

## Integration of Eco-Feminism and Islamic Values: A Case Study of Pesantren Ath-Thaariq Garut, West Java

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### Abstract

*This paper aims to study the integration of eco-feminism and Islam conducted by women activist of pesantren Ath-Thariq, Garut, West Java, in their attempt to conserve the nature. They are highly concerned with this issue as a response towards environmental crisis in Indonesia, especially in Garut. Additionally, there are only a few Muslimah activists that have so far been involved in such a movement. Against this backdrop, this study portrays the ways and results of the integration of eco-feminism and Islam as conducted by women activists of the respective pesantren. In doing so, this qualitative study employs feminism method. The subject of research includes women activists of pesantren Ath-Tariq. It finds the following. Through ontology, the women activist of the pesantren believe that there is no dualism of human being and nature. They protect, preserve, and love nature with a concept of rahmatan li al-'ālamīn. Through epistemological approach, they integrate local knowledge and Islam to interact with nature. They also implement the principles of heterogeneity, human-nature inter-dependability, and the holiness of nature. They believe that caring for nature is a form of religious piety and an alm. Thus, the novelty of this research is a new model of integration between Islam and eco-femism through ontological and epistemological approaches based on empirical experiences of women. It is hoped that women activists could apply this model in protecting and conserving the environment in other places.*

### Abstrak

*Artikel ini membahas integrasi eko-feminisme dan Islam secara ontologi dan epistemologi yang dilakukan oleh perempuan pesantren Ath-Thariq Garut Jawa Barat dalam rangka menjaga kelestarian lingkungan. Mereka melakukan gerakan tersebut tidak lepas dari maraknya kerusakan lingkungan di Indonesia pada umumnya dan di Garut pada khususnya. Di samping itu, kebanyakan perempuan muslimah masih sedikit yang terlibat aktif dalam gerakan pelestarian lingkungan. Berbasis pada persoalan tersebut, artikel ini akan mendeskripsikan bagaimana cara dan hasil integrasi eko-feminisme dan Islam yang dilakukan oleh perempuan pesantren. Untuk menjawab persoalan tersebut, artikel ini menggunakan penelitian kualitatif dengan metode feminisme. Sasaran penelitian adalah kelompok perempuan pesantren At-Thariq. Adapun hasil penelitian adalah sebagai berikut. Dengan pendekatan ontologi, perempuan pesantren mempercayai tidak ada dualisme antara manusia dengan alam. Mereka melindungi, melestarikan dan damai dengan alam dengan konsep rahmatan li al-'ālamīn. Dengan pendekatan epistemologi, mereka memadukan pengetahuan lokal dan nilai-nilai Islam dalam berinteraksi dengan alam. Mereka juga menerapkan prinsip heterogenitas, keterkaitan antara manusia dengan alam, dan kesucian alam. Mereka juga meyakini bahwa memelihara alam merupakan bentuk amal shaleh dan shadaqah. Dengan demikian, novelty riset ini adalah adanya model baru integrasi eko-feminisme dan Islam dengan pendekatan ontologi dan epistemologi berbasis pengalaman empiris yang dilakukan oleh perempuan. Temuan ini diharapkan bisa diaplikasikan oleh perempuan di tempat lain dalam rangka melestarikan lingkungan.*

**Keywords:** Women; Pesantren Ath-Thaariq; Rahmatan li al-'ālamīn; Ontology; Epistemology

## Introduction

Many studies either on women to preserve the environment or on Islam to care for the environment in general societies or in certain communities such as a *pesantren* have been conducted. However, there are less studies on how to integrate eco-feminism and Islamic values to care for the environment. Thus, this research paper is suggested to contribute for theoretical studies of eco-feminism integrated with the Islamic values.

Eco-feminism is a movement that struggles to maintain and conserve the environment based on women or femininity.<sup>1</sup> Islam also concerns of the environment as Matin promotes a concept of *green deen*. *Green deen* or *green Islam* is concept that convinces an integrative relation between faith and the nature.<sup>2</sup>

Some scholars have studied relationships of eco-feminism and Islam. Ammar (2010) states that Islam is highly compatible with eco-feminism. Humans either men or women have same right as God's creation or same responsibility as a God's servant. Humans have responsibility to maintain this Earth because they have special quality. One of the reasons of why the Earth is for humans is *amanah* (a trust).<sup>3</sup>

