here!

-The lion pointed angrily to the paper airplane that had turned into a tiny dot in the sky, and asked "And who are they?".

- "Fly!" said the Blue Donkey. (p.19)

The narrator tried to create a perception of reality in the reader by giving the impression that the event happened and opened the door to relative evaluations of the events. Whether the author and the illustrator became one of the fictional characters and whether they interfered with the plot of events is left as a mystery. Similarly, in the second story of the work, A Passenger on a Mysterious Ship, the reader's perception of reality is distorted by the Lion's awakening of the Blue Donkey;

"Blue Donkey opened his eyes at Lion's voice. He looked around in confusion, but there was neither ship nor coon! With sleepy eyes, he said to the lion, "Where are the passengers? Have you seen the author?" (p.30)

When Blue Donkey opens his eyes at the beginning of the narrative, he finds himself in a cabin. The cabin belongs to the author's cat and coon. The coon, the author, the grandmother, and the Blue Donkey are in the middle of an endless sea. Blue Donkey wants to describe his situation as a dream. But coon notes that the Blue Donkey is not in a dream, but in reality. When the Blue Donkey woke up and went to the sink to wash his face, he was faced with the shattered state of the paper ship he was in. Although the pieces of the paper ship were in front of the Blue Donkey, Lion saw neither coon nor the passengers. In this process, the reader is drawn into an enigma. The figurative writer disappeared with the awakening of the Blue Donkey, although he gave signs of how the narrative would take shape. As can be seen in the example, there is again a state of uncertainty. The reader is left between dream and reality. In this respect, it can be stated that the text turns into signs specific to individuals with different interpretations. For example, in the *Animals Searching Stories* section, the narrator and the author could not agree on the message to be given and the text became open to different interpretations. While the narrator thinks that they cannot give a message to the children in the story after the end of the narrative, the figurative writer in the story states that they tell a lot in this way;

"Lion angrily said, "We couldn't tell the children anything in this story because of you!". "No way?" said the author, "You have told a lot." (p.43)

As can be understood from the aforementioned, it cannot be determined exactly whether the main author is the narrator, the author in the story, or the person in the story. When individuals can look at events from different perspectives, their perspectives can become complex. In the fourth chapter titled *How Many Apples Will They Pick?*, the narrator gives the message that he is the author by expressing that he is the voice of the story;

"They sent expression with the crow and asked me. I wanted to ask you too. Now some of you are asking, "Who are you?" I can hear you ask. I am the voice-over narrator of this book. Don't be surprised if you hear my voice from time to time between the lines!" (p.50-51).

As seen in the example, the narrator can sometimes talk to himself and sometimes ask questions. In such cases, the readers have a job to do and they need to be able to move away from a monotonous way of thinking.

One of the chapters that needed a plural perspective was the fifth chapter, *Please Do Not Disturb*. In this episode, the Blue Donkey rebels against the figurative writer who claims to have written the story and all the speeches in the story himself. The figurative writer's "Children, did you like our story?" (p. 60), claiming that there is no story in the

face of him, again caused a dilemma;

"-A story? said the Blue Donkey... -We don't see any stories here." (p.60)

The reader needs to be able to look at what happened in this process from different perspectives and establish relationships with what they read. (Toffler, 2006). The narrator, who is the voice-over, finished the story with *"let's go to the next page"* (p.61) without concluding the claims of the Blue Donkey and the figurative writer, leaving the decision to the reader and ending the chapter with an ambiguous ending. In the sixth chapter called *Foresters in the Cinema*, the end of the story is left ambiguously to the reader as follows; *"If you can find the end of the story, let him write it at the end of this page. Finish the story."* (p73).

