

Embracing Nature: Ecocritical Insights into the Harmonious World of Ezra Pound's *The Canto XLIX*

Shang Jingmei^{1*}, Hamoud Yahya Ahmed Mohsen², Wang Jijun³, Zhang Hongmei³, Xu Li³

¹Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia

²International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia

³Inner Mongolia University, China

*Email: 80246707@qq.com

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Abstract

This study is aimed to explore the harmonious world of Ezra Pound's poetry with special reference to his notorious long poem deprived from the version of *The Cantos* of Ezra Pound (1975), the *Canto XLIX*, which is part of *The Fifth Decad of Cantos* (1937). The authors employ the recent theory of ecocriticism as a reading lens in the current study engaging three key ecocritical concepts, namely, the harmony with nature, nature as a symbol and the unity with nature. Through a close ecocritical reading the simple but beautiful verses of the long poem, the authors find a strong ecological concern and involvement of the human and natural worlds. The analysis of the selected poem reveals that Pound conceived a great deal of conception and thought on the description of ecological vision, including the harmonious unity of human and nature throughout the poem. On the one hand, the vision of his writing is ecologically rich, as reflected in his realistic living environment and the poem's depiction of nature. On the other hand, the expression of the poem is sensual, as displayed in the poet's poetic creation incorporating the idea of at one with nature, which evokes to a certain extent the contemporary sensitivity to ecological concerns for the environment, and even the current social and environmental challenges, as well as the nature-literature connection that is increasingly evident in literary studies. The poet's depiction of the natural environment inspires a deep sense of at one with nature, which can be seen as underlying ecological concern.

Keywords ecocriticism, humans, nature, the canto xlix, Ezra Pound

INTRODUCTION

It is a universal truth that human and nature have always been intertwining in harmony. The premise of the current article is based on the idea of "at one with nature", that is, humans and nature are symbiotic and cannot survive without each other. Thus, this gives rise to the significance of this paper, which highlights the harmonious and symbiotic connection between human and nature as embodied in one of the greatest poets of modern European literature, Pound's epic poem, the *Canto XLIX*. The use of ecocritical theory will undoubtedly contribute to the realization of harmony within disharmony in the various natural environments presented in this piece of poetry.

We had better have a good knowledge of the poet, Ezra Pound (1885-1972), who is a pioneering figure in "imagism" of the poetic literature. How did Pound become a poet? Pound later stated that as he was a teenager he had resolved to become a poet and had a determination to "know more about poetry than any man living" (Baumann et al., 2021). This is a quote from a book named *Cross-Cultural Ezra Pound* (2021) in which he let his initial motivation for writing revealed. This is a reason full of ambition why he initially started writing poetry and resolved to be a poet. He then put his determination into the different phases of his writing life that later moved from America through England, France, and Italy, working and portraying his insights into life in many of his poems and literary works. He

embarked on an ambitious programme of reading and studying poetry from around the world, and he showed a great gift for languages, because he learnt the poetry in its original language rather than in translation (Alexander, 2022).

Many writers throughout the last decades are concerned with cultural ecological issues and thinking, and Pound is one of the most important, challenging and controversial literary figures of the twentieth century. Pound's life is full of turmoil and instability, who is the only child of his family and was born on 30 October 1885 in Hailey, Idaho. He lived most of his childhood in Wincott, Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia. His parents, Homer Loomis Pound and Isabel Weston, offered him a traditional middle-class education (Beasley, 2010).

Pound's poetry depicts some of his own ideas about life, and of course there are views that include politics, economics, and history. The researchers focus on the literary aspects of Pound's poetry to explore the unity and harmony between human and nature, as well as to explore ecological concerns and self-realization in his poetry. As a scholarly poet with great literary and linguistic gifts, he has had the opportunity to express his poetry across cultures. A universally acknowledged poet in the American literary, whose poems reveal his way of thinking, some of them reflecting his awareness of the natural environment and human relevance. In his poems, he presents her awareness of the coexistence of nature and humanity in a way unlike any other poet. Indeed, his work reflects his concerns, his socio-economic, war concerns, which led to his repeated tendency to leave the United States to study and lived in various European countries and to reject certain aspects of American society and culture. The Canto XLIX is one of his long poems, a poem that clearly reflects his attitudes and experiences, and which straddles two cultures: Pound's native country and China, the country of the original source of this long poem.

