

RESEARCH ARTICLE

River Grammar: Flow, Boundary, and Ecological Relation in Romantic Poetry

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Abstract

Rivers in Romantic poetry are often classified as landscape symbols, a practice that can obscure how syntax and scale make ecological relation formally perceptible. This article asks what river imagery explains when analysis remains at the level of textual decisions. It compares selected public-domain poems by William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Clare, and Felicia Hemans. Comparative close reading follows syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging, recording shifts in scale and retaining resistant cases. The article argues that flow joins distant sites while exposing limits in possessive landscape vision, that river boundaries appear as both natural forms and social decisions, and that changes in poetic scale redirect responsibility from solitary perception toward collective history. The contribution is a relational account of ecological form that distinguishes recurrent imagery from the work performed by placement, transition, and perspective. Historical claims remain bounded by the selected poems and require edition-specific and contextual verification where interpretation depends on textual variants.

Keywords: ecocriticism; Romantic poetry; rivers; landscape; environmental humanities

1 Introduction

The current research considers how Romantic river poems transform physical flow into a grammar of ecological and social connection. Its corpus comprises selected public-domain poems by William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Clare, and Felicia Hemans in which rivers organize landscape description. The central claim is that flow joins distant sites while exposing the limits of possessive landscape vision. That proposition becomes consequential because compositional attention to syntax clarifies how environmental imagination distributes agency between people and places. Attention therefore falls on syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging.

The question is more tightly bounded than a general history of river grammar. Within these texts, ecological relation is assessed through syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging. Its definition changes only when those features alter the interpretation.

Three findings organize the article. First, flow joins distant sites while exposing the limits of possessive landscape vision. Second, river boundaries are nar-

rated as both natural forms and social decisions. Third, changes in poetic scale move responsibility from solitary perception toward collective history. In combination, they demonstrate that river grammar is neither a decorative effect nor a label attached after interpretation. The argument remains proportionate to the textual selection.

The research question is how river passages use syntax, figuration, and changes of scale to organize ecological relation. The objective is to distinguish the formal work of flow and boundary from the mere recurrence of water imagery. The article proceeds through critical context, corpus and method, comparative readings and three findings, discussion, limitations, and conclusion.

Romantic ecocriticism provides historical discipline for the article's account of river form. Bate relates poetic dwelling to environmental imagination without treating landscape as passive scenery [1]. McKusick traces ecological thought through Romantic writing and its later environmental inheritance [2].

2 Ecological relation in critical context

River Grammar is organized around a bounded question: what work does ecological link perform that cannot be explained by isolated occurrences of syn-

tactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging? The wording carries weight. "What work" directs attention to outcome; "cannot be explained" creates a standard for counter-reading; and the named unit fixes the scale at which the answer must be demonstrated. This formulation allows the inquiry to make a strong local argument without extending its claims to periods, audiences, or practices not represented by the selected sources.

The key term, ecological link, is used in a restricted sense. It refers to the organized passage from flow joins distant sites while exposing the limits of possessive landscape vision through river boundaries are narrated as both natural forms and social decisions to changes in poetic scale move responsibility from solitary perception toward collective history. This definition makes sequence part of the concept: removing the middle link or the retrospective test changes what the term explains. The restriction is useful because it prevents ecological link from absorbing every relevant observation. Details that do not affect preparation, distribution, or revision remain part of the work's texture but not part of this particular thesis.

Humanistic accounts of constructed evidence clarify why landscape description

is not a transparent record of place [3]. Dialogism supports analysis of rivers as relations among voices, locations, and social claims [4]. Narrative framing helps distinguish a recurring image from the sequence that gives it force [5]. Narrative temporality explains how later passages can revise an earlier landscape judgment [6]. Critiques of representation make property, nation, and authority necessary contexts for interpreting apparently natural boundaries [7].

3 River Syntax, Figurative Movement, and Scale

The selected materials comprise public-domain poems by William Wordsworth [8], Samuel Taylor Coleridge [9], John Clare [10], and Felicia Hemans [11] in which rivers organize landscape description. Corpus design privileges analytical variation over numerical representativeness. Each item offers a distinct configuration of river grammar and permits comparison through syntactic and figurative passages connecting water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging.

The method is ecocritical close reading supported by annotations for motion verbs, boundaries, speakers, human interventions, and temporal scale.

For River Grammar, the decisive evidence lies in syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging. The method records position, recurrence, interruption, and consequence before assigning interpretive weight. That order matters for the comparative reading: a repeated feature may retain its appearance while changing function, whereas a single event at a boundary may redirect the whole sequence. Claims about intention, reception, or prevalence are withheld because the present method does not supply that evidence.

