

The Personification of Nature in the Poetry of Ibn Zaydun from an Ecocritical Perspective: A Study of *Salawtum wa Baqina Nahnu 'Ushshaqan*

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the manifestations of nature personification in the poetry of Ibn Zaydun through the lens of ecocriticism, focusing on his poem *Salawtum wa Baqina Nahnu 'Ushshaqan* as a representative model of the relationship between humans and nature in Andalusian poetry. The significance of this study lies in addressing a research gap, as previous studies have predominantly examined nature from aesthetic and rhetorical perspectives or applied ecocritical approaches to modern Arabic poetry. In contrast, classical Andalusian poetry has received limited attention within this approach. The study employed a qualitative descriptive-analytical method based on Lawrence Buell's ecocritical theory. Data were collected through close reading and textual analysis of verses that personify natural elements. The findings revealed that Ibn Zaydun did not portray nature as a static decorative backdrop; rather, he endowed it with human characteristics such as smiling, compassion, illness, weeping, radiance, and conscious movement. Consequently, nature emerges as an active emotional partner that shares and reflects the poet's feelings of longing, nostalgia, and separation. The analysis further demonstrated that these representations reflect an ecocentric vision that transcends anthropocentric assumptions, portraying nature as a living entity that participates in the construction of poetic meaning. The study concluded that nature personification is not exclusive to modern Arabic poetry but has deep roots in classical Andalusian literature. This finding contributes to the expansion of ecocritical studies in Arabic literary heritage and encourages further environmental readings of classical Arabic texts.

Keyword

Andalusian Poetry; Ecocriticism; Ibn Zaydun; Nature Personification

Introduction

Nature has constituted a fundamental element in Arabic poetry, extending far beyond a merely descriptive function. The poet's emotions have become intricately intertwined with the elements of the natural world, transforming nature into a reflective medium through which human existence is articulated. In the context of Andalusian literature, this relationship reached its highest aesthetic expression, as nature was no longer portrayed merely as a geographical setting but as a dynamic emotional space that embodied the poet's anxieties, aspirations, and inner struggles. This distinctive interaction endowed the Andalusian landscape with its flourishing gardens and flowing rivers with the capacity to serve as an objective representation of the social and political realities of the period. Consequently, Andalusian poetry acquired an emotional depth that transcended conventional descriptive conventions and reflected an identity profoundly shaped by the interplay between human experience and place (Muhammad et al., 2025).

Andalusian poets tended to intertwine their emotional experiences with the natural world surrounding them, allowing inanimate elements to seem to come alive, becoming participants in an inner dialogue that merged objective and subjective dimensions (Ahmadi & Zadeh, 2020). This rich interplay of visual imagery and emotional expression evolved into an artistic medium that not only conveyed aesthetic beauty but also articulated the resilience of Andalusian identity and reflected the historical decline experienced by Andalusian society. In this context, nature transformed a mere artistic motif into a comprehensive symbolic discourse, demonstrating the poet's ability to employ environmental elements to document emotional experience and political reality simultaneously (Al-Shawabikah, 2026). Ibn Zaydun occupies a distinguished position among Andalusian poets. His poetic oeuvre reveals a remarkable convergence between the poet's emotional sensibility and the natural world through expressive forms that transcend superficial description and culminate in the personification of nature (Sheng et al., 2024).

Ibn Zaydun's poetry is distinguished by its remarkable integration of emotional sensitivity and artistic imagery. In his works, nature functions not merely as an external backdrop to the experiences of the poetic self but also as an expressive medium through which the poet conveys the depths of his inner world while simultaneously reflecting his psychological and emotional states. This characteristic is particularly evident in his ghazal poetry, which constitutes the most prominent dimension of his creative legacy, especially in poems inspired by his celebrated love story with Wallādah bint al-Mustakfī. Within these poems, feelings of longing, sorrow, and hope are intricately interwoven with images of nature, creating a cohesive poetic structure that embodies the unity of the poet's inner experience and emotional consciousness (Yasir, 2017).

One of the texts that exemplifies this interaction is Ibn Zaydun's poem *Salawtum wa Baqina Nahnu 'Ushshaqan*, which may be regarded as a representative model of the use of natural

elements as active agents in the construction of emotional meaning. In this poem, nature transcends its traditional descriptive function to become an emotional partner of the poet. It becomes intricately intertwined with his experiences of love, loss, and fidelity, thereby generating layers of meaning that extend beyond the scope of traditional rhetorical interpretation. Accordingly, the poem provides a significant site for examination through the lens of ecocriticism, a critical approach that investigates the patterns of interaction and interconnectedness between human beings and the natural world as represented in literary discourse.

