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Nature in the Poetry of Romantic Poets Wordsworth and Shelley: A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT
This study analyzes the depiction of nature in William Wordsworth's *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey* and Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* within the context of Romantic literature. The Romantic movement emphasized emotion, imagination, individual experience, and a deep appreciation of nature as a response to industrialization and political revolution. As leading Romantic poets, Wordsworth and Shelley both place nature at the center of their poetic vision. However, they express their ideas in different ways. This research aims to examine the similarities and differences in how these two poets portray nature and how their perspectives reflect Romantic ideals. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method and applies René Wellek's theory of comparative literature as its theoretical framework. Through close reading and textual analysis, the research focuses on themes, imagery, symbolism, tone, and the relationship between nature and human emotion. The findings show that both poets present nature as a living and powerful force that shapes human thought and feeling. Wordsworth depicts nature as calm, nurturing, and spiritually restorative, offering moral guidance and inner peace. In contrast, Shelley portrays nature as dynamic, intense, and transformative, symbolizing destruction, renewal, and revolutionary change. Although their tones differ, Wordsworth being reflective and meditative, Shelley passionate and urgent, both poets reveal a strong belief in the profound connection between nature and the human spirit. This comparison highlights the richness and diversity of Romantic views on nature.

Keywords: nature, poetry, romantic poets, comparative study

INTRODUCTION

The Romantic era was an important time in English poetry. Writers of this period looked closely at nature, explored strong human emotions, and admired the sense of awe called the sublime. Starting in the late 1700s and continuing through the 1800s, Romanticism changed poetry in lasting ways and shaped how we see and understand the world through verse (Visola, 2024). Many poets of this time turned to nature not only as beautiful scenery but as something alive and full of meaning. This strong interest in the natural world was also a reaction to the Industrial Revolution, when factories, machines, and growing cities began to change people's lives. Romantic poets believed that nature could give comfort, teach moral lessons, and inspire deep emotions.

Nature itself is one of the most important literary features of the Romantic period. Poets used it in many ways. Nature became a source of emotion and imagination, helping writers express joy, awe, or sadness (Visola, 2024). It was also a symbol of the sublime, showing greatness and wonder that could make people feel amazed and

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small at the same time. Many Romantic poets treated nature as a moral guide, believing it could teach humans to live simply and kindly. By praising nature, they also criticized the noise, pollution, and restlessness of industrial society.

William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley are two key poets of the English Romantic period, but they show very different ways of writing about nature. Wordsworth sees nature as gentle and calming, a guide that teaches people to live simply and wisely. Shelley, meanwhile, describes nature as strong and full of movement, a force that brings change and new ideas. Looking at their poems together helps us understand how Romantic poetry could express both quiet peace and powerful energy. This comparison forms a bridge between two important visions of nature and shows the rich variety within the Romantic movement.

William Wordsworth is often regarded as the leading poet of the English Romantic movement because of his deep love for the natural world and his belief in its moral and spiritual power. He saw nature as a living teacher that could shape human character and bring inner peace. In poems such as *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey* and *The Prelude*, Wordsworth describes how mountains, rivers, and quiet landscapes guide the mind toward wisdom and calmness. He believed that spending time in nature helps people escape the pressures of industrial society and reconnect with simple truths. For Wordsworth, nature is not just a setting for human activity but a source of inspiration, joy, and moral guidance.

Percy Bysshe Shelley admired nature just as much as Wordsworth, but he wrote about it in a more dramatic and visionary way. Shelley saw nature as a powerful and ever-changing force that reflects freedom, energy, and the cycle of life and death. In works like *Ode to the West Wind* and *Mont Blanc*, he uses images of wind, sky, and mountains to show how nature can both destroy and renew. Shelley was also influenced by his radical political ideas, so nature in his poetry often becomes a symbol of change and revolution. Instead of offering quiet comfort, Shelley's natural world is full of movement and mystery, urging people to imagine new possibilities.