According to Nawal Ammar, eco-feminism plays roles for: equal access of all creations, recovery of certain conditions in life regardless of gender, right protection of all creations, harmonization of all communities, reduction of irresponsible behavior for any God's creations (including the women), and respecting of diversities and all creations (including the women). These principles are in line with Islamic values.<sup>4</sup>

Next, Candraningrum offered a concept, Islamic eco-feminism.<sup>5</sup> She argues that women and men are equal in Islam based on a concept, *al-Insān* (meaning humans). *al-Insān* does not refer to certain gender; it refers to either men or women. This condition, equality, indicates that there is same responsibility to solve the environmental crises. The concept also can mean *khalīfah* that guides humans to conserve the environment. *Khalīfah* in a context of Islamic feminism means that every human has responsibility for his/herself, for humans and for the environment regardless of economic class. Women are manifestation of the Earth, and they are meaningful.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, Ali integrated Islam and eco-feminism by referring to thoughts of some muslim scholars (such as Muhamad Abduh, Rahman, Muhamad Asad, Othaman Abdur Rahman Llewellyn, Fazlun Khalid) and feminist muslims (such as Nawal Amar).<sup>7</sup> According to him, maintaining the environment cultivated by women should refer to concepts such as *tauḥīd*, *khalīfah* and *amānah* because the concepts are in line with eco-feminism.

The thoughts above address eco-feminism and Islam in normative ways, and those also need to be implemented further. They construct their argument based religious texts and eco-feminism thoughts. However, they do not present how a process and a result of integration between eco-feminism and Islam in daily practices. Therefore, this study observes and discusses how the integration is applied by women in Pesantren Ath-Thaariq, Garut, West Java based on empirical experiences and ontological and epistemological approach.

<sup>1</sup> Rosemarie Putnam Tong, "Feminist Thought," (Bandung: Jelasutra, 1998), 36.

<sup>2</sup> Ibrahim Abdul-Matin, *Green Deen: What Islam Teaches about Protecting the Planet* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2010), 3.

<sup>3</sup> 'Are Islamic Thinking and Ecofeminism Possible?', CRCS UGM (blog), accessed 19 September 2020, <https://crs.ugm.ac.id/are-islamic-thinking-and-ecofeminism-possible/>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Dewi Candraningrum, "Amanat Al-Insan Dalam Krisis Lingkungan: Kajian Ekofeminisme Islam," *Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta dan Jurnal Perempuan* 3 (2015): 3.

<sup>6</sup> Dewi Candraningrum, "Amanat Al-Insan Dalam Krisis Lingkungan: Kajian Ekofeminisme Islam," 3.

<sup>7</sup> M. Ali, "Integrating Islam and Ecofeminism: A Monotheistic Approach to Earth Crisis," *Body Memories: Goddesses of Nusantara, Rings of Fire, and Narratives of Myth, Jakarta and Salatiga: Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan and Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana* (2014): 105–118.

A movement of the women in the pesantren is caused by environmental crisis generally in Indonesia and especially in Garut. In 2015, ten locations in West Java like Conservation of Leuweung Sancang, Protected Forest of Wildlife Conservation of Gunung Kareumbi, Protected Forest of Cikuray and Kamojang were highly damaged. The damages reached 600 ha and caused amount of water decreased in Garut for 60 percent or 100 liter/second became 40 liter/second.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, inhabitants of Garut have experienced some disasters caused by climate changes, for examples: hot temperatures, long dry seasons, and unstable seasons causing crop failures. Some pests like plant hoppers appeared. The plant hoppers increased because some predatory animals like snakes, frogs, butterflies etc., which are a part of a balance of ecosystem in fields, have been in extinctions.

Considering these facts, Nissa Wargadipura, the founder-mother of Pesantren Ath-Thaariq has struggled to solve environmental problems. Interestingly, other women also follow her initiatives. Caring for nature should not depend only on men. The women have same roles to access, to preserve this Earth. Based on her concept on eco-feminism, Nissa urged that nature cannot be dominated and exploited.<sup>9</sup>

In this pesantren, the women students not only study religious lessons but also preserve the environment. They understand that nature is essentially God creations in a creative process. This understanding is similar to thoughts of transformative eco-feminism.<sup>10</sup> They also strengthen their environmental movement based on Islamic theology (Qur'an and Hadits). The integration applied by the women has significant contribution to solve the environmental crisis in Garut. Their movement also inspires broader societies in either Garut or other regions to learn how to preserve the

environment in the pesantren. They can learn how to cultivate agriculture, forest, waste, green entrepreneurship and etc. Hundreds of people from various communities have come to learn in the pesantren such as governments, private sectors, pesantren, universities, nuns, religious organizations, businessmen and others.<sup>11</sup> Because of hard work of the women in the pesantren, especially Nissa Wargadipura, Tabloid Nova awarded her as an inspirational woman in environmental conservation in 2015.<sup>12</sup>

