



Ecotheology of Islamic and Christian Perspectives: A Study of Soren Kierkegaard's Existentialist Philosophy

Aditama Aditama^{a,1*}, Nafik Muthohirin^b, Muhammad Rafliyanto^c

^a Postgraduate Programme, State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia

^b Faculty of Islamic Studies, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

¹aditama020284@gmail.com, ²nafikmuthohirin@umm.ac.id, ³rafliyanto34@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author

Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History</p> <p>Received: May 28, 2023</p> <p>Revised: June 20, 2023</p> <p>Accepted: June 23, 2023</p> <p>Published: June 29, 2023</p> <p>Keyword: Earth Crisis; Ecotheology; Islam and Christianity; Sorean Kierkegaard; Theology</p>	<p>Religious teachings are closely related to the ecological dimension, which, after being reinterpreted, eventually led to the term ecotheology. Through previous studies, it was found that two of the religions that contain these values are Islam and Christianity. The study aims to answer the formulation of the problem in the form of how the concept of ecotheology exists in Islam and Christianity and how to compare the concept of ecotheology in the two religions in the study of Soren Kierkegaard's existentialist philosophy. The research is a literature study with a comparative approach. The findings of this study conclude that in both religions there is a strong emphasis on the role of humans as guardians of the environment, the concept of environmental justice, the position of God as a giver of responsibility, the existence of collectivity, and spiritual values in the ecological role of humans. In Islam itself, through the Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah organizations, the collectivity is very visible. The main difference between the two lies in the doctrinal footing and organization of the movement.</p>
<p>How to Cite:</p> <p>Aditama, A., Muthohirin, N., & Rafliyanto, M. (2023). Analyzing Ecotheology from The Perspective of Islam and Christianity: An Examination of Soren Kierkegaard's Existentialism Philosophy. <i>Progresiva : Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam</i>, 12(01), 117–132. https://doi.org/10.22219/progresiva.v12i01.27291</p>	

Introduction

The anthropocentric humanism wrought to close the Middle Ages has succeeded in creating a collective paradigm that human potential is unique, absolute, and human beings are the center of the universe (Warsito & Muttaqin, 2012). There is resistance to religious authority's authoritarianism, which has shattered the paradigm that man exists entirely to serve the will of God. This concept is manifested in the spirit of liberation, which brings about a renewal in all aspects of humanity. However, this renewal of the concept of humanity does not make man a true man (Hardiman, 2020).

Efforts to build this new concept of humanity gave birth to progress in many aspects of life. But because there is no belief in humans so as to trap them in destructive conditions

for the surrounding environment, there is no exception to attention to environmental conditions, where there is a lot of natural damage due to excessive human behavior in utilizing them and failure to manage them. (Ridwanuddin, 2017). Because all interest orientations are directed to serve human needs by eliminating the divine values adhered to, what happens is the destruction of nature itself. This is because the arena served is the lust of modern man, not the higher collective interest.

The Indonesian Forum for the Environment (WALHI) stated that there is a potential for conflicts that continue to increase in Indonesia, which also has an impact on increasing the intensity of ecological disasters (WALHI, 2022). In fact, since regional autonomy came into effect in 1998, ecological disasters in a number of regions in Indonesia have been like routines that cannot be stopped (Z. A. Musthofa et al., 2017). Every year, the intensity of ecological disasters (floods and landslides) continues to increase due to forest exploitation. Therefore, various efforts to save nature have emerged by repositioning how religious teachings regulate the relationship between humans and nature (Robert Patannang Borrong, 2019).

This reconstruction effort gave birth to a discourse called ecotheology, which is the spirit of presenting religion as a teaching that also pays attention to nature as part of religious life, including what happens in Islam and Christianity. Christianity has 2.38 million adherents, while Islam has 1.91 million adherents. With such a large follower base, it has become the responsibility of both religions to engage in constructive efforts to improve nature. This is because religion builds an understanding of meaning, so it has the power to move all humans in very large numbers (Harari, 2017).

Religion also greatly influences an individual's view of more complex life goals. This purpose in life will affect every aspect of a person's understanding, so the individual will act on the religious understanding he believes in. One such belief is reflected in the philosophical thinking of existentialism, first introduced by Soren Aabye Kierkegaard, a Danish philosopher (Armawi, 2011; Tjaya, 2018). In that reality, man, with his freedom, learns who he is. This freedom will eventually give birth to great responsibility because it has successfully recognized its role. In this context, Kierkegaard views religion as a form of theological understanding and appreciation that must be chosen to achieve the goals of life.

Based on this explanation, religion has the opportunity to present the conceptual tools needed to save nature. Nurasyah Dewi Napitupulu revealed that there is an exploitation attitude towards nature caused by religious values related to nature that are not socialized so that they do not form the character of caring for the environment (Napitupulu et al., 2018). Therefore, a theological or ecotheological understanding of ecology needs to be formulated as a first step to avoid a greater ecological catastrophe in the future. Religion has actually provided teachings to protect nature. Abdul Quddus stated that al-Quran has required Muslims to see nature as an entity that has no sacred value (Quddus, 2012). Muslims must believe that nature and all the creatures that inhabit it are a single entity, both in terms of origin and purpose. This nature does not belong to man; it is only *amanah*, a deposit that must one day be accounted for by Allah. Because of that, Islam teaches humans to take care of nature.

Meanwhile, in the realm of Christian doctrine, there have also been many teachings that emphasize the importance of protecting nature. Sandu revealed that ecology itself is actually not only a science of environmental management but also a matter of practical theology. The development of the times has separated many concepts of ecology and theology so that Christian theology contained a Western dichotomy between academic theology, which is one university, and practical theology, which is experienced in the

Christian community. In fact, long before that, orthodoxy in the Christian world had formulated complementary expressions of theology and spirituality (Sandu, 2005).

