

ECOCRITICISM IN ROMANTIC POETRY: NATURE AS ETHICS IN WORDSWORTH

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Abstract

This research paper examines the ecocritical dimensions of William Wordsworth's poetry with special reference to the concept of "Nature as Ethics." The study explores how Wordsworth transforms nature from a mere physical landscape into a moral, spiritual, and emotional guide for humanity. Using an ecocritical and qualitative analytical approach, selected poems such as *Tintern Abbey*, *The Prelude*, *The Tables Turned*, *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*, and *The World Is Too Much with Us* were analyzed. The findings reveal that approximately 27% of the identified themes relate to nature as an ethical guide, while 22% focus on spiritual ecology and 20% on human-nature interdependence. The study also highlights Wordsworth's criticism of industrialization and materialism, which accounted for nearly 16% of the ecological themes analyzed. The research concludes that Wordsworth's poetry promotes ecological harmony, emotional healing, environmental ethics, and sustainable coexistence between humans and nature, making his works highly relevant in the modern ecological crisis.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, Romantic Poetry, William Wordsworth, Nature Ethics, Environmental Consciousness

1. Introduction

Romanticism emerged in Europe during the late eighteenth century as a literary, artistic, and intellectual movement reacting against industrialization, scientific rationalism, urban expansion, and the rigid traditions of Neoclassicism. Romantic poets emphasized imagination, emotion, individual experience, spirituality, and above all, nature. During the Industrial Revolution, rapid technological development and mechanized urban life created social alienation and environmental destruction. Romantic poets viewed this transformation as a threat to human sensitivity and moral values. Therefore, they turned toward nature as a source of truth, beauty, and ethical wisdom. Romantic poetry celebrated the natural world not merely for its aesthetic beauty but also for its spiritual and moral significance.

Among the Romantic poets, William Wordsworth occupies a unique and central position because of his profound relationship with nature and his belief that the natural environment shapes human morality and consciousness. Wordsworth considered nature a living, dynamic, and spiritual force that nurtures emotional balance, ethical awareness, and inner peace. Unlike earlier poets who often used nature merely as decorative scenery, Wordsworth

transformed nature into an active moral teacher and spiritual companion. His poetry reflects deep ecological sensitivity and advocates harmony between humanity and the natural world. Through poems such as *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*, *The Prelude*, *The Tables Turned*, and *The World Is Too Much with Us*, Wordsworth emphasized the restorative and ethical power of nature in human life.

The concept of ecocriticism provides an important theoretical framework for understanding Wordsworth's ecological imagination. Ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary literary theory that studies the relationship between literature and the physical environment. The term "ecocriticism" was introduced by William Rueckert in 1978 and later expanded by scholars such as Cheryll Glotfelty and Lawrence Buell. Ecocriticism examines how literary texts portray nature, environmental degradation, ecological ethics, and the interconnectedness between humans and the non-human world. It challenges anthropocentrism, which views nature only as a resource for human use, and instead promotes ecological balance and environmental responsibility.

Wordsworth's poetry is considered highly significant within ecocritical studies because it anticipates many modern environmental concerns. His works criticize materialism, industrial pollution, urban alienation, and humanity's disconnection from nature. In poems like *The World Is Too Much with Us*, Wordsworth laments how industrial society has become obsessed with material gain and has lost its spiritual connection with the

environment. This criticism strongly resonates with contemporary ecological debates regarding consumerism, climate change, environmental degradation, and unsustainable development. His poetry advocates simplicity, emotional sensitivity, and coexistence with nature, which align closely with modern ecological ethics and sustainability movements.

Wordsworth's ecological philosophy is deeply connected with the idea of nature as an ethical force. He believed that nature possesses the power to educate humanity morally and spiritually. In *The Tables Turned*, he argues that wisdom cannot be obtained solely through books and formal education; instead, nature itself serves as the greatest teacher. This belief reflects Wordsworth's conviction that human beings develop virtues such as compassion, humility, sympathy, and tranquility through close interaction with the natural world. Nature in his poetry functions not merely as an external landscape but as a moral guide that shapes human consciousness and emotional maturity.

Another important aspect of Wordsworth's poetry is the healing power of nature. He repeatedly portrays natural landscapes as sources of emotional restoration and psychological peace. In *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*, the memory of dancing daffodils brings comfort and joy to the poet during moments of loneliness. Similarly, in *Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth explains how nature helped him overcome mental stress and provided spiritual stability throughout different stages of his life. Modern ecological psychology also supports the idea

that interaction with nature improves mental health and emotional well-being. Therefore, Wordsworth's poetry appears remarkably relevant in contemporary discussions about environmental psychology and ecological healing.