This research compares how Wordsworth and Shelley describe nature in their poetry. Comparing Wordsworth and Shelley is especially valuable because they belong to two different generations of Romanticism, Wordsworth represents the older, early Romantic generation, while Shelley belongs to the younger, later generation, making their perspectives particularly worth examining (Barratt, 2022). They represent two different but equally significant ways of seeing nature in the Romantic period. Both poets celebrate the beauty and power of the natural world, yet their purposes differ. Wordsworth views nature as a source of peace and moral growth, while Shelley presents it as a symbol of energy, change, and freedom.

Drawing on the explanation provided above, this study addresses two main research questions: (1) How do William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley demonstrate similarities in their depiction of nature in their works? and (2) How do William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley differ in their depiction of nature in their works?

By studying their works side by side, we can see the rich variety within Romantic poetry and understand how the same theme "nature" can express both calm harmony and powerful transformation. This comparison helps us appreciate the depth and complexity of Romantic ideas about the relationship between humans and the natural environment. The aim of this research is to explore both the similarities and the differences in the way William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley depict nature in their poetry. By examining selected poems from each poet, the study seeks to understand how they share a deep love for the natural world while presenting it in distinct ways. Through a careful comparison, this research highlights how their ideas sometimes meet and sometimes contrast, giving a clearer picture of how nature becomes a central theme with many layers in Romantic literature.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Previous Studies

The first related study is Romanticism and Nature: A Comparative Study of Wordsworth and Coleridge by Dr. Monica Khanna published in 2023. This study aims to explore how the two major Romantic poets differ and overlap in their portrayals of nature. Using a qualitative research design with comparative literary analysis, the study closely reads and interprets key poems, particularly Wordsworth's Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey and Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, while drawing on secondary literary critiques for support. Khanna's objective is to deepen understanding of Romantic ideals by examining how Wordsworth treats nature as a moral and spiritual guide, whereas Coleridge presents it through the sublime, blending the real with the supernatural. The findings show that although both poets celebrate nature's power, Wordsworth emphasizes harmony, tranquility, and personal growth, while Coleridge highlights awe, mystery, and philosophical questioning, revealing complementary yet distinct visions that underscore the enduring influence of Romantic poetry.

The second related study is Depiction of Nature in the Poetry of Robert Frost and that of the Romantics: Questing for Similitude and Dissimilitude through a Comparative Analysis published in 2021 by Jannat-E-Hosne Ara examines how Robert Frost's treatment of nature both parallels and diverges from that of major English Romantic poets. The study's objective is to trace similarities and differences in the way Frost, a modern American poet, and Romantic figures such as Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats portray the natural world. Using a qualitative, comparative literary method, Ara analyzes primary texts, selected poems by Frost including The Road Not Taken, Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening, Mending Wall, and Birches, alongside representative Romantic poems like Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey, Shelley's Ode to the West Wind, and Keats's To Autumn, supported by secondary scholarly sources. The findings reveal that Frost shares the Romantics' deep appreciation for nature's beauty and solace yet differs in key ways: he rejects pantheism, stresses a realistic and symbolic connection between nature and human responsibility, and often employs "deceptive simplicity," where plain diction masks complex themes. The study concludes that while Frost echoes Romantic ideals of harmony with nature, his modern perspective foregrounds human duty, conflict, and the nuanced interplay between escape and engagement with the natural world.

The last related study is Exploring Nature's Reality: A Study through the Poetry of Wordsworth and Keats published in 2023 by Radha Ahluwalia and Dr. Shukla Chatterjee investigates how two major English Romantic poets depict the natural world. The objective is to offer an in-depth comparative analysis of how William Wordsworth and John Keats represent "the reality of nature," highlighting both shared Romantic ideals and their distinct approaches. Employing a qualitative method of close textual analysis, the authors examine primary poems such as Wordsworth's The Solitary Reaper, Nutting, and I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud, alongside Keats's *On the Sea*, *Ode to a Nightingale*, and *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, supported by secondary scholarly sources. The findings show that Wordsworth treats nature as a living spiritual force and moral guide, evolving from youthful exuberance to deep reverence, while Keats emphasizes nature's sensuous beauty and its power as an imaginative escape rather than a divine presence. The study concludes that, though both poets affirm the reality and significance of nature, Wordsworth frames it as a spiritual companion and teacher, whereas Keats presents it primarily as an aesthetic refuge and source of transient joy.