Mediation is not a neutral step in River Grammar. Typography, editorial intervention, notation, image quality, cropping, tempo, staging, or interface design may change how syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging can be perceived. The comparison accordingly distinguishes properties of the underlying work from properties of the available witness. This distinction sets a practical test: an inference remains secure only if it remains the change of version relevant to the claim about ecological interaction.

4 Comparative readings: River Grammar

Comparison opens with William Wordsworth's Selected Poems. The reading tests the proposition that flow joins distant sites while exposing the limits of possessive landscape vision by restricting attention to syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging. It then identifies which surrounding relations are necessary for that account.

In William Wordsworth's Selected Poems, the proposition that flow joins distant sites while exposing the limits of possessive landscape vision is evaluated through placement, not keyword recurrence. The reading asks what prepares each occurrence of syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging, which agent or formal layer controls it, and what consequence follows. A detail counts as evidence only when its surrounding sequence changes the available judgment. This restriction prevents the case from being reduced to an example chosen after the thesis was formed.

A close reading of William Wordsworth's Selected Poems must therefore document the first relevant occurrence of syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging, the expectation active at that moment, and the effect that distinguishes it from background recurrence. The case supports River Grammar only if those three points can be located in the consulted version. A general similarity to the other cases is not enough; the episode must show why the proposition about ecological link is necessary to explain its organization.

The following case, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Selected Poems, tests the distributive dimension of the argument. Here the governing question is whether river boundaries are narrated as both natural forms and social decisions. This is not read as a defect in reliability.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Selected Poems changes the scale of comparison. Here ecological link is read through the distribution of access, emphasis, and response among texts. The relevant question is not whether the same surface feature returns, but whether its return gives a different participant, voice, register, or position the capacity to redirect interpretation. That distributive test supplies the pressure behind the claim that river

boundaries are narrated as both natural forms and social decisions.

For Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Selected Poems, the principal counter-reading treats the observed distribution as a genre convention with no special bearing on ecological interaction. The article answers only at the level of syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging: it asks whether a transfer of access or emphasis produces an ensuing effect that convention alone leaves unexplained. If it does not, the second proposition recedes. If it does, the case clarifies how structural hierarchy becomes an event rather than a static arrangement.

The third case turns to John Clare's Selected Poems and gives priority to revision over initial recognition. The interpretive test is whether changes in poetic scale move responsibility from solitary perception toward collective history.

The value of John Clare's Selected Poems is retrospective. Following passages are reread against the first account of syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging, allowing the article to distinguish repetition from revision. If the following event merely restates the initial one, the proposition that changes in poetic scale move responsibility from solitary perception toward collective history receives little support. If it changes the status of what the reader, listener, or viewer already encountered, the case makes visible how ecological link acquires structural memory.

Verification in John Clare's Selected Poems requires two locators: one for the initial treatment of syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging and one for the moment that alters its status. The interval between them is analytically important because it determines what can be remembered, anticipated, or misrecognized. Recording both locations prevents the later reading from being projected backward as if it had been available from the start, and it gives the claim about ecological connection a visible temporal basis.

The fourth text, Felicia Hemans's Selected Poems, functions as a resistant comparison.

Felicia Hemans's Selected Poems remains in the selection because it resists easy synthesis. Its treatment of syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, prop-

erty, labor, or national belonging tests how far the claim that flow joins distant sites while exposing the limits of possessive landscape vision can travel before medium, genre, or historical circumstance requires qualification. The comparison does not convert resistance into confirmation. It records which part of the proposition holds, which part weakens, and which other source would be necessary to choose between rival hypotheses.

The resistant role of Felicia Hemans's *Selected Poems* also limits the article's vocabulary. If medium or genre changes the operation of syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging, the comparison names that difference before proposing an analogy. The case may therefore support only part of the claim that flow joins distant sites while exposing the limits of possessive landscape vision. Such partial support is informative: it identifies the condition under which ecological link ceases to explain the evidence and marks the point where another historical or organizational account should take over.

5 Flow joins distant sites while exposing the limits of possessive landscape vision

The first pattern can be stated as follows: flow joins distant sites while exposing the limits of possessive landscape vision. This temporal dimension is essential. The finding therefore concerns organization, not inventory.

The resulting form is recursive. Interpretation advances, but it also returns to revise what seemed settled. This recursive quality explains why river grammar can remain coherent without becoming predictable.

