



Religion and Contemporary Ecology: *Laudato Si'* and Ibn Arabi's Eco-spirituality in the Perspective of *Open Integrity*

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History</p> <p>Received: 9 December 2024</p> <p>Revised: 28 April 2025</p> <p>Accepted: 25 May 2025</p> <p>Published: 16 June 2025</p> <p>Keyword: Ecological awareness, Eco-Spiritualism, Environmental Sustainability, Human Nature.</p> <p>Copyright (c) 2025 Mochamad Ziaul Haq, Benedict Erick Mutis, Gerardette Philips</p> 	<p>This study aims to answer the main research question of how religious teachings—specifically the thought of Ibn Arabi and the encyclical <i>Laudato Si'</i>—shape ecological awareness and behaviour in the context of contemporary environmental crises in Indonesia. Focusing on the Islamic and Catholic traditions, the study explores the contribution of eco-spirituality to the development of an ecological ethic rooted in both transcendence and relationality. The research employs that include an in-depth literature study of primary sources, specifically <i>Al-Futubat Al-Makkiyah</i> and the doctrine of <i>Wahdat al-Wujud</i> by Ibn Arabi, the <i>Laudato Si'</i> encyclical by Pope Francis, and the concept of <i>Open Integrity</i> by Gerardette Philips, along with secondary literature on ecological spirituality and interfaith dialogue. The findings reveal that the idea of <i>Insan Kamil</i> in Ibn Arabi's Sufism and the ecological spirituality in <i>Laudato Si'</i> emphasize the sacred interconnectedness between humans, nature, and God. Both perspectives call for an inner transformation toward environmental awareness as an expression of faith. Ibn Arabi's idea of <i>cosmic tawhid</i> asserts that all creation manifests as the Divine; thus, ecological destruction constitutes a rejection of God's presence. Conversely, <i>Laudato Si'</i> offers the principle of <i>bonum commune</i> and intergenerational environmental justice that sides with the vulnerable and challenges exploitative economic systems. This study finds that a combined approach based on honesty can connect these two essential beliefs without losing their spiritual foundations. It also helps to create a meaningful and effective eco-spiritual ethic to address the misuse of natural resources in Indonesia -spirituality, morally, and practically.</p>
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Introduction

The 21st century, often called the post-Anthropocene era, marks a new phase of human dominance over nature (Hassani et al., 2021; Mosoh et al., 2024). In earlier periods, humans lived in interconnectedness and dependence on nature, as evidenced by archaeological findings (Labib et al., 2022). However, in the contemporary era, the drive to exploit natural resources on a massive scale has become increasingly evident (Napitsunargo, 2024; Usman & Balsalobre-Lorente, 2022). This phenomenon can be justified by creating a symbolic medium called money (Khan et al., 2023). Nearly all aspects of life, including renewable and non-renewable natural resources, are viewed merely as commodities (Zhang et al., 2022). Nature is often treated as pre-productive raw material, prompting individuals to extract its wealth as quickly and efficiently as possible (Haq et al., 2024).

Human efforts to manipulate nature are a natural symptom of evolution. From an evolutionary perspective, homo sapiens are social and collaborative beings who follow consensus systems or community leaders to maintain safety from environmental threats (Usman et al., 2022). However, more than that, the ability to manipulate the environment is rooted in the capacity for symbolic representation. This arises from the dynamic interplay between limited sensorimotor connections and more flexible neural associations. This facilitates abstract and symbolic processing. This neural flexibility is context-dependent on and modulated by socio-cultural factors. This finding suggests that human creativity is not merely a product of individual cognition but is deeply embedded in the cultural environment (Tonna, 2024). Consequently, it can be posited that the process of manipulating the environment was undertaken by human ancestors as a form of security, stability, and environmental control (Sagan & Druyan, 2023). Charles Darwin described artificial selection as a human method of restructuring natural conditions toward desired outcomes. As asserted by anthropologist and primate expert Agustin Fuentes (2018), creativity constitutes a pivotal element that propels humans to innovate and experiment, encompassing activities ranging from interacting with wild animals to modifying the environment through technological means. The hypothesis that human symbolic behaviour has its roots in social efforts to manipulate the environment is supported by other archaeological findings. Tylén et al. controlled cognitive experiments on ancient carvings from South Africa's Blombos Cave and Diepkloof Rock Shelter revealed that the carvings evolved over 30,000 years to become more prominent, memorable and express human intent (K. Tylén, 2020).

However, this creativity has also produced negative consequences, turning humans into the greatest predators, threatening ecological sustainability in some contexts, and leading to global environmental destruction, including Indonesia. Large-scale deforestation remains rampant in regions such as Kalimantan and Sumatra. Adi Ahdiat (2023) reports Indonesia has lost approximately 1.3 million hectares of forests in the past five years. In 2023 alone, Indonesia experienced a loss of roughly 1.18 million hectares of forest, placing Indonesia second globally in deforestation rates, with Brazil occupying the top position (Pristiandaru, 2024). Conversely, the Indonesian government has pursued a policy of promoting coal

exploration as an energy source under the guise of environmental sustainability despite the well-documented negative impact on marine ecosystems and air quality (Annur, 2023). The oversight of coal mining operations in areas such as East Kalimantan is hindered by overlapping regulations and inadequate law enforcement, leading to significant ecological degradation, including soil erosion, water pollution and biodiversity loss. The study emphasizes that the decentralization of authority and the lack of coordination among government agencies harm environmental problems (Nasir, 2023).

