

## Nature's Silent Scream in Wildoak: An Ecological Perspective

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### Öz

While using what is happening in nature for his own benefit, human who knows no boundaries has always positioned himself at the center of the world by asking for more. People who want to consume more have accelerated consumption by establishing factories with the Industrial Revolution. However, the factories that were established increased the emission of coal and chemical substances into the atmosphere, causing harm to nature. Moreover, the major pollution known as the "Great Smog of London" in 1952 was seen as a harbinger of this negative trend. At this point, critics who wanted to react to the deterioration of the relationship between nature and humans and to raise awareness have developed the ecocritical approach. This approach has gained importance not only in adult literature but also in children's literature. Such literary works have been written with the aim of being able to explain the deep bond between humans and nature to children, instilling a love for nature, and raising environmental awareness. In the study, C.C. Harrington's "Wildoak" (2022) will be examined using methods such as text analysis, critical reading, utilizing the ideas of theorists like Arne Naess, Cheryll Glotfelty, and Scott Slovic, who pioneered the ecocritical approach.

**Keywords:** Wildoak, C.C. Harrington, Nature, Eco criticism, Animal

### Saklı Ormanda Doğa'nın Sessiz Çığlığı: Ekolojik Bir Bakış

#### Abstract

Doğada olup biteni kendi yararına kullanırken sınır tanımayan insan, hep daha fazlasını isteyerek kendini dünyanın merkezine konumlandırmıştır. Daha fazlasını tüketmek isteyen insan, Sanayi Devrimi ile birlikte fabrikalar kurarak tüketimi hızlandırmıştır. Fakat kurulan fabrikalar kömür, kimyasal maddelerin atmosfere salınımını arttırarak doğaya zarar vermeye başlamıştır. Dahası 1952 yılında "Büyük Londra Sisi" adı verilen büyük kirlilik bu kötü gidişatın habercisi olarak görülmüştür. İşte tam bu noktada, doğa ve insan arasındaki ilişkinin bozulmasına tepki göstermek isteyen ve farkındalık yaratmaya çalışan eleştirmenler, çevreci eleştiri yaklaşımını ortaya çıkarmışlardır. Bu yaklaşım yalnızca yetişkin edebiyatında değil, çocuk edebiyatında da yankı bulmuştur. Çocuklara, insan ve doğa arasındaki derin bağı anlatabilmek, doğa sevgisi aşılayabilmek ve çevre bilinci kazandırabilmek amacıyla kaleme alınmıştır. Çalışmada Arne Naess, Cheryll Glotfelty ve Scott Slovic gibi çevreci eleştiri yaklaşımına öncülük eden kuramcılarının fikirlerinden yararlanılarak C.C. Harrington'un "Wildoak" (2022) eseri metin analizi, eleştirel okuma yöntemleri kullanılarak incelenecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Saklı Orman, C.C. Harrington, Doğa, Çevreci eleştiri, Hayvan


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## Introduction

Human beings have first tried to make sense of what is happening in nature they were in, and then tried to take control of it. While using what was beneficial to them, they did not recognize any limits, positioning themselves at the centre of the world by always wanting more. When the materials they found ready in nature were insufficient, humanity, wanting more, established factories with the Industrial Revolution and increased production and consumption. This production and consumption speed is described as follows in Sara Anne McGuire's work "Products of Industry: Pollution, Health, and England's Industrial Revolution" (2020):

*Improvements were made to trains and railways, canals, bridges, navigable streams, and in the laying down of new roads (...) These changes aided in the growth of the British economy by allowing goods to be more rapidly and more cheaply transported, which in turn meant more goods could be made and sold as business owners paid less to transport goods and could instead use the money they saved to purchase more raw materials for their industries (p.208).*

For humans who change nature according to their needs, the establishment of factories and the introduction of new products for sale mean the formation of a new consumption material. Just like from nature, humans, wanting more from factories, have aimed for economic growth by opening new roads and channels. The smoke from factory chimneys has caused an increase in air pollution, while material and chemical waste has brought about soil and water pollution. The event that emerged in 1952 called the Great London Smog demonstrates the severity of pollution. Engels (1845) describes the pollution experienced in England as follows: "So, too, Bradford, which, but seven miles from Leeds at the junction of several valleys, lies upon the banks of a small, coal-black, foul-smelling stream. On weekdays the town is enveloped in a grey cloud of coal smoke" (p.54). This situation shows that gray smoke is covering everywhere, indicating that there is severe air pollution. The coal used in factories, as a result of Industrial Revolution, emitted poisonous gases from the chimneys and affected England. Not only to the air but also by mixing with the soil and water, it has caused the poisoning of nature. The beginning of the destruction caused by humanity has also affected its own life. And this is supported by Polivka (2018) in her work titled "The Great London Smog of 1952," as she states that the health problems experienced were caused by pollution with the following statements: "The health effects were both immediate and long lasting, with a recent study revealing an increased likelihood of childhood asthma development in those exposed to the Great Smog while in utero or during their first year of life." (p. 57) Breathing the polluted air started to trigger lung diseases, affecting the quality of human life. Those who recognized the seriousness of the situation established organizations to try to prevent it. The purpose of UNEP, established in 1972, is to monitor the state of the environment and coordinate responses to the world's greatest environmental challenges (2025). On the other hand, in 1975, the World-Wide Fund for Nature (2025) was established to combat human-induced issues such as habitat destruction, climate change, overconsumption of natural resources, pollution, and illegal hunting, with the aim of stopping threats that result in the reduction of natural habitats and the loss of species. While efforts are being made to raise awareness through newly established organizations, works have been created in the field of literature to highlight environmental criticism and the visibility of environmental problems, so that what is happening in nature can be noticed, understood, and necessary measures can be taken. In the experiment titled "Reading literary fiction can improve theory of mind" (2018, p. 604) conducted by Kidd and Castano, it is mentioned that fiction affects and enhances empathy and social perception. Therefore, works addressing environmental pollution in the field of literature and the critiques made in this area play an important role in raising people's awareness.

