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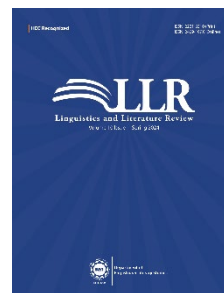
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Analyzing Selected Poems of Elizabeth Bishop: A Biocentric View of Ecocritic Attitude

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Abstract

The current study explored the biocentric view in the selected poems of Elizabeth Bishop, highlighting an ecocritical arena of her poems. Furthermore, this idea represented Bishop's anti-anthropocentric perspective; while prevailing her biocentric view. The study deployed the content analysis methodology to analyze Bishop's biocentric attitude through her representation of animals, environment, natural phenomena, and the abiding relationship of all living things, including humans. In this sense, the study further showed that Bishop's oeuvre reveals a sense of environmental consciousness. Her poetry, particularly the selected poems, demonstrate a biocentric view of life that can be easily perceived in her subjective understanding of the nature and the creatures. This is obvious through her representation of natural phenomena such as seasonal cycles, weather, and physical and ecological elements including air, earth, and water that inculcates poet's environmental consciousness. Hence, by examining the prevailing biocentric view of the poet through an examination of her poetic language, this study shows that the expected environmental imagination elucidates social responsibility for readers, to understand the eco-poetic relationship.

Keywords: anthropocentric, biocentrism, eco-criticism, eco-poetic, environmental consciousness, natural phenomena

Introduction

Poetry is a major literary form with an ecocritical meaning (Behnam, [2020](#); Fernández, [2018](#); Mason, [2020](#)). Interestingly, ecopoetry has created a significant impact on the world. Many authors and poets share common concerns regarding environmental issues, however, the word ecopoetry has been recently used. It is now a recognizable genre in English poetry (Al-Baghdadi & Jasim, [2020](#)). As Bristow ([2008](#)) puts it, "as a discipline,

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ecopoetic investigates how the human is situated within its habitat". That is to say, ecopoetry uses language to deepen the meaning of nature's position in our lives. Furthermore, Buell (1995) paved the way for ecopoetry as he created a certain tradition of grouping in his seminal environmental work, *The Environmental Imagination*. It explains the main aspects required for environmental studies. According to Buell (1995), any ecocritic should consider the vital role of non-human presence. The author's sphere of concern should not be confined to the human realm but he should respect and treat nature and the earth as equally rightful. The writer should interpret the universe as a dynamic developmental system rather than as a defined and constant force. This is perhaps why, Elder (1996) suggested, in his first thesis, "Dreaming the Universe" that the principles of ecology alter our view of life. By the same token, Spicer and McDermott (2017) further elaborated that the environmental poem extends the environmental perspective in the sense that all beings, including humans, exist in complex relationships with their surroundings.

These critical conversations about the interaction between the human and non-human worlds form part of environmentally sustainable historical creation and development (Bryson, 2005). For instance, Ernst Haeckel's ecological definition pointed out to his 19th-century contemporaries that human relations should be reimagined as part of a greater economy (Egerton, 2013). Ecology was a quantitative discipline in the scientific world as ecologists researched nature as part of an environment at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The philosophy of ecology has differentiated natural descriptions and the role of humans in nature from the perspective of spatial metaphors of the area. Ecological science has evolved from a comparatively general view of ecological cycles to more nuanced and simple natural processes such as spontaneous occurrences, imbalance and flux (Egya, 2016; Gong, 2012; Shoptaw, 2016).

