



REVIEW ARTICLE

Section: Literature, Linguistics & Criticism

Mitigating perceived greenwashing in tourism services: A study of tourism in English literature and the ethics of environmental representation

Ahmad M. Zamil^{1*}, Hebatallah A. M. Ahmed², Bassam Samir Al-Romeedy³, Hany Hosny Sayed Abdelhamied⁴ & Abdelrahman A. A. Abdelghani⁵

¹Marketing Department, College of Business Administration, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

²Applied College, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

³Tourism Studies Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, University of Sadat City, Egypt

⁴Hospitality Management Department, Faculty of Tourism, King Abdulaziz University

⁵Applied College, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

* Correspondence: am.zamil@psau.edu.sa

ABSTRACT

Tourism services frequently associate attractive landscapes with responsible consumption, although the beauty of a destination cannot establish the environmental quality of the services operating within it. This article examines how tourism in English literature can clarify that distinction. Through comparative close readings of Jane Austen's *Sanditon*, E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View*, and Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out*, it investigates the narrative production of desirable places and the suppression of inconvenient perspectives. Austen exposes the circular reasoning of resort promotion; Forster unsettles the tourist's ownership of the view; Woolf connects apparently adventurous travel with commercial extraction and unequal interpretive authority. Read alongside scholarship on greenwashing, ecocriticism, and staged authenticity, these works support a concept of accountable tourism narration: environmental claims should specify their evidential limits, disclose relevant interests, and remain open to correction by affected people. The article proposes applications to hospitality communication and English literature teaching, while distinguishing literary interpretation from evidence of behavioural effectiveness. Its principal contribution is a method for examining how environmental innocence becomes narratively plausible, and how that plausibility might be questioned without treating all tourism communication as deceptive.

KEYWORDS: perceived greenwashing, English literature, tourism narratives, ecocriticism, environmental communication, literary tourism

Research Journal in Advanced Humanities

Volume 7, Issue 4, 2026

ISSN: 2708-5945 (Print)

ISSN: 2708-5953 (Online)

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted: 22 June 2026

Accepted: 14 August 2026

Published: 11 September 2026

HOW TO CITE

Zamil, A. M., Ahmed, H. A. M., Al-Romeedy, B. S., Abdelhamied, H. H. S., & Abdelghani, A. A. (2026). Mitigating perceived greenwashing in tourism services: A study of tourism in English literature and the ethics of environmental representation. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 7(4). <https://doi.org/10.58256/rc96jx53>



Published in Nairobi, Kenya by Royallite Global, an imprint of Royallite Publishers Limited

© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Introduction

A hotel room can overlook an unspoilt coastline while belonging to a resource-intensive development. A guided excursion can promise intimacy with local culture while allowing residents little control over their representation. Such possibilities expose a recurring difficulty in tourism communication: what visitors are invited to admire is not necessarily what they need to know. Environmental judgements can be attached to scenery, atmosphere, and stories of belonging before the practices of a service provider have been examined. The resulting problem concerns the interpretation of evidence as much as the availability of information.

Greenwashing scholarship distinguishes misleading environmental communication from substantiated environmental performance. Delmas and Burbano (2011) examine the organisational and external conditions that encourage this divergence, while Lyon and Montgomery (2015) describe a range of misleading communicative practices. Perceived greenwashing adds another level. It concerns an audience's judgement that environmental communication is deceptive or exaggerated, whether or not that judgement accurately reflects organisational conduct. Lower suspicion is therefore an inadequate measure of ethical success. An effective intervention should help audiences distinguish warranted confidence from unjustified reassurance.

English literature offers a productive setting for investigating how reassurance is constructed. Tourism in fiction is rarely just movement between attractive locations. It involves anticipated experiences, purchased privileges, social performances, and disputes over who can interpret a place. A narrator may allow readers to recognise a commercial interest that a character overlooks. A scenic description may be interrupted by labour, discomfort, or an unwelcome encounter. These formal decisions make visible the processes through which an appealing account acquires authority.

The present article connects contemporary greenwashing debates with three works in which tourism structures the narrative: Austen's unfinished *Sanditon*, written in 1817; Forster's *A Room with a View* (1908); and Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (1915). Their geographical settings extend from the developing English seaside resort to continental sightseeing and an imagined South American destination. Together they permit comparison between the promotion of a place, the management of its visibility, and the tourist's desire to experience it as personally meaningful.

