

**WOMEN AND NATURE IN ZOULFA KATOUH'S *AS LONG AS
THE LEMON TREES GROW*: AN ECOFEMINIST ANALYSIS**

THESIS

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UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM
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THE LEMON TREES GROW: AN ECOFEMINIST ANALYSIS**

THESIS

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MALANG**

2026

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled *Women and Nature in Zoulfa Katouh's As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow: An Ecofeminist Analysis* is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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MOTTO

“If you wait to understand how to finish, you may never begin.

Just start, you’ll figure it out along the way.”

(Steph Crown)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents for their unconditional love, constant prayers, unwavering support, motivation, sacrifice, guidance, and affection. Thank you for everything.

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All praise and gratitude are due to Allah SWT, the Almighty God, the Most Compassionate and the Most Merciful, for all His blessings, grace, and guidance, which have given me strength in completing this thesis. Prayers and peace are always sent to Prophet Muhammad SAW, who has guided humanity to the path of light and truth, namely *Ad-Diinul Islam*.

This thesis, entitled *Women and Nature in Zoulfa Katouh's As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow: An Ecofeminist Analysis* is submitted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.). The researcher realizes that the completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the guidance, support, and contributions of many parties. Therefore, the researcher would like to express her deepest gratitude to:

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The researcher acknowledges that this thesis still has shortcomings despite her best efforts. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions are warmly welcomed for the improvement of this thesis.

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The researcher



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ABSTRACT

Afifah, Lailatul. (2026), *Women and Nature in Zoulfa Katouh's As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow: An Ecofeminist Analysis*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Miftahul Huda, M.Pd., Ph.D.

Keywords: Ecofeminism, nature, oppression of women, destruction of nature

This study examines how Zoulfa Katouh's *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* illustrates the connection between the oppression of women and the destruction of nature in the context of war. The data source of this study is Katouh's novel, first published in 2022 by Little, Brown and Company. The data consist of words, phrases, sentences, dialogues, and narrations related to women, nature, war, violence, power relations, care, and resistance. This study is literary criticism that applies an ecofeminist literary criticism, mainly based on the ideas of Vandana Shiva. The findings show that the connection between the oppression of women and the destruction of nature is represented through three broader patterns. First, the novel presents shared domination, in which women and nature are equally positioned as vulnerable entities affected by war and structural violence. Second, it shows embodied suffering and control, indicating that destruction of nature parallels the oppression women. Third, the novel presents interconnected life and care, indicating that women play a role in maintaining life and that humans and nature are represented as interconnected and interdependent entities. The study also found that the concept of women as agents of resistance against environmental destruction is not strongly represented in the novel due to limited textual data. Therefore, the study concluded that the novel represents the connection between oppression of women and destruction of nature through experiences of shared domination, interconnected suffering, and relationships that emphasize care, survival, and the interconnectedness of humans and nature amidst armed conflict.

مستخلص البحث

عفيفة، ليلة (2026)، المرأة والطبيعة في كتاب طالما تنمو أشجار الليمون لزولفا كاتوه: دراسة تحليلية من منظور النسوية البيئية. بحث جامعي. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرف: مفتاح الهدى، الماجستير

الكلمة الرئيسية: النسوية البيئية، الطبيعة، اضطهاد المرأة، تدمير الطبيعة.

تتناول هذه الدراسة العلاقة بين اضطهاد المرأة وتدمير البيئة في رواية طالما نمت أشجار الليمون من تأليف زولفا كاتوه. مصدر بيانات هذه الدراسة هو الطبعة الأولى من الرواية باللغة الإنجليزية التي نُشرت في عام 2022 بواسطة لينتل، براون وشركاه، وتتكون البيانات من كلمات وعبارات وجمل وحوارات وسرد ووصف مرتبط بتمثيل المرأة والبيئة والحرب وعلاقات السلطة. هذه الدراسة هي دراسة نقد أدبي تستخدم منهج النقد الأدبي الإيكوفيمي بناءً على أفكار فاندانا شيفا. وقد أظهرت نتائج البحث أن العلاقة بين اضطهاد المرأة والتدهور البيئي تتجلى من خلال ثلاثة أنماط رئيسية: أولاً: تُبرز الرواية نمط الهيمنة المشتركة، حيث تُصور المرأة والطبيعة كليهما ككيانين ضعيفين يتأثران بالحرب والعنف البيئي. ثانياً: تُظهر الرواية نمط المعاناة والسيطرة المتجسدين في الجسد، مما يدل على أن التدهور البيئي يسير جنباً إلى جنب مع المعاناة التي تعيشها المرأة. ثالثاً: تُقدّم الرواية نمط ترابط الحياة والرعاية، الذي يُظهر أن المرأة تؤدي دوراً في الحفاظ على الحياة، وأن الإنسان والطبيعة يُصوران ككيانين مترابطين يعتمد كل منهما على الآخر. كما توصلَ هذا البحث إلى أن مفهوم المرأة بوصفها فاعلة في مقاومة التدهور البيئي لم يُمثل بشكل قوي في الرواية؛ نظراً لمحدودية الشواهد النصية الداعمة لهذا المفهوم. وخلاصة القول، يستنتج هذا البحث أن الرواية تُمثل الترابط بين اضطهاد المرأة والتدهور البيئي من خلال تجربة الهيمنة المشتركة، والمعاناة المتبادلة، فضلاً عن العلاقة التي تُؤكد على الرعاية والبقاء والتواصل بين الإنسان والطبيعة في خضم النزاع المسلح.

ABSTRAK

Afifah, Lailatul. (2026), *Perempuan dan Alam dalam Novel As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow karya Zoulfa Katouh: Sebuah Analisis Ekofeminis*. Skripsi. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing: Miftahul Huda, M.Pd., Ph.D.

Kata Kunci: Ekofeminisme, alam, penindasan terhadap perempuan, kerusakan alam,

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* karya Zoulfa Katouh menggambarkan hubungan antara penindasan terhadap perempuan dan kerusakan alam dalam konteks perang. Sumber data penelitian ini adalah novel karya Katouh yang pertama kali diterbitkan pada tahun 2022 oleh Little, Brown and Company. Data penelitian berupa kata, frasa, kalimat, dialog, dan narasi yang berkaitan dengan perempuan, alam, perang, kekerasan, relasi kuasa, kepedulian, dan perlawanan. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kritik sastra yang menerapkan kritik sastra ekofeminis, terutama berdasarkan gagasan Vandana Shiva. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa hubungan antara penindasan terhadap perempuan dan kerusakan alam direpresentasikan melalui tiga pola besar. Pertama, novel ini menampilkan dominasi bersama (*shared domination*), yaitu perempuan dan alam sama-sama diposisikan sebagai entitas rentan yang terdampak oleh perang dan kekerasan struktural. Kedua, novel ini menunjukkan penderitaan dan kontrol yang mewujud dalam tubuh (*embodied suffering and control*) yang menunjukkan bahwa kerusakan lingkungan berjalan sejajar dengan penderitaan yang dialami perempuan. Ketiga, novel ini menampilkan pola keterkaitan kehidupan dan kepedulian (*interconnected life and care*) yang menunjukkan bahwa perempuan berperan dalam mempertahankan kehidupan dan bahwa manusia serta alam direpresentasikan sebagai entitas yang saling terhubung dan bergantung satu sama lain. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa konsep perempuan sebagai agen perlawanan terhadap kerusakan lingkungan tidak direpresentasikan secara kuat dalam novel karena didukung oleh data tekstual yang terbatas. Dengan demikian, Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa novel tersebut merepresentasikan keterkaitan antara penindasan terhadap perempuan dan kerusakan alam melalui pengalaman dominasi bersama, penderitaan yang saling berkaitan, serta hubungan yang menekankan kepedulian, keberlangsungan hidup, dan keterhubungan antara manusia dengan alam di tengah konflik bersenjata.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, problem of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Literature has long been viewed as a medium for documenting and representing various issues of human life, including gender and nature. In the development of contemporary literary studies, attention to these issues has increased, particularly when literary texts present serious topics such as war. In this context, war is viewed as a conflict among humans and as an event with extensive effects on life, including the destruction of nature and changes in habitat (Griffith, 2022). Interestingly, the oppression of women and the destruction of nature frequently coexist in many contemporary literary texts. These two issues are often intertwined within the same system of power, which requires a critical approach to examine their connection more comprehensively.

Ecofeminism is a relevant approach to examining this connection. This approach emphasizes that women and nature are both subjected to the power of a patriarchal system that positions them as objects to be controlled and exploited. In literary studies, ecofeminism is used to reveal how texts represent the relationship between gender and nature, while also demonstrating similar patterns of domination over both.

