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## HARRY POTTER: AN ATTEMPT FOR PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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### **Abstract**

The study examines the magical world in Harry Potter's fantasy series in light of Eco critique, a generally regarded renowned idea that appears in important works as a quintessence manifested in a variety of writers. This research tries to decipher the ecological aspects of the series. Incorporating chimaera components into the natural environment validates nature's authority. Every fantastical aspect created in this series is linked to nature. The three different facets of nature — Dichotomy, Safe-Haven, and 'Green Man' – are anatomized in the framework of Eco critique in the Harry Potter series. This study aims to reveal the metamorphosis of a magical and spell-filled world into a natural one rich in woodlands, animals, and man's interaction with natural forces.

**Keywords:** Eco criticism, chimeric elements, Dichotomy, Safe Haven, Green Man.

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### **Introduction**

Harry Potter is a fantasy novel series written by J. K. Rowling that follows the adventures of Harry James Potter, a young wizard, and his pals Hermione Jean Granger and Ronald Bilius Weasley, whom he met at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Harry was the only child of Lilly and James Potter, who sacrificed their lives to defend him from the clutches of the Dark Lord Voldemort, the head of the Death Eaters, an organisation of wicked witches and wizards dedicated to establishing Voldemort as a dominant force both in the muggle and wizard worlds. Harry Potter, the series' protagonist, is an eleven-year-old boy who lives with his uncle, aunt, and cousin, the Durselys. On his eleventh birthday, Harry learns from Rubeus Hagrid- a half-giant that he is not an ordinary young boy but a wizard whose parents was also wizards and didn't die in a car crash like the Dursleys framed. Being a wizard Harry was welcomed to the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry where his parents studied, met and fell in love with each other.

The novel follows Harry Potter's psychological transformation from a youthful, naive wizard to a powerful and fearless wizard. The series is divided into seven sections, each of which chronicles a year in Harry Potter's and his friends' lives. The seven Harry Potter series are Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, Harry Potter and the Half-blood Prince, and Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows. The series is mostly on the rivalry between good and evil, and later in the series, the good triumphs over the bad.

One of the vital themes in the series is death." My books are largely about death. They open with the death of Harry's parents. There is Voldemort's obsession with conquering death and his quest for immortality at any price, the goal of anyone with magic. I so understand why Voldemort wants to conquer death. We are all frightened of it." states Rowling(Rowling). Other major themes of the series are survival, oppression, love, hatred, loss, prejudice and pre-choices. Apart from these elements, this series is endowed with an enchanting natural milieu comprising woods, wild animals, herbs etc. that have a prominent presence and a vital role to play throughout the novels. These integral features help to analyse this series as an Eco fiction under the lens of Ecocriticism.

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The theory of Ecocriticism ensnared the attention of literary scholars and proved itself as an intriguing domain of investigation in literature for the last three decades. It is the deliberation on the relationship between literature and the physical environment. For the Eco critic, nature exists beyond a layman's understanding and is present as an entity that affects everything including human evolution. As observed by Peter Barry, ecocritics “turn away from the ‘social constructivism’ and ‘linguistic determinism’ of dominant literary theories [...] and instead emphasize ecocentric values of meticulous observation, collective ethical responsibility, and the claims of the world beyond ourselves” (Barry 255). They give attention to the natural representation in a larger diorama, they don't simply read literature from an eco-centric point of view rather they look for life in proportion to nature, importance of natural resources in our life, human civilization along with nature, our deeds which harm the ecology, wars and their adverse effects on society and many other things. Human perception of wilderness is scrutinized in Ecocriticism, and how it has altered throughout history is traced and whether or not current environmental issues are scrupulously represented in popular culture and modern literature.

Ecocritical reading of Harry Potter series begins with the Forbidden Forest which encircles the periphery of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. J K Rowling has derived the inspiration to write the Harry Potter series from the Edinburgh's natural milieu. Nature chiefly has been portrayed as dark and obsolete by the author through the portrayal of the Forbidden Forest, which is rich in chimeric and wild creatures like Hippogriff, Centaurs, Acromantula, Unicorn and Werewolf.

Another instance where the presence of nature is portrayed at its best is the Triwizard Tournament, the most onerous competition of the whole series is introduced in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. The student who wins the Triwizard Tournament seems to achieve eternal glory, but to do this, that student must survive three extremely dangerous tasks. This is the testimony for the complexities posed by the tasks as it is to determine the most courageous wizard with a powerful mental ability. In this sporting competition, nature plays a prominent role by posing a hostile and challenging environment for the participants. For instance, the first task is to retrieve the golden egg guarded by a dragon, which is to analyse the competitor's adeptness to tame the components of nature. The second task is set under the black lake where the participants have to save their loved ones by developing the abilities to adapt to the aquatic ecosystem- Viktor Krum undergoes partial transfiguration into a shark, Fleur Delacour makes use of Bubble- Head charm to breath underwater akin to aquatic beings, whereas Harry Potter resorts to Gillyweed to grow a pair of gills to survive underwater. The third and the last task demands the participants to locate the Triwizard Cup inside the bewitched labyrinth crafted out of nature's mould. The principle behind conquering the task is the idea of the “survival of the fittest.”

