



An Eco-philosophical and a Phenomenological Journey in William Wordsworth's *The Prelude* [*]

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Abstract: The present paper analyses William Wordsworth's *The Prelude* from an eco-philosophical perspective, which suggests a harmonical existence of human and nonhuman worlds. The main argument is based on Arne Næss' "ecosophy" following his deep ecological thoughts and David Bohm's "undivided wholeness" supporting the intimate interconnectedness of human and Nature. Following this eco-philosophical vision, Wordsworth believes that Nature has an essential place in children's learning. He even suggests stopping the formal education of children and meditating them through the subjective experiences in Nature. This study investigates how Wordsworth reflects a child's journey of gaining poetic consciousness through his interaction with Nature in his *The Prelude*. Nature is personified as a mother, a friend, and a teacher helping his maturity. As a child and the speaker of his poem, Wordsworth feels freedom and joy while acquiring a great deal of knowledge at every step through different experiences. From this perspective, this study bases its arguments on Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger's phenomenological insights to comprehend the essence of our "Being" through subjective experiences collected in our "life-world". Wordsworth emphasizes the growing maturity of the child in Nature by conceiving his existence in this perfect universe. The power of intuition and imagination, which preserves Nature in our minds, is also accentuated as the main factor educating and maturing us in time by shaping our ideas and feelings. In parallel with the eco-philosophical and phenomenological thoughts, Wordsworth stresses the truth, pureness, peace, and pleasure accompanied by the solitude in Nature. This paper observes the transformation of a naive child into a wise poet through the eco-philosophical and phenomenological journey in Nature through the power of intuition and imagination in Wordsworth's *The Prelude*.

Keywords: Eco-philosophy, Phenomenology, Nature, Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, interconnectedness.

William Wordsworth'un *The Prelude*'unda Eko-felsefi ve Fenomenolojik Bir Yolculuk

Öz: Bu makale, William Wordsworth'un *The Prelude* adlı eserini, insan ve insan olmayan dünyaların uyumlu bir varoluşunu öneren eko-felsefi bir bakış açısıyla incelemektedir. Bu makalenin ana argümanı, Arne Næss'in derin ekolojik düşüncelerinin ardından gelen "ecosophy" sine ve David Bohm'un insan ve Doğa arasındaki yakın ilişkiyi destekleyen "bölünmemiş bütünlüğe" dayanmaktadır. Bu eko-felsefi vizyonu takip eden Wordsworth, Doğanın çocukların öğrenmesinde önemli bir yere sahip olduğuna inanır. Hatta çocuklar için örgün eğitimi durdurmayı ve onlara Doğadaki öznel deneyimler yoluyla meditasyon yapmayı öneriyor. Bu çalışma, Wordsworth'un *The Prelude* adlı eserinde bir çocuğun Doğa ile etkileşimi yoluyla şiirsel bilinç kazanma yolculuğunu nasıl yansıttığını araştırmaktadır. Doğa, olgunlaşmasına yardımcı olan bir anne, bir arkadaş ve bir öğretmen olarak kişileştirilmiştir. Bir çocuk ve şiirin sözcüsü olarak Wordsworth, her adımda farklı deneyimlerle ciddi ölçüde bilgiler edinirken, özgürlüğü ve neşeyi hisseder. Bu bakış açısıyla, bu çalışma, argümanlarını Edmund Husserl ve Martin Heidegger'in fenomenolojik içgörülerine dayandırarak "yaşam-dünyamız" da biriktirdiğimiz öznel deneyimler aracılığıyla "Varlığımız"ın özünü kavramaktadır. Wordsworth, çocuğun varlığını bu mükemmel evrende tasavvur ederek Doğada büyüyen olgunluğunu vurgular. Zihnimizde Doğayı muhafaza eden sezgi ve hayal gücü, fikir ve duygularımızı şekillendirerek zaman içinde bizi eğiten ve olgunlaştıran ana faktör olarak da vurgulanmaktadır. Wordsworth, eko-felsefi ve fenomenolojik düşüncelere paralel olarak, Doğadaki inzivanın eşlik ettiği hakikati, saflığı, huzuru ve hazzı vurgular. Bu makale, Wordsworth'un *The Prelude* adlı eserinde, naif bir çocuğun sezgi ve hayal gücü aracılığıyla Doğadaki eko-felsefi ve fenomenolojik yolculukla bilge bir şaire dönüşmesini gözlemlemektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Eko-felsefe, Fenomenoloji, Doğa, Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, bağlantılılık.

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INTRODUCTION

Derived from the prevailing ideas of ecocriticism, which studies the relationship between human and Nature, eco-philosophy has emerged as a groundbreaking natural philosophy that attempts to change the anthropocentric views for a more cosmical vision claiming the harmonical existence of all living entities in the universe. Eco-philosophy or “ecosophy” as defined by Arne Næss (2003) is basically “a philosophical world-view or system inspired by the conditions of life in the ecosphere” (p. 38). It suggests the organic wholeness in the universe, which means everything in human and non-human world is intimately interconnected with each other. Næss (2003) explains his eco-philosophical views in his modeling “Ecosophy T” which celebrates “unity and diversity” (p. 39). This philosophy suggests that humans are deeply integrated into nature and into the problems concerning ecology as each organic and inorganic life form is observed to be a part of human identity.