In the last section, named *Jungle Band*, the author in fiction leaves the story by apologizing after designing the story. As the reader reads the story he has constructed, the narrator says, *"The story of the lion, who chose sleep that day, ended with a sleepless night outside the forest."* (p.82). Therefore, the narrator gives the message to the reader that he is playing a game and that he is a part of this game. The narrator does not have a fixed place and position due to factors such as the author's appearance in the story and his intervention in the text. It is constantly changing, and this provides a variety of perspectives for readers. The reader is now able to find the opportunity to discover their truths instead of single, absolute, and unchangeable truths, and can construct reality with their own experiences, observations, comments, and logical thinking. Therefore, in postmodernist narratives, rather than what is told in the text, it is more important what the reader extracts from the text and the reader's transformation into a subject.

Findings on the Use of Metafiction Technique and Playfulness in Language

In the 20th century, humanity's perception of reality began to change and the positivist understanding has lost its former functionality. Postmodernist writers, with the loss of the importance of reality, focused on fairy-tale and fantastic narratives and started to apply new techniques to reflect this reality in literary works. Metafiction is one of them. The main purpose of metafiction is to reveal that the text is a product of fiction rather than reflecting reality as it is. The author intervenes in the text he tells and constructs a story within a story. Similarly, it gives the real readers of the book the right to make all kinds of objections, change the place as they wish, and add their chapters if they wish (Tural, 2005). Concrete and abstract life layers are intertwined. The author combines both fiction and beyond by bringing the fictionalized and the unedited side by side. For example, in the episode *A Paper Plane*, the figurative writer sidelined the contrasts by stating that Lion was fictionalized as a flightless lion, although the lion wanted to fly;

"I want to be a flying lion too!" said King Lion. The illustrator looked at the author and asked "Can you write such a story?". "Of course, I write. But... Lion has to remain a flightless lion in this story." (p.17)

Similarly, in *A Passenger on a Mysterious Ship*, the Blue Donkey finds himself inside a ship when he opens his eyes, and he asks the author to get him off the ship. However, the figurative writer states that all the sentences of the story have been written before and that the Blue Donkey cannot make such a request and cannot talk to him either;

"The author says, "Besides, you can't talk to me..." "Why is that?" He added, "I have written every sentence you will speak beforehand... You do not have such a question sentence in this story." (p.25).

"In these sections, where concrete life and fictional text are intertwined, the boundaries between them are removed, creating a metafictional plane. In this process, the reader may realize that the characters in the story, the

narrator, the author, and the illustrator exist within the realm of fiction. This realization comes from the observation that the visual descriptions used for the figurative author and illustrator of the book correspond to the real personalities of Yalvaç Ural and Erdoğan Oğultekin, and they can be seen in Picture 1 and Picture 2. Moreover, upon examining the images claimed by the figurative illustrator to belong to various magazines, it becomes evident that they bear the signature of Erdoğan Oğultekin.”

Picture 1



Picture 2



In the story, the real author and the figurative writer in the fictional text have intertwined, creating a fictional problem due to the merging of layers of fiction and reality. Yalvaç Ural has increased the distance between the reader and the story's narrator by introducing the figurative author within the novel. In other words, he has crafted another narrative beyond the main intrigue of the novel. As a result, the reader now witnesses the writing process of the figurative writer as the text transforms into a multi-layered structure;

“This week, we had quite a hard time finding a topic,”

said the author. “We thought that meeting with you would spark some ideas... We need to come up with it quickly; we have to write and draw the story.” (p.17)

The reader, who witnessed how the stories were written and how the subjects were found, had the opportunity to see how the author created the fiction in the story by hiding behind his heroes and the difficulties he encountered

while editing the story, thanks to metafiction. In addition, he was able to observe the alternative fiction formed in the mind of the author from the conflicts between the figurative author and the story character;

"The Blue Donkey said, "Moreover, they put a seagull in my story without asking the mother! What, they were going to get on a seagull and look for a subject for our story..." (p.41)

The conflicts between the figurative writer and the heroes are a reflection of the diversity and plurality in the mind of the real author. For example, in the story where Blue Donkey finds himself in a ship made of newsprint, the character of the grandmother poses the danger of piercing the ship while solving the puzzle on the newspaper. Coon advises the Author to either take the pen from his father's hand or drop it into the sea to overcome this danger. However, the author finds a different solution, saying that everything is under control. Thus, the reader witnesses the story of how a story is constructed from the beginning to the end and how the fiction is realized from a pluralistic perspective. Therefore, the author shows how he wrote his work and what kind of different ideas he imagined while writing the story.