The magical aspects shown in this series have a strong visual and compositional relationship to nature. Wands, a wizard's most important tool, are carved from nature, and its core is made up of natural materials that change according to the wizard's personality, as described in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. They're all constructed of natural materials like phoenix feathers, dragon heartstrings, unicorn tail hair, and so on. Natural objects such as wands are seen to be more powerful than the wizard himself. "It's actually the wand that picks the wizard," says the wandmaker Ollivander (Rowling 89), demonstrating the supremacy of nature over wizardry.

Patronus charms also throw light on the interconnectedness between chimeric element and nature in terms of appearance. It is a highly difficult and defensive charm which intends to produce a guardian in the form of an animal. When there exists true love between two individuals, their Patronus or guardian animal becomes the same, for example, Severus Snape and Lily Potter share

the same guardian animal, a doe. This quality is bestowed upon the Patronus charm by the author to show that nature is the purest form of love.

### Objectives

This study seeks to examine Harry Potter from an eco-critical perspective, viewing it as an Eco fiction rather than the ostensibly magical world it depicts. Natural aspects, particularly characters' interactions with environment and its elements, as well as the author's description of nature, might be used to describe the phantasmal milieu of Harry Potter novels.

### Research Method

This study paper will go on to J.K. Rowling's Potter novels and seek to recapitulate them via an Eco critical lens. This research is carried out by dissecting the Harry Potter series in three dimensions within the context of environmental critique.

### Analysis and Interpretation

J K Rowling makes frequent use of imagery of Mother Nature in her Harry Potter novels. It has always served as a backdrop for the chimeric elements, including the greatest school of witchcraft, Hogwarts, which the author describes in Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone as "a vast castle with many turrets and towers, perched atop a high mountain on the other side, its windows sparkling in the starry sky." 119 (Rowling) As a result, nature serves as both a basis and a mystical manifestation for the great magical school.

Mother Nature has always been a blessing to mankind; she has engulfed the entire human race in her grasp. Mother Nature, in addition to being the personification of virtues, is also a mix of vices and virtues. She can't always be seen in a positive light, but she may also be seen in a negative one, because the same nature that protects mankind can also destroy it. As a result, nature has always lived in duality, and this duality is explored in J K Rowling's world-famous Fantastical series Harry Potter.

J. K. Rowling has depicted nature in both its majesty and its obscurity in her Harry Potter series. The author has already demonstrated the importance of nature at the start of the novel by describing a Hogwarts custom in which students are required to bring a loyal, steadfast friend in the shape of a pet to accompany them on their magical journey. Harry's Hedwig, Ron's Scabbers, Hermione's Crookshanks, Voldemort's Basilisk, Dumbledore's Fawkes, and other pets were companions to their masters in both bad and good times. These companions are the embodiment of loyalty, having dedicated themselves to their master's service regardless of his motivations.

The study of the duality of nature can be approached in multiple ways such as the duality existing in the same situation, duality is shown by same elements, duality present in Forest and duality as a result of Influence.

Table-1-Manifestation of Dichotomy

DUALITY	Same situation	Same elements	Forest	Influence
Positive	phoenix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aragog</li> <li>• Centaurs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe Haven</li> <li>• Harry Potter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hedwig</li> </ul>

<b>Negative</b>	basilisk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aragog</li> <li>• Centaurs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ron Weasley</li> <li>• Voldemort attack on Harry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nagini</li> <li>• Basilisk</li> <li>• Scabbers</li> </ul>
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As per the above table, duality existing in the Same situation can be analysed as, for instance in *The Chamber of Secrets* towards the end when Harry was in a duel with Basilisk-the snake, he was mortally wounded with basilisk venom and Phoenix bird came for his aid by helping him heal with its tears. Here the dichotomy of natural elements is evident as Basilisk and Phoenix are the manifestations of iniquity and goodness respectively.

Dichotomy existing in same elements is best illustrated through Aragog and Centaurs. These creatures exhibit their duality through their approach towards different characters in the series. For instance, in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, Centaurs protect Harry from Voldemort's advances in the Forbidden Forest but the same creatures attack Dolores Umbridge in the Forbidden Forest as she chokes one of the Centaurs. Here the creature depicts its duality based on attitudes exhibited by different characters towards them. Similar duality can be seen in the case of Aragog, where he had a companionable relationship with Hagrid whereas he had animosity towards all other characters other than Hagrid. For instance, when Harry along with Ron went to Aragog's abode for seeking information about the Chamber of Secrets, there Aragog and his children tried to harm them.

