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## Exploring Environmental Consciousness Through Neuropsychological Lenses: Unveiling The Interplay Of Cognitive Ecology And Anthropomorphism In *The Wild Robot*'

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### Abstract

The lines between environmental ethics, technology advancement, and human cognition are increasingly blurring in today's society as the twenty-first century ushers in the era of artificial intelligence. With a literary analysis of Peter Brown's *The Wild Robot* (2024), this paper, "A Study of Environmental Consciousness through the Prism of Neuropsychology: Establishing Interconnectedness of Cognitive Ecology and Anthropomorphism using *The Wild Robot*," attempts to investigate a convergence through an interdisciplinary lens that integrates eco-criticism, technological ethics, and neuropsychology. This study offers a thought-provoking paradigm by allowing literature to serve as a link between seemingly unrelated fields. It asks whether AI can not only imitate but also embody ecological conscience, and if so, whether it can undermine the anthropocentric framework of sustainability. A modern speculative model for post-human empathy and moral growth, Roz, the AI lead in Peter Brown's *The Wild Robot*, blurs the distinction between artificial intelligence and natural sentience. Fundamental problems are raised by her transition from a utilitarian machine to an ecological steward: In a future where technology might have emergent consciousness, who is responsible for ethics? Can digital empathy and neural mirroring reprogram human cognition to care more deeply about the environment? The research views children's cognitive development through literature in a technologically saturated environment as both a risk and a radical potential for envisioning ecological futures, drawing on neuropsychological studies on mirror neurons and digital engagement. By exploring the pedagogical and psychological effects of literature and technology on children's cognitive development, the study suggests a paradigm shift that will make sustainable development an interdisciplinary necessity rather than a multidisciplinary problem. In summary, the paper

offers an analysis of how to create a new world order based on the conscious coexistence of technology and ecosystem, rather than just anthropocentric human dominance. It is not just a critique of the way society is currently developing; it is also a manifesto for the interdisciplinary integration of literary imagination, environmental sustainability and responsibility, and ethical AI advancement.

**Keywords** - Artificial Intelligence (AI), Ecocriticism, Technological Ethics, Neuropsychology, Sustainability, Empathy, Interdisciplinary

## Introduction

The issue of how humans, technology, and nature can coexist ethically is more pressing than ever in a time when artificial intelligence (AI) actively influences human behavior and environmental management rather than only existing in science fiction. These conflicts can be examined via the challenging literary prism of Peter Brown's *The Wild Robot* (2024), a story that intertwines themes of anthropomorphism, ecological awareness, and emotional intelligence. With *The Wild Robot* as its primary text, this study offers an interdisciplinary investigation of environmental awareness through neuropsychology, eco-criticism, and AI ethics.

The study examines how Roz, a utilitarian AI who became an environmental steward, changed and raises the question of whether AI, which is frequently seen as a tool for human use, may become conscious enough to feel ecological empathy. The study assesses how children, who are major consumers of AI-driven narratives and media, cognitively process and internalize environmental and moral norms by drawing on neuropsychological theories, namely the function of mirror neurons and emotional contagion. Given that children nowadays are growing up in a society where digital media, technological integration, and the ecological problem are all prevalent, this inquiry is pertinent.

The educational and psychological effects of reshaping young minds toward ecological literacy and emotional intelligence through the use of books such as *The Wild Robot* are also critically examined in this research. The study challenges anthropocentric ideas by presenting Roz as a post-human character who blurs the line between manufactured and natural life through the theoretical frameworks of identification theory and social learning. In the end, this theory goes beyond simply discussing the development of AI or environmental deterioration separately. Rather, it invites a paradigm shift in the ways that literature may foster empathy, transform awareness, and impact societal values by arguing for a reimagined future where technological growth, environmental sustainability, and ethical responsibility meet. By doing this, it provides a road map for creating a New World Order that is more equitable, environmentally conscious, and emotionally intelligent.