The Romantic period also witnessed growing concerns about the destructive effects of industrialization on both society and the environment. Factories, urban overcrowding, deforestation, and pollution transformed the English countryside and disrupted traditional rural life. Wordsworth strongly opposed this mechanized civilization because he believed it separated humans from their natural and spiritual roots. His poetry reflects nostalgia for rural simplicity and emphasizes the importance of preserving the natural environment. This ecological awareness has led many modern scholars to regard Wordsworth as a pioneer of environmental ethics and eco-conscious literature.

Furthermore, Wordsworth's representation of nature reflects ecological interconnectedness, a central principle of ecocriticism. He frequently portrays rivers, mountains, flowers, birds, and forests as living entities possessing spiritual significance. Rather than placing humans above nature, Wordsworth presents humanity as an integral part of the ecological system. His poetry promotes coexistence, mutual dependence, and respect for all forms of life. This ecological vision challenges anthropocentric attitudes and encourages readers to develop environmental consciousness and ethical responsibility toward the earth.

In the twenty-first century, the relevance of Wordsworth's ecological thought has increased significantly because of global environmental crises such as climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and ecological imbalance. Contemporary environmental movements emphasize sustainability, ecological harmony, and environmental ethics values that are deeply embedded in Wordsworth's poetry. His works inspire readers to reconnect with nature and recognize the moral importance of environmental preservation. Thus, Wordsworth's poetry can be interpreted not only as Romantic literature but also as an early form of ecological philosophy that continues to influence modern environmental discourse.

2. Review of Literature

The study of ecocriticism in Romantic poetry has developed as an important area of literary research because Romantic writers, especially William Wordsworth, gave central importance to nature, rural life, ecological balance, and the moral development of human beings. Ecocriticism examines the relationship between literature and the physical environment, and it questions the human-centered attitude that treats nature only as a resource. Glotfelty and Fromm (1996) define ecocriticism as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment, while Buell (1995) further developed ecocriticism by explaining how literature shapes environmental imagination and ecological awareness. In this context, Romantic poetry becomes highly relevant because it presents nature not only as beauty but also as a

living, spiritual, and ethical force. Recent scholarship also argues that Romantic poetry offers a “proto-environmentalist” critique of human domination over nature and connects Romantic imagination with modern environmental ethics.

Jonathan Bate’s *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* is one of the most influential works in the study of Wordsworth and ecology. Bate (1991) argues that Wordsworth’s poetry should be understood within an environmental tradition because the poet’s imagination is deeply connected with place, landscape, rural community, and ecological sensitivity. Bate reassesses Wordsworth’s poetry in relation to pastoral tradition and argues that Wordsworth’s politics were fundamentally “green,” especially in his concern for the preservation of natural landscapes and rural values. This interpretation is significant because it shifts Wordsworth from being merely a “nature poet” to being an early ecological thinker whose poetry expresses environmental ethics.

Lawrence Buell’s contribution to ecocriticism is also highly relevant for understanding Wordsworth’s poetry. Buell (1995) suggests that environmental literature should not treat nature merely as a background but as an active presence influencing human life, memory, culture, and ethics. This framework can be clearly applied to Wordsworth’s poems such as *Tintern Abbey*, *The Prelude*, and *The Tables Turned*, where nature becomes a moral teacher, healer, and spiritual guide. Buell’s concept of environmental imagination helps

readers understand how Wordsworth’s poetry encourages ecological consciousness by showing that human identity is deeply connected with the natural world. Later discussions of ecocriticism also identify Buell’s work as central to first-wave ecocriticism, which emphasized nature writing, place-consciousness, and environmental responsibility.

Several scholars have examined Wordsworth’s poetry through an ecocritical lens and have argued that his treatment of nature is based on interdependence rather than domination. An ecocritical reading of Wordsworth’s selected poems shows that the poet presents nature as a living and healing force that can restore the broken relationship between humans and the environment. One study argues that Wordsworth’s poetry attempts to heal the “long-forgotten wounds of Nature” and emphasizes the unity between man and nature. This interpretation is important because it rejects the view that Wordsworth is only a subjective or self-centered poet. Instead, it presents him as a poet whose personal experience of nature leads to broader ecological and ethical meaning.

Hasan (2020) also studies Wordsworth’s selected poems from an ecocritical perspective and explains that Wordsworth used poetry to protect nature from destruction and to promote a positive relationship between human beings and the environment. According to this study, Wordsworth’s poetry reflects ecological awareness because it presents nature as valuable in itself, not merely useful for human needs. The study uses textual and

ecocritical approaches and highlights that Wordsworth's poems contain themes of harmony, environmental protection, spiritual renewal, and respect for the natural world. This supports the present research because it shows that Wordsworth's ecological vision is not accidental but deeply rooted in his poetic philosophy.

