

Finding the Warmth and Brilliance of Green Care in “The Tree” in Ezra Pound’s Selected Poems

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Abstract

As is known to all, there is a criticism of ecology of literary works is underscored, which is called *Environmental Concerns: Ecocritical Landmarks, Textmarks, Benchmarks* (Morrison, 2002). Deprived from the concern for the current research, one of Ezra Pound’s poems has been winnowed, it is a poem deplete with the milieu of nature and women, and originated from the version of “The Tree” (1915), from Ezra Pound (Pound, 1957). On the point of creating this paper, the researcher utilizes the method of description and analysis, among which, the potential method of ecocriticism is adopted. Through a close reading of the clear and graceful lines in the poem, a strong ecological concern for women and nature is showed. And meanwhile, the poet has utilized the skillful writing of description, metaphor and other techniques in this poem to express the thinking of the unity of heaven and human and the integration of nature. The outcomes state that Ezra Pound has made full use of various conceptions and thinkings in the writing of environmental vision, including the intertwining and unity of human and environment. In the first place, his environmental vision is rich and comprehensive, which is echoed in his realistic living environment and the vivid writing of nature in the poetic writing. What’s more, the expression of poetry is interpreted, and the poet combines the idea of being interlinked with nature in his poetry. To some extent, it evokes contemporary people’s awareness of the ecological environment, and even their sensitivity to the current social and environmental problems, along with the link between nature and literature.

Keywords: Environmental Concerns, Pound’s Selected Poems, Women And Nature

Introduction

It is a universal fact that human beings and natural environment always rely on each other harmoniously. The presupposition of this paper is based on ecofeminist thinking that humans and nature are symbiotic, and that humanity and nature are interdependent. It is on the basis of these reflections that the author has generated the significance of this paper, which is to emphasize the entanglement of human and nature in a harmonious coexistence. The poem "The Tree" (1915) contains images that can be said to be only partially developed and the description of natural elements and human serves as a comprehensive embodiment of women and nature, expressing a yearning for lasting love and memory. The tone of the poem is a state of tranquility and peace, reflecting the poet's longing for a love that transcends mortality, which can be interpreted as a love for women, nature and natural environment.

Compared to Pound's other selected poems, this poem is relatively brief and lacks experimental form. However, its theme of love and memory for women and nature, and the ecological interplay between humans and nature, can be seen as an exploration and embodiment of the ecofeminist concerns prevalent in his poetry. In terms of the period in which it is written, "The Tree" reflects the modernist movement's emphasis on fragmentation, subjectivity and the breaking down of traditional forms. The poem uses imaginative language and evocative nature imagery that captures the poet's desire to express the poet's love through a tree, in fact entwining and fusing the perfect unity of nature and women, which aptly reflects the poet's love for the environment and nature.

The poet, Ezra Pound (1885-1972), is a pioneering figure in "imagism" of the poetic literature. As is stated, the poet later gave a statement that as he was a child that he decided to be a poet after growing up and held a desire to "know more about poetry than any man living" (Baumann et al., 2021), which is a quote from a book named *Cross-Cultural Ezra Pound* (2021) in which he made his original motivation. It is a reason with ambition that he initially took on writing poetry and determined to be a poet. He then put his determination into different phases of his writing career, later moving from the U.S. to England, France, and Italy, working on and portraying his insights into life in his many poems and literary works. He embarked on an ambitious program of reading and studying poetry from all over the world, and he showed great talent for language in studying the original linguistics of poetry rather than translation (Alexander, 2022).

With many writers focusing on cultural and ecological issues and reflections over the past few decades, Pound is one of the most important, challenging, and controversial literary figures of the twentieth century, and his life is filled with a great deal of turmoil and instability. In addition, Pound is the only child in his family, born in Hailey, Idaho, on October 30, 1885, and he spent most of his childhood in Wyncote, Pennsylvania, where his parents, Homer Loomis Pound and Isabel Weston, provided him with a traditional middle-class education (Beasley, 2010).