Arne Næss (1973) coined the term “Deep Ecology” to reflect his radical worldview to replace ecology in the old human-centered vision of exploiting Nature (p. 206). Inspired by Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity and David Bohm’s theory of “undivided wholeness” which basically suggest the intimate interconnectedness of human and non-human worlds in the universe as particles of a complete whole. As Bohm articulates:

Nowhere is there a break or a division. Thus, the classical idea of the separability of the world into distinct but interacting parts is no longer valid or relevant. Rather, we have to regard the universe as an undivided and unbroken whole. Division into particles, or into particles and fields, is only a crude abstraction and approximation. Thus, we come to an order that is radically different from that of Galileo and Newton—the order of undivided wholeness (Bohm, 2005, p. 158)

In this eco-philosophical vision, Nature does not exist to serve humankind anymore; on the contrary, human is responsible for preserving the harmonical existence in this “undivided and unbroken” universe. Bohm and Hiley (1995) further claim that as intelligent members of this “participatory universe”, humans seek for wholeness (p. 134). If the balance in this wholeness is disrupted, then the crises and catastrophe begin. As J. M. Buchdahl and D. Raper (1998) explain: “Human needs, therefore, are secondary to the natural order of things, where equilibrium exists between life and death, growth and decay. Rather, we should strive for a sustainable harmony of nature” (p. 93). Accordingly, they suggest a radical “nonanthropocentric subjectivism as an alternative ethical doctrine for justifying sustainability” which is “ecocentric,

inherentist, anthropogenic prescriptivist, subjectivist and hierarchical” (Buchdahl & Raper, 1998, p. 96). The rationalist culture is to be blamed for this anthropocentric objectivist view subjugating Nature by causing ecological destruction through capitalist and abusive intentions as Kevser Ateş (2023) states: “Anthropocentrism has served the master slave relationship by exploiting nature as a resource for industrial development and treating it as a commodity” (p. 129). On the other hand, Nature-oriented philosophy has enlightened our perspective by suggesting the reciprocal interactions of human and Nature by contributing to each other’s lives rather than a one-sided manipulative relationship. Næss (2003) points out the misinterpretation of the religious accounts that claim humans as the masters of the universe while the rest is created to serve them:

God blesses all equally: each thing is blessed separately and referred to as good. “And God saw that this was good.” A strong value judgement was made even before He created Adam. The individual parts of the creation seem to be afforded intrinsic value. Nothing of that which is created has value only as means. Nothing is created only for the sake of human beings alone or solely for any other earthly being. A principal point in “egalitarianism in the biosphere” is thereby won: every living being is equal to all others to the extent that it has intrinsic value (p. 184)

Accordingly, the universe does not belong to humankind but to God, and all organic and inorganic life forms share this realm equally. This eco-philosophy grants freedom and life for all living bodies in the universe by breaking the chains of domination of Nature that causes death. Deep ecology is against the instrumental acknowledgment of Nature by protecting it for the sake of humankind; on the contrary, they appreciate the intrinsic value of Nature as a unique component of the universe.

The eco-philosophical worldview offers that there are two essential choices we make as humans: either “to contribute to the maintenance and development of the richness of life on Earth” or “to fritter away our chances, and leave development to blind forces” (Næss, 2003, p. 23). However, the whole ecosystem suffers from the consequences of the wrong choices humans make through ignorance, political megalomania, and avarice. The catastrophe that follows is pollution, irreparable destruction, and the killing of precious entities of the biosphere.

Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger’s phenomenological insights contribute to comprehending the positions of all beings in this interconnected universe as suggested by the eco-philosophical arguments. Husserl

(1970) claims that phenomenology is the key philosophy for us to understanding how the universe works and what function we have in it (p. 48). The essence of life is only conceived through our subjective experiences through the medium of a phenomenological attitude. Husserl (1983) defines a “life-world” in which the subjective experiences are collected: “The life-world is the natural world-in the attitude of natural life we are living functioning subjects together in an open circle of other functioning subjects” (p. 385). In this world, the experiences of the surrounding world are preserved, which contributes to our understanding of our being and reality through the questioning of existence. Likewise, Heidegger (1977) influenced ecological considerations with his existentialist philosophy with his claim: “Man is not the lord of beings. Man is the shepherd of Being” (p. 221). Humans have the crucial role of not mastering but guiding and protecting. He urges us to discover the essence of creations as they are more than what we see: “Nature’ is not to be understood as that which is just present-at-hand, nor as the power of Nature” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 100). Nature is a self-entity that can be discovered in various ways, which enhances our understanding of our true existence. Heidegger (1962) claims that “Being” is “the most universal and the emptiest of concepts” (p. 21), which has long been ignored, and can be compensated through the ontological knowledge collected from authentic experiences. Phenomenological ontology helps us to understand our authenticity to complete our potential in life in the perfect ecosystem of our universe.

Eco-philosophical thoughts observe Nature as a source of inspiration and guidance as reflected in many narratives. Deep ecology emphasizes the contribution of Nature to human life if harmonical cooperation is sustained rather than the problematic master-slave kind of relationship. Phenomenology provides a deeper understanding of our existence in this perfect universe. Through the incorporation of aforementioned arguments, this study observes that human interactions with Nature, especially in childhood, have a considerable influence on the development of adult behaviors. Nancy M. Wells and Kristi S. Lekies (2006) suggest that “childhood participation with nature may set an individual on a trajectory toward adult environmentalism” as proven by an intermixture of tests and modeling (p. 1). They further claim that especially childhood involvement in “wild nature”, as well as the moments spent in “domesticated nature”, have a positive influence on “adult environmental attitudes” (Wells & Lekies, 2006, p. 1). Therefore, Nature profoundly contributes to human growth and maturation as human and Nature are mutually influencing particles of a great unity.