To deepen the processes of the integration practiced by the women in the pesantren, this study applied a qualitative research by a feminism method. The feminism method can make the author understand positions and experiences of the women in a society as a main point of this study.<sup>13</sup>

Objects of this study were the women in the pesantren included in concrete actions to preserve the environment. The women are Bu Nyai (the founder), a student leader, a secretary, a treasurer, woman teachers, a daughter of the founder and woman students. Location of this study was at Pesantren Ath-Thaariq, Sukagalih, Tarogong Kidul, Garut, West Java. Its data were collected by in depth interviews, observation, documentation, and audio-visual materials.<sup>14</sup>

### Eco-Pesantren Movement

Pesantren at the beginning of its development is a centre of spread of Islam and an educational institution. Pesantren is also a social institution that experience dialectics because of changes inside and outside

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Ibang Lukmanuridin, February 13, 2018.

<sup>12</sup> "Perempuan Inspiratif NOVA 2015, Berkarya Dengan Cinta," accessed September 19, 2020, <https://nova.grid.id/read/07646698/perempuan-inspiratif-nova-2015-berkarya-dengan-cinta-?page=all>.

<sup>13</sup> Rachmad Hidayat, "Kapan Ilmu Akan Berubah?: Lebih Dekat Kepada Metodologi Feminis," *dalam Jurnal Perempuan*, no. 48 (2006): 32.

<sup>14</sup> John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (Sage publications, 2016), 75.

<sup>8</sup> Pikiran Rakyat, March 9, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Nisa Wargadipura, February 3, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> Vandana Shiva, *Bebas Dari Pembangunan* (Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1997), 50.

pesantren.<sup>15</sup> Some figures label a pesantren as a subculture, a cultural broker and an agent of changes.<sup>16</sup> As an agent of changes, a pesantren can contribute for ecological issues (or eco-pesantren) in addition to social issues. Eco-pesantren is a labelling when a pesantren can contribute and participate for an environmental conservation.<sup>17</sup>

Eco-pesantren is a social movement for environmental issues as practiced by the Pesantren Ath-Thaariq. According to Gidden, a social movement is collective efforts to reach interests and goals together through collective actions outside established institutions.<sup>18</sup> The main purpose of the social movement is to improve social structures. Based on historical epoch, the environmental movement is a new social movement shifting from old social movements.<sup>19</sup>

Eco-pesantren movement is pesantren's responsibility as a center of social development. In 1973, some pesantrens cooperated with Institution of Social Research, Education, and Information, abbreviated as LP3ES (Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan, dan Penerangan Ekonomi Sosial), to make program oriented on income of society, health and environment.<sup>20</sup> Some pesantren that implemented specific programs were Pesantren Darul Falah Bogor, Pesantren An-Nuqayah Madura, dan Pesantren Pabelan Magelang.

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<sup>15</sup> Arkanudin Budiyo, Subejo Subejo, and Samsul Maarif, "Deradicalization and Formation of Public Attitudes of Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren) in Sukoharjo, Indonesia," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 21, no. 1 (April 26, 2020): 34.

<sup>16</sup> Hiroko Horikoshi, *Kyai Dan Perubahan Sosial* (Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat, 1987).

<sup>17</sup> Fachruddin Majeri Mangunjaya, *Ekopesantren: Bagaimana Merancang Pesantren Ramah Lingkungan?* (Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2014), 6.

<sup>18</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Sociology*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 642.

<sup>19</sup> Robert White, *Controversies in Environmental Sociology* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 187.

<sup>20</sup> Manfred Ziemek, *Pesantren Dalam Perubahan Sosial* (Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat (P3M), 1986), 223–228.

