

Exploring the Integration of Technology and Environment in Peter Brown's Novel *The Wild Robot*

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Abstract

This study examines the integration of technology and nature in Peter Brown's novel *The Wild Robot* (2016) through two theoretical frameworks: Greg Garrard's ecocritical concepts of wilderness and dwelling, and Donna Haraway's cyborg theory. Technology and nature are often seen as two opposing forces that cannot coexist. The rapid development of technology in modern life has raised concern about its impact on the natural environment, leading many people to assume that machines and ecosystems can never truly belong together. Brown's novel challenges this assumption through the story of Roz, a robot who washes ashore on a wild island and must learn to survive among animals and ecosystems entirely foreign to her design. Using a qualitative descriptive analytical method, this research traces how Roz's journey from a stranded machine to an active member of the island's ecosystem reflects both an ecocritical process of learning to dwell responsibly in a place, and Haraway explains the assumption that technology and nature occupy fundamentally separate categories. The findings reveal that Brown's novel constructs the island not as a wilderness that resists the artificial, but as a living system that reshapes every entity within it regardless of its origin. This study contributes to ecocritical and posthumanist discourse by demonstrating that popular fiction can challenge the deepest assumptions of environmental thought while remaining accessible to diverse audiences

Keywords: *ecocriticism, Greg Garrard, cyborg theory, Donna Haraway, dwelling, wilderness, The Wild Robot, technology and nature, Peter Brown*

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between technology and the natural world is one of the most discussed topics in modern life. Everyday, people witness how factories produce pollution, how cities expand into forest and how the consequences of climate change,

deforestation, and biodiversity loss, as machines seem to take over spaces that once belonged to nature, and at the same time became most promising instrument of environmental recovery (Vereshchagina & Kompatsiaris, 2023). This growing concern has shaped the way people think about technology and nature as something that can coexist with the natural world (Kuharić, 2024).

Ecocriticism, a field of literary study that examines how literature represents the relationship between humans and the environment, has long reflected this concern (Glotsfelty, 1996). Ecocriticism as a literary and cultural approach examines the relationship between literature and environment, analyzing how environmental themes are depicted and their influence on societal attitudes toward ecological sustainability. In other words, literature bridges our understanding about responsibility toward nature and makes a space for questioning the assumption that technology always harms the environment.

Peter Brown's children's novel *The Wild Robot* (2016) offers a particularly compelling case for examining this assumption. The narrative follows Roz, a robot who washes up on an island after a shipwreck and must figure out how to survive among wild animals who are afraid of her (Qie & Maulidya, 2025). At first, Roz seems completely out of place because she is a machine, being programmed, and she does not eat, sleep, or feel pain the way animals do. But as the story progresses, Roz learns the other animal language, adopts an orphaned gosling named Brightbill, builds a shelter, and eventually becomes a protector of the island's ecosystem. Roz's journey raises an important question: can something that was made by humans become part of nature?

To analyze this, the study draws on two theoretical frameworks. The first is Greg Garrard's ecocritical framework, which provides tool for understanding how literature represents nature and the relationship between humans and the environment. In his book, Garrard studies the relationship between the human and the non-human through the "large scale metaphor," each of which is thought to have certain political effects or serve specific social

interest. Among these metaphors, there are two concepts that are relevant to *The Wild Robot*: wilderness and dwelling. The concept of wilderness signifies nature in a state uncontaminated by the society, making it one of the most potent constructions of nature available. Wilderness also functions as a cultural metaphor that casts nonhuman landscapes as hostile, alien, or sublime spaces awaiting human comprehension. This metaphor, rooted in Romantic literature and colonial frontier mythology, continues to shape how contemporary culture imagines wild spaces and the creatures that inhabit them (Lund, 2022). In contrast, dwelling refers to the process through which beings come to inhabit a place not just physically, but through care, responsibility, and emotional connection (Salma & Haryanti, 2025). Where wilderness implies distance and otherness, dwelling implies intimacy and reciprocity. Several recent ecocritical studies have demonstrated the analytical power of these concepts for understanding how literary and cinematic texts negotiate the boundary between environmental destruction and ecological belonging (Jamilah & Ayiz, 2024; Nirmala & Basid, 2024). Together, these two concepts help explain how Roz moves from being a stranger creature in a wild place to becoming one of its most dedicated members.