The argument is not that these authors anticipated contemporary environmental reporting or used an early version of the term greenwashing. Their texts address historically different questions of health, gentility, gender, commerce, and empire. The connection is interpretive: their treatment of selective representation helps formulate questions for present-day tourism communication. The article asks how these works make tourist narratives credible, how literary form interrupts that credibility, and what ethically defensible principles can be derived from those interruptions.

The resulting contribution is accountable tourism narration, understood as a relationship between a claim, its supporting evidence, the interests of its speaker, and the possibility of correction. Literature contributes to this relationship through disciplined attention to perspective and omission. It does not supply environmental measurements, certify businesses, or demonstrate that reading fiction changes purchasing behaviour. Keeping those limits explicit allows the literary analysis to remain substantial without turning novels into either marketing manuals or historical case studies of modern corporate misconduct.

Environmental claims and literary ways of seeing

An environmental claim can fail in several ways. It may be false, too vague to assess, or accurate only within an undisclosed boundary. An account can also emphasise a favourable activity while leaving a more consequential impact outside the frame. The review by de Freitas Netto et al. (2020) distinguishes forms of greenwashing at different organisational and communicative levels, including misleading effects associated with execution and presentation. Consequently, ethical scrutiny cannot stop at checking whether each individual sentence is literally true. The relation between the sentences and the overall impression also matters.

Perception nevertheless requires separate treatment. Szabo and Webster (2021) investigate perceived greenwashing through interviews and an experiment involving corporate website interaction. Their research connects that perception with environmental and product evaluations. Chen and Chang (2013), studying Taiwanese consumers of information and electronics products, report relationships between greenwashing, confusion, perceived risk, and green trust. These studies support attention to interpretation, but their findings

cannot simply be transferred to every tourism encounter. A literary analysis can identify plausible mechanisms for investigation; it cannot establish the strength or universality of those relationships.

Tourism makes questions of framing especially conspicuous because a service is experienced through a sequence of mediated expectations. A description precedes arrival, a guide directs attention during a visit, and photographs or reviews subsequently organise its memory. MacCannell's (1973) account of staged authenticity shows how tourist spaces can provide the impression of access to intimate or backstage life. Applied cautiously, this distinction helps explain why apparent closeness to nature or community is not self-validating. Access itself can be arranged, selected, and interpreted by those selling it.

Ecocriticism supplies a complementary question: what kinds of relationship between people and environments does representation make imaginable? Buell et al. (2011) situate literary environmental inquiry across concerns including place, gender, postcolonial relations, and the ethics of human engagement with other forms of life. This breadth is important here. A green landscape is not synonymous with an ecological account of a place. An ecological reading asks how the landscape is inhabited and used, whose activities sustain its appearance, and which relationships a description excludes.

Three literary distinctions guide the analysis. A character's statement is not automatically the narrator's judgement. A focalised scene presents the world through a particular position rather than an unrestricted account. Finally, an attractive descriptive surface may be contradicted by narrative arrangement: a later incident, a competing voice, or a detail whose significance exceeds the character's understanding. Irony often emerges from these differences. Readers are asked to compare what is said with the conditions under which it becomes persuasive.

Such comparison does not guarantee ethical insight. Readers may enjoy a novel's scenery while overlooking its criticism, and businesses may appropriate literary prestige for promotional purposes. Literary language can intensify a misleading environmental impression as readily as challenge one. The article therefore locates the potential contribution in a practice of reading, not in a presumed moral property of literature. That practice tests relations among viewpoint, evidence, and consequence, including cases where the text itself reproduces the inequalities it exposes.

Accountable narration also requires an external constraint. Environmental evidence must remain capable of disproving an attractive story. Parguel et al. (2011) demonstrate how independent sustainability ratings can alter evaluations of corporate responsibility communication. Their study does not establish that every label is reliable; it makes external evaluation relevant to the assessment of promotional claims. For tourism, the implication developed here is that narrative credibility should depend on accessible grounds for judgement rather than on confidence in a compelling voice alone.

Corpus and interpretive method

The study uses a purposive corpus of three English literary works, not a representative sample of tourism writing. Selection rests on the structural importance of travel and visitor accommodation, the presence of contested descriptions of place, and contrasts in narrative method. *Sanditon* examines a resort while it is being promoted and developed. *A Room with a View* makes accommodation, sightseeing, and mediated cultural knowledge central to its plot. *The Voyage Out* links international mobility, hotel sociability, and an organised excursion with the unequal encounter between travellers and their surroundings.