Pound's poetic works showcase some of his own views on life, and of course there are various views involving politics, economy and history. This paper focuses on the literary connotations of Pound's poetry, aiming to explore the unity and harmony between man and nature, and to seek ecological concern and self-realization in Pound's poetry. As a scholar-poet with literary and linguistic gifts, he has the opportunity to express his poetry cross-

culturally. He is recognized in American literature as a poet whose poems reveal his way of thinking, and some of them reflect his awareness of the natural environment and human relevance. In his poems, he shows her awareness of the coexistence of nature and human beings in a way that is different from other poets.

His work, in fact, reflects his preoccupations, his socio-economic and war concerns, which led to his repeated tendency to leave the United States to study and live in various countries in Europe, and to a rejection of certain aspects of American society and culture. "The Tree", is one of Pound's selected poems, a poem that clearly reflects an ecological attitude towards women and nature, and which straddles two cultures: Pound's native country and China, the country of the original source of this distressed poem.

The purpose of this study is to explore Pound's epic poem from an eco-cultural perspective, and the premise of this paper is based on the accepted view that the unity of man and nature cannot be maintained. The focus of this paper is therefore on the connection between man and nature as exemplified in Pound's poem. Similarly, the use of ecocriticism will undoubtedly contribute to the symbiotic nature of man and nature in the various natural environments presented in this poem. Having explored the relationship between literature and the natural environment and human beings in this paper, there seems to be a need to explore literature further from the perspective of ecological concern.

To summarize, Pound's constant migration, wandering life, excellent poetry and rich life experiences are all important factors in making him a great poet, as is known to all, he won Bollingen Prize for Poetry in 1948 (Hombberger, 2013). The numerous wonderful poems published by Pound have provided a tremendous opportunity for posterity to study Pound's poetic works, and this researcher is one of those who are keen on studying Pound, but this researcher's dissertation has a different viewpoint from that of other Pound researchers. Therefore, the writer tries to bridge this gap by analyzing the poem "The Tree" from an ecofeminist perspective.

Literature Review

There are a variety of studies on "The Tree", and of course, the poet does share the eco-feminist's focus on women and nature as demonstrated in the poem. It is widely believed that in this poem the reader begins to be aware of the femininity and naturalness that characterizes the poem, which seems to create a bit of a connection to nature as the author is concerned with the scene and the natural embodiment of femininity.

On the basis of his observations of the poems, the era of 1980s witnessed an early emergence of research on "The Tree", a book, *Ezra Pound and the "Image"-Problematic & Technique* (Kayman, 1983). Demonstrates its study of differences in imagery. In analyzing the poem, the researcher analyzes the poem as showing a formation of imagery that is different from ordinary metaphors. The analysis of the poem's subject is also unusual in that it seems as if the poem's subject is infused with a world hitherto considered metaphorical. This natural world, once a metaphorical distance, now becomes the real scene of the poem. Thus, the author analyzes the poem as if it were written literally. And as the branches and body of the tree are a metaphorical expression of the appreciation and praise of the woman in an ecological way through the depiction of a tree (Kayman, 1983).

Next author has conducted a further research on the Pound's poem, "The Tree", published the works, CASILLO, R. (1999). The author of this paper has undoubtedly created a platform for politics and the art of poetry, the author has consciously used poetry as a form of expressing a political viewpoint, utilizing sensibility and conformity, the author expresses a rejection of Pound's poetic creations, arguing that Pound's intentional creation of ideological myths negates Pound's overstated ideological myths of eternal truths, and argues that Pound's ideological beliefs have been overblown. However, this preference may simply mask an unimaginative force, not just a distrust of transparency(CASILLO, 1999).