The aim of this study is to explore Pound's epic poem from an ecocritical perspective, and the premise of this paper is based on the acknowledged view that there is no way to maintain the unity of man and nature. The point of this paper, therefore, is to focus on the connection between humanity, and nature as embodied in this poem by Pound. Similarly, the use of ecocriticism will undoubtedly contribute to the symbiotic nature of humans and nature in the various natural environments presented in this poem. This paper discusses the relationship between literature and the natural environment and human beings, and there seems to be a need for a further discussion in literature from the perspective of ecological concern.

It is unquestionable that Pound, a well-known poet and critic, became famous for his role in developing Imagism. As a response to the Victorian and Georgian poets, Imagism favored the linguistic phenomenon that plain imagery, compact language and strong correspondences should be expressed, especially when there is a correspondence between the verbal and musical qualities of the poem and the expressed mood. Ezra Pound's best-known works include *Personae* (1909), *Ripostes* (1912), *Cathay* (1915), *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920), and his half-way 120-section epic, the *Cantos*, which consumed his middle and late career and were eventually had successive publications published between the year 1917 and 1969.

Here the authors take precedence over one of Ezra Pound selected poem, The Canto XLIX, for it embodies his ecological concerns through ecocritical lens. Pound was an exiled poet who drifted in different countries, he experienced the devastation of two world wars, during the time he moved between different countries such as England, France and Italy, he saw the beauty of the geography of different countries, the knowledge of the region will instinctively inspire the poet's awareness of the ecological environment. It is apparently that the living environment of him and his experience had something to do with human and nature.

Ranking Pound among the poets of environmental concerns is definitely convincing and well-documented, and in some of his poems we can find ecological concerns entwined and reflected about the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature. His utilization of the natural environment as the main source of inspiration for some of his poems and the advancement of his poetry through various depictions of natural things can explain his frequent moving and living around different countries in search of scenic choices of green and ecological living environments as a place of residence. His epic poem the Canto XLIX reflects his sensitivity to greenery and the environment and his awareness of his close relationship with nature and man. This paper will examine the poem from the perspective of ecological concern. It uses ecocriticism as a lens to analyze the poet Pound's vision of the environment as expressed in this poem.

What is Pound's footing in the context of his environment through two world wars? He was born in the rural west of the United States and grew up in a middle-class upbringing, and later moved several times through countries such as England, France and Italy and these experiences made him realize how much human beings need the environment to find a sense of attachment, or a sense of belonging, and that human beings are always influenced by natural environmental factors. He spent half his life writing his epic poem *The Cantos*, which the researcher is about to analyze deprived from *A Fifth Decad of Cantos* (1937), part of his *Cantos*. It is this long poem that we detect the close connection between ecology and human beings in the poet's work and gives the researcher an opportunity to try to connect his work with environmental concerns.

In conclusion, it is clear that Pound's constant moving, life of wandering from country to country, excellent poems and rich life experiences helped to mould a great poet, and the poet's poetic achievements can be seen in the fact that he won Bollingen Prize for Poetry in 1948 (Hombberger, 2013). The numerous poems published by Pound, they have provided posterity with plenty of opportunities to study Pound's poetry, and the researcher is one such person, but the researcher's paper differs from the views of other Pound researchers. Therefore, the author attempts to bridge this gap by analyzing the poem the *Canto XLIX* from a perspective of environmental concerns.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The *Canto XLIX*, more commonly is referred to as "The Seven Lakes" and professional scholarship on Pound's *Canto XLIX* seems not very multiple in amount or extent. Daniel Pearlman published a paper, *The Barb of Time* (1969) first noted that the portion in the beginning of the canto (lines 1–32) is derived from the "Eight Views of Xiao xiang" Which is a landscape located in the Xiaoxiang region of what is now Hunan Province, China, the subject of poetry, and a famous depiction of paintings and drawings of the Song dynasty. The Eight Views of Xiaoxiang can be taken to refer to either a collection of various paintings based on this theme, a series of various poems on the same theme, or a combination of the two. The Xiaoxiang theme is part of a long poetic and artistic heritage. However, Pearlman was incapable to access the whole manuscript and only superficial research had been done, the author did reproduce four of the eight painted scenes. The author has not referred to into the study on the environment, ecological and human perspectives, nor does it show any concern for this, but seemingly focused only on the paintings themselves. Pearlman mainly argues the unity of structure and theory of the *Canto XLIX*. Meanwhile, he referred to organic time and mechanical time and they are opposed, on which he explains "the cosmic and seasonal cycles by which healthy societies regulate in all spheres of action (Pearlman, 1969), of course, such an explanation is really sharing in the same way as the poem. It is commonly acknowledged that in this particular poem, readers get to learn about the characteristics of human and nature, which seems to build a little connection with nature, after all, what the author concerns is natural scenes.

