

## Environmental Resilience in Arabic Literature: Eco-critical Readings of *al-Wabā'* and *al-Maṣābiḥ al-Zurq* and Their Relevance for Sustainable Rural Development

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**Abstract:** This study analyzes the representation of environmental resilience in two modern Arabic novels—*Hānī al-Rāhib's Al-Wabā'* and *Hannā Minah's al-Maṣābiḥ al-Zurq*—by focusing the unit of analysis on narrative elements such as characters, settings, symbolic events, and ecological metaphors that describe the community's response to environmental pressures. The purpose of this research is to explore how the representation of literature can enhance the understanding of sustainability dynamics relevant to rural development. Using a qualitative-descriptive method, this study applies three analytical approaches: ecocriticism, environmental sociology, and the *Sustainable Livelihoods Framework*. The findings suggest that figures such as al-Shaikh and Sheikh Abdel Jawad represent a shift away from traditional agrarian values to new forms of adaptation shaped by political instability, resource scarcity, and changes in social structures. Both novels reveal patterns of vulnerability, resilience, and livelihood strategies that reflect real processes in dealing with environmental changes. The contribution of this research lies in the designation of the role of literary works as a medium that reflects ecological pressures, as well as a conceptual tool that can enrich cross-disciplinary discussions on sustainability and provide interpretive insights that complement empirical studies of rural development.

**Keywords:** Environmental resilience, Ecocriticism, Sustainable livelihoods, Modern Arabic novels, Sustainable rural development

## 1. Introduction

Rural development in Indonesia has been under serious pressure in recent years due to rapid and uncertain environmental changes. Various studies have shown that villages are the most vulnerable areas to natural resource degradation, declining water quality, declining soil fertility, and increasing ecological disasters, such as floods, droughts, and landslides (Hizbaron et al., 2021; Panjaitan et al., 2020; Syafri et al., 2020). This situation is exacerbated by development policies that are often not sustainability-oriented, leading to the exploitation of resources without consideration of environmental capacity (Agus, 2020; Warren & Steenbergen, 2021). In various cases, villages face socio-economic pressures, including rising poverty rates, rural-urban migration, and the erosion of agrarian traditions due to rapid modernization. This social fact highlights the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to understanding how rural communities respond to environmental change, including through alternative sources of knowledge, such as literary works, which often provide in-depth representations of human experiences confronting ecological and social crises.

Literary studies over the past two decades have shown an increase in interest in examining the relationship between literary works and environmental issues through ecocritical approaches, environmental sociology, and sustainability studies (Glottfelty, 1996a, 1996c, 2007; Mackenthun, 2021; Myren-Svelstad, 2020). These studies confirm that literature functions not only as an entertainment medium but also as a critical reflection on social,



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political, and ecological changes (Ong, 2022; Simpson & Cremin, 2022). In the context of modern Arabia, the novels *Al-Wabā'* by Hānī al-Rāhib and *al-Maṣābiḥ al-Zurq* by Ḥannā Mīnah are widely studied for their powerful depictions of poverty, conflict, ecological pressure, and social transformation. However, although both novels contain strong environmental and social narratives, studies that link literary representations to the concept of environmental resilience or sustainable rural development are still relatively limited. In addition, previous research has tended to highlight the political and social aspects of Arabic novels, but has not examined how narrative elements, such as characters, spaces, symbols, and plots, can provide new insights into the resilience of communities in the face of environmental change. This emptiness is the basis for the importance of this research.

This article aims to examine how two Arabic novels, *Al-Wabā'* and *al-Maṣābiḥ al-Zurq*, represent the dynamics of environmental resilience in the context of rural communities through a reading of ecocriticism, environmental sociology, and the framework of Sustainable Livelihoods. The focus of the analysis is on narrative units, including the main character, the story space, ecological metaphors, and patterns of social interaction that reveal the community's response to environmental challenges. Another goal is to determine the extent to which literary representation in the two novels can offer insight into the concept of sustainability, particularly in relation to survival strategies, value shifts, and socio-ecological pressures faced by society. Thus, this research not only adds to the understanding of the relationship between literature and the environment but also seeks to expand the discourse of rural development through a cultural perspective. More broadly, this article aims to demonstrate how literary works can serve as a source of critical reflection that enhances environmental resilience and fosters understanding of society's adaptation in the face of social and ecological change.