In *Literary Time and Literary Space in Imagism and Ezra Pound's Poetry* (Shabani & Hamiti, 2022), The authors also mention the poem "The Tree" and introduce the relationship between literature and philosophy leads to an interaction between literary time and literary space in which "small" literature flows in from "big" literature and has a tendency to reappear as "big" literature in another literary time and space. The most important factor in "innovation" or "from big to small to big again" is time, because the creator of literature, the poet, dies. Since the existence of the poet as a creator is "temporary", "making it new" is the key to the next temporary. Therefore, this paper adopts a documentary research method to examine Pound's poetry through the time and literary space of his creative existence, as the impulse to translate becomes an influential factor in Pound's role as a "new" writer (Shabani & Hamiti, 2022).

The latest research on "The Tree" is *Exploring Identity in Modernist Poetry: A Discourse Analysis of Selfhood and Subjectivity* (ZULFIQAR et al., 2024), and this paper examines subjectivity and selfhood in several of the most influential modern poems by Eliot and Pound. In analyzing the poems, the Fairclough model of critical discourse analysis, proposed in 1989, is used. Ten modernist poems - five by Eliot and five by Pound - were considered to determine where these poets establish and recognize human subjectivity. The theoretical framework of this study examines aspects of modernist works such as fragmentation and stream of consciousness, examining the connections between techniques and their linguistic and stylistic representations of internal states and experiences in particular texts. Attention is also given to examining the role of poetic texts in which the poet's work reflects or intervenes in contemporary paradigms of notions of identity and subjectivity. The relationship between the inner and outer worlds of the speaker is explored in relation to imagery and symbolism in order to define the extent of the duality of self and personal identity. It is a pity that the authors never mention the care for women and nature, and as a research gap, the researcher is lucky enough to carry on my study on the poem from the ecofeminist perspective.

Due to the previously mentioned critical studies of this short poem, it is obvious that none of the researchers intended to analyze this unique and beautiful poem from an ecocritical perspective, despite the fact that it presents elements of nature. Therefore, when we have the opportunity to read this poem, we find that it is constantly being mined, appreciated and analyzed in different fields and in different critical studies. It is clear that Pound's poetry will continue to be uncovered, mined and studied by subsequent researchers in different fields in the future as well. The author is fortunate enough to come across this poem, and as a scholar of linguistics and literature, the researcher tries to do some research on this poem and analyze it from the perspective of ecocriticism in order to fill the academic gap in this field.

Ecocriticism as a Lens

An approach to literary criticism is ecocriticism that centers on the study of literature and natural elements as its mission and features (Wu, 2021), and Wu states that this approach to literary criticism is linked with ecological concern, raises us to pay attention to the relationship between human society and the natural environment where we human beings are living, and to issue appealing and warnings to the current development of society in an ecological direction through literary means. Of course, the level of measurement is not arbitrary, but full of ecological concern. It depends on an examination of the causes of the ecological crisis. Analyzing the relationship between nature and man helps to identify the problems associated with the ecological crisis. In a way, the interconnectedness between nature and human beings makes human beings a complex part of the environment; in fact, the relationship between human beings and the natural environment is symbiotic and interconnected.

The advent of ecocriticism first appeared in 1978, as Banerjee briefly explains, and the term “ecocriticism”, Banerjee says, was first coined by William Rueckert in 1978. The term “eco-literary criticism” was initially coined as an attempt to shorten the length of the term “ecocriticism”, and only became accepted and recognized in the late 20th century (Banerjee et al., 2020). As a result, people have gradually begun to awaken to the significance of ecological wisdom and the ecological connection between man and nature in this vast cosmic system. With the development of our society, the progress of human civilization, and the advancement of society and culture, ecocriticism has been taken seriously and given due attention. As ecocriticism shows us, it advocates the application of ecology, the concept of ecology, to the study of literature. William in his article “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism”, points out that the application of ecocriticism is an advancement in literature (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996).

This approach to literary criticism draws attention to the melting connection between man and nature in literature, and it employs a geocentric approach to the study of literature that is very much concerned with the long-term stability of the earth (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996).