Literature Review

Elizabeth Bishop is a major American poet whose environmental consciousness is apparent in most of her poems. Through her poetic artifice, she acutely informs about human perceptions and nature; concerning restraints and impersonality in her poetry. Such engagement in nature and world life can be noticed through her representations of animals, environments, and natural phenomena. This, indeed, illustrates her concern for nature and natural world. In a letter to Robert Lowell, she wrote: "[o]n

reading over what I've got on hand, I find I'm really a minor female Wordsworth at least, I don't know anyone else who seems to be such a Nature Lover" (Macrae, [2018](#)). Huang ([2010](#)) further highlighted that Bishop's preoccupation with nature and landscapes is also "manifested in the titles of her books – North & South, A Cold Spring, Questions of Travel, and Geography III; all these titles are concerned with the earth, geography, and travel" (Huang, [2010](#)). Interestingly, Bishop's biocentric stance has been recently articulated by Braidotti ([2022](#)) who acclaimed that the COVID-19 pandemic made it clear that "we are all in this planetary condition together whether we are humans or others". Braidotti simply writes, it is "high time for this heterogeneous and collective to move beyond the Eurocentric as well as humanistic habits that have formatted it and to dislodge the philosophical anthropocentrism they entail and enforce" (p. 5). Like Braidotti, Bishop's philosophy of life is that "all living entities-share the same planetary home", therefore, she devoted her poetry, calling for "decentering anthropocentrism" (Braidotti, [2022](#), p. 11).

Moreover, Práce ([2018](#)) confirmed that during her career, Bishop was a respected and unknown figure in American literature. Her reputation raised after the incident of her death in 1979 in which many reviewers including Larry Rohter of the New York Times called her

One of the most important US poets of the 20th century. She was greatly influenced by her lifelong friends Marianne Moore and Robert Lowell who provided her, not only with the necessary inspiration and possibility of literary growth but also with formative friendships. (Práce, [2018](#), p. 14)

After education, Bishop toured and lived in New York, Germany, Spain, Ireland, Italy, and North Africa. Her poetry reflects her adventures and sights. In 1938, she visited Key West and wrote poems at the conclusion of her first volume North and South, which was published in 1946. Her work won many awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for her collection, namely, A Cold Spring in 1956 and the National Book Award for Complete Poems in 1970. It is also worth mentioning that Elizabeth Bishop received the National Poetry Book Prize for Complete Poems (Práce, [2018](#)).

Several critics and researchers have considered Bishop's poetic/aesthetic perspective. In a likewise manner, Neimneh and Abussamen ([2018](#)), studied the sociopolitical vision of Elizabeth Bishop's

poems from an ecofeminist critical perspective. They argued that Bishop's poetry "contains socio-political" and "anti-patriarchal thrusts" (p. 1). For Neimneh and Abussamen, Bishop's "nature poems about animals are a part of her larger socio-political and feminist vision". They see her poetry as a "politicized one as it favours nature and women against patriarchy and oppression" (p. 143). However, Huang (2010), observed that Elizabeth Bishop's poetry was "characterized by a deep gaze at the landscapes, containing animals, and human beings" (p. 1). Huang, believed that Bishop's "delineation of the moose is similar to that of the fish; she simply adores the alien, and autonomous beauty of the animal without making any attempt to impose presumptions" (p. 20). Khuder (2016), on the other hand, noted that Bishop's poetry is confessional. It is a way to express her personal experiences and emotions. Khuder further claimed that

Bishop is famous of writing poems implicitly referring to her personal life and suffering". Khuder's claim was solely based on her study of Elizabeth Bishop's life and poetry in which she attempts to "show how her life is reflected in her poems through self-identification". (p. 9)

However, little attention was paid to Bishop's anti-anthropocentric philosophy of life, particularly, in the selected poems. Thereby, this paper, attempts to examine the poet's biocentric view of life through her selected poems, which adequately demonstrate the function of ecocentric perspective elucidating ecopoetic sensitives. Selected poems were, namely, 'The Fishhouses and the Song for the Rainy Season'. Hence, this study considers how Bishop's poetic language and poetic imagination are influenced by the external environment of the natural world.

Research Objectives

The study proposed the following objectives:

1. To examine the recurring biocentric view of life in Bishop's selected poems.
2. To explore the representation of animals, environments, natural phenomena, and the relationship of all living things including humans in Bishop's poetry.
3. To investigate Bishop's poetic imagination/language as reflected in her poems.

