

WOMEN'S WORLDVIEW IN WARTIME: A GENETIC STRUCTURALIST READING OF ZOULFA KATOUH'S *AS LONG AS THE LEMON TREES GROW*

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Received: 2026-04-01

Accepted: 2026-04-22

Published: 2026-06-12

Abstract

This study examines the women's worldview in Zoulfa Katouh's novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*. The research aims to analyze how the experiences of war shape female consciousness through the character of Salama Kassab. This study applies Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism, which views literary works as expressions of collective consciousness shaped by socio-historical conditions. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the analysis focuses on narrative excerpts that illustrate women's psychological and social experiences during the Syrian civil war. The findings reveal four major aspects that construct the women's worldview in the novel: despair and emotional exhaustion, trauma and psychological fragmentation, shattered dreams and disrupted futures, and moral conflict between survival and humanitarian responsibility. These aspects demonstrate how prolonged conflict transforms women's identities, aspirations, and ethical perspectives. Salama's experiences reflect not merely an individual struggle but the collective condition of women living in war-affected societies, where caregiving responsibilities, psychological trauma, and moral dilemmas become part of everyday survival. Through the lens of genetic structuralism, the novel articulates a collective female consciousness shaped by violence, displacement, and social collapse. This study contributes to the limited scholarship on women's collective consciousness in wartime literature by extending Goldmann's framework into gendered conflict analysis.

Keywords: *genetic structuralism; Syrian civil war; trauma; women's worldview.*

1. Introduction

Literature is not only a form of artistic expression but also a reflection of human reality within its socio-historical context. Lucien Goldmann, through his theory of genetic structuralism, argues that literary works should be understood as "human facts" that embody the worldview (vision du monde) of particular social groups (Muniroch, 2011). In this sense, literature is more than a personal creation of an author; it is an expression of collective consciousness shaped by specific historical and social structures.

This theoretical perspective provides a foundation to understand how individual narratives can represent the broader social experiences. Within this framework, the Syrian civil war, one of the most profound socio-historical realities of the 21st century, becomes a

crucial context for examining collective consciousness through literature. The conflict, which began in March 2011 in the southern city of Daraa, started as a peaceful protest against government corruption and repression before escalating into a prolonged civil conflict involving multiple factions and foreign powers (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2026). Over the years, this conflict has devastated Syria's social and cultural fabric. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2024), more than 16.7 million Syrians are in need of humanitarian assistance, while millions have been displaced. The conflict has caused not only massive physical destruction but also deep psychological trauma. Women, in particular, face a dual burden: surviving violence while sustaining their families under extreme conditions. Reports indicate that women experience increased unpaid care responsibilities, heightened risks of violence, and limited access to essential services during crises (Azcona et al., 2020).

Such conditions have given rise to literary voices that testify to both collective suffering and resilience. Many Syrian writers have used storytelling as a means of witnessing and resistance. Among them, Zoulfa Katouh's *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* (2022) stands out for transforming collective pain and endurance, especially that of women into a narrative of hope and survival. The novel has gained international recognition for its emotional depth and humanitarian message, portraying the Syrian war through the perspective of an 18-year-old pharmacy student, Salama Kassab, who becomes a volunteer medic during the revolution. Torn between her duty to help others and her instinct to survive, Salama's struggle mirrors the dilemmas of Syrian women. Her hallucinations of Khawf, an embodiment of fear and trauma, reveal the psychological toll of war while symbolizing collective endurance and resistance. From a psychological perspective, such hallucinations can be associated with trauma responses, including intrusive and dissociative experiences commonly found in individuals exposed to extreme stress and violence (American Psychiatric Association, 2022).

Through Salama's internal conflict and hallucinations, the novel constructs a narrative structure that reflects the collective worldview of Syrian women as a trans-individual subject shaped by war. However, despite the growing number of studies on the novel and on genetic structuralism, existing research tends to emphasize individual trauma, material conditions, or general socio-historical reflection without sufficiently addressing how gendered wartime experiences construct a collective women's worldview. Furthermore, the application of genetic structuralism has rarely been extended to examine the intersection between collective consciousness and gendered survival in conflict settings. This limitation reveals a substantial deficiency in comprehending how women's experiences are structurally depicted as a collective worldview within literary text.