It is well known that in the context of ecocriticism, ecocriticism focuses on the re-creation of nature by literature, which is equivalent to the transformation of ecological literature, while literary criticism also emphasizes the ecological manipulation of natural environments so that they play an important role in literature itself. For example, the use of a particular natural setting in a poem is important in shaping the subject matter of the poem itself. This may also explain why literary criticism always emphasizes the natural element in literature, no matter how small or unimportant it may appear.

Analysis and Discussion

The poem showcases the poet’s deep love for somebody in his life on the expression of a natural element “The Tree”(1915), meanwhile the poem expresses the endurance of human emotions and the current state of our human’s current state , and the reflections he has stated embodies the discovery that in the vastness of the universe, human beings is but a transient being, in other words, in the vastness of nature, our humambeings is like but a drop in the vast ocean. It is a short yet evocative piece that takes us readers into a series of situations, exploring the theme of transience and reflecting further on the lasting elements of

nature, as if the poet tries to display a thinking that beauty seems a combination of all elements from nature and human and can stand the test of constant time, as well as constant love. The poet's choice of the title is intimate and highlights the fact of the combination of nature above, as is mentioned. "The Tree" (1915) can be interpreted as an allusion to a person, perhaps a beloved woman. The poet's placement of man and woman in the vastness of nature, making them one with nature, is in line with ecofeminism.

Let's move on to "The Tree" (1915), this piece is an outstanding example of Ezra Pound's early works, which is a short and simple poem, with twelve lines long, but what these brief lines express, as are showcased, allusion and metaphor are used by the poet to craft a message about the power of nature and natural images to form impress one's perspective on the world (UNO, 1999). Being woven into Pound's short poems are the stories of Daphne and Apollo, and of Persis and Philemon. The latter is the less well-known of the two. It tells the generosity and kindness of the couple, who took in Zeus and Hermes and then taught themselves to serve them. As a reward, they were turned into linden and oak trees so they could spend the rest of their lives together.

The Tree

I stood still and was a tree amid the wood,
Knowing the truth of things unseen before;
Of Daphne and the laurel bow
And that god-feasting couple old
that grew elm-oak amid the wold.
Twas not until the gods had been
Kindly entreated, and been brought within
Unto the hearth of their heart's home
That they might do this wonder thing;
Nathless I have been a tree amid the wood
And many a new thing understood
That was rank folly to my head before. (Pound 2012: 366)

The use of several poetic techniques in the poem have been conducted. These include but are not limited to alliteration, metaphor, allusion, and enjambment are all used without limiting the graceful images of the poem. The utilization of alliteration firstly is ingenious, when words occur in succession, or appearing close together at least, and have the same sound in the beginning. Take "god" and "grew" as an example in lines four and five. Furthermore, Metaphors are comparisons between two different things, like things that exist in the text without the use of "like" or "as". When using this type of technique, the poet is arguing that one thing is different, that they are more than just similar. In this case, after alluding to the story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the author says that someone is "a tree in the wood/And understands many new things". The poet probes the female symbiotic connection that has fertilised the ecology of the body to become an impregnated tree. In the next four lines of the poem, the poet details the latter story, that of Persis and Philemon. He describes how the gods "kindly implored" their benevolent help. This is after they are "brought" into the "fireplace" of the couple's home. Kindness and their own love are showed from the couple, and in return they do this "miraculous thing" (Baldwin, 2020). They turn the couple into immortal trees so that they can be entwined forever, which directly embodies a harmony and unity of man, woman, and nature.

Lines 10-12

Nathless I have been a tree amid the wood
And many a new thing understood
That was rank folly to my head before. (Pound 2012: 366)

In the final three lines of the poem, Pound begins with “Nasrith”, meaning “nevertheless”. He is trying shifting into an example of repetition, and he reiterates how sitting in the woods, as a metaphorical tree throughout the book, offering him a chance to tap into truths about nature and love. This is information that is embodied that his love and feeling for nature and women is experiencing in a new way unprecedentedly. In just a few words, Pound has written a lyrical and poignant poem. This is a perfect example of seeking harmony in the disharmony of nature and women, and the unification between nature and human being is conveyed.