This article diverges from the argument that literary works, particularly novels that depict social and ecological conflicts, can serve as a medium for analyzing the dynamics of environmental resilience and community adaptation. The main hypothesis of this study is that *Al-Wabā'* and *al-Maṣābiḥ al-Zurq* not only reflect the socio-political conditions of Arab society at a given time, but also contain patterns of resilience, livelihood strategies, and value changes that are relevant to understanding the challenges of sustainable development in various rural contexts. Both novels illustrate how figures such as al-Shaikh and Sheikh Abdel Jawad underwent a transition from traditional agrarian life to more complex social conditions, resulting from war, resource exploitation, and ecological pressures. This argument aligns with the theory of Catton & Dunlap (1978, 1980), which emphasizes that changes in the environment and social structure are intertwined in the process of human adaptation. Therefore, this study aims to demonstrate that interdisciplinary readings, incorporating ecocriticism, environmental sociology, and sustainable livelihood theory, can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of how communities respond to ecological change. The novels, through their narrative representations, offer valuable conceptual models for understanding socio-ecological resilience.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Literary Reflection: Concepts, Functions, and Definitions of Operations

The concept of literary reflection refers to the ability of literary works to represent, interpret, and criticize social reality and human relations with their environment through narrative devices such as characters, settings, language styles, symbolism, and conflict (Hendersson & Wamsler, 2020; Mackenthun, 2021; Poray-Wybranowska, 2020). In the context of environmental studies, literature serves as an important medium that captures ecological experiences often overlooked by empirical research, such as the fear of plague, food scarcity, agrarian change, and life uncertainty (Comfort, 2023; Ngo, 2022). However, in the original article, the Literary Reflection section remains general, overly descriptive, and lacks an operational definition that can serve as a foundation for analysis. Therefore, in this study, literary reflection is defined operationally as the process of depicting community experiences and responses to environmental and social pressures, as reflected in the narrative structure of the two analyzed novels. By this definition, literary reading understands not only stories as "images of the environment," but as complex constructions

that describe how societies interpret, negotiate, and respond to ecological change. This approach strengthens the role of literature as a source of cultural data in understanding the environmental resilience of rural communities.

Previous studies have shown that literary reflection on the environment can be a source of conceptual insight into ecological injustice and social dynamics (Glottfelty, 1996a, 1996c, 2007; Tait, 2021). But the literature gap is clear: the study of modern Arabic literature still focuses on issues of colonialism, identity politics, and conflict, while representations of environmental resilience, rural livelihoods, or ecological change have not been the main focus of research. Furthermore, the literature linking literary reflection to environmental resilience remains limited in the Arab context. Therefore, this study closes the gap by showing how the literary representations in *Al-Wabā'* and *al-Maṣābiḥ al-Zurq* contain narrative patterns that are relevant to analyzing the resilience of communities in the face of environmental change. By understanding literature as a mirror of ecological experience, the study avoids descriptive tendencies that repeat common ideas such as "literature reflects environmental concerns." Instead, this research employs literary reflection as an analytical tool that enables an in-depth examination of adaptation strategies, social relations, and value systems that shape society's response to crises. This approach not only clarifies the relevance of literature but also shows how literary reflection contributes to the study of environmental resilience.

## 2.2 Environmental Resilience: An Analytical Framework and Literary Relevance

The concept of environmental resilience refers to a socio-ecological system's ability to adapt, survive, and recover from environmental disturbances, including natural disasters, outbreaks, conflicts, climate change, and resource scarcity (Amirzadeh et al., 2022; Buma & Schultz, 2020; Ford et al., 2020). In the context of literary analysis, this concept serves as a crucial tool for examining how fictional characters and communities navigate ecological pressures through moral choices, survival strategies, social solidarity, or, conversely, value rifts and internal conflicts (Lindgren, Leavenworth, & Manni, 2021; Schneider-Mayerson, 2020). However, in the original article, the environmental resilience section is still presented as a descriptive theory, rather than being positioned as an analytical lens connected to the narrative structure. In this study, environmental resilience is operationalized as an adaptation pattern that is reflected through the actions of characters, social interactions, and story symbols that illustrate the ability of fictional communities to cope with environmental pressures. This makes the concept of resilience not just an environmental theory, but an interpretive tool that helps interpret social dynamics in literary texts.

The international literature provides a strong theoretical basis for interpreting ecological resilience in social, economic, and cultural contexts; however, research on resilience in Arabic literature remains very limited. Most Arabic literature research focuses on colonialism, authoritarianism, and political conflict, but has not linked these narratives to the concept of socio-ecological resilience (Cvetković, 2021; Jung, 2020). In fact, novels such as *Al-Wabā'* and *al-Maṣābiḥ al-Zurq* contain explicit depictions of food scarcity, agrarian pressures, class conflicts, changes in agrarian values, and the adaptation of village communities. Thus, this research makes a novel contribution by demonstrating how the concept of resilience can be identified in narratives through character actions, social conflicts, and even environmental metaphors. This study demonstrates that resilience in the novel is not merely a technical ability to survive, but a social process—including solidarity, power negotiation, and value reconstruction—that can be analyzed literally through the interaction between characters and the dynamics of the storyspace. It addresses the weaknesses of literature that tend to separate environmental and literary studies, and reinforces the relevance of modern Arabic novels in enriching the understanding of the resilience of rural communities.