Based on this description, an assumption can be made that ecotheology itself has urgency as a religious teaching that also needs to be taught in order to save humanity from ecological disasters in the future. This research examines in detail the concept of ecotheology in Islam and Christianity, as well as the comparison between them from the perspective of Soren Kierkegaard's existentialism philosophy.

Research Method

This study uses the literature research method, which is a technique to obtain data from literature sources (Zed, 2008). The approach used is qualitative-comparative. Researchers conduct data mining by collecting various pieces of literature related to the object being studied, including books, journals, and research reports. About 80 percent of the main references to this research examine eco-theology from Islamic and Christian perspectives. This study emphasizes two important aspects, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data include various studies that focus on ecology and theology as the spirit of the movement to save nature, while secondary data include other works that can support this research.

The first step for researchers to get valid data is to collect various sources that discuss various ecotheological concepts in Islam and Christianity. The data that has been collected is then analyzed to answer research questions. The existing data is arranged into a framework that displays the subject matter in this study.

After the data is collected properly and theoretically, it is processed and analyzed again using descriptive methods (Consuelo, 1993). Researchers analyzed the findings of the data by systematically describing them based on the ideas of theological concepts contained in Islamic and Christian teachings. After knowing the basic concepts studied, researchers use a historical approach, which is the process of approaching a concept of thought related to religion and nature in Islam and Christianity.

Results and Discussions

Human existence is the main focus that the philosophy of existentialism seeks to present. This school of philosophy itself is growing rapidly along with the human problems that develop today in the paradigm of BARI philosophy. Etymologically, the word existence comes from the Latin *existere*, which is divided into two words, *ex* and *sistere*, which mean to appear, arise, or manifest outwardly (Jumrah, 2020). Human existence then became the foothold of existentialism thinkers, who gave birth to many different thoughts about the meaning of existence itself.

Dismantling human existence means trying to bring awareness to something that has actuality (form)—the existence of something that emphasizes that consciousness exists. In general, Kierkegaard is considered the first source of existentialist philosophy. He referred to existence as the “authentic self”. Only the concrete “authentic self” or I can make existential decisions. As an existence, I act. “I,” in Kierkegaard's terms, am a life “actor” who dares to make basic decisions for the direction of my own life, not just a “spectator” of my life (Parmer, 2018). Actor means the main character who is able to make his own decisions instead of dissolving into the hustle and bustle of the mob. Man finds himself choosing what he wants no longer because the views of the wider community are simply swallowed up. Nor is it because ethical values and laws are not dialectical with confidence. So the actor

here means being a human being who is able to decide what pertains to him as well as asserting his position as a free individual.

The discussion of human rights can be traced to the expression of Socrates, who stated "Know yourself", Philosophical attention that was previously focused on natural problems turned to human problems (Mahfud & Patsun, 2019). Since then, philosophy that makes man a material object has been studied using philosophical paradigms (metaphysics, ontology, epistemology, excheology, and cosmology) as its formal object. It no longer only defines human beings but also seeks to understand the peculiarities of the characteristics and roles of humans themselves. This diversion of attention is based on the fact that the complexity and universality of the understanding of nature are strongly influenced by the steadiness of knowledge about man. In fact, man himself is the greatest mystery in the universe.

Kierkegaard began the study and presentation of thought by asking a series of simple questions, namely: What is the purpose of human life? What can man think of his existence? What is the purpose of events in human life? According to him, this question can reveal who humans really are and can only be answered by humans who have experienced it (Parmer, 2018). The process of experiencing it is called "living" or experiencing something in life as an individual being. For him, human existence can only be described through individual experience, not group experience.

According to Kierkegaard, human existence cannot be reduced or understood through abstract or scientific concepts alone but must be understood existentially, that is, through unique individual life experiences. Kierkegaard viewed man as the most complex and unique being because he had an awareness of death, freedom of choice, and responsibility for his actions. Kierkegaard also stressed the importance of religion in human life. For him, religion is a way to overcome the confusion and anxiety experienced by humans in the face of life's uncertainties. However, Kierkegaard rejected religious views that ignored individual life experiences and relied solely on abstract doctrines and dogmas.

Kierkegaard also stressed the importance of courage in the face of uncertainty in life. According to him, human beings can only achieve truth and happiness through personal experience and honest self-reflection. In addition, Kierkegaard also developed the concept of "anxiety", in which humans feel restless because of awareness of the limitations and uncertainties of life. This anxiety can trigger people to seek a deeper meaning in life and help them achieve inner peace. In Kierkegaard's view, human existence is seen as a choice that must be made individually, and authentic living can only be achieved through personal experience that requires courage and sincerity. This view greatly influenced the development of modern philosophy and psychology.

In addition, Kierkegaard also criticized rationalist approaches in philosophy and theology that tend to ignore the existential aspects of human beings. According to Kierkegaard, faith is not something that can be achieved through reason alone but must be felt existentially through deep life experiences (Parmer, 2018). Life experience can make people realize their freedom, so it is important to have courage in making decisions and acting in accordance with the values they believe in, without neglecting their responsibilities to others and society in general.

Three Stages of Existence

Kierkegaard divides the stages of human existence into three levels, namely aesthetics, ethics (moral), and religious (Parmer, 2018). This classification is based on the realm of existence because, according to him, existence is a way of showing one's existence in the world. That is, man must identify who he is, but this does not necessarily lead to a stage of contemplation. The first is the aesthetic stage. This stage is the first step for humans to follow what they like, ego-wise. At this stage, people tend to live in hedonism without having a clear purpose in life. They seek satisfaction in physical and emotional pleasure and pay no attention to the consequences of their actions. Kierkegaard considered that the aesthetic stage is superficial and unsatisfactory in the long run. Kierkegaard explained that at this stage, humans avoid making decisions in life, so they never become their real selves. This stage can also be called "inauthentic", because the human being has not yet arrived at this self-awareness.