Within these ecocritical concepts, we can see technology has historically occupied an ambivalent and often antagonistic position. The industrial exploitation of natural resources, the pollution of waterways and atmospheres, and the accelerating pace of urbanization have provided ecocritics strong grounds for treating technology as something fundamentally opposed to ecological health (Shrestha, 2023). Within ecocritical thought, this attitude is sometimes called technophobia, a tendency to assume that any

machine entering a wild landscape is automatically a problem, a disruption to something pure that existed before it arrived (Qie & Maulidya, 2025). This assumption has shaped how many readers approach stories involving both technology and nature, including *The Wild Robot*.

However, Garrard's concept of dwelling opens a different way of thinking about this relationship. Dwelling, as Garrard (2012) explains it, is not just about physically occupying a place. It is about learning to live in that place responsibly and relationally, through acts of care, attention, and emotional connection to the beings around you. When Roz builds a shelter on the island, adopts the orphaned gosling Brightbill, and gradually learns to communicate with the forest animals, she is doing exactly what dwelling describes. She is not conquering the island or reshaping it to fit her design. She is listening to it, adapting to it, and eventually serving it. This raises an important possibility: that technology, under the right conditions, does not have to be a threat to ecological life. It might become a mode of ecological participation instead.

Popular fiction has begun to reflect this shift in thinking. Stories involving robots, artificial intelligence, and nonhuman characters in natural settings are increasingly used to challenge the idea that technology and nature must always be in conflict (Kuharić, 2024). Children's literature and animated films, in particular, have shown a strong capacity for reaching wide audiences with ecological messages from an early age (Qie & Maulidya, 2025). *The Wild Robot* stands out among these stories because it does not treat Roz's technological nature as something to be hidden or overcome. Instead, her mechanical identity becomes the very foundation of her contributions to the island's

ecosystem. Several scholars have also noted that popular narratives like this one are capable of embodying posthuman perspectives that challenge human-centered views of environmental responsibility (Vereshchagina & Kompatsiaris, 2023). Brown's novel belongs firmly within this tradition.

To understand why the technology-nature boundary in the novel is not just challenged but fundamentally questioned, a second theoretical framework becomes necessary. Donna Haraway's cyborg theory, introduced in her essay "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1985), offers exactly this kind of deeper explanation. Haraway reimagined the cyborg as a hybrid of organism and machine, using it as a metaphor for breaking down rigid distinctions and embracing fluidity and interconnectedness. Haraway proposes the cyborg as a conceptual tool that destabilizes traditional dualisms such as human and animal, nature and culture, and organism and machine, thereby undermining essentialist ways of thinking about identity and belonging. For Haraway, these boundaries are not facts of nature. They are political constructions that human societies have maintained over time, and the cyborg is the figure that refuses to respect them (Tüfekçi Can, 2023). Haraway's central argument is that we are already cyborgs, already living in intimate entanglement with our technologies, and that the interesting question is therefore not whether this is good or bad, but what politics and possibilities it opens up. This idea carries important implications for how we read Roz. She is not a machine trying to become natural. She is a hybrid entity whose separation from the natural world was, according to Haraway's logic, never real to begin with (Åsberg, 2024).

Donna Haraway's framework is applied to *The Wild Robot*, the story takes on a different meaning. Roz arrives on the island as a product of human technology, but her capacity for learning, emotional response, and care for other living beings positions her as an active participant in the ecosystem from the very first pages of the novel (Chinglen, 2025). Her adoption of Brightbill, her construction of a nest, her learning of animal languages, and her role as the island's protector are not signs of a machine slowly becoming natural. They are instead expressions of what Haraway calls the confusion of boundaries and the joint kinship with animals and machines that characterizes cyborg existence. Through the novel lens, the nature-technology binary is not at the end of the story but at its very beginning, because Roz was never the kind of purely artificial being that the binary imagines (Pooja, 2025). Roz hybridity is not something she earns, but it is something she already is (Dedeoğlu & Zampaki, 2023). Recent scholarship has also recognized the productive intersections between Haraway's posthumanist thinking and environmental humanities, suggesting that cyborg theory can enrich ecocritical readings of texts where the protagonist is nonhuman (Bobaru, 2025).