This study argues that Zoulfa Katouh's *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* constructs a gendered collective consciousness in which women's worldview is shaped by trauma, moral conflict, and survival ethics, thereby extending Goldmann's concept of *vision du monde* into the context of wartime female experience.

Several studies have applied Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism in literary analysis, although with diverse research objects and focuses. The first relevant research was conducted by Dewi Nurhasanah in an article entitled "Strukturalisme Genetik Lucien Goldmann dalam Novel Orang-Orang Proyek Karya Ahmad Tohari" (Nurhasanah, 2015). This study employed a qualitative descriptive method with a sociological approach to literature. Goldmann's genetic structuralism was used to explore the interaction between social

structure and literary structure within the novel. The analysis examined how intrinsic elements such as characters, themes, and conflicts correspond with extrinsic aspects that reflect Indonesia's social conditions, particularly class differences, modernization, and human relations in a developing society. The findings revealed that the novel portrays the collective worldview of Indonesian workers and intellectuals who struggle between idealism and corruption. Nurhasanah concluded that "Orang-Orang Proyek" represents the moral consciousness of a social class seeking integrity within a system dominated by materialism and power. While this study successfully demonstrates the relevance of genetic structuralism in analyzing class-based moral consciousness, it does not address gendered experiences or the formation of women's collective consciousness, particularly within conflict settings.

The second related study was an article entitled "A Genetic Structuralism Analysis of Materialism in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *A Little Princess*" (Sakinah & Kusumayanti, 2023). This research also adopted a qualitative descriptive approach within the framework of genetic structuralism. It focused on examining how themes of materialism and social class are represented in Burnett's novel and how they reflect the worldview of the Victorian era. By applying Goldmann's theory, the study identified homology between the structure of the novel and the socio-economic realities of nineteenth-century England. The results show that the protagonist, Sara Crewe, is constructed as a non-materialistic character positioned in binary opposition to Miss Minchin, reflecting resistance to materialistic values in Victorian society. The analysis further reveals that narrative structure, characterization, and setting correspond to the collective consciousness of the Victorian social hierarchy. However, this study remains limited to class and ideological opposition, without engaging with gendered consciousness in contexts of crisis or examining how extreme conditions such as war reshape collective worldview.

The last previous research that the researcher found was an article entitled "Genetic Structuralism Analysis in the Novel Alf Syams Musyriqah" (Apriliyanti et al., 2025). The study aimed to analyze the novel's structure and to reveal the social facts, collective subject, and the author's worldview as represented in the narrative. The findings indicate that the novel's intrinsic structure, including its themes, plot, character relationships, and setting, is deeply interconnected with the social structures that shape it. The narrative reflects the socio-historical reality of Afghanistan, particularly issues of patriarchy, domestic violence, war, and political conflict. The researchers concluded that Khaled Hosseini's worldview in the novel is a feminist view, emphasizing gender equality and women's empowerment in resisting oppression. Nevertheless, although this study addresses gender and conflict, it does not explicitly examine how women's experiences are structured as a collective consciousness through a systematic application of genetic structuralism, leaving the concept of gendered *vision du monde* underdeveloped.

Therefore, previous studies demonstrate that the genetic structuralism approach has been successfully applied to various literary works, from Indonesian contemporary novels to English classics and Middle Eastern narratives. However, most of these studies have concentrated on issues of class, morality, and modernization, while insufficient attention has been given to the construction of women's collective worldview in wartime contexts. Understanding the worldview of women in wartime literature is essential, as it reveals how female experiences of trauma, loss, and resilience are collectively represented and

articulated through narrative form. Such representation not only provides a nuanced understanding of the impact of war but also illustrates how women construct meaning, identity, and moral consciousness amid destruction.

Accordingly, this current research on Zoulfa Katouh's *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* aims to fill this gap by applying Goldmann's genetic structuralism to examine how the collective consciousness of Syrian women is represented through the character of Salama Kassab, who embodies both personal and communal struggle in the midst of war. This study limits its analysis to the representation of Salama Kassab as the embodiment of Syrian women's worldview, focusing on how her experience, choices, and psychological struggles reflect the broader collective consciousness of women in the context of the Syrian conflict.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Women's Worldview in Literature

The concept of worldview (*vision du monde*) is important in understanding how women are represented in literature, especially within certain social and historical contexts. Feminist literary studies highlight that women's voices offer different perspectives that often challenge dominant, male-centered narratives. Through literature, women express their experiences and show how they respond to social pressures and inequalities (Ahmed, 2021).