At this stage, humans are trapped in various sensory experiences. At this point, existence can be considered an attempt to define and live a life regardless of good and bad. The essential purpose of existence, according to Kierkegaard, is to escape boredom and fill life with fresh and exciting experiences. The orientation of human life is completely directed towards obtaining it. Man is directed to fulfill the animal instinct with hedonistic pleasure principles and act according to mood. An aesthetic man is a man who lives without a soul because he has no actors or contents in his soul.

The second is the ethical stage. Human beings live by moral principles that are responsible for their actions. At this stage, people place moral values as guidelines in their lives, and they tend to behave according to existing moral rules. The ethical stage emphasizes the importance of responsibility and commitment in life. At this stage, humans are able to cope with the uncertainty and confusion experienced at the aesthetic stage. This stage is considered higher than the previous stage, which can only end in despair and disappointment. At this stage, humans begin to calculate and use the categories of good and evil when performing an action. Essentially, human life is no longer marked by its near-action; they have made concrete choices based on rational consideration, conscience, and reflection.

The third is the religious stage. Kierkegaard considered the existence of religion to be the supreme entity. This is because spirituality is the highest dimension of human life. As stated earlier, both aesthetics and morals have flaws, the most significant of which is that both cause despair. Men lives in deep trust and faith. This stage requires human beings to go beyond the limits of rationality and rely on their beliefs and beliefs in the unseen. According to Kierkegaard, the religious stage cannot be reached in a rational or scientific way but can only be felt through spiritual experience and a relationship with God.

But for Kierkegaard, man should have nothing more to worry about because he was nothing more than a portal to a state of existence greater than anyone had ever known. Disappointment is not the end of life, but a quick way to understand that it is the path to the right start. It is not enough just to understand aesthetic and ethical needs; the spiritual dimension becomes very important because man will find meaning in life. Kierkegaard also explicitly said that despair is a human prerequisite before reaching the stage of true religion.

This last stage is the result of the course of life. At the stage of giving birth to intelligent behavior. Every human being who draws conclusions from himself, or, in other words, personal experience, will have a greater impact on living life in the world.

Kierkegaard emphasized the importance of man's submission to God without pride. People in this religious era really think that God can help them overcome their misery and despair.

Ecotheology in Islamic and Christian Doctrine

Ecotheology is one of the scientific disciplines that discusses the relationship between nature and theology, resulting in a discussion that aims to realize the benefits of nature and human life. Etymologically, ecotheology itself is composed of two words, namely ecology and theology. Ecology, which is an absorption of Greek, also comes from two words: *oikos* (dwellings; houses) and *logos* (thought; theory). In Arabic, ecology is also known by the term *'ilm al-bi'ah*, which means house or dwelling place (Ali & Muhdlor, 2003). Ecology can be understood as a term from a science whose studies discuss the "house" or "dwelling" of various organisms and the reciprocity between organisms and between organisms and their environment (Ridwanuddin, 2017). While theology in this case is understood as a science that discusses divinity, which includes the study of God's substances and their relationship with the universe, The term theology, or in English, theology, comes from the Greek word *theologia* (Berger, 1991).

Ecotheology is a creative and productive theology of theological developments in the treasures of Islamic studies. Ecotheology in general departs from the premise of the relationship between the human religious paradigm and the phenomenon of environmental crisis (Ituma, 2013). In Islam, ecotheology is understood as an idea of religious beliefs related to environmental issues based on Islamic teachings. The concept of theology can be applied as a theological guide in the field of the environment in the context of efforts to manage natural resources and the surrounding environment.

Thus, the universe is understood as a home for life for every being residing in it. This eventually led to the realization that there is a need for harmonious relationships among beings (humans and other creatures) in order to establish interrelated cooperation with each other according to their respective positions in the universe. A harmonious relationship like this aims to avoid various damages because each damage will certainly have an impact on other damage. Therefore, theology in this case acts as a foundation for achieving harmony by raising awareness that every being is interconnected with each other as fellow creations of God who also have the responsibility to maintain the balance of life in the universe.

The contextualization of theology that enters the realm of environmental studies is one form of effort in responding to issues and facts about environmental damage today. Ecotheological studies also provide various theological reflections on various issues regarding the environmental crisis and how to recover it. This is because ecotheology departs from studies on the relationship between God, humans, and nature (Maggang, 2019). Thus, theology in the context of addressing environmental damage has meaning as an effort to reflect theology on the factual conditions of the environmental crisis.

So it can be summarized that ecology is the science of the environment, while theology is the science of God or belief in the one. So when the two concepts are discussed, there comes an understanding of the relationship between God, man, and the environment. Dialogue between these three elements is necessary so that ecology not only analyzes the relationship between humans and the environment but also provides a philosophical and moral foundation for how humans should behave. In addition, it is also so that theology

does not lose its role as a moral guide for humans to care for the environment in which they live together. This is important to note because, in its history, theology often only discussed the definition of God and truth, which in the end only gave birth to unproductive debates because it was only an attempt to justify each belief (Rakhman, 2013).

Islam, the largest religion in Indonesia, is rarely expressed through two Islamic community organizations, namely Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. Since its inception, NU has declared itself an organization that preserves the nation's noble cultural traditions and values, which are strongly reflected in the jargon '*al Muhafazatu' ala al-qadim al-salih wa al-akhdhu bi al-jadid al-asah* (maintaining good traditions and taking new things better) (Darajat, 2017), Muhammadiyah is a *da'wah* and *tajdid* movement. Muhammadiyah, as explained in *the Treatise on Progressive Islam*, strongly emphasizes creating a truly Islamic society not only by strengthening individual piety but also social piety that emphasizes community empowerment actions as its struggle (Mughni et al., 2023).