The primary editions are the openly accessible Project Gutenberg Australia text of *Sanditon* and the Project Gutenberg texts of Forster's and Woolf's novels. Chapter references provide stable locators because these electronic editions lack fixed pagination. Austen's text is treated strictly as an unfinished fragment; later completions and screen adaptations are excluded. The distinction matters because its unresolved ending cannot be cited as evidence of either the success or failure of the resort. The analysis concerns the fragment's narrative procedures rather than an imagined completed plot.

Close reading concentrates on identifiable episodes: Parker's promotional speeches and the approach to Sanditon in chapters 1–4; the pension, guidebook, and carriage excursion in Forster's chapters I, II, and VI; and the hotel and excursion episodes in Woolf's chapters VIII and XVII–XXI. These scenes are interpreted through their immediate narrative contexts. The procedure identifies the speaker or focal position, specifies what makes the destination desirable, and then examines interruptions, contradictions, or absent perspectives. Comparison

follows from those readings rather than from keyword frequency.

The transfer to contemporary tourism is analogical and normative. Each interpretation first establishes a literary problem, then develops a question for evaluating service communication. For example, a narrator's disclosure of a promoter's investment becomes a question about interest disclosure, not evidence that a fictional character committed modern environmental deception. Competing readings are retained where they change the argument. Austen's hospitality, Forster's celebration of emotional freedom, and Woolf's limited representation of residents prevent the novels from being reduced to uniformly anti-tourist statements.

The method does not use interviews, experiments, environmental audits, or statistical coding. Accordingly, it makes no claims about prevalence, causal effects, intercoder agreement, or tourist populations. Its scholarly warrant rests on transparent textual locations, defensible interpretation, and a clearly bounded conceptual contribution. The proposed communication practices and educational applications remain subjects for subsequent empirical assessment.

Resort promotion and interested judgement in Sanditon

Sanditon begins with an error of interpretation. Mr Parker follows an advertisement to the wrong Willingden while seeking a surgeon for his developing resort. The resulting carriage accident exposes the material conditions that his confident reading failed to recognise. He possesses documentary evidence, but the evidence refers to a different place. Austen's opening therefore distinguishes having a source from understanding its relevance. The mistake is particularly suggestive for contemporary environmental communication, where an impressive certificate or statistic may be genuine yet fail to support the specific service claim beside it.

Parker's response to his injury extends this pattern. He quickly interprets the situation through Sanditon's restorative promise, presenting sea air and bathing as solutions. In chapter 2, the benefits multiply until apparently opposite bodily needs can be satisfied by the same environment. The rhetoric is difficult to falsify because every response can be incorporated into the claim. If one treatment fails, another feature of the seaside will supposedly compensate. Austen's comedy emerges from this flexibility: conviction expands where discrimination should become more precise.

The narrative does not require readers to conclude that the sea offers no pleasure or benefit. It exposes the movement from a plausible attraction to an indiscriminate explanation. That distinction is crucial for greenwashing analysis. A tourism provider may possess a genuine environmental achievement and still exaggerate its implications. Reducing one operational impact does not establish the sustainability of every activity associated with a holiday. Parker's language makes visible a reasoning problem in which a limited advantage becomes an unlimited identity.

The narrator's account of his investment sharpens the criticism. Sanditon becomes "his mine, his lottery, his speculation and his hobby horse" (Austen, 1817/2008, ch. 2). The sequence moves across extraction, chance, financial ambition, and personal obsession. Place is more than scenery: it is the object through which Parker imagines his future. His enthusiasm may be sincere, but sincerity cannot make his assessment independent. Indeed, the narrator's description of him as generally kind-hearted complicates any explanation based solely on deliberate deceit. Interested people can persuade themselves before they persuade anyone else.

This complication supports a more discriminating understanding of promotional responsibility. Asking whether a spokesperson seems genuine is different from asking whether a claim has adequate support. Parker's personal warmth coexists with selective judgement. His account of neighbouring Brinshore is relentlessly unfavourable, while his own resort appears naturally destined for success. Rival landscapes are evaluated through unequal standards. An environmental comparison would similarly be unreliable if a provider celebrated its strongest indicator while comparing that indicator with a competitor's weakest feature.