Women's experiences in literature are closely related to their socio-cultural background, including issues such as patriarchy, conflict, and inequality. Recent perspectives also emphasize that women's experiences are diverse and influenced by factors like culture and social conditions (Crenshaw, 2019). This means that women's representation in literature should be understood as both individual and collective.

In this study, women's worldview refers to shared values, perspectives, and ways of understanding reality that are expressed through women's experiences in the text. It includes how women respond to trauma, oppression, and survival.

In Middle Eastern literature, women's narratives often reflect both struggle and resilience, especially in situations of conflict and war (Abu-Lughod, 2013). In *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, Salama's story represents not only her personal experience but also the collective experiences of women living in wartime. This concept helps explain how individual experiences in the novel reflect a broader women's worldview shaped by socio-historical conditions.

2.2 Socio Historical Consciousness

The concept of worldview (*vision du monde*) helps explain how women are represented in literature, especially in relation to their social and historical conditions. Recent feminist studies show that women's voices in literary works offer different perspectives that often challenge dominant narratives and highlight women's lived experiences (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2024).

In literature, women's experiences are not only personal but also shaped by broader social factors such as gender inequality, culture, and power relations. Feminist research today emphasizes that women's perspectives are diverse and influenced by different backgrounds and conditions, rather than being seen as a single, uniform experience (Aulia et al., 2024).

Women's worldview in this study refers to shared ways of understanding life, including values, emotions, and responses to situations such as trauma, oppression, and

survival. Through literary texts, these experiences are expressed both individually and collectively. Contemporary studies also show that modern literature often gives space for women to present their voices, challenge patriarchal ideas, and reconstruct their identities (Taj et al., 2024).

In the context of literature from conflict regions, women's narratives often reflect both struggle and resilience. Their stories show how they deal with difficult conditions while still maintaining their identity and sense of purpose. Therefore, women's worldview in literature can be understood as a reflection of both personal experience and collective social reality.

2.3 Genetic Structuralism Worldview

Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism helps explain how a literary work is connected to the social conditions behind it. Goldmann argues that literature is not only created by an individual author, but also reflects a collective consciousness shaped by certain socio-historical situations (Goldmann, 1975). In this sense, a literary text carries a worldview (*vision du monde*) that represents the values, struggles, and perspectives of a particular social group.

Recent studies still use this approach to show how literary texts are closely linked to social reality. Genetic structuralism focuses on the relationship between the structure of the text and the structure of society, meaning that what appears in the story is often influenced by real social conditions (Sultani & Hamdi, 2024).

Goldmann also explains that literary analysis involves three main aspects: the internal structure of the text, the worldview expressed in it, and the socio-historical background that shapes it. These aspects are interconnected, because a literary work can be understood both as an artistic form and as a reflection of social life. Recent research also shows that this theory is still relevant for analyzing how social values and collective ideas are represented in literary works (Wahid et al., 2023).

Genetic structuralism is used to see how Salama's experiences are not just personal, but also represent the shared experiences of Syrian women. Through this approach, the analysis focuses on how individual stories in the novel reflect a broader collective worldview shaped by the realities of war.

2.4. Middle Eastern Literature and War Context

Middle Eastern literature is closely connected to themes of conflict, resistance, and displacement. Recent studies show that literature from this region often functions as a way to represent social and political struggles, especially in contexts shaped by war and crisis. War narratives, in particular, give space for individuals to express the impact of violence, loss, and forced migration, while also challenging dominant or simplified representations of the Middle East (Tanous et al., 2025).

Within this context, women's voices have an important role. Their narratives often highlight aspects of war that are not always visible in male-centered stories, such as emotional trauma, family breakdown, and the responsibility to maintain everyday life in difficult conditions. Research shows that people in conflict areas experience both deep psychological distress and, at the same time, forms of resilience and adaptation (Tanous et al., 2025).

Recent feminist studies also emphasize that women's experiences in war are not only about vulnerability, but also about agency and survival. Women often play central roles in sustaining life, care, and social connections even in extreme situations (Veronese et al., 2026).

Zoulfa Katouh, as a contemporary writer, brings this perspective into focus by centering women's experiences in wartime. In *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, Salama's inner conflict between staying to help others and leaving to survive reflects a broader dilemma faced by people living through war. Her story is not only personal, but also represents shared experiences of suffering, resilience, and hope among women in conflict settings.