## On the Trail of Environmental Thought: A Theoretical Journey

Glotfelty (1996, p. 18) describes ecocriticism as a study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment, playing an important role in examining events occurring in nature, investigating the origins of the relationship between the environment and humans, and questioning the awareness of responsibility. On the other hand, Williams and Marx define environmental criticism as the reflection of industrial capitalism in literature, characterized by the acceleration of the destabilization of "nature" due to urbanization and the increase in consumption (2008). Therefore, it is the issue that arises from human interventions and ultimately cause the disruption of nature's balance that are brought to the forefront through fiction. The humans, who consider themselves above everyone and everything, have used literature solely for themselves. In his work titled "What is Literature?", Roddannavar defines literature as follows: "Literature is an artistic expression of the best that is known and thought in world. It is a fine record of

man's ideas and ideals, aspirations and ambitions, joys and sorrows and experiences and excitements. It deals with the great drama of human life and action.” (2014, p. 275). As can be understood from the definition, literature is not seen as a universal purpose representing all living beings; it is merely a tool written for humans with the aim of entertaining and educating. In other words, for literature, which adopts a human-centered, anthropocentric stance, the subject is solely human. This mindset has undergone a transformation with the emergence of environmental criticism. This change has led to the perception that humans, like other living beings, are merely a species living within nature. As Asenath and Santhanalakshmi stated that “Human nature is often anthropocentric, assuming that only men are important. Ecocriticism promotes a sustainable future - Ecocriticism works hard to maintain the Earth's basic fundamental right to life so that it is still functional for a sustainable future.” (2021, p.1287). Therefore, the anthropocentric attitudes of people who shape the world solely according to their own interests are being attempted to be transformed into a nature-centered understanding through environmental criticism. Nature is a living organism that possesses intrinsic value and contributes to the lives of other beings.

On the other hand, the main purpose of ecocritical criticism is to discuss how nature is depicted in literary works, how humans affect nature, and whether nature is used merely as a being in the service of humans. In this respect, it transcends the boundaries of traditional literary criticism, directly bringing issues such as sustainability, environmental ethics, and ecological consciousness to the forefront. In this context, Vikas Hebbar P, in his 2024 work titled “*Exploring Eco-criticism: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Literature and the Environment*,” expresses the purpose of eco-criticism as follows: “Eco criticism challenges anthropocentrism, the human-centered perspective that places human interests above those of other species. It encourages a more eco-centric viewpoint that values the intrinsic worth of all living beings and ecosystems.” (p. 70). Therefore, an ecocentric perspective has emerged with the view that every living being in nature has intrinsic value and that none are superior to one another. Especially ecocentrism aims to offer a more just and inclusive approach to nature and all living beings. Scott Slovic, who plays an important role in the examination of justice, ethics, and moral dimensions, argues in “*Going Away to Think*” (2008) that critics have a moral duty regarding the fate of the world, through the concept of ecocritical responsibility.

*These days, I think more than ever that literature is much more than an intellectual toy created for clever critics who are indifferent to what happens in the world. As a field of study, literature and literature itself are, at the most fundamental level, connected to human values and behaviours (p. 28).*

Therefore, literature is not merely an intellectually pleasurable field as traditionally approached, but rather a domain that enables the perception of what is happening in the world and awakens a sense of moral and ethical responsibility. Literature is a powerful voice that questions human values and transforms behaviours. Ecocritical criticism, on the other hand, aims to ensure that this powerful voice is recognized and to convey that all living beings hold equal value. On the other hand, another source supporting the formation of the fundamental objectives of Ecocritical criticism is the “Deep Ecology” approach proposed by Arne Naess. He stated that the well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent value) and these values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes (Naess, 2005, p. 4). In other words, every living being in nature has the right to grow and develop, to be well, and to continue their lives in a healthy manner. Therefore, every living being has its own value. This value is independent of the benefits that living beings provide to humans. All living beings in the world have the right to protection, and the reason for this right is related to their own existence. On the other hand, according to Naess, Human beings have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs. The destruction or reduction of the numerous species on Earth by humans is an injustice. Intervention is only allowed for survival, that is, to maintain the natural cycle. Seeing nature as a material for arbitrary consumption and using it for luxury is not considered morally ethical (2005, p. 4). In this context, a common characteristic of all Ecocritics is to demonstrate that literature is not limited to humans, but is also a genre that narrates nature, animals, ecosystems, and non-human entities. According to eco-critics, literature serves as a narrative space where not only humans but also animals, forests, seas, winds, and any other beings can find their voice. Therefore, the entrenched views that place humans at the centre of the universe are often criticized in the works of eco-critics. They do not see humans as the masters of nature; they see them as a part of it and as an equal species. Therefore, literature does not only convey the inner world of humans, but transforms into a universe that describes all living beings, ecosystems, and ways of life. However, in these narratives, nature is not depicted as a pure place untainted by human interventions; rather, gloomy worlds are created by the consequences of human interventions. Every intervention in nature for human interests not only devastates the environment but

