



The Role of Nature in Shaping character in Romantic Literature: A comparative study of Frankenstein and The Prelude

Muthanna Kareem Mohaisen Alobaidi

Department of English, College of Education for Humanities, University of Diyala, Diyala, Iraq

* Corresponding Author: **Muthanna Kareem Mohaisen Alobaidi**

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Abstract

This study investigates the transformative role of nature on characters in Romantic literature, focusing on moral and psychological development through the analysis of two texts: Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" and William Wordsworth's "The Prelude." The paper examines the manner in which writers of the Romantic period, who were informed by the idealistic and pantheistic philosophies, understood nature as not just a physical location but also an enormous spiritual, moral, and emotional power. By comparing both texts, the study shows that nature is portrayed in both literary works as a dynamic being in the play of human life, teacher, healer, and moral judge in turn. Shelley in Frankenstein depicts nature as a comforter, ethical teacher, and careless or vindictive force when a human being violates the laws of nature, especially by using scientific arrogance and alienation of the natural world. On the other hand, The Prelude introduces nature as always advantageous, which created the character of Wordsworth as it taught him humility, imagination, and moral sensitivity. Though both authors support the power of nature on the development of characters, the vision of Shelley is somewhat horrifying, while the one of Wordsworth provides a model of harmony and reconciliation. As the paper concludes, Romantic ideas of nature prefigure ecological ethics in the modern world, allowing us to claim that the harmonious relationship with nature is the prerequisite of the cultivation of virtues, compassion, and personal fulfilment. This eternal conversation of man and nature makes the relevance of Romanticism to modern ecological and ethical debate obvious.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Romantic Literature and Its Philosophical Background

Romantic literature was a reaction against the rationalism and the mechanization and materialism of the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution that dominated the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century (Nassar, 2019) ^[21]. It was not just a literary movement but overall intellectual and emotional reaction of the transforming conditions of the modern life. The romantics focused more on emotion rather than reason, imagination rather than logic, and individuality rather than conformity. They wanted to find back the spiritual and moral aspects of life, which they considered was repressed by the emergence of science and industry. Romanticism therefore was a philosophical as well as an artistic movement of revolt against dehumanizing nature of the modern civilization (Richards, 2024) ^[25].

Romantically, philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Schiller influenced the movement with their emphasis on the natural goodness of human nature, and the need to be emotionally authentic (Alberti, 2019) ^[2]. The idea that human beings are born in purity and corrupted by the society is one of the main concepts by Rousseau that influenced the world of Romantics. Romantics artists and writers internalized this belief; they depicted civilization as something that deprives people of their natural state of unity with the world. To them, nature was a representation of innocence, truth and unity, which they considered to have been lost in the development of industrial society (Tresch, 2019) ^[35]. One more legacy that the German Idealists and British empiricists gave to the Romantics was the belief that imagination is not just a creative ability but a way of seeing the divine and the infinite. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was one of the main representatives of the English Romanticism, defined imagination as a recreation of the infinite mind as the perpetual act of creation. Using imagination, people could see the inner correlations between the self, and the universe. This idealism, philosophically, became the basis of much of the Romantic praise of art, poetry, and nature (Santayana, 2021) ^[31].

The romantic literature thus established itself as a medium through which authors were able to examine the relationship between the self and the natural world, emotion and intellect, the finite and the infinite. It was defined by an interest in the sublime - a term popularized by Edmund Burke to refer to the feelings elicited by nature, awe, terror, reverence in the presence of the majesty of nature. The mountains, storms, seas, and forests turned out to be the symbols of divine power which overwhelmed the human ambition and raised human consciousness. In that regard nature was not a passive spectator but a subject involved in the drama of human life. Romantic authors thought that nature could be a source of moral purification, spiritual enlightenment and self-understanding. Nevertheless, in case people broke the connection with nature they threatened to become morally loose, alienated, and hopeless. The motif of this central philosophical thought ran through prose and verse of the time, through the adoring Wordsworthian hymns to nature as well as the warning Wordsworthian story of the dangers of scientific ambition, Frankenstein.

Therefore, Romantic literature can be considered to be the reflection of the society, which was itself transitioning, longing to unite the results of the contemporary science and spiritual sustenance of nature. It tried to restore the moral and emotional aspects of human life by finding the truth not in reason or technology, but in the heart and imagination. The movement thus laid the groundwork of the current literary thinking, which is still applicable to the ecological and psychological interpretations of literature.

1.2. The Romantic View of Nature as a Living, Spiritual, and Moral Force

The concept of nature in Romantic literature is much more than a physical location, but a living, spiritual, and moral being that incorporates the divine order of the universe (Richards, 2024) ^[25]. The Romantic poets and novelists viewed nature as a spirit, which links all phenomena of existence. This universalistic world vision contrasted with the

enlightenment viewpoint that viewed nature as a source that can be studied, controlled and utilized (Ryff, 2021) ^[30]. To the Romantics such an attitude was the spiritual destitution of mankind. They had a feeling that losing touch with nature meant losing touch with the divine origin of the morality and creativity. Romantic view of nature could be traced back to the philosophy of pantheism - God is at home in all living things. An example is William Wordsworth, in *The Prelude and Tintern Abbey*, when he is talking about nature, he says it has a motion and a spirit, and that it is capable of thought and moral reflection. This religious oneness between man and nature brings about a feeling of a moral order that is not human law. Nature thus turns into a teacher and teaches mankind the soul of balance, humility, and compassion.