Placing this novel within the context of Middle Eastern war literature helps show that women's perspectives are essential in understanding how collective experiences are shaped during times of crisis.

3. Research Method

3.1 Data Selection

The primary data consist of quotations, narrative passages, and dialogues drawn from *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, while secondary data include scholarly books, journal articles, and credible academic sources related to genetic structuralism, feminist literary criticism, and the Syrian socio-historical context. The data were selected based on their relevance to key analytical themes, namely trauma, moral conflict, and gendered experience. This selection ensures that only significant textual elements contributing to the construction of women's worldview are included in the analysis.

3.2 Analytical Procedure

The data analysis was conducted through several systematic stages. First, coding was applied to identify significant textual units related to trauma, moral conflict, and gendered experience. Second, categorization was carried out to group the coded data into thematic patterns, including recurring symbols, conflicts, and narrative structures. Third, interpretation was conducted using Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism, encompassing intrinsic analysis, identification of *vision du monde*, and socio-historical contextualization. Through these steps, the analysis explains how individual experiences in the text construct a broader collective consciousness of women in wartime contexts.

3.3 Validity Strategy

To ensure analytical credibility, this study applies theoretical triangulation by integrating genetic structuralism with trauma theory and feminist perspectives. This strategy allows the data to be examined from multiple analytical lenses, strengthening the validity of the interpretation and ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of how women's experiences are collectively represented in the novel.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings derived from the analysis of *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* by Zoulfa Katouh. The discussion examines how Salama Kassab's experiences construct a distinctly female worldview shaped by the realities of war, trauma,

displacement, and socio-historical instability. The analysis reveals that Salama's consciousness is characterized by profound despair, psychological fragmentation, disrupted aspirations, and persistent moral dilemmas. These experiences not only reflect her individual struggle for survival but also symbolize the broader realities faced by women living amid the Syrian conflict. Through Salama's perspective, the novel portrays the complex intersections of gender, violence, loss, and resilience, demonstrating how prolonged exposure to armed conflict reshapes women's perceptions of themselves, their communities, and their futures. Consequently, Salama's worldview emerges as a powerful representation of the collective experiences of Syrian women whose lives have been profoundly transformed by war and political upheaval.

4.1 Salama's Despair and Emotional Exhaustion

In *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, Zoulfa Katouh constructs Salama Kassab's despair as a defining element of a women's worldview shaped by war. Salama's statement, "People are dying from haemorrhages and infections and there's no way for me to help them," reflects a profound collapse of agency that extends beyond individual frustration. Within Lucien Goldmann's concept of *vision de monde*, this despair signifies a consciousness structured by socio-historical pressures rather than purely personal emotion. Contemporary reinterpretations of genetic structuralism emphasize that literary character embody the collective consciousness of specific social groups whose worldview are shaped by historical crises and material limitations (Goldmann, 1975).

Salama's inability to enact her ethical roles as a medic mirrors the broader humanitarian reality in wartime Syria. Years of conflict have devastated the country's healthcare infrastructure, leaving millions without adequate medical support. Reports indicate that nearly half of Syria's healthcare facilities have been destroyed or rendered non-functional, while severe shortages of medicines, equipment, and trained personnel continue to restrict access to essential treatment. As a result, more than 15 million Syrians require urgent health assistance, and many medical workers have fled the country due to violence and instability (United Nations Population Fund, 2023). In such conditions, even trained caregivers often lack the resources necessary to save lives, creating situations in which individuals witness suffering yet remain unable to intervene effectively.

This structural collapse disproportionately affects women, whose social roles frequently involve caregiving and community health support. Many displaced women struggle to access even basic healthcare services, including maternal and mental health care, while damaged hospitals and limited humanitarian funding further reduce available treatment options. Consequently, Salama's despair does not merely represent an individual psychological response but reflects a shared experience among women living through the Syrian conflict. Her worldview emerges from a socio-historical reality in which survival displaces aspiration and moral responsibility collides with systemic destruction. In this sense, Salama's statement embodies the experiential reality of women whose identities as caregivers, healers, and protectors are destabilized by violence, displacement, and the collapse of institutional support.