Several recent studies have shown that ecofeminist literary criticism serves not only to read symbols or metaphors but also to understand the role of social and ideological structures in literary texts (Yang & Yang, 2026). In addition, other studies have emphasized that the oppression of women and destruction of nature is rooted in the same logic of domination; therefore, both often become victims in situations of crisis, such as war (Chinsya & Sain, 2024). Thus, ecofeminism provides a strong framework for examining literary texts that present the connection between nature and gender.

In this case, Zoulfa Katouh's novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* (2022) is an interesting object of study. The novel presents the life of Salama, the main character, during the Syrian war, which is filled with fear and loss. After her family dies in the war, Salama suffers from anxiety while volunteering in a hospital. She witnesses many women lose their family, live in fear, and struggle to survive in situations that limit their freedom and sense of security. In addition to facing the trauma of death and violence around her, Salama is continuously pressured to choose between leaving her homeland or staying for the sake of those who are still living around her. The lives of women in this novel demonstrate how war creates suffering, fear, and limitations that place women in a vulnerable position.

The novel also presents various depictions of the city during the war. The air is filled with the smoke and dust, the roads are littered with fallen buildings, and explosions continue to occur around the city. The hospital where Salama works is filled with bloodied victims, while many homes that have been previously occupied by families are now empty or destroyed. Parts of the city are illustrated as having

lost their warmth, including the lemon trees that are often recalled as part of the characters' memories of the past. Through this setting, the story creates a gloomy atmosphere with ruined structures where the survivors no longer feel safe.

As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow presents the oppression of women and the destruction of nature into one story. In addition to dealing with violence and social pressure, the female characters in the novel also face rapidly deteriorating environment. This suggests that both nature and women's bodies are vulnerable to harm. From an ecofeminist standpoint, this condition can be interpreted as a representation of a structure of domination that views women and the natural world as objects that can be controlled and manipulated.

Nevertheless, earlier studies examining the novel mainly investigate the themes of psychology, trauma, and character identity during wartime. These studies view the novel as a depiction of characters' difficulties under harsh conditions, which involve mainly internal conflicts, social pressures, and the effects of violence. For example, Nugrahani and Istiani (2025) used Sartre's existentialism to analyze Salama's freedom of choice during the war. They found that the main character faced an existential dilemma: whether to leave Syria for safety or stay for the sake of her family and homeland. This study emphasized individual freedom and personal responsibility, but did not discuss how these experiences relate to environmental conditions also affected by the war. Rahmah and Panggabean (2025) examined the formation of the main character's identity through inner conflicts arising from loss, fear, and social pressure. They demonstrated that the experience of war plays a significant role in shaping how the character views herself and the

society around her. However, this study focused more on the development of the character's identity than on the relationship between the women's experiences and the environment in which they live.

Similarly, some studies have used trauma as the primary focus of analysis. For example, El Gebali (2025) used trauma theory to examine the psychological impact of war on Salama. The study found that the loss of family members, exposure to violence, and persistent stress led to PTSD symptoms, manifested through anxiety and hallucinations. Meanwhile, Najam and Gul (2025) demonstrated that the trauma in the novel is not only experienced individually but also represents the collective trauma of Syrian society through the use of narrative techniques such as time fragmentation and recurring memories. Both studies provide a deep understanding of the psychological impact of war, but they still focus on the human experience and fail to connect it to the environmental conditions present in the narrative.

Some researchers have begun to analyze the novel in relation to gender and nature, although these two aspects have not yet been systematically connected. Latumeten and Nofansyah (2024) used an ecocritical approach to analyze the representation of nature in the novel. They found that lemon trees, gardens, and various natural elements serve as symbols of hope, resilience, and remembrance of pre-war life. This research highlights the emotional connection between humans and the environment, but does not discuss how these natural conditions relate to the experiences of women in the story. Nurhayati et al. (2025) used an intersectional feminist perspective to examine women's experiences during conflict. They found

that women face various forms of vulnerability due to war, reinforced by patriarchal structures, so that their traumatic experiences become a form of awareness and resistance to social domination. However, the focus of this research remains on gendered experiences and does not link them to environmental representations in the novel.

Beyond the study of *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, several ecofeminist studies also demonstrate a close connection between women and nature in literary works. Setiyawan et al. (2024) found that women and nature are represented as both experiencing marginalization and possessing the potential to serve as symbols of resistance. Lestari and Fraida (2025) demonstrated that female characters act as bridges between humans and nature and contribute to environmental restoration. Fauzi and Sulistyaningsih (2023) emphasized that women's interactions with nature influence the formation of characters' self-awareness and identity. Meanwhile, Nehal (2024) found that a connection with nature can be a means of recovery from traumatic experiences. In general, these studies demonstrate that ecofeminism can uncover the connection between women and nature in various literary contexts. However, these studies were conducted on different subjects and therefore do not yet explain how this relationship is represented in this novel, particularly in the context of war.

Based on these studies, it can be seen that studies on *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* tend to be divided into two main trends: those focusing on the experiences and psychological conditions of female characters and those highlighting environmental representations in the novel. Although both aspects

have been discussed, the connection between women's experiences and environmental conditions as two interrelated phenomena has not received adequate attention. In fact, this novel consistently presents women's suffering and depictions of the war-affected environment side by side. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap through Vandana Shiva's ecofeminist approach to analyze how the connection between oppression of women and destruction of nature is represented in the context of war.

B. Problem of the Study

The researcher formulates one research question to guide this study: How does Zoulfâ Katouh's *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* illustrates the connection between the oppression of women and the destruction of nature in the context of war?

C. Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of ecofeminism in literary studies. This study aims to expand the use of Shiva's perspective as a way of analyzing contemporary literature, especially Zoulfâ Katouh's *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* (2022). The findings of this study may enrich contemporary literary criticism by providing some insights on the connection between the oppression of women and destruction of nature in the novel.

Practically, this study can serve as an academic reference for students or researchers who are interested in ecofeminism in contemporary literary studies, especially in connection to gender and nature. This study can help readers understand that woman and nature issues are interconnected, especially in the

context of war. This study also provides a new perspective in reading Zoulfa Katouh's work, not only as a narrative of trauma but also as a reflection of the connection between humans and nature.

D. Scope and Limitation

This study examines the connection between the oppression of women and destruction of nature as represented in Zoulfa Katouh's novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* (2022). The scope of this study is limited to how these two issues appear and are connected within the context of the war that becomes the setting of the story. The connection is the aspect of the oppression of women and the destruction of nature.

This study is limited to analyzing the connection between oppression of women and the destruction of nature in Zoulfa Katouh's novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*. This study focus was chosen because the connection between women and nature is a central concept in ecofeminism, particularly in Shiva's perspective, which emphasizes that various forms of domination of women and nature are rooted in the same system. Although the novel raises various other themes such as trauma, loss, identity, romance, and political conflict, this study does not explore these themes in depth because the aim is to understand how women's experiences and natural conditions are represented as two interrelated phenomena in the context of war. Furthermore, this study does not compare with other literary works and does not discuss in detail the historical facts of the conflict that forms the background of the story, but rather focuses on the representation of the connection between women and nature as illustrated in the text.

E. Definition of Key Terms

The following definitions are provided to avoid misunderstanding and clarify some key terms used in this study.

1. **Ecofeminism** is an approach that examines the connection between the oppression of women and the destruction of nature within a patriarchal system. In this study, ecofeminism is used to understand how women and nature are represented as objects of domination in literary texts (Shiva, 1988)
2. **Nature** refers to the natural environment, encompassing physical elements such as soil, water, plants, and living spaces that support the sustainability of life. From an ecofeminist perspective, nature is not viewed as an object separate from humans, but rather as part of an interdependent network of life. Ecofeminists argue that the patriarchal perspective, which positions nature as something to be controlled and exploited, is linked to the treatment of women within the social structure. In this study, nature refers to the environment represented in the novel and its relationship to the lived experiences of the female characters in the context of war (Shiva, 1988; Warren, 2000).
3. **Oppression of women** refers to various forms of marginalization, control, and injustice experienced by women, both socially and culturally, in conflict situations. In this study, this term refers to women's experiences of being restricted, controlled, or disadvantaged in the context of war, as illustrated in the novel (Warren, 2000)

4. ***Destruction of nature*** refers to environmental or natural damage caused by human activity, including the impacts of war, such as the destruction of living spaces, the loss of ecological balance, and damage to the surrounding environment. In this study, the term is used to examine how nature is illustrated as being damaged in the text (Garrard, 2011).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter discusses three main things. The first is the description of ecofeminism and literature. The second is ecofeminism in Vandana Shiva's perspective. The third is analytical dimensions of the woman and nature connection.

