

An Ecocritical Study on the Ecological Thoughts in E. M. Forster's Novels

—Based on the Analysis of *The Longest Journey*

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Abstract: Based on ecocriticism, this paper aims to figure out the ecological thoughts and the vision to build harmonious ecological holism in E. M. Forster's Novels via the analysis of natural ecology, social ecology and spiritual ecology in *The Longest Journey*.

1. Introduction

The Longest Journey is one of the five novels published by E.M. Foster before his death. It is not so much a novel, but rather a self-post of Foster himself, because we can clearly see the shadow of Foster from the main character Rickie in the novel. Although not as popular as other novels, it is intriguing. According to the knowledge of the network, from the period of 1989 to 2017, there were a total of 27 articles on the theme of "The Longest Journey". The novels were discussed from various angles, mainly in four aspects: Oedipus complex. The researchers based on Freud's relevant analysis theory to master the "Oedipus complex" and its fate (Zhang Fuyong, Li Wei, Wang Xiaodan, 2012)^[1]; Second, homosexuality. From the perspective of homosexuality, the researchers unearthed the homosexual desires and relationships hidden in heterosexual relationships and men's and men's friendships from the perspective of homosexuality, and better understood writers and their works with a serious academic perspective (Luo Wenlin, 2009)^[2] Third, from Lacan's psychoanalytic theory to observe the fate of the owner, Qiqi Eliot. Some researchers believe that the Oedipus complex in his youth led to his pathological imagination, hindered the identification of self-identity and the establishment of interpersonal relationships, and eventually led to self-lost (Luo Wenlin, 2008)^[3]; some studies It analyzes the psychological causes of Ricci's misunderstanding, and believes that Foster's concern about epistemological issues or his so-called "realistic metaphysical views" is a response to the "cognitive crisis" of the Edwardian era (Li Jianbo, 2009)^[4] Fourth, ethics. Researchers believe that the "moral theme" in this novel represents "the conflict between ideal and reality, customs and truth, the thirst for individual freedom and natural emotions, and the pressure of class norms", and also conveys the ideals pursued by the author Foster. The society is a moral society with a harmonious development of mind and a harmonious relationship (Wen Rong, 2011)^[5]. In addition, there are studies on the writing techniques of the novel and the British society in Edwardian period. In a sense, Foster is an ecologist. There are many portrayals and reflections on the relationship between man and nature, between man and man, and between man and himself. The existing literature shows that the researchers are the longest the lack of research on natural ecology in Journey, therefore, through the study of the subject of ecological criticism of the novel, we will help us better understand the work and understand Foster's ecological thought.

2. An Overview of Ecological Criticism

The "ecological criticism" trend began in the 1970s. As a branch or genre of literary criticism, it is not a simple superposition of "ecology" and "literary criticism", but based on the needs of both connotations and extensions. The evolution of the phases has evolved and has continued to evolve. On the one hand, "ecology" is a category of natural sciences, and its research methods and methods are slowly applied to anthropology, sociology and other fields. It has a strong humanistic color, and the injection of new things has further expanded the scope of ecology. , gradually realize its

humanistic turn. With the frequent occurrence of natural disasters and the harshness of the environment, the publication of the "Shaxiang Yearbook" published by Leopold in 1949 and the "Literary Spring" published by Carson in 1962, "Natural writing, "ecological literature" and so on, into the public's vision, evoke people's environmental awareness. On the other hand, literary criticism theory emerges endlessly, but there is no theory that can be used to interpret ecological literature well. In 1974, American scholar Meeker wrote "The Surviving Comedy: The Ecological Study of Literature" The concept of "literary ecology" was proposed^[6]; in the same year, Kroeber applied "Ecology" and "Ecological" to literary criticism^[7] "ecology" and "literary criticism" gradually merged; in 1978, Rueckert officially proposed "ecological criticism" (Ecocriticism) in "Literature and Ecology, an Experiment of Ecological Criticism" This term^[8].