Forest, a recurring picture in the series, is likewise in a state of dichotomy. It's home to both lovable and scary individuals. It serves a good purpose by providing a safe refuge for characters such as Harry Potter, Voldemort, and Sirius Black, among others. For some characters, including as Ron Weasley, the Forbidden Forest looked to be a dark and terrible place. Harry Potter's encounter in the Forbidden Forest starkly demonstrates the forest's dual nature. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows ended with a peaceful time in the forbidden forest, when he saw his loved ones thanks to the Resurrection Stone, but it also brought Harry turbulent experiences when he was assaulted by Voldemort with the Killing Curse, which is one of the powerful unforgivable curses.

Dichotomy existing in nature is also exhibited through the manipulative actions of characters, who influenced the elements of nature for their benefits. The manipulation is exerted by the characters upon the wild creatures thus these creatures appear to be the reflections of their masters' qualities. For Harry his pet Hedwig an owl was a loyal companion who even sacrificed its life for his master. Just like Harry, Hedwig also depicts noble qualities. Similarly, Nagini and Basilisk are also the metaphors for Voldemort's wickedness. Though Nature is a predominant element throughout the series it was not an authoritative figure because characters had the power to manipulate it for their personal gains. Another aspect of dichotomy revealed by pets is in the case of Scabbers and Hedwig, where Scabbers is the symbol of disloyalty and cunningness, Hedwig is the emblem of loyalty and sacrifice.

Thus, the bicameral nature delineated in this series however, a preference is given to its positive aspect.

### A. Safe Haven

For millennia, Mother Nature, the greatest guardian, has served as a haven for all living things. In her world-famous Harry Potter series, J K Rowling has creatively depicted nature as a safe refuge. She outlined a variety of intricate stories in this series in which both the evil and virtuous characters sought refuge in nature when confronted with a perilous situation. Both small and significant

characters seek refuge in nature throughout the story. The characters found refuge in nature by hiding in the woods or metamorphosing into natural components. When faced with a quagmire, nature was their only rescuer, despite the fact that magical creatures and renowned wizards are powerful enough to execute vast enchantments.

Nature serves as a shielding force in this narrative, providing protection for the characters. For the most part, the Albanian woodland, Forbidden Forest, and other locations served as a host and a safe haven for the individuals. For example, Peter Pettigrew, a backslider, betrayed Potter's family—his best friend's family—for his own selfish gain, yet when he sought shelter in nature to escape people's fury, nature protected him for twelve years. In the Weasley household, he pretended to be a rat named Scabbers. Another example of nature's shielding power is Sirius Black, who transformed into Animagus, a gigantic black dog that helped him escape the Prison of Azkaban and protected him from being apprehended by Dementors and Ministry of Magic.

Other than metamorphosing into elements of nature, some characters used wilderness as a cover from their enemies. Hagrid who is portrayed as a green man found nature as his sanctuary when Voldemort sent death eaters to attack him, he harboured himself inside a mountain to escape from his foes. Along with seeking refuge for himself in the forest, Hagrid also concealed his giant half-brother Grawp from the civilized world which considered him as an invalid. Harry and Hagrid aside from concealing themselves in the forest, they also protected other components of nature like Buckbeak and Aragog from the cruel external world and hid them in the Forbidden Forest. In return for their aid, Buckbeak protected Harry and Hermione from a werewolf attack, through this the author communicates the idea that those who protect nature is protected by nature.

The principal characters like Harry, Hermione, Ron and Voldemort were also harboured by nature in the midst of adversity. Even the mightiest protective charms of the greatest sorcerer Albus Dumbledore couldn't protect Harry and his friends from Voldemort's attack, thus making nature come as their last resort. Initially, Harry, Hermione and Ron sought safety in Grimmauld Palace where the strongest magic and jinx were reinforced to shield them from their foes but this later proved to be of no help. Hence, they eloped to the forest to remain undercover and moved from one place to another and lived amidst the trees. Aside from guarding them, the forest provided them with the solution to their problems as Harry found the Gryffindor sword under a pond near their camping site which helped him to annihilate the Horcruxes that embedded Voldemort's soul. Even Voldemort, who is the antagonist and the most ruthless character throughout the series sought shelter and safety in Forbidden Forest and Albanian forest against the Ministry of Magic and Dumbledore. At the beginning of the Harry Potter series, it is revealed that Voldemort drank Unicorn blood in the Forbidden Forest to sustain his life as his soul was weak due to the rebound curse from Harry Potter. When Voldemort felt hopeless that any of his death eaters would help him and feared that he would never regain his power and former glory, Albanian forest cared him and sustained his life, thus in the hour of need, only nature was there to cater Voldemort.