Ecocriticism is one of the major approaches in modern literary criticism that examines the relationship between literature and the natural environment while analyzing the representation of nature and its role in the construction of meaning within literary texts (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996). Rather than regarding nature merely as a spatial setting, this approach recognizes it as an essential element that performs a significant function in shaping literary discourse (Buell, 2005). Within this framework, the personification of nature constitutes an important aesthetic strategy through which natural elements are endowed with human qualities, behaviors, and characteristics, allowing nature to emerge as an active participant in articulating the poet's emotional and psychological experiences. Ecocritical theorists have argued that such representations reflect an interactive relationship between human beings and the natural world while simultaneously advancing a perspective that transcends the traditional anthropocentric worldview (Garrard, 2023). Accordingly, applying an ecocritical perspective to Andalusian poetry holds considerable scholarly significance because it enables a contemporary reinterpretation of classical texts that reveals the ecological and affective dimensions embedded in their poetic imagery, while presenting nature as a living entity that actively participates in the construction of literary meaning.

Although scholarly attention to nature in Arabic and Andalusian poetry has expanded considerably in recent years, the existing literature remains characterized by several distinct but partially overlapping approaches. Previous studies revealed four principal strands: the aesthetic and rhetorical treatment of nature, the personification of nature in modern and contemporary poetry, the lexical and statistical study of nature-related vocabulary, and the application of ecocritical or ecofeminist approaches. While these strands have significantly contributed to understanding the representation and function of nature in Arabic poetry, their theoretical orientations, textual corpora, and analytical emphases leave a specific area insufficiently explored, particularly the relationship between the personification of nature and ecological interconnectedness in classical Andalusian poetry.

The first strand focused primarily on the aesthetic and rhetorical dimensions of nature as a source of poetic imagery and artistic expression. Muhammad and Shihab (2018) demonstrated that nature in Andalusian poetry was not represented merely as an objective external reality but

could also be personified to intensify emotional expression. Similarly, Al-Mabrouk (2024) emphasized the role of the Andalusian environment in shaping poetic vision, while Al-Mansouri (2024) identified nature as a major source for the construction of poetic imagery and artistic imagination. Meanwhile, Hasan (2023) highlighted the role of personification and metaphor in animating natural elements, and Ma'ammari (2023) showed that nature could function as a medium through which the poet's emotions and psychological states were articulated. These studies are important in demonstrating that nature occupies a central position in the aesthetic and expressive structure of Arabic and Andalusian poetry. However, their principal concern remains the artistic, rhetorical, emotional, or imagistic function of nature. Consequently, nature is largely examined in terms of how it contributes to poetic expression rather than how its personification constructs an interactive relationship between the human subject and the natural environment.

The second strand is addressed more directly through the personification of nature, although the existing studies identified here focus predominantly on modern and contemporary Arabic poetry. Fath Allah and Aswad (2025) demonstrated that nature could function as an emotional companion within a reciprocal relationship between human beings and the environment. Similarly, the study of Ma'arij (2024) argued that natural imagery reflected the poet's psychological condition, while Hasso (2025) examined personification as an artistic strategy through which natural elements acquire human characteristics. Furthermore, a study by Ali (2025) demonstrated that the symbolization of nature could express the poet's emotional and intellectual consciousness, whilst a study by Isahak et al. (2024) emphasized the symbolic function of nature in spiritual and Sufi experiences. Collectively, these studies establish the significance of personification in transforming nature from an inanimate object of description into a meaningful participant in poetic expression. Nevertheless, their concentration on modern and contemporary poetry leaves insufficient attention to the operation of nature personification in classical Andalusian poetry. Significantly, personification in these studies is generally approached through emotional, psychological, symbolic, spiritual, or artistic functions rather than being systematically examined through an ecocritical framework concerned with the relationship between human beings and the non-human environment.

The third strand adopted predominantly lexical, semantic, statistical, or symbolic approaches to the representation of nature. Kazim and Khalati (2024) demonstrated that natural elements, including the earth, sky, sea, and mountains, constituted a semantic network closely associated with human experience. Al-Fakhiri (2022) examined the lexical and semantic dimensions of environmental vocabulary in modern Libyan poetry, while Qurayn (2022) investigated the relationship between natural imagery and the poet's subjectivity in contemporary poetry. These studies have contributed to identifying the frequency, semantic

associations, and representational patterns through which nature enters Arabic poetic discourse. However, their analytical emphasis on vocabulary, semantic relations, statistical distribution, and symbolic associations does not fully address the relational dimension of nature representation. In particular, these studies do not primarily investigate how personified natural elements operate within the interaction between the human subject and the non-human world or how such representations may be interpreted as expressions of ecological interconnectedness.

The fourth strand explicitly employed ecocritical or ecofeminist perspectives and therefore comes closest to the theoretical orientation of the present study. For example, Ali and Hamad (2023) examined ecofeminism in the poetry of Linda Hogan and concluded that nature was represented as a living entity connected to human beings through ethical and spiritual relationships that extended beyond a purely utilitarian understanding of the environment. Likewise, Hasan and Al-Mas'udi (2025) investigated ecofeminist imagination in Andalusian nature poetry and demonstrated the capacity of literary representation to reshape ecological consciousness through depictions of interactions between human beings and the natural world. These studies are particularly relevant because they shift attention from nature as a merely aesthetic or symbolic object toward the relationship between humans and the environment. Nevertheless, their theoretical and textual orientations do not provide a direct examination of the specific intersection addressed in the present study: the personification of nature in a classical Andalusian poetic text through an explicitly ecocritical perspective.

