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“A COMPARISON OF THE ATTITUDES TOWARD NATURE IN LONDON’S “TO BUILD A FIRE” AND CATHER’S ‘NEIGHBOUR ROSICKY’”

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ABSTRACT

Toward the end of the 19th century, the vision of nature shifted from its romantic idealization to an understanding of it as a harsh and indifferent being. This shift is compatible with the change from Romanticism to Realism/Naturalism. As a naturalist, Jack London (1876-1916) deals with a character’s prejudiced and hostile stance to nature in “To Build a Fire” (1908). On the other hand, Willa Cather (1873-1947) adopts a Romantic/ecological point of view to nature in “Neighbour Rosicky” (1928), though Romanticism had lost its impact in her time. The works as representatives of opposite movements can be regarded as opposite in terms of their perceptions of nature, too. In

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the first, 'the man' underestimates the power of nature, the intensity of cold weather and does not establish a positive bond with his dog. At the end, nature with its indifference overcomes him severely. On the contrary, Cather's protagonist Rosicky is a city-bred man, but chooses to lead a natural and ecological life after thirty-five. He cherishes nature and its components; in return, he is rewarded with spiritual satisfaction. Both stories epitomize the concept of nature by portraying the characters and their casts of mind. This study juxtaposes two opposite works which can be regarded as belonging to two opposite literary trends.

Key words: Vision Of Nature, London, "To Build A Fire", Cather, "Neighbour Rosicky".

LONDON'IN "ATEŞ YAKMAK" VE CATHER'IN "KOMŞUM ROSICKY" ADLI ÖYKÜLERİNDE DOĞAYA KARŞI OLAN TUTUMLARIN BİR MUKAYESESİ

ÖZ

19. yüzyılın sonuna doğru, doğa hakkındaki görüşler onun romantic anlamda idealleştirilmesinden haşin ve kayıtsız bir varlık olduğu anlayışına doğru değişmiştir. Bu değişim Romantizm'den Gerçekçilik/Doğalcılığa doğru olan değişimle koştur. Doğalcı bir yazar olarak Jack London (1876-1916), "Ateş Yakmak" (1908) başlıklı öyküde bir karakterin doğaya karşı önyargılı ve düşmanca duruşunu ele alır. Öte yandan Willa Cather (1873-1947), Romantizm onun yaşadığı dönemde etkisini yitirmiş olmasına rağmen "Komşum Rosicky" (1928) adlı öyküsünde doğaya karşı Romantik/ekolojik bir bakış açısı benimser. Karşıt akımların temsilcileri olarak eserler, doğa anlayışları açısından da karşıt olarak düşünülebilir. İlk eserde 'adam' doğanın gücü ile soğuk havanın yoğunluğunu hafife alır ve köpeğiyle olumlu bir bağ kurmaz. Sonunda, kayıtsızlığıyla doğa, onu sert bir biçimde alt eder. Bunun tersine Cather'ın kahramanı Rosicky, şehirde yetişmiş biridir ama doğal ve ekolojik bir hayat sürmeyi otuzbeş yaşından sonra seçer. Doğayı ve onun unsurlarını aziz tutar; karşılığında manevi tatmin ile ödülünü alır. Her iki öykü de, karakterleri ve onların düşünüş şekillerini tasvir ederek doğa kavramını somutlaştırır. Bu çalışma, iki karşıt edebi akıma ait olarak düşünülebilecek iki karşıt eseri mukayese etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Doğa Anlayışı, London, "Ateş Yakmak", Cather, "Komşum Rosicky".

Beginning with the 16th century, great waves of immigrants came to America to find wealth and religious freedom. Mostly Puritans, they encountered the Native Americans, Indians as well as a harsh and pristine natural surrounding. They found rich natural resources but they had to struggle with this alien climate, deep forests or vast prairies to survive and settle. Until the emergence of American Romanticism, the perception of nature among the early settlers was of negation, fear and hatred. After it, the Americans saw nature as something of valuable and awesome. Thus, American nationality, culture, mythology and cast of mind are deeply influenced by nature from the time of its formation.