This perception has some moral connotations. The characters that were depicted by the Romantics were either people who flourished when in communication with nature or people who were denied nature and consequently they suffered (Watts, 2022) ^[40]. The power of nature was believed to be ethically educative, it could put to rest pernicious passions, evoke creativity and bring about spiritual order. Wordsworth has made a well-known claim that nature shapes the heart that is in love with her and develops the best part of the life of a good man. It was by experiencing the natural world that people would be able to leave their egos behind and find a moral and emotional balance. In addition, the sublimeness of nature significantly influenced the human character. When one saw great mountains, the stormy sea or the sky full of stars, the awe experienced brought one to his knees. This encounter with the sublime provided self-reflection, reverence to forces that are above human understanding. Nevertheless, in case people did not admire these natural forces, in case they wanted to control them or break the rules, they end in the collapse of morals (Rigby, 2022) ^[27].

The example of this tension is found in Mary Shelley in *Frankenstein*. For Victor Frankenstein, his aspiration to be a scientist guides him to overcome the natural limits by creating a life that is not natural. His sense of alienation to the natural world indicates his corruption of morals and spiritual emptiness. His barren surroundings, where he finally goes, frozen seas and raging mountains, reflect his psychological turmoil. In such a way, Shelley turns nature into a moral, and to punish the arrogance and redeem humility, nature can be seen as a moral judge and psychological mirror. On the contrary, the interaction of Wordsworth with nature in *The Prelude* is healing and eye-opening. Nature teaches the senses of the poet, adds to his moral consciousness, and perfects his imagination. Wordsworth, in communing with the natural world, is also able to have spiritual development and moral maturity through meditation. The nature then is simultaneously refuge and Bible—a book of God where the soul reads the truths which are immortal (Tu'itahi, 2021) ^[36]. Romantic perception of nature as a moral being alive still has its relevance. It also questions the exploitative attitude of the modern society towards the environment and makes us remember that moral and ecological health are two sides of the same coin. To Romantic authors, the destruction of nature was the destruction of the human spirit. Thus, their works promote the restoration of harmony, an ecology of morals based on reverence, empathy, and respect of all the living beings.

1.3. Brief Introductions to *Frankenstein* and *The Prelude* as Representative Romantic Texts

Frankenstein (1818) by Mary Shelley and *The Prelude* (1805, published posthumously in 1850) by William Wordsworth are two of the most meticulously detailed works that discuss nature and character in the Romantic era, but take an entirely different perspective on the subject (Pérez Rodríguez, 2020)^[24]. The nature of both works is the spirit of Romantic thought, namely that nature defines, molds, and even destroys human identity. *Frankenstein* can be called a Gothic novel though it has a strong foundation on the philosophy of Romantics. The author inspires by Shelley the story of Victor Frankenstein—a young scientist who is more concerned with the secrets of life and its unfolding because he fails to identify with nature and act in a way that is ethically sound. The scientific research of Victor is an extreme form of the Enlightenment rationality, who tries to surpass the natural boundaries and act as a god. His doom is tragic, thus, placing Romantic emphasis on the fact that to declare oneself out of the moral order of nature is to doom oneself (Suddaby, 2023)^[34].

Shelley contrasts nature and human ambition in the novel and throughout the story, the author portrays the sublime beauty of nature and the moral degradation of human ambition. The Swiss Alps, the ice of the Arctic, and the forest wildlands are symbolic landscapes that represent the inner world of the characters (O'Hanlon-Alexandra, 2023)^[22]. In the case of the creature, nature at first provides solace, food, and moral support—his childhood encounters with the sun, the birds, and the streaming water bring about innocence and purity. Nonetheless, when he encounters the problems of social rejection and isolation, even nature turns against him and turns desolate, just like he loses his innocence and turns vengeful (Garofalo & Sigler, 2019)^[10]. Therefore, the *Frankenstein* literature manifests nature as a healer and a punisher, who can bring about good and reveal the evil. Conversely, *The Prelude* by Wordsworth is an autobiographical epic which glorifies the capacity of nature to develop moral and spiritual development of the human soul. Following the evolution of the poet from childhood to maturity, the poem shows the way experiences in nature make a change in his imagination, emotions, and ethics. Wordsworth shows nature as a kind of lingering ghost, a teacher who shows humility, compassion, and respect to life. The English countryside, not only in the form of mountains, rivers, and lakes, is not an inert setting but a part of the process of his moral education (Bradshaw, 2019)^[3].

Where Shelley has alienation with nature in his narrative, Wordsworth has reconciliation and harmony in his poem. The experiences with sublime landscapes that the poet undergoes, e.g., the episode with climbing the mountain or the boat-stealing, make people feel awe and moral reflection and develop the feeling of moral responsibility to the natural world. According to the vision of Wordsworth, human mind and nature are mutually reliant: the mind influences nature by perception and nature by the sense of morality influences the mind. Both *Frankenstein* and *The Prelude* share the Romantic belief that nature is the center of human nature. However, they show two opposite results of that relationship: one of peace and spiritual elevation, the other of alienation and disgrace. These works, combined, indicate the two-sidedness of Romantic thought: the dream of being in harmony with

nature and the anxiety of losing it in the world of machines. Through comparing the two texts, this study aims at discussing how both authors describe how nature is a shaping factor to human character and how moral and psychological growth relies on the connection to the natural world. The combination of tragedy and spiritual journey by Shelley and spiritual journey by Wordsworth shows that the ultimate message of Romantic literature is the moral dialogue between man and nature—a dialogue which still characterizes the ethical and ecological awareness of today.