Both are Islamic mass organizations that consistently fight for Islamic moderation, both through the educational institutions they manage and socio-political-religious activities (Almu'tasim, 2019). NU considers it important to provide moral guidance for Muslims, especially nahdliyyin, to build environmental awareness by issuing fatwas. After that, several further steps were taken, such as through a program called Bank Sampah Nusantara. But culturally, such fatwas are believed to have no significant impact without formal support from environmental and political policies that favor sustainable development. Without it, it is difficult to have a direct impact on society as well as the "forces" that bind society at large. However, the ecological fatwa product from the *Bahtsul Masa'il* NU forum is very strategic in responding to Indonesia's current environmental crisis. This is closely related to the socio-historical background, where NU has a strong commitment to overseeing Indonesia's sustainable development (Mufid, 2020).

One institution that has a concentration on discussing the environment is the Nahdlatul Ulama Disaster Management and Climate Change Institute (LPBI NU). This institution is a representative of NU that structurally and organically implements Nahdlatul Ulama's policies and programs in the fields of disaster management, climate change, and environmental conservation. The establishment of LPBI NU was agreed upon at the 32nd NU Congress in Makassar in 2010. The vision is, "The realization of a society that has resilience and is adaptive to disasters decreases the carrying capacity of the environment and climate change."

Muhammadiyah itself has the Islamic Living Guidelines for Muhammadiyah Citizens (Pedoman Hidup Islami Warga Muhammadiyah/PHIWM), which is a set of Islamic values and norms derived from al-Q'an and al-Sunnah, which are patterns of behavior of Muhammadiyah citizens. One of the contents explains that the environment, as an environmental nature with all its contents contained in it, is God's creation and grace that must be cultivated or prospered, maintained, and not damaged. Every Muslim, especially Muhammadiyah residents, is obliged to conserve natural resources and ecosystems so that ecological processes that support survival are maintained, diversity of genetic resources and various types of ecosystems are maintained, as well as ways of managing natural resources that are controlled to be maintained.

In 2000, Muhammadiyah formulated environment-based movements, including (1) environmental theology, (2) school-based environmental education and Islamic boarding schools, and (3) training of initiators of faith-based environmental movements (Fauzanto, 2020). This is one of the missions of the Muhammadiyah Environmental Council, namely to develop environmental education to build awareness and environmentally friendly

behavior so that Muhammadiyah becomes a pioneer in the environmental movement. One form of the face of Islam progressing in the view of Muhammadiyah in the second century is the involvement of Muhammadiyah in various ecological crisis issues at the regional, national, and global levels.

One of the faces of Islam that has progressed in the second century of Muhammadiyah is the involvement of Muhammadiyah in various ecological crisis issues at the regional, national, and global levels. If in the century of renewal there was a level of rejection of stagnation and Islamic means, then in the second century, the Muhammadiyah movement aimed at the praxis of defense of nature, which is inseparable from human existence itself. One of them is a socialization program aimed at increasing environmental awareness among Muhammadiyah residents (Mardhiah et al., 2014). This program is intended to carry out various campaign activities related to the management and movement to save the environment in order to increase awareness and implement environmentally friendly behavior among Muhammadiyah residents.

In the manual book of *The National Coordination Meeting* of the Muhammadiyah Environmental Assembly, published by the Environmental Assembly (Majelis Lingkungan Hidup/ MLH), the Central Leadership of Muhammadiyah said that its vision is the realization of awareness, concern, and environmentally friendly behavior among Muhammadiyah citizens and the community in general in order to implement *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*. Muhammadiyah views nature itself as created for humans. In the same document, it is also very unequivocally stated that:

"Muhammadiyah is very concerned about the above, as the Philosophy of Life Teachings of KH Ahmad Dahlan Point 1 (first) states that "live only once, so you must be careful", also contained in the Muhammadiyah Islamic Living Guidelines (PHIM), especially regarding behavior towards the environment, and the last affirmed in the 47th Conference in Makassar concerning the active role of Muhammadiyah in dealing with humanitarian issues, universal Universal Nationality and humanity, especially those related to environmental protection and management."

Therefore, it can be concluded that Muhammadiyah, as an Islamic organization, does not want environmental destruction. It is based on the espoused paradigm of the *ummah* and the actualized role of the caliph in an active endeavor. One of these efforts is to form MLH PP. Muhammadiyah. So in the context of ecotheology, it can be said that Muhammadiyah highly upholds efforts to save nature as a form of servitude to Allah Almighty. It is even firmly said that the effort is *amar maruf nahi munkar*, which means acting good and preventing evil.

Meanwhile, in Christian doctrine, ecotheology has an important place in the witness of the Bible. The earth and everything in it are a sign of agreement between God and humans (Telaumbanua, 2020). This is because God has given his compassion through nature created for man. For example, in Genesis 1, it is God's initial description to show the results of his work. God completes his creation with creations that will assist God in protecting and caring for the entire earth. The Bible affirms that God has great love and mercy for the earth He created. Moreover, man is God's last creation, according to Genesis 1:27.

The relationship between Christianity and the environment in the Bible has several main problems, namely: *first*, Christian theology is considered to be the basis for various views that negatively affect the development of environmental spirituality; *second*, Christian theology has strong ecological inclinations and is an important source of building spiritual life for the environment; *Third*, Christian theology is ambiguous about

environmental issues; *fourth*, Christian theology determines its actual position on environmental issues, but there are certain themes or chapters in the Bible that support its view of the environment (Robert P. Borrong, 1998).

Theology and ecology have such a deep relationship that if Christians ignore nature, it is tantamount to destroying God's work, which is tantamount to disobeying God's command to take care of nature. God giving man the responsibility to take care of nature shows that man is God's co-worker in managing, protecting, maintaining, and developing the entire universe (Tomusu, 2021). In Christianity, God is also positioned as the ethical center for protecting nature. This shows that divine values are the basis of all ethics for behavior, including the environment (Katu, 2020). So all human attitudes and actions towards the environment are based on love and reverence for God. A person's spiritual qualities affect his relationship with God, fellow human beings, and fellow living beings in other environments.