also the future of humanity. Thus, literature not only glorifies the splendour and resilience of nature but also shows how anthropocentric desires can change the world and even lead it to disaster. These types of narratives, with the environment at their centre, do not just tell a story to the reader; they also strive to make them aware. At every point where the relationship with nature becomes unbalanced, it is reminded that destruction is inevitable. In this case, the duty of literature is not to be a refuge for the reader, but to be a mirror held up to the world. Thus, it does not hesitate to show people what they have lost in the world they have changed with their own hands. In the work titled *"Eco Criticism: Exploring the Interplay between Literature and Environment"* by R. Daffiny Rishma and J. Chriso Ricky Gill in 2024, it is stated that nature has two different faces as follows: "By portraying the destruction or loss of natural landscapes, literature emphasizes the profound impact of human actions on the environment. Moreover, literature also explores the potential for healing and restoration through our connection with nature, inspiring readers to develop a deeper sense of stewardship and environmental responsibility". This view, seen as the aim of environmental criticism, seeks for both positive and negative outcomes to be perceived by people. The disruption of natural processes, the destruction of nature by human interventions, and people's indifferent attitudes demonstrate that literature adopts a negative critical stance. On the other hand, the importance of human interventions and the relationship between humans and nature is emphasized by highlighting the power of the integrity and interaction between nature and humans.

### Children's Literature and Traces of Nature

To understand how children's literature emerged, it is necessary to first consider how the concept of childhood developed. Samantha Punch, in her 2003 article titled *"Childhoods in the Majority World: Miniature Adults or Tribal Children?"*, discusses how children were defined as "miniature adults" during the Middle Ages. In the Middle Ages, children were not seen as beings in a special developmental process, expecting care, love, and education. Moreover, they were seen not only as physically small and weak but also as beings with the same responsibilities as adults in terms of social roles. As noted in Philippe Ariès's work *"Centuries of Childhood,"* society only began to comprehend childhood in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries; education, morality, and social norms formed a new understanding of childhood (Ariès, 1962). This change has not only affected social life but also the formation of literature. It is seen as narratives shaped by people's emotions and thoughts. Ugurlu (1992, p. 189) defines literature as "a type of art that aims to effectively convey the feelings and thoughts of human and societal experiences through speech and writing." However, this art form does not only appeal to adults; with the historical development of childhood consciousness, narratives specifically for children have also found their place within the rich fabric of literature, opening the doors to a new literary universe that appeals to children's imagination and emotions. Especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, significant developments occurred in children's literature, and this era has been referred to as the "Golden Age" of children's literature (Grenby, 2008). Children's literature has become a genre that not only provides moral advice and educational writings but also develops children's imagination, enriched with elements of adventure and fairy tales. This change is associated with the recognition of childhood as a more special and protected period and the view of children as original readers, as expressed by Ariès (1962). *"The Kinder und Hausmärchen"* stories published by the Brothers Grimm in 1812 are considered to be significant in the development of children's literature. Grimm stories focus on the conflict between good and evil. In the end, good, hardworking, honest people are rewarded; bad, greedy, lazy, or selfish people are generally punished. These stories are designed to teach children moral values. Additionally, elements such as magical objects, enchanted creatures, fairies, witches, and talking animals have been included in the stories to support children's imaginative worlds. The work *"Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,"* published by Lewis Carroll in 1865, ensured that children's books transcended the sole purpose of teaching. This work created a new style in children's literature by using a playful language woven with imagination that challenges the boundaries of logic. Carroll's work, by centering on a child's perspective rather than an adult's, creates a world where the imagination can move freely. Unlike the didactic narratives in traditional fairy tales, Alice's journey, which begins with her following her curiosity, aims to surprise, provoke thought, and entertain the reader rather than educate them. On the other hand, literature is not limited to just imaginary journeys. At the same time, literature is a reflection of the child's environment, their relationships with it, and their interactions with all living beings. Therefore, in literature, the subject is not only the human being but also nature itself. Thus, literature goes beyond the human perspective of the external world and draws attention to the hidden connections between humans, nature, animals, and the universe. Therefore, literature gains meaning as a comprehensive art that extends beyond human-centered boundaries and touches every aspect of life. In this context, both children and nature have found their place in literature. Nature, in children's literature, has been depicted not only as a mere setting but also as a living space that needs to be preserved, understood,



and respected, just like in adult literature. In the book *“Hoot”*, written by Carl Hiaasen in 2002, the story revolves around children living in Florida who resist a construction project that would destroy the habitat of local owls. With the emphasis on topics such as animal rights, the preservation of natural habitats, and environmental responsibility, the aim was to raise children’s awareness of nature. On the other hand, the work *“The Last Bear,”* written by Hannah Gold in 2021, has emerged as a piece that questions the relationship between children and nature and helps children gain environmental awareness. In this work, which addresses the themes of global warming and climate change, the friendship between a polar bear living alone in the Arctic and a child is narrated. By highlighting the extinction of animals and the climate crisis, this work aims to foster empathy for nature in children. In this context, the focal point of the study is C. C. Harrington’s work *“Wildoak”* (2022). The work in question will be examined in light of eco-critical theory; the place of nature in the narrative, the representation of non-human entities, and the reflections of environmental sensitivity in children’s literature will be deeply evaluated.