The reflections of interactions with Nature and pastoral life are the primary themes of Romantic literature. For this reason, Romantics are mediated as “the first ecologists” with their devotion to Nature by rejecting “the ideology of capital” in this drastically rising industrial age (Bate, 1991, p. 57). Especially William Wordsworth chooses humble and rustic life as subject matter because he believes that essential passions of the heart find a better soil in to attain maturity. He even suggests stopping the formal education for children, as reflected in his poem “The Tables Turned”: “Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books; / Or surely you’ll grow double” (1798/2017, p. 186). He further suggests meditating them in Nature as “the ultimate source of wealth, health, cheerfulness” which is also “ready to bestow them on man if only man returns to his/her forgotten mother, Nature” (Ramazani & Bazregarzadeh, 2014, p. 6). Wordsworth calls to the music of Nature that involves more wisdom than the books: “Come forth into the light of things, / Let Nature be your Teacher” (1798/2017, p. 187). This kind of intellectual cultivation is sustained through the felt experiences in Nature, which is called the Phenomenology of the growth of the individual. The place of Nature in his writings is significant as W. B. Gallie (1947) notes that according to Wordsworth “Nature, so conceived, is a moral agency” (p. 130). A modest rural way of life is integrated into deeper functions of Nature as a mother, friend, or teacher from an eco-philosophical perspective. Nature has a unique power affecting and shaping the human mind by causing the moral growth:

Nature, then, for Wordsworth when he is philosophizing, means the fact that the extra-human world can have an incalculable moral effect on man. What is original in Wordsworths thought is the notion that human happiness at its best arises out of a peculiar co-operation of this external nature and man’s own inner nature, out of Natures gift and mans response. (Gallie, 1947, p. 131)

Through his vision of Nature and his philosophizing connections to humankind, Wordsworth’s poetry has developed into an iconic traditional source in ecocritical analyses. By being the voice of Nature, Wordsworth’s poetry serves, in Kate Rigby’s (2015) definition, to be “a form of advocacy for an other, which is felt to be unable to speak for itself” (p. 164). In Wordsworth’s *The Prelude*, Nature, as discernible in the capitalization, stands as a personification of mother, friend, and teacher, all together, by educating him. The study analyzes how Wordsworth, in *The Prelude*, reflects the eco-philosophical and phenomenological insights through the imaginative power of Nature in his journey from childhood to becoming a poet.

The Prelude: An Eco-Philosophical and A Phenomenological Journey of a Child in Nature

Wordsworth is the leading Romantic poet identified with Nature in contemporary ecocritical studies, as Jonathan Bate (1991) contends: “The time is now right to allow Wordsworth to become once more what he imagined himself to be, what Shelley called him, and what he was to the Victorians: ‘Poet of Nature’” (p. 9). In terms of his ecological vision, Wordsworth’s poetry serves “as a mediator between human beings and Nature” (Ramazani & Bazregarzadeh, 2014, p. 4). In his *The Prelude*, Wordsworth describes the school years in his childhood when he gains poetic consciousness through his interaction with Nature. The first two parts of his *The Prelude* is called “Childhood and Schooldtime”, but he reflects his education not in the grammar school he attended at that time but his education outside the school. As Monique L. Morgan (2008) observes, “The focus is on Wordsworth’s as-yet-unfulfilled ability to write a great poem...Wordsworth clearly shows his belief that Nature has fitted him for poetry, that the goal of these ministrations is his greatness as a poet, and that he feels he has not yet lived up to this potential” (p. 303). Therefore, Wordsworth comes to the world unconscious of his Being as Heidegger claims, and gains his poetic knowledge as a child by learning from Nature. He tells us how Nature fits and molds him into writing poetry through outdoor experiences, which are the subjective experiences Husserl argues to be a requisite for the improvement of our phenomenological understanding. Wordsworth appears as a child in his *The Prelude* who begins his education in Nature through sensed experiences, as Husserl suggests, with different feelings as the season changes. As Morgan notes: “Wordsworth tells us explicitly, and repeatedly, that Nature has fostered and guided the growth of his mind” (Morgan, 2008, p. 303). From the beginning to the end of the first two books “Childhood and Schooldtime”, he gradually matures. Through the eco-philosophical vision of interconnectedness, Nature gradually grants him freedom, creativity, knowledge, and limitless joy. It reflects the uniting power of Nature with a “mysterious bond”, as Sultana & Saleem (2016) assert: “Wordsworth tries to propagate eco-critical idea that ‘nature undisturbed is balanced and harmonious’” (p. 9).

