

**Review****The Impact of Nature in Romantic Poetry****Aljawharah Fahad Almashary<sup>1</sup> and Adel Ahmed Alfayez<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup> Bachelor Of Arts In English Literature, Department Of Art And Literature, From University Of Ha'il, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia<sup>2</sup> Bachelor Of Medicine And Bachelor Of Surgery (MBBS), Medical Doctor (MD), Riyadh, Saudi ArabiaCorresponding author: Name: Aljawharah Fahad Almashary Email: [jowhra20@gmail.com](mailto:jowhra20@gmail.com)

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This paper examines the thematic, emotional and philosophical dimensions of nature in Romantic poetry. Nature was not merely a backdrop in the poems of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats and Shelley but was a central force in their reflections on humanity, morality and cultural change. It deals with key themes in Romantic poetry, notably the sublime, nature as a refuge, its fleeting beauty and its revolutionary potential. While Wordsworth portrayed nature as a spiritual and moral guide, Coleridge picked up on its mysterious and awe-inspiring qualities. Keats celebrates the momentary beauty of natural moments; Shelley speaks of nature as a symbol of revolution and renewal. Presenting a multifaceted vision of nature, this critique of industrialization and Enlightenment rationalism insisted on the value of imagination and emotion. The findings underline the enduring legacy of Romantic poetry and the potential relevance it retains for contemporary ecological and philosophical debates about how human beings relate to nature.

**Keywords:** Romantic poetry, nature, beauty, human beings

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**INTRODUCTION**

During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, poets wrote romantic works to counteract the Enlightenment's emphasis on rationalism alongside the Industrial Revolution's transformative impact. Throughout Romantic poetry, writers focused on emotions and imagination through their natural world to inspire and create safe havens. The cardinal significance of nature in Romantic poetry exceeded environmental background because natural elements expressed emotional states then provided ethical direction and finally contained both philosophical and spiritual belief systems (1). Throughout history, literature experienced an essential transformation during the Romantic era because writers and thinkers redefined their understanding of people and nature.

The Romantic movement was heavily influenced by the ramifications of the Industrial Revolution, such as urbanization, mechanization and exploitation of natural resources. William Wordsworth, among other poets, missed the destruction of rural landscapes and wanted to celebrate the simplicity and purity of nature. In works like *Hills Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth demonstrated his belief that nature is restorative and spiritual (2). Samuel Taylor Coleridge also explored the sublime and mysterious dimensions of nature, portraying it as a powerful force that inspired both wonder and dread, for example, in his *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

Other poets saw nature with equal reverence but approached it differently. *To Autumn*, a poem by John Keats focuses on its' fleeting beauty and seeks to capture its transient moments of perfection(3). However, in contrast, Percy Bysshe Shelley believed that nature is a revolutionary force of destruction and renewal, an idea that he conveyed powerfully in *Ode to the West Wind* (4). Within these diverse interpretations of nature, these poets also presented their philosophies as well as the cultural challenges of their time.

Examining the role of nature in Romantic poetry in terms of the sublime, nature as shelter, and the duality between industrialization and ecological balance, this paper explores the relationship between nature and Romantic poetry. The study investigates how Romantic poets employed nature in selected works as a means of investigating human emotions, criticizing social changes, and espousing philosophical views (5).

## Background

### Historical Context

The Romantic period received two fundamental defining characteristics from the French Revolution alongside the Industrial Revolution. The late 18th century saw Britain begin the Industrial Revolution leading to rapid urbanization while machines spread and industrial pollution worsened. Romantic poets viewed industrial transformation that transformed agricultural land into industrial factories as evidence of nature welding itself away from human mental awareness. According to William Wordsworth in *Lyrical Ballads*, people formed a clear bond with nature during his poem *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey* even though industrial expansion caused humanity to drift further from nature (2). His work, *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*, is just but one of the remarkable poems in which he expresses his wish to preserve in his memory, to honour the strength of nature to regenerate, in the middle of the social upheaval.

The French Revolution also had its Romantic poets inspired, its ideas of liberty, equality and a possible radical change engraved on their ideals. Percy Bysshe Shelley captures the revolutionary themes of 'nature as a force of destruction and renewal' in the *Ode to the West Wind*. Shelley, a Romantic who believed nature shared the power to bring about change, then makes the wind itself a metaphor for political upheaval (4).

The Romantic imagination was formed by industrialization and revolution which the poets confronted the tension between progress and its opposite and the human longs for harmony with nature. In understanding the Romantic representation of nature as a refuge and as an agency for change, these are historical forces (5).

One such illustration showing what Romantic poetry is about is William Blake's frontispiece for *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. A major romantic poet and artist, Blake took his poetry and added intricate illustrations that helped in adding to the thematic depth of his poem. On the frontispiece, called '*The Ancient of Days*,' a huge, bearded figure leans from a fiery sky to measure the world with his compass. The symbol of this image is of the Romanticism era's focus on imagination, the sublime, and the exploration of the human condition.