Charlotte's approach to Sanditon in chapter 4 brings the built environment into the argument. The new elevated accommodation is discussed alongside the older house and its established comforts. The promotional attraction of position and prospect must be weighed against practical questions of exposure, shelter, and everyday use. The comparison resists a view of development in which newness supplies its own justification. A destination's advertised outlook and the conditions of inhabiting it are related, but they are not interchangeable measures of value.

The garden provides a precise example. Parker welcomes its produce while celebrating his distance from

its seasonal untidiness, asking who could endure a cabbage bed in October. His preferred landscape retains consumption and removes the visible conditions of production. Mrs Parker's recollection of shade and space for the children registers a different assessment of environmental value. Her remarks emerge within domestic conversation rather than an authoritative public speech, making their relative vulnerability part of the scene. The contrast exposes how aesthetic improvement can depend on transferring inconvenient processes elsewhere. For tourism services, it suggests an audit question about what remains outside the visitor's field of vision: the environments supplying food, receiving waste, or absorbing pressures displaced from the attractive site. The analogy identifies a question, not evidence of any particular present-day business's environmental misconduct. An additional check comes from Mr Heywood's concern about prices and the effects of resorts on local life in chapter 1. His objections are not an authoritative environmental assessment, and his paternalistic assumptions deserve scrutiny. Yet their presence interrupts Parker's story of universal improvement. The dialogue opens a distributional question: improvement for whom? Austen makes the claim of collective benefit contestable even while declining to provide an easy alternative. A responsible reading preserves that disagreement rather than converting one speaker into the author's unquestioned representative.

For contemporary tourism communication, the strongest inference concerns the disclosure and limitation of claims. Promotional enthusiasm should be accompanied by a specified subject, a relevant comparison, and evidence that could reveal underperformance. The novel's relevance lies in its account of interested judgement, not in retrospectively labelling seaside health claims as environmental certification. Its unfinished form also keeps the promised future under examination: expectation cannot be substituted for a demonstrated result.

The view and the visitor in *A Room with a View*

Forster opens his novel with an accommodation dispute. Lucy Honeychurch and Charlotte Bartlett have received rooms that do not match the promised view. Their complaint establishes landscape as a differentiated service benefit. The Arno is something to be looked at from the correct room, and the promise of access has entered the commercial relationship. Before scenery becomes a source of emotional awakening, it is an allocation problem involving expectations, exchange, and the social discomfort of accepting another guest's offer.

The pension simultaneously promises Italy and reproduces England. English guests, familiar cultural emblems, and recognisable social judgements fill the opening scene. This arrangement need not mean that hospitality is fraudulent; travellers may legitimately value familiarity. The tension arises because the experience can be represented as encounter while being organised to minimise disruption. Through the repeated presence of Englishness, Forster shows that geographical movement does not necessarily change the habits through which visitors interpret what they see (Forster, 1908/2001, ch. I).

The following chapter complicates the distinction between valuable culture and ordinary life. From the window, Lucy encounters work beside the river, transport, soldiers, children, and animals. The narrator's treatment of these supposedly minor observations unsettles the hierarchy that places recognised artistic monuments above living activity. A view contains movements that do not exist for the tourist's education. This surplus matters for an ecological reading because it prevents place from becoming a static object whose worth is exhausted by its attractiveness to a visitor.

Miss Lavish's rejection of the guidebook adds another difficulty. She presents herself as a route to less conventional understanding, but her insistence on the right manner of encountering Italy establishes another form of authority. Losing the Baedeker does not leave Lucy with an unmediated world. It leaves her negotiating rival mediators. The contrast resembles MacCannell's (1973) concern with managed access to authenticity, although Forster's scene should not be treated as empirical confirmation of his theory. The novel dramatises how opposition to conventional tourism can itself become a socially prestigious performance.

The carriage excursion in chapter VI makes the distribution of attention particularly visible. Its extended heading individually names the English participants before ending with "Italians Drive Them" (Forster, 1908/2001, ch. VI). The visitors receive names and distinctions; those enabling the journey are grouped by nationality and function. The heading invites a reading of tourism as an unequal arrangement of visibility. The scenery and the English encounter occupy the foreground, while local work supplies the condition of their availability.

Within the excursion, the driver and his companion are recast through classical mythology. Their

presentation as Phaethon and Persephone invests an ordinary relationship with imaginative energy, yet it also appropriates living people into the travellers' cultural vocabulary. The text permits pleasure in that transformation without requiring the reader to overlook its asymmetry. When the companion's presence becomes subject to the visitors' approval, the ability to define acceptable conduct follows from the purchasing relationship. The people who transport the tourists do not enjoy equivalent interpretive freedom.