Salama's emotional exhaustion further illustrates how prolonged conflict erodes psychological resilience. Her reflection, "In the last six months, I have participated in more surgeries than I can count... This wasn't supposed to be my life," reveals chronic fatigue

produced by continuous exposure to death. This conditions aligns with research indicating that women in war zones experience heightened levels of anxiety, depression, and emotional depletion due to cumulative trauma and caregiving burdens (Ommeren, 2019). Hochschild (2012) notion of emotional labor is relevant here: Salama's must repeatedly regulated grief, fear and guilt while functioning in life-and-death situations. In this context, exhaustion is not merely physical but existential, signaling the disintegration of anticipated futures. The phrase "This wasn't supposed to be my life" captures the rupture between imagined womanhood and war-imposed reality, a disruption widely documented among women affected by armed conflict (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2023). In such conditions, even trained caregivers often lack the resources necessary to save lives, creating situations in which individuals witness suffering yet remain unable to intervene effectively.

Salama's despair is framed collectively, as seen in "We'll be lucky if the worst that happens to us here is death... There's nothing to fight for." The pronoun "we" transforms personal anguish into communal consciousness, reflecting shared vulnerability. Empirical studies on women affected by the Syrian conflict report pervasive feelings of helplessness, insecurity, and psychological distress linked to displacement, loss of family members, and constant threat of violence (Kak, 2025). Women frequently bear dual roles as survivors and primary emotional anchors of families, intensifying stress and burnout (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2024). Through Salama, the novel articulates a women's worldview marked by endurance amid devastation, where despair becomes a structural condition of living rather than a transient emotional state. In Goldmann's framework, Salama's psychological exhaustion embodies the dialectical relationship between individual subjectivity and the collective social reality of women navigating war.

This demonstrates that Salama's despair and emotional exhaustion are not merely personal reactions to trauma but structurally produced conditions that reflect a collective women's consciousness, shaped by the intersection of gendered caregiving roles and the systemic collapse of social and medical institutions in wartime Syria.

4.2 Trauma and Psychological Fragmentation

In *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, Zoulfa Katouh portrays trauma not only as an emotional response but as a force that fragments Salama Kassab's psychological reality, shaping a distinctly gendered worldview. This condition is evident in Salama's intrusive sensory memory: "...the echo of the oscillating saw... is stuck in my mind on a loop." The persistence of violent imagery reflects what Caruth (Caruth, 1996) defines as trauma's belated nature, where overwhelming events return repetitively through involuntary recollection. Trauma theory explains that survivors of extreme violence frequently re-experience events through intrusive memories, flashbacks, and recurring sensory impressions that disrupt their perception of time and reality (Betancourt et al., 2013). Salama's consciousness therefore becomes a psychological space where past and present collapse into one another, indicating that war continues to exist internally even when the immediate threat has temporarily subsided. Within Lucien Goldmann's framework of genetic structuralism, such fragmentation signifies a worldview structured by instability, where reality is filtered through fear, loss, and the impossibility of emotional closure. The narrative structure thus reflects how individual consciousness mirrors the broader social disintegration experienced in wartime societies.

In the Syrian context, studies have shown that women frequently experienced layered trauma stemming from bereavement, displacement, and caregiving under extreme scarcity (Kak, 2025). More than a decade of armed conflict has forced many Syrian women to assume multiple survival roles within families while simultaneously coping with psychological distress, uncertainty, and grief. Research on conflict-affected populations demonstrates that such prolonged exposure to violence significantly increases the risk of anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress symptoms, and emotional exhaustion (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2024). Salama's experience reflects this broader social reality: trauma disrupts not only emotional equilibrium but also self-perception, generating a fractured worldview in which survival coexists with persistent guilt, fear, and moral conflict. Her internal struggle illustrates how war reshapes personal identity and moral reasoning, especially for young women who are compelled to navigate life-and-death decisions in unstable environments.

Psychological fragmentation is symbolically reinforced through Salama's dissociative coping mechanism, particularly her repetitive focus on flowers and medicinal plants: "Daisies. Daisies. Daisies." and "Feverfew. Feverfew. Feverfew." These moments function as cognitive refuge, revealing attempts to regulate overwhelming anxiety and maintaining. Trauma psychology identifies such patterns as grounding or dissociate responses, where the mind seeks temporary escape from unbearable stimuli (Herman, 1997). From a women's worldview perspective, these fragments of imagined calm contrast sharply with the brutality surrounding Salama, emphasizing the tension between inner vulnerability and external chaos. In war-torn Syria, women often adopt psychological survival strategies to endure continuous exposure to violence while maintaining functional roles within families and communities (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2023).