Img Source: The University of Manchester, (n.d).  
<https://www.digitalcollections.manchester.ac.uk/view/TW-D-01892-00032/1>

## Literary Context

Romanticism broke from this tradition, but reason, order and formality were only the traits of the past, which were replaced. Romanticist poets inveighed against emotion, imagination and the sublime power of nature. Romance poets celebrated both the power of nature and emotional expressions which went alongside nurturing imagination. *Lyrical Ballads* from Wordsworth and Coleridge (1798) mark the start of Romanticism which departed from conventional literary practices. Through his focus on everyday life in rural areas using plain-spoken language Wordsworth showed his belief that natural elements carry spiritual power (2).

Unlike John Keats who concentrated on the fleeting beauty of nature through sensory experiences, John Keats examined the transitory beauty nature expresses. Through *To Autumn* Keats reveals autumn's harvest ripeness in combination with its natural decline while encouraging readers to experience its brief postponement (3). The supernatural elements of nature received expanded treatment from Samuel Taylor Coleridge who depicted those elements in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (6). Through their unique strategies, the Romantic generation demonstrated how natural subject matter connects personal sentiments with philosophical contemplations and cultural perspectives.

The Romantic poets who explored nature wanted to share deeper critiques of their cultural context in their work. These writers directed their literary works to fight back against dehumanizing aspects of industrialism while structuring human linkage to nature to grant readers renewed insights and spiritual growth (1).

## Analysis/Argument

### The Sublime in Nature

Romantic poetry focuses on the sublime since nature presents devastating power that sparks both intense fear and intense admiration and intense emotional response. In Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, we find that the sublime shows two sides of nature by creating awe-inspiring experiences which also present human boundary limitations (7). The dual aspects ascribed to Romantic thought distinguished a specific philosophical school which poets utilized while studying emotional responses toward the natural world.

Through detailed natural imagery, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge displays instances of sublime experience. Through his representation of the ocean as horrifying yet nurturing Coleridge creates a powerful metaphor of human vulnerability against natural power (6). Through the mariner's destructive path which emerged from his neglect of nature's moral power, we see Romantic thought which identifies nature as a sacred entity requiring honourable treatment. Through sublime imagery, Coleridge depicts "silence that envelops the vast sea" while "slimy things" creep along its surface to establish the contrast between attractiveness and terror (8).

Romantic poetry's most evocative and defining concept is the sublime itself, and it shows in particular, nature's capacity to bring about awe and terror. Throughout *Ode to the West Wind*, Shelley describes wind as an unstoppable power which brings both damaging elements and reconstructive forces. Through the vast power of the wind, Shelley converts his political and social change aspirations into poetic power, distributing his words as 'ashes and sparks' (4). This combination of natural power with personal transformation aims of Shelley to fulfil his romantic nature as a collaboration with the human want of change.

William Wordsworth, in contrast, frames the sublime as a deeply spiritual experience. In *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth shows nature's capacity, through such a 'sense sublime,' to produce 'a sense sublime' and thereby unveil an intensely lodged power (2). The sublime interacts with Wordsworth's description of the meeting between nature and self and in the manner in which it contributes to the self (9).

Through a number of explanations, romantic investigations attempt to unravel the health of the sublime. The poets reveal the unity between them, or, to put it simply, they have no opposing views because Coleridge draws out divine natural power; Shelley shows the revolutionary potential of it, both through his rhyming sequence next to Wordsworth's religious interpretation of nature's power to bring changes. The sights of sublime experience reveal multiple circumstances of Romantic personal and natural forms linked with phenomena.

### Nature as Refuge and Solace

The Romantic era poets relocated from urban industrial territories and urban chaos to spend time within natural environments. As urban development expanded alongside factory encroachments on rural land William Wordsworth joined fellow poets in seeking emotional respite through nature. Through his poem *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth shares how nature serenely heals and refreshes him. The Wye Valley provides him with

"tranquil restoration" so nature grants sanctuary from the "fever of the world" (2). Nature brings moral clarity and personal peace to people who interact with it according to Romantic beliefs.

Nature seeks to protect people according to the works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge but he explores these protector functions through a mystical lens and transformative perspective. Across *The Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, readers find descriptions of peaceful natural environments which contrast with human life's primary challenges (6). The lyrical approach of Coleridge shows how natural landscapes serve according to Romantic thinkers as pools for spiritual inquiry (8).