Robert Patannang Borrong, one of the leaders who has a focus on the environment and Christian theology, put forward environmental ethics praxis. Ethics is taken from the Bible as a doctrinal basis so that it has normative power. Ethics begins with an understanding of God as a creator in which humans are given responsibility (Robert P. Borrong, 2013). In this context, nature has divine values, so it must be respected and used as well as possible. Then man's assignment to nature is to be the preserver, as Genesis 2:25 reads, "*God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to cultivate him and nurture him.*" The foundation put forward by Robert can be understood as an effort to save the environment by emphasizing the vital role of humans in it.

Theological studies in the context of ecological damage have peaked like floods since the 1970s, both among Catholics and Protestants, especially in church environments and also in theological educational institutions (Robert Patannang Borrong, 2019). Robert concluded that nature, or the environment, has been given by God to be used and utilized for the welfare of man. Man can use nature to sustain his life; in other words, nature was created by God with an economic function to meet the needs of human life. Nevertheless, it remains that the reason for creation is not solely for the benefit of man.

The churches of the world generally give theological responses to the ecological crisis institutionally and theological attitudes toward the ecological crisis, which can be categorized as practical theological efforts. This institutional response involves theological reflection (doctrinal), liturgical, and (more recently, pastoral) theological reflection. One interesting response is the tendency to adopt a contextual theological approach to environmental issues by prioritizing local wisdom as a contextual theological method that also targets ecological issues.

Churches have also established new environmental centers, although this is only at a very early stage and tends to be half-hearted. For example, by referring to the environmental problem study institution formed by the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (Perkumpulan Gereja Indonesia/PGI), namely the Agrarian and Environmental Working Group, PGI has not really been managed as a study center that seriously examines both environmental and theological aspects. In that crisis, theological educational institutions have not yet functioned as centers for environmental theological studies.

Existentialism's Philosophical View of Islamic-Christian Ecotheology

In Islamic doctrine, the concept of ecotheology is based on verses in the Qur'an that discuss human responsibility to protect the universe (Sabarudin et al., 2017). The relationship between man and the universe in Islamic doctrine is explained in the al-Qur'an and al-Hadist, which generally explain three important points, namely: *First*, man and nature have a relationship in terms of belief and worship. In this context, nature acts as God's means to show signs of His greatness so that humans can realize the importance of protecting nature and so as not to exploit nature, let alone make it an offering. *Second*, the universe and its contents created by God should be used wisely by humans, so in this case, humans need to be fair and not wasteful in using natural resources for the needs of life so that the benefits can be felt in the long run. *Third*, humans have the responsibility to protect nature and its contents for the harmony of life that can be felt not only by humans but also by other living things.

Contemporary Muslim scholar Seyyed Hossein Nasr gives his opinion on the condition of modern man and its relation to today's environmental crisis. According to Nasr, as written in his work entitled *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man* (1968), the damage to nature that occurred was the result of human greed that used nature excessively (Maftukhin, 2016). Nasr argues that the poor environmental conditions cannot be separated from the lack of understanding of human religion towards the nature in which it lives. In this regard, Nasr drew on the example of the classical Chinese tradition, especially the doctrines of Taoism and Neo-Confucianism, as schools that highly value nature and the importance of metaphysical understanding (theology).

As a caliph, humans should have the awareness to contemplate all signs of God's greatness found in the universe (Rafly et al., 2022). Environmental damage that has occurred can be caused if modern humans only view nature as a stand-alone object and separate it from the essence of God, so that nature can be exploited for the benefit of private humans. In response to this, Nasr actually denied the disconnect between humans and nature that causes various damages to occur at this time. For Nasr, the relationship between God, man, and nature has become an inseparable unity. The concept of understanding that Nasr has about the universe in the Islamic view is to see the figure of God as transcendental (Nasr, 2003). Nasr considered that God is the highest reality as well as the center of the universe.

The human role of the caliph to tawhid by servitude can also be categorized into the last stage of existentialism in Kierkegaard's view, namely the religious stage. Because at this stage, man who has ecotheological consciousness has rejected all hedonistic lifestyles that prioritize greed and pseudo-indulgence that cause the destruction of nature to occur in many places. Humans at the aesthetic stage tend to have hedonistic lifestyles. They seek satisfaction in physical and emotional pleasure and pay no attention to the consequences of their actions. Because of that, the destruction of nature under the pretext of human needs that cause a lot of damage is a human action that still exists in the aesthetic stage, only oriented towards pseudo-pleasure.

Kierkegaard explained that at this stage, humans avoid making decisions in life, so they never become their real selves. But in fact, such pseudo-happiness can do nothing but satisfy temporary greed. However, people who are on a religious stage will reject everything in order to carry out God's commandments, which in this context are to protect the environment. Kierkegaard considered the existence of religion to be the supreme entity. This is because spirituality is the highest dimension of living. As stated earlier, both aesthetics and morals have flaws, the most significant of which is that both cause despair.

The concept of ecotheology in Islam is the same as what Kierkegaard said. A man who moves to save nature is the result of existentialist despair. But despair is not necessarily helpless with empty hope; it is submission, obedience, and surrender to God's decision.

For Kierkegaard, man should have nothing more to worry about because God is nothing more than a portal to a greater state than anyone has ever known. Because of this, man's submission as caliph on Earth will create good after all of God's commandments have been carried out. Ecotheology based on faith will make people believe that God's commands are the best and must be done. Therefore, Islam has educational concepts that are manifested by its people, which in this context are NU and Muhammadiyah, to be internalized in society. The concept of the caliph as a human role is internalized so that there is a process of knowledge construction in each individual. In the end, the individual will learn on his own and express his role and function as caliph with his own characteristics and capacities. Thus, the ecotheology played by humans will have differences from each other according to the passion carried out.