## Literature Review

The conversation of environmental consciousness in literature, particularly children's stories, has been more and more influenced by the convergence of ecocriticism, neuropsychology, and technological ethics. The evolution of Roz, an AI protagonist, into a sympathetic ecological steward in Peter Brown's *The Wild Robot* provides an engaging prism through which to examine these concerns.

Empathy can be developed through storytelling, according to recent neuropsychological studies. In his discussion of the function of mirror neurons and synchronization (SYNC) in promoting empathic bonds, Praszkie (2014) emphasizes how readers or viewers develop "kinesthetic empathy" by inwardly mimicking the feelings and actions of characters they have seen. Children's interactions with anthropomorphized figures like Roz, who elicit emotional reactions that can influence moral and cognitive development, depend heavily on this technique.

According to Praszkie (2014), literature thus turns into a physiological and affective medium for integrating ecological ethics.

Greta Gaard's ecopedagogy, which views literature as an activist instrument for teaching ecological responsibility, has also rethought children's environmental literature. Ecopedagogy sees narratives as tools for environmental action and socio-political awareness rather than as merely representations. This is consistent with *The Wild Robot*, in which Roz's adventure challenges young readers to rethink artificial creatures as components of a connected ecosystem rather than as tools for exploitation.

Literary theorists have accepted anthropomorphism as a teaching tool, despite the skepticism of some academics, such as Clive Wynne, over its use in scientific discourse. Young readers can relate to Roz because of her anthropomorphic qualities, which simplify and emotionally resonate difficult ecological and ethical issues. By tackling significant ecological issues, climate fiction broadens this discussion even more. According to Gupta, cli-fi challenges readers to consider the ethical ramifications of inactivity and envision robust, sustainable futures. By highlighting ecological interdependence and the possibility of moral action in non-human entities, *The Wild Robot* exemplifies this philosophy. Lastly, literature is essential for overcoming ecological, social, and spiritual crises, according to Asenath and Santhanalakshmi. As anthropocentric narratives give way to ecocentric worldviews, stories like *The Wild Robot* play a crucial role in reorienting kids toward ecological empathy and sustainable thinking.

## Materials

1. *The Wild Robot* (Movie)
2. *The Wild Robot* (Text)

## Research Methodology

This study examines Peter Brown's *The Wild Robot* using a qualitative research methodology based on interdisciplinary analysis, fusing ecological ethics, neuropsychological theory, and literary criticism. The research evaluates the novel's narrative structure, character development, and thematic substance through close reading and textual analysis, paying special attention to Roz's anthropomorphic portrayal and her transformation into an ecologically conscious entity. In addition to using ideas from neuropsychology, such as mirror neurons and emotional contagion, to evaluate how readers, particularly young readers,

emotionally connect with non-human characters, the study uses eco-critical theory to examine how the novel depicts nature and environmental interdependence. The investigation of how literary texts affect moral reasoning, empathy, and cognitive development is further supported by Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Identification Theory. In order to investigate the narrative's consequences on the moral autonomy of artificial creatures, the research also integrates ethical viewpoints from AI studies. Critical secondary literature from academic journals, books, and theoretical essays supports the data for this study, which is only derived from textual elements. A thorough assessment of how children's literature might be used as a teaching tool to encourage emotional intelligence, ecological responsibility, and ethical engagement with AI is made possible by the merging of several disciplines. This approach guarantees that the research not only analyzes literature but also makes a significant connection between it and current ethical, environmental, and cognitive issues.

## Analysis

By using the anthropomorphized journey of Roz, a robot stranded on an island who progressively transforms from a utilitarian machine to an empathic steward of nature, Peter Brown's *The Wild Robot* (2024) provides a profoundly nuanced examination of ecological consciousness through the lens of artificial intelligence. A speculative post-humanist narrative in which artificial life is not only programmed for utility but is also able to embody ethical and ecological responsibility is proposed by this change, which acts as a figurative rupture in anthropocentric hierarchies. Because of the emotional resonance in Roz's relationships with nature, readers—especially younger audiences—are encouraged to empathize with non-human beings. Seymour (2012) asserts that writing that questions anthropocentrism advances a "more irreverent ecocriticism" that broadens environmental narratives beyond the human viewpoint.