Based on the observations of the scholar Pearlman above, the era of 1970s saw the emergence of the following scholars, namely Hugh Kenner (1973), Angela Jung Palandri (1974b) and Sanehide Kodama (1977), who separately published articles in the Poundian journal, *Paideuma*, and these scholars challenged the poet's translation and visualization of the Eight Views. Although these were only tentative explorations and analyses, their articles have provided an excellent foundation for later scholars to further understand the complexity and originality of the *Canto XLIX* of Pound's cantos. However, during the last two decades, although researches and studies on the *Canto XLIX* have been conducted, the published studies are rare and far between. Taylor (1993) has conducted further research on the Pound's *Canto XLIX* but only on the painting related to the Seven Lakes, who had access to reproducing the entire original album owned by Pound's daughter Mary de Rachewiltz, giving readers the opportunity to see the landscapes for the first time (pp. 333-352). However, the research is limited to do research on paintings and art.

In *The modernist Response to Chinese Art* (2003), Qian Zhaoming has utilized Taylor's research to examine the historical tradition of the paintings Eight Views in a comprehensive manner. His fascinating analysis takes the readers into the intellectual milieu of the scholars, painters, and poets who created the works during the Song dynasty. He then briefly analyses the related research in Pound's

Canto XLIX (pp. 123-137). It is a pity that the preceding works are almost exclusively about paintings related to the Seven Lakes, the Canto XLIX.

Another Chinese scholar, Suo Jinmei, has further conducted another study on this, and she makes a great analysis of Canto XLIX in the book named *Confucianism in Pound's Cantos* (2003). The author mainly elaborates on the manifestation of the power of cosmic principles in this poem, and explains Pound's intention to illuminate heaven with the historical teachings and examples he is about to provide. In addition, Suo Jinmei has done research showing that three-quarters of the first chapter of this section is adapted from the Li Ki, an ancient Chinese ritual calendar designed to harmonize human life with natural cycles through rituals, highlighting the theme of this section from the beginning (Suo, 2003). The author mainly analyzes and interprets in detail the influence and penetration of Confucianism on Pound and his poetry creation, which is to some extent a good response to the researcher's echoes from the shared symbiosis between ecosystem and human.

Moreover, Kent Su (Su, 2021) studied the poem, who published an article titled *Landscapes and Taoism in Ezra Pound's Cantos* in June 2021, in which the author attempts to explore the Taoist elements contained in Pound's evocation of Chinese landscapes in the Canto IV and Canto XLIX. The author mainly studies and discusses the combination of natural landscape and Taoism. When analyzing this type of poetry, the author mainly highlights the natural beauty of pastoral and peaceful life. The background of these stories is derived from the harmonious integration of the natural environment and human beings in ancient China, which is beautiful and natural and full of ecological beauty, most of which are backyards, rivers, cabins or villages. In the imagery of the Tianyuan (natural beauty of mountains, waters, and field poetry the hustle and bustle of urban life is removed, and the author explains that the poem overflows with serenity and peace. The authors tend to focus explicitly on the scene itself, rather than the audience, readers or any human factors, and as is stated, it seems that the poem itself gives importance to the expression of the natural scenes. On the other hand, the author makes clear research on the source of the poem: The Canto XLIX (Seven Lakes in Chinese) represents landscape poetry derived from the work of Xie Linyun (385-433) and meanwhile, which expresses the author's own view of the poem, which shows that humans can traverse or blend into beautiful and green natural landscapes alone, or venture on foot to the poetic mountains or nature. The author also explains that although the backgrounds of the two styles may seem different, their essence is the same. In his journal, he expounds the Taoist philosophy of "inaction", that is, following the natural laws of nature. It is worth reading that the author of the journal also shows the readers the landscape of nature with a sense of landscape representing a glimpse of the peaceful, temporary paradise that Pound had been trying to achieve throughout his poetic career. It's really a very good referenced article to any researchers having an intention to carry on the related research.