The study Nature in the Poetry of Romantic Poets Wordsworth and Shelley: A Comparative Study shares a common focus with the three related works in exploring Romantic poetry's engagement with the natural world, yet it differs in scope and emphasis. Like Dr. Monica Khanna's 2023 analysis of Wordsworth and Coleridge, it uses a qualitative, comparative literary method to examine how two

poets within the same movement portray nature, but it pairs Wordsworth with Shelley, contrasting Wordsworth's peaceful, moral vision with Shelley's energetic and revolutionary symbolism, whereas Khanna contrasts Wordsworth's spiritual harmony with Coleridge's sublime mystery and supernatural elements. It also resembles Jannat-E-Hosne Ara's 2021 study of Robert Frost and the Romantics in tracing similarities and differences in the treatment of nature and in drawing on both primary poems and secondary criticism, but Ara extends the comparison across time by including a modern American poet and highlights Frost's "deceptive simplicity" and human responsibility, themes outside the strictly Romantic frame of the Wordsworth–Shelley study. Finally, it parallels Radha Ahluwalia and Shukla Chatterjee's 2023 examination of Wordsworth and Keats in its close textual analysis and focus on Romantic ideals, yet differs by emphasizing Shelley's dynamic, reformist view of nature rather than Keats's sensuous aestheticism. Together these comparisons show that while all four studies investigate how poets celebrate and interpret nature, the Wordsworth–Shelley research stands out for centering on two generations of Romanticism and highlighting the contrast between Wordsworth's serene moral guidance and Shelley's vision of nature as a force of change and freedom.

2. Literary Devices of Poetry

Poetry is often seen as the oldest form of literature, with roots that go back to times before writing began. The word poetry comes from the Greek poēsis, which means "making," showing that a poet is someone who "makes" or creates verse (Anindita, Satoto, & Surmarlam, 2017). Poetry can be described as a type of writing that is spoken or written in verse, where "verse" means a single line with a regular beat or rhythm. Because of this, many traditional definitions of poetry focus on rhyme, meter, and patterned lines as the main features that set it apart from prose. Klarer (2004) notes that most explanations of poetry highlight these classic elements such as verse, rhyme, and meter as the usual way to separate poetry from other kinds of writing.

Literary elements are the essential components that build and shape a work of literature, including poetry. They are the internal features that give meaning, structure, and artistry to a text, such as theme, imagery, diction, symbolism, and style. Unlike external factors like biography or history, literary elements are intrinsic to the text and can be analyzed on their own. In comparative literature, these elements are crucial because they allow readers and scholars to examine how different authors or cultures use similar techniques to create meaning in their works.

The theme of a poem refers to its central idea or underlying message that serves as the basis, shaping how ideas are expressed and deepening comprehension (Rosida, 2017). It represents what the poet wants to communicate about life, society, or human experience. Themes can be universal, such as love, death, nature, or freedom, or they can be culturally specific, reflecting unique traditions and values (Huyssteen, 2023). Comparative studies often focus on how different poets approach similar themes in varying contexts. For example, the theme of love might be treated with spiritual depth in one culture and with romantic passion in another.

Imagery and symbolism are closely related elements in poetry. Imagery involves descriptive language that appeals to the senses—sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell—so that readers can vividly imagine the experience (Greene, 2024). Symbolism, on the other hand, is a way for writers to give their works meanings beyond the literal words (Preth, 2024). By using symbols, they can show complex ideas, themes, and feelings, helping readers understand and connect more with the text such as a rose symbolizing love or a storm symbolizing conflict. In comparative studies, these devices reveal how poets from different backgrounds use images and symbols to express emotions, beliefs, and worldviews.