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Many writers deal with American landscape together with its components including human beings, reflecting reciprocal relationships between them. In Romantic mode, man is integrated with nature and reveres it. Its processes awaken in him an admiration of it. On the contrary, in Naturalism, he is alone and a victim standing opposed to nature. He is a puppet or a toy of heredity and environmental conditions in the hands of fate because he lacks will power; he struggles for survival in a hostile nature or society.

Jack London (1876-1916), according to Ross is a naturalist writer: "The age in which London lived and wrote was the age of Darwinism applied to society, of pragmatism and instrumentalism, of Freud, of Veblen, of Henry Adams, of Marx, Jung, Pavlov, Nietzsche. It is not surprising, therefore, that novelists like London, Norris and Dreiser display in their work a kind of eclecticism, seeming sometimes to be behaviorists..." (1982: 57). In "To Build a Fire" (1908), "a little story about a character with no personality, thoughts, or feelings, who goes outside in cold weather in the Yukon and freezes to death" (Ewoldt, 1984: 24), man's narrow-mindedness, arrogance and his stubbornness toward the nature's power are exhibited. The unnamed protagonist is a newcomer in the Yukon Valley, Alaska, a place near the North pole, pursuing gold. His aim is to reach the camp to meet his friends by six o'clock in the evening. It is obvious that all are poor, because under such hard conditions, in a weather of extreme cold nobody can risk his life for finding gold. They cannot prospect future consequences and the risks of present conditions. Here, London at the beginning draws attention to poverty as a social threat and its destructive forces on men.

'The man' as a naturalist subject lacks caution and foresight: "Day had broken cold and gray, exceedingly cold and gray, when the man turned aside from the main Yukon trail and climbed the high earth-bank, where a dim and little-travelled trail led eastward through the fat spruce timberland" (London, 2022: 1). He is enemy to nature and sees it something to be conquered. He begins his journey alone in the morning on an unaccustomed place with a wolf-dog following not the main road but a secondary trail, which poses danger. He chooses a wrong way of travelling under very difficult conditions. He should have waited till the weather becomes better. He neglects all these negations, not seeing anything wrong with his plan. The weather is really cold but he insists that he will continue to walk. He does not want to think about the meaning and possible effects of cold. Although he is a newcomer and he does not know anything about this kind of weather, he is confident of himself. He has pride against nature. He continues to walk as if the weather did not give any harm to him. He takes only one meal. "The trouble with him was that he was without imagination. He was quick and alert in the things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances" (London, 1). He senses and measures the cold, but cannot evaluate its denotations. Bowen emphasizes "the chechaquo's rational limitations. Although a somewhat observant man, he is a man who does not penetrate beyond the obvious. And, as London emphasizes, he does not possess the ability to connect isolated phenomena..." (1971: 287)

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As 'the man' does not have a coherent tie with nature, he has no positive dialogue with his wolf-dog, either. He relies on his mind greatly and London shows him as a man who is illusioned by his mental capacity. He is a materialist and desires to be rich, for he is out in this extreme cold. As a naturalist, he experiments with a short-sighted, obstinate and unreasonable man, a defected one under Yukon conditions and hints us how he could survive. If he understood his vulnerability in nature, and were respectful to its cycles, he would live longer.

Willa Sibert Cather (1873-1947) writes in the first half of the 20th century like London and reflects the loneliness and difficulties experienced by the immigrants as well as their pleasure in living in harmony with nature. She adopts an idealist perspective and prioritizes nature, so she may be regarded as a romantic writer. She confirms in 1895: "Romance is the highest form of fiction it will never desert us It will come back to us in all its radiance and eternal freshness in some one of the dawning seasons of TimeChildren, the sea, the sun, God himself are all romanticists" (Slote, 1966: 62). For her, nature offers quietude and joy of life and it is a regenerating force.

