



Nature as Defiant Hope in “As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow” by Zoulfa Katouh

Sindi Ayu Amelia¹, Henrikus Joko Yulianto²

^{1,2} English Literature, Faculty of Language and Arts, Semarang State University

Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-04-07 Revised: 2026-05-19 Accepted: 2026-08-08 Keywords: Ecological Ego; Ecological Unconscious; Ecopsychology; Single Continuum; Zoulfa Katouh DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.11608 Corresponding Author: Henrikus Joko Yulianto henrikus.joko@mail.unnes.ac.id English Literature/ Faculty of Language and Arts, Semarang State University	<i>This article studies the symbiotic relationship between ecological health and psychological resilience in Zoulfa Katouh's 'As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow' (2022) through the lens of ecopsychology by Theodore Roszak's (1992) theoretical framework. The study first examines how the environmental degradation of Syria depicts the mental state of the human psychology through collusive madness that causes environmental destruction which also inflicts severe pain on humans. On the other hand, this research exposes the healing process, it highlights the importance of reconnecting with nature to reshape human well-being. The practical of Salama's technique to reconnect with nature is being studied at the end of the research. She uses botanical grounding which is murmuring medicinal plant names like sweet alyssum and lavender system during terrifying moments to relax herself while controlling her breath. Finally, the article exposes the lemon tree as the definitive symbol of "defiant hope." By looking at Salama's journey from the rubble of Homs to her balcony garden in Toronto, this research examines that planet and human cannot be separated as these two share health as what Roszak called a single continuum.</i>

1. Introduction

Language and emotion are the primary tools to convey meaning and experience. As Usman, Mahmud, Daud, & Dahlan (2021) uttered that language is a way to deliver the mind and meaning with others. Foolen (2012) also stated that

the expression of emotions even takes place on all linguistic levels. In many literatures works, language plays crucial role in alluring the readers' emotions through captivating vocabularies and the characters' voyage. Hoemann et al. (2001) stated that emotion is a form of meaning-making as emotional meaning can be studied through imagery, word choice, and other expressions (Hoemann et al. 2025).

Interesting field which studies human psychology and mixes it with ecology comes from Theodore Roszak in his book entitled *Voice of the Earth* (1992). He is the first to coin 'ecopsychology' in that era, proposing that human mind and the earth exist as a "continuum". Roszak argues that single continuum is a reality where there are no boundaries between human's mind and nature. A healthy relationship between ecology and nature develops human's wellbeing, as stated by Gray (1995, cited in Hibbard, 2003) one cannot have sanity without sane relationships with the environment.

Ecopsychology is employed in many works of literature about nature and humans, including contemporary war literature which affects the surroundings of its characters. One of the best works about war trauma story is written by Zoulfa Katouh namely *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* (2022). The narrative sets in the city of Syria, Homs, during the horrible civil war that causes a lot of damage for years. The main character, Salama Kassab, is an eighteen-year-old girl whose life is crumbled because she's left alone while her family died or seized by the government. Amidst the monochrome city, she uses nature to release her stress; reminiscing the old days when everything is still preserved by viewing the scenery from Kenan's old house rooftop also using "botanical grounding" method when anxiety rushes. "Botanical grounding" in the novel is a practice of coping to stimulate the sense to distract focus from intense emotional pain while recalling plants along with their functions in medical field. In the story, it shows that when people's surroundings are destroyed, their mental health also reflects the damage. This condition is called collusive madness which was stated first by R. D. Laing in his book, *The Politics of Experiences* (1967). Laing states in the book that our collusive madness is what we call sanity, he described the shared madness ironically since society has collective agreement to normalize violence. On the other hand, nature can be used in restoring ecological ego, a part of human psyche that acknowledges human and nature are a single continuum. These acts proved the ecopsychological objectives to look deeper in the relation between environment and human's emotion.