## 2.3 Sustainable Rural Development: A Socio-Ecological Perspective

The concept of sustainable rural development emphasizes the importance of striking a balance between ecological, economic, and social aspects in building the sustainability of rural communities (Díaz-Sarachaga, 2020; Surówka et al., 2021; Vázquez-Maguirre, 2020). In the original article, this framework is mentioned but not given a clear analytical function in relation to the literature. Therefore, this study utilizes the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (Chambers & Conway, 1992; Conway, 2022) to examine how narratives in Arabic novels portray

livelihood assets—such as land, social relations, cultural capital, and access to resources—that are crucial factors in rural life. This narrative representation helps identify how fictional communities respond to scarcity, environmental pressures, war, and agrarian change through adaptive strategies or through the destruction of social structures. In this way, the concept of rural development is not only understood as a macro policy, but as a process experienced directly by individuals and communities in literary texts.

The literature indicates that sustainable rural development is closely tied to a community's ability to adapt to environmental changes, manage resources sustainably, and maintain social stability (Goga & Pujol-Valls, 2020; Heras et al., 2021). However, studies on rural development in Arabic literature are still minimal, despite many texts describing the struggles of agrarian societies to face economic shifts, conflicts, and social transformations. In the novels *Al-Wabā'* and *al-Maṣābīḥ al-Zurq*, for example, the village is depicted as a space of battle between traditional values and the pressures of modernity, between communal solidarity and individual interests. This research fills the gap by showing how the two novels represent livelihood dynamics, agrarian conflicts, and community adaptation strategies. This analysis suggests that literature can serve as a valuable source of cultural knowledge, helping to foster a more nuanced and humane understanding of rural development. This approach broadens the understanding that rural development is not only about economic growth, but also about the sustainability of human-environmental relations as reflected in literary narratives.

## 2.4 Framework Integration: Three-Dimensional Conceptual Relations

To avoid theoretical fragmentation, this study integrates three concepts—literary reflection, environmental resilience, and sustainable rural development—into a complementary analytical framework. Literary reflection provides representational data in the form of narratives, symbols, and conflicts. Environmental resilience provides an analytical lens for assessing the adaptive responses of communities, while sustainable rural development offers a structural context that explains the livelihood dynamics and ecological pressures faced by rural communities. This integration enables a comprehensive analysis that views the novel not only as an aesthetic work but also as a cultural archive that documents socio-ecological changes. With this approach, research can avoid the descriptive nature of merely explaining theories separately and instead present a functional theoretical mapping in the reading of literary texts.

The integration of these three concepts also explains the novelty of this research in comparison to previous studies. The existing literature on modern Arabic novels highlights more political, psychological, or historical aspects, but has not developed an analytical model that links literary narratives to environmental resilience and rural development. By combining ecocriticism (Glottfelty, 1996a, 1996c, 2007), environmental sociology (Catton & Dunlap, 1978, 1980), and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, this study introduces an interdisciplinary approach that enables the reading of literary texts as a field of representation of resilience, adaptation strategies, and social transformation. This approach also clarifies the relationships between theories that were not previously described in the original article. In addition to strengthening the structure of the theoretical study, this integration opens up the opportunity to compile a conceptual model or table of interdimensional relationships—as recommended in the review results—that makes it easier for readers to understand how concepts work in analysis. Thus, this section not only corrects the weaknesses of the previous structure but also yields a sharper, more coherent, and viable theoretical framework for a reputable journal publication.

## 3. Methods

### 3.1 Material Objects

The material objects of this research are two modern Arabic novels, namely *Al-Wabā'* by Ḥānī al-Rāhib and *al-Maṣābīḥ al-Zurq* by Ḥannā Mīnah, which in the article are described as literary representations of environmental pressures, agrarian change, and rural social dynamics. Both novels were chosen because they contain ecological

narratives that are relevant to the framework of ecocriticism (Glotfelty, 1996a, 1996c, 2007) and environmental sociology (Catton & Dunlap, 1978, 1980). Both are primary sources for analyzing literary reflections on environmental resilience and the livelihood strategies of rural communities.

### 3.2 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive design, utilizing textual and interpretive analysis approaches. The use of this design aligns with the character of literary analysis, which emphasizes an in-depth reading of narrative structures and socio-ecological representations (Poray-Wybranowska, 2020; Lindgren, Leavenworth, & Manni, 2021). An interdisciplinary approach is applied by integrating ecocriticism (Glotfelty, 1996a, 2007), environmental sociology theory (Catton & Dunlap, 1980), and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (Chambers & Conway, 1992; Conway, 2022). With this design, researchers can interpret human–environmental relationships as reflected in the storyline.

### 3.3 Data Source

The primary data sources consist of two analyzed novels, while the secondary data sources include theoretical references on ecocriticism, environmental resilience, and sustainable rural development from Glotfelty (1996a, 2007), Schneider-Mayerson (2020), Buma & Schultz (2020), and Diaz-Sarachaga (2020). All literature was selected based on its relevance to the three main research concepts: literary reflection, environmental resilience, and sustainable rural development. Secondary sources serve to strengthen interpretation and provide a conceptual foundation for narrative findings in the novel.