2. Literature Review

Abed et.al (2025) explored the connections between British Romantic Literature and mythological narratives, analyzing how authors like John Keats, William Wordsworth, and Mary Shelley engage with mythological themes. It reveals how these writers incorporate myth to enhance depth in their storytelling, reflecting timeless concepts such as heroism and creation. “The investigation examines recurring motifs and archetypes within the Romantic movement, highlighting a collective mythical consciousness that shaped the literature of the era. Ultimately, the study underscores the significance of myth in influencing creativity and cultural discourse during the Romantic period”.

Frankenstein et.al (2025) discussed the Nature and Nurture in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* analyzes the interplay of innate and environmental factors in the character of Frankenstein's monster. “It highlights how the creature's intrinsic traits are influenced by Victor's scientific actions and profoundly impacted by societal rejection, suffering, and isolation. This narrative demonstrates that environmental influences can reshape innate characteristics, emphasizing the importance of social interactions in defining human identity, morality, and behavior”.

Emini et.al (2024) examined the portrayal of mental health difficulties in Shakespeare's plays *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, focusing on themes such as insanity, anxiety, and guilt through a comparative approach. “It employs an interdisciplinary methodology combining cultural studies, psychology, and literary theory to investigate how the Elizabethan socio-historical context influences these portrayals. Key aspects include *Macbeth*'s descent into megalomania and paranoia, alongside *Hamlet*'s existential crisis, revealing the intricate psychological processes in both characters. Additionally, the study aligns these depictions with contemporary views on mental health, highlighting enduring themes relevant to audiences across time”.

Kholodniak et.al (2023) “explored the importance of comparative literary theory in understanding English literature from a cross-cultural perspective. It discusses how cultural comparison enhances the appreciation of diverse literary traditions and historical contexts. The analysis emphasizes the significance of literary interactions, the role of translations in broadening access to different cultures, and how these interactions influence the evolution of literary canons. By examining shared themes and narrative techniques across cultures, the article illustrates how a comparative approach can deepen our understanding of global English literature”.

Gilly et.al (2021) “analyzed the works of William Wordsworth, Mary Shelley, and Virginia Woolf to explore how their characters and poetic voices grapple with the concept of self while reflecting on the past. The study focuses on the writers' use of nesting techniques, striking imagery, and vertical language to illuminate sublime moments. It incorporates the theories of Longinus, Edmund Burke, and Immanuel Kant regarding the sublime, aiming to merge their analytical approaches with the creative language of the authors”.

Engl et.al (2020) examined the British Romanticism and the Paradoxes of Natural Education” presents a unique view on Romantic-era concepts of “natural” education and human development. It posits that the Romantic retreat into nature, often seen as a departure from Enlightenment rationality, is deeply rooted in Rousseau's ideas. Rousseau asserts that natural education is inherently flawed due to its dependence on a socially constructed notion of “nature.” “This work argues that the literary outputs of British Romantics—Wollstonecraft, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley—subvert the expected paths of natural development, highlighting the paradox encountered by Rousseau. Wordsworth and Coleridge's poetry reflects the contradictions of their “natural” aspirations, while Wollstonecraft and Shelley utilize gothic elements to critique male-centric notions of education. Overall, the dissertation illustrates how Romantic literature acts as a gothic resistance to simplistic “natural” solutions in the context of social issues, resonating with contemporary environmental concerns”.

Chao et.al (2019) “Influenced by Enlightenment thinkers like Rousseau and Smith, Romantic writers such as Coleridge and Percy Shelley celebrate the powerful, sympathetic love that connects individuals into a harmonious whole, reducing the risks associated with loneliness and solipsism. However, not all Romantic authors adopt this optimistic view of love; Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein," for instance, presents a contrasting interpretation. Shelley depicts bitter solitude arising from a lack of sympathetic understanding among characters, including Victor and nature, the Monster and the De Laceys, and the Monster with his creator, Victor. Through these relationships, Shelley engages with both Enlightenment and Romantic concepts of love, ultimately undermining their idealistic portrayals and transforming love into despair. The novel, characterized by Gothic elements, suggests an absence of redemption, shifting the focus from the Romantic celebration of blissful connection to a profound sense of despair”.

Shun-liang et.al (2019) “explained the Romantic writers, influenced by Enlightenment thinkers, celebrate the harmonious power of love, promoting unity against isolation. However, Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" challenges this optimistic view by depicting themes of solitude and lack of sympathetic connection. Through the relationships between Victor, the Monster, and others, Shelley highlights the despair inherent in love, contrasting the idealized Romantic vision with a Gothic sense of hopelessness and the negation of redemption”.