A further point of comparison is provided by Sheng et al. (2024), who specifically examined representations of nature in the poetry of Ibn Zaydun. The relevance of this study to the present research lies in its focus on the same poet; however, its approach remains centered on artistic and thematic dimensions rather than an ecocritical interpretation of nature. Thus, although previous studies have addressed nature in Andalusian poetry, personification in Arabic poetry, lexical representations of the natural world, and ecological approaches to literary texts, these areas have largely developed separately. The existing literature in this field has not successfully combined these dimensions by examining the personification of nature in a specific classical Andalusian poem by Ibn Zaydun through an ecocritical framework.

This comparison revealed several interrelated research gaps. First, there is a textual gap, since the personification of nature in Ibn Zaydun's poetry has not been sufficiently examined in the specific poem *Salawtum wa Baqina Nahnu 'Ushshaqan* from the perspective adopted in the present study. Second, there is a theoretical gap, as studies of nature and personification have predominantly employed aesthetic, rhetorical, psychological, symbolic, thematic, lexical, or statistical approaches, while ecocritical approaches have been applied more explicitly to other literary contexts. Third, there is a temporal and literary gap, because research on the personification of nature identified above has concentrated substantially on modern and

contemporary Arabic poetry, leaving classical Andalusian poetry comparatively less explored from an ecocritical perspective. Fourth, there is a relational gap: previous studies have frequently examined what nature represents or how it contributes to the poet's emotional and artistic expression, but the ecological implications of representing natural elements as humanized or relational entities have received comparatively limited attention in the specific textual context under investigation.

Accordingly, the novelty of the present study does not lie simply in examining nature in Arabic poetry, nor merely in identifying personification as a literary device. Rather, it lies in bringing together four dimensions that have not been sufficiently integrated in the previous studies reviewed here: nature personification, Ibn Zaydun's poetry, classical Andalusian poetry, and an ecocritical analytical perspective. Through this combination, the study approaches personified natural elements not only as devices of poetic ornamentation or projections of the poet's psychological state, but as representations through which the relationship between the human subject and the natural environment can be examined. The study therefore seeks to extend the discussion of nature in Ibn Zaydun's poetry beyond its established aesthetic and thematic interpretations by investigating how natural elements are represented as humanized entities and how such representations participate in the construction of poetic meaning within an ecological relational framework.

On this basis, the present study focuses specifically on Ibn Zaydun's poem *Salawtum wa Baqina Nahnu 'Ushshaqan*. It seeks to identify the manifestations of nature personification in the poem and to analyze these representations from an ecocritical perspective. The study consequently addresses the following research question: How did Ibn Zaydun employ natural elements as humanized entities in his poem *Salawtum wa Baqina Nahnu 'Ushshaqan* from an ecocritical perspective?

Literature Review

Personification constitutes a rhetorical and literary strategy through which human attributes, emotions, intentions, actions, or capacities are attributed to non-human entities, inanimate objects, or abstract concepts. Through this process, entities that do not ordinarily possess human consciousness or agency are imaginatively represented as capable of feeling, acting, responding, or expressing intention. In classical Arabic rhetoric, personification is closely associated with *al-isti'ārah al-makniyyah* (implicit or concealed metaphor), in which the human term of comparison is omitted while one of its characteristic properties is transferred to a non-human referent. Accordingly, expressions involving human actions or emotions such as smiling, weeping, or showing compassion may be attributed to non-human entities, thereby transforming

them from passive objects of description into rhetorically animated elements within the poetic text.

From a literary perspective, personification therefore operates not merely at the level of stylistic ornamentation but also at the level of representation and meaning. By attributing human characteristics to non-human entities, the device establishes an imaginative relationship between the human subject and the represented world. Within an ecocritical reading, this function acquires a broader significance. Garrard (2023) argued that the literary phenomenon conventionally associated with the concept of the "pathetic fallacy" can be reconsidered through an ecocritical perspective as a mode of imagining the non-human world as an active participant in the production of meaning rather than simply as a projection of human emotions onto an otherwise indifferent natural environment. Such an approach shifts attention from personification as an exclusively rhetorical technique toward the implications of representing the non-human world as possessing a form of presence and agency within literary discourse.

The personification of nature represents a more specific application of this literary strategy to the natural environment. It refers to the representation of natural elements—such as wind, horizon, water, plants, light, and temporal forces—as entities capable of perception, emotion, intention, or response in relation to the human subject. Through such representations, the distinction between the human subject and the natural world becomes less rigid, while nature is no longer confined to the position of a passive descriptive background. Instead, natural elements may acquire an active function in the construction of poetic experience and meaning (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996; Garrard, 2023). In the context of the present study, this conceptualization provides the basis for examining how natural elements in Ibn Zaydun's poetry are represented through humanized characteristics and how such representations may be understood in relation to the interaction between the poet and the non-human environment.