### **“Wildoak”: An Ecological Perspective**

The novel, which opens with the sentence “To all the stuttering children; to everyone who speaks on behalf of animals and trees,” is not merely a gift to someone but is presented as a powerful call intended to be placed in the hearts of readers through the novel. At the center of the novel is a young girl named Maggie, who has just learned to read but cannot speak fluently like her peers due to her stuttering. Due to her difficulties with reading and speaking, Maggie is depicted as a withdrawn character who is bullied by those around her and uncomfortable in social situations. The author not only narrates Maggie’s life to the reader but also shows that children facing similar difficulties can find their own voice through Maggie. The narrative has not been limited to a one-sided perspective. To carry a deeper meaning and instil environmental sensitivity in children, it has also been supported by the perspective of a snow leopard named Rumpus. Therefore, it is possible to mention the use of the dual narrator technique in the novel *“Wildoak”*. In this context, both the perspective of a small child struggling with difficulties and the visibility of the bond between nature and humanity have been revealed. Thus, the novel has transformed from merely being the story of a child struggling with stuttering into a shared story of all silent beings who cannot express themselves. Maggie is described as a withdrawn child who avoids crowds due to her stuttering. This situation has led her to form deep connections with nature. For Maggie, the most trustworthy and comfortable environment where she can be herself is nature itself. Maggie’s passion for nature is illustrated through the animals she cares for at home. Maggie, who has affectionately named her brown rat Wellington, shares all her troubles with her rat, finding solace in their companionship. Instead of being looked down upon by society because of her stuttering, being in nature where she can act like herself and not be ridiculed brings her happiness. As Maggie grows closer to nature, she realizes the great similarity between them and begins to turn more towards nature. “You were trying to tell me something, Maggie had whispered, her little human heart beating thump-thump. But you can’t find the words, can you?” (p.24). Maggie is a character who cannot easily express herself due to her stutter and is misunderstood by people. Just like her, Wellington also lacks the ability to explain himself, to speak. Just like Maggie, his voice is unheard. In this context, Wellington has transcended being just a mouse and has become a symbol and representative of those who cannot speak and express themselves. On the other hand, the snails named Volcano and Hurricane, which hold a special place for Maggie, are not creatures arbitrarily removed from nature and forced to live in a specific area. These small creatures were taken from nature to protect them from the harsh weather conditions outside, but once the balance is restored, they will be returned to their natural habitat. Snails, which are often overlooked and unnoticed, have been recognized by Maggie; although they are quiet and small, they are living beings with their own value within nature. Thus, through the character of Maggie, it is conveyed that every living being in nature, from the smallest to the largest, should be listened to. Another creature under Maggie’s protection is a wounded sandpiper she named Flute. For Maggie, who takes care of her animals at home until their wings heal, Flute, like all the other animals she cares for, is a living being worth healing, a quiet companion. On the other hand, in Maggie’s eyes, all these beings are not just animals of different species, but unique entities that have gained identity through the names Maggie has carefully given them. These special names are the result of Maggie’s respect and love for nature and the animals within it. Naming them with special names has been created to make them visible. The living beings in nature are not random or insignificant; each one has its own voice and value. Maggie, who is happy when she is in nature, does not experience the same feelings when she is in society. For Maggie, who was bullied by the children at the schools she attended due to her stuttering and frequently changed schools, the last resort was to go to her grandfather Fred’s house in Cornwall. Maggie’s mother thought that being away from society and in the open air would be good for Maggie, so she took her to her grandfather Fred’s house, which is close to the

forest and surrounded by nature. Thus, Maggie distanced herself from society and began living in a town where she formed closer bonds with nature, which she had always understood better. The small town where Grandpa Fred lives is a treasure trove of natural beauty and the living beings within it, waiting to be explored. Maggie set out to explore nature from the very first days. Her soul, which was trapped within society, became free and found peace when it merged with nature. For her, nature is not just a haven where she can escape from society, but also the key to healing and rebirth. The forest near the town has become an interesting and intriguing place for her. While wandering in the forest, she is also drawn to the creatures around her:

*The inside of the tree was partially soft, and its bark was stretched like a scar tissue. It was open and dry. there was nothing inside but the remnants of an old nest. Her heart started beating stronger and faster. and felt the same thing again. That strange feeling of liveliness. The old tree seemed quite alive, just like her. (p.78)*

Just like humans, the tree carries pains and scars; it is not just a plant but a living being that feels, harbours traces of the past, and leads other creatures to live within it. Maggie's bond with nature has heightened her awareness and enabled her to see beyond her own boundaries. Realizing that every living being is connected to one another and that they need each other for life, Maggie wants to make the secrets of nature more visible. Therefore, at this point, nature has become not just a backdrop but a living subject. The author has placed the Snow Leopard named Rumpus at the center of the story to convey this liveliness in nature and the inability of nature to express itself. Rumpus and Rosie live in a zoo named "Harrodos Animal Kingdom". By nature, snow leopards should live in harmony with nature in snow-covered forests, but they have been imprisoned behind iron bars in a cage. Possessing unique beauty, Rumpus was deemed worthy of being given as a birthday gift. Therefore, his right to live or freedom was not considered important, but rather people's admiration. In the eyes of the zoo owners and visitors, the snow leopard is merely a source of entertainment or an object to be gifted. Already imprisoned in a cage, Rumpus is objectified by being presented as a gift to a woman named Arabella, reducing him to an object on display. "The collar was very uncomfortable for Rumpus; he was sitting in the cage, trying to remove the collar with his hind leg. The metal tags kept jingling under his chin." (p.30) The collar around his neck is like a seal stamped on Rumpus's identity and freedom. Thus, Rumpus, who does not understand the meaning of freedom, is further imprisoned by the collar. Not only is Rumpus's position being changed, but also his name, known as Rumpus in the Animal Kingdom, meaning his identity, is being altered by his "owner." "You really need a proper name, how about Snowball? It's very cold and you make snow too, would you like some more food, Snowball?" (...) The driver said to give only four meatballs at a time, but I think three are enough." (p.36) The new name given to him means the erasure of his freedom and the traces of who he used to be. This attitude towards Rumpus parallels the way people view nature as an object and try to possess it. Therefore, Rumpus here is not just a snow leopard, but a concrete example of the view that people objectify nature for their own interests. Arabella does not feed Rumpus enough. A person tends to the nature they believe they possess to the extent they desire. For Arabella, who ignores Rumpus's needs, Rumpus is merely an object she uses at home and can show off to others. However, Rumpus's instincts and lifestyle do not fit within these four walls. Still possessing the call of nature within him, Rumpus is a stranger to everything in the artificial world he finds himself in. He tries to make sense of the objects around him by relating them to their counterparts in the forest.