Figures of speech are essential in poetry as they convey meanings beyond the literal and enhance the

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emotional depth of a poem (Efendi, 2021). Common examples include metaphor, simile, personification, and hyperbole. These devices enrich poetry by allowing poets to communicate ideas in fresh and memorable ways. Comparative analysis often examines how figurative language is used differently across languages or cultures, highlighting unique stylistic traditions as well as universal patterns of expression.

Diction is the poet's choice of words, which greatly influences the tone and meaning of a poem (Lindsay, 2022). A poet may use simple, everyday language to create intimacy and clarity, or elevated, formal diction to produce a sense of grandeur and seriousness. Word choice also reflects cultural and historical contexts, as certain words may carry specific connotations in one tradition that differ in another. In comparative studies, diction helps scholars explore how poets express similar ideas with different linguistic textures.

Dziak (2023) mentions that style is the overall manner of expression that distinguishes one poet's work from another. It combines diction, syntax, rhythm, and figurative devices into a unique artistic voice. Style reveals the poet's personality, aesthetic choices, and cultural influences. For comparative literature, analyzing style allows scholars to see how poets from diverse traditions create distinct voices, even when addressing similar subjects or themes. Style, therefore, is one of the most important elements for understanding both the individuality of the poet and the broader literary connections across cultures.

To sum up, literary elements such as theme, imagery and symbolism, figurative language, diction, and style form the foundation of poetry and provide the tools for deeper interpretation. They allow readers to uncover not only the meaning within a single poem but also the broader cultural, historical, and artistic connections across literary traditions.

3. Nature in Romantic Literature

Romanticism was a literary movement that began in the late 1700s and continued until the middle of the 1800s, although its ideas still influence literature today (Jena, 2022). This movement focused on the individual, especially on personal feelings and emotions, even when those feelings were not fully logical. Romantic writers believed that emotions and imagination were just as important as reason. They also had a deep respect for nature and saw it as something powerful and meaningful.

Nature played a very important role in Romantic literature. Romantic writers believed that nature was a place where people could find truth, beauty, and peace for the soul. At a time when industrial cities were growing and becoming crowded, dirty, and noisy, nature was seen as a pure and healing space. It offered comfort and hope, especially when modern life felt cold and mechanical. For these writers, nature was not just a physical setting, but a powerful force that could refresh the human spirit and bring people closer to their inner selves (Sona, 2023; Wang, 2010).

Romantic authors also showed a deep connection between humans and the natural world. They often described landscapes, rivers, mountains, and the sea to represent ideas such as freedom, struggle, dreams, and strong desires. Nature reflected human feelings such as calm lakes could show peace, while storms could show anger or conflict. By using natural images in this way, Romantic writers not only admired the greatness and beauty of nature, but also expressed deep emotions and important human values through it.

4. Comparative Literature

The term comparative literature has always covered many academic fields and will continue to do so. It can involve studying how elements from oral stories were later included in written works (Wellek & Warren, 1949). According to Wellek and Warren (1949), comparative literature is the study of how different literatures connect to each other across countries and cultures. The word "comparative" can be confusing because all kinds of criticism involve comparison. But in this field, the focus is on how writers, movements, and ideas

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from one literature influence or interact with another, showing both similarities and differences.

One part of comparative literature looks at oral traditions, like folktales, legends, and ballads, and how they shape written literature. There has always been an exchange between oral stories and written texts. Folklore studies used to focus only on how themes moved from place to place, but now they also pay attention to style, form, and the role of storytellers and audiences. This helps us understand how genres and literary techniques began and developed (Wellek & Warren, 1949).

Another focus is the study of how one literature affects another. For example, scholars have examined the influence of Goethe in France or Carlyle in other countries. This kind of study looks at translations, reviews, and how foreign writers were received. However, this method often pays more attention to outside details such as reputation or influence than to the deeper artistic meaning of the works themselves (Wellek & Warren, 1949).