Several previous studies have explored *The Wild Robot* from related academic perspectives, and examining them closely reveals where the present study departs. Qie and Maulidya (2025) applied Garrard's ecocritical framework to the 2024 film adaptation, showing how Roz's transformation from an outsider to a forest guardian challenges the traditional divide between the natural and the artificial. Their contribution is significant, but their focus on the film means that the richness of Brown's original written text, particularly the detailed narration of Roz's inner observations and

learning process, remains largely unexamined. Nirmala and Basid (2024) analyzed ecological themes in the novel using an ecocritical lens, concentrating on how the natural environment shapes character behavior. While this work highlights the ecological dimensions of the story, it does not specifically address how technology fits into or disrupts the concept of ecological belonging. Chinglen (2025) took a posthumanist approach, arguing that Roz's caregiving role challenges anthropocentric assumptions about moral responsibility toward nature. This is closely related to the present study's concerns, though Chinglen's focus on ethics of care leaves the broader technology-nature binary largely unexamined. Pooja (2025) similarly used posthumanist theory to analyze Roz's maternal relationship with Brightbill, arguing that her emotional development proves machines can genuinely participate in ecological life. While compelling, this argument does not draw on Haraway's specific cyborg framework, which offers a more systematic explanation for why the technology-nature boundary is unstable in the first place. Jamilah and Ayiz (2024) examined dwelling as an ecocritical concept in children's literature more broadly, demonstrating that stories about nonhuman characters learning to live responsibly in natural spaces can build ecological awareness in young readers. Their work supports the theoretical foundation of this study but does not analyze *The Wild Robot* directly.

This research underlying assumption is worth examining carefully. They all treat Roz as beginning in a position of separation from nature and gradually moving toward integration through a process of effort and acceptance. This is a meaningful reading, and it captures much of what makes the story

emotionally powerful. However, it also quietly reinforces the very binary it aims to challenge, because it still begins from the premise that technology and nature are fundamentally separate things that must be brought together through work. This is precisely the gap the present study addresses. Reading *The Wild Robot* through Garrard's dwelling framework alone is not enough to fully escape this premise, because dwelling itself assumes an initial distance that must be overcome. Haraway's cyborg theory, by contrast, refuses this starting point altogether, arguing that the separation between the mechanical and the organic was always a cultural habit rather than an ecological fact. Together, the two frameworks allow this study can trace the specific process by which Roz becomes an ecological participant, while simultaneously questioning whether that process was ever necessary to begin with. Ecocritical scholarship in 2024 has increasingly called for approaches that move beyond identifying environmental themes in literature toward rethinking the deeper assumptions that shape environmental thought itself (Garrard, 2012). Ultimately, using Greg Garrard and Donna Haraway, this research conducts two pivotal questions: What processes transform technological alienation in the island wilderness into ecological belonging through dwelling in *The Wild Robot*? and What does Haraway's cyborg theory reveal about the nature-technology binary in *The Wild Robot*? This study contributes to a more nuanced ecocritical understanding of how popular fiction can challenge the deepest assumptions of environmental thought while remaining accessible and emotionally resonant for diverse audiences.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research method to examine the integration of technology and nature in Peter Brown's *The Wild Robot* (2016). A qualitative approach is considered the most appropriate method because the research focuses on interpreting meanings, relationships, and representations embedded within a literary text rather than measuring numerical data. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) explain, qualitative research aims to understand and interpret phenomena through detailed contextual analysis, allowing researchers to explore how ideas and values are constructed within specific social or textual situations. In literary studies, this kind of approach is widely used because it allows the researcher to examine how themes, narrative structures, and ideological perspectives are embedded within the language of a text. Since this study investigates how Roz, a robot, gradually becomes an accepted part of a wild island ecosystem, qualitative analysis is the most suitable method for tracing the narrative processes that build ecological belonging and question the traditional boundary between technology and nature.

The primary data source of this research is Peter Brown's novel *The Wild Robot* (2016), which was selected because it offers rich and detailed textual material that illustrates the relationship between a technological being and a natural environment. This novel was chosen specifically because it portrays Roz's transformation from an unfamiliar machine into an active and responsible member of the island's ecosystem, providing substantial material for both ecocritical and posthumanist analysis. Secondary data are drawn from scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and theoretical works related to ecocriticism, posthumanism, children's literature, and environmental humanities.

Greg Garrard's *Ecocriticism* (2012) serves as the primary theoretical reference for the concepts of wilderness and dwelling, while Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1991) provides the foundation for understanding the cyborg as a figure that dissolves the binary opposition between the natural and the artificial. Additional academic studies on ecocriticism, posthumanism, and *The Wild Robot* are also incorporated to support the interpretation and strengthen the overall theoretical framework.