Pesantren Darul Falah was established in 1960 located in Benteng, Ciampea, Bogor, West Java. This pesantren was founded by famous muslim scholars (ulama) such as Muhamad Nasir dan Seleh Iskandar to create leaders for rural development activities. One of its goals was to care with the environment in agricultural sectors.<sup>21</sup>

The next was Pesantren An-Nuqayah Guluk-Guluk, Madura. This pesantren practiced environmental programs such as reforestation, gardening, sanitation, and fresh water. The pesantren made self-sufficient groups to plant horticulture, fruits and vegetables in the yards of their houses.<sup>22</sup>

In addition, Pesantren Pabelan Magelang, Central Java, concerned about environmental issues through recovery programs of traditional architectures of houses for rural societies. In the beginning, many houses had not had windows, house chimneys and toilets. Because of the initiations of the pesantren, some houses had windows, productive small gardens, efficient chimney, safe energy and toilets far from wells. As a result, the pesantren got an international award "Aga Khan Award for Architecture" by a reward 78.000 USD. The pesantren also conducted trainings of appropriate agricultures, constructions of water storage tanks, buildings of wells for agricultures at Pabelan and fish development.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, a pesantren concerning about the environment had appeared in Tuban, West Java, namely Pesantren Wali Sembilan. This pesantren was founded by KH. Noer Nasroh on 25 December 1977 located in middle of a forest by a wide of 5 ha. The pesantren taught not only religious knowledge, but also knowledge of

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<sup>21</sup> Manfred Oepen and Wolfgang Karcher, *Dinamika Pesantren: Dampak Pesantren Dalam Pendidikan Dan Pengembangan Masyarakat* (Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat, 1988), 190.

<sup>22</sup> Manfred Ziemek, *Pesantren Dalam Perubahan Sosial*, 228.

<sup>23</sup> Manfred Oepen and Wolfgang Karcher, *Dinamika Pesantren*, 187.

preserving the nature, especially how to cultivate the forest. Its students learn not only classical Islamic texts, but also knowledge how to understand the environment around them. Cooperating with Perum Perhutani (A State Forest Enterprise), KPH Parengan and the surrounding society, the pesantren has cultivated 121,1 ha of owned forest, 192,8 ha of partnership forest, and 38 ha of educational forest.<sup>24</sup>

Mangunjaya and McKay (2012) calculated some of pesantren that have implemented Islamic approach to preserve the environment, such Pesantren Al-Haramain in Nusa Tenggara Barat. Tuan Guru Hasanaian Junaidi, the founder the pesantren, had pioneered a community-based forest and included its students and families to conserve the environment and to strengthen their economy.<sup>25</sup> As a result, the pesantren succeeded in its reforestation program for 31 ha area, and each family of its student was given 1 ha area to plant based on their business plan.

In Yogyakarta, there are some pesantrens that also care for the environment, for example: Pesantren Lintang Songo di Piyungan, Pesantren Al-Imdad Pandak, and Pesantren Al-Furqon Sanden Bantul.<sup>26</sup> Pesantren Lintang Songo has developed not only religious knowledge, but also environmental and agriuctural knowledge. The pesantren implements its environmental education through cultivating waste and forest around the pesantren.

Next is Pesantren Al-Imdad Pandak, Bantul. The pesantren has concerned on

<sup>24</sup>Ahmad Sihabul Millah, "Teologi Lingkungan Berbasis Pesantren," accessed September 19, 2020, [https://www.academia.edu/38759568/Teologi\\_lingkungan\\_berbasis\\_pesantren](https://www.academia.edu/38759568/Teologi_lingkungan_berbasis_pesantren).

<sup>25</sup> Fachruddin Majeri Mangunjaya and Jeanne Elizabeth McKay, "Reviving an Islamic Approach for Environmental Conservation in Indonesia," *Worldviews* 16 (2012): 296.

<sup>26</sup> Monika Arnez, "Shifting Notions of Nature and Environmentalism in Indonesian Islam," in *Environmental and Climate Change in South and Southeast Asia* (Brill, 2014), 92.

management of waste and conversation. The pesantren differentiates which one is organic or non-organic waste, and then those are reproduced. In its conservation program, the pesantren ever planted some trees around slopes of Merapi Mountain after eruption in 2010.<sup>27</sup> The pesantren encourages each teacher to plant 5 trees of teak, 5 trees of mahogany and 10 trees of yellow mimosa in his/her area.

In addition, another pesantren that concerns on the environment is Pesantren Al-Furqon Sanden, Bantul. Its care for the nature is manifested in educational milieu. According to its leader, Islam does not allow to harm this Earth.<sup>28</sup> God has bestowed this perfect nature for humans, but humans tend to harm it.

The studies on eco-pesantren above tend to focus on how the pesantren implements normative texts like the Qur'an and the Hadits to interact with nature. Its concrete actions can be like waste management, planting trees, reforestation, eco-friendly farming etc. However, a study on how a pesantren deals with issues of the environment by integrating eco-feminism and Islam needs to go further.