A. Ecofeminism and Literature

Ecofeminism in literary studies refers to a critical approach that examines the connection between women and nature as represented in literary texts, particularly in the context of power relations, domination, and exploitation. Ecofeminism itself developed from the awareness that the oppression of women and the destruction of nature share the same roots: a patriarchal system and a dualistic perspective that places men above women and positions culture above nature. In literary criticism, this approach is used to study how literary texts reproduce or criticize such systems of domination (Gaard, 2011; Plumwood, 1993). Ecofeminism views literature both as an artistic creation and as an ideological space that illustrates the relationship among humans, gender, and the natural world.

Moreover, ecofeminism emphasizes how women are frequently associated with nature in literary contexts, whether as fertile, passive, or exploitable. This association shows that societal structures influence the way women and nature are perceived. Plumwood (1993) argues that binary opposition such as female/male and nature/culture serve to justify domination by devaluing women and the natural

world. For this reason, ecofeminist literary criticism aims to reveal how literary texts represent, question, or reinforce these connections.

In literary studies, ecofeminism is used to examine how literary works represent the connection between women and nature and how this connection relates to systems of power operating in society. Literature functions not only as an imaginative work, but also as a cultural product that reflects the values, ideologies, and social realities of its time. Therefore, representations of women and nature in literary works often demonstrate particular perspectives on gender and nature. Through an ecofeminist approach, literary texts can be read as spaces that demonstrate how domination over women and nature is constructed, maintained, or even challenged through various narrative elements such as characters, conflicts, symbols, and settings (Gaard, 2011).

From an ecofeminist perspective, the concept of nature holds a crucial position. Nature is not understood solely as the physical environment consisting of forests, rivers, soil, plants, and animals. Nature is viewed as a living system that supports the survival of all living things and possesses intrinsic value independent of its economic benefits to humans. This view differs from the modern paradigm, which often views nature as a resource available to be exploited for development and economic growth. For ecofeminists, nature is not a passive object that can be used indefinitely, but rather part of an interconnected and interdependent web of life (Shiva, 1988)

According to Shiva (1988), destruction of nature is inseparable from the modern development system, which is oriented towards control, production, and

exploitation. Shiva explains that nature is often treated as something that has no value except when it can generate economic profit. This perspective leads to various forms of destruction of nature, such as deforestation, pollution, biodiversity loss, and the plundering of natural resources. Within an ecofeminist framework, the exploitation of nature shares ideological roots with the oppression of women, as both arise from systems that place domination and control as primary principles. Therefore, destruction of nature is understood not only as an ecological issue, but also as a social, political, and ethical one.

Ecofeminism also views nature as a space with symbolic meaning in human life. In literary works, nature often appears as a symbol of life, hope, sustainability, identity, and collective memory. Conversely, the destruction of nature is often used to represent violence, loss, suffering, and the collapse of social life. Therefore, nature in literary works functions not only as a setting for events but also as an element that contributes to constructing the meaning and message of the story. Ecofeminist analysis seeks to uncover how these representations of nature relate to issues of gender, power, and social injustice that emerge in the text (Shiva, 1988)

Another important concept in ecofeminism is the women-nature connection. This connection is not understood as a natural biological one, but rather as one formed through social, cultural, and historical experiences. In many societies, women are closely involved in activities related to sustaining life, such as food management, water provision, family care, and natural resource conservation. Because of this close connection, women are often the group most affected by destruction of nature. Shiva explains that women in various local communities

possess crucial knowledge and experience in maintaining sustainable livelihoods, so destruction of nature often directly impacts their lives (Shiva, 1988)

The connection between women and nature is the basis for ecofeminist arguments that the oppression of women and the destruction of nature stem from the same structures of domination. Gaard (2011) explains that ecofeminism highlights the interconnectedness of various forms of oppression rooted in ideologies that legitimize the subordination of certain groups. Thus, destruction of nature cannot be separated from issues of social injustice, including gender inequality. This perspective allows readers to see that women's experiences and natural conditions in literary works are often interconnected and shape broader meanings about power, domination, and resistance.

As a form of cultural representation, literature plays a crucial role in presenting and critiquing various social issues, including patriarchy, war, and environmental destruction. Through characters, conflicts, symbols, and narratives, literary works can demonstrate how women and nature experience similar forms of oppression within specific social systems. At the same time, literature can also present various forms of resistance to this domination. Therefore, ecofeminism is a relevant approach to analyzing literary works that present the connection between women and nature, especially in the context of conflict and war which often result in human suffering as well as environmental destruction.

B. Ecofeminism in Vandana Shiva's Perspective

Shiva's ideas serve as one of important bases for ecofeminism, especially in exploring the connection among women, nature, and power. According to Shiva (1988), patriarchy and modern capitalism are the sources of many forms of oppression, including the oppression of women and the destruction of nature. These oppressive systems exploit nature as a source that can be continuously controlled, while ignoring sustainability. In the same way, women are also often viewed as instruments in the processes of production and reproduction under patriarchal control (Shiva, 1988).

Shiva highlights that the modern scientific and reductionist paradigm have changed the understanding of nature from a living entity into an object of exploitation. Instead of being seen as a living organism, nature is reduced to an object that can be used and controlled. Within this framework, women are seen as having dual relations with nature. As stated by Shiva (1988), women are not merely victims of environmental destruction but also important agents in maintaining ecological balance.

To understand the connection between women and nature from an ecofeminist perspective, several key concepts in Shiva's thinking serve as the foundation for this research. In *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (1988), Shiva explains that the connection between women and nature cannot be separated from a critique of patriarchy and the modern development paradigm. According to Shiva, women and nature both experience marginalization due to a system that prioritizes domination, exploitation, and control over life. This

connection is explained through three main concepts: nature as the feminine principle, nature and women as producers of life, and gender ideology vs. the recovery of the feminine principle. These three concepts form the basis for understanding how women and nature are positioned in society and how both face various forms of oppression stemming from the patriarchal system and modern development (Shiva, 1988).

1. Nature as the Feminine Principle

The concept of nature as the feminine principle stems from Shiva's view that nature is not an inanimate object that merely serves as a resource for humans. Nature is understood as an active, dynamic, and self-renewing living system. Nature has the ability to nurture, regenerate, and sustain the lives of various living creatures. Therefore, nature cannot be viewed as passive or unproductive, as is often portrayed in the modern development paradigm (Shiva, 1988).

Shiva explains that the feminine principle does not refer to biological female sex, but rather to values that support the continuity of life, such as nurturing, cooperation, diversity, and regeneration. In this perspective, nature is seen as a source of life that continuously produces and sustains life through various interconnected ecological processes. However, these values are often neglected by the modern development system, which emphasizes control, exploitation, and economic profit (Shiva, 1988).

According to Shiva, one of the main problems in modern development is the reductionist perspective that views nature solely as a collection of resources to be exploited for human benefit. This perspective ignores the interdependence within

ecosystems. In fact, life exists through the interconnectedness of various natural elements that form a web of life. When this connection is disrupted through excessive exploitation, the ecological balance is also disrupted (Shiva, 1988)

Shiva also emphasized that the current ecological crisis is a result of the displacement of the feminine principle in how humans view nature. When nature is no longer understood as a living entity with intrinsic value, but is merely viewed as an economic object, exploitation of nature becomes normal. As a result, various forms of environmental damage arise as a consequence of human domination of nature. For Shiva, the restoration of the feminine principle is crucial because it emphasizes respect for life, diversity, and the mutually supportive relationships within nature (Shiva, 1988). Thus, nature as the feminine principle demonstrates that nature is an active and interconnected living system. This concept forms the basis for Shiva's thinking that the human connection with nature should be built through cooperation and nurturing life, not through domination and exploitation.

2. Nature and Women as Producers of Life

The concept of nature and women as producers of life is one of the central ideas in Shiva's ecofeminist thinking. According to Shiva, both nature and women play equally important roles in maintaining the continuity of life. Nature provides various basic needs that enable living things to survive, such as water, soil, plants, and food sources. At the same time, women also play a role in various activities that support daily life, such as providing food, managing natural resources, caring

for families, and meeting basic community needs. Therefore, women and nature are seen as contributing equally to the sustainability of life (Shiva, 1988).

Shiva critiques the modern development paradigm, which only recognizes activities that generate economic profit as a form of productivity. In this system, various activities carried out by nature and women are often considered unproductive because they do not generate direct financial returns. However, human survival is highly dependent on natural processes and women's work, which is often invisible in the formal economic system. Shiva stated that this assumption arises because the definition of productivity used in modern development focuses more on commodity production than on the production of life (Shiva, 1988).