Salama's hallucinations, particularly Khawf as the embodiment of fear. The novel renders trauma as both personal and collective. Her fractured perceptions mirror the socio-historical condition of Syrian civilians whose realities are shaped by uncertainty, insecurity, and loss. In genetic structuralism, Salama's psychological fragmentation thus represents more than an individual breakdown; it embodies the collective consciousness of women negotiating trauma within a collapsing social structure (Goldmann, 1975). Katouh's narrative articulates a women's worldview marked by endurance under psychic disintegration, where fear becomes internalized and reality itself destabilized by war.

This demonstrates that trauma in the novel operates not merely as a psychological consequence of violence but as a structuring force that fragments perception and identity, reflecting a collective women's consciousness shaped by prolonged conflict, instability, and the necessity of emotional survival within a collapsing social order.

4.3 Shattered Dreams and Disrupted Future

In *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, Zoulfa Katouh articulates the erosion of Salama Kassab's future through the collapse of personal aspirations and the redefinition of life milestones. Salama's recollection of her earlier ambitions "Graduated from university with high GPA... and finally be able to travel outside of Syria and see the world" establishes a contrast between anticipated adulthood and war-imposed reality. This rupture reflects Goldmann's notion of *vision du monde*, where individual consciousness becomes structured by socio-historical disruption rather than personal intention (Goldmann, 1975). In situations

of prolonged conflict, individual aspirations are often replaced by immediate survival concerns, as war restructures the temporal horizon of everyday life (Chatty, 2018). The future, once imagined as a space of mobility and self-realization, is replaced by a horizon dominated by survival, loss, and uncertainty. Salama's experience thus represents a collective female consciousness shaped by conflict, where dreams are not merely postponed but fundamentally destabilized.

The destruction of Salama's imagined future is symbolically intensified in the wedding scene: "We don't have cake, a proper wedding dress, or even clean clothes. But it doesn't matter. It feels like the whole thing happens in snapshots." This passage encapsulates how war dismantles culturally significant expressions of femininity, joy, and normalcy. In many Middle Eastern contexts, including Syrian-Islamic tradition, wedding rituals signify renewal, purity, and communal continuity (Joseph, 2018). The absence of these elements—cake, dress, cleanliness—therefore symbolizes not only material deprivation but also the disintegration of social and emotional stability. Armed conflict frequently disrupts social rituals and family traditions, which normally function as markers of life transitions and communal belonging (Chatty, 2018). Salama's phrase "but it doesn't matter" reveals a critical transformation of worldview: happiness is redefined not through ceremonial completeness but through emotional endurance. This moment reflects what recent humanitarian reports describe as adaptive resilience among women in conflict zones, where traditional aspirations are reshaped under conditions of violence and scarcity (United Nations Population Fund, 2023).

Narratively, the wedding scene functions as a subtle shift from despair toward negotiated acceptance. Rather than portraying the event as romantic fulfillment, Katouh frames it as fragmented, fleeting, and filtered through Salama's war-conditioned consciousness. The description "snapshots" suggests discontinuity, indicating that even moments of intimacy cannot escape the psychological imprint of war. Empirical studies on Syrian women have documented similar disruptions, where marriage, education, and career pathways are reshaped by displacement, insecurity, and economic collapse. Within Goldmann's genetic structuralism, this symbolic reconfiguration reflects the collective worldview of women whose dreams are recalibrated by necessity. Salama's disrupted future thus embodies a women's worldview defined by endurance, adaptation, and the reconstruction of meaning amid devastation.

This demonstrates that the destruction of Salama's future is not merely the loss of personal aspirations but a structurally produced transformation of temporality, reflecting a collective women's consciousness in which dreams are redefined, deferred, and reshaped by the constraints of prolonged conflict and socio-historical instability.

4.4 Survival versus Humanity (Moral Conflict)

In *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, Zoulfa Katouh frames Salama Kassab's consciousness within a persistent moral tension between self-preservation and humanitarian responsibility. This conflict is explicitly articulated when Salama states, "Layla, I'm the only pharmacist left in three neighbourhoods. If I leave, who will help them? The crying children. The sniper victims. The wounded men." The passage reveals a worldview structured by ethical obligation rather than personal safety. Salama's hesitation to flee Homs reflects a moral consciousness shaped by collective suffering, where survival is inseparable from responsibility toward others. Within Goldmann's concept of *vision du monde*, this

dilemma signifies the dialectical relationship between individual agency and socio-historical conditions, as Salama's choices are constrained and defined by war, scarcity, and communal dependency (Goldmann, 1975).