The pursuit of mining activities within the Indonesian archipelago has resulted in substantial environmental degradation. These activities have been linked to water, air and soil pollution, as evidenced by the case study of North Maluku Province, where mining waste has contaminated the water and air in nearby settlements (Bidul & Widowaty, 2023). A comparable situation is observed in Berau Regency, East Kalimantan, where residents are subjected to elevated levels of air pollution from mining truck emissions (Lusiana et al., 2024). In the context of the development of electric vehicles, Indonesia's increasing reliance on coal as a primary energy source has grave consequences. Although EVs produce zero emissions during operation, their overall carbon footprint remains high when considering their power source. However, without a significant transition towards renewable energy sources in the power generation mix, adopting electric vehicles will only result in the displacement of emissions from vehicles being transferred to power plants (Dimas Akmarul Putera, 2025). Nevertheless, despite the deleterious impacts, the Indonesian government continues to exploit local resources, often with the involvement of large religious organizations, which can disrupt people's ecological awareness.

The relationship between religion and ecology in Indonesia has grown increasingly complex due to recent government policy. The state has granted priority access to religious organizations to manage Special Mining Business Permit Areas (WIUPK), as outlined in Government Regulation 25 of 2024 (Zuada, 2024). Minister of Environment and Forestry Siti Nurbaya Bakar stated that this initiative aims to enhance efficiency and profit-sharing with religious institutions. Human ecological awareness cannot be separated from spiritual teachings. Religion and environmental consciousness are deeply interrelated, as religion often functions as a primary motivator for understanding the workings of nature. Although this study does not explore every religious ecological doctrine in depth, it focuses on Catholicism and Islam—given their significant representation in Indonesia, with approximately 238.09 million Muslims and 28.88 million Christians (Kusnandar, 2022; Bodian et al., 2019).

Previous studies on contemporary ecology have rarely explored the link between religion and ecological sustainability from a theological standpoint. For example, Woods et al. (2020) emphasized ecological frameworks in elite sports without considering spiritual or religious dimensions. Li (2021) examined ecological issues through a Marxist lens, focusing on the relationship between capitalism and environmental crises but failing to account for the role of religious values. Prokopenko and Miśkiewicz (2020) studied perceptions of “green shipping” as part of sustainability efforts in transportation without addressing religion's role in ecological awareness. Similarly, in *Introduction to Cultural Ecology*, Sutton and Anderson (2020), in *Introduction to Cultural Ecology*, emphasized cultural dimensions

in human-environment interactions without integrating religion as a factor influencing ecological behaviour.

Moreover, studies such as Zhao et al. (2022), which examined ecological thinking in ancient Chinese agriculture, and Verma and Dwivedi (2022), who explored environmental consciousness in the aesthetics of the *Vālmīki-Rāmāyaṇa*, placed more emphasis on cultural heritage and aesthetics than on religious perspectives. Even works like Zen et al. (2024), which preserved Bali's traditional ecological practices through the *subak* system, and Nerubasska et al. (2020), who analyzed contemporary society from a philosophical standpoint, did not explicitly integrate religion as a core variable in shaping ecological awareness. While ecological discourse is increasingly addressed across disciplines, studies that connect religious teachings and environmental consciousness—particularly in the Indonesian context—remain scarce.

This research explores the environmental impact of religious teachings—especially those from Islam and Catholicism—on shaping ecological awareness and promoting environmentally sustainable behaviour in Indonesia. Specifically, the study seeks to answer two central questions: (1) How do Islamic teachings (through the thought of Ibn Arabi) and Catholic teachings (through the encyclical *Laudato Si'*) influence ecological consciousness and environmentally conscious practices? (2) Why should religion be positioned as an alternative solution in responding to contemporary ecological crises, particularly amid the rampant exploitation of natural resources in Indonesia?

This study argues that religious teachings, particularly in Islamic ecological spirituality (through Ibn Arabi's *Wahdat al-Wujud*) and Catholic ecological ethics (through *Laudato Si'*), possess transformative power in shaping ecological awareness and ethical environmental behaviour. These teachings are not merely theoretical or symbolic but can be translated into applicable ethical and environmental practices. This research offers a scholarly contribution by integrating the *Open Integrity* approach—a dialogical and interdisciplinary framework that unites theological values from religious traditions without erasing their distinctive identities. Thus, the eco-spirituality drawn from these traditions may serve as a viable moral foundation for cultivating collective awareness and fostering sustainable ecological behaviour in Indonesia.

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using in-depth library research to explore Islamic and Catholic teachings' spiritual and ecological dimensions (Maxwell, 2008). The primary data were drawn from two major religious texts: *Al-Futuhāt Al-Makkiyah* by Ibn Arabi (2011), *Ibn Al-'Arabi: Wahdat al-Wujud dalam Perdebatan* by Noer and Hidayat (1995), and the encyclical *Laudato Si'* issued by Pope Francis (2015). In addition, the concept of *Open Integrity* as a dialogical approach to interreligious studies was examined through Gerardette Philips' work *Beyond Pluralism: Open Integrity as a Suitable Approach to Muslim-Christian Dialogue* (2013). These texts were selected based on their theological significance, contribution to ecological understanding, and relevance in developing ethical and spiritual awareness in contemporary environmental crises.