According to Shiva, from a woman's perspective, productivity should be understood as the ability to produce and sustain life (life and sustenance). Nature is considered productive because it has the ability to renew itself and provide the various necessities that sustain life. Likewise, women are considered productive because through their knowledge, skills, and work, the basic needs of families and communities can be met. Although these contributions are often overlooked in modern economic calculations, these roles remain fundamental to human survival (Shiva, 1988)

Shiva explained that women in many local communities have a close connection with nature because they are directly involved in activities related to resource management to meet their needs. Women collect water, find fuel, provide food, and utilize various natural resources to support family and community life. Therefore, when the nature is damaged, women are often the first to feel the impact.

Reduced water availability, forest destruction, or declining soil fertility will increase women's workload because they must expend more time and energy to meet needs that were previously more readily available (Shiva, 1988).

Furthermore, Shiva emphasized that development oriented toward economic growth often reduces the capacity of nature and women to generate livelihoods. When natural resources are diverted for commercial production, nature's function as a life support is disrupted. At the same time, women lose access to the resources they traditionally use to meet their needs. As a result, destruction of nature is not only threatens the sustainability of ecosystems but also worsens the living conditions of women, especially those who depend directly on nature for survival (Shiva, 1988).

Based on this perspective, Shiva views women and nature as producers of life because both play a central role in creating, nurturing, and sustaining life. Nature provides the conditions that enable life to exist, while women contribute through various activities that support the fulfillment of life's needs. Therefore, respect for nature and women is crucial because both are the primary foundation for human survival and ecological balance (Shiva, 1988).

3. Gender Ideology vs. the Recovery of the Feminine Principle

The concept of gender ideology and the recovery of the feminine principle is Shiva's critique of the patriarchal system that shapes how humans view women and nature. According to Shiva, patriarchy not only creates gender inequality but also constructs an ideology that places men, particularly Western men associated

with modern science and technology, at the center of power. In this system, women and nature are positioned as inferior, passive, and dependent on the control of those deemed superior. As a result, the domination of women and the exploitation of nature are considered normal and even necessary for achieving development and progress (Shiva, 1988).

Shiva explains that this ideology developed through the modern development paradigm, which she calls maldevelopment. Unlike development, which should improve the quality of life, maldevelopment actually results in social inequality and ecological destruction. Modern development often prioritizes economic growth, commodity production, and capital accumulation without regard for sustainability. In this process, nature is treated as a resource to be exploited, while women's contributions to sustaining life are invisible and unappreciated. Therefore, Shiva (1988) calls maldevelopment a form of development that eliminates or marginalizes the feminine principle (the death of the feminine principle).

According to Shiva, one of the ideological foundations of maldevelopment is dualistic thinking. Dualism divides the world into opposing pairs, such as male and female, culture and nature, reason and emotion, and human and nature. In these connections, the former is always placed in a superior position to the latter. Men are associated with rationality, knowledge, and power, while women are associated with nature, the body, and emotions. This hierarchical division is then used to justify the domination of women and nature because both are considered less valuable than the dominant entity (Shiva, 1988).

Furthermore, Shiva argues that the domination of women and nature is rooted in the exclusion of the feminine principle from social, economic, and scientific life. In modern society, values related to the preservation of life, diversity, cooperation, and sustainability are often considered less important than values related to control, competition, efficiency, and exploitation. As a result, women and nature lose their position as creators and sustainers of life and are reduced to objects to be exploited for economic gain and power. Shiva asserts that violence against nature and the oppression of women arise from this process of subordination to the feminine principle (Shiva, 1988).

In response to this situation, Shiva offers the idea of the recovery of the feminine principle. The recovery of the feminine principle does not mean prioritizing women over men, but rather restoring life-supporting values to the way humans understand the world. The feminine principle includes respect for diversity, the interconnectedness of living things, sustainability, and the responsibility to preserve life. Shiva believes that the environmental crisis and gender inequality cannot be resolved solely through technological change or economic policy but also requires a shift in perspective on the connection between humans, nature, and each other (Shiva, 1988).

Thus, the concepts of gender ideology vs. the recovery of the feminine principle demonstrate that the oppression of women and the destruction of nature stem from a patriarchal ideology that prioritizes domination and control. Therefore, the restoration of the feminine principle is an important step in building a more just relationship between humans and nature and creating a form of development that is

oriented towards the sustainability of life, not just exploitation and accumulation of profit.

C. Analytical Dimensions of the Woman and Nature Connection

Based on three main concepts proposed by Shiva (1988), the researcher summarizes six analytical dimensions to identify the connection between women and nature in the novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*. These six dimensions were used as analytical categories in interpreting the research data.

1. Women and Nature as Equally Dominated Entities

One of the key ideas in Shiva's ecofeminism is that women and nature experience similar forms of domination within patriarchal systems. According to Shiva, modern development positions nature and women as objects to be controlled and exploited for economic interests and power. In this perspective, both are often considered passive, lacking value, and their existence is only recognized to the extent that they support the production and development process (Shiva, 1988).

Shiva explains that this domination arises because the contributions of women and nature to sustaining life are often not recognized as important forms of productivity. Nature, which provides various necessities of life, and women, who play a role in maintaining the continuity of families and communities, are often viewed as unproductive because their activities do not generate direct economic benefits. As a result, women and nature are both reduced to resources that can be exploited to meet the needs of modern development (Shiva, 1988).

Furthermore, Shiva states that the exploitation of nature often goes hand in hand with the marginalization of women. When land, forests, and natural resources are diverted for commercial production, women often lose access to the resources that sustain their lives. This situation demonstrates that destruction of nature is not only impacts the environment but also reinforces the injustices experienced by women (Shiva, 1988).

Based on this perspective, Shiva observes that the oppression of women and the destruction of nature stem from the same ideological roots: a patriarchal system that prioritizes domination and control. Therefore, the struggle to protect nature and the fight for gender justice are inseparable, as both are efforts to challenge the same form of domination (Shiva, 1988).

2. Destruction of Nature as a Parallel to the Oppression of Women

From Shiva's ecofeminist perspective, destruction of nature and the oppression of women are two interrelated forms of injustice. Shiva argues that both arise from a patriarchal system that places domination and control as the basis of social connections and the connection between humans and nature. Within this system, nature is viewed as a resource to be exploited, while women are positioned as a group that can be controlled and exploited. Consequently, the destruction of nature and the oppression of women often occur simultaneously because they both stem from the same perspective (Shiva, 1988).

Shiva explains that modern development often results in ecological destruction through the exploitation of land, forests, water, and other natural resources. At the same time, this process also worsens the conditions of women

because they lose access to the resources that support their daily lives. When nature is degraded, women are often the most affected group because they are directly involved in providing for the needs of their families and communities. Therefore, destruction of nature is not only an environmental problem but also a form of social injustice that impacts women's lives (Shiva, 1988).

According to Shiva, both nature and women experience a process of marginalization through a perspective that views life-sustaining activities as unproductive. Nature's contribution to sustaining life and women's role in maintaining family continuity are often overlooked because they do not generate direct economic benefits. Consequently, both are reduced to objects whose value is measured solely by the economic benefits they provide. This view legitimizes the exploitation of nature while reinforcing women's subordination in society (Shiva, 1988).

Based on this thinking, Shiva observes that destruction of nature can be understood as a parallel to the oppression of women, as both are consequences of the same patriarchal ideology. Therefore, efforts to address the environmental crisis cannot be separated from the struggle for gender justice, as both are rooted in structures of domination that sacrifice life for power and economic gain (Shiva, 1988).

3. Women as Caregivers of Nature and Life

In Shiva's thinking, women have a close connection with nature because both play an important role in preserving and sustaining life. Shiva explains that in many communities, women are directly involved in various activities related to

meeting basic needs, such as providing food, collecting water, gathering fuel, and managing natural resources for the needs of their families and communities. Through these activities, women not only utilize nature but also participate in maintaining the sustainability of life that depends on it (Shiva, 1988).

According to Shiva, women's role in sustaining life is often overlooked in the modern development paradigm. Economic systems tend to value only work that generates financial gain, while activities related to care, maintenance, and meeting daily needs are considered unproductive. Yet, this work makes a vital contribution to the sustainability of families, communities, and the environment. Therefore, Shiva emphasizes that women are one of the groups that play a role as sustainers of life, along with nature (Shiva, 1988).

This close connection with nature also means that women are often the first to feel the impact of environmental damage. When forests diminish, water sources decline, or soil loses its fertility, the burden on women to meet their daily needs increases. This situation demonstrates that the sustainability of human life depends heavily on a balanced connection between women and nature. Therefore, Shiva views women as caregivers of nature and life because their role is not only to care for their families but also to support the sustainability of life through close interaction with nature (Shiva, 1988).