### 3.4 Data Collection Techniques

The data collection technique involved a close reading of the two novels to identify environmental themes, social pressures, and patterns of community adaptation. Each relevant section is coded and grouped based on conceptual categories such as ecological metaphors, human–nature relations, and representations of rural livelihoods. In addition, a literature search was conducted using theoretical references mentioned in articles such as Glotfelty (1996a), Mackenthun (2021), and Hendersson & Wamsler (2020) to corroborate the analysis. All notes and citations are systematically reduced.

### 3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is carried out through three steps: (1) structural analysis to map the characters, plots, settings, and environmental symbols in the novel; (2) ecological resilience analysis refers to the frameworks of Catton & Dunlap (1980), Ford et al. (2020), and Amirzadeh et al. (2022); and (3) analysis of livelihood strategies using the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework from Chambers & Conway (1992). These three analyses are then integrated to uncover how literary texts reflect environmental resilience and rural development dynamics.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Literary Reflections on Environmental Resilience through Eco-Criticism

An analysis of Ḥannā Mīnah's novel *al-Maṣābil al-Zurq* shows that ecological criticism in the text is manifested through explicit depictions of the exploitation of nature by large landowners. On page 70, the narrative describes how fertile lands are drained for personal gain, resulting in damage to the ecosystem and a decline in the quality of life for the village community (Figure 1). This representation suggests a direct connection between human actions and the emergence of ecological vulnerabilities. According to Cheryl Glotfelty's Ecocriticism approach, these findings show that novels not only present a dramatic narrative, but also position the environment as an entity that has a voice in the dynamics of rural crises. In addition, external conditions such as soaring prices of basic commodities, rising

unemployment, and shortages of essential goods like bread and kerosene, as well as arbitrary actions by the authorities, reinforce the picture that environmental exploitation is triggering a widespread social crisis. This section demonstrates that the novel employs narrative elements to illustrate the tangible effects of environmental degradation on individuals' well-being, thereby providing an initial insight into how literary texts serve as socio-ecological reflections in rural contexts.

Figure 1. The exploitation of nature for the personal gain of landowners

كانت له أوقات يخدم فيها الحي خدمة وجدان ، وتتميز هذه  
الأوقات بخلوها من الفوائد المقيمة ، الفوائد التي تتطلب الخبز  
والدهاء ، فإذا ذهب وجاءت غيرها ، أوقات أكثر ملاءمة للاستغلال  
شمر عن ساعديه لسلخ جلود الناس بسكين لطفه ، ونشر هذه  
الجلود بغير ملح في الشمس ، ثم اقناع أصحابها بأنه إنما يفعل  
ذلك لمصلحتهم !

وقد كانت الحرب خير فرصة جاءت بعد انتظار ، ومنذ اليوم  
الأول صارهم براهيه فيها .. قال :

— « الظروف استثنائية » .

وظل بعد ذلك يردد هذه العبارة طوال خمس سنوات ، حتى  
حفظها الناس عنه ، وأصبحوا إذا راوه مقبلاً قالوا :

— « جاء الظروف استثنائية » .

وإذا راوه مدبراً قالوا :

— ذهب « الظروف استثنائية » .

وكانت هذه الظروف الاستثنائية تعني السكوت عن كل شيء :  
الفلاء والبطالة وفقدان الخبز والكاز وتعسف الحاكم وظلم  
المستشار . أما السكوت فكان أمراً هاماً بالنسبة إليه . هو يعرف  
أن المختار وجه السلطة تجاه الشعب في القرية أو المدينة ،  
وخاصة في القرية ، فإذا سكوت الناس ارتاح هو ، واكتسب  
ثناء الذين أعلى منه ، وإذا شكوا نال هو اللطممة الأولى ، ثم  
تصاعدت اللطمات بطريق التسلسل ، وجاءته بالتالي التهديدات  
والتوبيخات بطريق التسلسل أيضاً !

The results of descriptive data analysis reveal a reciprocal relationship between human actions towards nature and the resulting social instability. Figure 1 illustrates a scene that highlights the structural injustices resulting from environmental exploitation, where small communities bear the brunt of unsustainable resource management. Glotfelty's approach to ecocriticism helps identify how the text places environmental degradation as an integral part of the socio-ecological crisis experienced by villagers. The novel illustrates that ecological changes—such as the shrinking of productive land—exacerbate social inequality and affect the resilience of communities in meeting their basic needs. The silence depicted in the text regarding various economic and social sufferings shows that environmental degradation is not only material, but also psychological and political. These findings reveal a consistent pattern of representation that highlights how natural disasters affect the structure of people's lives, underscoring the relevance of literature as a space for documenting ecological experiences.