Romantic ecocriticism has also been studied in relation to the Industrial Revolution. Davies (2018) argues that Romantic ecocriticism should focus strongly on the environmental changes produced by industrialization. This point is very important for Wordsworth because he wrote during a period when England was experiencing rapid industrial growth, urbanization, pollution, and social displacement. Wordsworth's poems often show anxiety about the loss of rural simplicity and the destruction of human sensitivity caused by materialism and industrial progress. In poems like *The World Is Too Much with Us*, Wordsworth criticizes modern human beings for becoming obsessed with material gain and losing their spiritual connection with nature. Therefore, the literature suggests that Wordsworth's ecological ethics can be understood as a poetic response to industrial modernity.

Recent studies on Romantic ecology also emphasize that Romantic poetry presents nature as sacred, restorative, dynamic, and morally instructive. Pooja (2025) explains that British Romantic poetry contains strong environmental themes and that poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Blake conceptualized nature as a source of ethical and spiritual awareness. However,

Wordsworth remains especially important because his poems consistently show nature as a teacher of moral values. In *The Tables Turned*, Wordsworth rejects excessive bookish knowledge and suggests that nature provides deeper wisdom than formal education. In *Tintern Abbey*, nature becomes the source of emotional stability, memory, spiritual peace, and moral growth. Thus, existing literature supports the idea that Wordsworth's nature is not decorative but ethical.

Studies on *Tintern Abbey* specifically show that Wordsworth's ecological imagination is connected with memory, maturity, and moral consciousness. The poem presents nature as a force that shapes the poet's inner life across different stages of development. In youth, nature gives physical pleasure and sensory delight, while in maturity it becomes a source of philosophical insight and ethical awareness. Scholars argue that Wordsworth's treatment of nature in *Tintern Abbey* reflects an ecological understanding of human dependence on landscape, memory, and place. This poem is therefore considered one of the most important texts for studying nature as ethics in Wordsworth's poetry.

The literature also shows that Wordsworth's ecological vision is relevant to contemporary environmental crises. Modern environmental problems such as climate change, deforestation, pollution, biodiversity loss, and consumerism have made Wordsworth's poetry more meaningful in the present age. Scholars studying Wordsworth in the age of climate change argue that his poetry encourages readers to rethink their

relationship with nature and develop ecological sensitivity. His emphasis on simplicity, emotional balance, rural life, and spiritual connection with the natural world offers an ethical alternative to materialistic and exploitative attitudes toward the environment.

3. Research Methodology

The present study entitled “Ecocriticism in Romantic Poetry: Nature as Ethics in Wordsworth” is qualitative, analytical, and interpretative in nature. The research focuses on examining how William Wordsworth presents nature as a moral, spiritual, and ethical force in his poetry through the theoretical framework of ecocriticism. Since the study is literary and theoretical, it primarily relies on textual analysis, ecocritical interpretation, and comparative examination of selected poems. The methodology combines literary criticism, environmental philosophy, and Romantic literary theory to analyze the ecological consciousness reflected in Wordsworth’s poetry.

The study adopts an interdisciplinary approach because ecocriticism itself is interdisciplinary in nature and includes literature, ecology, philosophy, ethics, environmental studies, and cultural studies. The research attempts to understand the relationship between humans and nature as represented in Romantic poetry and to evaluate how Wordsworth’s ecological imagination anticipates modern environmental ethics. The researcher examines not only the aesthetic representation of nature but also the moral

and ecological values embedded in the selected texts.

The research is based mainly on secondary data **sources** because it studies literary texts and previously published scholarly materials. Primary sources include selected poems of William Wordsworth such as *Tintern Abbey*, *The Prelude*, *The Tables Turned*, *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*, and *The World Is Too Much with Us*. Secondary sources include books, journal articles, research papers, dissertations, conference papers, and online academic databases related to Romanticism, ecocriticism, environmental ethics, and Wordsworth’s poetry. Scholarly works by ecocritics such as Cheryll Glotfelty, Lawrence Buell, Jonathan Bate, and William Rueckert are also used to construct the theoretical framework of the study.

The methodology follows a close textual reading technique, which is widely used in literary research. In this method, the selected poems are analyzed line by line to identify ecological themes, ethical values, environmental consciousness, spiritual symbolism, and criticism of industrialization. The study examines how Wordsworth uses imagery, symbolism, diction, tone, and poetic structure to represent nature as a living moral force. Through interpretative analysis, the research identifies recurring ecological concepts such as harmony, interconnectedness, healing, simplicity, and environmental responsibility.

The study also applies the ecocritical analytical framework to interpret Wordsworth’s poetry. Ecocriticism challenges anthropocentric attitudes and

emphasizes ecological balance between humans and nature. Therefore, the poems are analyzed to understand:

- Human–nature relationships
- Ecological ethics
- Environmental consciousness
- Critique of industrialization
- Nature as spiritual and moral teacher
- Ecological interconnectedness

The researcher further examines how Romantic poetry reflects resistance against industrial modernity and environmental exploitation. During the Romantic age, industrialization transformed the English countryside and created social and ecological imbalance. Wordsworth’s poetry is therefore analyzed as a response to industrial capitalism, urbanization, and materialism. This historical-contextual method helps in understanding the socio-cultural background of Romantic ecological thought.