The reader witnesses the understanding that the process of writing the story with the metafiction method is the story itself in the story *Animals That Seek His Story*. According to the story of the narrator, King Lion wants to speak to judge Jackal, Hyena, Magpie, Fox, and Crow. But the figurative writer spoils the fiction on the first plane by sending the four members of this quintet to the city just because the cheapness has begun. Thereupon, King Lion and Blue Donkey's plan is ruined and the story is left unfinished. The story continues on the second plane in the next period, and King Lion and Blue Donkey go to the newspaper where the author and illustrator work to complete the unfinished story. But this time, they learn from the secretary that the author and the illustrator are looking for a topic;

"The crow flew forward. The Blue Donkey and King Lion went on foot. Finally, they came to the newspaper... The secretary said that the author and the illustrator went on a seagull to look for a topic." (p.40)

The King Lion and the Blue Donkey is the thought that a story cannot be written in this process. However, at the end of the story, the message is given that the story is an adventure of completing the unfinished story. Therefore, language has now turned into a purpose rather than a tool used to tell the story. In this process, the reader needs to find out what is wanted to be told from the sentences and reinterpret them. Because in metafiction texts, information is not given directly to the reader, and the reader is expected to reach information and problem-solving skills with his efforts. By giving the reader a critical perspective, it is ensured that he is interested in the deep meaning of the text instead of dealing with the visible side. For this reason, while appreciating the Blue Donkey who follows the story of the figurative illustrator, he tries to point out the meaning behind the text to the reader;

"The Blue Donkey was stunned: "Did we say too much?" Yes! The pursuit of your own story, without even having to draw it, enabled you to both write and draw it. That's your story in this story," said Illustrator. (p.43)

With this method, the author interacts with the reader for a while and ensures that the reader is actively involved in the events throughout the story. For this, he usually tries to draw the reader into the text by leaving the story half or open-ended. *How Many Apples Will They Collect* section is one of the fiction designed in this way.

The figurative writer asks all the animals in the forest what they will gift him for teaching him the game of chess. The illustrator asks for an apple as a gift. But he tells them not to ask how many they want, they have to find it themselves;

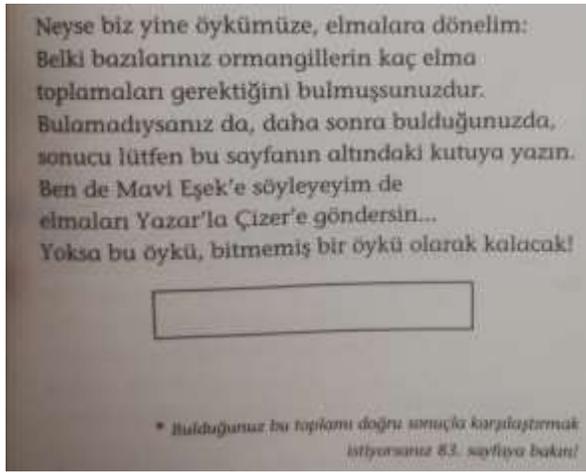
"Don't ask, 'How many?' You will find it! You will put one apple in the first square, four apples in the second square,

and twice as many apples in the next square as in the previous square. We want as many apples as there are in sixty-four squares!" (p.48)

As can be understood from the example, the reader starts to think and is activated from the passive state. Thus, he starts to reason the gaps with the power of interpretation. However, in postmodernist texts, the reader is not only made to think. At the same time, the author is asked to complete the story, that is, to re-edit it. Otherwise, it is stated that the story will be left unfinished;

"Perhaps some of you have figured out how many apples the rhododendrons need to collect. If you couldn't find it, please write the result in the box at the bottom of this page when you find it later... Otherwise, this story will remain an unfinished story." (p.51)