*Then suddenly, heavy silk curtains caught his eye. They resembled tree trunks and were suitable for climbing. He stretched out his claws and jumped on the nearest ones, but when the shiny fabric tore, he slid back down again. He tried repeatedly until the fabric was torn to pieces. Then he tried to climb on other things. Like the television cabinet and the large brass lamp (p.48)*

Trapped between the artificial and natural worlds, freedom is far from Rumpus. He was torn away from the natural environment where he was born and raised and was intended to be turned into a domestic animal. Rumpus symbolizes not only the captivity of an animal but also humanity's attempt to dominate nature and impose an artificial order. The wild nature of Rumpus has not allowed him to be a house cat. Arabella was horrified by the sight she witnessed. After experiencing this disturbance, she has called Rumpus a monster. For Arabella, Rumpus is an aggressive, untameable wild beast. However, Rumpus is the very embodiment of nature. He is seen as a being existing in the natural cycle and a concrete representation of freedom. Rumpus's behaviours are not contrary to nature or abnormal; on the contrary, they are in harmony with the order of nature. The true monstrosity lies not in Rumpus's behaviour, but in the attitude and actions humans exhibit towards nature. Therefore, it is not nature that is the monster, but those who market and imprison it. Arabella thinks that she is not a suitable object for Rumpus's house. Therefore, she calls her chauffeur to take Rumpus away from the house. Rumpus has been left alone in a forest he has never seen

before. “Rumpus didn’t like being pulled by the neck. As he shook his head from side to side, a tearing sound was heard. Rumpus jumped out of the minibus and shook his head repeatedly. His collar had finally come off.” (p.61). The collar around his neck had come off when he was abandoned in nature. For Rumpus, who regains the freedom suppressed within society with the removal of the collar, a life intertwined with nature has begun. From the perspective of eco-criticism, no matter how strong the desire for domestication and domination in nature, viewed through an anthropocentric worldview, the desire for freedom in nature will always prevail. Rumpus, having lived in the shackles of captivity since childhood, does not know what to do with the freedom he has gained. “There were snow-filled ditches on both sides of the road. One side was a long, dark forest. He sniffed the air; there were so many unfamiliar smells and sounds that he didn’t know if this was a safe place” (p.61). Left alone in the snow-covered forest, Rumpus is instinctively in his rightful place. For Rumpus, who has a home in nature but feels alienated due to a freedom he has never experienced before, the forest is a place full of uncertainties. For Rumpus, who never left the cage he lived in with Rosie, even seeing new animals was a source of uncertainty. For Rumpus, who has his own home and realizes he doesn’t speak the language of nature, the forest is an unknown and a place to be cautious of.

*Suddenly, she thought she saw dark orange ears and a furry tail. The fox was running between the trees, appearing a few steps away and looking at him. Then it disappeared from sight. Rumpus stayed where he was; the fox was smaller than him. Should he chase it too? Was it a friendly fox? Was he wanting to play with him? He wasn’t sure. (p.74)*

Although the forest is Rumpus’s rightful place, it seems unknown and frightening to him because it is a world kept away from people. Rumpus is now free, but he does not understand the meaning of freedom or how he should behave. The cage he was in had not only physically imprisoned him but had also dulled his instincts. For Rumpus, who cannot even distinguish the characteristics of the hedgehog he sees on the road, whether it is alive or not, the forest is the beginning of his new and uncertain life.

*It was like the game he played with Rosie, but his balls were much softer. Rumpus caught the hedgehog and lunged forward. He rolled it back and forth (...) then opened his mouth and tried to pick it up from the ground. The thorns pierced his tongue and lodged in his palate. Rumpus sneezed and spat it out of his mouth with disgust. He scrunched up his face and pursed his lips. Neither its taste nor itself resembled a meatball. (p.75)*