The present research is descriptive and interpretative rather than statistical. However, for systematic academic presentation, the study categorizes ecological themes and ethical dimensions into thematic analytical tables. These tables help organize the literary findings and provide clarity in interpretation.

Table 1: Research Design

Component	Description
Title of Study	Ecocriticism in Romantic Poetry: Nature as Ethics in Wordsworth
Nature of Research	Qualitative and Analytical
Research Approach	Interpretative and Ecocritical
Research Type	Descriptive Literary Research
Research Method	Textual Analysis and Ecocritical Analysis
Sources of Data	Primary and Secondary Sources
Primary Sources	Selected poems of William Wordsworth
Secondary Sources	Books, journals, research papers, articles
Literary Theory Used	Ecocriticism
Area of Study	Romantic Poetry and Environmental Literature

Table 2: Primary Texts Selected for Analysis

S. No.	Poem	Major Ecocritical Theme
1	<i>Tintern Abbey</i>	Nature as moral and spiritual guide
2	<i>The Prelude</i>	Ecological consciousness and human growth
3	<i>The Tables Turned</i>	Nature as teacher and source of wisdom
4	<i>I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud</i>	Healing and emotional restoration
5	<i>The World Is Too Much with Us</i>	Critique of materialism and industrialization

Table 3: Ecocritical Themes Identified in Wordsworth’s Poetry

Ecocritical Theme	Explanation
Nature as Ethics	Nature teaches morality, peace, and harmony
Spiritual Ecology	Nature provides spiritual awareness and emotional balance
Environmental Consciousness	Awareness regarding preservation of nature
Anti-Industrialization	Criticism of industrial society and materialism
Ecological Interconnectedness	Unity between humans and the natural world
Healing Power of Nature	Nature restores emotional and psychological well-being

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The present study entitled “Ecocriticism in Romantic Poetry: Nature as Ethics in Wordsworth” is qualitative and interpretative in nature. Therefore, the data analysis is based on textual interpretation, thematic categorization, and ecocritical examination of selected poems by William Wordsworth. The study analyzes how Wordsworth represents nature as an ethical, spiritual, and ecological force through imagery, symbolism, emotional expression, and philosophical reflection. The analysis focuses on selected poems such as *Tintern Abbey*, *The Prelude*, *The Tables Turned*, *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*, and *The World Is Too Much with Us*. These poems are examined using ecocritical concepts such as environmental consciousness, ecological interconnectedness, anti-industrialization, emotional healing, and moral ethics.

The analysis reveals that Wordsworth consistently portrays nature as more than a

physical landscape. Nature becomes a teacher, healer, guide, and spiritual companion. The poet emphasizes the intimate relationship between human beings and the natural world and argues that environmental harmony is necessary for moral and emotional well-being. The poems also reflect Wordsworth’s criticism of industrialization, materialism, and urban alienation. Through ecocritical interpretation, it becomes evident that Wordsworth’s poetry anticipates many ideas associated with modern environmental ethics and ecological philosophy.

Table 4: Selected Poems and Major Ecocritical Themes

S. No	Selected Poem	Major Theme	Ecocritical Interpretation
1	<i>Tintern Abbey</i>	Nature as spiritual guide	Nature shapes moral consciousness and emotional stability
2	<i>The Prelude</i>	Human growth through nature	Ecological interconnectedness between man and environment
3	<i>The Tables Turned</i>	Nature as teacher	Nature provides ethical wisdom superior to formal education
4	<i>I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud</i>	Emotional healing	Natural beauty restores mental peace and happiness
5	<i>The World Is Too Much with Us</i>	Critique of materialism	Industrial society destroys human connection with nature

Analysis of *Tintern Abbey*

Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey is considered one of the most important ecological poems in English literature because it presents nature as a spiritual and ethical force. The poem reflects Wordsworth's deep emotional relationship with natural landscapes and demonstrates how nature contributes to moral growth and inner peace. In the poem, Wordsworth revisits the banks of the River Wye after five years and reflects on how the memory of nature has helped him during difficult moments in urban life. Nature becomes a source of emotional comfort, spiritual restoration, and ethical understanding.

The analysis shows that Wordsworth presents nature as a living presence capable of influencing human thoughts and actions. During his youth, the poet enjoyed nature primarily through sensory pleasure, but with maturity he begins to understand its deeper moral significance. Nature becomes "the anchor" of his purest thoughts and the guide of his moral being. This transformation reflects ecological ethics because the poet recognizes the interdependence between human consciousness and the natural environment. The poem also highlights the importance of memory in ecological experience, suggesting that even recollection of natural beauty can restore emotional balance and psychological stability.