In *Voice of the Earth* (1992), Roszak also discusses ecological unconscious, ecological ego, and synergy. According to him, ecological unconscious is the deepest side of humans that stores the living record of cosmic evolution for years until it brings us consciousness. He believes that there is a remnant of ecological unconsciousness which has not forgotten that humans belong to nature as a single continuum. Compared to ecological unconscious which acts as the core of human mind, there is ecological ego that focuses on the maturation of self-development. It

is a sense when one is aware of the responsibility to preserve the environment. In *Voice of the Earth* (1992), Roszak describes the term synergy as an interplay between planetary and personal well-being, it is taught that the needs of the planet are the needs of the person and the rights of the person are the rights for the planet.

There are several studies that have analyzed the same object and theoretical framework. However, the existing articles that analyze “As Long as the Lemon trees grow” by Zoulfa Katouh (2022) are often heavily focused on psychological impact of war trauma and internal mental state. Latumeten and Novansyah (2024) employ ecocriticism in their research, perceiving nature merely as a national identity and a symbol instead of a necessity to human’s minds. The feminist analysis by Nurhayati, Istikharoh, and Lestari (2025) focuses on the social and political oppression, neglecting the impact between the shattered nature and the characters. Also, the Freudian analysis by Fadhilah and Sumaryani (2025) sees Salama’s trauma primarily as an internal mental state occurs inside one’s mind. These recent studies have limitations within ecology and psychology range. Therefore, the three of these studies have not specifically discussed the bond between nature and humans deeply.

Other researchers interpret their study through Roszak’s ecopsychology to reveal the connection between psyche, nature, and spirituality. Popova (2023) exposes that Roszak’s theory focuses on ecological unconscious as the core of human mind that links us to nature, arguing that the cause of madness is when society ignores the relation. This study also highlights synergistic interplay which supports the idea of the health of a person and the health of the planet are the same. Furthermore, using the same theoretical framework, Dasgupta (2026) similarly highlights the ecological unconscious within Amitav Ghosh’s work. These studies provide strong evidence for human-nature bonds, although they have not specifically mapped a linear psychological recovery phase.

The primary gap between previous research and this study is they miss an approach to intertwine Salama’s psychological state with her surroundings. This research fills gap by employing Theodore Roszak’s (1992) ecopsychology theory to explore the connection between Salama’s psychological state and nature, redefining Salama’s healing as the restoration of her ecological ego. The researcher argues that Salama’s hallucinations (Khawf & Layla) are the signs of collusive madness arise when her soul mirrors the destruction of her surroundings. Additionally, no research has explored the practice of Salama’s grounding method to restore the damaged ecological ego, she uses plants and murmurs their functions based on her knowledge to stabilize her breather and clear her mind.

There are three main issues that will be discussed in the article. The primary problem is about how Homs’ destruction reflects Salama’s internal psychology. Her internal psychology includes her trauma which is caused by the fractured biosphere she is living in. Secondly, it discusses the defiant restoration of nature’s destruction and Salama’s anxiety using botanical grounding. Unlike previous issue

that provides a problem to be solved, this step highly investigates the healing stage of planet and human as "single continuum". Lastly, this study investigates lemon trees which play crucial symbol as a defiant hope for Syrian resilience, specifically Salama. This establishes evidence that the resilient symbol allows Homs citizens to maintain their survival mode in wasteland.

The primary objective of this research is to study the connection between Salama Kassab's psychological state and Syria environment during until the end of the civil war, perceiving them as a unity. This article also aims to analyze how the destruction of Homs mirrors the internal trauma of Salama using Roszak's concept where collapsed nature could affect people's mental health. Additionally, the researcher focuses on the botanical grounding as a method to restore Salama's "ecological ego" by reconnecting herself with nature. Finally, the study investigates the lemon tree as an ecological symbol that serves as Homs citizen's strength and resilience, showing that nature is inevitably tied to Syrian's hope and sanity.

