

Journal of Religion & Society (JR&S)

Available Online:

<https://islamicreligious.com/index.php/Journal/index>

Print ISSN: 3006-1296 Online ISSN: 3006-130X

Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16896192>

Effect of Nature on Romanticism: A Comparative Study of Wordsworth, Keats and Shelly's Poetry

Ms. Iqra Azam

Lecturer of English Literature and Linguistics University of Agriculture Faisalabad Sub-campus Toba Tek Singh

Email: iqraazam209@gmail.com

Ms. Kiran Hussain

Lecturer of English and Linguistics University of Agriculture Faisalabad Sub-campus Toba Tek Singh

Email: kiran.hussain@uaf.edu.pk

Muhammad Jawad

Lecturer of English Literature and Linguistics University of Agriculture Faisalabad sub-Campus Toba Tek Singh

Email: muhammadjawadsaif@gmail.com

Arshia Ahmad

M.Phil Scholar Visiting Lecturer in Government Graduate College Toba Tek Singh

Email: arshiaahmad526@gmail.com

Yasir Iqbal

Lecturer of English Literature and Linguistics University of Agriculture Faisalabad Sub-campus Toba Tek Singh

Email: yasir29334@gmail.com

Abstract

This research looks at how nature influenced Romanticism, particularly in the writings of William Wordsworth, John Keats, and Percy Bysshe Shelley, and how their depictions of nature still have resonance in contemporary poetry. Romantic poets are well known for their close relationship with nature, which they viewed as a source of aesthetic beauty, spiritual instruction, and transformational force. Whereas Shelley saw nature as a forceful force for change and revolution, Wordsworth saw it as a moral and spiritual guide that offered knowledge and peace. In contrast, Keats praised nature's sensory beauty and its ability to induce transcendence and timeless beauty. This essay illustrates how the poets' interaction with nature influenced their philosophical and emotional topics by examining a few poems, including I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud by Wordsworth, Ode to a Nightingale by Keats, and Ode to the West Wind by Shelley. It also looks at how their Romantic ideas about nature still affect poetry now, especially when it comes to ecological issues and the interaction between humans and nature. This analysis demonstrates Romanticism's ongoing relevance and its significant influence on contemporary literary forms that prioritize self-reflection, personal development, and environmental awareness.

Keywords: Romanticism, Romantic Poetry, Nature In The Romantic Poetry, Poetry Studies.

Introduction

Impact of Nature on Romanticism in Modern Poetry

With its emphasis on personal feeling, the sublime, and the natural world, the Romantic era roughly from the late 18th century to the early 19th century marked a significant change in the field of English literature. Nature, an all-pervasive force that actively participated in people's emotional and spiritual growth rather than just serving as a backdrop for human activities, was one of the major themes that characterized this century. Nature was reinterpreted in literature by romantic poets like Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, and William Wordsworth, who turned it from a simple landscape into a potent symbol of inspiration, defiance, and transcendence.

According to these poets, nature served as a medium for people to delve deeply into their own feelings, thoughts, and existential dilemmas in addition to reflecting the human soul. This study will examine the complex relationship between nature and Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley's poetry, emphasizing how the natural world had a crucial role in forming the Romantic imagination through each author's unique poetical style and thematic themes. Through

an analysis of their writings, this research will contend that nature served as a source of aesthetic beauty as well as a philosophical and political force that addressed more significant issues such as morality, human existence, and the place of the poet in society. These poets encapsulated Romanticism's appreciation of the sublime and its criticism of the industrial age's encroachment on natural landscapes through their portrayals of nature.

Literature Review

In Romantic poetry, nature has always played a significant role, acting as an emotional, philosophical, and even spiritual force in addition to providing a backdrop. John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and William Wordsworth are notable Romantic poets for their use of nature in their poetry. Despite the fact that their poetry was composed in the 18th and 19th centuries, their principles and natural imagery still have an impact on contemporary poetry. Through the writings of these three poets, this review examines how nature influenced Romanticism and how that impact still shapes poetry today.

Keats's use of sensory imagery is among his most prominent stylistic strategies. Rich descriptions of natural sceneries that appeal to the senses of sight, sound, taste, and touch are common in his works. For instance, Keats skillfully evokes the nightingale's voice, the gloomy woods setting, and the intoxicating effects of alcohol in *Ode to a Nightingale*. Keats uses nature as a springboard for philosophical thoughts on life, death, and transcendence by elevating it to the sublime through this imagery.