The study also utilized secondary data collected from academic journal articles, scholarly books, and research reports that address the intersection of

ecology, religion, and spirituality. These sources were selected based on thematic relevance and the currency of their contributions to the discourse on eco-spirituality, both globally and in the Indonesian context. The researcher gathered secondary data using the Scopus database by applying keywords such as “religion and ecology” and “ecological spirituality.” The integration of secondary data involved contextualizing empirical and conceptual findings within a critical reading of the primary texts, thereby supporting intertextual and interdisciplinary analysis of religious teachings and ecological praxis.

The data collection process proceeded in three main stages. *First*, the researcher identified and selected relevant primary and secondary texts. *Second*, a critical reading and manual annotation of key textual passages were conducted, particularly those implying a relationship between environmental ethics and spiritual teachings. *Third*, the researcher analyzed the data using a data reduction process by filtering and categorizing information into key themes, such as ecological awareness, ecological spirituality, the human-nature-God relationship, and moral responsibility in religion (Miles & Huberman, 2013).

Thematic extraction followed an iterative reading technique to identify argumentative patterns, value alignments, and the ethical structures each tradition offers. The classified data were then organized into thematic narratives representing the contributions of Islamic teachings (through Ibn Arabi) and Catholic teachings (through *Laudato Si'*) in shaping ecological awareness. To maintain interpretive accuracy, the researcher acknowledged potential subjective bias in interpreting the primary texts, especially given their theological and philosophical nature. Therefore, each interpretation referenced credible supporting literature and avoided generalizations wherever possible (Snyder, 2019).

Result and Discussion

Bridging Spirituality and Ecological Awareness

Ecospirituality, or ecological spirituality, emerges from integrating two concepts: “ecology” and “spirituality.” Ernst Haeckel (2012), a German zoologist, first introduced the term “ecology,” defining it as the study of habitats, homes, and natural dwellings (*oikos-logos*). Initially, Haeckel applied this term to examine how living organisms, particularly animals, interact with their natural and nurtured environments. This study emphasized the reciprocal interactions between living beings and their surroundings, laying the foundation for ecology as a science that delves into the relationships among humans, other living organisms, and their habitats (Haeckel, 2012, pp. 27–28).

Fundamentally, ecology evolved from early research on the interactions between living organisms and their physical environments. Haeckel (1876) observed that each organism plays a role in the ecosystem, creating a complex web of interdependence essential for sustaining life on Earth. In eco-spirituality, this web is perceived not merely as a biological phenomenon but also as a spiritual dimension—recognizing that humans are not separate entities from nature but integral parts of it. As Berry (2015) articulated, “The universe is the first book that speaks to us about profound spiritual meaning” (p. 45).

Haeckel’s (1876) ecological concepts later became the bedrock for modern environmental movements, prompting humanity to view nature as sacred. From the eco-spirituality perspective, the human-nature relationship is a profound moral and

ethical connection. This aligns with Naess and Naess's (1990) deep ecology theory, which advocates for a respectful attitude toward all living beings, recognizing their intrinsic value. Here, eco-spirituality transcends ecological responsibility, becoming a spiritual practice that connects humans to the cosmos.

Moreover, ecological spirituality acknowledges environmental degradation as a form of spiritual alienation. Lynn White Jr. (1967), in his seminal essay "*The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis*," argued that the modern ecological crisis largely stems from the Western worldview's separation of humans from nature, exacerbated by exploitative approaches enabled by technological advancements. Within eco-spirituality, this perspective underscores the necessity of restoring a spiritual connection with nature to address the global environmental crisis.

Discussions on the environment date back to Ancient Greece. Theophrastus, a philosopher from the Greek school around 370 BCE and a student of Aristotle, pioneered the study of nature, particularly the substances and essence of plant diversification. He explored ecological perspectives through metaphysical and physical approaches, notably the concept of hylomorphism—the relationship between matter (*hyle*) and form (*morphe*). He perceived nature as matter, with living beings such as humans, animals, plants, and microorganisms as forms of that matter (Hughes, 1985). Theophrastus's view of nature as the essence of living beings has inspired environmental philosophers to develop more profound philosophical ecological perspectives.

As Aristotle's disciple, Theophrastus expanded metaphysical concepts related to hylomorphism, viewing nature as the fundamental substance and all living beings as manifestations of that matter. In this view, nature serves not merely as a physical backdrop but plays an essential role in sustaining life. His thoughts reflect a holistic ecological approach, where every element of nature is inherently interconnected—foundational to modern environmental philosophy (Hughes, 1985).

Theophrastus's ideas extended beyond scientific descriptions, touching upon ecological ethics. Given their deep interdependence, he emphasized the importance of understanding the harmonious relationship between humans and nature. This is evident in his observations of plants adapting to specific environments, teaching humans the significance of living in harmony with nature. This perspective later inspired modern environmental philosophers like Aldo Leopold (1949), who, in his work "*A Sand County Almanac*," developed the concept of "land ethic," positioning humans as integral members of a broader ecological community.

Spirituality represents the deepest dimension of human life, often explored through specific methods by religious groups, spiritualists, mystics, and ascetics (Britannica, 2024). In this context, spirituality is not only understood by those actively pursuing spiritual paths but also defined as a layer of consciousness beyond verbal expression, such as awareness of the "sublime" or the "being." Exploring spirituality aims to comprehend its connection with human consciousness, especially concerning the relationship between humans and their environment (Bonyoglio, 2017).