Although Rumpus should have a close relationship with nature, he has no idea about it at all and is trying to learn the language of nature through trial and error. However, nature is not a place that can be predicted like the cages Rumpus used to live in. It also harbours many dangers within. Instinctively unprepared for these dangers, Rumpus is unaware of what awaits him. The mentioned forest is right next to the town where Maggie also lives. The townspeople have set traps in various places in the forest to hunt or to protect themselves from wild animals found in nature. “Rumpus didn’t see the metal plate hidden beneath all that snow. The released spring made a snapping sound. It had created a sudden shock effect. Rumpus jumped into the air, but was immediately pulled back down. He collapsed to the ground and writhed. The trap’s mouth had swallowed its paw. He was breathless from the pain” (p.89). Therefore, the townspeople see the forest both as a resource they can use and as a threat that needs to be protected against. Both reasons lead the townspeople, who have a human-centered attitude, to shape nature for their own interests. Among the townspeople who believe that nature has no function other than being a resource for humans, there is also a businessman named Ford Foy. According to Foy, nature is a tool necessary for obtaining economic gains. “Ford Foy is also the owner of a large portion of the land in this area, including the oak forest, and he wants to eliminate the forest; he doesn’t care about the trees, he thinks he sits on top of a gold mine, or rather a copper mine.” (p.119). According to Ford Foy, the value of Nature is not the cycle of the environment or the living beings within it, but the minerals to be extracted from beneath the soil. According to Plumwood (1993), nature is reduced to the status of a “mere tool” in anthropocentric ways of thinking. Therefore, for Foy, nature is an object that can be discarded, and moreover, the income he derives from it is more valuable than the degradation or even destruction of nature. Foy is sending work vehicles into the forest to set his plan in motion. These work vehicles are terrifying mysteries for Rumpus, who wanders alone in the forest and has no knowledge of the dangers. “The ground began to shake, and Rumpus crawled to the nearest tree. He had reached the lower branches when, halfway down the road, the exhaust fumes of an open truck burned his nostrils. Rumpus didn’t come down from the tree until they passed, as returning to the clearing on an empty stomach might have been safer.” (p.88). Foy’s plan affects not only the trees in the forest but also the animals living in the forest. While the forest was a quiet, peaceful area, it has turned into a noisy, unsettling environment with dirty air due to Foy’s machinery. Therefore, the forest, which once served as a refuge for animals, now poses a threat. Rumpus does not know where to

hide, how to find food, or which places are safe. The extent of environmental destruction poses a threat to biodiversity and also leads to problematic animal behaviour. For Rumpus, who lives in hunger in the forest, the forest is no longer a place where he can find food and shelter, but an area where he might encounter human dangers. At this point, the author is changing the direction of the story by comparing the characters Rumpus and Maggie. When Maggie and Rumpus come together in the forest, a bond of friendship forms between them. This bond is seen as a symbol of the reformation of the forgotten bridge between humans and nature. Maggie is trying to heal the wounds inflicted by humans on Rumpus so that the foundations of this bridge can be laid solidly. Having both internal and physical wounds, Rumpus is healing day by day with Maggie's love and care. However, this new bond established with him has been attempted to be shattered again with the townspeople's, especially Foy's, discovery of Rumpus. The townspeople argue that Rumpus is wild and that he needs to be killed. Only Maggie knows Rumpus's nature and that he doesn't want to harm anyone. However, neither Rumpus nor Maggie, who cannot express herself due to her stutter, tells the townspeople about this situation. The pressures, unable to bear Rumpus being caged, lead Maggie to decide, with her last strength, to become both Rumpus and the voice of nature. "I will whisper on behalf of the trees," Maggie said. I will speak on your behalf too. I promise." (p. 276). Maggie spoke in front of the townspeople for the justice of Rumpus and the forest, ensuring that Foy would not achieve his goal of using nature for his own benefit.

### Conclusion

"*Wildoak*" is a powerful environmental critique narrative that goes beyond being merely the story of a child struggling with an individual issue like stuttering. The characters Maggie and Rumpus illustrate the oppressive impact of the anthropocentric perspective on both nature and people. The author has constructed two separate narratives: one depicting Maggie being condemned to silence in society due to her stuttering, and the other portraying Rumpus being enslaved by human ambition and control. This shows that humans silence and exclude not only nature but also those they see as "different." The theme of silence, which is frequently emphasized throughout the novel, represents not only Maggie's stuttering or Rumpus' being a non-speaking animal but also the suppressed voice of nature. The author, using a dual-narrator approach, has conveyed both Maggie's inner world and Rumpus' perspective, establishing a connection between the experiences of humans and non-human beings. From the perspective of environmental criticism theory, this approach is quite logical. The novel, especially in line with Val Plumwood's critique of anthropocentrism, depicts nature not as an "object" that humans can dominate, but as a subject in its own right. With Ford Foy's perspective of viewing nature merely as a repository of resources and minerals, the author has concretized environmental exploitation from an economically driven viewpoint. Maggie, despite being ostracized by society due to her stuttering, has formed a strong bond with nature, and this bond has been strengthened by the help of animals in need. Animals like Wellington, Hurricane, Volcano, and Flute are not only good characters but also powerful symbols in the novel that demonstrate the right of animals to live. Maggie has given each of them a name, granting them subjectivity and identity. This aligns with the idea that "every living being in nature has its own value," which forms the basis of environmental criticism. Rumpus is depicted as an animal "abandoned" to nature but ignorant of its language, with dulled instincts. The struggle for survival in the forest not only shows the physical aspect of captivity but also its psychological side. Rumpus, in this case, is not only a snow leopard but also a victim of humanity's desire to tame, control, and objectify nature. Even when released into nature, Rumpus was not truly "free," encountering instinctual and environmental dangers. The traps the townspeople set in the forest and Ford Foy's machinery show that nature is systematically endangered for human interests. In the final chapter of the novel, Maggie's words, "I will speak for the trees, and I will speak for you," are not just an example of individual courage but also the voice of an environmentally conscious generation. Maggie has chosen to be a spokesperson for nature beyond overcoming her stutter. Thus, the character of Maggie is seen as a representation of the "harmony between humans and nature" idealized by eco-critical theory and the ethical subject who speaks for nature. The Hidden Forest mentioned or the animals found in the work are not placed as auxiliary objects or decorative items but as active subjects. Therefore, the novel teaches children not only to love nature but also to hear its voice, listen to it, and speak for it. In this respect, it has transformed into a powerful environmental manifesto in children's literature, emphasizing the interconnectedness of the environment, humans, and non-human ways of life. With the effort to make every living being visible, the author has instilled in children a love for nature, a sense of responsibility, and an ethical perspective.