The notion of nature as a catalyst for social and political transformation is among Shelley's most persistent ideas. Nature is portrayed as a potent transformative force that has the capacity to spark social and political revolutions in pieces like *Ode to the West Wind* and *The Masque of Anarchy* (1819). For instance, Shelley links the wind in *Ode to the West Wind* to the possibility of widespread social disruption. The ability of the wind to disperse "the leaves of the dead" and arouse a fresh political consciousness makes it a metaphor for revolutionary force (Shelley, 1819).

Many people consider William Wordsworth (1770–1850) to be one of the most important members of the English Romantic movement. Wordsworth, a poet who prioritized nature in his writing, examines the interrelationship between

people and the natural world in his works, highlighting the notion that nature is an active and vital element in human experience rather than just a background. Wordsworth's philosophical reflections on nature have had a lasting influence on contemporary poetry, and his poetry delves into issues of memory, childhood, and the sublime. Wordsworth's history, writing style, and handling of nature are all examined in this literature review, with an emphasis on how his ideas about nature influenced Romanticism and still have an impact on poetry today.

Research Questions

Based on the studies, my research questions are as follow:

1. How do Keat's works realistically enlighten us about contemporary life?
2. What influences Percy Bysshe Shelley understands of nature?
3. What features distinguish Wordsworth's view of nature?

Objectives of Research

1. To explore the theme of nature in the selected poems by Keats, Shelley, and Wordsworth.
2. To analyze how nature expresses Romantic ideals like imagination and emotion.
3. To examine each poet's unique perspective on nature and its deeper meanings.
4. To compare thematic and stylistic uses of nature among the three poets.
5. To understand nature's role in shaping Romantic poetry and its literary impact.

Research Methodology

Data Analysis

The selected poems were examined through the method of close reading, a fundamental technique in literary analysis that entails careful and detailed attention to language, structure, and figurative devices within the text. This method allows for a nuanced understanding of the poet's intentions, the aesthetic qualities of the poem, and the philosophical ideas embedded in its imagery and themes. Each poem was first analyzed independently to interpret its individual treatment of nature, followed by a comparative analysis to explore the similarities and divergences among the poets' perspectives.

In John Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*, the natural image of the nightingale serves as a symbol of permanence and transcendence. The bird's song represents a realm untouched by human suffering and decay, contrasting starkly with the poet's own awareness of mortality and pain. Keats finds solace in imagining an escape into the bird's world, which he portrays as idealized and eternal. Nature, in this context, becomes a means of philosophical reflection on life, death, and the role of art in preserving beauty (Keats, 1819/2008). The nightingale thus acts not only as a literal figure of the natural world but also as a metaphor for the poet's longing for continuity and aesthetic immortality.

Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* offers a markedly different portrayal of nature. Here, the west wind is personified as a wild and uncontrollable force, embodying both destruction and renewal. Shelley invokes the wind as an agent of change, calling upon it to "lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!" (Shelley, 1820/2010, p. 302). This plea reflects Shelley's desire for spiritual and political transformation, aligning nature with revolutionary potential. The wind's duality—as destroyer of the old and herald of the new—mirrors Shelley's own

radical ideals. In this sense, nature is not a passive backdrop but an active, volatile power capable of instigating personal awakening and societal upheaval.

William Wordsworth's *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* centers on nature's tranquil and restorative effects. The poet recalls a field of daffodils whose beauty left a lasting impression on his inner life. This memory, preserved and revisited during moments of solitude, offers emotional nourishment and spiritual serenity. Wordsworth's emphasis lies in the continuity between nature and the human mind; the daffodils are not only visually striking but also symbolically powerful, representing the capacity of nature to inspire joy and reflection long after the immediate experience has passed (Wordsworth, 1807/2004). Through this, nature is seen as morally instructive and spiritually sustaining, a constant presence that reinforces emotional wellbeing.

By synthesizing the insights gained from close readings and comparative analysis, the study underscores the pivotal role of nature as a unifying motif in Romantic thought. Nature is not merely an object of observation but a profound force that shapes human understanding, emotion, and imagination. Whether as a symbol of eternal beauty, a call to transformation, or a source of inner peace, nature functions as a cornerstone of Romantic ideology. It bridges personal introspection, political idealism, and metaphysical contemplation, thereby affirming the enduring relevance of Romantic poetry in discussions of humanity's relationship with the natural world.