The data collection technique used in this study is close reading, which involves a careful and systematic examination of the novel to identify significant passages, dialogues, narrative descriptions, and character interactions that illustrate Roz's relationship with the island environment. According to Ohrvik (2024), close reading allows the researcher to investigate how language, characterization, setting, and narrative progression contribute to the representation of particular themes and ideological positions within a literary text. During the reading process, relevant textual evidence is documented and organized into categories based on recurring themes, including Roz's first arrival in the wilderness, her early encounters with the island's animals, her gradual process of learning and adaptation, her acts of caregiving and cooperation, and her eventual role as a responsible member of the island ecosystem. The collected data are then analyzed using an interpretative approach that brings together Garrard's ecocritical concepts of wilderness and dwelling with Haraway's theory of the cyborg, synthesizing both frameworks to explain how ecological belonging emerges not from biological origin but from responsiveness, adaptation, and ethical responsibility toward the environment

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 RQ1: What processes transform technological alienation in the island wilderness into ecological belonging through dwelling in *The Wild Robot*?

Garrard (2012) argues that dwelling is not merely physical habitation but an ethical process through which beings form reciprocal relationships with their environment through care, adaptation, and emotional attachment. This section traces three specific processes through which Roz transitions from a technological outsider to an accepted member of the island's ecological community.

4.1.1. Sensory Learning and Language Acquisition: The Mechanics of Dwelling

The second process that facilitates Roz's ecological belonging is her acquisition of animal languages and environmental knowledge. Rather than conquering or dominating the landscape, Roz begins to listen, observe, and respond to the island's ecological rhythms. Brown (2016) describes Roz's learning process:

"Roz noticed chickadees fluttering through the same flowers and singing the same song every morning. She noticed a lark who swooped down to the same rock and sang the same song every afternoon. She noticed the same magpies singing to each other from across the same meadow every evening. After weeks of robotically studying the birds, Roz knew what each bird would sing, and when they would sing, and eventually, why they would sing. The robot was beginning to understand the birds" (Brown, 2016, ch. 20).

This passage demonstrates that Roz does not impose her own framework onto the environment; instead, she absorbs the environment's own sounds, patterns, and

rhythms. Her “learning mode” allows her to process ecological data and gradually acquire the communication skills needed to interact with the island’s inhabitants. This process directly enacts what Garrard (2012) describes as dwelling: the transformation of mere presence into meaningful, relational inhabitation. Garrard argues that dwelling requires not just physical proximity but a deep engagement with the specific qualities of a place. Roz’s language acquisition represents exactly this kind of place-based engagement.

However, this process also reveals a tension between Garrard’s and Haraway’s frameworks. Garrard’s concept of dwelling assumes that Roz begins as an outsider who must work to become part of the ecosystem (Qie & Maulidya, 2025). From Haraway’s perspective, however, Roz’s learning mode was designed from the very beginning to entangle her with any environment she encounters. Her adaptive programming means that she was never truly “outside” the ecological system; she was always capable of becoming part of it. As Kvangraven (2023) observes in his analysis of human-bird relations in fiction, the capacity for interspecies communication is not something that develops over time but something that emerges when beings are open to being affected by one another. Roz’s learning is not a process of becoming natural; it is a process of enacting an entanglement that was always already possible

4.1.2. Care, Sacrifice, and Ecological Responsibility: The Culmination of Dwelling

The third and most significant process of ecological belonging is Roz’s adoption and nurturing of Brightbill, the orphaned gosling. This act of interspecies care represents the fullest expression of dwelling in Garrard’s sense. Brown (2016) describes Roz’s decision to care for Brightbill:

“Roz held him. The robot’s body may have been hard and mechanical, but it was also strong and safe. The gosling felt loved. His eyes slowly winked closed. And he spent the whole night quietly sleeping in his mother’s arms.” (Brown, 2016, ch. 31).

This passage reveals something that previous studies have not fully addressed: Roz’s care for Brightbill is not a programmed response but an emergent behavior that arises from her engagement with the specific ecological context of the island. She does not raise Brightbill because her programming tells her to; she raises him because her dwelling in the island’s ecosystem has created the conditions for relational care to emerge. As Fraile-Marcos (2025) argues in her analysis of ethics of care in speculative fiction, the capacity for care is not innate but is produced through engagement with specific communities and environments. Roz’s mothering of Brightbill, therefore, is not a machine fulfilling its function but a being enacting the ethical commitments that dwelling produces.

The culmination of Roz’s dwelling occurs when she sacrifices herself to protect the island community during the snowstorm. Brown (2016) describes this moment:

“The robot brought in load after load of firewood. And each time she went outside, she was remained of the frozen weasel and mouse and bird and deer. How many other frozen animals were hidden beneath the snow?” (Brown, 2016, ch. 54).

