

Title: Adapting *Phaedra* and the Ecofeminism of Marina Tsvetaeva
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Abstract:

In 1928, Marina Tsvetaeva published an adaptation of the Greek tragedy *Phaedra*. This paper examines that work from an ecocritical point of view, using it and other poetry from Tsvetaeva's period of exile to establish an ecofeminist ecology of Tsvetaeva's work. It engages some comparison with the (coincidentally) concurrent publication of "Cawdor," another adaptation of *Phaedra*, in the form of a long poem, by the Californian poet Robinson Jeffers.

Where Jeffers' ecology foregrounds his controversial "anti-humanist" (his own term) convictions, Tsvetaeva's ecology focuses on the internal life of *Phaedra*, and her efforts to cross the dichotomies of earthly and divine, masculine and feminine. While Jeffers' "anti-humanist"—his own term—political ecology was perceived as on the fringe, unsympathetic, and misanthropic, especially in a time of total war, it shows many parallels with contemporary environmentalism, with its preference for wilderness over working landscapes.

After establishing Jeffers' ecology as close to conventional environmentalism, and presenting a reading of that political ecology as masculine, an ecofeminist reading of Tsvetaeva's *Phaedra* and several other shorter works of the exile period constitutes the majority of this conference paper. The paper argues that Tsvetaeva's union of the female subject with her surroundings demonstrates an orientation to the world that is more sustainable than the division of human subjects and the natural world.

The paper ends with a call for ecofeminism as a more realistic and necessary political ecology for the Anthropocene. By focusing on Tsvetaeva, who set out neither to be an environmental nor a feminist poet, this paper presents a new, less strict, tack on ecofeminism, whose discourse is notoriously limited; it also incorporates ecofeminist theory into nascent anthropocene theory, an alliance that is natural and necessary.