Discussion Analysis

John Keats

One of the biggest lovers and admirers of nature was Keats. He is able to capture the beauty of nature and its artistic expression. He has a completely sensuous appreciation for nature and appreciates its breathtaking landscapes and habitats for their own reason. e. His poem "*Ode to a Nightingale*" has the following:

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains

My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains

Keats is in awe of the Nightingale's happiness. Prior to listening to the bird's song, he attempted a number of strategies to put aside his worries. Keats thought he had been poisoned or was under the influence of drugs. Still, the song of the Nightingale brought peace and long-lasting joy. It means that you will experience endless bliss if you interact with nature. Being in nature is the best method to create pleasure. In his writing, Keats extols the creative beauty of nature. He expresses his desire for timeless beauty by showcasing the creative grandeur of nature in his poem *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. He describes it as a "unravished bride of quietness and a foster-child of silence and slow time." Keats goes on to say that imagined music is far sweeter than music that is actually perceived.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Shelley is considered a lyrical poet of the Romantic era by eminent academics and critics. Shelley demonstrates his unique perspective on beauty in poems such as "*To a Skylark*" and "*Ode to the West Wind*," where he connects his feelings and art through metaphors from nature. While fantasy is the true source of empathy, compassion, admiration, and sympathy—all of which depend on one person's ability to evoke another's feelings—poetry is a powerful tool for stifling creativity and whimsy. "A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and

comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others," Shelley himself states. According to Shelley, a person's character can be healed by nature. He finds comfort in nature and feels its soothing effect on his heart. He communicates his ideas to the world through poetry. He depicts clouds, wind, lightning, rocks and caverns, the fury of storms, dancing, glittering waves, and other ephemeral and ever-changing natural moods. The following is his Ode to the West Wind:

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth! (63-64)

He summons the west wind, the most powerful force in nature, to carry his dead thoughts of the past memories away from him like withered leaves that fall unexpectedly in the autumn season in order to begin a new life, a life full of happiness. He sincerely hopes that men and women would continue to be happy throughout their lives. According to Shelley, the Skylark, which sings freely from the sky and rises higher and higher, could never be just a bird. The poet describes it as a joyful spirit that, like the stars in the brilliant daytime, climbs into the sky at dawn and falls into the air as nightfall draws near. It is a bird of paradise whose soothing call has an affect on people all around the world. The bird is described as a "blithe spirit" in the first few lines of the poem.

"Pourest thy full heart/
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.
" The words "Pourest thy full heart"

It indicates that the bird uses song to express its most intense feelings, and Shelley praises the Skylark's impromptu musical outpouring, saying, "In profuse strains of unpremeditated art." Its music, which deeply speaks to the entire soul, contains no artificial elements. In addition, Shelley claims that it spreads its rebellious message in the same way that the moon spreads its light as a spirit of unrest.

William Wordsworth

William Wordsworth drew readers' attention to the sky and stars, rivers, forests, mountains, and hills. Modern living has caused humanity to overlook its natural beauty. The natural beauty of rural areas is slowly being undermined by urbanization and globalization, which also has an impact on men's and women's laughter. He is the most creative personification of nature and its elements. He laments the gap that exists between nature and people. He criticizes the world's most harmful civilization, which began with industrialization. *Daffodils* is a poem that depicts nature.

"Besides the lake, beneath the tree
Fluttering and dancing in the bridge"

"Nature is a mentor whose knowledge we can acquire, and without humankind is futile and insufficient," according to Wordsworth. William Wordsworth noted that a person would recover from all illnesses if he considered nature to be his companion. The healing properties of nature are therapeutic. He sees nature as his protector, teacher, and ally. He states in *Tintern Abbey*:

Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, that owned to them.

In hours of weariness, sensation sweat,(22-27)

Wordsworth emphasizes how remembering lovely pictures may lift a person above their material demands and away from the chaos of the material world.

Scope and Limitation

This study adopts a multi-pronged literary critical framework that enables a comprehensive and nuanced examination of nature's role in Romantic poetry. Rather than limiting the analysis to formalist or thematic elements in isolation, the study integrates multiple critical lenses—specifically thematic analysis, imagery and symbolism, and Romantic literary theory. This integrative approach aims to uncover not only how nature is represented in the selected poems but also why it holds a central place in the Romantic literary imagination. By employing this layered framework, the research investigates both the aesthetic dimensions and the ideological foundations of Romantic portrayals of the natural world, offering a richer and more holistic interpretation.