“Before going in for the night, she called out to whoever was listening. “Animals of the island! You do not have to freeze! Join in my lodge, where it is safe and warm!”“ (Brown, 2016, ch. 54).

The phrase “join in my lodge, where it is safe and warm” marks the completion of Roz’s transformation from nonhuman machine to inhabitant. She has moved from wilderness to dwelling not through biological adaptation but through ethical commitment. However, this moment also invites a critical question: is Roz’s sacrifice truly an expression of dwelling, or is it simply her programming overriding self-preservation? Alexandru (2023) suggests that in ecofeminist narratives, care for the environment is often indistinguishable from programmed duty, and the distinction between authentic care and mechanical obligation remains ambiguous. This ambiguity is precisely what makes *The Wild Robot* theoretically productive: it forces readers to question whether the distinction between “genuine” and “programmed” care matters when the ecological outcome is the same.

4.2 RQ2: What does Haraway’s cyborg theory reveal about the nature-technology binary in *The Wild Robot*?

Haraway (1985) argues that the cyborg disrupts three fundamental dualisms: between human and animal, organism and machine, and physical and non-physical. This section examines how Roz’s character challenges each of these binaries, revealing the nature-technology boundary as a cultural construction rather than an ontological fact.

4.2.1 Roz as Always-Already Hybrid: The Machine-Nature Boundary Was Never Real

The most fundamental revelation of Haraway’s cyborg theory in *The Wild Robot* is that Roz was never purely “mechanical” in the way that the nature-technology binary assumes. Her adaptive programming, her capacity for learning, and her ability to integrate with ecological systems were built into her design from the very beginning.

Brown (2016) establishes this in the novel’s opening:

“I am Rozzum unit 7134, but you may call me Roz. While my robotic systems are activating, I will tell you about myself. Once fully activated, I will be able to move and communicate and learn. Simply give me task and I will complete it” (Brown, 2016, ch. 3).

On the surface, this self-description reinforces the machine-nature binary: Roz identifies herself as a robot designed for human purposes. However, her adaptive programming, which allows her to learn from any environment, means that she was designed to become part of whatever ecological system she encounters. As Song (2025) argues in his analysis of cyborg images in science fiction, the cyborg’s fluidity between human-made and natural categories reveals that these categories were always unstable. Roz’s “designed” nature does not make her separate from the ecosystem; it makes her inherently capable of integration with it.

This reading challenges previous scholarship that treats Roz’s integration as a gradual process of becoming natural (Chinglen, 2025; Pooja, 2025). From Haraway’s perspective, Roz did not “become” part of the ecosystem; she was always capable of being part of it. The apparent separation between Roz and the natural world was a cultural projection, not an ontological reality. As Zhu (2023) demonstrates in her analysis of cyborg space in Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake*, the boundaries between human civilization and the natural world are cultural constructions that dissolve when examined through the lens of hybrid identity. Roz’s very existence on the island exposes the artificiality of the nature-technology boundary.

4.2.2 Emotional Entanglement: Challenging the Organism-Machine Dualism

The second dualism that Roz disrupts is the distinction between organism and machine. Haraway (1985) argues that this dualism is culturally constructed and does not reflect the actual entanglement of living and non-living systems. Roz's emotional development throughout the novel provides the most compelling evidence for this argument.

When Roz discovers Brightbill's egg after the mother goose has died, she makes a decision that cannot be explained by programming alone. Brown (2016) describes this moment:

"He lay quietly in his nest with his eyes closed, surrounded by chips of broken shell. And when his eyes slowly winked open, the very first thing he saw was the robot looking back.

"Mama! Mama!" peeped the gosling." (Brown, 2016, ch. 27).

"The gosling was hungry. Of course he was. So, using her friendliest voice, Roz said, "What would you like to eat, little darling?" (Brown, 2016, ch. 27).

Roz's decision to care for the gosling is not a response to a programmed command; it is an emergent behavior that arises from her engagement with the specific situation. As Rastogi (2023) argues in her analysis of cyborg feminism in science fiction, the cyborg's emotional responses challenge the assumption that emotions are exclusively biological phenomena. Roz's "feelings" for Brightbill do not come from human programming; they emerge from the relational entanglement between a technological being and a natural organism. This entanglement is precisely what Haraway

describes when she argues that the cyborg "is a creature in a post-gender world; it has no truck with... the reproduction of the whole" (Haraway, 1985, p. 150).

