

**TYPOLOGY OF NATURE IMAGERY BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL EXISTENCE  
AND COLLECTIVE CULTURAL MEMORY  
(BASED ON THE WORKS “THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA” AND “FIELDS  
INHERITED FROM MY FATHER”)**

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**Abstract.** *This study explores the typology of nature imagery as a link between individual existence and collective cultural memory in “The Old Man and the Sea” and “Fields Inherited from My Father”. Drawing on ecocritical perspectives associated with Lawrence Buell and cultural memory theory developed by Maurice Halbwachs and Jan Assmann, the research applies a comparative-typological approach to analyze the symbolic functions of natural landscapes in the two works. The findings indicate that nature imagery in the first text primarily reflects an existential sphere of individual struggle, while in the second it embodies collective memory and generational continuity. The study demonstrates that nature in literature functions as a mediating structure connecting personal experience with broader cultural meanings.*

**Keywords:** *nature imagery, cultural memory, existential symbolism, comparative literature, ecocriticism.*

**Annotatsiya.** *Ushbu tadqiqotda “Chol va dengiz” hamda “Otamdan qolgan dalalar” asarlarida tabiat obrazlari tipologiyasi individual mavjudlik va jamoaviy madaniy xotira o‘rtasidagi bog‘lovchi omil sifatida tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot Lawrence Buell bilan bog‘liq ekokritik qarashlar hamda Maurice Halbwachs va Jan Assmann tomonidan ishlab chiqilgan madaniy xotira nazariyasiga tayanadi. Izlanishda ikki asarda tabiiy manzaralarning ramziy funksiyalarini aniqlash maqsadida qiyosiy-tipologik yondashuv qo‘llanadi. Tahlil natijalari shuni ko‘rsatadiki, birinchi asarda tabiat obrazlari asosan shaxsiy kurashning ekzistensial maydonini ifodalaydi, ikkinchi asarda esa u jamoaviy xotira va avlodlar davomiyligini aks ettiradi. Tadqiqot natijasida adabiyotda tabiat obrazlari shaxsiy tajriba bilan kengroq madaniy ma‘nolar o‘rtasini bog‘lovchi vositachi tuzilma sifatida namoyon bo‘lishi asoslab beriladi.*

**Kalit so‘zlar:** *tabiat obrazlari, madaniy xotira, ekzistensial ramziylik, qiyosiy adabiyotshunoslik; ekokritika.*

**Аннотация.** *В данном исследовании рассматривается типология природных образов как связующее звено между индивидуальным существованием и коллективной культурной памятью в произведениях “Старик и море” и “Поля, унаследованные от моего отца”. Опираясь на эко-критические подходы, разработанные Лоренсом Бьюэллом, и теорию культурной памяти, разработанную Морисом Хальбваксом и Яном Ассманом, исследование применяет сравнительно-типологический метод для анализа символических функций природных ландшафтов в указанных произведениях. Результаты показывают, что в первом тексте природные образы преимущественно отражают экзистенциальную сферу индивидуальной борьбы, тогда как во втором они воплощают коллективную память и преемственность поколений. Исследование демонстрирует, что природа в литературе выступает как медиатор, соединяющий личный опыт с более широкими культурными смыслами.*

**Ключевые слова:** *природные образы, культурная память, экзистенциальная символика, сравнительная литература, эко-критика.*

**Introduction.** Contemporary literary studies increasingly interpret nature imagery not merely as a descriptive background but as a complex semiotic system reflecting human

existence and cultural consciousness. In both Western and Central Asian literary traditions, representations of nature function as mediators between individual experience and collective memory.

The novella “The Old Man and the Sea” portrays nature as an existential space where human dignity, endurance, and solitude are tested through the figure of Santiago. Conversely, “Fields Inherited from My Father” presents nature as a repository of ancestral memory, agricultural heritage, and communal identity shaped by historical continuity.

Despite extensive scholarship on ecological symbolism and cultural memory, comparative typological analysis between these two literary traditions remains insufficiently explored. Therefore, this study aims to identify the typology of nature imagery that connects individual existential experience with collective cultural memory across different cultural contexts.

**Literature analysis.** Nature imagery has long been a significant subject of literary scholarship, particularly within ecocritical and cultural studies. Scholars such as Lawrence Buell note that representations of nature often function as symbolic structures reflecting human relationships with the environment [Lawrence Buell; 1995]. The concept of cultural memory, introduced by Maurice Halbwachs and later developed by Jan Assmann, highlights the role of landscapes in preserving historical experience and collective identity.

Within Western literary criticism, the symbolism of nature in “The Old Man and the Sea” by Ernest Hemingway has often been interpreted through existential and philosophical perspectives, focusing on the individual’s struggle against natural forces. In contrast, Uzbek literary studies highlight the cultural and historical symbolism of land and agricultural space in “Fields Inherited from My Father” by Togay Murod, where nature reflects generational memory and national identity.

However, despite these separate lines of interpretation, comparative typological studies examining how nature imagery simultaneously reflects individual existence and collective cultural memory across different literary traditions remain limited. This gap provides the foundation for the present research.

**Research methodology.** This study employs a comparative literary analysis to examine the typology of nature imagery in “The Old Man and the Sea” and “Fields Inherited from My Father”. The research integrates interdisciplinary approaches combining comparative literature, cultural memory studies, and ecocritical theory.

The comparative-typological method is applied to identify similarities and differences in the symbolic functions of natural imagery across Western and Central Asian literary contexts. Hermeneutic interpretation is used to analyze narrative meanings embedded in descriptions of sea, land, labor, and landscape. In addition, elements of cultural memory theory help reveal how natural space becomes a carrier of collective historical experience and inherited identity.

Textual analysis focuses on recurring motifs, symbolic landscapes, and character–nature interactions, allowing the study to interpret nature not only as setting but as an active semantic structure shaping existential and cultural meanings.

**Results and discussion.** The comparative analysis reveals that nature imagery in the two literary works functions through different but interconnected typological models. In “The Old Man and the Sea”, nature is predominantly represented as an existential environment where the individual confronts forces larger than himself. The sea operates as a symbolic space of struggle, endurance, and personal dignity. Through Santiago’s interaction with the sea and the marlin, nature becomes a medium through which the protagonist negotiates meaning, isolation, and resilience.

In contrast, “Fields Inherited from My Father” portrays nature primarily as a cultural and historical landscape connected to collective identity. The land, fields, and agricultural environment embody the continuity of generations and the transmission of ancestral values. Here, nature imagery functions less as an existential challenge and more as a symbolic archive of communal memory and inherited traditions.

The typological comparison indicates two dominant models of nature imagery: existential-natural symbolism and cultural-memory symbolism. While the first emphasizes the individual’s internal struggle within the natural world, the second highlights the role of nature in preserving social experience and cultural heritage. Despite these differences, both texts demonstrate that nature imagery serves as a meaningful bridge between personal experience and broader cultural narratives.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that nature imagery functions differently within the two literary traditions but ultimately serves a similar interpretative purpose. In “The Old Man and the Sea”, nature becomes a space where the individual confronts existential challenges and defines personal dignity. In contrast, “Fields Inherited from My Father” presents nature as a cultural landscape reflecting generational continuity and inherited social values. These differences highlight how literary representations of nature are shaped by distinct cultural and philosophical perspectives.

**Conclusion.** The study concludes that nature imagery in both works acts as a symbolic link between human experience and broader cultural meaning. While one text emphasizes individual existential struggle, the other foregrounds collective cultural memory. This typological comparison reveals that nature in literature can simultaneously function as a medium of personal identity and a repository of cultural heritage.

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