The final findings of this subsection confirm that al-Maṣābīḥ al-Zurq utilizes symbolic language and narrative structure to highlight the interplay between resource exploitation and human vulnerability. On page 70, as illustrated in Figure 1, the novel portrays the village as a space undergoing extreme ecological changes due to the actions of a small group of land elites. Through the restatement technique employed in this study, a pattern of repeated representation was identified in the text, specifically that environmental damage is a direct cause of poverty,

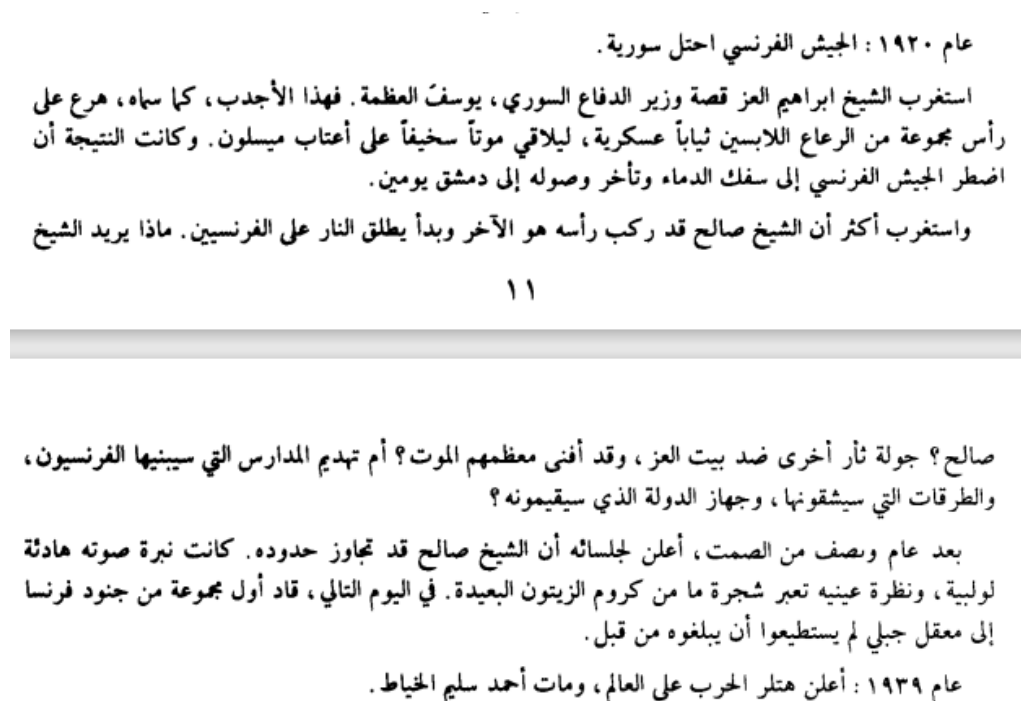
instability, and the erosion of social values. Literature, in this case, serves as a forum to display the unequal power relations between capital owners and village communities who have lost access to natural resources. Ecocriticism's approach helps to affirm that novels not only reflect ecological conditions but also uncover social structures that exacerbate the effects of natural destruction. These findings provide the initial basis for understanding how literary reflection can contribute insight into the importance of sustainable environmental management.

#### 4.2 Literary Reflections on Environmental Resilience through Environmental Sociology

Catton and Dunlap's approach to Environmental Sociology helps to interpret how Hānī *al-Rāhib's al-Wabā'* reflects society's relationship to drastically changing environmental conditions and social structures. On pages 11–12, the novel describes the French occupation of Syria in 1920 and the popular resistance led by Shaikh Saleh (Figure 2). The event shows that external pressures, such as colonialism, cause social instability as well as damage to the infrastructure built by the colonizers. Acts of resistance, including the destruction of public facilities by residents, reflect how communities respond to threats through collective actions that have ecological and social impacts. These findings demonstrate a direct link between social change and environmental change, as Catton and Dunlap argue, specifically that communities respond to external pressures in ways that alter the ecological conditions surrounding them. This representation highlights the fragile balance between the social and environmental order.

The continued narrative on pages 11–12 shows the emergence of new social spaces as a form of community adaptation to the changing political and environmental situation. After the French occupation and the ensuing devastation, the novel describes the Aḥmad Salīm al-Khayyāṭ shop as a space where village farmers and educated youth met (Figure 2). This interaction signifies the formation of a new social network that serves as a means of exchanging knowledge, values, and survival strategies. Catton and Dunlap's approach emphasizes that this kind of social dynamic shows how communities build adaptation mechanisms through new social relationships. The novel portrays the social context that evolves in tandem with changes in the environment and political structure, demonstrating that the social environment is a crucial element in understanding the ecological resilience of society.

Figure 2. Interactions between society and its environment, and social dynamics



The findings in this subsection suggest that the social interactions described in *al-Wabā'* affirm the role of the environment as an arena for the formation of collective identity. The novel illustrates how the village community responded to the pressure of colonial power through both resistance and innovation in their social relations. The act of destroying infrastructure by citizens as a form of protest against colonialism highlights the ecological consequences of political action. Meanwhile, the emergence of new spaces of interaction, such as the *al-Khayyāt* shop, shows how society rebuilds social structures after being shaken. The Environmental Sociology approach helps affirm that ecological and social change are occurring simultaneously and mutually affecting one another. These findings provide an initial overview of how the novel represents society's efforts to reorganize social relations in order to maintain its survival.

