

# Literature and Nature

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**Abstract:** This essay explores the intricate relationship between literature and nature, focusing on how natural environments influence literary works. The study begins by examining the evolution of the portrayal of nature in literature, particularly noting the shift in perspective following the Industrial Revolution. It highlights how early literary works often depicted nature as a force to be conquered, in contrast to later works that emphasize a respectful, harmonious coexistence with the natural world. The paper further delves into the role of nature in character development and plot setting, showing how authors use natural landscapes to reflect character traits and societal issues.

**Keywords:** Literature; Nature; Industrial Revolution; Character Development; Social Commentary; Environmental Attitudes; Artistic Appeal.

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## 1. The Connection between Literary Works and Nature

In literary works, the description of the natural environment is always an essential part, many literary works reflect the complex relationship between man and nature, and the author's attitude towards nature will also affect the creation of his literary works.<sup>[1]</sup> Many of the early literary works conveyed the central idea that "man can conquer nature" or "man can conquer nature". So, there were many legends of heroes overcoming monsters.

However, after the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, there was a greater recognition that the forces of nature were irresistible and that human beings should respect nature. In the literature of this period, the power of the characters is far less than that of the heroes in earlier literature, most of them are ordinary people, and the natural environment more easily influences the behavior of the characters.

For example, authors who advocate harmonious coexistence between man and nature tend to describe beautiful pastoral natural scenery, use poetic sentences to praise the good relationship between ideal man and nature, and advocate that human beings should have a heart of reverence for nature, the tone of their works will be more positive, and the relationship between people will be more harmonious.

Therefore, man's attitude towards nature determines the style of literary works, and literature always reflects the relationship between humans and nature.

## 2. The Role of Nature in Enhancing Literary Works

Nature plays a very important role in literary works, and the description of nature can point out the background of the story and reflect the character characteristics.<sup>[2]</sup> The portrayal of natural scenery serves as a crucial means for authors to convey their thoughts and emotions.

The nature and landscape are also recognizably a product of class, and the ability to describe and appreciate landscape is fraught with social tensions. Through intricate depictions of natural scenery, readers can better understand and experience the characters, events, and emotions within the work. The portrayal of natural environments can create an atmosphere, enhance the artistic appeal of the work, and convey the author's emotions and thoughts through delicate descriptions, enriching the work with vividness.<sup>[3]</sup>

A connection with nature often makes literature richer and more readable. The natural environment provides writers with an inexhaustible source of creation. The founder of romantic poetry in the 19th century wrote in his autobiography that he had observed the natural world with interest since his youth, and was particularly fond of and familiar with a colorful forest near his home. Because of this, he could, based on his personal observation, truly, vividly, meticulously and emotionally sing praises to the natural scenery

of the United States, and inject moral feelings into natural objects, strengthen moral concepts with beautiful and solemn images, and cultivate the spirit of characters by describing the beauty of nature.<sup>[4]</sup>

The writer's description of nature is not only for the painting of scenery and scenery, but more is to borrow things to express aspirations, borrow scenery lyric, so that the scene blend, showing the national style of both form and spirit. Its significance goes far beyond the natural environment itself.<sup>[5]</sup>

### **3. Detailed Analysis**

#### **3.1 Ivanhoe**

Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* is set in 12th-century England, a time of feudal lords, severe feudal system, and discrimination against Jews. The rich description of the environment in the novel plays a crucial role in enhancing the plot and characters.

The author vividly portrays different settings such as forests, castles, countryside, and towns, creating a realistic historical backdrop for the story. For example, the depiction of the grandeur and magnificence of Castle Locksley and the lush countryside with winding paths serve as dynamic stages for the unfolding of the story. The portrayal of Castle Locksley is particularly notable as it not only serves as a pivotal location for the story's development but also symbolizes the privilege and glory of feudal nobility, intensifying the atmospheric effects.

The environmental descriptions highlight the distinct characteristics of different social classes and characters. For instance, the depiction of life inside and outside of Castle Front-de-Boeuf showcases the lifestyles and spiritual demeanor of individuals from various social strata, from the luxurious lifestyle of the Front-de-Boeuf Duke to the modest living of the huntsmen, providing detailed and vibrant depictions of each character.

The novel emphasizes the luxurious lifestyle and privileged position of feudal nobility through descriptions of Castle Front-de-Boeuf, the manor of the High Justice in the forest, and the stately banquet hall of the Front-de-Boeuf Duke. These depictions offer important background support for the unfolding of the novel's political struggles, romantic entanglements, and the triumphant return of the knights.