This harmonical universe has been the subject matter of poetry and philosophy, which are intimately connected, as Paul H. Fry (1996) states: “According to this whole tradition—or stubborn prejudice—nature not only exists but it responds to human desire by communicating, among other things, ethical lessons (“philosophy”), and Wordsworth is the supreme poet of this communion” (p. 536). In the first part of *The Prelude*, the child’s declaration of freedom is observed through the autumn wind facing

him in the open air. The opening lines of *The Prelude* welcome the wind as a messenger of Nature in this beautiful autumn day:

OH, there is blessing in this gentle breeze,
That blows from the green fields and from the clouds,
And from the sky; it beats against my cheek,
And seems half conscious of the joy it gives.
O welcome messenger! O welcome friend!
(Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 1)

The city’s walls are portrayed as a “prison”, and this gentle breeze sets the child free out of this prison so that he can wander outside as he wishes. J. Andrew Hubbell (2010) remarks that “As Wordsworth characterizes it in *the Prelude*, the city is where humans are most alienated from nature, most mobile, and most anthropocentric, and thus least capable of achieving ecological insight, a sense of home, and an ethics of care for one’s environment” (p. 14). In line with that logic, urban constructions are observed as an impediment that separates humans from Nature as their integrated parts; alternately, “Wordsworth places the speaker in the middle of Nature and shows that Nature is right and loyal to human being in its turn and it is man who should take the blame for the broken bond between him/her and Nature” (Ramazani & Bazregarzadeh, 2014, p. 4). The child calls Earth as a guide to him while he is “a wandering cloud”, he will not miss his way according to Wordsworth’s Romantic ideology connecting humans to Nature. Nature gives him freedom, but at the same time it does not leave him alone; on the contrary it accompanies him as a guide in the same manner with Heidegger’s phenomenological ontology. Through a deep breath, there is an immense rush of “trances of thought and mountings of the mind” on the child, which is the beginning of the poetic inspiration given as a “miraculous gift” shaking off his body and a “heavy weight” burdening the future poet (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 1). These are the initial stages of the child’s poetic education in this harmonical universe.

Eco-philosophical vision brings harmony and wisdom, as Derya Biderci Dinç (2021) states: “Ecological harmony underpins diversities and reducing the diversity of an ecosystem can create an imbalance in it, as all the things in the universe depend on each other for their existence” (p. 379). With this balanced unity of Nature, the child in *The Prelude* continues his journey with an ecstasy of freedom, which strengtens him for the delicate future mission. He feels the blowing of “the sweet breath of heaven” (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 2) on his body, which signifies the peaceful co-existence encouraging the child’s education in Nature. The breeze is “mild and creative” and travels on the things by becoming “A tempest, a redundant energy/ Vexing its own creation” (Wordsworth,

1805/2001, p. 2). This gentle breeze is vital by contributing to the child's creativity. It turns into a storm and:

Brings with it vernal promises, the hope,
Of active days, of dignity and thought,
Of prowess in an honorable field,
Pure passions, virtue, knowledge, and delight,
The holy life of music and of verse. (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 2)

The child is hopeful for his promising future even though his soul is still in "measured strains". Later, Wordsworth (1805/2001) reveals his prophesy about poetry to the open fields: "poetic numbers came/ Spontaneously, and clothed in priestly robe/ My spirit, thus singled out, as it might seem, / For holy services" (p. 2). Wordsworth here indicates his belief in the holy gift of poetic inspiration coming with spontaneous overflow of emotions, which he explains his perception of poetry in the "Preface" of his *Lyrical Ballads*: "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility" (Wordsworth & Coleridge, 1798/2017, p. 57). Accordingly, the child is filled with great hope, and feels cheerful in confident about his growth as a future poet. Furthermore, the child comes to a green place and enjoys his happiness under a tree on a sunny autumn day. He lays on the ground, which is "genital pillow of the earth" (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 3). Invaded by deep thoughts, the child perceives Earth as a balancing and warm bed for his head and body; otherwise, he would be lost entirely "seeing nought, nought hearing" (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 3). As Husserl and Heidegger's existential questioning suggests the appreciation of the essence of "Being", the child accepts that he is "zero" without Nature. This aesthetic approach once more emphasizes the idea that we are here not to destroy Nature as in the anthropocentric vision; on the contrary, we desperately need its existence in this interconnected whole:

The anthropocentric perspective allows humans beings to conquer, violate and exploit every living or non-living in nature. It ignores the reciprocal relations between nature and culture, human and the rest, interconnectedness of all living and non-living, and the interaction of energy and matter. "Everything is connected to everything else," we must conclude that literature does not float above the material world in some aesthetic ether, but, rather, plays a part in an immensely complex global system, in which energy, matter, and ideas interact. (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996, p. xix)

Feeling to be a part of this perfect system, the child wanders around freely for two days and his "pleasant loitering journey" brings him to a place that he calls "hermitage" where finds "the admiration and the love" in

his life full of ordinary things around (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 4). Through reading and thinking, he begins to realize his longed dreams by storing new memories and purifying himself from the decay of the past. His mind recalls "the sweet promise of the past", but there are continuous obstacles every day standing in front of his struggle with noble themes (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 5). He praises the poet in his glorious work and defines himself as holding two necessary agents to become a poet: he has the vital soul and general truths as helpers of his living mind. He is also aware of the external images and forms, thus he fulfills the need "to build up a poet's praise" (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 5).