The development of ecocritic abroad has gone through three stages, namely, the 'characterization stage', which mainly studies how literature expresses nature and the relationship between man and nature; the 'reproduction phase' is committed to rediscovering works about nature and natural writers. The 'theory stage' is mainly to construct its own theoretical system, that is, to examine the symbolic construction of species, and to understand how the literary discourse defines the concept of 'human'."^[9] In China, the study of "literature and ecology" can be traced back to the earliest. By 1983, Zhao Xinyu's "Ecology and Literature Art", the author hopes that writers can open their eyes to master some theoretical knowledge of ecology, environmental protection and natural philosophy, pay attention to the impact of modern technology on people, society and nature, and explore how to establish A new relationship between man and nature.^[10] In 1996, Lu Shuyuan believed that literature and art was the spiritual channel for saving the ecological crisis facing humanity, and called on people to think about the development of ecology and literary theory. In 1999, "ecocriticism" first entered the field of Chinese literary scholars. Subsequently, Lu Shuyuan combed the "ecological literary criticism" in 2001 and tried to define its connotation and extension; in the same year, the first edition of the "New Literature History" edited by Professor Wang Ning was officially the first in the first series. Put forward the term "ecological criticism".^[11] Since then, theoretical and practical research on "ecological criticism" has emerged in an endless stream. There are many representative scholars, among which there are more influential, long-term and coherent scholars such as Lu Shuyuan and Wang Nuo. In 2006, the ecological critic Lu Shuyuan supplemented the category of "ecology". He believed that ecology should include three levels of natural ecology, social ecology and spiritual ecology^[12]. As for what is ecological criticism, Wang Nuo believes that "ecological criticism is a literary criticism that explores the relationship between literature and nature under the guidance of ecologicalism, especially ecological holism. It should reveal the ideological culture of ecological crisis reflected in literary works. Roots, but also explore the ecological aesthetics of literature and its artistic expression."^[13]

If ecocriticism is likened to a three-story house, then the first layer is natural, the relationship between man and nature; the second layer is social, the relationship between man and others; the third layer is spiritual, and it is the soul of the human being and the will. You have me in these three levels. I have you in it. It is the organism that constitutes the whole ecosystem. Only by maintaining the balance and stability of the relationship between the ecological and ecological objects in the entire ecosystem can we achieve the harmony of the whole ecology. Based on this, this paper intends to combine the "longest journey" to examine the mismatch between the protagonist and himself, with others and with nature from the "natural ecology", "social ecology", "spiritual ecology", and three levels.

3. Interpretation of Ecological Thoughts in the Longest Journey

The title of the novel "The Longest Journey" is a verse from Shelley's long love poem "The Spirit of the Heart"... with a sad friend, or a sly confrontation, begins to embark on the most boring and long journey. "The implication is that the combination of non-freeness between the two sexes is "the most boring and long journey."^[14] (Foreword)¹ Foster himself self-reported the novel with a strong brand of the times, because of the population growth and the abuse of science, the danger of rural roads, the pollution of the air, the dirty of the river, the butterflies and wildflowers The devastating

effects of the spray, the foam of the Avon River filled with detergent, the fish in the belly of Cambridge, the incomparable good England is beyond recognition, and it is gone forever. It will be "the longest journey" of how humans who are going further and further on the road to civilization and technological progress can return to the embrace of nature before the industrial revolution and urbanization.

3.1 Foster's Natural Ecological View.

First of all, in the novel *The Longest Journey*, Foster expresses the yearning, praise and worry about nature through the poetic description of the natural scenery. Next to the banks of the Cambridge River, there are quiet little valleys, green grass, clear pools, etc. Even if every landmark makes Ritchie feel happy, he regards Cambridge as his real home; Rickie and Agnes married and went to live in Sawston, there was almost no description of the natural scenery in the text, but it was mentioned that the school building of Sawston's grammar expansion did not have the elegant style of ancient architecture, but it was more like the style of pure modern architecture. The school's educational philosophy is too commercial; in Cardiff, Wiltshire, Foster also uses a lot of pen and ink to describe the local natural scenery, the crystal clear river, the fascinating grassland, the vast forest an amazing circular position, an unadorned field that people love, and so on. Through the description of the natural scenery, one can also reveal the truth that people in a landscape full of natural ecological atmosphere will be bleak and quiet; and once they are separated from the embrace of nature, people will dying and losing themselves. Foster has inserted the train several times in the whole novel. The train is the product of industrial civilization. Its appearance is to take away the human life, or it is to destroy the environment. The train has a profound ecological meaning.

As a part of nature, Foster not only praises nature, but also praises people and praises "natural people" who have no status, are not highly knowledgeable, but have strong limbs and vitality. The typical representative is Rich's half-brother, Stephen, who is a shepherd. "It's a young man with a bear-in-the-neck, an enviable muscle, but his body is too generous compared to his height." ^[14]
¹⁰⁹⁻¹¹⁰ Stephen is far from human civilization, big cities, living in remote villages, and is truly enviable, free-spirited, and full of vitality. When Stephen came to Rickie to recognize his relatives, he was separated from the original rural living environment. From a natural person to a fallen civilized person, after many twists and turns, and finally away from the dust, returning to the original countryside, restored the vitality of life. She slept on the wedding night. He used to sleep alone in the open hills and grasslands. After his daughter was born, he took his daughter into the embrace of nature and lived happily. The pure beauty of nature and the beauty of life were organically integrated. Together, constitute a beautiful picture.