4. Women and Nature as Agents of Resistance against Environmental Destruction

From Shiva's ecofeminist perspective, women are not only seen as victims of environmental damage, but also as agents playing a role in protecting and

sustaining life. Because of their close connection with nature through various activities to fulfill their daily needs, women are often the first to recognize the impacts of environmental damage. This experience encourages women to engage in various forms of action aimed at preserving natural resources and maintaining conditions that support life (Shiva, 1988)

Shiva explains that various women-led environmental movements emerged in response to development that destroys nature and threatens community life. This resistance is not solely aimed at protecting nature, but also at preserving the resources that are fundamental to the survival of families and communities. In this context, women's actions to protect forests, land, water, and other natural resources represent a form of resistance against a development system that prioritizes exploitation and economic profit over the sustainability of life (Shiva, 1988).

According to Shiva, women's resistance is rooted in feminine principles that value life, diversity, and the interconnectedness of living things. By preserving nature, women simultaneously challenge patriarchal ideologies that view nature as objects of exploitation and women as passive participants. Therefore, women can be understood as agents of resistance because they play an active role in maintaining life and fighting for a more just connection between humans and nature (Shiva, 1988).

5. Structural Violence against Women and Nature

From Shiva's ecofeminist perspective, the oppression of women and the destruction of nature occur not only through direct actions but also through violence embedded in social, economic, and political systems. This form of violence is often

referred to as structural violence, which is a condition where a system consistently produces injustice and disadvantage for certain groups. Shiva explains that the modern development paradigm has created structures that enable the exploitation of nature while marginalizing women. Consequently, destruction of nature and oppression of women are not isolated events, but rather consequences of the same system (Shiva, 1988)

According to Shiva, development oriented toward economic growth often neglects the needs of local communities and environmental sustainability. When forests are cut down, land is converted for industrial purposes, or natural resources are overexploited, the groups most affected are those whose livelihoods depend on nature, especially women. Although not always subjected to physical violence, women lose access to resources essential for daily life. In this context, destruction of nature indirectly results in suffering and worsens women's position in society (Shiva, 1988).

Shiva also explained that modern science and development often ignore women's local knowledge and consider it less valuable than dominant scientific knowledge. As a result, women are increasingly excluded from decision-making processes related to the environment and development. At the same time, nature is treated as an object to be controlled and exploited without considering its long-term impacts. This situation demonstrates that both women and nature are victims of power structures that prioritize domination, control, and economic profit (Shiva, 1988).

Based on this perspective, structural violence against women and nature can be understood as a form of injustice generated by patriarchal systems and modern development. This violence is not always directly visible but operates through policies, institutions, and ways of thinking that continue to maintain women's subordination and the exploitation of nature. Therefore, Shiva believes that efforts to achieve gender justice and environmental sustainability must begin with changing the structures and ideologies that cause these forms of injustice (Shiva, 1988).

6. Critique of Dualism (Nature/Culture and Male/Female)

One of Shiva's main critiques in *Staying Alive* is the dualistic way of thinking that has developed within modern science and the patriarchal system. Dualism divides the world into opposing pairs, such as nature and culture (nature/culture), women and men (female/male), and matter and mind (matter/mind). In this division, the former is often placed in a subordinate position to the latter. As a result, nature is considered inferior to culture, while women are considered inferior to men (Shiva, 1988).

According to Shiva (1988), this dualistic way of thinking underlies the emergence of various forms of domination in modern society. Modern science, which has developed since the Scientific Revolution, has established a strict separation between humans and nature, and between men and women. This separation is then used to justify human control over nature and men's authority over women. Shiva explains that the ideology of modern science and gender

ideology reinforce each other because both are based on the idea of domination over those deemed inferior.

Shiva also shows that a mechanistic view of nature changes the way humans understand the environment. Nature is no longer viewed as a living, interconnected system, but as an object to be manipulated and exploited. At the same time, women are increasingly associated with nature and placed in a subordinate position within the social structure. Therefore, the domination of nature and the subordination of women develop through the same logic: the assumption that those deemed inferior can be controlled for the benefit of those deemed superior (Shiva, 1988).

Alternatively, Shiva advocates a view that emphasizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of living beings. She rejects rigid divisions between humans and nature, or between men and women. She believes that life proceeds through complementary connections, not through the domination of one over the other. Therefore, a critique of dualism is crucial in ecofeminism because it helps explain how the destruction of nature and the oppression of women stem from the same, interrelated mindset (Shiva, 1988).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter explains the research method used in this study, including the research design, data source, data collection, and data analysis.

A. Research Design

This study is a literary criticism study because the object of analysis is a literary work, namely Zoulfa Katouh's *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*. The study focuses on interpreting the meaning and representation of the connection between women and nature in the literary text. Literary criticism is used because this study does not aim to test empirical data, but rather to interpret how the novel represents the oppression of women and the destruction of nature in the context of war through narrative, symbolic, and descriptive elements within the (Tyson, 2023).

The study applies ecofeminist literary criticism because this approach allows the researcher to analyze the connection between the patriarchal domination of women and the exploitation of nature as illustrated in the novel. This approach is relevant because the novel presents the experiences of women living during war while also showing the destruction of nature as part of an oppressive system.

Ecofeminism is used as the main theoretical framework, especially the ideas of Vandana Shiva. Shiva's perspective is used to understand the connection between patriarchy, violence, war, and the exploitation of nature (Shiva, 1988). In this study, ecofeminist theory is used to interpret how women and nature are positioned as objects of control, violence, and exploitation in the novel. The theory

is also used to analyze how nature is represented as a space of hope, memory, and resistance for female characters in wartime situations.

B. Data Source

The data source of this study is Zoulfah Katouh's novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, first published in 2022 by Little, Brown and Company. The novel was chosen because it depicts the lives of Syrians during war through the experiences of female characters who face violence, loss, trauma, and destruction of nature. The novel also depicts the destruction of nature and changes in environmental conditions that occur alongside the women's oppression. These issues are relevant to an ecofeminist perspective because they show the interconnectedness among patriarchal domination, violence, women's oppression, and destruction of nature.

The data in this study consist of words, phrases, sentences, dialogue, narratives, and descriptions that show the representation of women and nature in the novel. Data were taken from sections of the story that depict the female characters' experiences facing social pressure, fear, loss, and the limitations of life caused by war. Data were also drawn from environmental descriptions depicting destruction, death, and the destruction of living spaces as a result of war. This study also focuses on data that demonstrate the characters' emotional relationships with nature, including how nature is represented as a space of hope, memory, and resistance.

C. Data Collection

The data for this study was collected through close reading of *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*. The researcher read the novel carefully to identify textual

data related to the representation of oppression's women, the destruction of nature, war, and power relations from an ecofeminist perspective. This technique was used to understand the meanings of the narrative, symbolic, and descriptive elements in the novel.

In more detail, the data collection process involved the following steps: First, read the novel thoroughly several times to gain a comprehensive understanding of the story, characters, and major issues presented in the text. Second, marking words, phrases, sentences, dialogues, and narrations that reflected the oppression of women, the destruction of nature, women's caregiving roles, forms of resistance, structural violence, and other issues related to ecofeminism. Fourth, classifying the collected data into several categories based on the ecofeminist concepts proposed by Shiva (see Chapter II).

D. Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using an ecofeminist literary criticism approach based on the ecofeminist theory of Shiva and Warren. The analysis focused on interpreting textual data that show the connection between the oppression of women and the destruction of nature in *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*.

The data analysis process involved the following steps: First, the researcher conducted a close reading of *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* to identify textual data related to women, nature, destruction of nature, and other issues relevant to ecofeminism. Second, the selected data were categorized based on the ecofeminist concepts derived from Shiva's theory. Third, each data excerpt was analyzed by

examining its narrative context in the novel. Fourth, the researcher interpreted the significance of each data by identifying how the selected passage represents women, nature, or the relationship between them. Fifth, the interpretation was connected to Shiva's ecofeminist perspective. Finally, conclusions were drawn from the analysis of individual data and then synthesized within each category to identify broader patterns regarding the relationship between the oppression of women and the destruction of nature in the context of war.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the answers to the study question concerning the connection between the oppression of women and the destruction of nature in the context of war in Zoulfia Katouh's *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*.

A. Analytical Dimensions of the Women and Nature Connection

The connection between oppression of women and destruction of nature in this novel is examined using Vandana Shiva's ecofeminist perspective. This analysis is based on three key concepts proposed by Shiva and to facilitate data analysis in the novel, these three concepts are operationalized into six analytical dimensions as discussed in the chapter II. This analysis is conducted based on these analytical results. Of the six dimensions of the connection between women and nature, there are five dimensions that stand out in this novel.