Furthermore, spirituality can be perceived as an unspoken awareness—the deepest layer of human thought and emotion that cannot be fully articulated. In mystical traditions, as Aprianti and Purwadi (2024) explain, spirituality is often conveyed through symbolism or metaphors, such as "a silent path to enlightenment" or "a soul's journey to its origin." This indicates that spirituality is

not merely an endeavour to understand something external but also an inward journey to find a balance between the physical and metaphysical dimensions.

The explanation of spirituality, particularly in the context of human and environmental relationships, is a pivotal factor in cultivating ecological awareness. Some studies have demonstrated that spirituality can function as an ethical foundation for maintaining ecosystem balance. As Huriani et al. (2022) demonstrate, within numerous spiritual traditions across the globe, nature is regarded not solely as a resource but as a manifestation of the Divine, thus meriting respect and preservation. Rofiqi and Haq (2022) also assert that this awareness motivates individuals to act responsibly towards the environment, recognizing the deep connection between ecological well-being and spiritual sustainability. In this particular instance, spirituality is not merely an expression of individual piety; it is also a collective action aimed at maintaining harmony between humans and nature. In their 2023 study, Eom and Ng explored the potential for religious stewardship to significantly motivate pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours among people of faith. Stewardship is defined as the belief that humans are entrusted by divine authority to care for the Earth. The review under discussion in this article highlights that stewardship beliefs, which are prevalent in various religious traditions, can shape cognitions and emotions related to environmental issues, and this can increase motivation for sustainable action. These findings suggest that religious stewardship can be a powerful strategy to promote environmental sustainability within faith communities (2023).

The term “eco-spirituality” also parallels the concept of “ecosophy” introduced by Arne Naess (2015), which integrates ecology and philosophy. Therefore, ecospirituality can be defined as ecological awareness grounded in spirituality or religiosity. As conscious beings, humans realize they live within nature and, through spirituality, strive to understand and appreciate their relationship with the environment. This understanding refers to the notion that human spirituality encompasses not only the relationship with God or the divine dimension but also reverence for nature as a manifestation of sacred creation. Berry and Epstein (1999) emphasize this by stating, “*We do not live on the Earth; we are part of the Earth.*” This perspective highlights that humans are inseparable from their ecosystems, and through spirituality, they can cultivate appreciation and moral responsibility toward the environment.

This perspective is also aligned with the worldview of indigenous peoples, where nature is revered as sacred and spiritual practices are strongly linked to environmental ethics. Indigenous peoples offer a profound and holistic worldview in which nature is regarded as holy, fostering a reciprocal and respectful relationship between humans and the environment. This spiritual connection constitutes the basis of indigenous environmental justice, emphasizing the inextricable bond between indigenous peoples and their ancestral lands. Integrating traditional ecological knowledge and indigenous governance systems has been demonstrated to facilitate more sustainable environmental management and enhanced health outcomes. Notwithstanding the historical and ongoing challenges faced by Indigenous communities facing colonialism and ecological degradation, these populations have demonstrated remarkable resilience in preserving spiritual traditions and their relationship with the natural environment (de Diego-Cordero R, 2025).

As conscious beings, humans recognize that their lives heavily depend on harmony with nature. This view resonates with the traditional beliefs of indigenous communities worldwide, who regard nature as an integral part of their spirituality. Heschel (1962) notes, “*Our spiritual life is connected to the broader material world; every action we take toward nature inevitably impacts our spiritual balance.*” This perspective invites humans to understand that environmental stewardship is part of maintaining spiritual and moral equilibrium in their lives. It offers a holistic perspective that views the human-nature relationship as integral. Instead of perceiving nature as an exploitable object, eco-spirituality teaches eco-spirituality as part of a larger ecological community. In this tradition, everything in nature possesses intrinsic value independent of its utility to humans. Thomas Berry states, “*Without a deep relationship with the natural world, our spirituality loses an essential dimension that gives it meaning*” (Berry & Epstein, 1999). Thus, eco-spirituality serves not only as a theoretical approach but also as an ethical and practical guide for living in harmony with nature.

Ecospirituality in Laudato Si’

Christian teachings place significant emphasis on ecotheology and, by extension, ecospirituality. These concepts are prominently featured in *Laudato Si’*, the 2015 encyclical by Pope Francis, expressing profound concern for life’s sustainability on Earth. In *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis articulates a profound awareness of environmental degradation: “*The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth. In many parts of the planet, the elderly lament that once beautiful landscapes are now covered with rubbish*” (Franciscus, 2015, p. 17).

The encyclical serves as an ethical guide for the harmonious use, stewardship, and interpretation of humanity’s relationship with itself, others, and nature, aligning with God’s will to safeguard the ongoing process of *creation continua*. Nature must be preserved, maintained, and utilized responsibly, not solely for personal gain but for the common good (Ohoiwutun, 2022, p. 9). This principle of *bonum commune* transforms environmental awareness into an integral consciousness shared with others: “*We realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others*” (Franciscus, 2015, p. 159).

Laudato Si’ integrates ecological issues by examining the moral implications of human actions on nature. Pope Francis addresses environmental sustainability, human morality, and peace, particularly concerning the marginalized (Imanaka et al., 2017, p. 51). He positions humans as both actors and agents of peace, fostering relationships among themselves with nature and promoting justice and unity: “*Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth*” (Franciscus, 2015, p. 92).

Christian ecotheology delves deeper into the dimensions of ecospirituality. While eco-theology emphasizes doctrinal and intertextual approaches—seeking relevance between sacred texts and reality—eco-spirituality focuses on the depth of spirituality. This spirituality pertains to the inner dimensions of the human soul or the core of human existence. In idealist approaches, spirituality resides in the abstract realm (noumenality), challenging systematic linguistic expression.