Ecocriticism is broadly concerned with the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Rather than examining literary representations of nature solely according to their aesthetic or symbolic functions, ecocritical scholarship considers how literary texts represent the natural world and how those representations relate to cultural understandings of the relationship between human beings and their environment (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996). The significance of this approach lies in its expansion of literary analysis beyond a human-centered framework by directing critical attention toward the presence, representation, and role of the non-human world in literary texts.

Within this framework, ecocriticism challenges a purely anthropocentric approach to literary interpretation and encourages an ecocentric orientation in which nature is considered more than a setting or background for human actions. Garrard (2023) emphasized the importance of examining representations of the natural world in relation to broader assumptions

concerning the human–environment relationship. Consequently, natural imagery in poetry can be approached not simply as decorative material or as a means of expressing human emotions, but as an element that participates in the formation of literary meaning and reflects particular ways of conceptualizing the relationship between humans and the non-human world.

Therefore, when applied to poetry, ecocriticism directs analytical attention to the ways in which natural elements function within the structure and meaning of the poetic text. Such an approach makes it possible to examine whether nature remains merely an object observed and described by the poet or whether it is represented as an active presence within the poetic world. This distinction is particularly relevant to the study of personified nature because personification can provide a textual mechanism through which natural entities are represented as capable of action, feeling, perception, or interaction. The combination of personification and ecocritical analysis thus allows the present study to examine natural elements not only as rhetorical constructions but also in terms of their position within the relationship between the human subject and the natural environment.

The present study adopted Lawrence Buell's ecocritical theory as its principal theoretical framework for examining the representation of nature in Ibn Zaydun's poem. Buell (2005) conceptualized the literary representation of the environment in a manner that moves beyond understanding nature as merely an aesthetic setting or passive background. His discussion places literary representations of nature within a broader intellectual history, emphasizing that although environmental criticism may appear as a relatively recent critical discourse, concern with the "idea of nature" has long constituted an important subject within literary scholarship (Buell, 2005). This perspective provides a theoretical foundation for investigating the position accorded to the non-human environment within literary representation.

A central implication of Buell's approach is the possibility of reading a literary work as an "environmental text" when the non-human environment is represented as more than a contextual frame for human action. In such a reading, human history and natural history are not treated as entirely separate domains; rather, the representation of the environment becomes relevant to how human experience is constructed within the literary text (Buell, 2005). This orientation is particularly applicable to a study of personified nature because the attribution of human characteristics to natural entities may transform their textual status from passive objects into presences that participate in the development of the poetic experience.

Accordingly, Buell's theoretical perspective provides the analytical basis for examining the natural elements represented in Ibn Zaydun's *Salawtum wa Baqina Nahnu 'Ushshaqan*, including the horizon, breeze, garden, dew, flowers, and temporal forces. The purpose is not to assume that these elements possess literal human agency, but to examine how the poem constructs them through humanized qualities and how such representations function within the relationship

between the poet and the non-human environment. Through this framework, the study extends the analysis of personification beyond its conventional identification as a rhetorical or ornamental device and considers its significance as a mode of representing the relationship between human experience and the natural world. In this respect, Buell's ecocritical framework establishes the theoretical connection between the study's focus on personification and its broader examination of nature as an active component in the construction of poetic meaning.

Method

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a descriptive-analytical method to examine the representation of nature in the poetry of Ibn Zaydun and to analyze it from an ecocritical perspective. The analytical framework was grounded in Lawrence Buell's ecocritical theory, which conceptualizes nature as an active entity in the construction of literary meaning rather than merely an aesthetic backdrop (Buell, 2005). The primary data consisted of Ibn Zaydun's poem *Salawtum wa Baqina Nahnu 'Ushshaqan*, cited from the critically edited *Diwan Ibn Zaydun* prepared by Karam Al-Bustani (Ibn Zaydun, 1975), published by Dar Shadr, Beirut, while the secondary data included scholarly books and studies on ecocriticism, particularly the works of Cheryll Glotfelty and Greg Garrard. In addition, this study drew upon previous research on representations of nature in Andalusian poetry as well as studies addressing the personification of environmental elements in literary works.

The data were collected through the Close Reading technique by repeatedly examining the poetic text, complemented by a note-taking technique to identify verses that demonstrated the personification of natural elements, such as the wind, gardens, and dew. These textual data were subsequently categorized according to their ecological significance and stylistic characteristics. The data were analyzed using the qualitative data analysis model developed by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, which comprised three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The analytical process focused on revealing the dimensions of ecocentrism and the relationship between humans and nature within the Andalusian poetic experience, thereby demonstrating how nature functioned as a living entity that actively participated in the poet's emotional experience.

Result and Discussion

The verses of the poem reveal an intensive employment of the phenomenon of nature personification, whereby the elements of the surrounding environment are transformed into active entities participating in the formulation of the text's emotional meaning. The following presents an analytical discussion of each verse, revealing the mechanisms of this transformation and its ecological and psychological dimensions.