Charlotte Smith, one of the early Romantic poets, also used nature as a source of solace in her *Elegiac Sonnets*. Through his descriptions, Smith reveals coastal and pastoral imagery which functions as emotional relief during personal suffering. Through sonnets, women use nature as their trusted companion who provides brief peaceful moments within periods of despair (1). Through this focus, we better understand how nature offered individuals personal sanctuary in addition to expanding the understanding of Romantic elements to encompass marginalized women's contributions beyond published works.

Through their poems, Wordsworth and Coleridge show how nature brings spiritual restoration but Smith demonstrates nature's power to support individuals in intimate personal experiences. Through their combined work these poets demonstrate nature's role as an escape from both societal strictures and personal hardships in Romantic thought.

### The Transience of Nature

The theme of natural impermanence stands as a core Romantic poetic idea because poets fixated on facing mortality throughout time's flux. We find one of John Keats's most expressive treatments of impermanence through his evocative poem, *To Autumn*. Keats paints autumn with vivid sensuous detail to portray both its plentiful nature and its forecast of approaching winter decline. The "soft-dying day" and "rosy hue" of sunset ripple with a sense of nature's ephemerality, capturing the idea that beauty and decay cannot be separated (3). Both this acknowledgement of life's transience and the Romantic belief of finding meaning in fleeting moments ring true in the minds of readers long after Keats' time.

A new treatment of the transience theme is offered by Percy Bysshe Shelley in *Ode to the West Wind*. The wind is advanced as an infinite force of destruction and new germination because it is a symbol of life's periodicity. Because the wind scatters the remains from dead leaves and disseminates seeds at the same time, dead leaves reveal the vital link between natural life cycles. Shelley reveals through his invocation of wind, an ambition to experience transformation, that goes beyond natural elements and extends to society and his creative activity (4). This philosophical work shows how the Romantic interest in change, operating in the realm of both nature and human existence through change, plays itself out through its exploration of impermanence.

Wordsworth also engages with the theme of transience in *The River Duddon: A Series of Sonnets*. The river, as it runs across heterogeneous landscapes over and over, symbolizes the natural time progress in tandem with its common cycle patterns. In showing the river, Wordsworth makes clear that nature always provided continual support for the necessary transformations of life (2). An extended depiction of how nature, viewed on the pages of the author, shows its resistance to change from Keats' perspective, centered in brief moments.

Through their varied depictions of transience, Keats, Shelley, and Wordsworth reveal nature's dual role as both a reminder of impermanence and a source of renewal. The authors of the Romantic period displayed a profound connection to biological events in life alongside their philosophical insights.

### Nature as a Revolutionary Force

According to Romantic poets, nature functioned as a dualistic symbol, representing both refreshing serenity and transformative revolutionary power. In Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*, the poet showcases the wind's role as an irrepressible agent of both dynamic destruction and liberating restoration. The poet asks the breeze to disperse his political ideas throughout the world, likening them to the sparks emanating from burning embers (4). The wind operates as a revolutionary force, demolishing existing systems while fostering enterprise-like renewal. Through this visualization, Shelley demonstrates two key influences on his philosophical outlook: his admiration for progressive humanity (8) and the radical political impact of the French Revolution.

Through a contemplative emotional approach, William Wordsworth portrays nature's transformative capacity. In his *Miscellaneous Poems of William Wordsworth*, the poet illustrates nature as a guiding force, leading individuals toward ethically improved behaviour and deeper moral awareness (2). Wordsworth's meditative tone emphasizes the quiet but profound changes nature can inspire in people's lives. Shelley, on the other hand, evokes nature through dramatic power, using it as a metaphor for political advocacy, revolution, and societal transformation.

The *Elegiac Sonnets* by Charlotte Smith present a different perspective, showcasing nature's ability to restore itself while drawing parallels between natural patterns and human grief. Smith's poetry illustrates humanity's capacity for

renewal through a spiritual connection with the natural world, highlighting the healing power of nature amid sorrow (1). Her work broadens Romanticism's scope by incorporating deeply personal reflections on natural cycles.

These poets demonstrate how nature can enact revolutionary change through eruptive or gradual evolutionary processes. According to Romantic thought, nature possesses an inherent capability to create fundamental transformations in people's lives and cultural structures, making it a central motif for reflection and inspiration.

## CONCLUSION

As a vehicle for exploring human emotion, societal critique, and philosophical reflection, nature served as a lens for Romantic poets, who engaged deeply with the tensions of their era. Whereas Wordsworth found solace and moral guidance in nature, Coleridge emphasized its sublime and mysterious power. Keats celebrates its fleeting beauty, and Shelley employs it as a revolutionary force for change. Nature to these poets was not a matter of a physical presence, but rather a point of counterpoint to the mechanized, rational aesthetics of the Enlightenment; nature was an essential tenet of Romantic thought. That doesn't stop Romantic poetry from continuing to resonate, to reveal insights into humanity's complicated relationship with the natural world, and to sustain conversations about environmental awareness and the capacity of nature to transform.

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