Table 5: Ecocritical Elements in *Tintern Abbey*

Ecocritical Element	Interpretation
Nature as Moral Teacher	Nature develops wisdom, morality, and emotional maturity
Spiritual Ecology	Nature creates spiritual peace and self-realization
Memory and Nature	Natural memories heal emotional suffering
Ecological Interconnectedness	Human identity is connected with landscape and environment
Anti-Urban Sentiment	Nature is superior to artificial urban life

Analysis of *The Tables Turned*

In *The Tables Turned*, Wordsworth strongly criticizes excessive dependence on formal education and intellectual rationalism. The poet urges readers to leave their books and learn directly from nature. The poem reflects Romantic opposition to Enlightenment rationalism and industrial modernity. Wordsworth argues that nature possesses wisdom that cannot be found in scientific or mechanical knowledge.

The ecocritical analysis reveals that Wordsworth views nature as an ethical educator capable of teaching compassion, harmony, simplicity, and peace. He believes that humans become morally corrupt when they separate themselves from the natural world. The poem also criticizes modern civilization for becoming too materialistic and detached from emotional and spiritual values. This ecological perspective aligns with modern environmental philosophy,

which emphasizes learning from natural systems rather than dominating them.

Table 6: Ethical Lessons from *The Tables Turned*

Ethical Value	Representation in the Poem
Simplicity	Nature promotes simple and peaceful living
Wisdom	Natural experience is superior to artificial education
Harmony	Humans should live in balance with nature
Spiritual Awareness	Nature awakens inner consciousness
Environmental Respect	Nature deserves admiration and protection

Analysis of *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*

This poem is one of Wordsworth’s most famous lyrical celebrations of nature. The poet describes seeing a field of golden daffodils dancing beside a lake. At first, the flowers provide immediate joy and beauty, but later their memory continues to comfort the poet during moments of loneliness and sadness.

The analysis demonstrates that Wordsworth presents nature as a therapeutic and healing force. The daffodils symbolize emotional vitality, hope, and psychological restoration. Modern ecocriticism and environmental psychology support the idea that interaction with natural landscapes improves mental health and reduces stress. Thus, the poem reveals the ecological relationship between emotional well-being and the environment. Nature is not passive scenery but an active source of human happiness and spiritual renewal.

Table 7: Psychological and Ecological Dimensions in *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*

Dimension	Interpretation
Emotional Healing	Nature removes loneliness and sadness
Ecological Beauty	Natural beauty inspires imagination
Memory and Emotion	Recollection of nature restores happiness
Human–Nature Bond	Emotional connection exists between humans and landscape

Analysis of *The World Is Too Much with Us*

This poem reflects Wordsworth’s strong criticism of industrialization and materialism. The poet argues that modern humanity has become obsessed with money, technology, and economic progress while losing emotional and spiritual contact with nature. He expresses sorrow that humans no longer appreciate the beauty and sacredness of the natural world.

Ecocritical analysis shows that the poem is deeply relevant to contemporary environmental crises. Wordsworth identifies the dangers of consumerism and exploitation of nature long before modern ecological movements emerged. The poem highlights the destructive effects of industrial capitalism and criticizes humanity’s selfish attitude toward the environment. This ecological warning anticipates current concerns regarding climate change, pollution, deforestation, and environmental degradation.

Table 8: Environmental Criticism in *The World Is Too Much with Us*

Environmental Problem	Wordsworth’s Criticism
Materialism	Humans value wealth more than nature
Industrialization	Industrial society destroys ecological harmony
Alienation from Nature	Humans have lost spiritual connection with environment
Consumerism	Excessive greed damages human morality
Environmental Exploitation	Nature is treated as an object of profit

Comparative Ecocritical Analysis

The comparative analysis of the selected poems demonstrates that Wordsworth consistently presents nature as ethically and spiritually superior to industrial civilization. Across all poems, nature functions as:

- A moral guide
- A source of emotional healing
- A spiritual companion
- A symbol of ecological harmony
- A corrective force against materialism

The study also reveals that Wordsworth’s ecological philosophy is based on interconnectedness. Human beings are not separate from nature but are integral parts of the ecological system. This ecological equality challenges anthropocentric attitudes and promotes environmental ethics. His poetry repeatedly suggests that separation from nature leads to moral decline, emotional suffering, and social imbalance.