The late research on The Canto XLIX is *Fourth Dimension: On the Images of The Seven Lakes Canto* (2021) by Ma Ling. The author has employed the Eight Views of Xiaoxiang as a blueprint, Chinese themes, Chinese cultural imagery, and the poetic art of classical Chinese poetry and Chinese writing from the early days of the Imagist school. According to the journal, it was these works from the art of Chinese poetry that enabled Pound to successfully recreate the poetic and pictorial images of the Eight Views of Xiaoxiang, and to create the classic epic poem, The Canto XLIX. The journal has claimed that Pound obtained the fourth dimension of "stillness" from the poetic and pictorial beauty of the Eight Views of Xiaoxiang and built his "ideal state" by borrowing the sacred rule of Yao and Shun as depicted in the ancient Chinese songs. The transcendental pursuit and expression of the Chinese artistic images and the aesthetic realm of "stillness" presented by Pound are given a sublime humanistic significance. This is the most recent study on Pound's Canto XLIX in terms of poetic images (Ma, 2021).

Due to the aforementioned critical studies on this beautiful poem, *The Canto XLIX*, it is obvious that never a single researcher intends to analyze this unique and beautiful poem from an ecocritical perspective, despite the fact that it presents elements of nature. Thus, when we have the opportunity to read this poem, we find it constantly unearthed to be appreciated and analyzed in those different fields and different critical studies. And it seems to be evident to all that this poem of Pound's will also be endlessly uncovered, dug and studied in the future by subsequent researchers in different fields. The researcher is fortunate to have encountered this poem and as a scholar of language and literature to conduct a try to do some research on the current poem and use it to fill in a lacuna in the academic field by analyzing the poem from an ecocritical point of view.

ECOCRITICISM AS A LENS

The rise of ecocriticism first appeared in the year 1978, about which Banerjee conducted a brief explanation. Banerjee states that the word, “ecocriticism” is coined by William Rueckert first in 1978. The term first arose because of an attempt of people to shorten the writing length of “ecological literary criticism” phrase, and later on this idea was gradually accepted and given recognition in the late twentieth century (Banerjee et al., 2020). As a consequence, people began to gradually gain a sense of awareness, and began to realize the importance of ecological wisdom and the ecological connection between human and nature in this vast cosmic system. Along with the development of our society, human civilization, social and cultural progress at the same time, ecocriticism has been taken seriously, and is justified as well. As ecocriticism shows us, ecocriticism advocates the application of ecology, the concept of ecology, to the study of literature. William Rückert pointed out in his article “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism”, that the application of ecocriticism is a progress in literature (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996a).

This method of literary criticism focuses on the relationship between human and nature in literature. It takes a geocentric approach to literary research and is very concerned with the long-term stability of the Earth (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996a). In the context of ecocriticism, ecocriticism focuses on the recreation of nature in literature, which is equivalent to the reform of ecological literature, and literary criticism also emphasizes the ecological manipulation of the natural environment, making it play an important role in literature itself. For example, the use of a specific physical environment in a poem is significant in shaping the theme of the poem itself. This may also explain why the criticism in literature always highlights on the natural elements in literature, no matter how tiny or far less significant it may seem.