Salama's moral conflict further emerges in her declaration, "I volunteer at the hospital because I can't stand seeing people die," and "I'm not a monster. There are people suffering and I can help." These statements position humanitarian engagement not as heroic abstraction but as existential necessity. Her refusal to abandon the hospital illustrates what feminist conflict studies describe as gendered ethical labor, where women disproportionately assume caregiving roles under crisis conditions (United Nations Population Fund, 2023). In war-affected societies, women often experience intensified moral pressure to preserve life, sustain families, and uphold social cohesion despite personal risk (Said et al., 2015). Salama's worldview therefore reflects a specifically gendered consciousness in which empathy and duty compete with fear and exhaustion.

At the same time, the novel does not romanticize Salama's altruism. Her confession, "All I care about... is Layla and the hospital," exposes the psychological cost of prolonged moral strain. The narrowing of Salama's emotional world signals survival fatigue, a condition associated with chronic exposure to trauma and ethical stress. Empirical research on Syrian women indicates that continuous decision-making under threat—whether to stay, flee, protect, or sacrifice—produces severe anxiety, guilt, and emotional depletion (Kak, 2025). Salama's internal struggle thus mirrors the lived reality of women navigating impossible choices in conflict zones, where neither survival nor solidarity can be achieved without loss.

Through genetic structuralism, Salama's moral dilemma represents the collective worldview of women situated within collapsing social structures. Her oscillation between leaving and staying embodies a consciousness shaped by war's ethical contradictions: the instinct to survive versus the compulsion to remain human. Katouh's narrative reveals that within a women's worldview, moral conflict is not a peripheral theme but a structural condition of existence under violence. Salama's struggle ultimately signifies the collective female experience of negotiating care, guilt, endurance, and responsibility amid the dehumanizing pressures of war.

This demonstrates that Salama's moral conflict is not merely an individual ethical dilemma but a structurally produced condition, reflecting a collective women's consciousness in which survival and humanity are continuously negotiated within the constraints of war, gendered responsibility, and socio-historical collapse.

5. Conclusion

This study analyzes the women's worldview portrayed in Zoulfa Katouh's *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* through Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism. The analysis demonstrates that the character of Salama Kassab embodies a collective female consciousness shaped by the socio-historical realities of the Syrian civil war. Her experiences reflect how prolonged conflict restructures women's emotional, psychological, and moral perspectives.

The findings reveal four major dimensions that construct the women's worldview in the novel. First, despair and emotional exhaustion emerge from continuous exposure to violence and the overwhelming responsibility of caring for others. Second, trauma and psychological fragmentation illustrate how war disrupts personal identity and mental

stability through intrusive memories, fear, and dissociative coping mechanisms. Third, shattered dreams and disrupted futures show how war dismantles personal aspirations and life milestones, forcing women to redefine hope and happiness under conditions of uncertainty. Finally, the moral conflict between survival and humanitarian responsibility highlights the ethical dilemmas faced by women who must balance self-preservation with the obligation to help others in times of crisis.

Through these dimensions, the novel reflects not only Salama's individual struggle but also the broader experiences of women living in conflict zones. From the perspective of genetic structuralism, Salama's consciousness represents the collective worldview of women navigating trauma, caregiving responsibilities, and moral pressures within a collapsing social structure. Ultimately, the novel portrays women's worldview in wartime as a complex negotiation between suffering, resilience, ethical responsibility, and the persistent effort to maintain humanity amid devastation.

This study also offers a theoretical contribution by extending genetic structuralism to the analysis of gendered consciousness in wartime literature, showing how the concept of vision *du monde* can be applied to understand women's collective experiences in conflict settings.

The practical implication of this study lies in providing a deeper understanding of women's perspectives in war narratives, which can be useful for literary studies, gender studies, and educational contexts that aim to promote awareness of trauma, resilience, and humanitarian values.

Future researchers may further explore women's perspectives in war literature by examining other Middle Eastern narratives or by comparing different literary representations of female resilience in conflict contexts.

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