Ecospirituality touches upon the highest meaning, the human heart (*coeur*), achieved through genealogical and historical consciousness (Messias, 2024, p. 5). For instance, in the *Book of Genesis*, God creates non-human entities like trees and plants bearing seeds before the creation of humans on the third day (Genesis 1:11).

Ecospirituality highlights the human aspect prepared by God and supported by nature, positioning humans as stewards of the Earth. The logical progression indicates that God created this beautiful world for human life, fashioned in His image (Messias, 2024). God grants humans full authority to manage nature as a gift, allowing them to dwell in the '*Garden of Eden*.' The deepest layer of ecological spirituality is the awareness of humanity's profound dependence on nature.

Furthermore, *Laudato Si'* reveals that the encyclical is a moral critique of the ecological crisis and a call for environmental conversion that places humans in a dialogical and affective relationship with creation. Pope Francis invites humanity to move beyond an anthropocentric paradigm that positions humans as the centre and absolute rulers of nature towards a relational and transcendental paradigm where humans are part of a sacred and interconnected web of creation. In this context, eco-spirituality becomes a praxis of faith that encompasses all aspects of life, from the most profound inner awareness to tangible actions in preserving and restoring ecological relationships. By referring to elements of nature as "brother" and "mother," such as brother sun, sister moon, and mother earth, the encyclical reintroduces the language of spirituality into an inclusive and compassionate cosmology.

Beyond its theological narrative, *Laudato Si'* also contains social critiques of the exploitative global economic system and lacks ecological justice. The unequal distribution of resources, the suffering of the poor due to environmental degradation, and the dominance of capital over nature are framed as structural sins requiring collective repentance. Thus, eco-spirituality in *Laudato Si'* is an inner experience and an ethical-political call to action. Pope Francis emphasizes that the beauty of the universe is a divine gift that cannot be commodified and that caring for creation is a tangible expression of living faith.

In conclusion, *Laudato Si'* establishes a robust foundation for eco-spirituality within the Catholic tradition, integrating spiritual awareness, moral responsibility, and social action into a cohesive ecological faith. The encyclical shifts the traditional understanding of human dominion over nature to a participatory and contemplative relationship between humans and creation. By recognizing nature as part of the spiritual community, *Laudato Si'* offers a transformative ethical framework that transcends doctrine and informs daily life. In the context of Indonesia and a world facing ongoing ecological crises, this teaching serves as an inspiration to cultivate collective consciousness for the sustainability of life on Earth.

Ibn Arabi's Thought on Ecospirituality

In discussing Islamic spirituality, this paper focuses on the thought of Ibn Arabi and the Sufi tradition, correlating it with ecological contexts or ecosufism. Ecospirituality in Islam, according to Seyyed Hossein Nasr (2009), entails maintaining the balance of life and cultivating harmonious relationships among human beings, nature, and God. The disharmony between humans and the natural world can significantly impact spiritual meaning and the understanding of divine power. Human exploitation of nature reflects a spiritual crisis, indicating a rupture

from the divine harmony established by God. Caring for nature, therefore, means preserving its sacredness, as nature holds intrinsic sanctity (Encep et al., 2022).

Nasr refers to the *Wahdat al-Wujud* concept formulated by Ibn Arabi to describe the triadic relationship between humans, nature, and God (Nasr, 1989). Ibn Arabi, a prominent Sufi from Andalusia who lived during the 12th and 13th centuries, is renowned for his ideas on the harmony between humans and nature within the spirituality framework (Noer & Hidayat, 1995). Many scholars identify his thought as pantheistic, asserting that God is present in nature and manifests Himself through it (Setiawan et al., 2023, pp. 51–52).

The core of Ibn Arabi's metaphysical worldview lies in *Wahdat al-Wujud*, or "the unity of being." He asserts that all creatures, the cosmos, and God share the same essence, although they retain a harmonious relational distinction. Ibn Arabi affirms: "God brought the world into existence; that is, His existence is manifested by the manifestation of the world, just as the existence of his natural form manifests the human being. We are His external form, while His Ipseity is the spirit which governs the form. This governing is only in Him, just as it is from Him, for He is the First, and the Last in form" (Noer & Hidayat, 1995, p. 52).

For Ibn Arabi, God occupies the primary position as *al-wujud al-mutlaq* (the Absolute Being). At the same time, nature constitutes the manifestation of God in concrete form, which he refers to as *al-wujud al-muqayyad* (the constrained being). Thus, caring for nature aligns with loving God because nature reflects divine essence and virtue. As Ibn Arabi states: "All things other than God are creatures because they possess a spirit. There is nothing that moves under itself, but everything moves under another. Each thing moves according to God's Straight Path, which serves as a path only by walking according to it (literally: on it)" (Abraham, 2015).