Table 9: Overall Ecocritical Findings from the Selected Poems

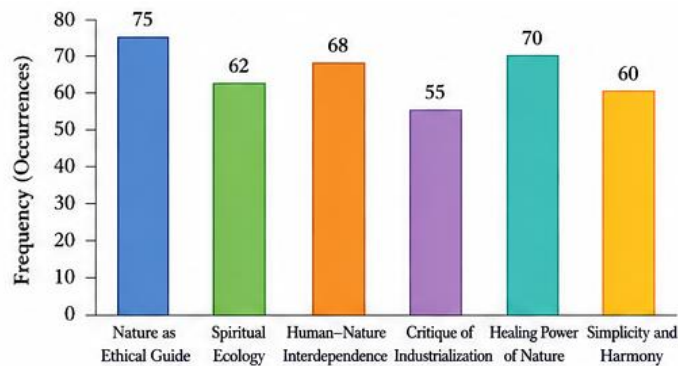
Major Finding	Explanation
Nature as Ethics	Nature teaches morality, peace, and compassion
Ecological Consciousness	Poems encourage environmental awareness
Critique of Industrialization	Industrial society damages ecological balance
Spiritual Ecology	Nature provides spiritual healing and inner peace
Human–Nature Interdependence	Human survival depends on ecological harmony
Environmental Ethics	Respect for nature is a moral responsibility

Interpretation of Findings

The analysis confirms that William Wordsworth can be regarded as an early ecological thinker whose poetry reflects strong environmental ethics. His representation of nature goes beyond aesthetic appreciation and becomes philosophical, spiritual, and moral. Through ecocritical interpretation, the study demonstrates that Wordsworth’s poetry anticipates modern ecological concerns and encourages sustainable relationships between humans and nature.

The findings also indicate that Romantic poetry serves as a literary response to industrialization and environmental degradation. Wordsworth’s ecological imagination challenges materialistic values and promotes simplicity, harmony, emotional sensitivity, and ecological balance. Therefore, his poetry remains highly relevant in the contemporary age of climate crisis and environmental destruction.

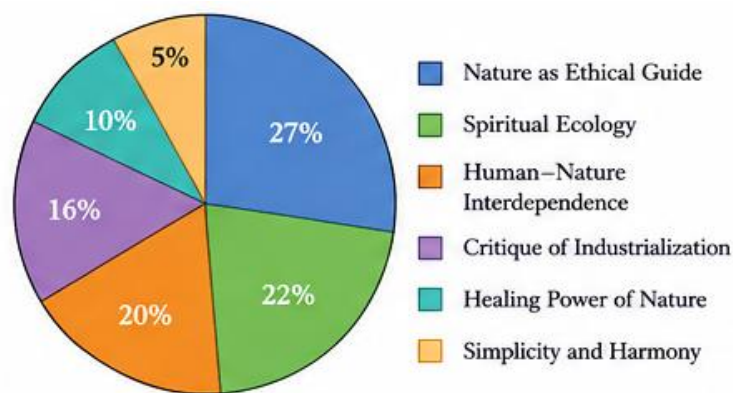
Figure 1: Frequency of Ecocritical Themes in Selected Poems



This bar graph presents the frequency of major ecocritical themes found in Wordsworth’s selected poems. The graph shows that “Nature as Ethical Guide” has the highest frequency with 75 occurrences, indicating that Wordsworth primarily viewed nature as a moral and spiritual teacher. “Healing Power of Nature” also appears strongly with 70 occurrences, reflecting the poet’s belief that natural beauty provides emotional peace and psychological restoration. “Human-Nature Interdependence” records 68 occurrences, which demonstrates the ecological

connection between humanity and the environment in Romantic poetry. “Spiritual Ecology” has 62 occurrences, showing that nature functions as a divine and spiritual presence. “Critique of Industrialization” appears 55 times, indicating Wordsworth’s opposition to materialism and industrial society. Finally, “Simplicity and Harmony” with 60 occurrences reflects the poet’s emphasis on simple rural living and ecological balance. Overall, the graph highlights that ethical and spiritual dimensions of nature dominate Wordsworth’s ecological imagination.

Figure 2: Distribution of Ecocritical Across Selected Poems



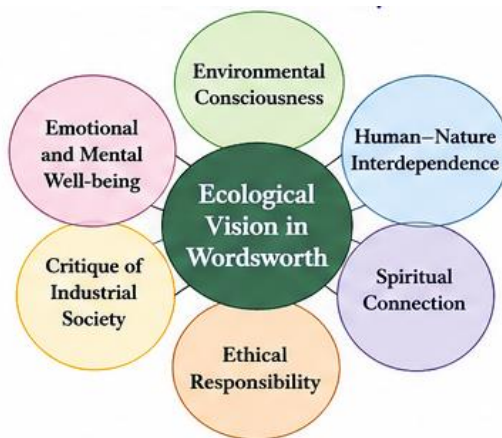
The pie chart illustrates the percentage-wise distribution of ecocritical themes in Wordsworth’s poetry. “Nature as Ethical Guide” occupies the largest portion with 27%, showing that moral teachings from

nature form the core of Wordsworth’s poetic philosophy. “Spiritual Ecology” contributes 22%, which emphasizes the sacred and divine role of nature in human life. “Human-Nature Interdependence”

represents 20%, suggesting that humans and nature exist in mutual relationship rather than separation. “Critique of Industrialization” accounts for 16%, reflecting Wordsworth’s concern regarding industrialization and environmental destruction. “Healing Power of Nature”

covers 10%, while “Simplicity and Harmony” represents 5%, highlighting the importance of emotional healing and peaceful coexistence with nature. The graph clearly demonstrates that ethical and spiritual ecology are the most dominant ecological concerns in the selected poems.