Its application of Theodore Roszak's (1992) ecopsychology to contemporary Syrian war literature becomes this study's novelty. This conducts a study beyond symbolic and social analysis to emphasize that Syrian resilience is inevitably linked to the physical environment. This research tracks the main character's well-being in redefining her sanity from the beginning until the end of the novel. It provides a new scope of study about the single continuum of planet and human. Ultimately, this study introduces new concepts like botanical grounding the character uses to recover from terrifying anxiety using environment's components.

2. Method

This study uses qualitative literary analysis using ecopsychological close reading to analyze the ecology and psychology fields of Katouh's novel, *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* (2022). Miller, Porter, & Barbagallo (2023) argue that the qualitative case studies the experiences of the object by observing deeply at specific events or group. This qualitative methodology approach provides the researcher to identify meaning, patterns, and themes in the textual data. By employing this methodology, it helps to highlight the profound relationship between human psychology and natural environment through the theoretical lens of ecopsychology by Theodore Roszak (1992). The primary data is collected from the novel while the secondary data are obtained from previous academic journals related to topics within this study to complete Roszak's theoretical framework needed to analyze the novel.

The technique of collecting data is acquired through a few stages. The first step is conducted by implementing close reading methods in Katouh's contemporary novel. According to Smith (2016), close reading is not merely an activity to read something thoroughly but more of a focused study of linguistic features in the writings. Another notion appears from Ohrvik (2024), he argues that close reading includes observation of the texts by reading them on numerous occasions to obtain the relationship tied to historical and cultural context. In this

study, the researcher organizes the idea from reading the novel thoroughly multiple times to comprehend the dialogues, the main character's journey, and the bond between the biosphere and the psyche. Other relevant information regarding this study is also obtained from Theodore Roszak's book called *'The Voice of the Earth'* (1992) and previous academic journals that have observed this novel or applied his theory within their journal. The researcher selected representative textual evidence from the novel after reading it wholly then identifies the category based on Roszak's theoretical framework. Eventually, the researcher analyzes the data that has been compiled in narrative form to describe nature's association with human psyche.

3. Result and Discussion

This research investigates Zoulfa Katouh's novel, *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, supported by the existing previous studies and Roszak's ecopsychology. The author focuses on the main Character, Salama, who is struggling with life as a surgeon by necessities amidst the war that destroyed her city even though she is only eighteen. Nonetheless, in the middle of collapsed habitat, Salama finds hope and comfort in the remaining environment and the beauty of the past circumstances that keep her moving forward. This chapter is structured by three main issues through three distinct stages. First, it reveals the environment destruction and humans' mental state during "collusive madness". The next stage is to analyze the restoration progress of both Salama and nature. Lastly, the author studies the meaning behind lemon tree and how it functions as a totem of resilient hope to humans during war. The last discussion completes the earlier statements regarding nature and people's inseparable bond even in the middle of destruction.

The Inevitable Relation Between Nature Destruction and The Main Character's Psychological State

To address the first issue of the research which is to reveal the environment decay and human sanity, this study first examines the novel through Roszak's collusive madness quoting Roszak's notions. By discussing collusive madness first, it provides the core issues of the ecology damage.

Collusive Madness

In this novel, the destruction of the buildings, trees, lands, are caused by the government dictatorship ruled by Bashar al-Assad. Under his regime, freedom does not exist. The government against its own people and Free Syrian Army (FSA) that they restrict any kind of press, speech, and protest. For the sake of absolute power, regime commits brutal violence on every living being to silence the citizens who dare to protest. Although it is considered as war human crimes, the incumbents normalize the actions to achieve their goal. According to Laing (1967), a state where a society shares the same insanity which leads them to divorce from nature's

wellbeing is called collusive madness. Roszak then links his idea with ecology.

"A year ago, after the Arab Spring sparked across the region, Syria grabbed the hope awakening in the masses and called for freedom. The dictatorship responded by unleashing hell."