Research Questions

The current study aims to target certain research questions based on the above stated objectives, which are stated as follows:

1. How does the poet interact with nature and the non-human world in her poetry?
2. How does ecocritical reading can reflect her biocentric view?
3. To what extent does Elizabeth Bishop's poetry reflect her anti-anthropocentric attitude?

Methodology

Man-nature relationship appears to be the driving-force in Bishop's poetic inspiration. This study deployed the content analysis methodology to investigate Bishop's biocentric consciousness. For this purpose, this study analyzed some of her selected poems, focusing on her biocentric perspective and environmental consciousness through ecocritical lens. To elaborate on ecocriticism, this study draws on the views of critics like Glen A. Love and Cheryl Glotfelty among others who have defined ecocriticism as the study of the relationship between literature and nature. Glotfelty's (1996) pioneering statement in the ecocriticism reader defined ecocriticism as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (p. 18). He further pointed out that "ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies" (p. 18), just like feminist criticism, which "examines language and literature from a gendered perspective", and Marxist criticism that "brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts" (p. 18). Cokinos (1994) also defined ecocriticism as "the critical and pedagogical broadening of literary studies to include texts that deal with the nonhuman world and our relationship to it" (p. 3). Furthermore, ecocriticism, according to Sheenam (2014) is "an approach analyzing the representation of nature in literary texts. It is concerned with creating awareness in society about environmental degradation" (p.155).

In a broader sense, Buell (2009) viewed ecocriticism as an "umbrella term used to refer to the environmentally oriented study of literature and the art, and the theories that underline such critical practice" (p. 138). According to Buell, it is "the omnibus term by which the new polyform literature and environment studies movement has come to be labeled,

especially in the United States” (p. 3). Buell’s view was emphasized by Branch ([1998](#)) who further confirmed,

“Ecocriticism is not just a meaning of analyzing nature in literature; it implies a move towards a more biocentric world-view, an extension of ethics, a broadening of human’s conception of the global community to include non-human life forms and the physical environment”. (p. 13).

Thus, texts that indicated an engagement with the world around can be evaluated eco-critically. Hence, this new critical method has been widely used by critics and researchers to analyze works of literature concerning nature writing and ecological themes in literature. In this regard, this paper attempts to explore the poetic creativity and the profound ecological consciousness in Bishop’s poems through a consideration of her conception of ‘the man-nature relationship’. In other words, it analyzed the biocentric attitude of the poet through the representation of landscape, animals, and other creatures, and their relationship with the human being as depicted in her poetry. Indeed, the notion, “all living, mutually interdependent entities as ‘persons’ that draw on ancient traditions is at the center of Ecocriticism” (Monani, [2017](#), p. 4).

Bishop’s ‘To a Tree’: Early Passions for Nature

Bishop’s ‘To a Tree’, uncompromisingly marks her early gaze of massive love for nature and natural world. Her essential sympathy is specifically related to the realization of the outside environment.

Oh, tree outside my window, we are kin,
For you ask nothing of a friend but this:
To lean against the window and peer in
And watch me move about! Sufficient bliss

For me, who stand behind its framework stout,
Full of my tiny tragedies and grotesque grieves,
To lean against the window and peer out,
Admiring infinites’mal leaves (Práce, [2018](#), p. 212)

Interestingly, the way she addresses and communicates her feelings to the tree (using the pronoun 'we') shows her anti-anthropocentric view of life. By personifying the tree and addressing it as a comrade, this image de facto reveals the speaker’s close attachment to the environmental surroundings.

Indeed, this shows that Bishop, from the outset of her career as an artist, celebrated the natural environment. She is strongly concerned with man-nature relationships. After revealing her inner pathos to such a lovely tree, the speaker looks for the tree harmony and warmth, by inspecting its roots, rotten leaves, and broken branches. As Muosa (2018) noted, the Bishop's poetry implicitly shows that she is well-informed of human dignity in the rest of the natural world. Moreover, through her close, well-known, and creative emphasis on her place, she crystallizes her consciousness of human status with respect to non-human beings, a voice that was mostly uncommon in American poetry at that particular time.