Glotfelty and Fromm (1996) also suggested that “human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and be affected by it” (p. 19), attaching great importance to the fact that throughout the history of human development, human culture has been viewed as an entity directly related to the physical environment, with the two being intertwined and influencing each other. Moreover, the term interconnectedness has been utilized to explain this phenomenon. It has been argued that the key to understanding ecocriticism is to understand the interconnectedness and interdependence between nature and human culture, especially when the cultural elements of our language and literature are embedded in it to make the literary criticism viable. (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996b). Therefore, we can interpret ecocriticism from two different perspectives, on the one hand, from the standpoint and angle of literature, and on the other hand, from the angle of environmental protection, which will be more ecological from the perspective of the natural environment. In fact, its theoretical foothold lies in the negotiation and symbiosis between humans and non-humans. (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996a).

More importantly, it gives such an explanation that nature is both a platform for the representation of human stories and an active actor in the drama itself (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996a). From a foothold of comparing active and passive nature, the theory explains that nature is no longer seen as a passive recipient of human development, but rather as a current participant that will impact humans in direct or indirect ways (Walther, 2022). As we mentioned earlier, changes in a given physical environment, no matter how tiny, can have a huge impact on humans which is the ecocritical view and the important role that nature plays in human life. It is a breakthrough from what we have attained in the past because it is not what previous researchers have thought. This theory is all-encompassing, broad and wide-ranging, and it encompasses a multitude of fields. As Nashikkar explains, everything that exists in nature lives in an intricate web of interrelationships, and no entity is independent. All the participants in this universe interact with each other, are entangled with each other, and have a variety of effects depending on their behaviors (Aberbach, 2021).

Ecocriticism is an approach to literary criticism that centers on the study of literature and natural elements as its mission and characteristics (Wu, 2021), and Wu argues that in general, such a literary criticism method full of ecological concern helps us to pay attention to the relationship between human society and the natural environment, and it serves as an appeal and warning to the current development of society in the ecological direction through the means of literature. Of course, the level of measurement depends on the examination of the causes of the ecological crisis. Analyzing the connection between nature and human helps to identify the problems related to the ecological crisis. In

a way, the interconnections between nature and humans make humans a complex part of the environment, a more intelligent player. This perception also takes us to a deeper understanding of ecological culture, where the relationship between humans and the natural environment is to be developed in symbiosis and interconnectedness. The analysis will be carried out in the light of ecocriticism. The main focus will be on the following three key ecocritical concepts, namely, the harmony with nature, nature as a symbol and the unity with nature.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Using ecocriticism as a lens of the current study, the analysis of Pound's poem is carried out in the study engaging three key concepts of ecocriticism as the following:

I. Harmony with nature

The idea that *The Canto XLIX* promotes a vision of harmony between humans and nature, suggesting an ideal relationship where both coexist peacefully and support each other's well-being. *The Canto XLIX*, also known as *The Seven Lakes*, is an epic poem through which Pound offers his readers a "glimpse of heaven". The poem opens with an explicit tribute to the "Eight Views of Xiao xiang" with 9 stanzas and 47 lines, according to the version of the Cantos of Ezra Pound (Pound, 1975), presenting a writing method of combining narrative and commentary structure. The opening six stanzas of the poem take the Eight Views of Hunan as the object of appreciation and recreate it on the basis of Zeng Baosun's English translation of the inscribed poem, recreating the classic imagery of the Eight Views of Hunan and presenting the beauty of silence and harmony of the natural landscape; stanza 6 is Pound's own voice questioning the greed of the loan sharks; stanzas 7 and 8 are two ancient Chinese songs, which was copied from the Japanese version of Fenollosa's manuscript and is a tribute to the noble character of Yao and Shun; the other one is a close translation of the song to preserve the flavour of the ancient song, and depicts the simple and peaceful life of the forefathers who lived in harmony with nature under Yao's and Shun's peaceful rule; and stanza 9 is Pound's own voice revealing the greatness of the power of ruling by doing nothing. The poetic mood of the "Eight Views of Xiaoxiang" and the praise of Yao and Shun's sacred rule evokes constitute the main body of *the Canto XLIX* (Ma, 2021) & (*The Fourth Di...n Lakes Canto_MA LingDepart...Ollege of Art.Pdf*, n.d.).