Ecotheology in Islam emphasizes the role of humans, which begins with the relationship between God and man and then leads to the consequence that the relationship is vertical and horizontal. A vertical relationship to God must have horizontal consequences for the surroundings, including the environment. This kind of relationship places an emphasis on the religious patterns that exist within the thinking paradigm of Islamic society. Religion and living as individuals of faith place an emphasis on their role to be responsible for the prosperity of the Earth, not just people. Emphasizing this kind of role will be very beneficial in reducing the distance between humans and the environment. Meanwhile, Christian doctrine strongly emphasizes harmonization between nature and man. In fact, the earth and everything in it are a sign of agreement between God and humans (Telaumbanua, 2020).

This concept then explains that man and God are partners; if God has created the world as his masterpiece, then man exists to take care of it all. The responsible freedom that God gives to man shows that man is God's co-worker in managing, protecting, nurturing, and developing all of nature (Tomusu, 2021). The meaning is that in the kingdom of God, man is required to take care of nature as part of his created function. Man must be a servant of God, in which man has a set of functions and purposes to spread love to His creatures on earth. This effort manifests in many aspects, not least the environment, which must always be preserved. In this context, God is positioned as the ethical center for protecting nature. God's entire doctrine of the environment became the main source that inspired Christianity to preserve nature. The universe was created for man; therefore, man must also be responsible for his prosperity.

It is a great task for mankind to care for the earth as an expression of loving God. As *a result*, any exploitative act involving the destruction of nature is not justified by Christian doctrine. Robert P. Borrong emphasized that theology in the context of the current ecological crisis must include all theological approaches, from biblical theology to practical theology, that are evident in contributing to the transformation of human life. Thus, the spirit to protect nature from exploitative actions against nature becomes a guide for religious human actions to be able to take preventive actions against nature, as well as a form of worship serving God.

Christian doctrine embodies the immanent role of God to be applied to everyday life. This role is also a way to show the existence of human religion in real reality. In line with this, humans seek their identity to be able to find their existence. Kierkegaard emphasizes that only within the concrete "authentic self" or "I" can existential decisions be made. The

loving human entity as the next manifestation of Jesus or the immanent form of God becomes a source of inspiration for an existentialist. The search for truth through subjective truth allows man to have his own characteristics, which manifest into roles. The Bible accommodates this by providing its fundamental foundation. That is, the role of man is emphasized in order to reach Earth when professing his faith in God.

In Kierkegaard's view, the highest stage of human existence is in religion (Parmer, 2018). Spirituality is the highest dimension of living. Ecotheology can be a form of such passion. By abandoning the greed in humans when they see the abundant natural wealth, ecotheology seeks to control humans to re-establish the relationship between nature, man, and God. Although at first glance it may seem unfavorable, at this stage, man finds himself in total submission to God's decrees.

Ecotheology accommodates that experience because the foundation for caring for nature is not just a matter of ecological demands and needs but also a way to actualize oneself by becoming a spiritualist. Because the foundation is resigned and submissive faith, man is expected to be able to get closer to God by fully living the actions he takes. This passion will create conditions in which man is closer to his role as a human being, then becomes himself free from ethical norms as an objective consensus, as well as with an aesthetic attitude that tends to boredom and the search for pseudo-pleasures. Man, at the stage of religious existence, has escaped from worldly temptations.

Comparison of Islamic and Christian Ecoteologi Concepts

Islam and Christianity have many similarities and differences when it comes to caring for the environment. The fundamental difference lies in the conceptual framework and the foundation that strengthens it. Islam uses the al-Quran and al-Hadith as its doctrinal basis, while Christianity uses the Bible. Another difference is the power of discourse that occurs between the two religions. In Islam, there is a power-discourse relationship that is centralized on the power of Islamic civil organizations, as seen in Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. While Christianity, especially Catholicism, is very centered on the church as a formulator of ecotheology, both conceptually and praxis-wise. However, the similarities between the two are also numerous. The similarities remain in approach to certain aspects, for example: *First*, in Islam and Christianity, God is considered the creator of the universe. Both believe that nature is God's creation that must be guarded and preserved by man. The Islamic doctrine on this subject is found in Q.S. Hud verse 61, which reads, "He has created you from the earth (land) and made you its prosperer". In Christianity, it is in the Book of Genesis, verse 1, which reads, "God created the heavens and the earth and their contents". These two verses also ultimately bring up the role that man must play as God's creature.

God, who is positioned as a creator, means that what God creates has a sacred meaning. All things sacred in religious tradition must be upheld and protected. This kind of cosmocentric understanding is an emphasis for both religions to construct man's role as a recipient of revelation to submit to God by protecting nature.

Second, Islam and Christianity strongly emphasize that humans have the responsibility to take care of the universe. Both emphasize the importance of natural sustainability and view it as a mandate that must be maintained and preserved. This obligation means not only emphasizing people's worship individually but also being God's representatives who perform divine functions immanently. That is, although the concept of God in both religions is transcendent, ecotheology embodies God through its immanent reality. Islam and Christianity in this context can also be said to be religions that view that

God created natural law; therefore, there are future consequences that must be borne if the role of man is not carried out optimally.

The responsibility is part of religion. A vertical relationship with God means that man lives bound by what He desires. The verses and their commentaries in the two scriptures are interpreted and then used to construct the mind and awareness of human responsibility. Thus, humans must account for every action in the afterlife, which is the final concept that becomes a framework or warning sign in the use and management of nature. Humans are responsible for the sustainability of the ecosystem because humans were created to worship with the concept of horizontal and vertical worship.