At the Fish Houses: The Bond with the Other

'At the Fish Houses' is a remarkable poem that depicts the Bishop's imaginative and creative power to handle abstract declaration of nature. Joseph Krutch's in his visionary view titled Bishop as a "nature-lover" (Love, 1990). This poem succinctly reflects Bishop's eco-conscious inclination toward nature and other world creatures. In other words, it is a perfect example of the poet's ecological view in which she tried to showcase the interconnectivity between man and the environment. In this poem, the speaker guides the reader through a series of views around the fish houses. The narrative moves from a description of the Fish houses and the old man to a description of the seal, ending with a description of knowledge. This portrayal was beautifully developed to illustrate the interrelationship of man, the environment, and other creatures. Bishop through her poem depicts a binary world that co-exists; however, there is strangeness along with certain familiarity, which becomes the immediate expression of the poet.

The poem begins with a "narrative description exploring the historic changeability of human and natural processes on place" (MacRae, 2018, p. 121). The first stanza focuses on the description of the Fish Houses and their surroundings, establishing a dark atmosphere by incorporating negative words such as 'cold evening', 'gloaming', and 'dark'. This gloomy atmosphere is further stressed by the use of words like 'worn', 'ancient', and 'rusted', along with an indication of 'some melancholy stains', like 'dried blood', which suggests death. This stanza begins with the scene of an old fisherman who is completely absorbed in netting. The description then gradually moves to the woods around the shore, then the shore itself, the stones and the water moving around. These narrative descriptions are

skillfully interwoven to depict the interconnectivity of the landscape and all living things living together in a world of binaries; however, the poet intends to depict the delicateness of the natural world. Bishop rejects to see humans as a distinct part of nature; rather she through her poetic language tries to achieve anecdote and illustrates the actual real beauty of nature that conjoins with imagination. MacRae (2018) rightly observed “turning commonplace situations into moments of poetic beauty” that is a significant feature of Bishop. MacRae further added that “Narratives and images of nature proliferate throughout [Bishop’s] work and often the landscape serves as a spectrum onto which she maps the human experiences” (p. 116).

Although it is a cold evening,
down by one of the fishhouses
an old man sits netting,
his net, in the gloaming almost invisible,
a dark purple-brown,
and his shuttle worn and polished. (Poem Hunter, 2004)

The description then moves to the ‘five houses’ with “steeply peaked roofs and narrow ...” (p. 7), and then towards the sea, “the heavy surface of the sea, swelling slowly as if considering spilling over, is opaque, but the silver of the benches, the lobster pots, and masts scattered among the wild jagged rocks ...” (p. 7).

Explanatorily, water in general, and sea, in particular, seem to be an important issue/sight in Bishop’s poetry. More emphasis in the poem is dedicated to the movement of the water, shining surfaces, and its silver colour to indicate how all these features come along and interact to depict Bishop’s environmental consciousness. She seems to be fully attracted by the view and the life of the sea, which the speaker describes as “cold dark deep” (p. 8), but “absolutely clear” (p. 8). The amazing description of the sea and its surroundings (the heavy surface of the sea ... the silver of the benches, the lobster pots, and masts ...) that she has provided further emphasizes the speaker’s fascination with nature. As Khuder (2016) highlighted that Bishop’s poems are “valued for their brilliant surfaces, keen observations of the physical world, and formal perfection” (p. 11).