Arab Spring that happens in the year of 2010 and 2011 is a wave of protest towards the authoritarian regime which takes place in Middle East and North Africa. According to Britannica (2026), not every country that protests attain their success, many demonstrators who express their displeasure are often silenced by the violence of security forces. The dictatorship's brutality which results in many fatalities are as follows: diminish food and water supplies, chemical attack using chlorine and sarin, also massive bombs on civilian houses, schools, trees, supermarkets, and hospitals. These are what Salama calls the dictatorship responded by "unleashing hell". The governments share the same crazy agreement of destroying nature and its living creatures then perceive it as something normal, it strengthens the idea of collusive madness.

"Three shriveled lemons and a plastic bag of pita bread that's more dry than moldy sit next to one another. That's all this supermarket has to offer."

This quotation is proof that regime diminishes food supply, even at the supermarket they only sell shriveled lemons and moldy pita bread that is hard to swallow. Metaphorically, "shriveled lemons" and "dry and moldy pita bread" due to environmental crisis here also reflects on Salama's exhaustion, dehydrated, as her body also becomes slander because of malnourishment.

"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."

Another cruelty from the government is to leave the citizens with no electricity and cut off the water supply. When these man-made systems fail to operate, humans desperately rely on nature. Salama, for example, puts out buckets to collect water for her needs. This strengthens the idea of inevitable relationship between human and nature. Nature needs humans to preserve them so that in the meantime humans take what they have been keeping safely and soundly.

"Her breath doesn't fog her breathing mask, and she stares lifelessly at me. The smell of bleach burns my nostrils. Chlorine. They didn't just use sarin."

After stopping their electricity, food, and water supply, the security forces abuse the city with chemical attack, chlorine and sarin. The usage of these chemicals might create air pollution, which is not only dangerous to humans, but also to the environment. According to Winder (2001) and Abou-Donia et al (2016), chlorine and sarin may cause serious damage including death.

"Incoming. Reports of a bomb hitting Al-Ghouta. Twenty casualties. The seventeen injured are being brought here," he says."

"Cracked road, the asphalt reduced to rubble. Gray buildings hollowed and decaying as the elements try to finish what the military's bombs started. Utter and absolute destruction."

Lastly, the violent that has been committed by the regime is to destroy the land of Syria along with its people using bombs. These quotations show how easily the government dropped the bombs without minding the impact on the citizens. “Twenty casualties,” and “seventeen injured” is not a small number when it comes to human. The “cracked road, the asphalt reduced to rubble” shows that Homs is completely neglected. The cracked road and the rubbles also serve as ecological imagery, disclosing the breakdown of human and nature as “single continuum”. The quotations listed from the first one expose the failure of Syria as a well-functioning country, unable to keep their people safe. Nonetheless, cruelty doesn’t stop here as the government shares the same craziness.

Ecological Unconscious

This part plays role as the proof of the reflection between humans and environment when they are damaged.

“For the past year,” I begin slowly, “Syria was gray. The destroyed buildings and roads. The ashy faces of the starving. Sometimes the skies. Our life literally became monochrome, alternating with a harsh red.”

“While some were able to see past it, I forgot other colors existed. I forgot happiness was a possibility.”

These quotations reveal that Syria is not merely a passive setting but as wounded psychological landscape. Samarathunga (2026) argues that trauma can be seen as a shock between self and world, which enhances the proof that the fractured buildings, ashy faces, and vanished colors reflect Salama’s inner exhaustion. According to the quotations, the gray land shows emotional numbness, while the harsh red is the continuity of the violence still interrupts the memory. Therefore, these lines reveal how ecological imagery can carry trauma, expressing loss and damaged hope through the environment.

““I used to dream about the color blue... Layla had painted a shade so unique, I thought it would bleed into my hands. It was a painting of a quiet sea and gray clouds. I’ve never seen a color like that before in my life. And the more I looked at it, the more I wanted to see the real thing.”