This poem A Virginal (1912) depicts the poetic character’s struggle being “bound straitly”, and Pound attached a great deal of importance to the depiction of the beloved’s purity. It is obvious that the poet is keen on integrate the passion when writing (‘How Ezra Pound Influenced Modernis’, 2023). The title of the poem apparently suggests that the beloved is a woman, a virgin, and Pound ends the remaining lines of the poem with different images of purity that the virginal is angelic, as gentle as the spring wind, and gives the poet a unique and refreshing lightness into poet’s life; and it seems a “magic in her nearness”. The love and the care for the beloved woman are revealed in the following lines of the poem.

Lines 6-15

As with sweet leaves; as with subtle clearness.
Oh, I have picked up magic in her nearness
To sheathe me half in half the things that sheathe her.
No, no! Go from me. I have still the flavour,
Soft as spring wind that’s come from birchen bowers.
Green come the shoots, aye April in the branches,
As winter’s wound with her sleight hand she staunches,
Hath of the trees a likeness of the savour: (Pound 2012: 366)

These lines of poetry “as with sweet leaves; / as with subtle clearness. / Oh, I have picked up magic in her nearness.” compare the woman to a part of nature, displaying that she is like sweet leaves; like subtle clarity. The man in the lines of the poem learns to submit to “magic” around this virginal, a woman. The poet unknowingly blends the leaves, the woman, and the man from the elements of nature in his poem, highlighting the glory of ecofeminist care. Furthermore, the last line of the poem is written about the colour, white; apparently, which is a part of nature’s elements. The poet associates the virginal with the colour white, symbolising purity and innocence. Pound also associates her with several elements of spring, which is the new growth of tender buds, and the intertwined connection of the buds that have yet to blossom and the virginity, all of which highlight his love and care for the virginal and his reliance on nature. Finally, the man in the lines describes the past as a “winter’s wound”, showing that even with all the wounds and memories of the past. His virginal has strengthened him, and that the maiden, like an angel of purity, holds everything, soothing all wounds, and bringing him the shoots and branches of spring. At last, “Hath of the trees a

likeness of the savour”, the poet integrates the scent of virginity with the components of nature, the aroma of trees, reflecting the idea of the unity of heaven and man. Everything is clear here, and this pure, blossoming spring is more enticing than the past, the less pure seasons of the quest. The man’s belief that his virginity can erase the sins of his past is another ecofeminist expression and a close interweaving of the lines of the poem, reflecting the culture of the poet’s ecofeminist stance (Eliot, 2022).

Conclusion

Through the analysis of a poem “The Tree”(1915) , deprived from *the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (1975), readers can never fail to discover such a fact that not only the relationship is embodied between Pound and poetry, but also Pound’s attitude towards women and nature intertwining through the lines of this poem. In addition, from the perspective of human beings and the environment of the world, it is unquestionable that the close and environmentally friendly connection and entanglement between human and the natural environment have been stated. On top of that, the fusion of man and nature full of ecological aesthetics is embodied in this poem as well, which can be looked on as the perfect fusion and unity of man and the environment, man and nature, as long as nature and women, which contributes to having a good comprehension on why the researcher has employed an option of choosing the poet Ezra Pound as one of research objectives, which does a great help to take an account for why the researcher considers this poem to analyze from the ecofeminism perspective, and meanwhile which is also the author’s highest level of praise and esteem for this eminent poem. The present study showcases that we should not lose sight of nature in human life and in literary creation, for nature is in every aspect of human’s life in a variety of forms, like an active participant in our life. The researcher also spares no efforts in providing some crude and unsophisticated insights to elaborate the linkage between human beings and nature. The shortcoming of this paper is that it is focused on only one poem, which is inevitable to have some limits and meanwhile lacks some persuasive power. However, this paper sincerely suggests that scholars interested in Pounds’ poetry should further study the poem and the related selected poems, employing similar or different approaches.

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