This poem is based on a book Pound received from his parents, a Chinese book of illustrations and poems (Byron, 2013). Pound translated and rewrote the verses of that based on the original material embedded with paintings named "Eight Views of Xiao xiang" which is a landscape located in the Xiaoxiang region of what is now Hunan Province, China, the subject of poetry, and a famous depiction of paintings and drawings of the Song dynasty. The Eight Views of Xiaoxiang can be taken to refer to either a collection of various paintings based on this theme, a series of various poems on the same theme, or a combination of the two. The Xiaoxiang theme is part of a long poetic and artistic heritage. As Pound acknowledges in the poem: "by no man these verses" (Su, 2021), which suggests that they are divorced from their historical (and personal) context, a complete detachment. Uncluttered as many of the stanzas in this poem are, it contains calm and beautiful imagery: heavy rain, geese, running water in the streams, lanterns, a boy fishing for shrimp, sunrise and sunset, a sailboat and floating boat. Pound praises the simplicity of a life in tune with the rhythms of nature: "Sun up; work / sundown; to rest / dig well and drink of the water," noting that it is imperialism that creates this ideal outcome. While Pound is merciless in his attack on imperialism, he does not forget to use his concern for the environment and humanity in this poem to express his mercifulness in his mercilessness. And the following is the first stanza of the poem:

*For the seven lakes, and by no man these verses:
Rain; empty river; a voyage,
Fire from frozen cloud, heavy rain in the twilight
Under the cabin roof was one lantern.
The reeds are heavy; bent;
and the bamboos speak as if weeping.*

The first stanza of the poem opens up with a reference to the Seven Lakes, which is why the poem is also known as the Seven Lakes Canto. (Ma, 2021). It seems a pity that it is for the seven lakes, unfortunately, though, there is a beautiful landscape as a backdrop, the poet claims that no one has written these lines, to which “and by no man these verses” is a good response. Hence, the poet claims that it is his own creation. The next verses are from natural elements in the ecosystem and we seem to be able to visualize that in a rainy sky, the poet is canoeing alone on the “empty river” through rain-filled landscapes. However, the poet’s description of the scenery also goes beyond that, as he describes the clusters of red clouds in the sky as solidified with flames burning, and the description of the natural environment also combines a blend of setting and time suggestion, revealing that the time in the artistic conception of the poetic work is at dusk with rain falling, while the general environment is the “empty river” with a “lantern” under the roof of the cabin. This lantern adds a touch of earthly flavor and warmth to the silent environment. In the last two lines of this stanza, the poet employs a combination of scenic description and anthropomorphism in the writing technique. “The reeds are heavy; bent; and the bamboos speak as if weeping.” This is the glimmer of warmth we catch, full of care for the natural environment of “seven lakes”, “river”, “cloud”, “rain”, “cabin”, “lantern”, “reeds” and bamboo”. the cabin is a representative of mankind, and the natural scenery above shows the natural integration of human and the environment, and more highlight the theme of the unity of man and nature, at one with nature.

In the following two stanzas with 13 lines, through the description of the nature elements and ecology environment, the poet displays the harmony with nature:

*Autumn moon; hills rise about lakes
against sunset
Evening is like a curtain of cloud,
a blur above ripples; and through it
sharp long spikes of the cinnamon,
a cold tune amid reeds.
Behind hill the monk's bell
borne on the wind.
Sail passed here in April; may return in October
Boat fades in silver; slowly;
Sun blaze alone on the river.
Where wine flag catches the sunset
Sparse chimneys smoke in the cross light*

The two stanzas above, can be combined to analyze and understand, and the poet describes the dusk reflecting the setting sun, a round of cold autumn moon; mountains surrounded by lakes, from which we can get a knowledge that the poet is imaginative, and he employs a good combination of environment and time description. In this verse, dusk is described like a cloud curtain, in the twilight ripples on the surface of the river blurred; the poet goes on to describe the cinnamon spikes, the reeds among the cold tunes, the sudden “spikes of cinnamon” and “reeds” among the tunes, which is equivalent to the spikes of the reeds to give the life of the rhythm of the music. In such a tranquil environment along coming the sound of the monk’s bell behind the mountains, drifting with the wind, empty, silent and far away. The poet is adept at giving life to poetry and Pound’s excellent writing skills are exposed to readers in the next few lines as the poet infuses the poem with the concept of time April. As is described, the poet begins to unfold the narrative storytelling style using time as a clue, “Sail passed here in April; may return in October”. The canoe is slowing down in the silvery light in April and slowly recedes in the silvery light. It seems to tell us that the night bids farewell to the day in the