Wellek & Warren (1949) mention that a wider view of comparative literature is to see it as "world literature" or "general literature." This means studying literature as one large tradition instead of keeping it separate by language or nation. From ancient Greek and Roman works to medieval and modern writings, many movements like Romanticism or Realism crossed national borders. This shows that literature is a shared human activity. To study it this way, scholars need to look beyond just one language or culture.

Even though comparative literature looks at connections, it also studies what makes each national literature unique. This can be tricky, because deciding when a literature becomes "national" is not always clear, for example, when American literature separated from English literature, or whether Irish and Belgian literatures are independent. Comparative literature tries to balance these two sides: the shared, universal aspects of literature and the special contributions of each nation or region.

METHOD

This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze how nature is portrayed in William Wordsworth's *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey* and Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*. Rather than relying on numerical data, the research focused on interpreting words, images, and meanings within the poems to identify themes, patterns, and differences in each poet's representation of nature. This approach enabled an in-depth understanding of the poets' artistic choices and Romantic perspectives.

The primary data source consisted of the two selected poems, while secondary data included scholarly books, journal articles, literary critiques, and other authoritative sources related to Romanticism, nature in poetry, and the works of both poets. Data were collected through library research using reliable printed and online academic sources. Following René Wellek's comparative literature method, the researchers systematically selected the texts, gathered relevant critical and historical references, and conducted a close comparative reading to ensure a thorough and well-supported analysis of the similarities and differences in the poets' depictions of nature.

RESULT

1. Similarities in the Depiction of Nature in Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* and Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*

William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley, as major figures of the Romantic movement, share a deep and meaningful vision of nature in their poems *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey* (1798) and *Ode to the West Wind* (1819). Although their tones and poetic styles are different, Wordsworth being calm and meditative, Shelley being passionate and intense, both poets present nature as a living, powerful force that shapes human emotion, thought, and spiritual growth. In both poems, nature is not simply scenery; it is active, symbolic, and deeply

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connected to the inner life of the poet. Through description, personification, and symbolism, Wordsworth and Shelley reveal striking similarities in how they understand and depict nature.

First, both poets describe nature as a powerful presence that goes beyond physical beauty. In *Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth looks at the landscape of "steep and lofty cliffs," "plots of cottage-ground," and "wreaths of smoke," but he does not describe them only for visual pleasure. Instead, he shows that these natural scenes have shaped his inner life. He writes that nature has given him:

"In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration."

These lines show that nature affects not only his senses but also his heart and mind. Nature becomes a source of healing and emotional balance. Similarly, in *Ode to the West Wind*, Shelley presents nature as a mighty and active force. The West Wind is described as:

"Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, O hear!

Here, the wind is not simply air moving in the sky. It is a "Wild Spirit," both destructive and creative. Like Wordsworth, Shelley sees nature as something powerful and meaningful, capable of shaping the world and human experience. Both poets move beyond simple description and show nature as an active force with deep significance.

Second, both poets connect nature closely with personal emotion and memory. In *Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth reflects on how his memories of nature have comforted him during times of stress and difficulty. He explains that when he was in "lonely rooms, and 'mid the din / Of towns and cities," the memory of nature gave him peace. The natural world lives within him even when he is far away from it. He says that these memories have provided:

"tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure."

This suggests that nature has a lasting emotional impact. It continues to influence him even in absence. In a similar way, Shelley connects the West Wind with his personal feelings and struggles. He identifies himself with the natural force, crying: "I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!" This line reveals his emotional pain and frustration. He feels weak and burdened, unlike the powerful wind. Yet, he longs to be united with it: "Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is." Just as the wind plays music through the trees, Shelley wants the wind to use him as an instrument. Both poets, therefore, use nature to express their inner emotions. Nature becomes a mirror of the self.

Third, both Wordsworth and Shelley present nature as a source of spiritual insight and moral truth. Wordsworth famously describes a deep spiritual experience in nature when he writes:

"And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused."