These details suggest why cultural authenticity and environmental responsibility should remain distinct. A tour might use local imagery, include a picturesque encounter, and supply an emotionally convincing story while leaving questions of resource use or decision-making unanswered. Conversely, a less romantic service might provide strong environmental evidence. Forster's formal organisation encourages readers to ask what an account makes available for admiration and what it leaves available only as support. The contemporary question is not whether an image feels authentic, but whether that feeling is being used to answer an unrelated question about environmental performance.

The novel also resists a simple rejection of scenic pleasure. Lucy's developing freedom is inseparable from moments of affective and sensory intensity. Its critical force would be weakened by treating every pleasurable encounter as false consciousness. The more useful distinction separates enjoyment from proof. People can value a landscape without believing that their presence protects it. Accountable tourism narration would preserve that possibility, describing an experience attractively while refusing to make its beauty stand as evidence of harmlessness.

Excursion and extraction in *The Voyage Out*

Woolf extends the problem of mediated encounter beyond the European sightseeing itinerary. *The Voyage Out* places travellers within overlapping structures of shipping, domestic dependence, hotel life, and organised exploration. Movement does not release them from the social conditions that make movement possible. The novel's shifting attention repeatedly exposes the difference between arriving elsewhere and understanding the lives or environments encountered there. Its usefulness for environmental interpretation comes partly from the discomfort it creates around the visitor's expectation of personal transformation.

The hotel lounge illustrates this arrangement in miniature. In chapter VIII, its furnishings include armour and local embroideries, while the manager reflects on the commercial importance of the room. Cultural objects contribute to an atmosphere designed to support sociability and comfort. Their presence says little about the conditions under which they were produced or acquired. Woolf's narrative links the arrangement of experience with entrepreneurial judgement: the room's apparent informality is itself part of a planned service environment (Woolf, 1915/2006, ch. VIII).

The Flushings make the connection between cultural appreciation and exchange more explicit. Mrs Flushing displays objects that her husband acquires locally and that they intend to sell in London. Her explanation rests on an unequal distribution of market knowledge: "they don't know what they're worth, so we get 'em cheap" (Woolf, 1915/2006, ch. XVII). The objects can become attractive signs of difference for metropolitan consumers precisely because the transaction's inequality is absent from the finished display. Interest in local artistry does not, by itself, ensure a fair relationship with its makers.

An invitation to travel upriver grows out of this conversation. The wish to see places directly is mixed with collecting, commercial opportunity, and dissatisfaction with the hotel's familiar social world. The narrative refuses to keep tourism, culture, and commerce in separate compartments. The expedition is subsequently described as a repeatable itinerary through which English parties visit a settlement, purchase objects, and return. What may feel exceptional to the individual traveller already has an established pattern (Woolf, 1915/2006, chs. XVII and XX).

Chapter XXI exposes the direction of attention during that itinerary. Mr Flushing tells the party where to look, including towards a hut associated with an explorer's death. Rachel's perception, however, does not obediently become historical appreciation. Her attention is absorbed elsewhere, while Helen and Hirst experience different forms of unease and disappointment. The same surroundings fail to produce a common meaning. Through these discrepancies, Woolf challenges the assumption that a well-designed excursion can reliably deliver the transformation promised by its organiser.

Material details further disturb the scenic surface. The explorer's site includes damaged shelter, traces of

fire, and discarded tins. Shortly afterwards, the landscape is compared to an English park. These successive acts of description place evidence of occupation beside a familiar aesthetic category. The park comparison makes the unfamiliar readable through a metropolitan frame, but it does not establish whose work or history has shaped the ground. A literary environmental reading can therefore distinguish the recognition of pleasing form from knowledge of the relationships that produced it.

The novel's own limits remain important. Local people receive less sustained interior attention than the British travellers, and the representation of the settlement is mediated through the visitors' perspectives and the narrative's colonial vocabulary. Those limitations cannot be converted into a claim that Woolf provides an uncomplicated model of inclusive storytelling. Instead, the discrepancy between the visitors' elaborate inward lives and the comparatively restricted representation of residents becomes part of the analysis. A text can unsettle imperial tourism while remaining constrained by its ways of seeing.

