



Pandemic, Space and Environment in *Blindness* by José Saramago

Marinică Tiberiu Şchiopu

Abstract

Mentioned and praised even by the Noble prize committee, in 1998, *Blindness* (published in 1995) is a complex novel dealing with the human nature and behaviour in the context of a crisis generated by a sudden and unknown disease. The relevance of reading this book these days, when the entire humanity (and I daresay our planet as an interdependent system) is facing a terrible viral pandemic, is obvious and helpful. The present paper aims to explore José Saramago's novel from a combined geo-ecocritical perspective, emphasizing the interrelatedness of humanity, space, and surrounding environment. The main research questions of this study are: how do humans interact with the places they live in and the ecosphere during a pandemic? and how does a pandemic affect the human behaviour? The geo-ecocritical approach is due to the interdependence between space and environment, one can hardly explore one of the previously mentioned components of the fictional world without referring to the other. Another aspect that this essay will touch is the alteration of people's emotions due to the difficulties they face during pandemics and the importance of emotion management in these extreme situations. For the proposed analysis the following methods will be indispensable: close-reading, ecocriticism, geocriticism, and narratology.

Keywords: Blindness, Ecocriticism, Geocriticism, José Saramago, Pandemic.