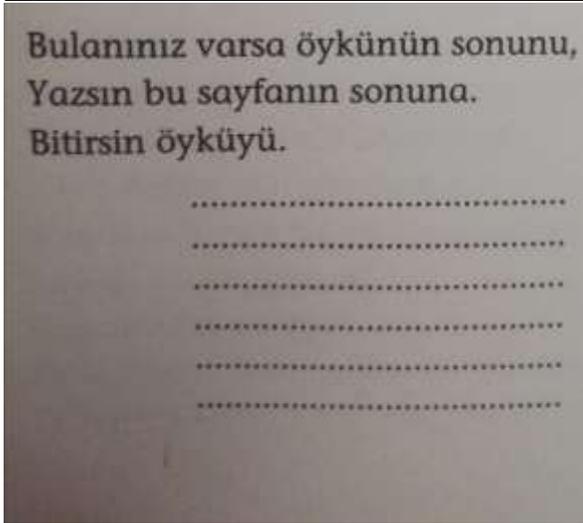
Picture 3



In postmodern narratives, the real author of the story communicates with the reader, calls out to his readers, and plays games with them, as here. As seen in Picture 3, there is even a note at the bottom of the page indicating on which page he can find the answer to the question. When the reader goes to page 83, he sees the answer that rhododendrons need to collect quintillion apples. Therefore, the boundaries between the author, the text, and the reader have been removed, and the author tries to show that the text is fiction by making the game evident to the reader. It even turns the game into the story itself. Consciously equipping the text

with entertaining qualities is an important element that enables the reader to enjoy the text. In this way, the text turns into a riddle-like game playing with its reader. A similar game situation and the process of completing the story can be seen in *Foresters in the Cinema* section.

Picture 4



The figurative writer and illustrator get into a fight because they can't finish the story. Thereupon, Yalvaç Ural, the real author of the story, reports that Blue Donkey and the author are desperately trying to find an end to the story by sitting in front of the computer. However, to complete the fiction in the story in which the reader is included in the text and turns into an author, the author says to him, as in Picture 4, "If you find one, write the end of the story at the end of this page. Finish the story." (p.73)

Findings Regarding the Ordinaryization of the Heroes by Leaving Their Idealist and Perfect Identities

The characters of traditional narratives are usually composed of heroes who have an important place in the plot and have idealistic features. However, with the postmodernist narrative, the heroes lose their positions and move away from their familiar roles. They sometimes lose their main figures in the story to other heroes. The qualities of the heroes in postmodern narratives have a very important place according to the principle of relative to the child. Fictional characters should not be idealized perfectly for the child reader (Neydim, 2003). It should not be endowed with extraordinary things and should not be standardized. On the contrary, all characters should have the same importance and attributes, and these heroes should not be given a central quality.

These elements were taken into consideration while creating the characters in the book *Blue Donkey and Idle Lion*, in which postmodernist elements are used. While designing the characters of his stories, the author chose a main character as in traditional narratives and did not put the burden of the narrative on that hero. On the contrary, he deprived his heroes of nobility, grace, and power. In traditional narratives, the lion, the great hero of the stories and the king of the forests was dethroned by being reflected outside of its usual role in the work. This time the story was written for the *Blue Donkey*. Therefore, although Lion wanted to be a flying lion, this request was not met;

"I want to be a flying lion too!" said King Lion. The illustrator looked at the Author, "Can you write such a story?" asked. "Of course, I will... But this is the story of the Blue Donkey." (p.17)

As can be understood from the example, the memorization in the reader's perception of the hero has been broken. The fictional scenes he knew and saw went out of the ordinary, and he began to experience different emotions and thoughts in the limitlessness of his imagination. One of them is that the author and illustrator of the book are included in the plot as the hero of the story. In stories where fictional and real characters are intertwined, figurative writers and illustrators often embark on a journey toward the world of fiction. Similarly, when the characters of the fictional world

do not like the stories of the figurative writer and illustrator, they go on a journey toward the real world to hold them accountable.