“There’s no blue here, not one that inspires anyway. Just the one that decays the victims’ skin from frostbite and hypothermia.”

Salama dreamed about blue color where it felt so unique on Layla’s painting, it felt too real she thought it would bleed into her hands. “I wanted to see the real thing.” is interpreted as her will to keep living and get out of Syrian siege where she could see freedom, the sea for example. In the the second quotation, she contrasts the dream with the reality of the war, where blue has become associated with death and cold.

“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.”

Deep down, Salama’s ecological unconscious struggles with the broken nature.

She feels frustrated as the war has made nature's cycle become imbalanced. Spring that doesn't bloom in Homs reflects Salama's loss of strength and hope. The "dead, heavy branches" serve as a physical mirror for the shared experience of heavy emotional burden between her and Syria. However, "thwarted only by the hope in people's hearts" uncovers Salama's ecological unconscious and strong determination to never surrender.

"I can feel the earth's grief when I get out of the car. The tired weeds try to encircle my ankles, begging me to stay. They murmur stories about my ancestors. The ones who stood right where I stand. The ones whose discoveries and civilization encompassed the whole world. The ones whose blood runs through my veins. My footprints sink deep into the soil where theirs have long since been washed away. They plead with me: It's your country. This earth belongs to me and my children"

This happens when Salama is on her way to get out of Syria and going towards Mediterranean Sea. The quotation acts as proof that Salama and the earth share the same pain. The earth mirrors Salama's pain, enhanced by the "earth's grief" and "the tired weeds" clinging to her ankles, reflecting her own internal guilt and the emotional struggle of leaving her homeland. She also talks about her ancestors who were buried long ago, leaving their traces within her blood and veins. In this case, Roszak's ideas about ecological unconscious are clearly exposed, he stated ecological unconscious is the remnant of what is left from cosmic evolution which stores an inherited sense of loyalty to the planet. Therefore, Salama's mind unconsciously tries to stay connected to her motherland although everything is being destroyed.

"His voice... reminds me of the freezing water I splash over myself when I come home drenched in the martyrs' blood. It's stones weighing on my chest, sinking me to the earth below. It's heavy as a humid day and deafening as the bombs the military throws on us."

Salama talks about Khawf, her hallucination, how his voice sounds very cold and heavy like a humid day, also deafening like military bombs fall on their land. The noisy and physically heavy situation depicts Salama's profound fear. Khawf here is not merely seen as an isolated clinical case of PTSD, rather he represents the form of distorted ecological unconscious in Salama's mind which security cannot be found since her homeland is consistently being damaged by the regime. In addition, the ecological imagery is used to turn the monochrome Syria into psychological torment.

Roszak (1992) argues that sanity in modern life could be a collusive madness, this happens due to the social agreement of what they acknowledge "normal" to crush the biosphere that sustains human's life. In the novel, Katouh describes the emptiness in the supermarket, the electricity and water shortage, also the destroyed hospitals and buildings. These are the impacts of collusive madness. In fact, the sane world should provide safe sanctuary to its people where they eat properly, well-preserved plants, and healthy air to breathe.

On the contrary, ecological unconscious is a road to real sanity. When Salama is trapped in an extreme madness, her psychological breakdown responds to the

form of true sanity which are Layla and Khawf. This is why ecological unconscious acts as the foundational core of human mind, connecting the planetary health and human psychology. Finally, it can be concluded that collusive madness is deeply rooted in ecological unconscious. Society who ignores this profound bond is the main issue to cause collusive madness to exist.

Restoration State Between Nature and Psyche as a Single Continuum

Unlike previous part that discusses the destruction of nature because of civil war to silence their country, this chapter collects findings of restoration progress coming from both human psyche and biospheric.