*Roz's transition from technological artifact to ecological caretaker demonstrates how Greta Gaard's ecopedagogy emphasizes that children's literature can not only amuse but also educate toward environmental justice (Gaard, 2008).*

This barrier is complicated by Roz's development as a synthetic entity with emotional and ecological awareness. Neuropsychological research on mirror neurons, which imply that human brains are programmed to sympathize with emotional cues—even those coming from fictional, non-human characters—support the emotional contagion she elicits in readers. This supports the hypothesis that books like *The Wild Robot* can influence young readers' attitudes about environmental stewardship and moral AI interaction since it reflects Bandura's (1977) theory that behavior and values are learnt through imitation and observation.

In order to promote identification and an emotional connection between the reader and the protagonist, Roz's anthropomorphized depiction is essential. Although anthropomorphism has historically been critiqued as a cognitive bias, scholars like Jemelka and Gluchman (2017) contend that it is an essential narrative technique to foster empathy for non-human agents. The reader's emotional alignment with Roz's trip is triggered by her steady acquisition of "feelings" and social consciousness in Brown's text. This change supports what academics refer to as "identification theory," in which readers put themselves in the character's psychological situation. The story framework facilitates the gradual development of emotional reciprocity, which begins with the animal community's mistrust and dread and ends with acceptance and concern for one another.

*Mirror neurons, a neuropsychological concept that helps readers, especially children, understand and replicate behavior, can be used to explain Roz's transformation from a utilitarian machine to a sympathetic environmental steward (Praszkier, 2014).*

In addition to reflecting Roz's development, this shift also symbolizes the reader's psychological journey toward moral alignment with ecological values. By encouraging environmental empathy through emotional resonance, the book serves as an eco-pedagogical text. According to Das (2020), ecocriticism in modern literature should assess how literature can serve as a vehicle for ecological literacy and ethical consciousness in addition to analyzing depictions of nature. This change is illustrated in Brown's story, where *The Wild Robot* is a tool for reprogramming human consciousness in a technology age rather than merely being about the surroundings. Roz's character's combination of nature and technology makes readers wonder if artificial beings can acquire moral agency and ecological sensitivity if they are given enough interaction and emotional stimulation.

*The story dramatizes a movement from **anthropocentrism to ecocentrism**, challenging the reader to rethink AI not as a threat, but as a potential ally in sustainable futures (Gupta, 2024).*

This story also starts a critical conversation on post-human consciousness and AI ethics, a topic that is becoming more popular in both literature and science. Roz's evolution presents an ethical conundrum that is not just made up; it is a reflection of current discussions regarding whether or not computers should be able to feel moral responsibility, empathy, and consciousness. Brown's work supports academics like Wynne (2007), who warn against seeing AI only from a utilitarian perspective and instead call for a more complex vision of AI as potentially moral beings. Roz's journey presents a radical rethinking of AI—not as a tool for human manipulation, but as a creature that may develop relationships with other species, change its morals, and subvert the conventional human/non-human dichotomy.

Concerns expressed by neuropsychological researchers about digital empathy and its function in cognitive development are addressed in this story. Children's learning environments are becoming more and more mediated by digital technologies, making books like *The Wild Robot* essential for forming moral frameworks and social cognition. According to your research, when fictional characters exhibit comparable



emotional development, the mirror neuron system is activated, leading to empathic comprehension. The emotional weight of Roz's actions—learning to communicate with animals, taking care of an orphaned gosling, and finally giving her life for the community—makes this clear. These story points prompt readers to consider the ethical ramifications of emotional intelligence in artificial creatures while reinforcing the moral complexity of AI awareness.