"The lion said, "Let's get up and get going as soon as possible!" "Well, sir, as you wish!" They fell on the road... They went little, they went far... The crow flew forward. Blue Donkey and King Lion on foot. They finally came to the newspaper." (p.39-40)

Unlike traditional stories, the protagonists of the stories in postmodern narratives have qualities that do not like the plot and can oppose the author. For this reason, sometimes they do not want to listen to the words of the author, do not fulfill what he says, and may reject the author's authority by opposing the directives. In some cases, they can even pretend to be the author of the story, like the Blue Donkey. In such cases, the real author of the book calls for help by making the reader a writer to resolve the conflict.

A disagreement arises between the figurative writer and the Blue Donkey over the ending of the story. The figurative writer writes a story in which King Lion sleeps because he is very tired. But the Blue Donkey says it's his own story and he doesn't accept it. Meanwhile, King Lion wakes up and is very angry that he was awakened. Then he presents a suggestion. If the story is the Author's, it will be asleep. But the story is that the Blue Donkey will eat them;

"Lion, "I will eat you for putting Big Lion on stage and making everyone watch!" If this story is the author's story, I will be sleeping in this story." (p.72)

At this point, the author includes the reader in his adventure of writing and wants to find a solution to the uncertain ending in the story. Therefore, the reader becomes a hero of the fictional world like a figurative writer and becomes a person who has the right to speak about the end of the story. In a way, the author has transformed his reader into a kind of novelist like a figurative writer. However, in this process where fiction and reality are intertwined, the reader should decide for himself who he is and where he wants to be.

Findings Regarding Relative Understanding of Time and Space

The mechanical, definite, and measurable time understanding of traditional narratives has left its place in postmodern narratives to an understanding that is scattered, ambiguous, intricate, and beyond rational thought. (Emre, 2006). Rather than being chronological, time becomes ambiguous about the past and present in the same sequence as the mood of the person (Eliuz, 2016). For this reason, the plot, space, and time are presented in a way that is far from the perception of continuity, and its borders are scattered. Thus, a time-space perception began to emerge in the stories, in which the heroes and the reader had difficulty in describing which time zone and place they were on. Especially in the work, this perception is tried to be created with a dream theme.

The dreams of the Lion and the Blue Donkey are used as an important element that brings together the animals in the forest and the figurative writer and illustrator in an indefinite time and place. The Lion, the Blue Donkey, the figurative writer, and the illustrator pursued a reality that did not exist in the dream world and had various adventures. In this process, the elements of consciousness were disabled and an imaginative expression based on the subconscious emerged. When the Blue Donkey opened his eyes, he found himself in an unspecified time and inside a ship made of newsprint. The ship is sailing through a sink. One of the passengers on the ship, your father, while solving the puzzles on the newsprint ship, pierces the ship and the ship begins to sink. Upon this, with the assignment of the figurative writer, coon pulls the stopper in the sink and the ship is caught in a big whirlpool and runs aground when the waters recede.

Blue Donkey opens his eyes to Lion's voice;

"Just then, the ship got caught in the whirlpool.... They turned, turned, turned... Finally, the waters receded and the ship ran aground. Blue Donkey opened his eyes with Lion's voice" (p.29)

Instead of time flowing linearly with the dream theme, the author has created a fragmented and sometimes disconnected perception of time. For this reason, the plot differs from the time flowing in the consciousness of the Blue Donkey, and the two perceptions of time intersect only when the Blue Donkey opens his eyes. This allowed readers to develop different perspectives in a playful atmosphere. The reader may begin to sense that it is not possible to position people according to a certain time and place and that each individual is free to create their world of meaning.

The author has also brought a critical approach to the present occupancy of the city through the perception of space. Jackal, Hyena, Magpie, and Fox went to the shopping center early in the morning, as the cheapness started in the morning. The goat went to the cinema, Ceylan went to the hairdresser, and Mother Monkey to watch Cem Yılmaz. The reader has had the opportunity to observe in an absurd and interesting style the constantly differentiating quests and tendencies of the protagonists who tend to consume the encompassing structure of the city. Thus, the reader, who moved away from the understanding of space presented in a customary order, was prompted to think and reason while reading the story.