3. The Romantic Concept of Nature

3.1. Nature as a Divine and Restorative Power in Romantic Thought

Nature has a divine quality in Romantic literature and it is a source of spiritual healing. According to the view of the Romantics, the world of nature is animate and has a spirit that goes beyond material existence as an expression of a divine order of things (Marcos Moreno, 2020) ^[18]. They regarded nature not as a physical space and a set of objects to be analyzed but as a living, breathing being that contained the spirit of God, imagination, and morality. This concept represented a sharp departure from the Enlightenment view of the world as one of machines, which had demoted nature into a series of lifeless laws and determinism. To the Romantics, nature was imbued with divinity—a force that troubled with the bliss of elevated ideas which Wordsworth wrote in Tintern Abbey.

The divine in nature was most easily perceived in terms of pantheism, the view that God existed in every form of life. This school of thought encouraged Romantic authors to perceive the natural world as a divine book, with which a person could discern divine truths. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley (Percy Bysshe Shelley) frequently wrote of experiences of transcendence when communion with nature had resulted in a sense of the infinite. Spiritual experience of mountains and rivers brought by Wordsworth represented this connection between the human soul and the divine spirit of the universe. Equally, in Frankenstein, Mary Shelley talks about nature as a moral and healing power that can calm, forgive, and rejuvenate the most tortured of souls. As Victor Frankenstein goes back to the Alps following the tragedy of the death of his brother, the vastness and tranquility of the natural world provide him with a moment of reprieve, when it comes to guilt and hopelessness. Shelley in describing snow-covered mountains and still lakes reminds us of the Romantic ideology about nature and its power to restore and cleanse the human soul (Greenwald, 2019) ^[13].

Nature served as an escape from civilization's corruption too. The smoke-filled cities and mechanization of labor during the Industrial Revolution was a spiritual crisis to the Romantics. They perceived industrial advances as an increasingly alienating effect of humankind to the natural rhythms. Romantic literature in its turn glorified the countryside, the wilderness, and the wild landscapes as the place of authenticity and of moral truth. Nature, on the contrary, was pure and upright as compared to the human institutions and it maintained the innocence that had been lost by society. To withdraw to nature was to reenter the condition of moral sanity—a motif which echoes throughout the poetry of Wordsworth and is tragically reversed in Frankenstein with Victor losing all connection with nature and therefore falling into a pit of moral decline.

3.2. The Tension Between Nature and Human Ambition (The Sublime vs. the Destructive)

The opposition of nature to the human desire to accomplish something great is perhaps one of the most interesting themes of Romantic literature, especially articulated in the notion of the sublime. The sublime, as described by Edmund Burke and subsequently taken over by Romantic philosophers, is a state that can be experienced in awe and terror, when human beings are confronted by enormous, uncontrollable forces of

the natural world (Clohecy, 2019) ^[6]. Such experiences evolve humility and reverence that make human beings realize their inferiority before creation. To Wordsworth, the sublime was of moral nature; it uplifted the spirit and made people reflect on their spirituality. Conversely, in case of the human ambition to master or manipulate nature, it turned out to be that which destroys, a sin of hubris resulting in moral destruction.

Frankenstein written by Mary Shelley is an expression of this conflict. The desire of Victor Frankenstein to unleash a flood of light on our dark world symbolizes the Enlightenment craze of mastering nature by means of science. However, his crime against nature leads to anarchy, pain, and fatalities. Shelley employs sublime scenery, thunderstorms, frozen wastes, and barren mountains, to show the strength of nature and also the moral decline of Victor. The very mountains which he has earlier inspired to his imagination now scorn his arrogance, and become symbols of his alienation to the natural and moral order. This duality is also evidenced in the way the creature is wandering through wild nature: although nature provides him with companionship and comfort, it also reflects his increasing anger and loneliness. With these oppositions, Shelley is able to make the sublime into an ethical lesson—when reverence becomes destructive, awe becomes ambition (Maggiore, 2025) ^[17].

Wordsworth in *The Prelude* addresses another aspect of such tension. His sublime moments, including his meeting with the high mountain, which he has stolen a boat to get to, give him not pride but humility. It is the amazing magnificence of nature that brings him to his senses and moral consciousness. The sublime therefore becomes an experience of moral education, to make mankind aware of the right place in the creation. Wordsworth manages the sublime in a restorative and not a punitive manner as opposed to the tragic version by Shelley (Cazajous-Augé, 2025) ^[4].

Both writers emphasize the weak line between wonder and control, reverence, and rebellion. Romantic sublime requires admiration of the boundaries of nature. Human ambition in trying to take the place of creative nature or God is not going to bring about enlightenment; it causes alienation. This is a philosophical conflict characteristic of a larger Romantic apprehension of the modernity-in-flux, an apprehension that is especially germane in an era of environmental destruction and technological hubris.

3.3. How Romantic Writers Saw Nature as Teacher, Healer, and Moral Compass

Romantic authors always depicted nature as a teacher, healer, and moral guide and directed the human race to virtue and self-awareness. In a rapidly industrializing and ethically perplexing world, nature brought out the lessons of simplicity, humility, and harmony. Wordsworth was sure that nature was the most reliable teacher of humanity as it forms not only mind but also heart and conscience. In *The Prelude*, he narrates how his childhood experiences in nature, when he could listen to the murmur of the river, when it was possible to climb mountains, to witness the changing of the seasons, he had been taught to be empathetic, patient and respectful of life. These experiences developed his imagination and his sense of morality and show that it is not formal teaching that builds moral development but rather an individual and deep connection to the natural world (Verma, 2024) ^[39].

