

Paradise Lost and the Critique of Anthropocentrism: An Ecocritical Study of Selected Poems in Tanure Ojaide's *The Beauty I Have Seen: A Trilogy*

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Abstract

This article explores Tanure Ojaide's critique of the malevolent mortification of the biosphere by agents of imperialism which often results to paradise lost and ignites nostalgia in humans. This epoch is marred with the consequences of human actions on the planet's basic life support systems and these seemingly unbecoming practices ignite Ojaide's desire to contribute to environmental restoration by weaving a nature-oriented literature to redirect humankind from "ego-consciousness" to eco-consciousness. Consequently, this study adopts a content-based analysis of selected poems in *The Beauty I Have Seen: A Trilogy* through the deployment of ecocritical poetics to argue that the poems unequivocally critique man's uncanny activity on nature. Ecocriticism is seen as the intercourse between literature and ecology which centres on the investigation of human-nature connection and how such relationships endanger the natural environment with grave complications. Thus, this paper offers an ecocritical study of selected poems in the said collection to demonstrate the synergy between literature and ecology in investigating environmental issues so as to enlighten the society on the exigent need to preserve and conserve the ecosystem from further deterioration. This research therefore seeks to explore environmental issues such as deforestation (felling of forest trees), global warming, animal rights, water issues, climate change etc. and its attendant consequences on the ecosphere and all that exist therein, in order to expand eco discourse and tips environmental consciousness as the only pathway for a sustainable ecology.

Keywords: Paradise Lost, Anthropocentrism, Lamentation, Alienation, Nostalgia, Ecocriticism