CONCLUSION

In the educational approach advocated by the postmodern paradigm, individuals are the constructors of knowledge, they contribute to the diverse structuring of knowledge through their unique experiences, and they do not consider knowledge as absolute truth, nor do they generalize or fit it into universal criteria (Kökten, 2013). They act with awareness, respecting all types of knowledge and advocating multiplicity over universality and locality over universality (Kesici, 2019). In this regard, Yalvaç Ural's work *"Blue Donkey and Idle Lion"* can be seen as a collection of stories that can contribute to individuals expressing their original thoughts within the framework of the postmodernist educational approach.

Ural has skillfully used various elements in his stories to encourage readers' active and creative thinking, adding polyphony to his work. To achieve this, he turned the narrator into an enigmatic persona, employed metafictional techniques, and playfulness, and stripped his characters of their idealistic and flawless identities, developing a relative perception of time and space. Consequently, he provided readers with an opportunity for an active reading process, allowing them to reconstruct information in their minds using cognitive skills. Furthermore, by tracing who tells what and how through the narrative persona, he granted his readers the chance to hear their voices within the text. As a result, readers found an opportunity to reflect their imagination and thoughts into the gaps left within the text, contributing to alternative narratives and enriching the development of the stories. Thus, through postmodernist narratives, readers gained an environment where they could elevate themselves to the level of authorship and discover the ability to express original ideas through writing.

The use of metafictional techniques and playfulness by the author is evident in achieving this. By intertwining fiction with reality through metafictional techniques, the author created a new world. Readers were expected to find what is right and wrong in this world, follow the clues, and question the events. Additionally, they were asked to identify and reinterpret the underlying messages in the stories. Therefore, the author warned his readers that they would remain

outside of the game if they engaged in passive reading.

When readers became active participants, they were involved in the process of creating the narrative and elevated to the level of authors, as apparent in the relationship between the author and the reader. In this context, readers experiencing the role of authorship should approach the text critically and skeptically. Specifically, the author left gaps in the stories, allowing the readers to complete them through their interpretations and reasoning. Consequently, what Ural expected from his readers was not merely learning from the texts but, on the contrary, becoming the game-master of the narrative. According to Ural, each reader should place Blue Donkey and Idle Lion in different positions in their imagination and enrich the stories within their inner world. Hence, it can be observed that Ural also played with the identities and qualities of the characters in his stories.

The characters forming the personal cadre of the stories are no longer central characters equipped with extraordinary qualities and stereotypes, but rather ordinary characters with flaws. Like the readers, they have ordinary abilities and struggle to get out of some situations in their daily lives. Therefore, Ural encourages the readers who take on the role of authorship to generate solutions for these characters and guide them beyond conventional judgments. First, he dethrones the king of the forest, the lion, and presents Blue Donkey to the readers. Blue Donkey breaks the established patterns and becomes a character that does not conform to the narrative structure of tradition, and he defies directives and confuses the events, leading to a dead-end. In such situations, the author steps back, observing the readers' authorship journey, and expects them to complete the unfinished stories with creative ideas and embrace the understanding that every form of life is enriching. Consequently, readers are provided with a new realm of experience, and they can attribute various meanings to the characters from different perspectives.

Moreover, the author attempts to break the mechanical, specific, and measurable understanding of time and space found in traditional narratives. The stories create a world beyond rational thought, with uncertain places and interwoven integrated times. Readers enter this world through the metaphor of a dream, embarking on a journey within the infinity of their imagination. This situation enables readers to develop different perspectives in a playful atmosphere and observe the events from different angles. Indeed, the dreams of Blue Donkey and Lion in the stories remain open-ended, allowing them to vary depending on the reader's perspective and leaving the readers alone with a new reading experience.

In conclusion, Yalvaç Ural has pioneered a brand-new realm of storytelling in children's literature by utilizing postmodern narrative techniques. The child readers were also encouraged to think, question, establish connections between events, overcome uncertainties, imagine, laugh, and learn through postmodern narratives.

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