Analysing the attributes of nature as a safe haven, it appears that nature has always protected anyone who sought her help despite the person's character and conduct. The noblest and unadulterated character like Hagrid and the most barbarous character like Voldemort found nature as their saviour during their hardships. One can trace the motherly attributes of nature in the Safe Haven as it is akin to how a mother shields and cares her children, mother nature looked after the characters and protected them from harm's way.

J K Rowling also discusses the idea of modern man inflicting destruction upon himself by distancing from nature. The author vividly shows that whenever the characters distanced themselves from nature doom comes onto them. None of the characters like Voldemort, Harry and

Sirius got hurt while they were in the lap of nature but only when Harry and Voldemort came out of their hiding both were harmed. This is the same scenario in the present modern world where the man lost his contact with nature and his deterioration commenced.

Nature thus, shields her creation that seeks refuge in her through varied manner. One such manner is by the employment of her true disciples, for instance Rubeus Hagrid, who throughout the series proves to be a sincere, compassionate and untainted creation of nature that acts as a saviour for those in need.

## **B. Green Man**

Rubeus Hagrid is a fictional character from J K Rowling's world-famous Harry Potter series. Rubeus Hagrid is a figure that embodies the goal of ecocriticism. He is the gamekeeper and keeper of Hogwarts keys, and he is half-giant and half-human. Hagrid is an important character in the Harry Potter series. The spectator experiences Hagrid's unwavering passion for nature right from the start of the series, which is shown in his unwavering liking for all exotic species as well as his odd wardrobe. He is such a pure character that, unlike other wizards who polish and change their natural appearance, he loves his natural look gifted by nature. As a result, his rustic and pastoral appearance appeals to him stand out from others.

The author herself quoted in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* that Hagrid's "face was almost completely hidden by a long, shaggy mane of hair and a wild, tangled beard, but you could make out his eyes, glinting like black beetles under all the hairs" (Rowling 50). Hagrid has been portrayed as a physically intimidating character, but actually is delightful and vehement about things in an unanticipated way. He affiliated with nature at a deeper level which ordinary folks couldn't. He succoured even the most vicious creatures that instilled abhorrence and aversion in the mind of others. He is characterized as a semi-wild person who lives in harmony with nature. He is noted for buying ferocious three-headed dogs, befriending giant spiders and smuggling dragon eggs into his cabin.

Hagrid can be considered as an epitome of selfless love even toward the most despised creatures. He risked his life as well as broke the sacred rules of Hogwarts for protecting a monstrous creature, Aragog a giant spider. The forbidden act of keeping dangerous beings in possession culminated in him being wrongfully accused of opening the Chamber of Secrets and thereafter his expulsion from the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Despite his expulsion, he didn't abandon Aragog but brought him to the forbidden forest where he found him a mate named Mosag and an entire colony of giant spiders were established. In *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, Hagrid again risked his life to regain the corpse of Aragog and to give him a proper funeral as he feared that his children would gobble his body. The zenith of Hagrid's selfless love is reflected when he encounters a situation in the climactic battle where the Aragog's children attack the Hogwarts defenders frantically, irrespective of their actions Hagrid appears as their saviour who safeguards them back to the forbidden forest.

Hagrid's communion with nature bore in him a deep faith and trust in nature rather than the world outside. This conviction made him bring his brother Grawp to the forbidden forest, who was intimidated and loathed by the so-called civilized society. The proximity of Hagrid's abode to the forest and its serene atmosphere in itself highlights his detachment with the outer world thus providing him with peace and tranquillity. For him, the forbidden forest was not a symbol of horror or mystery but rather it was his 'back garden'. Hagrid's hut was intriguing whenever Harry and his friends visited the hut, they always found something new and interesting elements of nature.

## Conclusion

Nature is sometimes depicted as a mother who watches over her offspring and chastises them when they stray from the path. In this series, the essence of dualism is demonstrated, with nature attacking man only when evilness blooms in them. Nature has never hurt Hagrid, who is regarded as the most sympathetic and pure character in the series, although all other characters have been subjected to both the harsh and beneficial aspects of nature, depending on their vices and virtues. As seen in many of the characters, man has lost contact with Mother Nature sometime along the way in his manic pursuit for worldly growth, and this has proven to be catastrophic for him. Many characters fall into this category, since they either question or engage in conflicts that are likely to raise a slew of unanswerable everlasting questions, all of which would leave a mark on the otherwise dominating entity.

Because of his love for wild animals and intimate relationship with nature, Hagrid was named professor of Care of Magical Creatures. Buckbeak was devastated when he learned he was going to be executed since he was unable to stop it. When his house caught fire, he risked his life to save his pet Fang. All of these events demonstrate his unwavering love for nature, and he was one of the most honourable and trustworthy characters in the whole series as a result of these traits.

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