As Næss's ecosophy appreciates "unity and diversity", the child's journey continues with the realization of richness around him by connecting this greatness to the tales of the old poets like Milton after listening to some stories from the shepherds and hearing the tales of knights. He feels proud to be a part of this greatness after learning the history of the land and significant inhabitants like Mithridates, Odin, Sertorius, Gustavus, and Wallace (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 6-7). He considers the wars, achievements, and glories of the ancient civilizations once lived on this land in great admiration by learning from their experiences. His eco-philosophical vision reveals that his last and only wish is to sing the song of truth by touching human heart with an immortal melody like the harmonical music on the Orphean lyre. Every part of Nature helps him flourish his ideas like the flowing stream composing him an unstopping music throughout the day and night. He declares that through Nature, he gain an immense sum of knowledge by personifying Nature like a mother teaching his pure infant:

To more than infant softness, giving me,
Among the fretful dwellings of mankind,
A knowledge, a dim earnest, of the calm
That Nature breathes among the hills and groves.
(Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 9)

The child represents the innocence of an infant; his mind is empty and ready to be filled with knowledge as emphasized by Heidegger about our understanding of our "Being". Like a baby with the help of a caring mother, Nature, he grows wiser towards maturity. Through the changing seasons, the child has gone through multiple subjective experiences. Husserl highlights these adventures as essential components contributing to the development of his identity. The child describes himself as "a naked savage, in the thunder shower" in the burning summer days, and he reflects his love towards his birthplace, where he had spent nine summers full of everlasting learning (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 9). Here, Wordsworth praises being a "savage" which is also his Romantic idea that savages are noble beings wandering in

Nature. He gives his soul to Nature in seed-times and “grew up/ Foster’s alike by beauty and by fear” (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 9). He visions his existence as a lonely trouble among the perfect union of stars and the moon, which contradicts the eco-philosophical thoughts appreciating the inherent value of all beings in the universe. On the other hand, deep ecologists might agree with this thought as they observe humankind to be the primary threat to the wild Nature. Nevertheless, the child quickly recalls the peaceful co-existence while watching the movements of the clouds and feeling the blow on his ear:

The mind of Man is framed even like the breath
And harmony of music. There is a dark
Invisible workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, and makes them move
In one society. (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 10)

While appreciating the existence of all creations in a harmonical way, the speaker of the poem also talks about the infusion of different feelings and thoughts in his mind like “terror, early miseries, regrets, vexations, lassitudes” (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 11), and he praises their arrival. Wordsworth successfully reflects the Romantic definition of aesthetics in which there is not only a depiction of beauty but also terror, wonder and sublime. Awakening these senses through the felt experiences is the primary issue in Romantic aesthetics, which parallels with Husserl’s phenomenological attitude. Nature enables him to frame his mind to foster his own Being with these gentle visitations.

The speaker of the poem collects subjective experiences through a phenomenological attitude. His recollected memories through the cave, the rocks, the mountain, the moon, the water, the lake, the stars, the sky, etc. genuinely influence him and constantly haunt him even after he leaves this place. He observes the inorganic bodies as living creatures, and through the power of intuition and imagination in solitude, they turn into “huge and mighty Forms that do not live like living men” (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 12), which trouble his dreams all the time. Then he calls out to the “Wisdom and Spirit of the universe” whose soul gives him eternal thoughts contributing to his moral growth:

By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
Of Childhood didst Thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human Soul,
Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man,
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature, purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
(Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 13)

Nature clears his mind and ideas, thus helping him to build a perfect human soul away from “the mean and vulgar” actions of man. His intercourse with Nature lasts

days and nights on the fields beneath the gloomy hills while going home, and he recalls those moments with great joy: “happy time/ It was, indeed, for all of us; to me/ It was a time of rapture” (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 13). With the concept of “rapture”, Wordsworth touches on the theme of Romantic sublimity that grants him to see beyond the visible realm. He explores the effects of these solitary places on the education of his mind:

Ye Presences of Nature, in the sky
And on the earth! Ye Visions of the hills!
And Souls of lonely places! can I think
A vulgar hope was yours when Ye employ’d
Such ministry, when Ye through many a year
Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,
On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills,
Impress’d upon all forms the characters
Of danger or desire, and thus did make
The surface of the universal earth
With triumph, and delight, and hope, and fear,
Work like a sea? (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 14)

All these places takes him to the Romantic idea of The Beautiful and The Sublime. Rather than focusing on the Romantic vision of the “egotistical sublime” prioritizing the human mind and imagination above everything, this article focuses on the ecocritical stance, which proposes, as Christopher Hitt (1999) suggests, “a reconfigured version of the sublime—an ‘ecological sublime’—” which is “the recognition that the traditional natural sublime, for all its problems, involves what look to us like ecocentric principles” (p. 607). There is a prodigious beauty in Nature that also haunts him in his “boyish sports”. Nature harbors both the beauty of sky, hills, caves, trees and woods, and at the same time, it evokes danger and desire through the hugeness of these objects. The initiation into the sublime depends on the ability to be “fostered alike by beauty and by fear” (Bate, 1991, p. 98). There is an intense infusion of distinctive feelings into the child’s mind: triumph, delight, hope, and fear. In this rush of emotions, he questions life and perceives the world wiser with a cultivated mind.