In her "Neighbour Rosicky" (1928), a pastoral short story, a character who is in harmony with nature is exhibited. Unlike 'the man' in "To Build a Fire", Anton Rosicky adopts a Romantic/ecological attitude centering not man but nature in life and leads a life of tranquility. He regards himself not superior to it, but a component. Apart from his early years, he lives in the city and struggles to survive there. Deeply and negatively affected by city life, due to rapid urbanization and materialism, he chooses rural life adopting commitment to nature and his land. He learns farming after thirty-five, accepts natural cycles as they are and adapts himself to them, not fighting with them like 'the man' in London's work. He enjoys what he has, never trying to get more by pressing on himself. He is prudent, considers his conditions and is never aggressive against nature. He gives importance to respect, love, responsibility and concord in his relationship with nature. He suggests a romantic/ecological life style with small community, spiritual tie to soil and places. Unlike 'the man', Rosicky knows that his existence is closely linked to the soil and centers nature in his life, caring for it and being satisfied with it. Unlike London's protagonist, he believes the integrity of human beings and nature, knows its structure and has sensitivity to it. He thinks ecological values are much more important than materialism. He grows his fruits and vegetables with love and earns his living not by exploiting the land. He has his ecological identity, not an identity enemy to it. He sets free other creatures to live their lives comfortably, adopting not a hostile but friendly point of view. He interiorizes universal virtues, values and ideas like patience, sense of freedom for every creature and land ethic². He proves that

² An idea developed by A. Leopold which urges a moral relationship between human beings and nature with its organic and inorganic contents.

American dream of success is not a solid and sustainable concept and is against materialism and capitalism. With hope, devotion and steadiness, he never gives up his love and respect in the face of hardships. In an optimistic aura, he has a harmonious and joyful family that never quarrels, which shows that he is coherent with every being.

In "To Build a Fire", 'the man' uses scientific data to measure the distances, but he is devoid of integrating them to his actuality; for example, 'fifty degrees below zero' does not awaken in his mind any sense of life danger. Rosicky, in winter enjoys the snow in his house resting and watching it, waiting for the spring patiently. He has learned his place in the universe, a vulnerable creature. He takes cautions against winter conditions, but the man sets out on his journey without proper cautions. When nature warns him, when he spits he does not hear it: "There was a sharp, explosive crackle that startled him. He spat again. And again, in the air, before it could fall to the snow, the spittle crackled" (London, 1). This means it is colder than fifty below, but he feels no fear. He has a scarce lunch; he has not taken into account the possibility that the road will be longer and he will need some more food. He spits in the air but it freezes before it falls, but he is indifferent to it, cannot count that such a cold can leave him helpless and even kill him.

On the contrary, the dog perceives the conditions, the situation and what to do through its instincts and they show it the right way. It is unwilling to go further. "It knew that it was no time for travelling. Its instinct told it a truer tale than was told to the man by the man's judgment. In reality, it was not merely colder than fifty below zero; it was colder than sixty below, than seventy below. It was seventy-five below zero" (London, 2). The man does not want to understand its instincts and their guiding quality; "there was no keen intimacy between the dog and the man. The one was the toil-slave of the other, and the only caresses it had ever received were the caresses of the whip-lash and of harsh and menacing throat-sounds that threatened the whip-lash. So the dog made no effort to communicate its apprehension to the man" (London, 4). It is afraid of him and fears that if it shows its unwillingness, he will beat it. His eyelashes, eyebrows, mustache and beard freeze by moisture. He continues to chew tobacco to prevent his face freezing. His cheek-bones and nose go numb. He feels rependant not to have taken a weft. He passes on a frozen creek but there are hot springs in the area. He knows this danger: getting his feet wet means it will immediately freeze. He compels the dog to go on in front, so that it becomes the victim but it is unwilling, knowing by instinct the extreme danger of sinking into the water. He is merciless toward it, compels it more and when it steps its feet get wet. It at once bites out the ice; of course it does not know by reason that staying wet is fatal, but it knows it by instinct. Here, London makes it apparent that instincts are more important under such conditions and 'the man' should have noticed the dog's instincts and its unwillingness. 'The man' is not aware of the true nature of cold in the area. "He did not expose his fingers more than a minute, and was astonished at the swift numbness that smote them" (London,4). He is not able to comprehend and decide what to do. "He had had no chance to take a bite of biscuit. He