### Eco-feminism and Islam

Eco-feminism defined as a movement to maintain and preserve the environment based on the understanding sexuality and gender.<sup>29</sup> The term "eco-feminism" initially has appeared since 1974 in Francoise d'Eaubonne's *Le Feminisme ou la Mort*. This movement urges for equality between women and men in preserving and protecting the nature.

Eco-feminism is a discourse connecting the ethics of ecology and the idea of feminism. This study tends to find the connection between the environmental crisis and the oppression on women. I suggest that ecology as discourse shall come in perfection if combined with feminism

<sup>27</sup> Monika Arnez, "Shifting Notions of Nature and Environmentalism in Indonesian Islam, 92.

<sup>28</sup> Monika Arnez, "Shifting Notions of Nature and Environmentalism in Indonesian Islam, 93.

<sup>29</sup> Putnam Tong, "Feminist Thought," 361.

because it highlight the necessity to prevent and protect women from oppression; and feminism is disembodied without the ecology, which asserts the interdependence of living being.<sup>30</sup>

In the context of eco-feminism, the women discern that relations of violence and exploitation to women are parallel with exploitation of nature that is continually oppressed by economic capitalism working in a patriarchy system.<sup>31</sup> The patriarchy system views women and nature are objects and things to be exploited. As a social movement, eco-feminism strongly criticizes the development of economic capitalism that does not consider sustainability of certain ecosystem.

In the context of ecofeminism, a perspective used by the patriarchy system to view a problem is still by binary oppositions, such as the sky or the Earth, men or women, ideas or bodies, humans or animals, spirit or body, young or old and so forth.<sup>32</sup> This view is harmful because the women and the nature or the Earth often become objects of exploitations. Both the women and the Earth or the nature often experience injustice.

One of the famous figures in eco-feminism is Vandana Shiva. She is included in a wave of transformative ecofeminism. Thoughts of Shiva focus on integrating ecology and feminism based South tradition, especially tradition in India.<sup>33</sup>

According to Rajni Kothari, quoted by Shiva, contributions of feminists in ecological issues are useful not only for women, but also for men. Feminist values are not exclusive for women.<sup>34</sup> On one hand, there are many women, but they do not have femininity values in

themselves, while on the other hand, there many men, but they have femininity values. Although both of them are different, dialectically they cannot be separated.

Shiva's analysis of the women of the Chipko Movement contributes to India's feminine principle of *Prakriti*, or the awareness of nature as a living, interdependent force.<sup>35</sup> For the Indian women, the nature is seen as *Prakriti*, a creative process and a feminine principle that become references in life.<sup>36</sup> In Indian cosmology, this universe is created and renewed through dialectical processes between creations and damages or between unity and disunity.<sup>37</sup> This opposition causes emergence of dynamic energy (Shakti). Manifestation of the energy is called the nature (*Prakriti*). Attributes lying in the nature as *Prakriti* are active and very strong, and they are productive energy formed in the dialectical process of creations, and renewal of all forms of life.

In similar ways, this research investigates eco-feminism movement in the Pesantren Ath-Thaariq by using femininity principles of *Prakriti* developed by Shiva. The first principle is a creative, active and productive principle. Shiva shows that femininity principles owned by women in India to provide food as a life production; and they consider their relationship with the nature is productive because the women not only consume what the nature produces, but also make anything productive.<sup>38</sup>

The second is a principle to respect diversity and togetherness. The Indian women closely cultivate their forest by heterogeneous plants. By this system, a life cycle can run well. Each plant has its own functions and benefits to balance the nature. The nature is maintained together as sources of life, and it is not allowed to be dominated by individuals or corporations.

<sup>30</sup> Bijay Kumar Sarkar, "Eco-Feminism: Women and Nature" 04, no. 04 (2015), 6.

<sup>31</sup> Dewi Candraningrum, "Amanat Al-Insan Dalam Krisis Lingkungan: Kajian Ekofeminisme Islam, 3-4.

<sup>32</sup> Dewi Candraningrum, "Amanat Al-Insan Dalam Krisis Lingkungan: Kajian Ekofeminisme Islam, 3-4.

<sup>33</sup> Mansur Faqih, "Menyuarakan Kearifan Perempuan Selatan," in *Bebas Dari Pembangunan: Perempuan, Ekologi, Dan Perjuangan Hidup Di India* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1997), xvii.

<sup>34</sup> Vandana Shiva, *Bebas Dari Pembangunan*, 67.