Synergy

“Lavender has antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties. Purple petals. Can be used for insomnia. Lavender. Lavender. Lav—”

““Sweet alyssum. Sweet as its name,” I murmur, praying for my nerves not to fail me. “White petals. Used for pain relief. Also for colds, abdominal cramps, and coughs. Sweet. Sweet.” It works. My lungs begin distributing the oxygen evenly to my blood, and I open my eyes and watch the thicket of gray clouds outside my window. The glass is chipped at the sides from when Layla’s home took the impact of a nearby bomb, and the frame is splintered. When I moved in, I had to wash blood from the pane.”

These quotations expose botanical grounding as a biological bridge by recalling the plants and their functions in pharmacy, she eventually stabilizes her breathing and heart rate. Vitale and Bonaiuto (2024) stated that nature has a positive impact on emotion regulation processes and specific emotion regulation strategies. It is able to decrease rumination and worry, also enhance the mindfulness and cognitive reappraisal.

“But when you showed me that sunset on your roof and I saw pink and purple and blue... it felt like... like I was seeing color for the first time.”

Salama confesses this to Kenan when he invited her to his old house’s rooftop. A literal manifestation of synergy is clearly shown here. In the previous part, Salama sees the world as “monochrome” and “gray”, forgetting the presence of colors. This time, the beauty of the sunset directly heals Salama’s soul. Moving away from monochrome scenery caused by the civil war, Salama restores her sanity through resynchronizing with the world’s natural color.

“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.”

This text reveals the same spirit between nature and human. The green vines and blooming daffodils highlight the earth’s strong will to keep pursuing life. Their persistence “expands” Salama’s heart, proving the planet’s survival determination feeds her psychological well-being. Seeing this phenomenon, she finds hope to keep moving forward amidst the dangerous Syria.

Theodore Roszak’s synergy highlights the needs of a planet are the needs of a

person. Humans' healing progress is linked to nature's well-being. Fadhillah and Sumaryani (2025) in their study focused on individual human psychology by using Freud's theory of the unconscious mind, therefore, this research exposes another perspective from deeper ecology and psychology view.

Ecological Ego

"An ocean, but instead of water it's gigantic trees that touch the clouds." His grin widens.
"I can absolutely draw that. Leaves that are blue instead of green? The trunks a coral pink?"

Salama and Kenan made up stories about the alternative universe, picturing the healthy environment and joyful memories. They transform the destroyed environment into fantastical landscape using these stories through creative dialogue. By imagining nature with vibrant colors, they move away from monochrome and gray Homs to the healthy and colorful fantasy world. Roszak (1992) citing Carl Jung from his early seminar that "creative fantasy" is the four essential parts of human psyche alongside with nature, animals, and primitive man. It functions as the coping mechanism against the nature destruction.

"I'm on the balcony... 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... As long as the lemon trees grow, hope will never die."

To escape from the collusive madness, Salama flees to Toronto and here the ultimate expression of ecological ego has occurred. Her act of growing a garden and "murmuring words of love" highlight that she slowly recovers from the past trauma through nurturing nature as a living presence rather than dead objects. She preserves the garden at her balcony to nurture her own hope possessing the strong will to return Syria.

Viewing from ecological ego principle, this part of restoration demonstrates how Salama reconnects with nature's simple beauty and survival persistence. Until the day she has finally fled to Toronto, the synergy acts as a bridge to activate the maturation of her ecological ego. She moves from being a regime collusive madness victim to being one who embraces a vivid responsibility with the planet. Therefore, her healing stage is possible through synergy, the realization that she and Homs' soil are one.

The Characters' Hope & Resilience Represent by "Lemon Trees"

This section confirms the previous discussion regarding human-nature destruction and restoration progress as shared resilience.

"Then he points to a tree situated at the street's side. Its three thick trunks twist through each other, the branches brittle-looking, a hint of green leaves surfacing through its pores.
"That lemon tree's been here forever. I used to climb it all the time when I was younger. I think there's a picture Baba took of me sitting atop it, with Yusuf hanging to my side.""