#### 4.3 Literary Reflections on Environmental Resilience through the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

Chambers and Conway's *Sustainable Livelihoods Framework* approach helps identify how *al-Wabā'* and *Maṣābīḥ al-Zurq* represent the livelihood strategies of rural communities in the face of ecological and social pressures. On page 13 of *the novel al-Wabā'*, the life journey of *al-Shaikh*, who returned from exile to manage the farmland in *al-Baik* and send his children to school (Figure 3), is depicted. This representation illustrates how the utilization of natural assets (land) and human assets (education) is combined to enhance family resilience. In addition, the novel demonstrates how the village community preserves its traditional identity through the role of figures such as *al-Shaikh*, who has become a symbol of agrarian values. These findings show that livelihood strategies in the novel are not singular, but involve a combination of assets and adaptation practices that reflect rural socio-ecological dynamics.

Figure 3. *al-Shaikh* has become a symbol of the village's deep-rooted traditions

تنقل بين القرية والمدينة، عندما كان التنقل بين قرية وأخرى حدثاً يروى، وعرف لماذا أثر جده الشيخ  
عزلة الصومعة. عاش في المدينة سنوات الحرب والاستقلال الخاطف، ثم عاد إلى القرية ليعمل مرابحاً عند البيك،  
ثم نزل إلى المدينة مرة أخرى ليضع الأولاد في المدرسة. لم يتغير في ذهنه شيء من صورة العالم، ظلت امتداداً  
بلا أطراف وتجليات لأصل واحد.

كان ذلك فيما مضى - عندما كانت الفصول تأتي وتروح ويراه رتيبة وجيلة ومفرحة، والألوان تتبدل في  
وجه الطبيعة الأبدي مع دورات المطر والجفاف، القمح والحصيد، الريح والسكينة، الزمهرير والقيظ. ولقد رآه  
ثابتاً، مؤبداً، غير قابل للتغيير. لم ير في الحياة شيئاً أقل من مطلق، ولا في الموت - حتى ذلك الغروب، إذ وقف  
يرقب الصغار وهم يلعبون أمام البيت الكبير، وخطر له خاطر غريب.

ربما كان على ذلك الخاطر أن يجيء قبل ربع قرن. فوفاة جده شيخ السنديان لم تكن أقل من زلزلة. فجأة  
اختفى، وكان حضوره الدائم الغائب ضمانة لثبات الأفلاك وتحركات الشمس حول الأرض. فجأة سقطت  
حايته للشير من الموت المدهام. فجأة اقتحم الموت الجبال والوديان والزرع والبشر، وتعين على الجميع أن يهربوا  
منه بدلاً من أن يستقبلوه بابتسامة حزينة. فجأة وإذا العائلة العريقة ثلاث عائلات، وذهب باسمها الأصل  
الشيخ إبراهيم، بينما بقي له، هو الشيخ عبد الجواد، كنية الخياط، ولحقت بالشيخ عبد الهادي كنية الريحان،  
وبآخرين كنى أخرى. كان هو أقل الثلاثة حظاً، وأكثرهم زهداً، وأوفرهم علماً وأخفهم على سطح اليابسة.

On page 14 of *al-Wabā'*, *Shaikh Abdel Jawad* expressed his anxiety about the decline in religious values and drastic changes in the village of *Shīr* (Figure 4). This narrative illustrates social change as a response by society to environmental pressures and modernization. This representation aligns with the SLF framework, which emphasizes that the sustainability of life is not only determined by material assets but also by social and cultural assets. The village of *Shīr*, once the center of collective life, now emerges as a scattered space. The novel illustrates that the erosion of



traditional values coincides with ecological vulnerability and economic uncertainty. These findings suggest that sustainable rural development must take into account the dynamics of community values and identities.

Figure 4. The village, particularly through the character of Shaikh al-Sindiyan

وقد خشي الشيخ عبد الجواد أن ينصرف الناس عن الهداية الروحية، فيضعف إيمانهم وترتخي العروة الوثقى التي تشدهم إلى الله. ذات يوم، وكان قد أنهى زيارة لجده الراقدة في الصومعة، نظر حوله بإمعان ورأى أن الشير لم تعد الشير. فلما مضى كان لها مقام وشخصية. الآن هي مجموعة بيوت متناثرة هنا وهناك لا يربطها رابط ولا تشير إلى معنى. كان الغرباء يتوافدون إليها مطمئنين إلى نومهم وأكلهم وهدايتهم. فالشير كانت تعني شيخ السنديان، وشيخ السنديان الشير. كان البيت الكبير للبيوت كلها، باسمها تذبح الذبائح فيه، ومن زاره زار القرية وعرف كرم أهلها وتقواهم وصفاءهم. الآن تبددت الحالة. على نحو ما، بطريقة غريبة غير مفهومة، صار تحصيل لقمة العيش أشق وأهم. مع أن الأمور لم تتغير. الأرض هي الأرض، والفصول الفصول. والنباتات والمطر والجفاف والرياح الشمالية. كل شيء. كان ابن الشير يرضى بأي مقدار تجود به الطبيعة، يكتفي بشورية العدس والتين اليابس. الآن تغير ذلك. فجأة برز أناس مثل محمد الغفري وسالم خضير ورسلان محفوظ وججاج، وصاروا وجوه الشير. وجوه الشير لا شيء سوى أنهم بعد الحرب وتركوا صاروا أغنياء. وصار أحد آل السنديان واحداً منهم، عبد الهادي الريحان الذي كان الثاني بينهم.