Data 1:

إِنِّي ذَكَرْتُكَ بِالزَّهْرَاءِ مُشْتَاقًا وَالْأَفُقُ طَلَقٌ وَمَرَأَى الْأَرْضِ قَدْ رَاقَا
"I remembered you longingly at al-Zahra, while the horizon was radiant
and the sight of the earth was delightful."

This finding both extends and departs from earlier interpretations of nature in Ibn Zaydun's poetry. Sheng et al. (2024) in their comparative examination of descriptions of nature in Ibn Zaydun's verse, similarly identified the prominence of luminous and sky-oriented imagery within his poetic landscape. However, the present analysis advances this observation by demonstrating that such imagery functions not merely as descriptive representation but also as an active emotional agent within the poetic text, thereby highlighting an ecocritical dimension that a purely comparative-thematic approach does not capture. At the same time, this finding corroborates the observation of Ahmadi and Zadeh (2020) that Andalusian poets characteristically merge the objective and subjective dimensions of the natural scene, as the "radiance" of الأفق in the present context operates simultaneously as a property of the external landscape and as a projection of the poet's inner state.

Data 2:

وَلِلنَّسِيمِ اعْتِلَالٌ فِي أَصَائِلِهِ كَأَنَّهُ رَقَّ لِي فَأَعْتَلَّ إِشْفَاقًا
"The breeze had an ailment in its evenings,
as though it took pity on me and fell ill out of compassion."

In this verse, the poet portrays النسيم as suffering from اعتلال, thereby transforming this natural element from a mere object of sensory description into a fully personified entity that shares the poet's emotional suffering. The expression كَأَنَّهُ رَقَّ لِي فَأَعْتَلَّ إِشْفَاقًا explicitly employs the comparative particle كَأَنَّ. However, the verse extends beyond a conventional simile to construct an imagined reciprocal emotional relationship in which النسيم becomes a sentient being capable of رِقَّة and إِشْفَاق, qualities traditionally associated with human emotional experience, toward the poet, who is overwhelmed by separation from both his homeland and his beloved.

From an ecocritical perspective, this representation transcends anthropocentrism, which confines consciousness and emotional capacity exclusively to human beings. Rather than functioning merely as a decorative poetic device, النسيم emerges as an empathetic subject endowed with independent emotional agency, thereby embodying an ecocentric vision that recognizes the affective vitality of the natural world. Consequently, the اعتلال of النسيم operates as a dual metaphor: it reflects the poet's inner emotional fracture while simultaneously emphasizing the profound interconnectedness between human existence and the surrounding natural environment. Through this reciprocal relationship, nature is represented not as a passive

backdrop but as a living participant in the construction of poetic meaning and emotional experience.

This representation of the breeze as an empathetic and suffering companion resonates with Ali and Hamad's (2023) ecofeminist reading of Linda Hogan's poetry, in which nature is similarly represented as a living entity connected to the human subject through an ethical and compassionate relationship rather than a utilitarian one. It also anticipates a pattern that becomes evident throughout the poem: analogous to the emotional-companion function identified by Fath Allah and Aswad (2025) in Romantic Arabic poetry, the *النسيم* (breeze) here does not merely reflect the poet's grief but participates actively in his emotional experience. Hence, this representation supports the argument that the personification of nature in classical Andalusian poetry can perform an emotional-companion function that later criticism has predominantly associated with modern Arabic poetry.

Data 3:

وَالرَّوْضُ عَنْ مَائِهِ الْفِضِّيِّ مُبْتَسِمٌ كَمَا شَقَّقَتْ عَنِ اللَّبَّاتِ أَطْوَاقَا
*"The garden smiles through its silvery water,
 as though necklaces were parted from fair, slender necks."*

The poet further develops his personified natural landscape by portraying *الرَّوْضُ* as *مُبْتَسِمٌ* through its shimmering silvery water. This image constitutes an implicit metaphor, in which the human act of smiling is attributed to *الرَّوْضُ*, thereby endowing it with a distinctly human characteristic. The image is further reinforced through an elaborate simile that likens the unveiling of *الرَّوْضُ*'s silvery water to the uncovering of necklaces from the graceful necks of beautiful maidens. Through this comparison, the poet fuses the beauty of nature with the beauty of the human body into a unified multisensory poetic image.

From an ecocritical perspective, however, this convergence between *الرَّوْضُ* and the beloved extends beyond mere rhetorical ornamentation. Rather, it reflects an integrative vision in which nature and humanity are conceived as interconnected living entities that share a common corporeal and emotional vocabulary. The smile of *الرَّوْضُ*, like that of the beloved, reveals an inner purity and concealed beauty, thereby reinforcing the representation of nature as a living entity capable of expression, emotion, and agency rather than as a static landscape intended solely for visual appreciation. This interpretation is consistent with an ecocentric perspective that attributes autonomous semantic agency to the nonhuman world, recognizing nature as an active participant in the construction of poetic meaning rather than as a passive object of human perception.