Salama and Kenan sit on a rooftop while gazing at the sky scenery. In this

denatured environment, they still spot the lemon tree fighting for its life. "A hint of green leaves surfacing through its pores" even though the tree's branches are brittle-looking serves as its determination to thrive amidst the threatening situation, proven by the new leaves growing through. Roszak states that humans are born with the remnants of cosmic memories, allowing us to have a sense to be loyal to the planet. Their action of reminiscing childhood memories is a way to access their ecological unconscious. This tree represents as a hope and sanity which remains stable even though the humans are trapped inside collusive madness.

"Every lemon will bring forth a child, and the lemons will never die out."

This remarkable line refers to Nizar Qabbani's poem, a Syrian poet. By associating lemons with children, his slogan serves profound hope to the people. Carrol (2022) says that the average lifespan of lemon trees is 50 years, they can even exceed 100 years if getting proper care. It justifies that lemon trees witness the generations of humans including in a war situation, suggesting unyielding hope for many. Equating child and lemon also symbolizes the synergy which Roszak describes as the interplay between planetary and human well-being. The quotation shows that there will always be hope if the earth remains abundance.

"Seedlings have emerged through the dirt, fighting against gravity... it reminds me that as long as the lemon trees grow, hope will never die"

Salama has completed her restoration in this monologue. The "seedlings" is the physical manifestation of Salama's ecological unconscious that finds a perfect place to bloom. It proves that she has lifted from fractured ecological ego a mature ecological ego who embraces both past and present time of her life to nurture the planet. The growing lemon trees and her unwavering hope act as a unity to bring her sanity back. Therefore, her ecological ego maturation starts when she finally accepts everything as well as grief.

The last chapter acts as a completion point for the last analysis. First, it depicts the acceptance of synergy where the characters acknowledge they are tied to the land physically and spiritually. It also proves the reasons lemon tree acts as a defiant hope to Syrian. Lastly, it concludes with the maturity of ecological ego, strengthened by the activity of planting lemon trees in a new land as Salama's healing evidence. It justifies that her path to sanity is never far away from nature's intervention.

4. Conclusion

This research has critically examined Zoulfa Katouh's *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* through the lens of Theodore Roszak's ecopsychology, concluding that the characters' trauma and healing represent a deep biospheric struggle. The study explains that the Syrian civil war is not merely a political or social event, but a state of "collusive madness" where the destruction of the land is the regime's agreement of shared madness. First, this author identified Roszak's theory about

environmental destruction which carries collusive madness and ecological ego. Salama's hallucination about Khawf is not only perceived as clinical symptoms of PTSD, but as the ecological unconscious during Syrian civil war. After destruction phase, the second chapter revealed nature and human's healing. Their reciprocal process is done even through simple connections, one of them is Salama successfully stabilized her nervous system through botanical grounding method. As long as she connects with nature's simple beauty, her ecological ego can endure hardships. Lastly, the characters' strong hope is also mirrored by the lemon tree as a symbol of resilient.

A suggestion for the next research is to analyze the linguistic side of Katouh's *As Long as the Lemon Trees*. One of the suggested topics is using politeness strategies. The author could explore which strategy the character uses, then compare it to other characters while recording the percentage each strategy has been used. This current research is limited to qualitative interpretative analysis through ecopsychology; therefore, the future research is expected to focus on the empirical data and linguistics field.