## Ethical Declaration

During the writing process of the study “*Assessing the Influence of Energy Efficiency Guide Label on Consumers' Purchasing Decisions for Household Refrigerating Appliances*” scientific rules, ethical and citation rules were followed. No falsification was made on the collected data and this study was not sent to any other academic publication medium for evaluation.

## Etik Beyan

“*Saklı Ormanda Doęa'nın Sessiz ıęhęęi: Ekolojik Bir Bakıř*” bařlıklı alıřmanın yazım srecinde bilimsel kurallara, etik ve alıntı kurallarına uyulmuř; toplanan veriler zerinde herhangi bir tahrifat yapılmamıř ve bu alıřma herhangi bařka bir akademik yayını ortamına deęerlendirme iin gnderilmemiřtir.

## Declaration of Conflict

There is no potential conflict of interest in the study.

## atıřma Beyanı

Bu arařtırma ile ilgili dięer kiři veya kurumlarla yařanabilecek herhangi bir ıkar atıřması sz konusu deęildir.

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## TÜRKÇE GENİŞ ÖZET

Yalnızca kendi çıkarları doğrultusunda hareket eden insanoğlu, doğayı da herhangi bir sorumluluk duygusu olmadan kullanmaya devam etmiştir. Özellikle Sanayi devriminin başlamasıyla birlikte üretim ve tüketim artmış, hep daha fazlasına meyili olan insanoğlu kömür, kimyasal maddelerin kullanımını arttırarak ekonomik refah sağlamaya çalışmışlardır. Bu ekonomik refah beraberinde doğal dengenin bozulmasını, dünyanın geri döndürülemez bir kötü gidişata sürüklenmesini sağlamıştır. Bu kötü gidişatı durdurmak için kuruluşlar kurulmuş fakat tüketimin hızına yetişilememiştir. Doğanın sessiz çığlığını insanlara yansıtmak isteyen edebiyatçılar çevre eleştirisi kuramı üzerinde çalışmalar yapmaya başlamışlardır. Bu bağlamda Çevreci eleştirinin amacı edebiyat ile fiziksel çevre arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiyi analiz etmek, farkındalığı ve doğal dünyayla daha derin bir bağlantıyı teşvik etmektir. Çalışma, literatüre geleneksel, insan merkezli yaklaşıma temelde meydan okuyan çevreci eleştirinin temel ilkelerine dayanmaktadır. Cheryll Glotfelty, Scott Slovic gibi teorisyenlere atıfta bulunarak çevreci eleştirinin temelleri incelenmiştir. Bu bağlamda ortaya çıkan görüş, insanların birçok canlı arasında sadece bir tür olduğunu ve tüm yaşam biçimlerinin içsel değere sahip olmasıdır. Yani insan merkezli bir perspektiften çevre merkezli bir dünya görüşünün benimsenmesi gerektiğidir. Bu görüş, tüm canlıların yaşamlarına değer veren bir bakış açısı yansıtmaktadır. Arne Næss tarafından icat edilen ve hem insan hem de insan dışı yaşamın refahının, insanlara olan faydasından bağımsız olarak içsel bir değere sahip olduğunu savunan bir terim olan “Derin Ekoloji” diğer canlı türlerinin de önemli olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Næss’e göre, insanların hayati ihtiyaçları karşılamak dışında gezegenin zenginliğini ve biyolojik çeşitliliğini azaltma hakları yoktur. Bu etik boyut, Scott Slovic’in edebiyatın sadece entelektüel bir alıştırma değil, aynı zamanda dünyanın kaderiyle ilgilenmek, insani değerleri ve davranışları şekillendirmek için ahlaki bir görevi olan güçlü bir araç olduğunu iddia eden “çevresel sorumluluk” kavramıyla daha da vurgulanmaktadır. Bu nedenle edebiyatın rolü, ekokritik bir bakış açısıyla, hayvanların, ormanların ve tüm ekosistemlerin seslerinin duyulabildiği bir anlatı alanı olarak hizmet etmek ve insan deneyiminin anlatmaya değer tek hikaye olduğuna dair uzun süredir devam eden inanca meydan okumaktır. Bu makale, bahsedilen çevreci eleştiri kuramının merceğinin yalnızca yetişkin edebiyatıyla sınırlı olmadığını, ancak çocuk edebiyatında genç okuyuculara doğaya sevgi ve çevresel sorumluluk duygusu aşılama amaçladığını anlatmaktadır. 2022 yılında C.C. Harrington tarafından yazılan “*Saklı Orman*” eseri de çevreci eleştiri bağlamında yazılan ve çocukların doğa ile olan iletişimlerini sağlamlaştırmaya çalışılan bir çalışmadır. Eser genel ama etkili bir cümle ile başlamaktadır: “Kekeleyen tüm çocuklara; hayvanlar ve ağaçlar adına konuşan herkese.” Bu, kişisel mücadeleyi çevre bilinciyle harmanlayan derinden dokunaklı bir anlatının tonunu belirlemektedir. Kitabın merkezinde okumayı öğrenen ancak şiddetli bir kekemlikle mücadele eden genç bir kız olan Maggie vardır. Konuşma güçlükleri onu akranlarından izole ederek utangaç ve içine kapanık hale getirmiştir. Roman, Maggie aracılığıyla her ne kadar kekemelik ile mücadele etme ve zorbalıklar karşısında hissedilen duyguları içersede hikaye Maggi’nin bakış açısıyla sınırlı kalmamaktadır. Yazar, bir kar leoparı olan Rumpus’un bakış açısını tanıtan ikili bir anlatı tekniğini tercih etmektedir. Bu yaklaşım sadece hikayenin duygusal derinliğini genişletmekle kalmamış, aynı zamanda insan ve hayvan mücadeleleri arasındaki bağlantıyı da vurgulamıştır. Maggie’nin hikayesi Rumpus’unkiyle iç içe geçerek romanı kekeleyen bir çocuğun hikayesinin ötesine, tüm sessiz varlıkların evrensel bir hikayesine kaydırmaktadır. Maggie’nin doğayla olan derin bağlantısı onun toplumdan uzaklaşmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Sığınağı, kendini güvende ve kabul edilmiş hissettiği doğal dünyada yatmaktadır. Hayvanlara olan sevgisi, sessiz dayanıklılığın ve yanlış anlaşılan varlıkların sembolü haline gelen sevgili kahverengi faresi Wellington gibi evcil hayvanlara olan ilgisiyle belirginleşmiştir. Maggie ayrıca Volkan ve Kasırga adlı salyangozları da önemsemektedir. En küçük yaratıklara bile olan saygısını ve sevgisi her hayvana verdiği isimle vurgulanmaktadır. Bu hayvanlar, ekosistemin gözden kaçan ancak önemli kısımlarını sembolize etmektedir. Maggie’nin merhameti, iyileşene kadar ilgilendiği Flüt adlı yaralı bir güvercine kadar uzanıp gitmektedir. Bu hayvanlara isim verme eylemi, her canlının bir değeri olduğunu vurgulayarak onlara farklı kimlikler vermesinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Roman, Maggie aracılığıyla okuyucuları, büyüklüğü veya sosyal statüsü ne olursa olsun, tüm canlıların içsel değerini tanımaya teşvik etmektedir. Maggie, Cornwall’da büyükbabası Fred ile kalması için gönderildiğinde, doğayla olan bağı derinleşmiştir. İnsan zulmünden kaçarak, büyükbabasının evinin yakınındaki ormanlarda huzur bulmuştur. Orada doğanın sadece bir sığınak değil, iyileşme ve dönüşüm yeteneğine sahip yaşayan, nefes alan bir varlık olduğunu keşfetmiştir. Dahası bu canlılığı insanlar gibi doğanın nasıl yara izleri taşıdığını ancak gelişmeye devam ettiğini göstermek için eski bir ağacın metaforunu kullanarak betimlemektedir. Öte yandan Rumpus’un hikayesi, insan-doğa çatışmasının başka bir tarafını ortaya koymaktadır. Bir zamanlar Harrodos Hayvanlar Krallığında esir olan Rumpus, duyarlı bir varlıktan ziyade dekoratif bir obje olarak ele alınmaktadır. Arabella adında bir kadına hediye edilen, insanın doğaya hükmetme ve nesneleştirme girişimlerinin sembolü haline gelmiştir. Arabella onu yeniden adlandırmaya, kimliğini silmeye ve kısıtlayıcı önlemlerle onu kontrol etmeye çalışmaktadır. Yine de Rumpus’un evcilleşmemiş ruhu tüm bu kısıtlayıcı