These lines show that he feels a divine or spiritual presence in nature. It is "deeply interfused" in all living things. Nature is not separate from humanity; it is connected to "the light of setting suns," "the round ocean," and "the living air." For Wordsworth, nature teaches moral values and helps him become "a lover of the meadows and the woods." In Shelley's poem, the spiritual quality of nature appears in his address to the wind as a sacred power. He calls it "Spirit fierce," suggesting something supernatural and divine. The wind has the power to bring change, to destroy old leaves and spread "winged seeds" that will grow in spring. This cycle suggests a higher order and meaning in nature. Both poets, therefore, see nature as more than material reality; it carries spiritual and moral significance.

Another important similarity is that both poets view nature as a force of transformation and renewal. Wordsworth explains how his understanding of nature has changed as he has grown older. In his youth, he loved nature for its physical excitement:

"The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion."

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As a young man, he responded to nature with strong physical energy and excitement. However, as he matured, his love for nature became deeper and more thoughtful. He now appreciates "the still, sad music of humanity," meaning that he sees the connection between nature and human suffering. Nature has helped him grow morally and spiritually. In Shelley's poem, transformation is expressed through the powerful image of the West Wind spreading seeds that will grow in spring:

"Drive my dead thoughts over the universe Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!"

Here, Shelley hopes that his ideas, like seeds, will create change and renewal. The wind destroys old leaves but also prepares for new life. The poem ends with the hopeful question: "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" This line suggests that after suffering and darkness, renewal will come. Both poets connect nature with change, growth, and hope for the future.

Finally, both Wordsworth and Shelley use personification to make nature feel alive and active. Wordsworth speaks of "Nature" almost as a teacher and guide. He addresses his sister Dorothy and hopes that nature will guide her as it has guided him:

"Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her."

This line shows trust and affection. Nature is presented as faithful and protective. In Shelley's poem, the wind is directly addressed as if it were a powerful being who can listen and respond. He repeatedly cries, "O hear!" and "Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!" The wind becomes a partner in the poet's mission. Through personification, both poets show their deep emotional connection with the natural world.

2. Differences in the Depiction of Nature in Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* and Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*

William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley both present nature as powerful and meaningful in *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey* and *Ode to the West Wind*, yet they differ greatly in tone, purpose, and the role nature plays in human life. Wordsworth depicts nature as calm, nurturing, and spiritually healing, while Shelley presents nature as wild, forceful, and revolutionary. These differences can be seen clearly through their imagery, language, and the emotional attitudes of the speakers in each poem.

First, Wordsworth portrays nature as a quiet and restorative presence, whereas Shelley describes it as violent and dynamic. In *Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth recalls the peaceful landscape of the River Wye, describing "steep and lofty cliffs" and "quiet of the sky." The tone is gentle and meditative. Nature gives him emotional healing and balance, as shown in the lines:

"sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart; And passing even into my purer mind, With tranquil restoration."

The phrase "tranquil restoration" shows that nature calms and renews him softly. In contrast, Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* opens with strong and dramatic imagery: "O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being." The wind is described as powerful and uncontrollable. Shelley calls it "Destroyer and Preserver." Unlike Wordsworth's peaceful river scene, Shelley's wind drives "dead leaves" like "ghosts from an enchanter fleeing." The movement is fast and intense. Nature in Shelley's poem is not calm; it is stormy and energetic.

Second, Wordsworth sees nature as a moral teacher and spiritual guide, while Shelley views nature as a force for political and imaginative change. Wordsworth expresses a deep spiritual connection with nature, describing:

"A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused.

Here, nature is connected to a divine or universal spirit. It teaches him wisdom and shapes his moral character. He even states confidently, *"Nature never did betray. The heart that loved her."* This shows trust and faith in nature as a guide. On the other hand, Shelley does not focus on moral calmness but on transformation and revolution. He asks the wind to spread his ideas across the world:

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"Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!"

The wind becomes a symbol of radical change. Shelley's purpose is outward-looking and political, while Wordsworth's is inward-looking and spiritual.