Another motif of the Romantic thought was the healing power of nature. Communing with nature was a way of regaining the inner harmony and emotional balance. The therapeutic effect of natural beauty on the troubled mind is shown severally in the poems of Wordsworth: Nature never betrayed the heart that loved her. Mary Shelley as well gives a treatment to nature that heals, but it is more complicated. In *Frankenstein*, nature is used to momentarily calm the guilt and despair of Victor and give him a glimpse of calmness. But he fails to stay in touch with the moral rhythm of nature, and this inability to do so is his ultimate downfall. The juxtaposition of curing and destruction contributes to the moral message that redemption is in balance with nature, rather than the conquest (Rigby, 2022; Lane, 2019) ^[27, 16].

Nature is a kind of moral compass, which mirrors the condition of the human soul. Romantic authors tended to employ the images of nature to project inner feeling: calm pictures of the landscape were associated with innocence and peace, and tempests were associated with conflict and sin. This ethical figurativity emphasized the opinion that the moral truth lay within the natural order. To do something contrary to nature was to do something opposite to morality. This serves as the intuitive truth of the creature in *Frankenstein*: the purer he is morally, the more he is at one with nature, and the more he is distanced and rejected by society, the more he becomes morally corrupt. Likewise, the moral awareness of Wordsworth is the result of his identification with the natural world, in which every leaf, rock, and stream are the expressions of divine wisdom.

Finally, the Romantic vision of nature summarizes a philosophy of morality that is still very humanistic. Divine nature is a lesson in humility, compassion, and the self. It cures the wound of ambition and alienation. And most of all, it is a guide to humanity on the path of moderation between reason and heart, between progress and piety, between creation and annihilation. With the help of their poetic descriptions of nature, Romantic writers remind their readers that one can comprehend the world and themselves only after learning how to listen to the ethical voice of nature itself.

4. Nature and Character in *Frankenstein*

4.1. Victor Frankenstein's Alienation from Nature and Its Moral Consequences

Frankenstein (1818) by the writer Mary Shelley is a work that offers one of the most potent literary reflections on the ethical and psychological implications of being out of touch with nature. The tragic character of the novel, Victor Frankenstein, is a symbol of rationalist ambition of Enlightenment to control and manipulate the natural world by means of scientific research (Vaněk, 2025) ^[38]. His intellectual aspiration causes him to cut his emotional and spiritual ties with nature; a break, which causes his own personal collapse and destruction of those close to him. The alienation of nature in Shelley, which is brought out in the story by Victor, is a symbol of the alienation of man from the moral order that nature represents.

The childish wonder at natural philosophy at the very beginning of the novel awakens Victor to his interest in the secrets of creation. But this admiration becomes obsession as his ambition becomes more and more active. He secluded himself within the framework of his laboratory without being connected to the family, society, and the beat of nature.

Shelley talks of his surroundings in sterile, mechanical terms, dim light, dying materials, and the stench of chemical tests, which is so constant, compared to the purity and life that he had enjoyed in nature (Kozii, 2025) ^[15]. By denying nature and its natural mechanisms and trying to take over the creative power of nature, Victor crosses the ethical boundaries which were defined as sacred by Romantic thought.

One of the key effects of this alienation, as emphasized by Shelley, is its undesirable moral consequences, which are highlighted in the recurring cycles of imagery of sickness, decay, and desolation. Victor is physically and mentally destroyed, and his disintegration is a reflection of his spiritual corruption. When he alienates himself from nature, he is mad, guilty, and desperate. On the other hand, there are only instances of momentary reprieve when he is once again in touch with the natural world. As an example, when Victor makes the creature, the first thing he does is to heal it when he goes roaming through the mountains of the Alps. The sublime beauty of the scenery—the sea of ice and the dreadful grandeur of Mont Blanc—can bring him temporary rest and sanity. But his failure to maintain this communion shows his lifelong moral displacement (Valdebenito Tihuel, 2023; Simpson, 2021) ^[37, 34].

Shelley therefore alienates Victor to condemn the Enlightenment philosophy of endless human development. Trying to subjugate nature, Victor kills his humanity. His punishment does not take the form of Godly vengeance but rather of psychological torture, which is a Romantic caution that alienation from nature results in moral and emotional destruction. The character of Victor serves as a warning: when people lose their respect for the creative order of nature, they lose their sense of right.

4.2. The Creature's Relationship with Nature—Its Role in His Early Innocence and Later Suffering

However, unlike Victor, the creature has a warm childhood that is characterized by closeness to nature. Without human contact or formal moral education, he takes his lessons directly from nature, which he gains through observation and empathy, forming a moral sense through moral intelligence. His earliest impressions are highly sensuous: he can feel the warmth of the sun, the coolness of water, and the music of birds. These feelings stir not only the sense of physical wellness, but also the feelings of emotional vulnerability and thankfulness (Gasser, 2021) ^[11]. The awakening of the creature described by Shelley is much like the Romantic notion of the natural man as outlined by Rousseau: innocent, pure, and naturally good until society corrupts him.