وضاعف خوف الشيخ عبد الجواد أن الشيخ إبراهيم لم يرزق حتى ذلك الحين إلا بسلسلة مخجلة من البنات، مما جعل الاستمرار في هذا التراث أمراً محفوفاً بالخطر. لذلك عزم على إحياء عادة عريقة كان جده يتابعها

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On pages 111–112 of *al-Maṣābīh al-Zurq*, the novel describes how the inhabitants continued to bring their animals to market despite the continued decline of trade (Figure 5). This action demonstrates the community's efforts to maintain economic sustainability by utilizing its remaining assets. In addition, the picture of consuming simple foods, such as lentil soup and dried figs, highlights aspects of cultural resilience in maintaining a frugal and adaptive lifestyle. The SLF framework helps to interpret that this strategy is a creative response to declining economic and environmental capacity. These findings demonstrate that rural communities in the novel sustain a stable life through a combination of natural, social, and cultural assets. This representation serves as a crucial foundation for understanding how ecological awareness and survival strategies are conveyed in literary texts.

Figure 5. Interaction between villagers and their livestock at the market

ولامر ما تمثل زوجه نائمة في البركة ، وولديه مضطجعين

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[w.liilas.com/vb3](http://w.liilas.com/vb3)

\* me3refaty

في وعائين كبيرين تفرهما المياه ، وقطتهم تقف تحت صنوبر الماء  
في المطبخ ، اما الخادم الطويلة المصوصة فقد تصورهما معلقة من  
رجليها في سقف دورة المياه .

كانت السوق مقفرة بعد ، وثمة حارس يسير متمهلاً ناعساً  
يقتلع رجليه بصعوبة من رصيف الشارع ، ويمضي باتجاه المخفر  
ليقول لمن فيه « الحارة سليمة » ، وبعض القرويين يهرولون في  
سيرهم ليلحقوا دوابهم المتجهة الى سوق الخضار ، واجير المطعم  
القريب ينظف الطناجر ، وقد جلس قربه اجير اللحام ، يتحادثان  
بما ليس يدري سواهما ، ويبدو من هيئتهما انهما غريبان عن المدينة،  
قدفهما الريف فيمن قذاف من فلاحيه ..

## 5. Discussion

The results show that the two novels—*al-Maṣābīḥ al-Zurq* by Ḥannā Mīnah (1954) and *al-Wabā'* by Ḥanī al-Rāhib (1981)—present a strong representation of human-environment relations in a rural context. An analysis based on Ecocriticism, as presented by Glotfelty (1996), reveals that the exploitation of nature by landowners in *al-Maṣābīḥ al-Zurq* causes ecosystem damage, which in turn contributes to the socio-economic deterioration of the village community. Meanwhile, the approach of Environmental Sociology of Catton and Dunlap (1978) shows that environmental change is inseparable from socio-political dynamics, as illustrated through the situation of the French occupation and the resistance of the people in *al-Wabā'*. At the same time, an analysis with *the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework* of Chambers and Conway (1992) found that rural communities in both novels rely on social, cultural, and material assets to maintain survival. The findings from the three theoretical frameworks demonstrate the integration of environmental degradation, structural pressure, and community adaptation as a form of environmental resilience. Thus, both novels serve not only as aesthetic works but also as socio-ecological representations, providing in-depth accounts of rural realities.

Reflection on these findings reveals that literature possesses a distinctive ability to capture the complexity of human and environmental relations, as emphasized by Glotfelty (1996). This suggests that literary works can serve as a space for ecological criticism, as well as a medium for interpreting environmental crises. The description in *al-Maṣābīḥ al-Zurq* of the destruction of nature due to land exploitation confirms that ecological destruction is always intertwined with social injustice, in line with Catton and Dunlap's (1978) view of the close relationship between social structures and environmental conditions. This reflection suggests that rural communities are at their most vulnerable when their resources are controlled by the elite, but still have adaptive capacity through socio-cultural practices, as emphasized in the framework of Chambers and Conway (1992). These novels illustrate that traditional values, social solidarity, and communal identity are important capital in dealing with environmental pressures. Thus, literature can function as a reflective space that not only describes crises but also shows the resilience of society in the face of ecological and social changes.