While progressing his education with his recollections of childhood memories, he not only personifies Nature as a teacher but also uses unique names like “A sanctity, a safeguard, and a love!” (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 15). Nature is present as an instructor fostering his growth; furthermore, as Michael Bedsole (2020) argues, “He sees in Nature, too, a coherency and meaningfulness that works as well to give coherence and meaningfulness to his own sense of self” (p. 428). With delightful memories in mind, he patiently waits for the slow and gradual teaching of Nature by filling his mind with great forms:

Nor, sedulous as I have been to trace

How Nature by extrinsic passion first
 Peopled my mind with beauteous forms or grand,
 And made me love them, (Wordsworth,
 1805/2001, p. 16-17)

Wordsworth observes Nature as a creature “peopling” with beautiful shapes in the pure human mind supplementary to creating a love instinct for them. This pleasure is unforgettable as they carry their “own intellectual charm” and “calm delight” creating his “new existence to existing things” (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 17). As a link between life and joy, he has a constant contact through the changing seasons in the world:

A Child, I held unconscious intercourse
 With the eternal Beauty, drinking in
 A pure organic pleasure from the lines
 Of curling mist, or from the level plain
 Of waters colour'd by the steady clouds.
 (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 17)

The child's eco-philosophical vision opens a new dimension for him: his unconscious recalling is a new pleasure and vulgar joy as if “a bee among flowers” which emphasizes the power of intuition and imagination as well. In Romanticism, forms and shapes are created in the mind contradicting the Platonic world in heaven. Like in Husserl's “life-world”, we all live “functioning subjects together in an open circle of other functioning subjects” in the world of ideas in our minds (Husserl, 1970, p. 385). The received the images from real life are molded and shaped by the interactions with other figures in our minds. These images are not direct reflections, but they transform into unique items through the power of our imagination. Bate (1991) observes that “Imagination is seen as a way of transcending ‘this frame of things’, the earth in which we dwell, where revolutions go sour; imagination remains ‘unchanged’” (p. 3). The child is far away from those memories; however, they stay alive, and they are still so enchanting as he feeds them with imagination.

The scenes which were a witness of that joy
 Remained, in their substantial lineaments
 Depicted on the brain, and to the eye
 Were visible, a daily sight; and thus
 By the impressive discipline of fear,
 By pleasure and repeated happiness,
 (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 18)

He explains that these days were distant, but the same scenes were so beauteous and majestic as alive as they are still present. Bate (1991) explains this as “a transcendence of Nature” which means: “Wordsworth's tribute to ‘Imagination’ severs the original temporal sequence and forestalls Nature's exhibition to the bodily eye with an ecstatic excursus on the inner eye” (p. 8). It illustrates the troubling visions of Wordsworth upon the mighty objects as his inner eye is activated. Supporting

Husserl's emphasis on understanding our existence through the subjective experiences collected in our “life-world”; Wordsworth also claims that we gain wisdom and maturity by beholding images from Nature, by freezing the vital moments, by capturing the memories within our minds and by shaping those ideas and feelings in time. That is Wordsworth's understanding the child's education in Nature. The colors and shapes were attached to the child's affection with invisible links, and he becomes a “form maker” to sustain his own learning. Gallie analyzes that “As the poem progresses, Nature gently instructs Wordsworth to grow independent of her instruction eventually, and ... ‘it is not nature as such but nature indistinguishably blended with imagination that compels the poet along’” (Gallie 1947, p. 317). At the end of the first book, Wordsworth clearly states his gradual transition from an innocent child to a mature man through the education he received from Nature. The power of Nature has spurred on him, and he is “in manhood now mature, / To honorable toil” (Wordsworth, 2001, p. 19).

In the second book of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth's usage of Romantic Irony is quite recognizable in his lines through the parentheses in which he comments on his writing, where his self-awareness is reflected in, besides his moral growth by the help of Nature. Bate (1991) states that *The Prelude* presents an “‘inscription’, a tradition which Wordsworth here reshapes, and which exemplifies the self-consciously [...] this self-reflexive quality” (p. 90). Wordsworth's speaker in the poem expresses that he feels he is enchanted by a power while remembering his memories and reflecting them in his writing:

The vacancy between me and those days,
 Which yet have such self-presence in my mind
 That, sometimes, when I think of them, I seem
 Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself
 And of some other Being. (Wordsworth,
 1805/2001, p. 21)

This “Being” is his haunted self by the power of writing poetry. Bedsole (2020) claims that by this “two consciousness” Wordsworth suggests: “time alone does not divide him from his past; he also feels some deeper rift has radically decentered him. That is, he is not merely older now than he was then, but somehow fundamentally different, ‘tranquilized,’ as he puts it, or diminished.” (p. 430). In fact, this double consciousness serves as a distracting element for Wordsworth's inner harmony and self-integrity. He voluntarily forms a bridge between his past and present; he writes his own biography and history by creating a myth out of himself. Being possessed by an invisible power within himself at the conscious level grants him the gift of being integrated with the text as a poet through the wisdom he receives in Nature. For Wordsworth, poetry is a mirroring process composed of

dualistic fragmentations within the past and present, the subject and the object. Through this attempt, Wordsworth seeks to reconstruct his self-unity influenced by his double consciousness.

By tracing the origins of his self-identity in the recollected memories in tranquility, Wordsworth continues his pursuit to mend his self-fragmentation in the rest of the second part of *The Prelude*, which is a kind of continuation of the splendid memories of his past in which “the beauteous forms / Of Nature were collaterally attach’d / To every scheme” of his delightful days (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 21). Considering his Christian education with religious themes, he places Nature in a religious category as it carries the soul of God, and it has a moral function on human beings. According to Wordsworth, Hermits are similar to poets because they follow a spiritual life of solitude in Nature through which they further acquire insight. He once more stresses the cruciality of seclusion in his education: “I was taught to feel, perhaps too much, / The self-sufficing power of solitude” (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 22). He remembers the teaching of his Christian education encouraging him to have spiritual contact with God, which is only possible in solitude.