A part from the surrounding landscape, the third stanza shifted the focus to the seal to showcase the relationship between man and animal. As Glotfelty stated “nature per se is not the only focus of ecocritical studies of

representation. Other topics include the frontier, animals” (Introduction, xxiii). Reading it from an ecocritical perspective, one can say that the seal metaphorically like a human being who enjoys dance and music. In other words, it is presented in such a way to reflect the interrelation of man and animals. Both the speaker and the seal seem to be very interested in each other. “He was curious about me” (p. 8). This obviously shows the strong bond between man and animals. Furthermore, Neimneh and Abussamen (2018) claimed that Bishop’s “animal poetry seems to give the louder voice to the animal over the marginalized human, thus attempting to give justice to women and nature in an ecofeminist pursuit” (p.141). Such representation of the seal de facto intended to reduce the gap between what is human and what is non-human as it is presented as a human, enjoying life, music, and more importantly, the company of other human beings. In this sense, the seal appears to echo the chorus of frogs who announced, in another context, “We are all in this together” (Love, 1990, p. 232). Indeed, the speaker’s mutual fascination with the seal reminds us of Bishop’s ‘To a Tree’, where sensibility and deep passion for nature pervade the poem. The two portraits clearly illustrate Bishop’s eco-consciousness. “Oh, tree outside my window, we are kin, for you ask nothing of a friend but this . . . admiring infinites’ mal leaves” (Runyan, 2014, To a Tree section). Obviously, the speaker appears to address the tree as a comrade. This image is projected in such a way as to stress the interrelationship between man and nature. Likewise, the seal is treated as a good friend and a good listener. This kind of interrelatedness is extended to animal life where the speaker compares himself to the seal. This analogy emphasizes the interrelatedness between humans and other creatures. This image, in other words, succinctly describes Bishop’s biocentric philosophy of life through her poetry, which offers valuable insight into the natural world by incorporating devising forms of language with poetic engagement. Vendler (1987) further noted that “in anthropomorphizing the seal, Bishop suggests that people are only a different mammalian species; she uses the seal exactly the sort of words she could use of an acquaintance” (p. 830).

. . . One seal particularly
 I have seen here evening after evening.
 He was curious about me. He was interested in music;
 like me a believer in total immersion,
 so I used to sing him Baptist hymns.
 I also sang “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”.

He stood up in the water and regarded me
steadily, moving his head a little.
Then he would disappear, then suddenly emerge
almost in the same spot, with a sort of shrug
as if it were against his better judgment (Poem Hunter, [2004](#))

Hence, “by formulating meetings with animals this way, [the poet blurs] the lines of perception, pushing against the perceived constraints of what is human and what is animal, acknowledging them both as part of the same scale of life on earth” (MacRae, [2018](#), p.120). Obviously, Bishop's biocentrism comes in as a reaction against the dominant anthropocentric practices/views. For instance, in contrast to Bishop, Tongasukkaeng ([2015](#)) appeared to have an anthropocentric view of life as he noted that “the relationship between humans and animals is; therefore, constructed out of alienation and actions which reinforce animals’ otherness” (p. 37). Tongasukkaeng further claimed that “nature’ is an anthropocentric discourse which defines both the external nature and humanity itself. It signifies ‘otherness’ in animals, plants, water, air, earth, rocks, and other entities in particular environments” (p. 25).

Contrarily, the subjectivity of the speaker in the Bishop’s poems, shows the speaker’s connectivity to other creatures. This technique, in other words, highlights the deep ‘immersion’ of the persona in world life. Significantly, it reflects the poet’s deep attachment to nature and other creatures, which is a common feature in Bishop’s poetry. Surprisingly, the seal appears to be completely charmed and captured by the presence of humans as the speaker admits that ‘he was curious about him’ and ‘interested in music’. Thus, the image of the seal has been carefully employed to distort the distance between man and animal and to reflect the bond that ties them both. This partnership between the speaker and the seal is projected through the frequent visits to its place, its interest in music, and in the presence of a human, as well. Moreover, MacRae ([2018](#)) suggested, “there is no attempt to master nature here. Instead, human and animal are equalized ..., thus rejecting the anthropocentric ideal in which humans dominate nature” (p. 123).