The interpretation of the results of this study shows that environmental damage in both novels is positioned as a representation of a broader social crisis. In *al-Maṣābīḥ al-Zurq*, the exploitation of natural resources by landowners not only triggers ecological degradation but also reflects unequal power relations, as criticized in the perspective of Glotfelty's Ecocriticism (1996). Meanwhile, *al-Wabā'* displays the impact of colonialism on deteriorating social structures and ecological spaces, consistent with Catton and Dunlap's (1978) analysis that socio-political pressures are part of the ecological crisis itself. Interpretations of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (Chambers & Conway, 1992) suggest that the characters in both novels respond to change by reorganizing their assets and life strategies, reflecting adaptive resilience. These findings suggest that environmental resilience is not solely about the ecosystem's ability to recover, but also about the capacity of communities to adapt to change through social, cultural, and economic strategies. Thus, both novels demonstrate that environmental resilience is a dynamic process influenced simultaneously by ecological, political, and cultural pressures.

A comparison of the results shows that the three theoretical frameworks provide complementary perspectives. Glotfelty's (1996) ecocriticism emphasizes both the moral and symbolic dimensions of environmental exploitation, particularly in *al-Maṣābīḥ al-Zurq*. The approach of Environmental Sociology of Catton and Dunlap (1978) emphasizes that ecological crises cannot be separated from the dynamics of colonialism, social conflict, and inequality, as depicted in *al-Wabā'*. Meanwhile, the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, proposed by Chambers and Conway (1992), presents the practical side of the adaptation strategy for village communities, utilizing natural, social, and cultural assets. The similarity of the three outcomes suggests that rural communities are not passive, but rather continue to develop survival strategies in the face of structural and ecological stresses. Nevertheless, the comparison shows that *al-Maṣābīḥ al-Zurq* emphasizes more power relations and environmental exploitation, while *al-Wabā'* provides a stronger historical-political context in shaping ecological and social dynamics. This synthesis

demonstrates that understanding environmental resilience necessitates a multidisciplinary approach that integrates ecology, history, social structure, and culture.

The follow-up of this study shows that literary works can function as an alternative source in the study of environmental resilience, in line with Glotfelty's (1996) idea regarding the potential of literature as an instrument of ecological awareness. The socio-ecological representations in *al-Maṣābīḥ al-Zurq* and *al-Wabā'* can be used as a basis for formulating rural development policies that are more sensitive to social, cultural, and historical contexts. The *Sustainable Livelihoods Framework* approach (Chambers & Conway, 1992) suggests that policy interventions should prioritize strengthening the social and cultural capital of communities, rather than focusing solely on technical and material aspects. From the perspective of Environmental Sociology, Catton and Dunlap (1978) argue that policy implementation needs to consider power relations, inequality of access to resources, and the dynamics of social change. The results of this research can also serve as a basis for developing environmental literacy education by utilizing literary texts as a reflective medium to understand the complexity of human-environmental relationships. Thus, integrating literature studies and environmental studies can enrich the approach to sustainable development, especially in rural areas.

## 6. Conclusion

This study confirms that the two novels, *al-Maṣābīḥ al-Zurq* by Ḥannā Mīnah (1954) and *al-Wabā'* by Ḥanī al-Rāhib (1981), contain profound socio-ecological reflections on the environmental resilience of rural communities. Through the approaches of Glotfelty Ecocriticism, Catton and Dunlap's Environmental Sociology, and the *Sustainable Livelihoods Framework* of Chambers and Conway, this study found that ecological pressures, social injustice, and political conflict are interrelated factors that affect rural living conditions. Both novels show that the exploitation of natural resources and colonial dynamics have a direct impact on social structure, survival strategies, and changes in societal values. These important findings confirm that literature is not only an aesthetic medium but also a socio-ecological document that records the dynamics of rural communities' resilience to ecological and social change.

The main contribution of this research lies in its multidisciplinary approach, which integrates the study of literature with ecology, environmental sociology, and sustainable livelihood studies. By utilizing literary texts as analytical data, this study expands the scope of environmental resilience studies and demonstrates that literary works can serve as a conceptual space for understanding the complexity of human-environmental relationships. The analysis enriched the literature on ecological representation in modern Arabic literature, demonstrating how narratives can reveal power structures, social vulnerabilities, and the dynamics of adaptation in rural communities. Theoretically, this study confirms the relevance of the Glotfelty, Catton, and Dunlap framework, as well as Chambers and Conway, in examining environmental issues in literary texts. It provides an analytical model that can be applied to the study of environmental literature in the context of West Asia and the global countryside.

For further research development, this study recommends expanding the scope of analysis to include other literary works that explore human-environmental relationships, both from the Arab tradition and other regions, in order to enrich the comparative understanding of ecological resilience in world literature. Further research can also employ a political ecology approach to examine the factors of power, colonialism, and capitalism that contribute to environmental exploitation, as represented in the novel. Additionally, the study of literary ethnography can be employed to connect narratives with the real-life experiences of contemporary rural communities. The integration of quantitative methods—such as environmental data mapping or spatial analysis—with literature reading can also expand the depth of analysis. Thus, further research is expected to yield a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of environmental resilience and community adaptation strategies in the context of global ecological change.

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