This finding is consistent with Al-Mansuri (2024) argument that nature functions primarily as a source for the construction of poetic imagery in Andalusian poetry. The present analysis confirms that **الرَّوْضُ** generates a rich visual image, in accordance with the aesthetic interpretation proposed by Al-Mansouri; however, its ecocritical significance lies in the fact that the garden is not represented merely as a source of imagery employed by the poet, but as an entity endowed with the capacity to smile and thus perform an expressive action within the poetic text. In this respect, the finding moves beyond Al-Mansuri's predominantly rhetorical framework by drawing on the ecocentric orientation provided by Buell's theory, through which the garden's smile can be interpreted as a representation of the natural world as participating in the construction of poetic meaning rather than functioning merely as raw material for human artistic expression.

Data 4:

يَوْمٌ كَأَيَّامٍ لَدَاتٍ لَنَا انصَرَمَتْ بَتْنَا لَهَا حِينَ نَامَ الدَّهْرُ سُرَّاقًا
*"A day like the days of pleasures we once spent,
 which we passed as thieves while time itself lay asleep."*

In this verse, the poet shifts from the direct personification of natural elements such as **النسيم**, **الأفق**, and **الروض** to the personification of an abstract temporal concept, namely **الدهر**. **الدهر** is portrayed as a being capable of sleep, as though it momentarily neglects to witness the fleeting moments of joy and intimacy shared by the poet and his beloved. The expression **نَامَ الدهر سُرَّاقًا** carries a striking figurative implication: **الدهر**, in its usual vigilance, is implicitly likened to a thief lying in wait to steal moments of happiness, whereas its temporary slumber enables the lovers to steal a fragment of time for themselves. Although **الدهر** represents an abstract temporal concept rather than a tangible environmental element, attributing to it the human capacities of sleeping and being robbed operates within the same mechanism of personification that governs the poem as a whole. Consequently, both the spatial and temporal forces of the universe are transformed into animate entities that interact with, and participate in, human experience. From an ecocritical perspective, this representation reinforces a holistic ecological vision that refuses to separate human beings from their cosmic environment, presenting both space and time as active participants in the construction of emotional and poetic meaning.

This representation of **الدهر** as a vigilant, thief-like guardian that must be evaded resonates with Al-Shawabikah (2026) account of nature and, by extension, the cosmic order—as a discourse that Andalusian poets could mobilize in an adversarial manner to register resistance against forces, whether political or existential, beyond their control. It also corresponds with the

biographical context documented by Yasir (2017) concerning Ibn Zaydun, whose poetry of longing and separation repeatedly represents time and fate as obstacles to be outwitted rather than as neutral background conditions. Considered alongside Data 1–3, this instance demonstrates that Ibn Zaydun's personifying imagination extends beyond concrete natural elements to encompass the cosmic order itself. Such representation supports Buell's (2005) contention that an ecocentric literary vision treats the non-human universe, in its various forms, as an active participant in human history rather than merely as a passive stage upon which human experience unfolds.

Data 5:

نَلْهُو بِمَا يَسْتَمِيلُ الْعَيْنَ مِنْ زَهْرٍ جَالَ النَّدى فِيهِ حَتَّى مَالَ أَعْنَاقًا
*"We delighted in flowers that captivated the eye,
 through which the dew wandered until their necks bent low."*

The poet draws a vivid scene combining flowers *الزهر* and dew *الندى* in a doubly personified interactive relationship: the dew *الندى* is portrayed as a being that "wanders," that is, moves *يجول* freely among the flowers *الزهور*, sharing in the moments of delight and happiness experienced by the two lovers, while the flowers themselves are portrayed as bodies with "necks" *أعناق* that bend *مالت* under the dew's effect, in an implicit metaphor that grants plants a human anatomical structure. This pairing of the dew's agency and the flower's responsiveness reveals an integrated ecological structure that does not stop at employing a single natural element but weaves a network of reciprocal relationships among the components of the natural scene, as well as their relationship with the human. From an ecocritical perspective, this verse embodies the principle of ecological interconnectedness, whereby the elements of nature are not personified in isolation but interact within a complete living system, whose aesthetic image mirrors the interaction of the poet and his beloved in a scene of shared delight and happiness.

This network of reciprocal relationships among the dew, the flower, and the human subject is consistent with the findings of Kazim and Khalati (2024), who demonstrated that natural elements in classical Arabic poetry constitute a semantic network closely associated with human experience rather than functioning as isolated images. While Kazim & Khalati approach this network primarily from lexical and statistical perspectives, the present analysis highlights its dynamic and agentive dimension. The significance of the relationship, therefore, lies not merely in the co-occurrence of "dew" and "flower" as lexical items, but in their representation as entities that act upon and respond to one another, as well as to the human observers, within the temporal progression of the poetic scene. This interpretation supports the ecocentric argument advanced

in the literature review that ecological interconnectedness in Ibn Zaydun's poetry constitutes a structural feature of his poetic imagination rather than an incidental stylistic embellishment.