1. Women and Nature as Equally Dominated Entities

One of the main dimensions of the connection between women and nature in *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* is demonstrated through the depiction of environmental destruction as a reflection of women's oppression in a war situation. This connection can be seen in the description of the city at the beginning of the story:

Spring, the symbol of new life, does not extend to worn out Syria. Least of all my city, Homs. Misery reigns strong in the dead, heavy branches and rubble, thwarted only by the hope in people's hearts (p. 11).

This quote appears as Salama walks home after working at the hospital. She witnesses the war-torn city of Homs. The streets are cracked, buildings are crumbling, and trees are devastated. At the same time, Salama herself is experiencing physical and psychological exhaustion after working with war victims all day.

The description “*dead, heavy branches*” suggests that nature, usually synonymous with growth and life, has lost its natural function. Spring, which symbolically brings rebirth, is unable to revive an environment devastated by war. This situation parallels Salama’s situation. As a young woman who should be living a normal life as a pharmacy student, she is instead forced to become an emergency medical worker, constantly confronted with death. Thus, war not only destroys the ecological space in which humans live, but also destroys the future and lives of the women who live within it.

According to Shiva (1988), women and nature are both victims of a system of domination that prioritizes control and power. In this data, the destruction of nature and Salama’s suffering are not two separate events. Nature loses its ability to sustain life, while Salama loses the opportunity to live the life she was meant to have. Both experience the impact of the same structure of violence.

These data demonstrate that war produces forms of domination that simultaneously affect both nature and women. The ecological damage and Salama’s suffering represent both women’s positions as victims of a destructive system of power.

Further evidence can be seen in the following narrative:

The neighborhood hasn't had water or electricity in weeks. It used to come in bursts but has stopped altogether with the siege. Luckily it rained last week, so Layla and I put out buckets to collect the water (p. 19).

The scene shows Salama explained that her neighborhood had lost access to water and electricity for weeks due to a military siege. To obtain water, she and Layla had to collect rainwater in buckets.

Water is one of the most fundamental natural elements for survival. When access to this natural resource is disrupted by war, the impact is directly felt by women in their daily lives. Salama and Layla must adapt all their activities to the scarcity of water. Interestingly, the novel depicts not just environmental damage, but how women must work harder to maintain life amidst such damage.

Shiva (1988) explained that when natural resources are destroyed or appropriated, women are often the most impacted because their lives are directly linked to those resources. In this data, the loss of water access not only demonstrates environmental damage but also increases the burden Salama and Layla bear as women struggling to maintain their daily lives.

This data demonstrates a direct link between environmental damage and women's vulnerability. When nature loses its ability to provide basic needs, women are the ones who bear the consequences directly.

Further evidence is found in the following dialogue:

This is the land of your father, and his father before him. Your history is embedded in this soil (p. 18).

The quotation refers to Layla tries to convince Salama not to give up on her country. In the conversation, Layla emphasizes that their history and identity are embedded in the Syrian soil.

The word “*soil*” here refers not only to the physical ground, but also to the living space, history, and collective identity. When war devastated Syria, it destroyed not only the geographical area but also the human relationship with the land that shaped their identity. As Syrian women, Salama and Layla experienced the threat of losing their homes, family history, and sense of belonging to their homeland.

Shiva (1988) argues that the exploitation of nature often goes hand in hand with the marginalization of groups whose livelihoods depend on that nature. In this data, land is not just a physical object, but part of the women’s identities. Threats to land mean threats to their existence and future.

This data shows that domination of ecological space also means domination of the lives of women who are tied to that space. The destruction of land and threats to women stem from the same process of violence.

Further evidence is found in the following dialogue:

In a historic city plagued by bombs, life has persisted. I see it in the green vines waking up from their winter slumber, squirming through the rubble. Daffodils blooming, their petals opening bashfully. I see it in Layla, who smiles more, now that I do. When I see these subtle signs of life on my way to the hospital, my heart expands (p. 154).

The quotation refers to Salama begins to see signs of life reappearing amidst the war-torn city. She observes the vines regrowing and the daffodils beginning to bloom. At the same time, she connects this scene to Layla.

This is one of the most explicit moments connecting women and nature in the novel. Salama directly juxtaposes the revival of plants with Layla. The survival of life in plants mirrors Layla's survival, despite being pregnant, lacking food, and

living in the midst of war. This connection demonstrates that women and nature are both positioned as sources of life that persist amidst destructive conditions.

According to Shiva (1988), women and nature are connected because both play a role in sustaining life. In this context, the continued growth of plants and Layla's continued pregnancy represent the same function: maintaining the continuity of life despite the pressure of violence.

This data provides the strongest evidence for the concept of women and nature as equally dominated entities because the novel directly links the survival of nature with the survival of a woman. Both face the same threat of war, yet they nonetheless demonstrate the capacity to survive and sustain life.

Overall, the novel represents women and nature as entities experiencing the same impacts of domination in the context of war. Destruction of nature is seen through the destruction of vegetation, limited access to water, and the threat to land as a living space, while women experience the loss of security, future, and decent living conditions. The novel shows that environmental damage is not merely a setting for events, but has a direct connection with women's life experiences, because the decline in environmental quality also exacerbates the vulnerability and burdens they face. At the same time, women and nature are illustrated as having the same capacity to sustain life amidst destruction, so that their connection in the novel reflects their position as victims and sources of survival in war situations.

2. Destruction of Nature as a Parallel to the Oppression of Women

Another dimension of the connection between women and nature in this novel is shown through the parallel between the destruction of nature and the oppression of women. This connection is evident in the narrative:

The smell of trees burned to ash (p. 13).

This quote emerged as Salama witnessed the war-torn conditions of Homs. Throughout the city, she saw numerous signs of destruction left by bombing and fighting, including trees burned to ashes. At the same time, Salama continued to work in the hospital and faced the daily death and suffering.

Trees are a part of nature synonymous with life, growth, and sustainability. However, in this quote, trees are no longer illustrated as sources of life, but as something destroyed by the violence of war, leaving only ashes. This destruction represents the loss of nature's ability to sustain life as it should. At the same time, Salama also experienced a different form of destruction. The trauma of losing her family, the emotional distress of constantly witnessing death, and the loss of the normal life she was supposed to lead demonstrate that war not only destroys the physical environment but also destroys women's lives. Just as the trees lose their lives to war, Salama also loses the sense of security, hope, and future she should have had.

According to Shiva (1988), destruction of nature can be understood as a parallel to oppression of women because both are consequences of the same structure of domination. In this data, the destruction of the trees demonstrates how nature is subjected to violence that prioritizes control and destruction. At the same

time, Salama experiences suffering stemming from the same conditions of war. The destruction of nature and women's suffering do not appear as two separate events, but rather as simultaneous effects of a system of violence that sacrifices life. Therefore, this data demonstrates the link between destruction of nature and oppression of women, as explained by Shiva.

This data shows that the trees burned to ashes serve as a parallel to the trauma, loss, and suffering experienced by Salama. Therefore, the destruction of nature in the novel reflects the oppression of women caused by war.

Further evidence is found in the following narrative:

The neighborhood hasn't had water or electricity in weeks. It used to come in bursts but has stopped altogether with the siege. Luckily it rained last week, so Layla and I put out buckets to collect the water (p. 19).

This quote emerged when Salama described the living conditions of the people of Homs, who were under siege and experiencing infrastructure damage due to the war. For weeks, their neighborhood lacked access to water and electricity. Under these conditions, Salama and Layla had to rely on rainwater, placing buckets outside their homes to collect water for daily use.

This data shows that war not only directly destroys people but also damages natural resources and the systems that support life. Water is a basic necessity that enables human survival. When access to water is disrupted, people's lives become increasingly vulnerable. In such situations, women are directly affected, as they must find ways to meet their daily needs. Salama and Layla not only experience the inconvenience of water scarcity but also bear the additional burden of maintaining life under increasingly difficult conditions. Thus, the loss of access to water as a

source of life parallels the increased vulnerability experienced by women due to war.

According to Shiva (1988), destruction of nature and oppression of women often occur simultaneously because both stem from the same system of domination. When natural resources are degraded or no longer accessible, women are often the most affected group because their daily lives are closely linked to these resources. This data shows that disrupted access to water not only represents environmental damage but also worsens the conditions for women who struggle to survive amidst war. Thus, environmental degradation and women's suffering emerge as two interrelated forms of injustice.

This data shows that the loss of access to water as a source of life runs parallel to the increased vulnerability of women, so that destruction of nature and the oppression of women mutually reinforce each other.