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struck the fingers repeatedly and returned them to the mitten, baring the other hand for the purpose of eating” (London, 4). His toes become numb and he remembers an old man warning him of the cold. “That man from Sulphur Creek had spoken the truth when telling how cold it sometimes got in the country. And he had laughed at him at the time! That showed one must not be too sure of things” (London,4). He becomes a little anxious and begins to understand his fault. He makes a fire to eat his lunch. When he again takes the road, he breaks through a hole covered by soft snow and gets wet to the knees. Angry, he curses and swears, makes a fire again struggling against natural forces. He knows that wet feet freeze faster, and works as fast as possible. He remembers the old-timer again and his advice. While walking, his blood flows but when he stays still, it does not. When he succeeds in building a fire he despises the old man: “Those old-timers were rather womanish, some of them, he thought. All a man had to do was to keep his head, and he was all right. Any man who was a man could travel alone” (London, 6). That he has built the fire under a spruce tree prepares another disaster; for he prepares his fire under the tree, when the fire grows stronger, all the snow on the branches fall on it. He thinks about a trail-mate at last when he faces all these setbacks; the other may help him all along the road.

Although he exerts great effort to make another fire in the open, he cannot use his fingers. He tries hard to keep calm and burn the matches for his wet feet are freezing. He catches sight of the dog, which watches him expectantly, expectant to get warm. He, “the man, as he beat and threshed with his arms and hands, felt a great surge of envy as he regarded the creature that was warm and secure in its natural covering” (London, 7). In his desperate efforts, he drops the whole box of matches onto the snow. He tries again but this time he coughs and blows the flare. He achieves to start the flame but seventy matches ignite at the same time, burning his flesh. He has to leave them on the snow but supports the flame with twigs, which he brings not with his hands but with his wrists. This time, a piece of moss extinguishes the small fire. Desperately, he remembers an idea that man can kill an animal and with its body’s warmth he can save his life. He calls the dog but it intuits the danger and does not answer his call. He tries to catch him by calling in the usual way, it comes, he tries to catch him but it escapes. “A certain fear of death, dull and oppressive, came to him. ... it was a matter of life and death with the chances against him” (London,9). Still hopeful to go to the camp, he runs fast steadily. “He was losing in his battle with the frost. It was creeping into his body from all sides” (London,10). He accepts his defeat peacefully at last: “ ‘You were right, old hoss; you were right,’ the man mumbled to the old-timer...” (London, 10) He leaves himself helplessly to a comfortable sleep, that is death. The dog, as the survived one “turned and trotted up the trail in the direction of the camp it knew, where were the other food-providers and fire-providers” (London, 10). It observes its advantage by its instincts and knows how to survive, unlike him.

On the other hand, in “Neighbour Rosicky”, it is seen that Rosicky’s existence, character

and his philosophy of life is based on and closely linked to nature. Rosicky holds a strong sense of the places with their spiritual connotations and with the people residing there. He has no greed for attaining utmost advantage from the soil. Unlike 'the man' he is modest toward nature, feels himself a part and element of nature, being not hostile. He feels awe, care and gratefulness toward its innate and aesthetic values. 'The man' in London's work exploits nature having the sense of ownership. Rosicky believes the wholeness and balance of life, including death. He regards himself not a master but a member of nature and regulates his way of life according to natural cycles, not resisting against them; 'the man' has no understanding of the wholeness and balance of nature and regards nature and death as enemies. In Rosicky's family, there is also love, sincerity and respect to nature; the members are in harmony with it. Throughout the story, Rosicky as a farmer, father and a husband tries to make the conditions suitable and convenient for his family in natural life. With direct communication and a bond of love, the members lead a peaceful life with peaceful minds together.