Ibn Arabi views human beings as a fragile and finite part of the microcosm. Although humans possess rational and intellectual capacities that enable them to transcend physiological limitations, they must temper this potential with moral responsibility to avoid harming nature (Budiyanti et al., 2020, p. 74). Consequently, Ibn Arabi emphasizes balancing intellect and morality to preserve the natural world. Ibn Arabi's ideas—particularly those associated with pantheism—resonate with the ecological literacy promoted by Muhammad Quraish Shihab. In his interpretation of Surah Al-A'raf verse 56, Shihab stresses that humans are responsible for caring for the Earth as an act of obedience to God (Arabi, 2011). In his view, caring for the Earth equates to caring for all of God's creation, and humanity must live in harmony with nature as part of God's universality (Shihab, 2011). Simplifying this expansive concept—Islamic eco-spirituality as represented by Ibn Arabi—is no easy task. Ibn Arabi remains controversial in Islamic intellectual history due to his visionary and unconventional ideas. Nonetheless, his thought significantly enriches the understanding of the interconnected relationship among humans, nature, and God in both spiritual and ecological terms.

In conclusion, Ibn Arabi reveals that Islamic spirituality encompasses the vertical relationship between humans and God and the horizontal relationship between humans and the natural world. Through *Wahdat al-Wujud*, Ibn Arabi teaches that nature is not a passive entity or mere object but carries a divine dimension because it manifests God (Arabi, 2011). This understanding cultivates an awareness that harming or exploiting nature equates to violating the traces of God's presence in the world. Within this framework, eco-spirituality emerges as the

highest form of worship, acknowledging God's presence through contemplation and reverence for His creation. Ecological piety thus becomes not merely a moral responsibility but also an expression of love and direct connection with God.

This perspective bears profound ethical implications. If nature embodies a manifestation of God, all forms of environmental destruction must be seen as spiritual violations, not merely ecological errors. Ibn Arabi's thought radically challenges the modern paradigm that separates the spiritual and material realms. By grounding metaphysical concepts in daily life, Ibn Arabi offers a model of religiosity that is both sustainable and inclusive toward the environment (Noer & Hidayat, 1995). In this context, humans must develop cosmic consciousness—an ability to see themselves as part of a broader existential network in which every creature holds an irreplaceable spiritual value.

Ibn Arabi's doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wujud* provides a strong theological and philosophical foundation for developing ecospirituality in Islam. His concepts affirm that authentic spirituality must be holistic, encompassing self-awareness, environmental connectedness, and recognising God's presence in every dimension of life. Amid today's global ecological crisis, Ibn Arabi's thought can inspire Muslims to reconstruct their worldview of nature—from an object of exploitation into a spiritual subject. Thus, this Sufi teaching is not merely contemplative but has practical dimensions supporting collective ecological transformation.

Open Integrity Approach

Open Integrity is a contemporary interpretative path introduced by Sr. Gerardette Philips, RSCJ, PhD, holistically engages interfaith dialogue. The central focus of this paradigm lies in elevating themes of Christianity and Islam as coexisting traditions without uprooting their unique identities (Philips, 2022; Philips & Haq, 2018). Drawing from the intellectual and faith traditions of Hans Küng and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Open Integrity* paves the way for peace founded upon Global Ethics and Perennial Philosophy (Philips, 2013). (K. Tylén, R. Fusaroli, S. Rojo, K. Heimann, N. Fay, N.N. Johannsen, F. Riede, & M. Lombard, 2020) (K. Tylén, 2020)

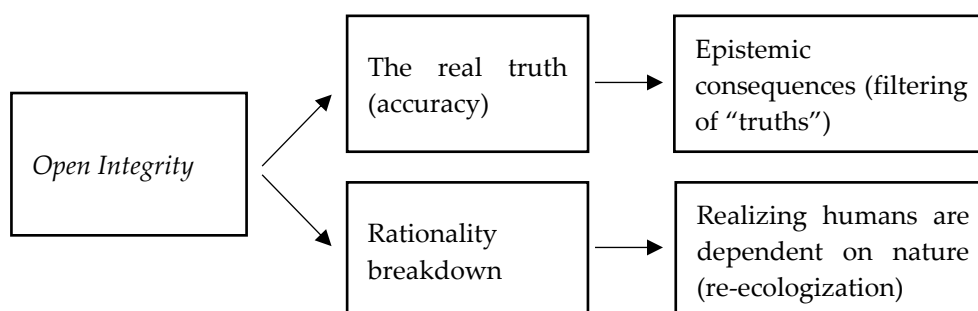
Hans Küng argues that interreligious conflict often resembles petty drama—a symbol of the degradation in articulating religiosity, akin to the envy of children competing for popularity (tension between the *Melting Pot* and *Salad Bowl* paradigms). He emphasizes the need for accurate knowledge within the internal domain before it can extend outwardly. Such rootedness in understanding one's religion becomes critical amid a media landscape saturated with portrayals of other faiths. Proper knowledge must be tested by its rigour, strength, and rootedness. Therefore, the paradigm demands correlational awareness between one tradition and another (Philips, 2022; Siagian, 2021; Sudarminta, 2013).

In other words, the concept of religion holds mysteries of *the Sublime, the Absolute, and the Sacred*, which the human intellect—despite its limitations—seeks to grasp, regardless of the angle from which it perceives *the Abstract*. Nasr explores this shared essence, asserting that religions are fundamentally identical at their most essential level, converging on rationality. This rationality seeks the truth through knowledge motivated by diversity, embracing uniqueness and plural definitions of truth (Hutabarat, 2018; Philips, 2013).