<sup>35</sup> Cynthia Garrity-Bond, "Ecofeminist Epistemology in Vandana Shiva's The Feminine Principle of Prakriti and Ivone Gebara's Trinitarian Cosmology," *Feminist Theology* 26, no. 2 (January 1, 2018): 186.

<sup>36</sup> Vandana Shiva, *Bebas Dari Pembangunan*, xxxvii.

<sup>37</sup> Vandana Shiva, *Bebas Dari Pembangunan*, 50.

<sup>38</sup> Vandana Shiva, *Bebas Dari Pembangunan*, 55.

The third is a principle of relatedness of all creations, including humans or nature. The Indian women are aware that they are very dependent on nature. Thus, they have strong spirit to recover forests, fields and rivers. This awareness is related to a tradition of producing and preserving the life. They channel fertility of their forest into their fields and livestock. The cooperativeness between the women and the nature ensure their sustainable life.<sup>39</sup>

The fourth is a principle of balancing of nature and humans. When the women channel the fertility of their forest into their fields and livestock, they bring animal feces into their forest in order the forest can water their fields. This cooperativeness indicates the balance of interdependence of the nature and the humans.<sup>40</sup> Certainly, this condition can ensure the sustainable life and the balanced nature.

The fifth is a principle of holiness of nature. This principle is a concrete form of the eco-feminism spirituality to encourage recovering the holiness of this life. The life in the Earth can be preserved if everyone respects and values any form of life in the Earth as holiness and a respected essence.<sup>41</sup> Because of the holiness, there is no reason to damage or destroy the nature. On the other hand, it will be preserved, maintained and protected.

Those principles above will be integrated with Islamic values of the environment. Islam actively concerns to the environmental issues. One of Muslim scholars concerning the issues is Seyyed Hussein Nasr. Responding the issues critically, he offered two concepts: reevaluating traditional cosmology concepts developed in Sufism or *Syari'ah* awareness of ethics to the nature and its broader implementations.<sup>42</sup>

Nasr argues that humans principally are an integrative part of nature, and nature is a God representation. In a radical anthropocentric

approach, humans are kept at the centre, but in Nasr's relationship model, humans have a place between God and nature. As created by the same God, humans are part of natural world.<sup>43</sup> Whoever is peaceful with God, he/she should be peaceful with God's creation, nature and humans.<sup>44</sup>

The second concept is a principle of *Syari'ah Islam* for the environmental ethics. The principle is *tauhid* (oneness), *khalifah* (a representative in the Earth), *amanah* (trust), *syari'ah* (ethical attitudes, halal or haram), *'adl* (justice) and *i'tidal* (moderation).<sup>45</sup> In this context, Nasr often refers to Manzoor's arguments.

As an ethical principle, *tauhid* teaches that humans should believe that Allah is the only sources of any values.<sup>46</sup> The principle also highlights that Allah is the only Creator. Next, *khalifah* points out that the humans are God's representatives to maintain the Earth, to make it fruitful and to protect it from damages and extinctions. As a *khalifah*, he/she should be a trusted person *amanah* to the nature as a logical consequence of trust given by Allah for the humans. Therefore, humans should be able to preserve the nature well and obey the God's orders.

The next is an ethical principle (*syari'ah*) lying in the Qur'an and the Hadits and a *halal* (allowed things) or *haram* (prohibited things). This principle provides normative and legal ethics and rules for muslims to make certain decisions of ecological issues.<sup>47</sup>

The next ethic is *'adl* and *i'tidal* to cultivate the nature. *'Adl* is one of God's attributes

<sup>43</sup> Md Abu Sayem, "Religions and Environmental Ethics," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 4, no. 3 (December 30, 2019): 43.

<sup>44</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Islam, the Contemporary Islamic World, and the Environmental Crisis," *Earthcare: An Anthology in Environmental Ethics*, 2009, 162–163.

<sup>45</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature*, 213–214.

<sup>46</sup> S. Parvez Manzoor, "Environment and Values: The Islamic Perspective," *Touch of Midas: Science, Values and Environment in Islam and the West* (1984): 155.

<sup>47</sup> S. Parvez Manzoor, "Environment and Values: The Islamic Perspective," 158.

<sup>39</sup> Vandana Shiva, *Bebas Dari Pembangunan*, 59.

<sup>40</sup> Vandana Shiva, *Bebas Dari Pembangunan*, 59.

<sup>41</sup> Vandana Shiva et al., *Ecofeminism: Persepektif Gerakan Perempuan & Lingkungan* (Ire Press, 2005), 19.