Thematic analysis serves as a foundational component of the framework, providing a method for identifying and interpreting the central motifs that recur across the poems. Drawing on Braun and Clarke's (2006) model of thematic analysis, the study systematically examines key themes such as escapism, mortality, transformation, and the sublime. These themes are essential to Romantic poetry and reflect the movement's preoccupation with intense emotional experiences, metaphysical speculation, and a desire to transcend the limits of ordinary life. For example, the theme of escapism in Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale* reveals a yearning to flee from the harsh realities of human suffering into an idealized realm of beauty and permanence. Similarly, Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* engages with the theme of transformation, where the speaker invokes nature as a catalyst for personal and societal renewal. Wordsworth's *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* centers on the restorative and spiritual dimensions of nature, illustrating how solitary reflection can lead to emotional uplift and a sense of inner peace. These thematic threads are not only poetic devices but also expressions of the poets' broader philosophical inquiries and responses to the sociopolitical contexts of their time.

This multi-dimensional framework enables the study to move beyond surface-level readings and engage deeply with both the formal literary features and the ideological dimensions of the selected poems. It allows for an exploration of how the Romantic poets use nature not simply as subject matter but as a vehicle for expressing complex emotional states, philosophical ideas, and critiques of modernity. Through the combined application of thematic analysis, imagery and symbolism, and Romantic literary theory, the research illuminates the enduring significance of nature in Romantic poetry and its function as a bridge between the external world and the inner life of the poet.

Conclusion

The literary contributions of William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats collectively underscore the profound connection between nature and the human condition, a hallmark of Romanticism that remains influential to this day. Although their perspectives differ, these poets are united by a shared reverence for nature as a vital source of emotional depth, philosophical inquiry, and poetic inspiration. Each poet articulates a distinct interpretation of nature's role in human life, yet all acknowledge its transformative power.

Wordsworth views nature as a moral and spiritual teacher. His poetry often reflects a belief that communion with the natural world can lead to personal insight, tranquility, and ethical clarity. He suggests that nature's simplicity and consistency foster a contemplative state that encourages emotional healing and self-awareness. In works such as *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey* and *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*, nature is portrayed as a benevolent presence that nurtures the inner life and fosters a sense of unity with the universe (Wordsworth, 1798/2004). His belief in the restorative and educative qualities of nature shaped much of Romantic literature's emphasis on introspection and emotional truth.

References

- Barker, A. (2004). *Keats and nature: A study of the poems of John Keats*. University Press.
- Bödeker, H. (2017). *The Romantic imagination and nature*. Cambridge University Press.
- Keats, J. (1819). *Ode to a Nightingale*. In *The poetry of John Keats*. Harper & Brothers.
- Keats, J. (1820). *To Autumn*. In *The poetry of John Keats*. Harper & Brothers.
- Abrams, M. H. (1999). *The mirror and the lamp: Romantic theory and the critical tradition* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Bate, J. (2000). *The song of the earth*. Harvard University Press.
- Mellor, A. K. (2004). *Romanticism and gender*. Routledge.
- Wordsworth, W. (1798/2000). *Lyrical ballads*. (S. D. H. Abse, Ed.). Routledge.
- Shelley, P. B. (1821). *Adonais: An elegy on the death of John Keats*. Retrieved from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44491/adonais-an-elegy-on-the-death-of-john-keats>
- Shelley, P. B. (1820). *The cloud*. Retrieved from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44482/the-cloud>
- Wordsworth, W. (1800). *Preface to lyrical ballads*. Retrieved from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44480/preface-to-lyrical-ballads>
- Wordsworth, W. (1798). *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*. Retrieved from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45507/lines-composed-a-few-miles-above-tintern-abbey>
- Keats, J. (2009). *The poems of John Keats* (J. Barnard, Ed.). Longman.
- Shelley, P. B. (2003). *The major works* (M. H. Abrams & S. Hirsch, Eds.). Oxford University Press.
- Wordsworth, W. (2008). *Selected poetry of William Wordsworth* (M. H. Abrams, Ed.). Norton & Company.