The renewed paradigm of peace from Open Integrity emphasizes correlation through the institutionalization of accurate knowledge, integration between human beings' external and internal senses, and the necessity to return to rationality in the search for truth, as articulated by Hans Küng and Seyyed Hossein Nasr. The humanistic foundation of this philosophy aims to shape a new reality using a peace-centred framework and to give equal recognition and attention to humans and nature in their traditionally tense relationship. The chaos resulting from inequality and lack of recognition profoundly impacts spiritual depth. In this context, Open Integrity must be understood as a theoretical framework for interfaith dialogue and as a practical, ethical and spiritual approach that challenges the fragmentation of meaning in the contemporary world. This paradigm presents a corrective to reductionist interpretations of religion and ecology by proposing that peace is not merely the absence of conflict but also the existence of a shared understanding based on the eternal truths of sacred traditions. Open Integrity acknowledges the interconnection between interreligious conflict and ecological degradation. The environmental crisis caused by excessive exploitation at the biosphere level reflects the spiritual crisis caused by excessive exploitation at the bodily level (by focusing on satisfying sensational-bodily pleasures rather than gaining intellectual and spiritual experiences). The two phenomena are interconnected. Consequently, reintegrating the human soul into both the sacred and natural order assumes significant importance. The reintegration process necessitates an epistemology grounded in humility, respect for others, and an unwavering commitment to the holy as a shared horizon.

As explained in the *Open Integrity Approach*, humans and nature are interconnected. When we examine the conflict or estrangement between humans and nature, we must reflect on the interconnectedness and mutual dependency within the ecological system. Humans wholly depend on natural processes. As we all know, human beings are awakened to their true nature through their relational existence with the workings of nature, regardless of the depth of this interaction—a dynamic referred to here as the law of correlationality. This law, also known as reciprocity, is based on the mutual relationship between humans and nature. As illustrated in Giambelli's (2022) study of reciprocity and circular relationships in Nusa Penida society, beginning with *Ibu Pertiwi* (Mother Earth): humans plant crops, harvest them for sustenance, a person is born, and then returns to feed Ibu Pertiwi with their body —thus completing the cycle (Giambelli, 2022, pp. 55–56). Reflecting on Küng's thought, humans live among diverse entities—from the physical and visible to the abstract and essential, from the seemingly alien to the deeply needed, and beyond.

Figure 1. Foundational Thought Scheme of *Open Integrity*



Source: Philips, 2013.

Open Integrity provides an epistemological foundation that unites two major traditions—Catholicism and Islam—without erasing their respective uniqueness. The openness offered by Gerardette Philips enables not only a balanced interfaith dialogue but also cultivates a contemplative and ethical space where the deepest dimensions of ecological spirituality in *Laudato Si'* and Ibn Arabi can meet. In *Laudato Si'*, nature is seen as a “common home” filled with love and to be cared for as an act of worship toward the Creator. In Ibn Arabi’s thought, nature manifests God Himself, containing both sacred and divine dimensions. Both reject exploitation and stress reciprocal relationships among humans, God, and nature (Philips, 2013).

Open Integrity provides a dialogical and enriching framework since both perspectives ground their eco-spiritualities in the awareness of universal interconnectedness and the divine values embedded in all creation. Therefore, *open integrity* becomes not only a relevant paradigm but also an urgent one that needs to converge the transformative visions of these two significant figures in addressing the contemporary ecological crisis—spiritually, ethically, and practically.

The Correlation between Laudato Si' and the Ecological Thought of Ibn Arabi

Laudato Si' and the conceptual ideas of Ibn Arabi strongly resonate in their shared articulation of the relationality among human beings, nature, and God. *Laudato Si'*, which addresses the harmony between humans and nature (rooted in the creation narrative of the universe), emphasizes that managing biodiversity and natural resources must prioritize the common good—especially the needs of the marginalized and impoverished. Pope Francis calls for restraining egoistic tendencies to heal nature’s wrath against humanity, which has increasingly become massive and destructive (Setiadi et al., 2023).

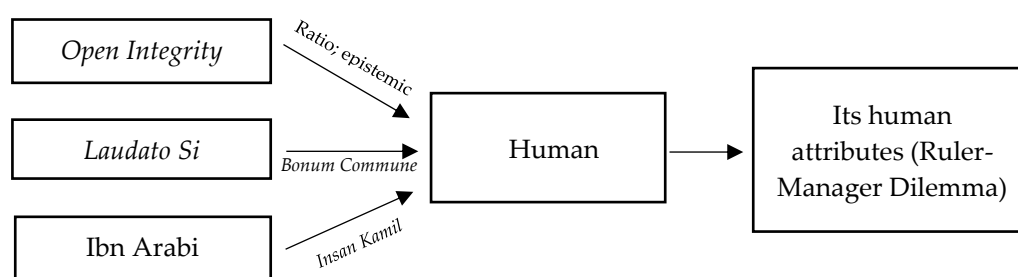
When mapping the role of the subject in *Laudato Si'*, it includes not only humans (universally), nature, and God but also directs attention to the poor and marginalized (a respecification of “the human”). Within Pope Francis’ worldview (as expressed in the encyclical *Laudato Si'*), we can reweave harmonious and conducive ecological relationships (Iheka, 2017, p. 253). This capability appears to rely on humanity’s capacity for thought and reason, including the ability to think, deliberate, and will. The Pope urges a reconfiguration of the order of rationality that extends toward both nature and others (the “other”; the poor) (Franciscus, 2015).

Humans play a significant role here (in the connotation of *actus* or action). Humanity is reawakened to its conscience—or, in theological terms, its inner voice—to restore its anthropocentric mindset. Personal gain desire will not be realized through exclusive control over specific natural resources; instead, they must be oriented toward the common good without discrimination or partiality.