The harmonical co-existence of the poet and Nature reveals itself throughout *The Prelude*. Following Næss and Bohm’s ideas of undivided wholeness and the participatory universe, the poet feels an inseparable part of this perfect and “holy” unity in which vision he wants to stay permanently: “there I could have made / My dwelling-place, and liv’d for ever there / To hear such music (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 23). The desire to behold these moments within his mind is only possible through the phenomenological vision with the power of intuition and imagination. Accordingly, the speaker is therefore spiritually connected to Nature:

Even in this joyous time I sometimes felt
Your presence, when with slacken’d step we
breath’d
Along the sides of the steep hills, or when,
Lighted by gleams of moonlight from the sea,
We beat with thundering hoofs the level sand.
(Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 24)

This connection is so strong that the visions are “Never before so beautiful, sank down/ Into my heart, and held me like a dream” (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 25). The child is intertwined with Nature, as John H. Muirhead (1904) analyzes: “The child is one with Nature; he is one in himself. From the first it followed that there exists in the child’s mind a natural responsiveness to the deeper tones of the world in which he lives—a pre-established harmony between the soul and the impressions that education seeks to deepen and develop in it” (p. 342). As a gift of this

harmonical union, the speaker begins to see common creations so uncommon and dear as a future poet. Hence, his heart is full of love comprising the sun, the earth, the hills, the mountains, the moon, etc., and most significantly, he is filled with joy in Nature: “In many a thoughtless hour, when, from excess / Of happiness, my blood appear’d to flow / With its own pleasure, and I breath’d with joy” (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 25). Nevertheless, he reveals that those rural objects were at first material things attaching him to Nature, and when they begin to lose their power, he seeks the interfering presence of Nature in his thoughts:

Those incidental charms which first attach’d
My heart to rural objects, day by day
Grew weaker, and I hasten on to tell
How Nature, intervenient till this time,
And secondary, now at length was sought
For her own sake. (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 25)

Once again, Wordsworth resembles the relationship between the child and Nature to maternal love and the baby’s devotion the caring mother. The baby is attached to his mother’s body like breasts and eyes; similarly, the speaker perceives the soft breeze touching his mind in the journey of finding his “Being”:

Bless’d the infant Babe,
(For with my best conjectures I would trace
The progress of our Being) blest the Babe,
Nurs’d in his Mother’s arms, the Babe who sleeps
Upon his Mother’s breast, who, when his soul
Claims manifest kindred with an earthly soul,
Doth gather passion from his Mother’s eye!
Such feelings pass into his torpid life
Like an awakening breeze, and hence his mind
Even [in the first trial of its powers]
Is prompt and watchful, eager to combine
In one appearance, all the elements
And parts of the same object, else detach’d
And loth to coalesce. (Wordsworth, 1805/2001,
pp. 26-27)

This desire for the manifestation is also the Romantic idea in which the absolute wants its own manifestation by materializing itself in concrete forms. The Hegelian conception advocates that beauty is the manifestation of the absolute in the material world. In Wordsworth’s poetry, the baby’s spirit desires for the manifestation of a real object, which is the closest and the most desirable thing: her mother’s body. Wordsworth again emphasizes the eco-philosophical vision that “all elements are the particles of the same objects” which are simultaneously separate and integrated. This integration is strengthened by “The gravitation and the filial bond/ Of nature, that connect him with the world” (Wordsworth,

1805/2001, p. 27). The poet's strong tie to Nature nourishes with an everlasting satisfaction. It is supported by the powerful feelings of "exultation, fear and joy", contributing to the enrichment of his poetic mind that "creates, creator and receiver both" (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 27). In this way, the poetic spirits complete him as a form-maker, a creator of the objects he receives from Nature.

From the metaphor of a baby's first intercourse of touch and voiceless dialogues with his mother's heart, the speaker claims to have gained an infant sensibility towards Mother Nature. Following the eco-philosophical vision, the poet's mind unveils to the influxes of Nature with a mutual communication through his heart. C. Clarke (1948) asserts that this moral education gained through the interaction with Nature brings not just the love of Nature but the love of humankind: "This moral education through direct impulses from Nature leads eventually to intuition in the highest sense. Such intuition brings with it a love of man -not the love of one class of men only, but of all men" (p. 315). As human beings are parts of the universal spirit, the love of humankind brings direct communication with it. Confirming Wordsworth's ecological vision of connecting non-human and human worlds, Bate (1991) also emphasizes that "love of nature leads to love of mankind" (p. 31). In this way, he has gained wisdom and delight:

Many are the joys
Of youth; but oh! what happiness to live
When every hour brings palpable access
Of knowledge, when all knowledge is delight,
And sorrow is not there. (Wordsworth,
1805/2001, p. 28)

In the eco-philosophical worldview of the poet, time passes by permanent traces by the influence of the wise Nature. The poet thinks that "life, change, beauty and solitude" are better than the best society, and with a poetic eye endowing "the visionary power", everything seems unique through a sublime joy. While digging history, his subjective experiences turn everything into a dream through the help of poetic vision. That also enables him acquire the creative sensibility by strengthening his spirit with delight.