hareketlere meydan okumaktadır. Esaret Rumpus'un hayatta kalma becerilerini köreltmif olsa da içgüdüsel olarak özgürlüğü özledigini anlatmaktadır. Bir zamanlar ormanda terk edilen Rumpus, yaban hayatına uyum sağlamak, bilmediğı tehlikelerle yüzleşmek ve tam olarak anlamadığı bir dünyada gezinmek için mücadele etmektedir. Yolculuğu, insan merkezli tutumların yarattığı yıkımı yansıtmaktadır. Bu güvencesiz varoluş, bir bakır madeni kurmak için eski meşe ormanını temizlemeyi planlayan bir işadamı olan Ford Foy tarafından daha da tehdit edilmektedir. Ford Foy, madencilik kârı için ormanı yok etmeye çalışarak doğayı salt ekonomik bir varlığa indirgeyerek bu zihniyeti özetlemektedir. Rumpus'un Maggie ile olan nihai dostluğu hikayenin kalbini oluşturmuş ve insanlar ve doğal dünya arasında kaybolan bir bağlantının yeniden kurulmasını temsil etmiştir. Maggie'nin duygusal yaralarını Rumpus'un ise hem psikolojik hem de fiziksel yaralarını iyileştiren bu bağ doğanın önemini göstermektedir. Ancak tüm insanlar bu baği göremez dahası Rumpus'un bir canavar olduğunu ve ölümünün gerektiğini savunmuşlardır. Bu noktada ise Maggie, Rumpus'u ve ormanı alenen savunan sesini keşfetmiştir. Cesur duruşu, hem doğanın hem de savunmasız bireylerin korumayı hak ettiğini vurgulayarak yıkıcı insan merkezli zihniyete meydan okumaktadır. Nihayetinde "*Saklı Orman*", özgürlüğün, saygının ve bir arada yaşamının hem insan hem de insan dışı yaşam için gerekli olduğunu gösteren derin bir çevre eleştirisi romandır.