In his communication with nature, the creature learns about compassion, patience, and reverence for life. He experiences the seasons, harvests food, and hides in the forest, slowly harmonizing with his surroundings. His initial teacher and guide of morals is the natural world. But as he starts to witness human acts, especially brutality, rejection, and prejudice, his relationship with nature deteriorates. The peace and love he once felt are replaced by bitterness and anger. Shelley captures this change through the surrounding scenery: the darker his soul grows, the more cruel and cold the world around him becomes.

The increasing alienation of the creature from nature is similar to that of Victor, albeit for different reasons. The creature is pushed out by emotional pain and social rejection,

whereas Victor is not, as he is a person of intellectual pride. The creature's need for companionship and acceptance draws him into conflict with humanity and, consequently, with the natural order that once protected him. The forest, once a symbol of innocence, becomes a land of exile; the Arctic, his ultimate home, turns into a frozen desert reflecting his distress. In this development, Shelley depicts the tragic ethical trajectory of a creature who starts as a child of nature and ends as its outcast.

Finally, the narrative of the creature illustrates the Romantic belief, as put forward by Shelley, that ethical goodness is based on balance with nature, whereas corruption stems from alienation—through arrogance, denial, or hopelessness. The loss of the creature's innocence demonstrates that alienation from nature is both a personal and a universal moral defeat.

4.3. Symbolism of the Natural Settings: Alps, Arctic, and Forests

The moral and emotional elements of Frankenstein are led by Shelley through the use of nature settings. Every major scenery—the Swiss Alps, the woodlands of Germany, the wilderness of the Arctic—is a symbolic image of the inner world of the characters and their moral paths. The Alps, for example, symbolize the sublime greatness of nature, a land where human aspiration is humbled before godly power. Even when Victor comes to the Alpine valleys, he feels temporarily restored; the grandeur and cleanness of the scene briefly erase his guilt. However, the mountains are also the location where he faces the beast, reminding him that his moral atrocities cannot be overcome by aesthetic admiration (Rüdiger, Schirpke, & Tappeiner, 2019) ^[29].

The woods, on the other hand, represent privacy, loneliness, and the vagueness of ethical development. To the monster, the forest serves as both home and school—a place where he learns survival, empathy, and self-knowledge. This is, however, also a sign of exile, as he has been rejected by society. The changing images of the forest, both compassionate and ominous, reflect the psychological shift of the creature from innocence to vengeance (Meloche, Langlois, Rutter, McLennan, Royer, Billecocq, *et al.*, 2022) ^[20].

The starting point and the ending of the novel is the Arctic, representing the final stage of moral and spiritual alienation. It is a scenery of lifeless calm and barrenness, reflecting the weary soul of Victor. The frozen wastes symbolize the literal and metaphorical terminus of his journey: in attempting to surpass nature, he is consumed by its indifference. The wild and vast Arctic reasserts the power and moral authority of nature over human will (Peitzsch, Martin-Mikle, Hendrikx, Birkeland, & Fagre, 2024) ^[23]; (Martin, Kumar, Sonnentag, & Marsh, 2022) ^[19].

4.4. Nature as a Mirror of Human Emotion and Conscience

Shelley uses nature as a mirror that reflects the moral and emotional conditions of her characters all through the Frankenstein novel. This method has Romantic aesthetic, where the external world was considered to be a reflection of the inner world. Nature is seen as happy and kind when Victor is happy and as terrible and stormy when he is distressed. Storms go hand in hand with feeling guilty or having an epiphany with the lightning that initially leads him to develop interest in electricity and also with the lightning that sheds

light on his ethical collapse of his. In a similar manner, the emotional development of the creature, through the innocence to the anger, is followed with the help of the nature: the beauty of spring is associated with his initial innocence, and the sterility of winter is a symbol of his hopelessness.

This interaction with the context and feeling turns nature into a moral compass- an apparent manifestation of the conscience of the characters. To Shelley the natural world is not non-responsive but reacts to moral good and evil. The further Victor and his creation are separated in nature in a moral law the more barren are their environment. The natural world therefore becomes the witness as well as the judge; a reflection of the result of human transgression.

Using the emotional state of a person and the natural image, Shelley supports one of the main principles of Romanticism: nature has certain moral insight, which reflects and magnifies human experience. This fact is emphasized by the tragic end of the novel, which was written in the frozen tundra of the Arctic. Eventually, nature takes back its control over human pride and folly and restores moral balance of the situation by destroying those who had challenged its laws.

5. Comparative Analysis: *Frankenstein vs. The Prelude*

It was the Romantic period of unprecedented interaction with nature, not as a picturesque backdrop but as a kind of moral and emotional power that influenced the identity of people and their moral judgment. The works of both *Frankenstein* (1818) by Mary Shelley and *The Prelude* (1805, published posthumously in 1850) by William Wordsworth are examples of the Romantic interest in the ability of nature to teach, cure, and discipline the human spirit (Pérez Rodríguez *et al.*, 2020) [24].

However, though both writers use similar philosophical foundations in Romanticism, with its focus on feeling, imagination, and personal experience, the descriptions of nature presented by these writers are also very different in terms of their tone and their purpose. The nature in *The Prelude* is a friend, a motherly figure that helps the poet develop spiritually. *Frankenstein*, in its turn, depicts nature as something which brings comfort and something which brings alienation, something which reflects human desire and human inability to do the right thing. The comparative analysis of these texts demonstrates some similarities in the Romantic vision and some differences based on the philosophical-oriented focus, narrative structure, and the gendered aspects of writing.