Data 6:

كَأَنَّ أَعْيُنَهُ إِذْ عَايَنْتْ أَرْقَى بَكَتْ لِمَا بِي فَجَالَ الدَّمْعُ رَقْرَاقًا
"As though its eyes, upon witnessing my sleeplessness,
wept for my state, and tears flowed glistening."

The personification reaches its highest sensory intensity in this verse, as the poet attributes *الندى* to *الزهر*, enabling it to see and weep. In doing so, he transforms the sparkling drops of *الندى* resting upon the petals of the flowers into flowing tears that express profound sympathy for the poet's sleeplessness and emotional suffering. The poetic image is constructed through a complex implicit metaphor grounded in complete personification. First, *الزهر* is endowed with *أعين* (the faculty of vision); it is then granted the act of *المعاينة* (perception), followed by the capacity for *البكاء* and emotional responsiveness. This progressive sequence bestows nature with a fully developed emotional consciousness comparable to that of human beings.

From an ecocritical perspective, however, this imagery extends beyond aesthetic artistry to raise a fundamental question concerning the boundaries of consciousness and emotional agency. Nature is no longer represented as a silent recipient of the poet's emotional state; rather, it emerges as a perceptive subject that shares his suffering and responds with *الدمع* in an act of emotional reciprocity. Consequently, the verse embodies an ecocentric vision in which nonhuman entities particularly *الزهر* and *الندى* are granted the status of emotional agents. Their shared act of *البكاء* ultimately functions as a symbolic affirmation of the inseparable bond and shared destiny between human beings and the natural world.

The weeping flower in this verse constitutes one of the clearest instances in the poem of the emotional-companion function of personified nature identified by Fath Allah and Aswad (2025) in Arabic poetry. Rather than merely reflecting the poet's emotional state in a passive manner, nature is represented as actively expressing an emotional response through the act of weeping, thereby paralleling the poet's own experience of grief, although the causes of their respective responses may differ. This finding also corresponds with the ecofeminist observation of Ali and Hamad (2023) that personified nature may be represented as a living entity connected to human beings through an ethical relationship based on shared suffering rather than detached sympathy. These parallels suggest that the progressive intensification of personification identified across Data 1–6 from representations of radiance and compassion to the attribution of full sensory and emotional agency extends beyond the specific case of Ibn Zaydun and reflects a pattern that subsequent criticism has documented primarily in modern Arabic poetry, while here appearing within the context of a classical Andalusian poetic text.

Data 7:

وَرْدٌ تَأَلَّقَ فِي ضَاحِي مَنَابِتِهِ فَازْدَادَ مِنْهُ الضُّعَى فِي الْعَيْنِ إِشْرَاقًا
*"A rose radiant in its sunlit growth,
 through which the morning light grew even brighter to the eye."*

In this verse, the poet portrays the وَرْد (ward, rose) as a radiant being, attributing to it the quality of تَأَلَّقَ (radiance or brilliance), a characteristic that is conventionally associated with human beauty, grace, and luminosity. Through an implicit metaphor, the poet transfers this distinctly human attribute to the وَرْد flourishing in its sunlit habitat, thereby extending the sequence of personified images that permeates the poem. Significantly, the radiance of the وَرْد does not remain confined to the flower itself; rather, its influence extends to the الضُّعَى (al-ḍuḥā, the morning brightness), enhancing its brilliance in the observer's eyes. The verse thus suggests that the humanized luminosity of the وَرْد spreads to the surrounding elements of the natural world, transforming the entire landscape into an integrated system of mutual illumination and shared beauty.

From an ecocritical perspective, this verse embodies an integrated vision of the relationship between humans and the environment. The personification of nature is not restricted to a single natural element but instead extends its human qualities across the entire ecological scene, allowing these attributes to illuminate and animate the surrounding environment. Consequently, nature is represented not as a passive backdrop that merely reflects human emotions, but as a living, interconnected entity whose constituent elements possess the capacity for reciprocal influence and continuous interaction. This representation ultimately reinforces an ecocentric vision in which the natural world actively participates in the construction of poetic meaning rather than a mere static reflection of the human condition.

The diffusion of radiance from the rose into the surrounding morning light provides direct textual support for Hasan and Al-Mas'udi (2025) argument that Andalusian nature poetry can contribute to the reshaping of ecological consciousness by representing the environment as an interconnected system rather than as a collection of discrete objects. At the same time, this instance extends Qurayn's (2022) observation that natural imagery in Arabic poetry is closely associated with the poet's subjectivity, as the rose's radiance and the poet's delighted perception, represented through "the eye," are constructed as mutually intensifying elements. Considered alongside Data 1–6, this final instance completes a recurring pattern throughout the poem: individual natural elements are personified not as isolated entities but as interconnected components of a broader ecological system. The seven instances demonstrate a coherent progression in the representation of nature, moving from localized forms of personification, such as the smiling horizon and the compassionate breeze, toward increasingly complex and systemic

representations, including the weeping and seeing flower and the mutually illuminating garden of light. This progression constitutes a finding of the present study, as the analysis demonstrates, verse by verse, how the personification of individual natural elements develops into a broader representation of ecological interconnectedness, thereby corresponding to the ecocentric orientation articulated in Buell's (2005) theory.