The final lines take the reader back to the sea through a metaphysical image of the water which “seems suspended above the rounded gray and blue-gray stones” (p. 8). The speaker admits that he has “seen it over and over” in several parts of the world. However, here it is so cold that no one

could touch it, for it would make one's bones ache; if one tasted it, the water would "surely burn [his] tongue. It is [just] what we imagine knowledge to be". Significantly, the speaker seems to use the sea to establish a connection between the image of knowledge and nature. This is perhaps why the speaker moves on and lists the qualities attributed to knowledge, which are possessed by this water, "dark, salt, clear, moving, utterly free, drawn from the cold hard mouth of the world, derived from the rocky breasts forever, flowing and drawn ..." (p. 8). Thus, the metaphor of knowledge has been carefully developed to showcase how our knowledge appears to be, "historical, flowing, and flown" (p. 8), providing all necessary things for human development. To put it differently, the poet uses the metaphor of knowledge to simply suggest that 'nature is knowledge'.

Indeed, the poet seems to use the sea as a metaphor to create a concrete image of the connection between knowledge and nature, hence, stressing the significance of nature. She seems to suggest that knowledge is like the sea and that nature is the source of knowledge. Knowledge, according to her, is inherently historical a great stream of time that surrounds humankind, "dark, salt", but "clear, moving, utterly free". This means that knowledge is all around but too hard to be obtained, or that it needs hard effort to be acquired.

Likewise, Bishop's 'The Fish' is another example that highlights the poet's attraction to sea life. Explanatorily, through the fish, the poet seems to suggest, in Braidotti's words, the "web of interconnections, acknowledging that 'we'-all living entities share the same planetary home ..." (p. 8). The poem opens with "I caught a tremendous fish" and then goes on to describe the fish and its behaviour. Once again, the description of the fish shows the speaker's attraction toward other species. "I looked into his eyes, which were far larger than mine". This commonality between the speaker and the fish leads the speaker to sympathize with the fish. Such an attitude towards the fish shows the speaker's strong attachment to other creatures. The poem ends, "And I let the fish go" which seems to emphasize the notion that the fish has inspired the speaker to visualize, thereby, to understand the environment. Furthermore, the poem also appears to illustrate not only the suffering of a single creature but also the fisherman who catches fish. In an interview, Bishop said, "I always tell the truth in my poems. With 'The Fish,' that's exactly how it happened" (Ebberson, 2020, p. 2). According to Ebberson (2020), Bishop describes the fish as "reaction

to the aesthetics of the fish, and she expresses her personal responses to the object itself". Ebberson further asserted that "many critics praise [Bishop's] ability to render realistic and vivid images of the scenes she described" (p. 2).

The second part of the poem indicates a transition of behaviour as the speaker "stared and stared" at the fish. Repetition de facto shows that the speaker is absolutely charmed by the fish. This admiration has been overtly expressed when the speaker states, "I admired his sullen face". This leads the speaker to sympathize with the fish. Ultimately, this admiration and sympathy lead the speaker to free the fish. Yet, that passionate feeling is not because the fish was trapped at the outset of the poem but because of the shift throughout her intense reflections and love for fish. The poet carefully uses the poem to illustrate the process by which she arrives at her final action. The triumph is not as Willard Spiegelman claimed, the destruction or defeat of the opponent but accepting, subsuming, and internalizing it (Mousa, [2018](#) p. 58). However, in contrast to the seal in the previous poem, it is the speaker who is charmed by the fish. These two images, in other words, reemphasize Bishop's recurrent theme, the coexistence of man and other natural world life, which definitely demonstrates the poet's biocentric view of life.