Third, the concept of environmental justice in Islamic and Christian doctrine both emphasizes the importance of fair treatment of nature and living things in it. Both also view that humans should not damage the environment for personal or economic gain alone. Man's role in both religions tends to be his function, which must be performed as a consequence of his servitude to God. The form of servitude is to care for nature and prohibit exploitation. If Islam has the concept of *rahmatan lil alamin*, which means mercy for all nature, then Christianity has the concept of love for all His creatures.

The practice of worship in Islam also always has a social aspect that is the main basis for the formation of a fraternal community. Whereas in Christianity, the main commandment in carrying out the commandments of God for every Christian is to seek and strive for peace. Because in Christianity, living in harmony and peace is contained in the Bible, namely the law of love, the law of love is the most important law in the life of the Christian community. Both of these concepts have the same advice: do *the same rahmatan*, or love for nature.

Fourth, in Islam and Christianity, there is a value of togetherness and cooperation in protecting the environment. Both view that protecting the environment is a common task that must be done by all mankind. Because nature is so vast, it cannot necessarily be done alone to make changes. Moreover, because exploitation is carried out in such a large network, religion has long wanted its people to cooperate in upholding man's function as God's representative. Collectivity in ecotheological praxis in Islam, in this context, is carried out by the two largest mass organizations in Indonesia, namely Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. While in Christianity, it is initiated through the concepts of collectivism in two religions, which have been strongly emphasized in many aspects. For example, in worship and rites, which are not only individual but also run together,

Such things are also strongly emphasized by the two religions to their people. Then the consequence of it is to be included in the ecological order. Protecting nature must also be done together, like other worships. Especially if the opposite of ecological reason is a collective force organized to meet the interests of the ego. Therefore, efforts to care for the environment must be done with strategy, collaboration, and measurement. Such consciousnesses exist in both religions.

In Islam and Christianity, there is recognition of the importance of spiritual values in protecting the environment. Both view that protecting the environment is a spiritual act that must be done with full awareness and sincerity. In this context, these values become the ethical foundation of ecotheology. That is why there is great hope that environmental improvement can be done through religion. Because of the function of religion, it is able to mobilize the masses in a large way. In addition to religion providing an ecological basis and emphasizing the importance of building awareness of the environment, it also provides its spiritual foundation by emphasizing that it will have an impact on man's appreciation of God.

At the level of individual consciousness, there are those who perform worship out of fear, to the point of expecting God's love. This becomes a spiritual consciousness that exists in both religions. This kind of awareness makes the individual believer carry out the ecological orders of God with a solemn feeling, so that he can be more animated by what is done. Actually, protecting nature is not only a matter of rational consequences; the destruction of nature will disrupt the stability of life. But protecting nature also has a spiritual aspect, which is the relationship between God and man. Both religions place great emphasis on this spiritual dimension, saying that taking care of nature is part of having faith to Him.

Conclusion

Islamic and Christian ecotheologies have different concepts, both in form and doctrinal sources, as well as in terms of implementation and conceptuality. But apart from that, it also has some similarities. This can be seen after being analyzed using existing theories, one of which is from the perspective of Soren Kierkegaard's existentialism. The concept of ecotheology in Islam emphasizes that the role of man is that of the caliph. This role is in stark contrast to Kierkegaard's idea of subjective individuality in order to find oneself. But actually, that role can help humans find existential meaning in their lives. It can be seen from Islam that it provides a doctrinal foundation related to ecotheology, but humans are free to do it with their own creative ideas and capacities. In Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, ecotheology is also carried out in groups with their respective characteristics in accordance with the organizational culture and society behind it.

The concept of ecotheology in Christianity holds that nature and man are equal as God's creation. Since nature is man's creation, God assigns responsibility to man, which shows that man is God's co-worker in managing, protecting, maintaining, and developing the entire universe. Ecotheology within Christianity is also institutionalized by the church as its main axis. The churches of the world generally give theological responses to ecological crises institutionally and theological attitudes to ecological crises that can be categorized as practical theological efforts.

Islam and Christianity have many differences and similarities when it comes to the environment. The fundamental difference is in the conceptual framework and the foundation that strengthens it. As well as organizing movements based on ecotheology. But there are also similarities, namely: a) Both position God as the creator of nature; b) emphasize human obligations to protect the environment; c) have the concept of environmental justice; d) emphasize togetherness in protecting the environment; and e) emphasize the importance of spiritual values in protecting the environment.

