

ABSTRACT

RE-MYTHING NATURE: WALT WHITMAN AS AN ANCESTRAL ORIGIN OF ECOFEMINIST LITERATURE

Despite the fact that ecofeminist theory and the writings of Walt Whitman are separated by over a century of radical literary and social change, I suggest that the style, content, and philosophy behind Whitman's poetry represent a catalyst of change in the manner in which nature and women are viewed. His defiant approach to literature initiated a compositional and philosophical revisioning that took the door of tradition off of its hinges, allowing women and their alternative styles of literary expression to walk through. I establish the basic philosophical and stylistic tenets of mainstream ecofeminism, and reveal how Whitman's poetry aligned with them by means of a careful examination of his writings. Thus, I take part in re-evaluating the canon in American literature, challenging its worth in light of a society no longer acquiescent of male-dominated hierarchies in art and society. In the case of Walt Whitman, he continues to belong.

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