Song for the Rainy Season: Use of Metaphoric Language/Aesthetics of Nature

Bishop's 'Song for the Rainy Season' illustrates the poet's anti-anthropocentric perspective. She skillfully developed an extended metaphor to expose, not only the aesthetics of nature but more importantly, the interrelatedness of human beings and the environmental surroundings. Unlike Ted Hughes, her poetry develops an "interconnection between creatures and an ecosystem and reveals [her] environmental consciousness through metaphorical language" (Tongsukkaeng, [2015](#)). For instance, the image of home that she creates, which is thriving with life but is at the same time completely calm and isolated reflects the poet's ecological consciousness towards nature and the natural world. The poem begins with the image of a house that looks like a star in the sky hidden in the fog. "Hidden, oh hidden, in the fog, the house we live in". This metaphysical style of strange imagery is skillfully developed to highlight the enchantress of the home and the environmental surroundings. The house is presented in such a way that it is embraced by different types of plants and creatures,

which adds to its beauty by depicting the image of the natural world. In this sense, the poet indirectly suggests that nature is a source of beauty for life that brings happiness and excitement to mankind, which is similar to a theme that she seems to echo from William Wordsworth's poem 'The Daffodils' (1807). In his poem, William Wordsworth made it obvious that nature is the most significant source of human joy. The poem opens, "I wandered lonely as a cloud". His loneliness, however, is changed into happiness when he came across "A host, of golden Daffodils". As a romantic poet, William Wordsworth appears to be very subjective in his poem, reflecting his personal experience and passion for nature. Yet, he made it clear that we are a part of nature as he finds a company in the environmental surroundings, particularly, with the daffodils, which changed his melancholy, disappointment, and loneliness into happiness and excitement.

In a likewise manner, the subjectivity of the speaker in the first stanza "the house we live in", stresses the connectivity of the speaker to the environment, which according to Wordsworth, is a source of human joy and happiness. Like Wordsworth, Bishop's poetry reflects her intimate passion and love for nature. As MacRae (2018) noted, "There is a kinship with nature at work that undermines patriarchal systems and centralizes the ways in which both nonhuman animals and women might be perceived as "other" (p. 119). Such intimacy with nature is further stressed in the second stanza, which continues to highlight the beauty of the house and its surroundings. The poet skillfully employed certain poetic devices to create a magnificent image of the house and its surroundings that inspired her powerful imagination. Those images definitely indicate the poet's powerful and influential environmental consciousness.

In a dim age
of water
the brook sings loud
from a rib cage
of giant fern; vapor
climbs up the thick growth
effortlessly, turns back,
holding them both,
house and rock,
in a private cloud.

This stanza describes the image of a stream, “the brook sings loud”. This image has been carefully created with the use of certain literary devices, such as personifications and metaphors to illustrate the beauty of nature. The elegance of this view has been intensified by the image of plants that hold both “house and rock, in a private cloud”. The intensive use of imagery in phrases like “the brook sings loud”, “rib cage”, “vapor climbs up”, and “holding them both, house and rock in a private cloud”, surely mark Bishop’s powerful figurative language and great imagination. Significantly, such poetic language clearly illustrates Bishop’s deep ecological consciousness. She makes use of certain words and poetic devices like hyperbole, personification, and metaphor to invoke the aural dimension of poetic language and to connect the earth and the air to give a sense of ecological consciousness. Práce (2018), observed that “Elizabeth Bishop is not a poet of many words, but she is a poet of great ones. Her ability to move fluidly and effortlessly through the new worlds she built, while using controlled, precise, and on-point vocabulary makes her one of the major voices of 20th-century poetry” (p. 61). Likewise, Ebberson also confirmed that Bishop retained Moore’s “precise language not only to provide objective descriptions but also to reveal personal and emotional observations” (p. 6).