silvery light and the “sun blaze alone on the river”, indicating that the day is coming. It is exactly how it is in the human society, like the cycle of the moon and the sun, which is repeated over and over again. The last line of the poem, “where the wine flag captures the setting sun and the sparse chimneys smoke in the cross light”, is obviously based on the researcher’s introduction of the Eight Views of Xiaoxiang, and the poem is based on the picture as well, in which the wine flag dances with the wind in the setting sun, and the sparse chimneys smoke in the distance, and the poet has secretly brought readers into a landscape painting, in which we are accessible to seeing the smoke and from several households in the natural environment in a few strokes.

II. Nature as a Symbol

The use of nature in the poem as a symbol is very common and the researchers has found that Pound really knows how to use nature symbolically in his poetry. Anyone who has common sense in literature and life will understand that chimneys should be accompanied by smoke, but Pound utilizes “chimneys smoke” to make us know at a glance that there are a few sparse families in the distance. The utilization of “autumn moon”, “lakes”, “evening”, “cloud”, “sharp long spikes of the cinnamon”, “reed”, “hill”, “boat”, “river” and the images of humans, “monk”, “chimneys smoke” perfectly embody the intertwining and symbiosis of the natural environment and mankind, at one with nature. The following verses, the 4th stanza shares equally satisfactory outcome ignoring the different tune:

*Comes then snow scur on the river
And a world is covered with jade
Small boat floats like a lanthorn,
The flowing water clots as with cold. And at San Yin
they are a people of leisure.
Wild geese swoop to the sand-bar,
Clouds gather about the hole of the window
Broad water; geese line out with the autumn
Rooks clatter over the fishermen's lanthorns*

The first 5 lines of this verse describe the snow at the end of the winter. The poet takes the reader from the autumn mentioned above to the winter season. The “Comes then snow scur on the river” clearly tells the reader that this is a world covered with snow and ice. The poet compares the white snow to flawless “jade”, and “small boat floats like a lanthorn” ; obviously the boat is compared to a lantern, and the flowing water is frozen for the cold. The description of the environment here is very objective, and also expresses the cold of winter, however the poet’s intention is far more than stating the scenery, the poet also subtly infuses the human element. As is stated, in Sanyin, a place, where people can definitely enjoy a quiet and leisure life. The combination of human and environment here is seamless, achieving the unity of human and environment and realizing the state at one with nature. Let’s move to the next few verses, the time span of the poet’s writing is very transversal, and it seems that time goes back to autumn, orderly geese are standing in a row on the sand bar. Here the poet describes the window as small as the size of a hole, white clouds gather outside this small window, and the description of natural landscape is integrated into the transformation of space, from the clouds and geese in the sky to the river. With the arrival of autumn, wild geese line up on the lake, from objects to people, the description for the scene is combined with rooks and fisherman’s lanterns. We can imagine a group of rooks chirping around the “fisherman’s lanterns”, “wild geese swoop to the sand-bar”, “Broad water”, “geese line out with the autumn”, and what a picture of the coexistence of natural environment and human beings! Similarly, it expresses the poet’s strong awareness of ecological environment, which can be seen in the following verses:

*A light moves on the north sky line;
where the young boys prod stones for shrimp.
In seventeen hundred came Tsing to these hill lakes.
A light moves on the South sky line.*