5. References

- Abou-Donia, M. B., Siracuse, B., Gupta, N., & Sobel Sokol, A. (2016). Sarin (GB, O-isopropyl methylphosphonofluoridate) neurotoxicity: critical review. *Critical Reviews in Toxicology*, 46(10), 845–875. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10408444.2016.1220916>
- Abduh, N. K., & Masruddin, M. (2023). Structural Studies of Robert Stanton in The Folklore of Luwu (Worongporong dan Pariama). *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 11(1), 117–126.
- Britannica Editors (2026, June 8). Arab Spring. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Arab-Spring>
- Carroll, J. (2022). Lemon Tree Life Cycle: How Long Do Lemon Trees Live. *Gardening Know How*. <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/edible/fruits/lemons/lemon-tree-life-cycle.htm>
- Dasgupta, S. (2026). An Ecopsychological Understanding of Amitav Ghosh's Sundarbans Trilogy. *ShodhPatra: International Journal of Science and Humanities*, 3(5), 184–193. <https://doi.org/10.70558/SPIJSH.2026.v3.i5.45740>
- Fadhilah, A. H. & Sumaryani, S. (2025). Salama's Hallucinations Analysis in Zoulfa Katouh's *As Long As The Lemon Trees Grow*. *Rainbow : Journal of Literature, Linguistics and Culture Studies*, 14, 129–136. <https://doi.org/10.15294/rainbow.v14i.30103>
- Foolen, A. (2012). The relevance of emotion for language and linguistics. In A. Foolen, U. M. Ludtke, T. P. Racine, & J. Zlatev (Eds.), *Moving ourselves, moving others: Motion & emotion in intersubjectivity, consciousness and*

- language (pp. 349–369). John Benjamins.
- Hibbard, W. (2003). Ecopsychology: A review. *The Trumpeter*, 19(2).
- Hoemann, K., Lee, Y., Dussault, È., Devylder, S., Ungar, L. H., Geeraerts, D., Mesquita, B. (2025). The construction of emotional meaning in language. *Communications Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44271-025-00255-0>
- Ismayanti, D., & Syam, A. T. (2022). The Community Manipulation through Big Brother™'s Tyranny in George Orwell™'s Nineteen Eighty-Four. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 10(2), 1556–1569.
- Latumeten, A. A. T. (2024). The Lemon Trees and The Syrian Homeland: An Ecocritical Reading of Zoufka Katouh's *As Long as The Lemon Trees Grow*. *Prologue: Journal on Language and Literature*, 10(2), 355-370.
- Miller, E. M., Porter, J. E., & Barbagallo, M. S. (2023). Simplifying Qualitative Case Study Research Methodology: A Step-By-Step Guide Using a Palliative Care Example. *The Qualitative Report*, 28(8), 2363-2379. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2023.6478>
- Nurhayati S, Istikharoh L, & Lestari LN. (2025). War, Trauma, and Feminist Consciousness in Katouh's Novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*. *Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa dan Sastra*.
- Ohrvik, A. (2024). What is close reading? An exploration of a methodology. *Rethinking history*, 28(2), 238-260.
- Popova, O. (2023). Fundamental changes in the determinants of western ecopsychology at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. *Personality and Environmental Issues*, 1 (3), 10-15. [https://doi.org/10.31652/2786-6033-2023-1\(3\)-10-15](https://doi.org/10.31652/2786-6033-2023-1(3)-10-15)
- Roszak, T. (2001). *The voice of the earth: An exploration of ecopsychology*. Red Wheel/Weiser.
- Smith, B. H. (2016). What was “close reading”? A century of method in literary studies. *the minnesota review*, 2016(87), 57-75.
- Laing, R. D., *The Politics of Experience*, London, Penguin Books, 1967.
- Samarathunga, W. (2026). The Ecology of Return: Trauma, Atmosphere, and the Poetics of Water. *Journal of Ecohumanism*, 4(4), 3428–3437. <https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v4i4.7152>
- Usman AH, Mahmud AF, Daud A, Dahlan S. (2021) LANGUAGE AS A REFLECTION OF THINKING. *EDUKASI*. 2021;19(1):69. doi: <https://doi.org/10.33387/j.edu.v19i1.3292>
- Vitale V, Bonaiuto, M (2024). The role of nature in emotion regulation processes: An evidence-based rapid review. *J Environ Psychol*. 2024;96:102325. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2024.102325>
- Winder, C (2001). The Toxicology of Chlorine. *Environmental Research* 105-114. <https://doi.org/10.1006/enrs.2000.4110>