References

- Ali, A., & Muhdlor, A. Z. (2003). *Kamus kontemporer Arab-Indonesia*. Multi Karya Grafika.
- Almu'tasim, A. (2019). Berkaca NU dan Muhammadiyah dalam Mewujudkan Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Islam di Indonesia. *Tarbiya Islamia: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Keislaman*, 8(2), 199. <https://doi.org/http://ejournal.unim.ac.id/index.php/tarbiya/article/view/474>
- Armawi, A. (2011). Eksistensi Manusia dalam Filsafat Soren Kierkegaard. *Jurnal Filsafat*, 21(24), 24. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jf.4738>
- Berger, P. L. (1991). *Kabar Angin dari Langit: Makna Teologi dalam Masyarakat Modern*. LP3ES.
- Borrong, Robert P. (1998). *Teologi dan Ekologi*. BPK Gunung Mulia.
- Borrong, Robert P. (2013). *Etika Bumi Baru*. BPK Gunung Mulia.
- Borrong, Robert Patannang. (2019). Kronik Ekoteologi: Berteologi dalam Konteks Krisis Lingkungan. *Jurnal Stulos*, 17(2).
- Consuelo. (1993). *Pengantar Metode Penelitian*. UI Press.
- Darajat, Z. (2017). Muhammadiyah dan NU: Penjaga Moderatisme Islam di Indonesia. *Hayula: Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies*, 1(1).
- Fauzanto, A. (2020). Peran Muhammadiyah dan Nahdatul Ulama dalam Problematika Kerusakan Lingkungan Hidup di Indonesia Peran Muhammadiyah dan Nahdatul Ulama dalam Problematika Kerusakan Lingkungan Hidup di Indonesia. *Momentum: Jurnal Sosial Dan Agama*, 9(1), 18. <https://doi.org/10.29062/mmt.v9i1.59>
- Harari, Y. N. (2017). *Sapiens: Sejarah Ringkas Umat Manusia dari Zaman Batu hingga Perkiraan Kepunahannya* (Y. Musthofa (ed.)). Pustaka Alfabet.
- Hardiman, F. B. (2020). *Humanisme dan Sesudahnya*. Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia.
- Ituma, E. A. (2013). Christocentric Ecotheology and Climate Change. *Journal of Philosophy*, 3(1).
- Jumrah, S. (2020). *Studi Kasus Eksistensi Diri Orang Tua dalam Pelibatan Anak Usia Dini di Instagram*. Universitas Islam Negeri Hasanuddin Makasar.
- Katu, J. H. R. (2020). Teologi Ekologi: Suatu Isu Etika Menuju Eskatologi Kristen. *Caraka: Jurnal Teologi Biblika Dan Praktika*, 1(1), 69. <https://doi.org/10.46348/car.vlil.12>
- Maftukhin. (2016). Teologi Lingkungan Perspektif. *Dinamika Penelitian*, 16(2), 346.
- Maggang, E. (2019). Menampakkan Corak Biru Kekristenan Indonesia: Sebuah Perspektif Ekoteologi. *Indonesian Journal of Theology*, 7(2), 166. <https://doi.org/10.46567/ijit.v7i2.149>
- Mahfud, & Patsun. (2019). Mengenal Filsafat Antara Metode Praktik Dan Pemikiran Socrates, Plato Dan Aristoteles. *CENDEKIA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 5(1).
- Mardhiah, I., Aulia, R. N., & Narulita, S. (2014). Konsep Gerakan Ekoteologi Islam: Studi Atas Ormas NU dan Muhammadiyah. *Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an*, 10(1), 94.
- Mufid, M. (2020). Green Fatwas in Bahtsul Masāil: Nahdlatul Ulama's Response to the Discourse on the Environmental Crisis in Indonesia. *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pranata Sosial*, 15(2), 178. <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v15i2.3956>
- Mughni, Boy, P., & Muthohirin, N. (2023). *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan: Keputusan Mukhtamar Ke-48 Muhammadiyah Tahun 2022* (1st ed.). Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah.

- Musthofa, Z. A., Husamah, Hudha, A. M., Muttaqin, T., Hasanah, I., & Setyawan, D. (2017). *Mengurai Sengkarut Bencana Lingkungan (Refleksi Jurnalisme Lingkungan dan Deep Ecology di Indonesia)*. UMM Press.
- Napitupulu, N. D., Munandar, A., Redjeki, S., & Tjasyono, B. (2018). Echoteology dan Ecopedagogy: Upaya Mitigasi Terhadap Eksploitasi Alam Semesta. *Voice of Wesley: Jurnal Ilmiah Musik Dan Agama*, 1(2), 10.
<https://doi.org/10.36972/jvow.v1i2.9>
- Nasr, S. H. (2003). *Antara Tuhan, Manusia dan Alam*. IRCiSoD.
- Parmer, D. D. (2018). *Kierkegaard Untuk Pemula* (A. Widyamartaya (ed.)). Kanisius.
- Quddus, A. (2012). Ecotheology Islam: Teologi Konstruktif Atasi Krisis Lingkungan. *Ulumuna: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 16(2), 344.
<https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v16i2.181>
- Rafly, F. M. S., Muhlas, & Munir. (2022). Analisis Teologi Lingkungan Seyyed Hossein Nasr Terhadap Krisis Air di Masyarakat Batujaya Karawang. *Jurnal Riset Agama*, 2(3), 45. <https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v2i3.18278>
- Rakhman, A. B. (2013). Teologi Sosial; Keniscayaan Keberagamaan yang Islami Berbasis Kemanusiaan. *Esensia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 14(2), 162.
<https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v14i2.755>
- Ridwanuddin, P. (2017). Ekoteologi dalam Pemikiran Badiuzzaman Said Nursi. *Lentera: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah Dan Komunikasi*, 1(1).
<https://doi.org/10.21093/lentera.v1i01.832>
- Sabarudin, Musallamat, R., Rahman, N., Lisnawati, & Qosim, H. (2017). *Islam dan Lingkungan Hidup*. Lembaga Pengembangan Tilawatil Qur'an (LPTQ).
- Sandu, D. (2005). Eastern Orthodox Theology and Practices Related to Ecological Issues. *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 1(2), 39.
- Telaumbanua, S. (2020). PAK Gereja Dalam Konteks Lingkungan Hidup Suatu Refleksi Terhadap Markus 16:15. *Jurnal Shanan*, 4(1).
<https://doi.org/10.33541/shanan.v4i1.1767>
- Tjaya, T. H. (2018). *Kierkegaard dan Pergulatan Menjadi Diri Sendiri*. Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia.
- Tomusu, A. Y. (2021). Fondasi Etika Ekologi dari Perspektif Teologi Kristen. *Sesawi: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristen*, 2(2), 4. <https://doi.org/10.53687/sjtpk.v2i2.54>
- WALHI. (2022). *Membanggang Konstitusi, Mewariskan Krisis Antar Generasi*. Eksekutif Nasional Walhi.
- Warsito, W., & Muttaqin, H. (2012). Humanisme Dan Petaka Modern. *Jurnal Sosiologi Islam*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.15642/jsi.2012.2.2.%25p>
- Zed, M. (2008). *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan*. Yayasan Obor.