For contemporary services, this reading raises questions about consent, ownership, and the distribution of interpretive authority. A community-themed excursion should not present the organiser's account as equivalent to the community's agreement. Nor should the purchase of locally made objects be treated automatically as evidence of environmental benefit. Social and environmental claims intersect, but each requires relevant support. Woolf's contribution is to make the tourist's self-explanation difficult to separate from the commercial relations and silenced viewpoints around it. That difficulty is a resource for critical judgement, not a ready-made certification procedure.

Accountable tourism narration

The comparison identifies related but distinct narrative problems. Austen examines how conviction and investment shape the promotion of a destination. Forster examines how a place becomes a view and how the work enabling that view is unevenly recognised. Woolf examines how apparently intimate encounters remain organised through commercial advantage and unequal access to representation. Their formal differences matter. Satirical disclosure, ironic framing, and shifting focalisation do not perform the same operation, even when all three unsettle a visitor-centred account.

Accountable tourism narration translates these insights into four requirements for contemporary communication: attributable claims, bounded evidence, contestable perspectives, and responsibility over time. These are proposed evaluative requirements, not dimensions of a validated measurement scale. They address the conditions under which a reader or tourist can judge an account. The aim is to make warranted disagreement possible, including disagreement that damages a provider's preferred image. A story that permits only admiration has little capacity to correct itself.

Attributable claims identify who is speaking and what interest that speaker holds. Austen's narrator supplies information about Parker that his promotional speeches cannot independently establish. A contemporary service description should likewise distinguish a provider's statement, a commissioned testimonial, and an independent assessment. Interest does not invalidate speech: businesses necessarily describe their own activities. It changes the evidential burden. A declaration of sincerity cannot resolve the question that interested participation creates.

Bounded evidence keeps the scope of a conclusion proportionate to its support. A verified reduction in laundry water use should not become a claim that an entire holiday has negligible environmental consequences. The relevant period, comparison, operational boundary, and method need to be recoverable. Forster's distinction between enjoying the view and understanding the world beyond its frame clarifies the underlying error: the attractive part is allowed to stand for the whole. The proposed remedy is specific attribution of benefit rather than the abandonment of appealing description.

Contestable perspectives concern who can challenge an account. Woolf's uneven allocation of interiority directs attention to the difference between appearing in a story and possessing authority within it. A resident's photograph or a short quotation does not necessarily establish meaningful participation. Communication becomes more accountable when affected people can correct factual statements, withhold endorsement, and articulate disagreements that remain visible. Such participation should complement environmental expertise, not replace it; neither a community testimonial nor a technical indicator answers every relevant question. Responsibility over time asks whether communication records consequences beyond the visitor's arrival and

departure. Promotional stories often reach their satisfying conclusion when an enjoyable service has been delivered. Environmental obligations may continue after that point. Accordingly, the proposed approach requires dated updates and correction of claims when conditions change. Its success would be calibrated trust: confidence responsive to the quality and scope of evidence. Where performance is weak, honest communication may increase perceived greenwashing before operational improvements make stronger reassurance justified.

Implications for tourism services and English literature teaching

For hospitality providers, the immediate application is a review of the relationship between promotional language and supporting material. Descriptions of coastlines, gardens, or heritage settings can remain expressive, but environmental claims should be identifiable as claims. A reader should be able to discover what activity is covered, what has changed, and how that change was established. Links to evidence should clarify rather than merely decorate the message. The relevant test is whether a sceptical reader can assess the assertion without already accepting the provider's preferred account.

A hypothetical example clarifies the distinction. Replacing an unspecified promise of an environmentally harmless stay with a documented account of a particular operational improvement narrows the inference available to the guest. The communication can acknowledge that other impacts remain unresolved. This is not evidence that the revised message will improve sales or lower suspicion. It is a proposed standard for making the statement more accurate and easier to evaluate. Operational correction remains necessary wherever the underlying practice is deficient.

Literary tourism deserves particular caution because literature itself may supply the emotional authority of a destination. An Austen-themed coastal visit or a Forster-inspired Italian itinerary could reproduce the selective looking that the relevant texts complicate. A responsible interpretation would allow the novel's tensions to remain visible, including the social arrangements behind scenic experience. Quoting an admired writer cannot establish that a present-day operator shares that writer's values, still less that its environmental practices have been assessed.

In English literature teaching, the corpus offers a sequence of close-reading problems connected to contemporary public communication. Students can examine Parker's evidence, compare Lucy's view with the activities it contains, and trace the Flushings' movement between appreciation and profit. They can then assess a tourism claim against an independently documented account of its scope. Assessment should reward accurate quotation, attention to narrative voice, and reasoned qualification. The educational objective is interpretive discrimination, rather than using fiction to prescribe a single approved attitude towards travel.