Rosicky expresses himself outdoors. His courtesy to nature finds reflection in his attitude to other beings; for example, he does not want Doctor Burleigh to see his paying for the fee. Unlike him, 'the man' scolds the dog or swears; it is afraid of him. Rosicky never raises his voice. He never touches his wife apart from compassion. He behaves everything with affection and kindness. He meets hardships in farming and in other spheres of life with calmness and docility.

Rosicky's farm and the graveyard are very close to each other. "When Rosicky went out to his wagon, it was beginning to snow, - the first snow of the season, and he was glad to see it" (Cather, 1992: 593). The image of the hayfield and the graveyard next to each other makes Rosicky think that life and death are intertwined. The wire between them is invisible both in literal and metaphorical senses.

"It was a nice graveyard, Rosicky reflected, sort of snug and homelike, not cramped or mournful, - a big sweep all round it. A man could lie down in the long grass and see the complete arch of the sky over him, hear the wagons go by; in summer the mowing-machine

rattled right up to the wire fence. And it was so near home. Over there across the cornstalks his own roof and windmill looked so good to him that he promised himself to mind the Doctor and take care of himself. He was awful fond of his place, he admitted. He wasn't anxious to leave it. And it was a comfort to think that he would never have to go farther than the edge of his own hayfield. The snow, falling over his barnyard and the graveyard, seemed to draw things together like. And they were all old neighbours in the graveyard, most of them friends; there was nothing to feel awkward or embarrassed about" (Cather, 1992: 593-94).

Rosicky establishes a compassionate bond with his small farm and the graveyard together. In the romantic/ecological thought, life and death are the same thing. He is not afraid of dying and the graveyard. He is at peace with the idea of death and accepts life as it is. Enjoying every minute of life is his philosophy of life. When Mary asks what the

doctor said, he answers: " 'He don't say nothing much, only I'm a little older, and my heart ain't so good like it used to be' " (Cather, 595). Even when his health is the point in question, he is without panic and ready for death; he can make jokes about it. Yet, 'the man' is unprepared to death; he starts out a journey without enough providence, he is afraid of death and cannot compromise with the idea of it.

Rosicky is fond of snow and what it means, too. It is the indicator of winter, a difficult time for many people, but he embraces it as a romantic: "Well, it was a nice snowstorm; a fine sight to see the snow falling so quietly and graciously over so much open country. On his cap and shoulders, on the horses' backs and manes, light, delicate, mysterious it fell; and with it a dry cool fragrance was released into the air. It meant rest for vegetation and men and beasts, for the ground itself; a season of long nights for sleep, leisurely breakfasts, peace by the fire. This and much more went through Rosicky's mind, but he merely told himself that winter was coming, clucked to his horses, and drove on" (Cather, 594). He adopts the holistic view of life, cherishes its cycles whether they are easy or difficult and admires their existence for what they are. He obeys what nature rules, stays home and enjoys the winter thinking about its advantages in an optimistic way. He will rest, save energy for the next spring and summer and work satisfactorily. On the other hand, 'the man' fights with winter blindly, tires himself vainly and becomes defeated at the end.

Rosicky, in these winter days in front of the fire remembers his past, too. After working in New York for five years, he begins to feel uncomfortable, not knowing the reason. "Those blank buildings, without the stream of life pouring through them, were like empty jails. It struck young Rosicky that this was the trouble with big cities; they built you in from the earth itself, cemented you away from any contact with the ground. You lived in an unnatural world, like the fish in an aquarium, who were probably much more comfortable than they ever were in the sea" (Cather, 599). One day, he undergoes an epiphany when he sees the blossoming flowers; he intuits and misses "an optimistic mood of having a regenerated life full of peace and happiness. Therefore, the transformation of thoughts inspires him to have self-recognition to possess a new way of living" (Köseman,2021:1799).