Another key difference lies in how the poets relate themselves to nature. Wordsworth describes growth and maturity in his relationship with the natural world. He reflects on his past, saying that in youth:

"The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion."

As he grows older, his love becomes deeper and more thoughtful. He listens to "the still, sad music of humanity," suggesting a quiet understanding of life's suffering. Wordsworth's connection with nature develops gradually over time. Shelley, however, feels separated from the power of nature and longs to unite with it. He cries, "I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!" He feels weak compared to the wind and begs, "Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!" Shelley does not calmly reflect; he urgently pleads for transformation. This shows a more dramatic and emotional struggle than Wordsworth's peaceful acceptance.

Furthermore, the overall tone of the two poems is different. Wordsworth's tone is reflective, balanced, and hopeful in a quiet way. Even when he speaks of "the still, sad music of humanity," the sadness is gentle and thoughtful. His poem ends with a blessing for his sister Dorothy, wishing that nature will guide her in life. Shelley's tone, however, is intense and prophetic. The poem builds toward a powerful conclusion: "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" This line suggests hope, but it is hope after destruction and struggle. Shelley's vision of nature involves conflict and rebirth, while Wordsworth's vision emphasizes harmony and stability.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study demonstrate that William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley share a strong Romantic understanding of nature, although they express this understanding through different poetic perspectives. In both *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey* (1798) and *Ode to the West Wind* (1819), nature is presented as more than a physical landscape. It becomes an active force that influences human emotion, thought, spirituality, and personal transformation. This finding supports the central characteristics of Romantic poetry, particularly the emphasis on the relationship between the natural world and the individual imagination.

One important similarity is that both poets portray nature as a powerful presence rather than merely as beautiful scenery. Wordsworth presents the landscape around the River Wye as a source of emotional restoration. His description of nature moves from physical observation toward an exploration of its effects on the speaker's heart and mind. The phrase "tranquil restoration" indicates that nature has the ability to provide psychological comfort and inner balance. This suggests that Wordsworth's relationship with nature is deeply personal because the natural environment continues to influence him even when he is physically separated from it.

Shelley similarly presents nature as a powerful force, but his representation is more energetic and dramatic. The West Wind is described as both "Destroyer and preserver," emphasizing its dual ability to remove the old and create the possibility of something new. Therefore, although Wordsworth and Shelley use different images, both poets reject the idea of nature as passive scenery. Nature possesses agency and power, and it becomes closely connected to human experience. The results also indicate that nature functions as a medium for expressing personal emotions in both poems. Wordsworth associates nature with memory, showing how his earlier experiences of the natural world continue to provide comfort during periods of loneliness and difficulty. His memories of the landscape allow nature to exist within his consciousness even when he is physically present in towns and cities. This

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relationship suggests that nature becomes part of his psychological and emotional development.

Shelley's relationship with nature is similarly personal but considerably more troubled. Rather than remembering nature as a source of peaceful restoration, Shelley identifies his own suffering with the powerful movement of the West Wind. His statement, "I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!" reveals a sense of weakness and frustration. His desire to become the wind's "lyre" further demonstrates his wish to regain the power and freedom that he associates with nature. Thus, both poets use nature as a reflection of their inner lives, but Wordsworth uses it primarily to express emotional recovery and contemplation, whereas Shelley uses it to express struggle, frustration, and the desire for transformation.

Another significant finding is the spiritual dimension of nature. Both poets suggest that nature contains a meaning that extends beyond the material world. Wordsworth experiences nature as a spiritual presence that is "deeply interfused" with the world around him. His experience of nature contributes to his elevated thoughts and moral development. Nature therefore functions almost as a teacher or guide, helping him understand both himself and humanity.

Shelley also gives nature a spiritual quality by addressing the West Wind as a "Spirit fierce." However, the spiritual power of nature in Shelley's poem is associated more strongly with movement, destruction, and renewal. The natural cycle of dead leaves, seeds, winter, and spring becomes a symbolic representation of change. Consequently, while both poets recognize a spiritual dimension in nature, Wordsworth emphasizes spiritual understanding and moral growth, whereas Shelley emphasizes the transformative power of nature.