The findings of the present analysis are consistent with previous studies on the personification of nature in modern and contemporary Arabic poetry, which have demonstrated that nature functions as an emotional companion that interacts with the poet's psychological experience rather than serving merely as a static descriptive backdrop. This perspective was likewise emphasized by Fath Allah and Aswad (2025) in their study of the personification of nature in Romantic poetry. Similarly, the present analysis, which demonstrates that الزهر (flowers) and الندى (dew) are transformed into living entities reflecting the poet's psychological state, accords with the findings of Mona Qasim Ma'arij regarding the capacity of natural imagery to mirror the poet's emotional condition (Ma'arij, 2024). It also supports the argument advanced by Hassu (2025) that personification functions as an artistic strategy through which natural elements are endowed with human characteristics, as well as Muhammad Daw Ali's conclusion that the symbolic representation of nature serves to reveal the poet's emotional consciousness (Ali, 2025). Nevertheless, the present study extends beyond these earlier investigations in terms of its scope of application. Whereas previous research has been confined primarily to modern and contemporary Arabic poetry, the current analysis demonstrates that the Personification of Nature is not exclusively a modern literary phenomenon but is deeply rooted in the classical Andalusian poetry of Ibn Zaydun. In doing so, this study addresses the research gap identified in previous scholarship and broadens the historical scope of ecocritical personification within the Arabic literary tradition.

By contrast, the present study partially converges with previous scholarship that has examined nature in Andalusian poetry from aesthetic and rhetorical perspectives. For example, Al-Mansouri argued that nature constituted a primary source for the construction of poetic imagery and artistic imagination (Al-Mansouri, 2024), while Fawaz Maamari emphasized the role of nature in expressing the poet's psychological condition (Maamari, 2023). The present analysis likewise confirms the rhetorical richness of natural imagery, particularly through the use of implicit metaphor and personification. However, the current study differs fundamentally from these works in its theoretical orientation. Rather than limiting its analysis to rhetorical and aesthetic interpretation, it adopts Lawrence Buell's ecocritical framework to interpret these poetic images as representations of a reciprocal relationship between human beings and the natural environment that transcends anthropocentrism (Buell, 2005). In this respect, the study

also shares common ground with the research conducted by Ammar Kitab Hasan and Safa Husayn Latif Al-Masudi, who employed an ecofeminist approach to the study of Andalusian nature poetry (Hasan & Al-Mas'udi, 2025). Both studies recognize Andalusian nature as an active living entity rather than a passive background. Nevertheless, the present study differs methodologically by adopting Ecocriticism in its broader theoretical sense rather than an ecofeminist perspective, while placing the Personification of Nature at the center of its analytical framework to illuminate the ecological interaction articulated in Ibn Zaydun's poetry.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrated that Ibn Zaydun employs the Personification of Nature as a central artistic and semantic strategy in constructing the poetic experience of his poem *Salawtum wa Baqina Nahnu 'Ushshaqan*. Various natural elements, including the horizon, the breeze, the garden, the dew, the blossoms, and the roses, are transformed from silent components of the natural landscape into living entities endowed with human qualities and emotional capacities. They smile, sympathize, fall ill, weep, radiate brilliance, and interact with the poet's suffering and psychological state. This representation reveals an integrated relationship between human beings and the natural environment that transcends the conventional function of nature as merely an aesthetic setting or a spatial backdrop for poetic events. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrated that the personified images in the poem function not merely as rhetorical embellishments but as essential mechanisms for generating poetic meaning and articulating feelings of longing, nostalgia, and loss, thereby positioning nature as an active emotional partner in shaping the poet's lived experience. Accordingly, the study achieves its primary objective by demonstrating how Ibn Zaydun represents nature as a living entity that shares human emotions and actively contributes to the construction of poetic meaning.

This study contributed to the advancement of Arabic ecocritical scholarship by extending the application of ecocritical theory to classical Andalusian poetry, an area that has received considerably less scholarly attention than modern and contemporary Arabic poetry. The findings further demonstrated that the Personification of Nature is not exclusively a modern literary phenomenon but possesses clear historical roots within the Andalusian literary heritage, thereby supporting contemporary ecocritical reinterpretations of classical Arabic texts. Moreover, the study reinforces the concept of ecocentrism by presenting nature as an active participant in the production of meaning rather than merely an object of description. These findings provide a valuable foundation for expanding interdisciplinary research at the intersection of literature and environmental studies while contributing to the development of critical approaches to the Arabic literary heritage. Finally, the study recommends future research on the Personification of Nature in Ibn Zaydun's other poetic collections, comparative studies with Andalusian poets such as Ibn

Khafajah and Ibn Zamrak, and the application of additional environmental approaches, including Deep Ecocriticism and Ecofeminist Criticism, to further explore the multifaceted relationship between humans and nature in classical Arabic literature.

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