5.1. Nature as a Formative, Emotional, and Moral Influence

Both *Prelude* and *Frankenstein* discuss nature as a means of shaping the moral consciousness. To Wordsworth nature serves as a supreme moral teacher. His autobiographical account is also a glorification of gradual awakening of the self in terms of experiences with the natural world. It is the early experiences of the poet, when he is climbing mountains, rowing boats, and walking through valleys that leave the man with the awe of the mountains, with the moral reverence. In *The Prelude*, nature is a divine teacher which teaches modesty, interdependence, and exultation at simplicity. In Book I, Wordsworth states in his well-known lines that nature is the anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse, / the guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul / of all my moral existence.

Mary Shelley on the other hand renders nature ambivalent. In the case of Victor Frankenstein, nature is the source of inspiration and renewal, he finds strength in its beauty when he is studying in Ingolstadt and finds a consolation in the Alps when William dies tragically. Nevertheless, his inability to align himself with the natural order, represented by his effort to replace the creative power of nature with the synthetic life, makes nature an accusing voice. Even the creature is morally awakened by his encounter with nature, he learns language and compassion by watching life in countryside and finds comfort in the forest and mountains. However, in contrast to the harmonious communion by Wordsworth, the view of nature by Shelley is one that highlights the lack of concern of nature to the suffering of humans as well as the failure of nature to save moral wrongdoing. The very nature that brings the creature its innocence in its youth turns into a dumb onlooker of his pain. So, both writers will acknowledge the moral value of nature, but the presentation of Shelley is tragic and conditional, whereas that of Wordsworth is redemptive and universal.

5.2. Shelley's Limits vs. Wordsworth's Idealization

The major difference between the two is the extent and boundaries of the healing power of nature. Wordsworth romanticizes nature in *The Prelude* as an unquestionably moral and spiritual guide. He is nearly pantheistic in his belief in the goodness of nature God and nature become one as he finds exaltation in sceneries. The experiences of the sublime that the poet undergoes when facing the high mountains, or the huge seas arouse the fear and reverence but finally the poet attains self-awareness and moral peace. According to Wordsworth, the sublime is a tool of divine pedagogy.

Conversely, the sufficiency of nature as a moral refuge is put into doubt in *Frankenstein* by Shelley. The Alps and the Arctic have sublime sceneries that are grand yet at the same time, they are desolate and lost. The adventures of Victor walking through glaciers and icy mountains do not enlighten him but are a manifestation of torment. Shelley reforms the Romantic sublime into a psychological terrain, an outburst of guilt and grief and alienation. The silence of nature reflects the lack of morality of Victor and the desertion of the creature. Where Wordsworth in his sublime restores belief in the unity of the man and the universe, Shelley in his sublime reveals that unity as a thing frail. Her character is never all-powerful, she cannot redeem Victor of his crime, or the monster of its despair. Therefore, the nature of Wordsworth restores to human ambition its due and moral order; whereas the nature of Shelley is witness of the ruinous overindulgence of ambition.

5.3. Isolation, Community, and Moral Formation

Both authors associate moral development with the state of the relationship of the individual with the community and nature, however, their conclusions are strongly opposite. In *The Prelude*, the nature of solitude brings about contemplation and self-recognition that brings the poet to social compassion and spiritual harmony. The times of seclusion that Wordsworth goes through can never be alienating; they only represent a kind of prelude to the rebirth into the world of man. Nature then is an intermediary between individual and society.

Isolation causes degradation of morals in *Frankenstein*. The isolation of Victor into fanatical science breaks off the

connection of the scientist with the natural world and with people, leading to the development of moral blindness. He is deprived of his innocence due to the isolation that he is compelled to live by the rejection, and it becomes revenge. In the moral universe created by Shelley, being deprived of nature and others is equivalent to corruption. Therefore, the solitude of Wordsworth is meditative and revitalizing, whereas the solitude of Shelley is a mental illness and a tragedy. Both authors imply the same that, communion with nature brings out moral sensibility, however, Shelley opens up the contemporary fear that communion with nature may not be achievable in a world of scientific arrogance and social estrangement.

5.4. Gender, Authorship, and Philosophical Perspective

The disparity between genders and authorship also educates the treatment of nature. Wordsworth as a male poet in the Romantic tradition depicts nature as a mother who is submissive and maternal, as something that supports his self-discovery in a masculine system of mastery and transcendence. In his work as a woman, Shelley is in an intellectual culture characterized by patriarchy, and she identifies the risks of masculine domination of nature. The fact that Victor, in his pursuit of natural creation, invaded it, i.e., his effort to be God, will symbolically represent patriarchal abuse of nature as well as female creativity. The story by Shelley therefore predicts ecofeminist interpretations where nature, womanhood and morality merge. Whereas the nature of Wordsworth elevates the soul into the divine, Shelley uses nature to chastise the arrogance of mankind and remind him of its independence.