The comparison further reveals an important difference in the poets' understanding of transformation. Wordsworth's transformation is primarily internal and gradual. He contrasts his youthful response to nature, when he experienced it through intense physical excitement, with his mature appreciation of nature as a source of deeper thought and moral awareness. His changing relationship with nature reflects his personal growth from youthful enthusiasm toward mature reflection.

In contrast, Shelley's concept of transformation is more external and revolutionary. The West Wind becomes a symbol through which the poet hopes to spread his "dead thoughts" throughout the universe. His thoughts are compared to withered leaves and seeds, suggesting that ideas can contribute to a new birth. The ending of the poem reinforces this interpretation because the arrival of spring after winter represents hope emerging from destruction and suffering. Therefore, Wordsworth's transformation is mainly psychological and spiritual, while Shelley's is imaginative, social, and potentially revolutionary. The differences in the poets' depictions of nature are particularly visible in their imagery and tone. Wordsworth's nature is generally calm, peaceful, and restorative. His descriptions of the River Wye landscape create a meditative atmosphere in which the speaker can reflect on memory, human experience, and spiritual development. Nature provides stability and allows the speaker to achieve emotional balance.

Shelley's nature, on the other hand, is wild, dynamic, and uncontrollable. The West Wind moves rapidly through the sky, drives dead leaves, and represents both destruction and preservation. The violent energy of the wind corresponds to the speaker's emotional condition and his desire to overcome his own limitations. This difference in imagery reflects the different purposes of the two poems: Wordsworth uses nature primarily for inward reflection and spiritual healing, while Shelley uses it to express energy, conflict, change, and the possibility of renewal.

The findings also suggest that the two poets have different relationships with nature. Wordsworth trusts nature and regards it as a reliable moral and spiritual guide. His statement that "Nature never did betray" expresses his confidence that a genuine relationship with nature can support human development. His relationship

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with nature is therefore characterized by harmony and acceptance.

Shelley's relationship with nature is more complex because he feels separated from the power that he admires. His repeated requests to the wind to lift him demonstrate his desire to participate in its energy. He wants nature to transform him and to give his ideas the power to influence the wider world. As a result, the relationship between the poet and nature in Ode to the West Wind is characterized by tension and aspiration rather than Wordsworth's sense of trust and harmony.

Finally, the differences in tone reinforce the different functions of nature in the two poems. Wordsworth's tone is reflective, balanced, and quietly hopeful. Even when he considers human sadness, his response remains contemplative, and the poem concludes with a blessing for Dorothy. Shelley adopts a more intense and prophetic tone. His concluding question about winter and spring expresses hope, but this hope emerges through destruction and struggle. Thus, both poems ultimately communicate hope, but they imagine the path toward hope differently: Wordsworth emphasizes harmony, memory, maturity, and spiritual stability, whereas Shelley emphasizes conflict, destruction, transformation, and rebirth.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, both William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley place nature at the heart of their poetic vision, reflecting the fundamental ideals of Romanticism. In *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey* and *Ode to the West Wind*, nature is portrayed as a living and powerful force that shapes human emotions, thoughts, and spiritual awareness rather than serving merely as a background setting. Both poets share the belief that nature possesses profound meaning beyond its physical beauty and plays a vital role in human experience.

Despite this shared Romantic perspective, the two poets differ significantly in their representation of nature. Wordsworth presents nature as a calm, nurturing, and spiritually restorative presence that encourages reflection, moral growth, and inner peace, while Shelley portrays nature as a dynamic and transformative force associated with change, renewal, and revolutionary energy. Wordsworth's harmonious relationship with nature contrasts with Shelley's sense of longing and struggle to unite with its power. Together, these contrasting yet complementary visions demonstrate that nature can function both as a source of peaceful contemplation and as a catalyst for personal and social transformation.

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