Overall, both data demonstrate that the destruction of nature in the novel parallels the suffering experienced by women. The loss of access to water demonstrates how the degradation of natural resources increases women's vulnerability in maintaining daily life, while the trees burned to ashes reflect the trauma, loss, and destruction Salama experiences due to war. Thus, the novel illustrates that destruction of nature and the oppression of women are not separate events, but rather two forms of injustice that develop in parallel and are interrelated in situations of conflict.

3. Women as Caregivers of Nature and life

According to Shiva (1988), women are not only victims of conflict but also those who care for, protect, and sustain life. This is evident in Salama's words:

I think I want to stay at the hospital these last three days. Help as many people as I can before I leave (p. 237).

Salama knew that the war situation was becoming increasingly dangerous and even considered leaving Syria. However, before leaving, she chose to remain at the hospital to help as many victims as possible. This decision demonstrates that her actions were driven by a moral responsibility to preserve the lives of others, rather than personal gain. In a situation where death is a part of everyday life, Salama positioned herself as someone who strives to keep life going.

According to Shiva (1988), activities related to the care and maintenance of life are forms of work that support the continuity of society, even though they are often not recognized as productive. Salama's decision to continue caring for war victims demonstrates her role as a sustainer of life, actively maintaining community life amidst the destruction of war

This data shows that Salama acts as a guardian of life through her commitment to caring for and saving others despite dangerous circumstances.

Further evidence is found in the following narrative:

I'm on the balcony, bathing in the soft glow and gazing at the corner I've transformed into a small garden. Daisies. Honeysuckle. Peonies. Lavender. I've grown them all myself, tending to their tiny roots and petals with care, murmuring words of love (p. 288).

This quote comes from Layla's pre-war memories. She describes a small garden she planted herself on her balcony. Various flowers grew there because she carefully tended their roots and petals.

The garden demonstrates Layla's active connection with nature. She not only enjoyed the beauty of the flowers, but also played a direct role in their growth through ongoing care. The phrase "*tending to their tiny roots and petals with care*" indicates Layla's involvement in nurturing life, while "*murmuring words of love*" demonstrates an emotional bond between her and the plants she cared for. Thus, nature in the novel is positioned not as an object to be exploited, but as a part of life that is protected and nurtured by women.

According to Shiva (1988), women have a close connection with nature because of their involvement in activities that support and sustain life. This data clearly represents this idea through Layla's actions in planting, tending, and maintaining the growth of plants. These activities demonstrate a form of nurturing life that is oriented not toward economic gain, but toward the sustainability and well-being of living beings. Therefore, Layla represents women as caregivers of nature and life, preserving life through a caring relationship with the natural world.

This data shows that Layla acts as a guardian of nature and life through care practices that enable plants to grow and thrive, thus reflecting women's connection with nature as fellow life-supporters.

Further evidence is found in the following Salama's dialogue and narrative:

Better grab the buckets, then.

After that, I help Layla get ready for bed (p. 43).

When it began to rain, Salama immediately went outside to set down a bucket to collect the rainwater. Afterward, she helped the pregnant Layla prepare for rest.

In one sequence, Salama simultaneously performs two forms of life preservation. First, she manages rainwater as a natural resource essential for survival. Second, she cares for Layla, who is pregnant and in a vulnerable state. The connection between the two is crucial because the novel demonstrates that human survival depends on the sustainability of natural resources. The collected water helps meet daily needs, while caring for Layla helps preserve the life of the next generation she is carrying.

According to Shiva (1988), women are referred to as caregivers of nature and life because they maintain life through their close relationship with nature and daily care activities. This data demonstrates both aspects simultaneously. Salama not only utilizes rainwater as a natural resource, but also uses this resource to sustain the lives of herself, Layla, and the baby she is carrying. Thus, women and nature are illustrated as working together to sustain life.

This data provides the clearest representation of women as caregivers of nature and life, demonstrating the direct connection between natural resource management and efforts to sustain human life.

Overall, the novel represents women as caregivers of nature and life through various forms of care that support the continuity of life in the midst of war. This role is seen in Salama's efforts to care for and save war victims in the hospital, Layla's actions in planting and caring for various plants in her small garden, and Salama's daily activities in managing natural resources and caring for Layla who is pregnant. These three forms of action show that women not only play a role in maintaining human life, but also in maintaining nature that supports life itself. Thus,

the novel depicts women as guardians of survival who continue to maintain, care for, and grow life even in a war situation full of destruction and loss.

4. Structural Violence against Women and Nature

Women and nature are also connected through the structural violence that occurs systematically. This is evident in the following narrative:

The government was an open wound, hemorrhaging our resources for their own gain with their greed and bribery, and yet we persisted. We held our heads high and planted lemon trees in acts of defiance (p. 69).

Salama recalls her mother's explanation of how the Assad regime exploited the country's resources for years through corruption and abuse of power. This situation existed long before the war broke out and was one of the causes of the revolution.

This data shows that the people's suffering is not only caused by the war, but also by a political system that drains resources for the benefit of the powerful. The phrase "*hemorrhaging our resources*" suggests that the resources that should sustain people's lives are instead exploited by the power structure. As a result, people lose access to various necessities essential to their lives. In the context of the novel, this condition contributes to the situation that forces women like Salama and Layla to live in insecurity and limitations.

According to Shiva (1988), structural violence occurs when political and economic systems result in the exploitation of resources while simultaneously creating injustice for vulnerable groups. This data shows how corrupt government structures exploit resources for the benefit of elites, while the people bear the brunt

of the consequences. Thus, resource exploitation and human suffering emerge as a result of the same system of domination.

This data shows that resource exploitation and community suffering are consequences of an unjust power structure.

Further evidence is found in the following narrative:

The neighborhood hasn't had water or electricity in weeks. It used to come in bursts but has stopped altogether with the siege. Luckily it rained last week, so Layla and I put out buckets to collect the water (p. 19).

Salama explained that the siege and war had resulted in the loss of basic services such as water and electricity. To meet daily needs, she and Layla had to collect rainwater using buckets.

The lack of access to water demonstrates that the damage experienced by communities extends beyond the physical threat of war to the loss of life-sustaining infrastructure. Women must adapt to these conditions through various strategies to meet their daily needs. At the same time, water scarcity demonstrates how the environment and life-supporting resources are impacted by prolonged conflict.

Shiva (1988) explains that women are often the most affected group when access to natural resources is disrupted. In this data, the disruption of social systems due to war leaves women without access to basic necessities and bearing the additional burden of maintaining family life. This situation demonstrates how the structure of conflict produces suffering for women while disrupting communities' connections with natural resources.

This data demonstrates that the disruption of social systems and the disruption of access to natural resources create burdens that directly impact women's lives.

Further evidence is found in the following narrative:

The smell of trees burned to ash (p. 13).

This quote emerged as Salama witnessed the devastating effects of war visible throughout the city of Homs. The environment that had previously been a living space for the community was now covered in ruins and traces of destruction.

The trees burned to ashes demonstrate that war destroys not only people but also the environment that sustains them. The destruction of vegetation coincided with the suffering experienced by the community, including women who lost their families, homes, and sense of security. Thus, the destruction of nature and human suffering do not appear as two separate events, but rather as consequences of the same system of violence.

According to Shiva (1988), women and nature are often victims of structures of domination that prioritize control and power. In this data, the destruction of trees and the suffering of the community are consequences of conflict generated by repressive political structures and institutionalized violence. Therefore, the destruction of nature and the suffering of women can be understood as forms of structural violence originating from the same source.

This data demonstrates that nature and humans are both victims of a system of violence that produces widespread destruction.

Further evidence is found in the following narrative:

When I went back to my demolished building after the bombing, I wasn't able to find anything that belonged to me (p. 38).

This quote emerged as Salama recounts how her home was destroyed by bombing, resulting in the loss of all her belongings and living space.

The destruction of her home demonstrates that war robs the living space that is fundamental to human survival. This loss is not only material, but also concerns identity, security, and a person's attachment to their place of residence. Women like Salama must bear the long-term consequences of this damage, even though they were not involved in the decisions that led to the war.

Shiva (1988) emphasizes that structural violence operates through systems that produce persistent disadvantages for certain groups. In this data, the destruction of living space is a result of the structure of conflict that destroys the environment in which people live while simultaneously worsening the conditions of women who depend on that space for their daily lives.

This data demonstrates that the structure of violence destroys the living space that supports human survival and deepens women's suffering.

Overall, the novel depicts structural violence as a system that simultaneously harms women and nature. The exploitation of resources by corrupt regimes, the loss of access to water and basic services, the destruction of vegetation due to war, and the devastation of people's living spaces demonstrate that oppression of women and destruction of nature stem from the same power structures. This violence does not always manifest itself in direct physical acts, but operates through political systems, protracted conflicts, and unfair resource management. Thus, the novel presents women and nature as equal victims of a dominating structure that prioritizes power and control over the survival of life.