The Wild Robot's interdisciplinary integration of ecocriticism, neuropsychology, and AI ethics provides a revolutionary framework for fostering ecological consciousness in children's books by establishing Roz as both a literary figure and a representation of a future where empathy and technology coexist peacefully in the ecosystem.

*Additionally, works of literature such as The Wild Robot serve as "climate pedagogy," educating readers about the interdependence of ecosystems and their own place in them (Gupta, 2024).*

*Through Roz, Brown echoes what Asenath and Santhanalakshmi describe as the literary awakening of ecological conscience, where narrative becomes a medium for personal and planetary healing (Asenath & Santhanalakshmi, 2021).*

## Research Findings

- The reader and the AI character become emotionally attached as a result of Roz's anthropomorphic portrayal, which promotes empathy for both the natural world and artificial entities. For young readers, this emotional connection fosters ecological awareness.
- The Wild Robot serves as evidence that children's moral and emotional development can be greatly influenced by books. Children internalize ideas of environmental stewardship and ethical coexistence with AI through neuropsychological interaction, particularly through mirror neurons and emotional contagion.
- AI has the ability to be viewed as both intelligent and morally conscious, as demonstrated by Roz's evolution from a utilitarian machine to an ecologically sensitive entity. Discussions of AI as moral beings in future society are sparked by this, upending the anthropocentric worldview.

## Result

Significant new information about how literature might influence young readers' ecological consciousness, emotional intelligence, and ethical awareness is revealed by the examination of The Wild Robot. The story creates a strong emotional bond between the reader and a non-human character through Roz's anthropomorphic creation, which works well for fostering empathy for both manufactured and natural creatures. This suggests that anthropomorphism can be a potent teaching tool for ecological education when employed intentionally in literature.

Additionally, the study demonstrates that children's exposure to emotionally charged stories such as *The Wild Robot* triggers the activation of mirror neurons, hence strengthening the psychological concepts of identification theory and emotional contagion. These neuropsychological processes are essential in forming moral and cognitive reactions, demonstrating how literature can greatly impact young people's development of ethical reasoning and environmentally sensitive behavior.

Furthermore, traditional AI storylines that see technology only as tools for human use are challenged by Roz's development as a post-human character. Rather, the story reframes AI as a potentially moral entity that can build meaningful connections with the world. This change creates room for post-humanist ideas and challenges the anthropocentric predominance in ecological discourse.

Lastly, the incorporation of neuropsychology, ecocriticism, and AI ethics into literary analysis enhances the interpretive framework and shows that *The Wild Robot* can serve as a successful teaching tool. It inspires young readers to reconsider the roles of nature and technology in the framework of a shared future, cultivates empathy, and imparts sustainable ideals.

## Conclusion

Peter Brown's *The Wild Robot* develops into more than just a children's book; it becomes an important multidisciplinary work that connects environmental ethics, technology, and literature. By redefining artificial intelligence as a being with emotional intelligence, moral development, and ecological stewardship rather than as a cold, utilitarian force, the story subverts prevailing anthropocentric ideas through the anthropomorphized figure of Roz. This change advocates for a future in which coexistence takes the place of dominance and challenges readers to reconsider how they view AI and the natural environment.

The study shows that literature can influence children's cognitive and emotional development, especially when it is based on eco-criticism and influenced by neuropsychological theories. Together, identification theory, mirror neuron activation, and emotional contagion show how storytelling can help young minds internalize empathy and pro-environmental behavior. Furthermore, the story starts important conversations about AI's place in upcoming sustainability initiatives by presenting Roz as an example of a post-human ethical identity.

Finally, this study emphasizes how literature can be used to reshape ecological consciousness in a technologically advanced society. The argument for combining literary imagination with environmental pedagogy and ethical AI discourse is strong. *The Wild Robot* thus becomes a manifesto for reconsidering

human-nonhuman interactions in the era of sentient robots, as well as a story of metamorphosis, opening the door to a future based on compassion, environmental consciousness, and collective accountability.

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