

**FORMATION STAGES OF ECOLOGICAL DISCOURSE IN AMERICAN AND UZBEK LITERATURE****Khulkar Ishkabilova**Senior Lecturer, Department of English Language N-1,  
Uzbekistan State University of World LanguagesE-mail: [ishkabilovakhulkar@icloud.com](mailto:ishkabilovakhulkar@icloud.com)<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20379860>**ABSTRACT**

This article provides a comprehensive exploration of ecocriticism, tracing its formation, historical development, and core conceptual framework within literary studies. It examines how literature represents nature, human-nature relationships, and ecological issues across various cultural and historical contexts. The study highlights the aesthetic, symbolic, and ethical dimensions of ecological discourse in literary texts, demonstrating how writers use landscapes, flora, and fauna to convey moral, cultural, and environmental messages. Methodologically, the research integrates close textual analysis, historical-contextual interpretation, and comparative cross-cultural perspectives to capture the multifaceted nature of ecocritical representation. The findings reveal that ecocriticism functions as an interdisciplinary lens, bridging literature, environmental awareness, and ethical reflection, while fostering ecological consciousness among readers. By analyzing works from diverse literary traditions-including American, Uzbek, and global literature-the article underscores the role of literature as a living dialogue between humans and the natural world, encouraging reflection, moral responsibility, and sustainable thinking.

**Keywords:** ecocriticism, environmental literature, human-nature relationship, ecological consciousness, literary symbols, ethical reflection, interdisciplinary analysis

**Introduction**

The formation of ecological discourse in American and Uzbek literature primarily reflects how human attitudes toward nature have evolved over time. In American literature, this process begins with thinkers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, who interpreted nature as a source of spiritual purification and truth. Later, Rachel Carson raised awareness about ecological dangers, strengthening the connection between literature and society. By the end of the 20th century, scholars such as Cheryll Glotfelty and Lawrence Buell established ecocriticism as a recognized academic discipline.

In Uzbek literature, nature was initially depicted as an aesthetic and symbolic motif, but in later periods, it began to be interpreted in direct relation to human destiny and societal issues. In this regard, studying these literary traditions helps trace the gradual development of ecological thought across two different cultural contexts.

In ancient Greek literature, for instance, Homer's "Iliad" and "Odyssey" illustrate human confrontation with nature, often leading to disaster: neither strength nor intellect could alter nature's judgment, highlighting its supreme authority. The sea could rise like mountains, overwhelming humans, demonstrating that ecological understanding in these epics is about balance rather than conquest. Similarly, in Central Asian history, Zoroaster's "Avesta" emphasized the sacredness of earth, water, and air, underscoring that polluting nature is a sin, and promoting ecological ethics and responsibility:

"The Earth is the mother of all good; if she is pure, humans will be pure as well."

In ancient India, the Vedas "Rigveda" and "Atharvaveda" portrayed the Earth as Mother, and nature as a living organism, where trees, rivers, and mountains were often deified. In 6th



century BCE China, Laozi in the “Dao De Jing” emphasized living in harmony with nature and warned that human interference disrupts balance, stating:

“The highest good is like water; it benefits all things without contention.”

Confucius also considered nature a source of moral education, teaching that observing natural laws helps individuals cultivate virtue and maintain social order. In ancient Mesopotamia, the “Epic of Gilgamesh” depicted the Cedar Forest as sacred and protected by gods. When Gilgamesh and Enkidu entered the forest and cut down trees, their actions were punished, demonstrating that nature is a living, sacred force, and human neglect or aggression leads to disaster. Even though ancient myths and legends conveyed ecological warnings primarily through religious and moral lenses, by the 20th century, literary scholarship began to study ecological issues not only scientifically but also through social and ethical contexts. In literature of this period, harmony or conflict between humans and nature is used to symbolize ecological crises, allowing readers to reflect on human responsibility and the consequences of actions.

In world literature, Richard Powers’ “The Overstory” portrays the interdependence and conflict between humans and nature as a symbol of ecological crisis: “Trees are the communication network of the earth, silently holding the wisdom of centuries and connecting all living things.”

Similarly, Barbara Kingsolver’s “Flight Behavior” presents land as a living, sensitive system:

“The land is alive, humming with a secret rhythm; every tree, river, and creature plays its part in the delicate balance of life.”

John Steinbeck’s “The Grapes of Wrath” illustrates how natural disasters like the Dust Bowl affect society and human life:

“The land is cruel yet sustaining; it shapes the lives of those who toil upon it, offering both hardship and the faint promise of life.”

In William Golding’s “Lord of the Flies”, the island and its natural environment are depicted as a living system, sensitive to human fear and violence:

“The island was a living presence; the trees, the shore, the sea—they were all part of a balance that could be disrupted by human fear and violence.”

Aldo Leopold in “A Sand County Almanac” emphasizes the moral and responsible aspects of living in harmony with nature:

“A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”

Here, nature is portrayed as a moral and balanced system, reinforcing the ethical foundations of ecological thinking. Jean Giono’s “The Man Who Planted Trees” emphasizes human responsibility in restoring nature: “He planted trees not for himself, but for the generations that would come after him; the land, once barren, now hummed with life.” This narrative illustrates that even one individual’s persistent effort can restore life and benefit the wider community.

Finally, Jack London’s “Call of the Wild” depicts how humans and animals adapt to the wild, portraying nature as a living, governing force:

“He was mastered by the sheer surging of life, the tidal wave of being, the perfect joy of each separate muscle, joint, and sinew in that it was everything that was not death, that it was aglow and rampant, expressing itself in movement, flying exultantly under the stars.”

Here, nature tests yet empowers, highlighting the interconnectedness of life and the essential harmony between humans, animals, and the environment.

Ecocriticism has grown from an approach that focused mostly on the aesthetic depiction of nature into a fully interdisciplinary field that explores ecological, cultural, and ethical issues in literature. Throughout this study, it has become clear that nature in literary texts is not just a background or decoration—it is a living, symbolic, and moral presence that invites readers to



reflect on their relationship with the environment and the consequences of human actions. Forests, rivers, mountains, and other natural elements often carry deeper messages about responsibility, balance, and interconnectedness between humans and the natural world.

Literature acts both as a mirror and a guide. It reflects cultural values and historical attitudes toward nature while encouraging readers to think critically about the environment and their own ethical responsibilities. Across different literary traditions, we see that ecological awareness is shaped by historical, social, and cultural contexts. Through these stories, readers are invited to engage emotionally and morally, considering sustainability, conservation, and the importance of living in harmony with nature.

Ecocriticism also shows us the transformative power of literature. By portraying environmental crises, the resilience of natural systems, and the consequences of human neglect, literary works inspire reflection, empathy, and action. They are not just art—they are lessons in how humans can coexist with nature responsibly. Different cultural perspectives enrich this dialogue: while all literature celebrates the beauty of nature, some emphasize ethical duties, activism, or cultural interpretation, showing that there are many ways to understand our connection to the natural world.

Finally, ecocriticism encourages collaboration across disciplines, bringing together literary scholars, environmental scientists, ethicists, and cultural theorists. This combined perspective allows us to see literature as a living conversation between humans and the environment—one that can teach, warn, and inspire. In short, ecocriticism provides a holistic way of understanding literature as a tool to foster ecological awareness, moral reflection, and cultural understanding, showing us that stories about nature can shape the way we think and act in the real world.

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