He experiences a sudden loath of the buildings made of cement. An urge of escape from the city and an idea of starting a new life in the country appear. He perceives what ails him: a life disconnected from the soil. He determines to make a living on a farm where he will find freedom, solace and comfort. According to Özer, starting a new way of life means that the character gets matured by observing his independence and freedom (2018: 76). Rosicky defines his aim and place in life, desires to express his true self and becomes aware that this self will show itself while dealing with the soil and when he has a consciousness of place, belonging to a specific place. He persuades himself that the soil will answer him positively if he loves and is identified with it; that is crops increase spontaneously as much as he establishes a reciprocal bond with nature. In

addition, he predicts that fortitude, belief in the soil and hard work are essential for becoming a true farmer. His new way of living in nature includes simplicity, regeneration, comfort; it is a means for his happiness in a tranquil setting. These are the signifiers and elements of getting matured and gaining an ecological identity.

In his last winter, when he has actualized this ideal self he is self-assured. "He stopped by the windmill to look up at the frosty winter stars and draw a long breath before he went inside. That kitchen with the shining windows was dear to him; but the sleeping fields and bright stars and the noble darkness were dearer still" (Cather, 604). He in his mind amalgamates his existence with his farm and the surrounding nature. His "dream to live the infinite bliss by reaching eternity emblemizes [him] with stars. The sky is the place of escaping to eternity and everlasting peace" (Şenocak, 2010: 22). Not only the earth but also the sky is included in his love and respect for nature endlessly.

As 'the man' has no intention and idea of ecological identity, he "does not see himself in relation to the universe nor comprehend the value of adapting to a given universe instead of attempting to overcome it" (Reesman, 1997: 41). Moreover, he does not attach any attention to the dog's warnings, shown by its reluctance to go further. The dog uses its instincts and figures out that such a cold is unsuitable for travelling and it will kill him; it has instinctual wisdom. 'The man' risks the dog's life for his interests by using his mind, while the dog uses its instinct to survive. He ignores the dog's safety for his own survival, egoistically. He meets the melting of the ice where there is an undercurrent of hot springs, an obvious danger. He decides to send the dog over there, and risks the dog's life uncaringly, so it reveals the lack of empathy and love between the dog and him. The man ignores the dog's safety using his reason; he forces the dog to walk on the thin ice. It falls into the ice, creeps out, and bites the chunk of ice quickly to stay alive. He does not feel sorry for that and does not help the dog. He sees it only as an instrument in reaching his target. He has no spiritual or compassionate bond with it. In another time, it senses the man's intention of killing him intuitively; he wants to warm himself with its blood and warm corpse. 'The man' remembers an old-timer warning him against the cold and travelling alone when it is lower than fifty degrees. He sees his wisdom, too. For his equipment is not suitable for such extreme natural conditions, he should have accommodated himself to them as much as possible and impelled his intelligence and thinking ability. He makes exercises not to freeze as a last chance to survive. "The evocation of his premature assessments, his frustrated desires, and growing agitation..." (Mitchell, 1986: 90) lead him to failure; the necessities of the wilderness are too much for him. He cannot think deeply; his cheeks, toes and fingers are frozen by the cold air. He sees it, he feels it but ignores all of the indications of the danger that will happen soon. He cannot use his instincts like the dog, he uses his reason but it is not on a sufficient level. In naturalist literature, "in nature the subject confronts itself, faces the limitations..." (Penny, 2019: 63) and he is no exception. He sees his own helplessness and deplorability springing from both his own stupidity and

inexorable natural forces. C. Darwin's theory of 'Natural Selection' which prescribes that the species best adapted to their environment are most likely to survive fits into 'the man's' situation. He is not selected because he is not adapted to his environment but he dog will survive by adapting itself to the environment and acting on its instincts. "In effect, the man dies because he lacks respect for the power and danger of the natural world's sublime force, because he is unable to imaginatively conceive of his place in nature" (Hilfer, 2012: 285). London gives the message that man's arrogance and stubbornness against nature is futile: man should know his place and function in the world in a reasonable and modest way. At this point, he shares Cather's views about man's relationship with nature.