In conclusion, the atmospheric depictions in *Ivanhoe* serve multifaceted roles, enriching the plot, characters, and historical background, imbuing the entire work with a sense of history and drama.

#### **3.2 Pride and Prejudice**

In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Persuasion*, nature provides a place where the characters can make discoveries about themselves and show their true personalities to others.

In detailed, Elizabeth Bennett dashes through puddles and mud to get to her sister, Jane, at the Bingleys' home. Jane has become ill, and Elizabeth could not care less about water or dirt at that moment. She is totally devoted to her sister and willing to do whatever she must to care for her. The tells us something important about Elizabeth, but other characters, like Mr. Bingley's sisters, judge her harshly for not keeping up appearances.<sup>[6]</sup> Without the difficult walk on the fields still wet from the earlier rain, Elizabeth may not have appeared quite as attractive to Mr. Darcy. It is nature that influences Elizabeth and gives her that extra push.

In brief, Austen consistently used responses to landscape as she used other literary languages or contemporary ideas, in the service of characterization; and the views of landscape in her novels are more fully and wittily weighted with metaphorical value than has been recognized in any sustained fashion.

#### **3.3 The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club**

The *Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* by Charles Dickens, an early work of his, showcases the societal landscape of early 19th-century Britain through a series of episodes and events. In exploring the relationship between "The Pickwick Papers" and nature, we can analyze it from several aspects.

The depiction of natural landscapes in this work reflects Dickens' profound feelings and love for nature. In the book, Dickens paints pastoral scenes, country lanes, and the natural scenery of the suburbs. These descriptions are not just settings but also serve to express Dickens' admiration for the beauty of nature and his concerns about the destruction of nature in the process of industrialization. For instance, the travels of the protagonist, Mr. Pickwick, and his friends through the countryside show their harmonious relationship with nature and the solace they find in it.

The natural elements in *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* also symbolize the inner worlds and emotional states of the characters. Dickens uses changes in weather and seasons to reflect the psychological changes and emotional development of the characters. For example, in certain key scenes, storms and gloomy weather often accompany the characters' troubles and struggles, while bright weather symbolizes hope and joy. Through this symbolism, Dickens deepens the characterization and enhances the

emotional tension of the story.

Dickens critiques some of the societal issues of his time through his descriptions of nature, particularly the impact of industrialization on the natural environment. Dickens contrasts natural landscapes with industrialized cities to expose the environmental problems of industrialization, expressing his concern for nature and apprehensions about the future.

In summary, *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* is not just a novel depicting the social aspects of Britain; it also, through its depiction and symbolism of nature, expresses the author's love for the beauty of nature, his concern for the natural environment, and his worries about the potential destruction of nature due to social progress. Through this work, we can see Dickens' profound contemplation of the relationship between nature and human society as an early 19th-century British writer.

#### 4. Conclusion

This essay has explored the intricate relationship between literature and nature, emphasizing the pivotal role nature plays in shaping literary works. The first part of the paper, "The Connection between Literary Works and Nature," highlighted how nature is not merely a backdrop in literature but an active force influencing characters and narratives. This section underscored the transformation in literary perspectives towards nature, from seeing it as a force to be conquered to one that commands respect and awe.

The second part, "The Role of Nature in Enhancing Literary Works," delved into how nature enhances literary creativity. It emphasized how natural settings provide not only a physical context but also contribute to the emotional and thematic depth of literary works. Nature, in this respect, becomes a canvas upon which authors project the inner workings of their characters and the broader human condition.

In the third part, "Detailed Analysis," I examined specific literary examples that illustrate the complex interplay between nature and human experience. This analysis demonstrated how different authors utilize nature to reflect on human triumphs, struggles, and philosophical inquiries.

Drawing from these discussions, it is evident that the relationship between literature and nature is multifaceted and profound. Nature in literature is not a mere scenic detail but a dynamic entity that shapes, reflects, and enhances the human experience. This relationship offers insights not only into the human psyche but also into our collective attitudes towards the natural world. As literature continues to evolve, it is likely that the portrayal of nature will also transform, reflecting changing human understandings and values related to the natural environment.

In conclusion, examining the role of nature in literature provides a valuable lens through which we can understand not only literary works but also our relationship with the world around us. It reminds us of the power of nature as a source of inspiration, reflection, and, ultimately, as a vital component of the human story.

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