Limitations and directions for empirical research

The corpus is historically and culturally restricted. Three works by English authors cannot represent global tourism literature or the perspectives of communities represented within their narratives. The chronological range also does not justify a linear history of increasing environmental awareness. Differences between the texts may arise from genre, narrative form, social position, or individual artistic purpose. Further research should place these works beside writing that gives residents and workers more sustained authority, without treating such writing as internally uniform or automatically representative.

The proposed framework also needs empirical testing. A future study could compare equally readable tourism descriptions that differ in the presence of bounded evidence and genuine opportunities for correction. Environmental performance information should vary independently from narrative attractiveness, so that researchers can distinguish successful persuasion from accurate judgement. Outcomes should include recognition of unsupported claims and appropriate trust in supported ones. A simple decrease in greenwashing scores would leave the central ethical question unresolved.

Educational research could similarly compare a literary close-reading intervention with direct instruction in environmental claim evaluation. It would need to account for language proficiency, prior environmental knowledge, and familiarity with the literary works. Any improvement should be tested on unfamiliar service descriptions, not merely on examples rehearsed during instruction. Delayed assessment would help distinguish temporary task compliance from a more durable interpretive ability. These are research proposals; the present analysis supplies neither a completed intervention nor evidence of its effectiveness.

Conclusion

Tourism in English literature offers a rigorous way to examine the relation between desirable places and credible accounts of them. *Sanditon* makes promotional conviction answerable to the promoter's interests. *A Room with a View* reveals the social organisation of scenic experience. *The Voyage Out* complicates the traveller's search for contact through unequal exchange and uneven representation. These readings do not turn historical novels into modern environmental audits. They show how narrative form can expose the limits of apparently persuasive accounts.

Mitigating perceived greenwashing should therefore mean improving the correspondence between environmental communication, available evidence, and audience judgement. It should not mean teaching businesses to conceal deficiencies through more sophisticated stories. Accountable tourism narration provides a conceptual basis for that distinction by requiring claims that can be attributed, bounded, challenged, and revised. English literary study contributes through its attention to what a voice knows, what a view excludes, and whose experience remains outside the narrative. Its practical value depends on preserving those questions even when their answers make tourism less easy to sell.

Funding

The authors extend their appreciation to Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University for funding this research work through the project number (PSAU/2026/02/46337

References

- Austen, J. (2008). *Sanditon*. Project Gutenberg Australia. (Manuscript written 1817). <https://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks/fr008641.html>
- Buell, L., Heise, U. K., & Thornber, K. (2011). Literature and environment. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 36, 417–440. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-111109-144855>
- Chen, Y.-S., & Chang, C.-H. (2013). Greenwash and green trust: The mediation effects of green consumer confusion and green perceived risk. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 114(3), 489–500. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1360-0>
- de Freitas Netto, S. V., Sobral, M. F. F., Ribeiro, A. R. B., & Soares, G. R. L. (2020). Concepts and forms of greenwashing: A systematic review. *Environmental Sciences Europe*, 32, Article 19. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12302-020-0300-3>
- Delmas, M. A., & Burbano, V. C. (2011). The drivers of greenwashing. *California Management Review*, 54(1), 64–87. <https://doi.org/10.1525/cmr.2011.54.1.64>
- Forster, E. M. (2001). *A room with a view*. Project Gutenberg. (Original work published 1908). <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2641>
- Lyon, T. P., & Montgomery, A. W. (2015). The means and end of greenwash. *Organization & Environment*, 28(2), 223–249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026615575332>
- MacCannell, D. (1973). Staged authenticity: Arrangements of social space in tourist settings. *American Journal of Sociology*, 79(3), 589–603. <https://doi.org/10.1086/225585>
- Parguel, B., Benoît-Moreau, F., & Larceneux, F. (2011). How sustainability ratings might deter ‘greenwashing’: A closer look at ethical corporate communication. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 102(1), 15–28. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-0901-2>
- Szabo, S., & Webster, J. (2021). Perceived greenwashing: The effects of green marketing on environmental and product perceptions. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 171(4), 719–739. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04461-0>
- Woolf, V. (2006). *The voyage out*. Project Gutenberg. (Original work published 1915). <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/144>