5.5. Discussion

The nature in Romantic literature forms as a creative and destructive power to represent the contradictions inherent in the human being in both conscious and unconscious. Romantics did not just see nature as a physical space but as a life-force, something living and thinking that can influence the character, emotion, and thought of people. This duality its ability to bring life to life and at the same time destroy it mirrors the intricate viewpoint of humankind and nature. In both the prelude or Frankenstein, nature acts as a reflection of the human aspiration in terms of ambition, creativity, and moral endeavor. To Wordsworth, nature is inherently creative: it stimulates imagination, brought moral reflection and developed spiritual oneness. His poetic experience of landscapes and elements of nature is a path to self-realization and moral maturity. In contrast, the creative power of nature depicted by Mary Shelley is something that a human being tries to imitate or even manage but meets the vengeful side of it. The scientific desire of Victor Frankenstein to go beyond the natural boundaries turns the nurturing loving nature into the destructing and moral law-breaking nature; the inability to follow the rules of morality leads to alienation, guilt, and ruin. So whereas Wordsworth glorifies the formative nature of nature in the development of virtue, Shelley threatens of the disastrous results of the disconnection of human beings with the natural moral rhythm.

Romantic issues relating to human ambition and moral responsibility are also highlighted in the discussion of the dual nature of nature. The Romantic imagination tried to bring the intellect into harmony with emotion, science with spirituality and progress with humility. Nevertheless, as the

story by Shelley reveals, moral decay is the result of the search of knowledge that is not sanctioned by ethical principles. The fact that Victor created life in itself is not evil, it is his inability to take responsibility of his deed, which turns creativity into destruction. On the contrary, Wordsworth interaction with nature aspires to moral awareness which is based on reverence and gratitude. His submission to the sublime powers of nature implies that the only way one can be wiser is to acknowledge that human being is limited and is dependent with nature. Thus, both authors present rather complementary insights: whereas Wordsworth preaches about the moral unity gained due to the friendship with nature, Shelley reveals the moral corruption caused by the egoistic isolation. In their collaboration, there is a Romantic humanism that sees moral virtue in being the ecological consciousness the understanding that the destiny of humanity cannot be addressed outside the context of its connection to the earth.

In conclusion, the Romantic vision is a prophetic warning, which is very relevant in the contemporary ecological setting. The sublime interest of the day, as pertains to mountains, storms, oceans, showed awe, fear of the forces of nature, which cannot be controlled and the fragile viability of reverence and control. The scenario of devastation, barrenness and alienation that Shelley portrays prefigures the modern worries of scientific exploitation and environmental destruction. The Romantic appeal to moral responsibility expressed in the works of Wordsworth and Shelley becomes a universal reminder that in the absence of ethical and ecological awareness in progress, there is no longer any connection with nature and self. In the Romantic conception of nature, nature is not merely a setting but rather a moral order that people should be submissive and respectful of. To disidentify with it is the loss of the meaning of being human. In this way, the inter-relationship between the Romantic imagination and its creativity, and reservations, beckons the reader to find some balance between the human desire and the wisdom of the natural universe that persists.

6. Conclusion

To sum it up, the comparative analysis of Frankenstein by Mary Shelley and The Prelude by William Wordsworth throws light on the primacy of nature into human character development in Romantic literature. Both writings validate the idea that nature is not an indifferent setting in which a human character can act, but it is an active, moral, and spiritual phenomenon, able to guide the feelings, moral feelings, and the course of human existence. The Prelude by Wordsworth is a perfect example of nature as a care giving, healing factor, a factor that fosters imagination, sense of morality and spiritual peace. His experiences with rivers, mountains, and valleys show that nature brings people close to each other, provides feelings of empathy and deep comprehension of human interdependence with the environment, which will help people grow personally. Conversely, the nature in Shelley Frankenstein is a comforting and a reflection of human sin. The alienation of Victor Frankenstein with nature caused by the ambition that is not controlled and the urge to break the boundaries of nature leads to the decline of morality, emotional pain, and the ruin of the surrounding people. The original naivety of the creature promoted by the direct contact with the natural world is destroyed by the rejection of society and the lack of

understanding and caring help, stressing that the moral and emotional evolution cannot be separated with the contact with nature. The comparative analysis discloses the similarities and differences between the understanding of nature in Romanticism. Both writers admit that it has a formative, ethical, and emotional power and that their ethical impact on the natural environment is about the ethical consequences of human activity. However, Wordsworth romanticizes nature as naturally harmonious and redemptive, unlike Shelley who introduces nature as a moral disorder and able to mirror human alienation and torment. This departure is further enhanced by the differences in the functions of isolation and community: Wordsworth paints solitude in the nature as thought healing and rejuvenating, whereas Shelley presents isolation as the force that destroys and isolates (both self-imposed and socially imposed). Moreover, the fact that Shelley is a female writer in the society characterized by masculine ambition and domination presents the criticism of both the masculine ambition and domination, associating ecological, moral, and social responsibility in the way that completes and criticizes the Wordsworthian idealism. Finally, both *Frankenstein* and *The Prelude* highlight a classic Romantic point that the moral and emotional health of mankind is closely connected with its connection to nature. The Romantic imagination, which we can see in these writings has its beauty and its danger, and praises the educative and rejuvenating influence of nature, on the one hand, and on the other, reminds us of the dangers of detachment, hubris, and moral laxity. Their works, in the modern sense, echo the timeless ecological and moral topicality, as they remind the readers that the respect towards nature cannot be discussed outside of developing human virtue, compassion, and wisdom. In looking at these works in concert, this paper indicates how the vision of Romanticism that the natural world is a reflection and reflection of character, conscience, and the moral structure of human life has endured.

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