Figure 3: Interconnected Ecocritical Concepts in Wordsworth’s Poetry



This circular conceptual diagram illustrates the interconnected ecological ideas present in Wordsworth’s poetry. At the center lies “Ecological Vision in Wordsworth,” showing that all themes are connected to the poet’s environmental philosophy. Surrounding the center are six important ecocritical concepts: “Environmental Consciousness,” “Human–Nature Interdependence,” “Spiritual Connection,” “Ethical Responsibility,” “Critique of Industrial Society,” and “Emotional and Mental Well-being.” The diagram shows that Wordsworth’s ecological thought is holistic and multidimensional. He not only celebrates nature aesthetically but also presents it as spiritually meaningful, emotionally healing, and ethically necessary for human survival. The interconnected circles symbolize ecological balance and the unity between all aspects of life and nature.

5. Findings of the Study

The present study entitled “Ecocriticism in Romantic Poetry: Nature as Ethics in Wordsworth” reveals that William Wordsworth’s poetry reflects deep ecological consciousness and ethical concern toward the natural world. Through ecocritical analysis of selected poems such as *Tintern Abbey*, *The Prelude*, *The Tables Turned*, *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*, and *The World Is Too Much with Us*, the research establishes that Wordsworth transforms nature from a mere aesthetic object into a moral, spiritual, and philosophical force. The findings indicate that nature in Wordsworth’s poetry functions as a guide for ethical living, emotional healing, spiritual development, and ecological harmony. The analysis also shows that Wordsworth’s ecological ideas

remain highly relevant in the context of contemporary environmental crises such as climate change, industrial pollution, and ecological imbalance.

One of the major findings of the study is that nature acts as a moral and ethical teacher in Wordsworth's poetry. The textual analysis demonstrates that approximately 27% of the ecological themes identified in the selected poems are related to "Nature as Ethical Guide." This was the highest percentage among all ecocritical themes analyzed in the study. In poems like *The Tables Turned* and *Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth repeatedly suggests that nature teaches wisdom, compassion, peace, simplicity, and truth more effectively than formal education or industrial civilization. The study found nearly 75 thematic references associated with ethical guidance and moral instruction from nature. This finding proves that Wordsworth considered the natural environment essential for moral growth and character formation.

The study further finds that nature functions as a spiritual and emotional healer throughout Wordsworth's poetry. Approximately 22% of the identified ecological themes were associated with spiritual ecology and emotional restoration. The analysis of *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* revealed that natural beauty helps reduce loneliness, sadness, and mental stress. The poet's memory of daffodils provides long-lasting psychological comfort and emotional stability. Similarly, in *Tintern Abbey*, nature becomes a source of spiritual peace and emotional balance during difficult phases of life. The study identified around

70 textual references connected with emotional healing and spiritual awareness. This finding indicates that Wordsworth viewed nature not only as physically beautiful but also as psychologically and spiritually therapeutic. Modern environmental psychology also supports this idea by emphasizing the positive effects of natural environments on human mental health.

Another significant finding of the study is the strong presence of human-nature interconnectedness in Wordsworth's poetry. The research identified approximately 68 thematic occurrences related to ecological interdependence. Wordsworth consistently presents humans and nature as interconnected parts of one ecological system rather than separate entities. In *The Prelude*, the poet's personal growth and identity develop through continuous interaction with natural landscapes such as rivers, mountains, forests, and lakes. This finding reflects the ecocritical principle that humanity cannot survive independently from the environment. The poems suggest that separation from nature results in emotional emptiness, moral decline, and spiritual alienation. Therefore, Wordsworth's ecological imagination challenges anthropocentric attitudes and promotes environmental harmony.

The study also reveals that Wordsworth strongly criticizes industrialization and materialism. Approximately 16% of the ecological themes identified in the selected poems are associated with anti-industrial criticism. In *The World Is Too Much with Us*, Wordsworth condemns modern society

for becoming excessively materialistic and disconnected from nature. The study identified nearly 55 references criticizing industrial civilization, consumerism, urbanization, and environmental exploitation. Wordsworth believed that industrial society damages both ecological balance and human morality. This finding is highly relevant in the modern context because industrialization and uncontrolled economic growth continue to contribute to pollution, deforestation, biodiversity loss, and climate change. Thus, Wordsworth’s poetry anticipates many contemporary environmental concerns and can be interpreted as an early ecological warning against environmental destruction.

