

Analysis of ezra pound's poem fan piece

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October 3, 2013 Paper One I chose to focus on Ezra Pound's poem, " Fan Piece for her Imperial Lord", a poem in which I argue represents both the sublime as well as beauty. More so, I argue his poem is a direct representation of how the sublime can be found in beauty. How through the idea of pleasure and goodness one can experience pain. Beauty aims to please the senses in some way, focusing on objects of delicacy, smoothness and color.

On the contrary, the sublime attempts to evoke a sense of overwhelming magnificence in an attempt to inspire haughty emotion through ideas, art, nature or xperience.

It attempts to arouse enjoyment, with a sense of horror, all the while maintaining a sense of deviation or even death. In relation to the sublime, the poem gives out a sense of hopelessness, however, it is Pound's word choice and use of imagery, which give it great beauty. Furthermore, I argue it is through Pound's use of repeated vowel sounds, metaphorical symbolism as well as the poem's length that the readers are able to truly see the sublime through the beauty in " Fan Piece for her Imperial Lord". Pound's use of metaphorical symbolism throughout the poem allows for the eader to interpret its true meaning.

I argue in Just three lines, Pound attempts to describe a beautiful woman who although is delicate and pure, her beauty is temporary in the eye of her beholder and she is quickly set aside. The poem begins with the line " O fan of white silk". Pound's choice of the words " white" and " silk" attribute to the poem's beauty, which also enhances his attempt to personify the fan as

a beautiful woman. Pound's use of a fan to describe a woman directly references to the social views of his time, as a fan was seen as a thing of beauty and richness for omen of power.

More so, he describes the fan as "white silk", which describes this beautiful woman as pure, clean and delicate. For Pound, beauty is delicate and fine.

This first line greatly emphasizes on beauty as it plays into the senses of both sight and touch. However, I also argue that Pound has already hinted at the sublime through this line. For many men, it is a woman's sense of mystery, which creates attraction and the loss of mystery can result in the loss of attraction. His description of the fan as "white silk" ultimately translates in describing the woman as pure, as white is the color of purity.

The idea of purity, for many men can eliminate any mystery a woman might hold, ultimately eliminating any attraction.

Although his words are beautiful and create a sense of beauty, there is a sense of deviation as well, hinting at the sublime. Line two states "clear as frost on the grass-blade". Here, Pound is literally comparing the fan to frost, which symbolizes the change in which the way the woman's lover views her. Although frost is delicate, it is clear and transparent and when hit by the sun, it quickly melts, causing it to be temporary.

This delicacy of frost references to the woman's beauty, however, the frost symbolizes a temporary love as her beauty is "melted away" in the mind of her lover.

I argue that Pound uses this metaphor to portray the idea that although society sees physical perfection as a means of power, success and wealth that is not all love is about and eventually, that love of solely the physical will die. Pound's use of the words "clear" and "frost" create a sense of beauty for the reader as they both please the senses and come across as light and delicate words.

However, a sense of hopelessness and deviation is created as we learn beauty can only go so far, creating a temporary love; a representation of the sublime in the beautiful. The final line "also are laid aside" literally portrays the idea that the fan soon joins something that too has already been discarded. I argue that for Pound, this line not only suggests the idea that for the woman, being "set aside" has happened before, but also that she is another beautiful woman in the succession of beautiful women whom he has discarded for another.

I take great emphasis on the word "also" in this line, as Pound is expressing an idea of a controlled destiny for beautiful women, that their beauty will only take them so far until they are discarded for another person.

Furthermore, this line creates an unmasking sense of despair, pointing at the idea that nothing can be done to gain his love again. This final line helps to reinforce my argument of the sublime being present in the beautiful.

Pound ends on a depressing and hopeless note, however, he uses beautiful words to portray such a depressing and dark ending for the woman. This ultimately helps to bring about the idea of the sublime in something so

beautiful. Pound's use of style throughout the poem also helps to emphasize the short-lived love he writes about.

Pound's decision to keep the poem at a minimal three sentences speaks volumes. This short length directly correlates with the temporary love the woman experiences in the poem.

More so, his use of beautiful language in such a short poem acts as a representation of the beautiful woman herself he is writing about, who only experiences love for a temporary time before she is set aside and replaced by someone more beautiful. I argue this also represents the idea of the sublime being present in the beautiful. That although his language is beautiful, the poem itself creates an overwhelming feeling of terror, which leads the reader to wonder if all love affairs end this way. In literal terms, Pound is expressing the idea of setting aside a fan as a metaphor for discarding of a love affair with a woman.

It only takes seconds to lay down a fan you do not want or enjoy anymore, just as for Pound, this love was only temporary and it did not take long before it was terminated. In terms of his language choice, Pound's use of adjacent stressed syllables, such as "white silk", "grass-blade" and "Fan-piece", create a certain rhythm that corresponds to the poem's exact emotion that is being expressed. These stressed syllables act as a soundscape of controlled dignity and enforce the idea that everyone will one day be "set-aside".

The idea that no matter how hard she tries, the woman cannot change her fate nor can she stop the man from discarding her. This idea also correlates <https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-ezra-pounds-poem-fan-piece/>

with Pound's constant use of the sound "aid" in lines two and three through the words "blade" and "laid". Line one metaphorically portrays a strong and beautiful woman, one whom is pure and loved.

This line does not contain the sound of "aid", however, as the poem continues and her love affair begins to fall apart, Pound's use of "aid" through his word choice allows for the reader to gain sympathy for the woman.

She cannot control the fact that the man she loves is setting her aside and I argue that his double representation of the word "aid" correlates with the woman's longing for help to keep her love affair strong. Representation of the sublime in the beautiful can be a challenging concept, however, I argue that "Fan Piece for her Imperial Lord" does a great job of combining the two. Pound's use of beautiful language helps to mask the underlying theme of his poem, a depressing ending for a woman whom is in love.

Pound uses all aspects of the poem through images, length, vowel sounds and syllables, to project the idea of the sublime being present in beauty. Although he does present the sublime in something so beautiful, his actions are not intended to be seen as equalizing the sublime and beauty.

The idea of finding something so terrifying and deceiving in something so beautiful speaks volumes and I feel as though "Fan Piece for her Imperial Lord" does a great job of combining the two ideas.