Pound seems to have found the way and thinking to cope with the world in the beautiful landscape of ancient China. This verse in the poem can be seen that Pound saw a new hope “A light moves on the north sky line”; this beam of light is the hope Pound perceives, and it is also the light of salvation of the society at that time. However, this “a light”, this new hope appears in the eastern sky, showing his affirmation and longing for Chinese culture. Looking at the poetic expression, we go back in the time to 1700 AD, “where the young boys prod stones for shrimp” and we readers are taken into these lush mountains and lucid waters. This idyllic scene is infused with the idea of the unity of heaven and human, in which the beginning and the end of the verse mirrors each other. The poet begins with “A light moves on the north sky line”, and ends with “A light moves on the South sky line,” Suggesting the unity of this world, a sense of geographical and celestial closure. Both the north and south horizons show the same phenomenon, 130 overcast days. “n between these lines (the lines of the poem and the two lines of the horizon) a dominant image appears: “where the young boys prod stones for shrimp” (XLIX / 245). This is a direct look at human activity in the ecological environment., which echoes the previous verse, “they are a people of leisure” in the last stanza, and which is a recreational activity suitable for “a people of leisure”. Although there is a subtle hint that people make a living by fishing, it also expresses a love and concern in this natural environment, representing the symbiosis and entanglement of heaven and earth. However, the next stanza is a different reflection of environmental concerns by slamming usury:

*State by creating riches shd. thereby get into debt?
This is infamy; this is Geryon.
This canal goes still to TenShi
Though the old king built it for pleasure*

The sixth verse of the poem is Pound’s own voice, questioning the greed of usury and attacking the two major social evils of the day: usury (interest on unproduced debts) and fraud (Geryon), which dominate social decay. Pound offers a stark contrast here, turning the preceding 5 stanzas into an idyllic paradise (a paradise heavily influenced by Buddhist and Taoist aesthetics). And an abusive imperialist, Pound further dissects: an abusive emperor would upset the balance of the empire, disrupt the course of nature, and destroy the livelihoods of all. His responsibility is to maintain harmony between human and nature in an ecological environment in accordance with Confucian principles.

III. Unity with nature

The last two stanzas of the poem can be characterized as mirroring the beginning and responding to the theme, the unity of heaven and human under the care of the environment.

*Sun up; work
sundown; to rest
dig well and drink of the water
dig field; eat of the grain
Imperial power is? and to us what is it?
The fourth; the dimension of stillness.
And the power over wild beasts*

For the translation of the last two sentences, James Legge gives this translation, “Splendid are the clouds and bright, All aglow with various light! /Grand the sun and moon move on; / Daily dawn succeeds to dawn” (Tan, 2013). (Achilles Fang) notice, by the way, this poem was also used as the national anthem of the republic of China in 1911 after the first dynasty (232). The poem changes the tone of the chapter from the brooding gloom of the early days to a thorough celebration of light and progress (the successive dawns of each day), clearly conveying hints of vigorous sporting activity as well as social and political progress. However, Pound’s poetry is more beautiful and concise, and at the same time full of ecological implications. By liberating syntax and grammar, he transformed lyric poetry into a clear, articulate form, concise and direct in tone. In fact, the verse shows a causal relationship from the natural environment to man, and from human activity back to the natural environment and

back to nature: “Sun up” represents natural factors; “work” represents human activity; “dig well” represents human activity “and drink of the water” means a natural element. These staggered movements go back and forth between human and nature, and raise the readers’ attention to the question of the natural environment and human activities, which is the main focus of the Canto XLIX, at one with nature. Pound, as a generation of poets, even when writing the beautiful and harmonious idyllic poems, skillfully link political and cultural discourse together, and injected a fresh pastoral wind into the ruthless political society, representing a symbiosis between human beings and the environment.

CONCLUSION

Through the analysis of a poem from *the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (1975), the Canto XLIX, by carefully dissecting Pound’s poem XLIX, the readers can not only discover the relationship between Pound and poetry, but especially the natural and close interconnection and entanglement between human and his environment reflected in this poem, which helps us to understand why Pound chose to relate this poem to the usurious society in his epic poem. The analysis of the poem has revealed clearly how the poet could display the harmony with nature and unity with nature as well as how he used nature as a symbol throughout his poetry. It is in every aspect, like an active participant in human life. The researcher’s current study also strives to provide some crude and immature insights into the interpretation of Human’s connection with nature. In short, this paper is only centered on a poem, which inevitably lacks certain limitations and persuasiveness. It is sincerely suggested that a similar or different approach could be adopted for further study of the cantos of Ezra Pound.

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