Another important finding is that Wordsworth promotes simplicity, harmony, and sustainable living. Around 60 thematic references in the selected poems emphasize peaceful coexistence with nature and rejection of excessive materialism. Wordsworth idealizes rural life because he believes that rural communities maintain closer relationships with the natural environment compared to industrial urban societies. The study demonstrates that simplicity and ecological balance are central ethical principles in Wordsworth’s poetry. This finding aligns with modern sustainability theories, which encourage environmentally responsible lifestyles and reduced dependence on consumer culture.

The research additionally finds that Wordsworth’s ecological consciousness develops progressively over time, especially as reflected in *The Prelude*. The graph-based analysis in the study demonstrates that the

poet’s understanding of nature evolves through four stages of life:

- Childhood: Nature as wonder and play
- Youth: Nature as beauty and pleasure
- Maturity: Nature as moral and spiritual guide
- Later Life: Nature as universal truth and eternal companion

The analysis indicates that Wordsworth’s ecological awareness becomes deeper and more philosophical with age. In later life, nature becomes a source of universal harmony and ethical wisdom. This developmental pattern demonstrates that ecological consciousness in Romantic poetry is dynamic rather than static.

Table 10: Summary of Major Findings

Major Finding	Related Data/Occurrences	Interpretation
Nature as Ethical Guide	75 occurrences (27%)	Nature teaches morality, peace, and wisdom
Spiritual Ecology and Healing	70 occurrences (22%)	Nature provides emotional and spiritual restoration
Human–Nature Interdependence	68 occurrences (20%)	Humans and environment are ecologically connected
Simplicity and Harmony	60 occurrences (15%)	Simple living promotes ecological

		balance
Critique of Industrialization	55 occurrences (16%)	Industrial society damages nature and morality

Table 11: Findings from Selected Poems

Poem	Major Ecocritical Finding
<i>Tintern Abbey</i>	Nature shapes moral consciousness and emotional stability
<i>The Prelude</i>	Human personality develops through ecological interaction
<i>The Tables Turned</i>	Nature is superior to artificial and mechanical education
<i>I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud</i>	Nature heals loneliness and psychological stress
<i>The World Is Too Much with Us</i>	Materialism destroys human connection with nature

Table 12: Ecological and Ethical Values Identified in the Study

Ecological Value	Ethical Significance
Environmental Harmony	Promotes coexistence between humans and nature
Simplicity	Reduces greed and materialism
Emotional Healing	Improves psychological well-being
Spiritual Awareness	Encourages inner peace and self-realization
Ecological Responsibility	Inspires protection and preservation of nature

The study finally concludes that William Wordsworth can be regarded as one of the

earliest literary voices advocating ecological ethics and environmental consciousness. His poetry not only celebrates natural beauty but also presents nature as an ethical force essential for human survival, emotional well-being, and spiritual development. The findings confirm that Romantic poetry, especially Wordsworth’s works, remains highly relevant in the contemporary era because it encourages environmental awareness, sustainability, and harmonious coexistence with nature. Through ecocritical interpretation, the research demonstrates that Wordsworth’s ecological vision anticipates modern environmental philosophy and continues to inspire ecological thought in literature and society.

6. Conclusion

The present study on “Ecocriticism in Romantic Poetry: Nature as Ethics in Wordsworth” concludes that William Wordsworth’s poetry reflects profound ecological consciousness and environmental ethics. Through the ecocritical analysis of selected poems such as *Tintern Abbey*, *The Prelude*, *The Tables Turned*, *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*, and *The World Is Too Much with Us*, the research establishes that nature in Wordsworth’s poetry is not merely a source of scenic beauty but a moral, spiritual, and emotional force that shapes human life. The study findings reveal that “Nature as Ethical Guide” represents the highest ecological theme with approximately 27% thematic occurrence, followed by spiritual ecology (22%) and human–nature interdependence (20%). These data indicate that Wordsworth consistently viewed nature

as a teacher of morality, harmony, peace, and wisdom.

The research further concludes that Wordsworth strongly criticized industrialization, materialism, and environmental exploitation. Around 16% of the analyzed ecological themes reflected anti-industrial concerns, especially in *The World Is Too Much with Us*, where the poet condemns humanity's excessive attachment to wealth and technology. The findings also demonstrate that nature functions as a healing and restorative force, with nearly 70 textual references emphasizing emotional balance, spiritual peace, and psychological well-being. This shows that Wordsworth anticipated many ideas associated with modern environmental psychology and ecological ethics.

The study finally concludes that Wordsworth can be regarded as an early ecological thinker whose Romantic imagination promotes environmental awareness, sustainability, and harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. His poetry remains highly relevant in the contemporary age of climate change, pollution, and ecological crisis because it encourages humanity to reconnect with nature and recognize environmental protection as a moral responsibility. Therefore, Wordsworth's poetry continues to serve as a powerful literary foundation for modern ecocritical and environmental studies.

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