The triadic vision (humanity, nature, and God) is also evident in the thought of Ibn Arabi. As previously discussed, Ibn Arabi posits that the essence of humanity, nature, and God is ultimately one (*Wahdat al-Wujud*). Humanity strives toward the ideal of *Insan Kamil*—the Perfect Human—who embodies harmony, unity, and deep entwinement with the natural world. In this context, the theologization of ecological human life is not merely an ethical directive; it finds orientation in the portrayal of this perfected human being (Noer & Hidayat, 1995).

One finds a shared emphasis on the human person and humanity when observing the interconnections between Islamic and Catholic eco-spirituality. One could then argue that humanity occupies a central, actual role today. Human actions—what people do and how they live—directly affect both the vertical (human-God relationship) and the horizontal (relationships among humans and all living beings that support the ecological system). This role reveals that humans face two internal whispers: to become stewards or rulers. As “stewards,” humans make ethical judgments and carefully consider the consequences of their willful choices. In contrast, “rulers” act with authoritarian power, treating nature as a source of profit—a site for indiscriminate exploitation, aesthetic imperialism, and fetishes of grandeur.

Figure 2. Diagram of the Relationship among *Open Integrity*, *Laudato Si'*, and Ibn Arabi



Source: Arabi, 2011, Franciscus, 2015, and Philips, 2013.

Through the lens of *Open Integrity*, we can understand that the fundamental similarities between *Laudato Si'* and Ibn Arabi’s thought are not merely theological coincidences but expressions of universal spiritual values rooted in the depth of each tradition’s religiosity. *Open Integrity*, as formulated by Sr. Gerardette Philips (2013), fosters an authentic and equitable reading across faiths without erasing the distinctive religious identities of each. In this context, *Open Integrity* becomes a highly relevant interpretive framework to construct conceptual bridges between the ecological spirituality of *Laudato Si'*—which emphasizes ecological awareness, solidarity with the poor, and cosmic harmony—and Ibn Arabi’s *Wahdat al-Wujud*—which unites the existence of humanity, nature, and God into an inseparable ontological oneness.

The *Open Integrity* paradigm rejects dichotomies and polarizations between “the West” and “the East,” “Christianity” and “Islam,” or even between “faith” and “reason” (Philips, 2013). Instead, it emphasizes the importance of recognition from within—inner rationality—an effort to deeply understand “the other” through their epistemologies without rushing to categorize or judge. This approach aligns powerfully with the growing need for spiritual dialogue on ecology. The ecological crisis is not merely a technical or political problem; it is also a crisis of spirituality, distorted by ruptured human relationships with creation. *Laudato Si'* calls for ecological conversion, while Ibn Arabi offers the vision of *Insan Kamil* as one capable of preserving cosmic balance—both addressing the deepest dimension of the human person as a spiritual and ecological agent.

Open Integrity enables both traditions to complement one another: *Laudato Si'* brings forth ecological and social justice praxis, while Ibn Arabi nurtures

transcendental cosmic awareness. Through the lens of *Open Integrity*, we no longer see humans solely as creatures of faith but also as dialogical beings capable of recognizing and absorbing truth from various sources, so long as they remain rooted in authentic spiritual wisdom (Philips, 2013). This idea encourages us to view ecological stewardship not as the exclusive domain of any one tradition but as a collective mandate for all humanity—manifested in spiritual narratives across faiths. When Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* affirms that “everything is interconnected” and Ibn Arabi asserts that “nature is the manifestation of God in limited form,” *Open Integrity* emerges as an epistemic meeting point that strengthens, clarifies, and expands the interpretive horizon. In other words, *Open Integrity* is a medium for interfaith dialogue and a transformative moral foundation to address the global ecological crisis through a network of inclusive, authentic, and relevant spiritualities.

Conclusion

This study concludes that eco-spirituality in Catholic teaching through *Laudato Si'* and in Islam through the thought of Ibn Arabi both offer strong and relevant theological paradigms for addressing the contemporary ecological crisis. Both emphasize a harmonious triadic relationship among humanity, nature, and God as the foundation for environmental consciousness. *Laudato Si'* calls humanity to ecological conversion through social justice and reverence for creation as our typical home. At the same time, Ibn Arabi, through the concept of *Wahdat al-Wujud*, asserts that nature is a sacred manifestation of God and must be cared for as an expression of love for the Creator. Thus, ecological action is not merely an ethical imperative but a profound expression of spirituality.

The primary contribution of this study lies in its integration of interreligious perspectives through the *Open Integrity* approach, which enables authentic dialogue and synthesis between two spiritual traditions without compromising their theological identities. This approach successfully constructs a new interpretive framework for understanding eco-spirituality as a foundation for ecological ethics that can be widely applied in multicultural and multireligious societies such as Indonesia. The study also enriches interdisciplinary discourse among religious studies, environmental philosophy, and sustainability ethics by positioning religion as a key agent in transforming ecological consciousness.

However, this study has several limitations, primarily due to its nature as a literature-based inquiry that relies on interpretations of primary and secondary texts. It does not incorporate empirical field data that could demonstrate how eco-spirituality is experienced or practised by religious communities at the grassroots level. Additionally, focusing only on two major traditions—Catholicism and Islam—limits the generalizability of its findings across other religious frameworks. Therefore, future research should broaden its scope using participatory approaches and include other spiritual traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Indigenous belief systems to enrich the eco-spirituality narrative within Indonesia's pluralistic context.

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