5. Critique of Dualism (Nature/Culture and Male/Female)

The other dimension of the connection between women and nature is shown through critique of dualism. In this novel, dualism is often used to subordinate women and nature. This is clearly seen in the following dialogue:

This is the land of your father, and his father before him. Your history is embedded in this soil. No country in the world will love you as yours does (p. 18).

This quote appears when Layla tries to convince Salama to think beyond personal safety and leave Syria. Layla emphasizes that their identities are inseparable from the land they come from.

Layla's statement demonstrates that humans are not positioned as separate entities from nature. Instead, human history, identity, and life are illustrated as embedded in the soil on which they live. The phrase "*embedded in this soil*" indicates the interconnectedness between humans and nature, making the soil more than just a physical object external to human life. Thus, the novel rejects the strict separation between humans and nature that underlies the nature/culture dualism.

According to Shiva (1988), modern dualism separates humans from nature and places culture above nature. This data, in fact, demonstrates the inseparable connection between human identity and the land. Layla understands the land as part of human history and life, not as an object external to them. Therefore, this data represents a critique of the nature/culture dualism by emphasizing the interconnectedness between humans and nature.

This data shows that the novel rejects the separation between humans and nature by depicting human identity as something inherent to the land on which they live.

Further evidence is found in the following narrative:

The government was an open wound, hemorrhaging our resources for their own gain with their greed and bribery, and yet we persisted. We held our heads high and planted lemon trees in acts of defiance (p. 69).

Salama recalls her mother's story about the Syrian government's decades-long repression. Despite this exploitation and oppression, the community continued to plant lemon trees as a form of resistance.

This quote presents two opposing perspectives. The government is illustrated as taking resources for its own benefit and profit, while the community responds by planting lemon trees. Planting trees serves not only as a physical activity but also as a symbol of a connection that values life and sustainability. Thus, the novel demonstrates the clash between the logic of domination and the logic of preserving life.

Shiva (1988) explains that modern dualism views nature as an object to be controlled and exploited for human benefit. Conversely, the act of planting lemon trees in this passage demonstrates a perspective that recognizes the value of natural life. By using lemon trees as a symbol of resistance, the novel critiques the logic of domination that separates humans from nature and views resources merely as tools for profit.

This passage critiques the dominant perspective that exploits resources and emphasizes the importance of a more balanced connection between humans and nature.

Further evidence is found in the following Kenan's dialogue:

There's still beauty, Salama. Still life and strength in Homs.

That lemon tree's been here forever (p. 152).

While on the rooftop, Kenan invites Salama to observe the sunset, the children still playing, and the lemon tree that remains alive despite their city having been destroyed by war.

Salama had previously viewed Syria only through the lens of destruction, death, and suffering. However, Kenan directs her attention to the sky, the children, and the surviving lemon tree. Nature is not positioned as a passive backdrop separate from human life, but rather as a part of life that provides hope, strength, and meaning to humans. Human life and nature are illustrated as interconnected in the face of shared destruction.

According to Shiva (1988), the nature/culture dualism separates humans from nature and considers nature to have no role other than that of an object. In this narrative, the lemon tree and the natural landscape become sources of meaning and strength for humans. The novel demonstrates that human life cannot be understood separately from nature, as the two support each other. Thus, this narrative critiques the dualism that separates humans and nature as two distinct entities.

This data shows that nature and humans are illustrated as part of a mutually supportive web of life, thus rejecting the separation of nature and culture.

Overall, the novel critiques the dualistic perspective that separates humans from nature. The novel depicts the land as part of human identity, the lemon tree as a symbol of life and resistance, and nature as a source of hope inseparable from the human experience. This representation demonstrates that humans and nature are not two opposing entities, but rather interconnected and dependent on one another. Thus, the novel rejects the logic of the nature/culture dualism and emphasizes the

importance of a complementary connection between humans and nature as the basis for the continuation of life.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents the conclusion drawn from the findings discussed in the previous chapter. It also provides suggestions for future researchers and readers who are interested in ecofeminism or the literary work examined in this study.

A. Conclusion

This study concludes that Zoulfa Katouh's *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* illustrates the connection between the oppression of women and the destruction of nature in the context of war through three general patterns: shared domination, embodied suffering and control, and interconnected life and care. These three patterns contain the six dimensions of connection discussed in the analysis (as categorized by Shiva, 1988)

First, the novel shows **shared domination** through: (1) women and nature as equally dominated entities; (2) structural violence against women and nature. The findings show that women and nature experience similar forms of oppression under the conditions of war. Women are subjected to displacement, loss, insecurity, and limited access to basic necessities, while nature suffers from environmental destruction, damaged resources, and devastated living spaces. These forms of suffering are further reinforced by structural conditions, such as political violence, war, and unequal systems of power, which simultaneously harm both women and the natural environment. As a result, the novel illustrates women and nature as interconnected victims of the same structures of domination.

Second, the connection between women and nature is shown through **embodied suffering and control**, especially in destruction of nature as a parallel to the oppression of women. The findings demonstrate that the destruction of nature in the novel often mirrors the experiences of suffering endured by female characters. The loss of water resources, the destruction of vegetation, and the devastation of living environments parallel women's experiences of trauma, grief, displacement, and loss of security. Through these representations, the novel illustrates that the oppression of women and the destruction of nature are not separate experiences but interconnected consequences of violence and domination.

Third, the novel presents the connection between women and nature through **interconnected life and care**, is reflected in: (1) women as caregivers of nature and life, and (2) critique of nature/culture dualism. The findings show that women play an important role in sustaining life through acts of care, nurturing, and survival. Female characters continue to care for family members, support the wounded, manage limited resources, and preserve living spaces despite the destructive conditions of war. At the same time, the novel challenges the separation between humans and nature by portraying both as deeply interconnected. Nature is not represented merely as a passive background but as an integral part of human identity, memory, survival, and hope. These representations suggest a relationship based on interdependence rather than separation or domination.

However, the study finds limited evidence supporting Shiva's concept of women as agents of resistance against environmental destruction. While several passages illustrate resilience, survival, and the preservation of life amid war, the

novel does not strongly depict women engaging in direct resistance against environmental destruction. Therefore, this concept is not represented as prominently as the other ecofeminist concepts identified in the study.

Overall, the findings suggest that *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* illustrates the connection between women and nature through shared experiences of domination, parallel forms of suffering, and interconnected practices of care and life preservation. These representations highlight how the oppression of women and the destruction of nature are interconnected within the context of war while also emphasizing the importance of care, interdependence, and the preservation of life in the face of violence and loss.

B. Data Source

Future researchers are suggested to develop this study by applying other ecofeminist perspectives or combining ecofeminism with other approaches, such as trauma theory or feminist literary criticism. Future studies may also compare *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* with other literary works that present similar themes in order to reveal broader patterns concerning the relationship between women, nature, and war.

For readers, this study suggests that *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* should not only be read as a war narrative but also as a literary work that presents the connection between oppression of women and destruction of nature. The novel shows that women are more than just victims of war, but they are figures who preserve life in difficult situations. Through this perspective, readers are

encouraged to understand literary works more critically to gain a broader view of how war can affect both human life and the environment.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



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APPENDIX

SYNOPSIS

Zoufka Katouh's novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* tells the story of Salama Kassab, a young pharmacy student in Syria living during the civil war. Before the war, Salama lived a normal life with her family and had hopes for a peaceful future. However, the ongoing conflict shattered her life. The loss of her parents, the destruction of her city, and the damaged environment forced her to volunteer in a hospital and take care of the victims.

During the war, Salama faced psychological pressure, fear, and trauma that continued to haunt her. As a young woman, she not only struggled to survive but also bore the emotional burden and responsibility of protecting Layla, her pregnant sister-in-law. The oppression of women is evident in their vulnerable position, forced to endure the suffering of their families, and the need to remain strong in situations of violence and uncertainty.

In addition to depicting women's suffering, the novel also depicts the destruction of nature and the environment caused by war. The city of Homs is illustrated as a mess of ruins, dust, destroyed buildings, and green spaces slowly disappearing due to attacks and violence. Hospitals, homes, streets, and even lemon orchards are damaged. The lemon tree, which appears repeatedly in the story, symbolizes hope, memory, and a life struggling to survive.

In the midst of this situation, Salama meets Kenan, a young man who documents the realities of war through photos and videos. Kenan's presence provides Salama with hope and emotional support to persevere. Through Salama's journey, the novel demonstrates the connection between oppression of women and

the destruction of nature in the context of war, while also demonstrating the woman's struggle to maintain hope, humanity, and life.