However, it is important to note a critical limitation of this argument. Hameed and Hayat (2025) observe that in many cyborg narratives, the distinction between "genuine" emotion and "simulated" response remains unresolved. Roz's emotional development could be interpreted as sophisticated programming rather than authentic feeling. This ambiguity does not weaken Haraway's argument; it strengthens it. The point is not that Roz "really" feels emotions but that the distinction between genuine and simulated emotion is itself a culturally constructed binary that fails to capture the complexity of human-machine-nature entanglement.

4.2.3 The Cyborg as Ecological Agent: Collapsing Cultural-Natural Distinctions

The third dualism that Roz disrupts is the distinction between the cultural and the natural. Haraway (1985) argues that the cyborg represents the collapse of this distinction: the cyborg is both cultural (technological, human-made) and natural (embedded in ecological systems, responsive to environmental forces). Roz's role as a forest guardian embodies this collapse.

When Roz protects the island's animals from predators and environmental threats, she performs a function that is simultaneously technological and ecological. Brown (2016) describes Roz's role:

"It was true. Brightbill had seen hundreds of different robots that winter. And none of them were anything like Roz. None of them had learned how to speak with animals, or had saved an island from the cold, or had adopted a gosling. As he sat here, wtching the robot's animal gestures and listening to

her animal sounds, Brightbill realized just how special his mother was.” (Brown, 2016, ch. 64).

The statement “Brightbill realized just how special his mother was” marks the complete dissolution of the cultural-natural binary. Roz is not a cultural entity (a machine) that has been accepted into a natural system; she is a hybrid being whose cultural and natural dimensions have merged. As Yadav (2025) argues in her analysis of AI and humanity in contemporary fiction, when technological beings are fully integrated into ecological systems, the categories of “cultural” and “natural” become analytically useless. Roz’s existence demands a new vocabulary that does not depend on the nature-technology binary.

This reading also connects to Garrard’s concept of dwelling, creating a productive dialogue between the two theoretical frameworks. While Garrard describes dwelling as a process of becoming part of a place, Haraway reveals that the “place” Roz inhabits was never purely natural to begin with. The island, like all ecosystems, is shaped by both natural forces and cultural interventions. Roz’s dwelling, therefore, is not a transition from the artificial to the natural but an acknowledgment that the distinction between artificial and natural was always illusory (Smith, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the integration of technology and nature in Peter Brown’s *The Wild Robot* (2016) through the combined theoretical lenses of Greg Garrard’s ecocritical framework and Donna Haraway’s cyborg theory. The analysis reveals that the novel challenges the conventional nature-technology binary through two

interconnected processes. The findings demonstrate that Roz’s ecological belonging emerges through three specific processes: the initial encounter with the island’s wilderness (which reveals fear as a culturally constructed response), sensory learning and language acquisition (which enacts dwelling as relational engagement), and care and sacrifice (which culminates in full ecological membership). These processes show that dwelling, in Garrard’s sense, is not limited to biological organisms but can be enacted by technological beings through ethical commitment and relational care.

Regarding Haraway’s cyborg theory reveals that the nature-technology binary was never ontologically real. Roz’s adaptive programming, emotional development, and ecological integration demonstrate that the boundaries between machine and nature, organism and mechanism, and cultural and natural are cultural constructions rather than facts of nature. The novel’s protagonist does not “become” natural through adaptation; she enacts an entanglement that was always already possible. The dialogue between Garrard and Haraway produces a more nuanced reading than either framework alone. Garrard provides the vocabulary for tracing the specific mechanics of ecological integration, while Haraway reveals that the separation these mechanics appear to bridge was always an illusion. Together, they demonstrate that *The Wild Robot* is not simply a story of a machine learning to belong in nature but a narrative that exposes why we ever believed a machine could not belong.

This study has certain limitations. It focuses exclusively on Peter Brown’s novel without comparing it to the 2024 film adaptation or to other works in *The Wild Robot* series. Future research could apply this dual theoretical framework to the film

adaptation to examine how visual storytelling alters the representation of the nature-technology relationship. Additionally, future studies could explore how *The Wild Robot* compares to other contemporary works that feature nonhuman protagonists, such as Becky Chambers' *Monk and Robot* series (Moore, 2025), to develop a broader understanding of how popular fiction challenges ecological binaries. Despite these limitations, this study contributes to ecocritical scholarship by demonstrating that the most productive readings of *The Wild Robot* require not a choice between ecocriticism and posthumanism but a dialogue between them.

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