The dog and 'the man' have different ways to survive. When the man decides to do something, he does not think about what happens at the end, but the dog can predict the results. The man trusts his knowledge of reason overwisely, but the dog innocently acts only on its instincts. At the end of the story, neither nature nor the dog cares whether the man is alive or not, and 'the man's' overconfidence in his reason leads him to his death. His lack of imagination also causes his death. Then, the dog leaves the corpse and sets off for the camp to find food and warmth.

Rosicky thinks about the 'survival' of his children, too. He wants Rudolph, his eldest son to be a farmer like himself. "To be a landless man was to be a wage-earner, a slave, all your life; to have nothing, to be nothing" (Cather, 604) he says upon Rudolph's desire to work at a factory. He prefers them to lead lives that are connected to the soil. "What makes landscape meaningful in Cather's fiction are inhabitants who possess their world imaginatively and emotionally rather than economically, marking the land the way a writer marks a blank page" (O'Brien: 1987: 61). For him, gaining the love of the soil and establishing affectionate bonds with natural beings are more important than earning money. 'The man', on the contrary, is not able to leave a dog which is fond of him. He victimizes himself for the sake of money. Rosicky does not battle with his land and animals like other ambitious farmers because he is compatible with everything. It can be said that the source of happiness and success in his life stems from living a harmonious life with nature. This reflects his philosophy about life and nature. 'The man's' philosophy of life, on the contrary is based on exploitation and the disregard of nature. His death is inevitably ugly and meaningless in a place he has not paid attention to and felt no respect. The dog does not mourn for him, only informs nature of his death.

After Rosicky's death, one night when the Doctor goes to the family to condole, he thinks that Rosicky is not in the house but under the moonlight and stars, integrated with nature, where he loves and values much. He sees his mowing-machine by his graveyard and the wire, which Rosicky saw before as unnoticeable in the grass. The same feeling comes to him: life and death are intertwined and united in a serene way. His graveyard is "open and free, this little square of long grass which the wind for ever

stirred. Nothing but the sky overhead, and the many-coloured fields running on until they met that sky. The horses worked here in summer; the neighbours passed on their way to town; and over yonder, in the cornfield, Rosicky's own cattle would be eating fodder as winter came on. Nothing could be more undearthlike than this place; nothing could be more right for a man who had helped to do the work of great cities and had always longed for the open country and had got to it at last. Rosicky's life seemed to him complete and beautiful" (Cather, 618).

London experiments with an excessively self-reliant and short-sighted man who suffers from a tragic flaw: vanity against nature. He is defeated by nature because of his lack of respect and love for it, insufficient reasoning and his thought that he does not need anybody. He despises nature and in return it punishes him with its indifference. London, by rendering a subject ('the man'), tries to imply that man should have common sense when dealing with nature. He is in fact positive toward humanity like many other naturalists. "That naturalism itself is more than pessimistic materialistic determinism has long been recognized,..." (Reesman,1997: 34); it is affirmative toward life, implying the right stance to it. London as a naturalist, implies that while animals survive through instinct, men will survive through reason. Dealing with 'man versus nature' theme, he desires to improve human condition. On the other hand, Rosicky's death at the end of the work is venerable because he has led a life submitting to the power of nature and respectful to it. For Cather, to succeed in living in nature, one should follow its rules. If he defies it, his existence, mind, ideas, challenge, and character will be nothing to it and such a defiance brings about an inevitably fatal destruction. She believes in the wholeness of life, reverence for the soil, the circle of nature and with all of this 'freedom' in its full sense. She epitomizes a way of life which is a regenerating force; not consumptive, exploitative or destructive. In her work, "the human-embracing, constituent and transcendental quality of nature is emphasized" (Şahin,2018:117). If the characters are compared with each other in terms of their relationships with nature, Rosicky displays a more prudent, positive and emotionally comprehensive attitude, making his farm an arcadia with sincerity.

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