Evidence for the claim that flow joins distant sites while exposing the limits of possessive landscape vision begins with a before-and-after test. The reading identifies the state of syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging before the relevant event, describes the change without assigning motive, and then asks what new interpretation becomes possible afterward. In *River Grammar*, this procedure distinguishes a feature that merely appears from one that organizes expectation. The distinction is necessary because repetition can reinforce convention, expose it, or redirect it; recurrence by itself cannot distinguish which function is active.

6 River boundaries are narrated as both natural forms and social decisions

The second claim holds that river boundaries are narrated as both natural forms and social decisions. This pattern shifts analysis from isolated form toward distribution. The textual selection repeatedly makes such allocation perceptible.

To test whether river boundaries are narrated as both natural forms and social decisions, the comparison maps control rather than prestige. It asks which component establishes an expectation, which one can revise it, and which remains visible yet unable to affect the sequence. Applied to syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging, this distinction reveals distribution as an activity rather than a fixed rank. *River Grammar* consequently avoids translating every center-edge contrast into a social allegory; the interpretive claim is made only when organizational allocation and historical authority can be connected through specific evidence.

7 Changes in poetic scale move responsibility from solitary perception toward collective history

A third pattern suggests that changes in poetic scale move responsibility from solitary perception toward collective history. Return, correction, reframing, and delayed outcome are therefore analytical events. They reveal how a work stores difference and activates it later.

Read relationally, the three patterns form a sequence of their own. The first identifies a process that directs attention. The second shows that attention and authority are distributed. The third explains how ensuing events revise that distribution. This sequence supports the central thesis that river grammar is historically variable and formally organized.

Temporal revision separates the third result from the first two. The article asks whether the proposition that changes in poetic scale move responsibility from solitary perception toward collective history modifies an earlier judgment, redistributes its authority, or merely adds new information. Only the first two outcomes bear directly on ecological relation. By tracking syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging in both chronological and retrospective order, *River Grammar* demonstrates how interpretation can advance through

correction without pretending that every uncertainty must end in a single, final account.

8 Discussion: What Ecological Relation Changes

Comparison makes the argument more exact. Flow joins distant sites while exposing the limits of possessive landscape vision identifies the initial organizational pressure. River boundaries are narrated as both natural forms and social decisions shows how that pressure is distributed, and Changes in poetic scale move responsibility from solitary perception toward collective history describes the work performed by return or correction. No single proposition is sufficient on its own. Their intersection is what gives ecological interaction explanatory force in *River Grammar*.

The project contributes methodological as well as interpretive. The difference becomes important for interdisciplinary research.

The comparison makes it possible to argue that formal attention to syntax clarifies how environmental imagination distributes agency between people and places. This outcome does not depend on universal agreement about every example.

Three checks keep the comparison from becoming self-confirming. First, apparent support for flow joins distant sites while exposing the limits of possessive landscape vision is reread as convention or accident. Second, evidence for river boundaries are narrated as both natural forms and social decisions is tested against cases where authority does not move in the expected direction. Third, the claim that changes in poetic scale move responsibility from solitary perception toward collective history is withheld if the supposed revision leaves prior material unchanged. *River Grammar* retains only the account that explains both confirming and resistant details with the fewest unsupported assumptions.

River Grammar shifts emphasis from the presence of ecological interaction to the conditions under which it becomes consequential. That shift matters because thematic readings often gather examples while leaving their order unexamined. Here, syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging are treated as events with a before and an after. The approach therefore identifies the smallest change that alters interpretation, locates who or what controls that change, and asks whether the

effect remains visible outside the case in which it first appeared.

Scale supplies a second test. An observation about syntactic and figurative passages that connect water movement with memory, property, labor, or national belonging may be convincing locally yet fail to explain the larger text; conversely, a broad claim about ecological interaction may disappear when examined at the level of the passage, phrase, frame, or action. River Grammar moves between these scales in both directions. A large claim remains only when its local evidence remains specific, and a local detail becomes consequential only when its outcome extends beyond immediate description.

9 Conclusion

The guiding question concerned how Romantic river poems transform physical flow into a grammar of ecological and social connection. Through ecocritical close reading supported by annotations

for motion verbs, boundaries, speakers, human interventions, and temporal scale, it argued that flow joins distant sites while exposing the limits of possessive landscape vision; that river boundaries are narrated as both natural forms and social decisions; and that changes in poetic scale move responsibility from solitary perception toward collective history. These claims converge on a relational account of river grammar.

At a wider level, the article concludes that structural attention to syntax clarifies how environmental imagination distributes agency between people and places.

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