Through the end of this journey, the child's transformation into a poet in a harmonical union with Nature is quite visible in sympathism towards everything in the universe. By the blessing of intuition and imagination achieved through Nature, the poet finds the true existence of his "Being" as Heidegger emphasized. Clarke (1948) analyzes that: "The mind of the child arrives at an animistic conception of Nature because its knowledge is, with the exception of occasional 'gleams,' gained by the association of ideas; insight into the real nature of the

universal Spirit mostly comes later and is achieved through intuition" (p. 310). Wordsworth highlights that the gift of the poet granted by the influence of intuition ensures access to the spiritual world in which he contacts with other beings through the creation of his mind and soul.

In his conclusion, Wordsworth praises the child, as he is kept pure in Nature, contradictory to humans having ambitions in society distancing themselves from Nature. For Wordsworth, poetry enables our understanding of our place in this world; Bate (2000) elucidates: "William Wordsworth remains the founding father for a thinking of poetry in relation to place, to our dwelling upon the earth" (p. 205). Once more, Wordsworth stresses the truth, peace, and pleasure coming with the solitude in Nature to conceive our existence on Earth. Clarke (1948) observes that: "Natural impulses are there regarded as completely trustworthy and as the ultimate source of all knowledge. They bring authentic tidings of Reality" (p. 312). The child stays pure because of his spiritual connection to God and Nature. According to Clarke (1948), Nature is the manifestation of God: "Wordsworth appears to have conceived of God as a Being who both transcended the universe and also breathed a Spirit of life and creativeness into it, and particularly into the mind of man. The Spirit is 'Nature's self, which is the breath of God'" (p. 305). That is to say, God has sent his spirit into the world through the divine breath he gave to Nature and humankind as reflected in Wordsworth's poetry.

There is a blind beggar in *The Prelude* who unveils his eyes by awakening him to the realm of the universe: "This label seemed of the utmost we can know, / Both of ourselves and of the universe" (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, p. 45). That is a moment of epiphany for the speaker who is deeply affected by the apocalyptic writing upon his chest, as Onur Ekler (2021) depicts it as an experience of "a sudden rupture from the illusory world of the funfair" to shake the human soul before it is too late (p. 2). Such narratives are prophetic Works with the attempts to awaken "seemingly civilized minds over the reconsideration of human's dangerous intrusion into the natural functioning of the universe" (Ekler, 2021, p. 2). That is a warning for us to place ourselves and Nature in a cordial order, which confirms Bate's (2000) vision that "poetry is the place where we save the earth" (p. 283). Muirhead (1904) observes that the love of Nature and humanity is the fundamental motivation for the happiness of humankind (p. 343). Therefore, the prevailing message emphasizes that poets and saints are symbols of wisdom through the love they possess. The child has gained the natural gift as he avoids material desires, jealousy and enmities. He integrates his innocent body and soul into Nature, which sustains the joyful and peaceful co-existence:

O Nature! Thou hast fed
My lofty speculations; and in thee,
For this uneasy heart of ours I find
A never-failing principle of joy,
And purest passion. (Wordsworth, 1805/2001, pp. 32-33)

As Gallie (1947) argues, nature has immeasurable functions in human life as observed in Wordsworth's writings: "Men can feel Nature as something to follow, to cultivate, as something demanding a self-giving in return, a moral response that is genuine because it has a self-accepted standard" (p. 132). An eco-philosophical worldview supported by the phenomenological approach implements a healthy and harmonious co-existence of human and non-human worlds through the power of intuition and imagination. As Fikret Güven (2022) elucidates, this eco-philosophical vision "calls humanity to care for the diversity of life forms and this ecocentered approach of deep ecology" (p. 2874). We all need to listen to this call and join this perfect unity for the peaceful future of all living bodies and the universe.

CONCLUSION

To recapitulate the eco-philosophical arguments, Næss and Bohm suggest a harmonical worldview in which human and Nature exist equally to contribute to each other's flourishing and enrichment as opposed to the classical anthropocentric approach leading to the manipulation of Nature for the selfish desires of humankind. As quantum mechanics, the new rules in New Physics, and the theories of "undivided wholeness" claim, the intrinsic value of all entities in Nature is appreciated as an indispensable part of a complete universe. Accordingly, we all live as equal particles of this "participatory universe" in which all living bodies have intimate relationships influencing each other. A respectful approach towards Nature to protect its richness can prevent ecological crises for the sustainable and peaceful co-existence of all living bodies in this universe. Likewise, the phenomenological attitudes of Husserl and Heidegger contribute to our understanding of the essence of "Being" which is possible through the subjective experiences accumulated in our "life-world". Advocating the eco-philosophical vision, Phenomenological ontology attempts to provide insights for our authenticity to complete our potential in life in this perfect ecosystem of our universe by creating a symbiosis between human and Nature.

In Wordsworth's world, Nature has a distinguished place as aforementioned. Its primary function is to enable man to educate their minds. Nature is even personified as a wise being cultivating the mind, but it is through the power of intuition and imagination of

humankind shaping the inspiration with an eco-philosophical and a phenomenological vision. Through beholding critical images from Nature and freezing the subjective experiences in his "life-world", the child walks to maturity to be a wise poet. Wordsworth emphasizes that poets are gifted beings conscious of our true existence in this harmonical universe.

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