The next stanza, however, shifts the focus to the image of the night where she brought in different creatures like the owl and the frog in such a way as to emphasize the poet’s connection with the 'other', living things. Through beautiful and memorable images, the description takes the reader through various aspects of the house where different kinds of creatures, such as silverfish, owls, and mice, live inside and outside the natural world, which is the home of all living organisms. Hence, it is evident in her poetic language that Bishop uses animal imagery to emphasize the co-existence of all living things. This captivating picture has been further enhanced by the enchanting view of the sunrise when everything is “milk-white” and the fog encompasses the home. This image makes the house appear as if it was living in its own cloud. However, as Huang (2010) indicated that nature in Bishop’s poetry is “embodied by tangible, specific, and natural objects, instead of the abstract concept of ‘nature’ in Wordsworth or Emerson, to whom human consciousness is predominate protagonist, while nature is subordinate, or at most respondent to human idealism” (p. 5). Perhaps, this is why Khuder (2016) rightly observed that Bishop successfully “combines

her two revisions of Moore and Lowell to create a style of poetry suited to her realistic desire” (p. 12).

Additionally, the tone and the attitude of the speaker change in the last stanza where she ends her poem with the image of summer, which completely changes the overall view of the scenic poem. Indeed, Bishop has carefully juxtaposed the rainy season with the middle of the summer to achieve the intended effects. Once again, she makes use of her poetic devices to illustrate the changing condition of nature in this particular season. For instance, the personification in “the great rock will stare unmagnetized, bare, no longer wearing rainbows or rain”, shows the effect of summer on the environment. This image also shows the unhappy tone as the speaker appears to be more interested in winter rather than in summer. Perhaps, the poet seems to emphasize the impact of nature on human life.

the great rock will stare
unmagnetized, bare,
no longer wearing
rainbows or rain,
the forgiving air
and the high fog gone;
the owls will move on
and the several
waterfalls shrivel
in the steady sun.

Thus, ‘Song for the Rainy Season’ by Elizabeth Bishop depicted a home in the middle of the rainy season. The poem appears like an extended metaphor that clearly illustrated Bishop’s subtle language and powerful poetic imagination. According to Khuder (2016), “Bishop's poetry is confessional. It is an outlet to express her personal experiences and emotions” (p. 12). However, Huang (2010), claimed that “Bishop’s fascination with raw nature, instead of idealism or personal psychology, distinguishes her from English Romantics and her contemporary, confessional poets, such as Robert Lowell, Anne Sexton, and Sylvia Plath, who were more subjectively engaged with personal myths” (p. 2). Bishop strove to provide perfect representations of the physical world through her poetry. To her “the physical world was real and language, if used carefully, could describe it well enough to communicate something essentially significant” (Gioia, 2004, p. 25). Indeed, Bishop’s notion of the nature and

natural world appears to have a corresponding relationship with the ecocritics who believed that “nature really exists, out there beyond ourselves, ... but actually it is present as an entity, which affects us and which we can affect, perhaps fatally, if we mistreat it” (Barry, [2002](#), p.163)

Conclusion

Past decades have significantly failed to put a plausible interpretation of humans and the natural world. However, the assumptions of humans towards nature and civilization have inadequately affected both humans and nature. So, to understand the relevant effect humans have on the environment discourse, this study attempted to examine Elizabeth Bishop's objectivity toward nature in relation to ecological biocentrism where man is merely a member of the ecosystem and no longer the lord of nature. Through analysis it was acclaimed that the environmental catastrophe was culminated with a blend of biocentric perspective in her poems that reflected an extraordinary presence of the non-human world. She developed a sense of ecological consciousness and poetic creativity in her works to state her close observations. In other words, she spread her quest beyond mankind to restraint environmental degradation concerning the contact of nature and other world creatures. By a particular treatment for location and species, Bishop's poems demonstrated a strong resistance to the anthropocentric fashion, which has dominated modern society by restricting the environmental discourse. Nevertheless, Bishop devoted her poetic language and imagination to develop an awareness of the connectivity of landscapes, animals, trees, and country-dwellers. Such environmental consciousness contributes to the social function of poetry as it raises environmental awareness. The proposition that nature is solely independent and does not require any human is emphasized by the Bishop's poetic. Such literary works are committed to the relationship and contact of human life, which is a key aspect of eco-literature.

Conflict of Interest

The author of the manuscript has no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

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