3.2 Foster's View of Social Ecology.

In short, the social ecological concept mainly refers to the sum of various relationships between people and others or between individuals and society. The ideal social and ecological relationship is equal between people. People and society are harmonious states that do their best, each has its own place and are interdependent. However, in modern civilization, due to the temptation of fame, fortune, money, status, etc., some people lose their self, and the relationship between people and people and society becomes distorted and deformed. This is concentrated in the novel "The Longest Journey". Ritchie's parents' alienation from him made him insecure and inferior. His parents' derailment made him doubtful about his feelings and marriage. The heroine, Agnes' s appearance seemed to be high. In fact, the hypocrisy is a full worship. Female, she managed to find Rickie to get the property of his aunt; Aunt Emily was born with indifference and sarcasm to her relatives, Rickie, and even his death, she did not let go of ridicule, the adoption and Stephen, who has no blood relationship, is physically and mentally humiliated and abused; Agnes's brother, Pembroke, is a hypocritical force, chasing after the name, and looking down on the lower status. Rickie had to circumvent these characters, showing how collapsed his heart was, especially in Sawston, in a repressive and authoritarian atmosphere, he gradually lost himself and lived in contradiction. At the beginning of the novel, Foster built a social state that is like a harmonious and beautiful, and then

let Rickie tear open the layer of veil, until the real ugliness gradually emerged, which is thought-provoking.

3.3 Foster's Spiritual Ecology.

The existence of human beings has both natural and social attributes, and has more spiritual attributes. *The Longest Journey* not only reveals the alienation of the human spirit, but also reveals the salvation of the self-spirit, such as Agnes, Rickie's mother and Rickie. For example, Rickie's wife, Agnes, attacked the mind and made an idea about the property that Ricci might gain behind him. In the end, she wished to lose her mind. She and Ritchie parted ways, lingering on the next person to choose, perhaps later she was materially satisfied, but the spiritual level is lost, forgetting what her soul should have. Ritchie's mother met Robert, a flat-headed person at a party, and was attracted by the hands of his rough farmer's work. They talked about artificial manure and how to make land. "The land became a living thing, fertilizer. It is no longer a dirty thing, it is a symbol of endless life."^{[14]288} After learning that her husband was derailed, Mrs. Elliot decided to abandon Mr. Elliot and that looks decent. But the sick life, with the young farmer Robert, went to his hometown, "escaped" into the embrace of nature full of vitality, managed a farm in Stockholm to make a living, and went through the farm work to seek a happy life. This can be said to be The mother's redemption of her own spirit expresses Foster's ecological philosophy of "returning to nature". For Rich, the day in Sawston is his most tormented. The Buildings of Dunwood is like a processing factory. The students are mass-produced products. Rich is also mechanized. His job is to cooperate with his wife's brother. Commercial "intrigue", rather than true teaching and educating people, he sympathizes with the weak who has had similar experiences, but can not provide substantial help, he is tired of this mechanically rigid work, his spirit, conscience The indulgence and temperament have also changed. The decent Ritchie has gradually lost himself in the whirlpool of modern civilization with the supremacy of interests, and the spiritual part has gradually been strangled. With the help of Ansel and Stephen, Rich finally got rid of all kinds of restraints and awakened Stephen by sacrificing himself, and Foster also found himself through Ricci and realized the balance of his spiritual world.

4. Conclusion

The core idea of ecocriticism is ecological holism. Its connotation is "to regard the overall interests of the ecosystem as the highest value, and to regard whether it is conducive to maintaining and protecting the integrity, harmony, stability, balance and persistence of the ecosystem as the basis for measuring everything."^[15] As an important component of the ecosystem, human beings can obtain limited resources from the natural world on the premise of following the laws of nature. It is also necessary to fulfill its obligation to maintain the normal functioning of the ecosystem. Foster said that in the creation of this novel, it is closer to his own mind and mind than in other writings. There are many autobiographical elements. The text in the text can be said to be the author's own mapping. "The cow is there" as a philosophical image repeatedly appears in the novel. It may refer to the abnormal operation of the ecosystem, which is embodied in the dislocation between man and nature, the dislocation between man and others, man and self. Through a bright and awkward depiction of many natural landscapes such as Cambridge and Wiltshire, Foster conveys the heavy cost of the ecological environment and natural resources that human beings depend on in the process of civilization; the authors of *Rich* and *The* creation of relationships between parents, aunts, wives, illegitimate children and other young people focuses on revealing the mechanization and defamiliarity of the relationship between people in the industrial age; while Rich's life is misplaced with others, The spirit is also alienated, the natural leg and foot disability, the lack of family ties, the breakdown of marriage, and the repression of work have prompted Rich to lose himself. The novel outlines the trajectory of his spiritual alienation with the main sequence of the transition from Cambridge to Sawston to Wiltshire. Under the redemption of Ansel and Stephen, he finally uses life and these misplaced relationships. A settlement was reached, expressing Foster's desire to achieve an overall ecological harmony.

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