<sup>42</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature* (Oxford University Press, 1996), 213–214.

meaning regulatory and balance. The *'adl* can lead to *i'tidal* meaning harmony and balance with nature. In this ecological sense, *i'tidal* can mean to make the nature balanced without exploitative attitudes. The *i'tidal* then will encourage to create principles of *ijma'* (public agreement), *istihsān* (preferring for a better choice) and *istiṣlāh* (public benefit).<sup>48</sup>

In this paper, the concept of Islamic ecology developed by Nashr and Manzoor above are integrated with the concept eco-feminism struggled by Shiva. The concepts are the first step to construct integration of ecofeminism and Islam practiced by the women in Pesantren Ath-Thaariq Garut.

### Ontological Integration of Eco-feminism and Islam

Ontology is knowledge of a real essence to be observed or to explain a subject matter.<sup>49</sup> In other words, ontology is a real essence used as sources of a certain disciplines or a social movements. In the context of ecological movement, eco-feminism struggled by Shiva has ontological concepts based on spirituality of Indian traditions. Ontologically humans and the earth cannot be separated as well as men and women. Both humans and nature are in dualism but in unity. Both are inseparable. Each creation consists of dialectical unity between the men and the women or between the humans and the nature. Hence, there is no dualism of the humans and the nature.<sup>50</sup>

In the context of Islam, ontologically the humans are integrative parts of the nature, and the nature is manifestations of God power. The humans should be in harmony with the sky, sources and genesis of creations. Whoever makes peace with the God, he/she should also make peaceful harmony with all His creations,

the nature or the humans.<sup>51</sup> This view is in line what Mujiyono Abdillah (2001) conveyed that humans and the environment has same positions as God's creations included in one ecosystem. The humans and the environment have same strength and weakness. Unity of humans and nature is mentioned in the Qur'an, Verse al-Anam: 38, "There is not an animal in the earth, nor a flying creature flying on two wings, but they are peoples like unto you. We have neglected nothing in the Book (of Our decrees). Then unto their Lord they will be gathered. Mujiyono Abdillah (2001) understands that this verse can mean "every community in an ecosystem is a family in the ecosystem. Communities of humans, flora and fauna are one family."<sup>52</sup> In other words, the humans are not owned by the nature, or the nature is not owned by the humans. The humans are integrative parts of the ecosystem.

Ontology of Eco-feminism and Islam has both similarities and differences. The similarities are in ways of the two ideologies see humans (women and men) and nature that they are integrative parts complementing each other in an ecosystem. There is no dualism between humans and nature. Meanwhile, the differences are their reference bases. Islam refers to normative texts derived from the Qur'an and Hadits, while Shiva's concept of transformative eco-feminism is rooted in the spirituality of Indian tradition.

Women in Ath-Thaariq seems combining the two ontological concepts as sources of their ecological movement. The combination is not in excessive ways because Nissa ever learned concepts of ecology and farming thought by Vandana Shiva in India. Moreover, the women in Ath-Thaariq also strengthen their movement by spiritual values of Islam.

Those can be seen in how the women cultivate their ecosystem in the pesantren by positioning equality of humans and nature and

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<sup>48</sup> S. Parvez Manzoor, "Environment and Values: The Islamic Perspective, 158.

<sup>49</sup> Muhamad Adib, *Filsafat Ilmu: Ontologi, Aksiologi, Dan Logika Ilmu Pengetahuan* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2011), 69.

<sup>50</sup> Vandana Shiva, *Bebas Dari Pembangunan*, 52.

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<sup>51</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Islam, the Contemporary Islamic World, and the Environmental Crisis," 162–163.

<sup>52</sup> Mujiyono Abdillah, *Agama Ramah Lingkungan: Perspektif al-Quran* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2001), 154.



combining the equality by a concept of *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn*

Sometimes humans feel the most powerful one in the Earth, as if I, the human, am the only a decision maker. This view is wrong. In the Qur'an, it is clear that ecosystem, ecology, has significant roles. The humans as part of the food chain is *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn*. We must not neglect all God's creations such as a cat, a snake and so forth. Everything created by Allah must have significances, mutual symbiosis (Nissa Wargadipura, Feb, 1st 2018)

The statement above indicates that when preserving nature, humans either women or men should make positions of humans, nature and all God' creations equal. The Nissa's statement seems to argue that humans should position themselves to be equal with the nature and other God's creations in cultivating the Earth. They cannot feel the most superior creature among other creations. Because of the equality, the women cultivate farming in the pesantren without killing snakes, butterflies, womb and etc. as they consider all God's creations as part of food chain needed to be preserved. The nature is not considered as an object, but it is a subject.<sup>53</sup> Everything originates from Allah, and everything is meaningful. Everything is useful for either the humans or the nature. This is in line with a verse in the Qur'an quoted by Kiai Ibang:

*"And We created not the heaven and the earth and all that is between them in vain. That is the opinion of those who disbelieve. And woe unto those who disbelieve, from the Fire!" (Q.S. Sad, 38:27).*

This positioning is part of the concept of *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn*, which reassure the peace and coexistence of human and nature. Making peace is a form of worship in respecting God's creations in this system of life. All of our life is part of *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn*. *Rahmatan li al-*

*'ālamīn* cannot be separated from ecology. Therefore, humans as representatives of God must keep an ecological balance.

In the concept of ecology, *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn* is balancing ecology. Thus, this Earth will be protected. Food is not only for humans, but also for animals and other creations, and this is a balance. Allah has created the Earth, bamboo and its various uses... those are characteristics of the balance. This is *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn*. Humans are the best creation, so they should spread *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn* (Nissa Wargadipura 17/02/2018)

In short, the statement above portrays that the concept of *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn* encourages the humans (men or women) to implement a principle of balance for nature. They should respect and value every creation in this Earth. This disallows conflicts between humans and animal, plants and other creations to happen.

Therefore, ontologically speaking, it can be concluded that the women have two concepts as sources of integrating ecofeminism and Islam. The first is a concept that there is no dualism of humans and nature as both are equal. The second is a concept of *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn* that humans should be harmonic and protect the nature as both are same as God's creations.

### **Epistemological Integration of Eco-feminism and Islam**

Epistemology is a philosophical and critical study, a theoretically basic analysis of knowledge and a way to understand and to know reality.<sup>54</sup> Epistemology can be understood as a basis of knowledge, a technique, a method or a procedure in the ecological movement promoted by women in the Pesantren Ath-Thaariq. In this sub-part, the integration of the epistemology of eco-feminism and Islam is discussed as a basis for knowledge and a way of the women to interact with nature.

<sup>53</sup>Interview with Hilma, 1 February 2018.

<sup>54</sup> Muhamad Adib, *Filsafat Ilmu: Ontologi, Aksiologi, dan Logika Ilmu Pengetahuan*, 78.

### A. Integration of Local Knowledge and Islam

Basic knowledge of the women in the pesantren to interact with their environment originates from traditionally local knowledge. This can be seen in how they cultivate their farming. They do not plough their field with a tractor, but they leave their ducks or chickens to play as a process of ploughing naturally in the fields. Moreover, composts from leaves, animal feces or remaining straws are used as a fertilizer for their farming areas<sup>55</sup>. Grasses and leaves in the pesantren are produced to be a fertilizer or put near big trees as a natural fertilizer. This model of farming is an inherited farming of their ancestors that is continually preserved.

They also implement organic lifestyle. The women in the pesantren do not use instant pads instead of reusable pads. Reusable pads are healthier than the instant pads sold in several markets.<sup>56</sup> This practice is a struggle to counter enterprises that are not eco-friendly.

The women also always can differentiate which one is organic and inorganic waste. The waste is collected and reproduced. The organic waste is put in a box. After it is decomposed, it is put in their fields as a fertilizer. This knowledge is also an inherited local knowledge.

Those practices above indicate that the women strengthen their ecological movement based on local knowledge. This is similar with basic epistemology of Shiva's ecofeminism, which refers to spirituality based on local tradition of Indian women.

In addition, the women in the pesantren also strengthen their knowledge foundation about their ecological movement with Islamic values. For them, Islamic spirituality does not tolerate oppression and occupation of either humans or nature. According to Nissa Wargadipura, their resistance movement on ecological issues in this pesantren is not "leftist", but based on Islamic spirituality. In this world, there is a creation and of course there is a

"creator". Nature is a creation, while the creator is Allah.<sup>57</sup> This foundation makes spirit of the pesantren differ with other movements.

The concept that they believe is *tauhid*, stressing that there is no God except Allah. When someone believes that Allah is the only God, he/she should respect the humans, all His creations, and this universe. Witnessing that the only God is Allah (*Syahadat*) is a form of transaction or relation between humans and the God, not the humans and material things. A believer will not harm the nature and will keep its balance.<sup>58</sup>

Knowledge based on some Hadits also strengthens their movement. For example, a Hadits stated that whoever plants and some birds eat their plants, so the eaten plants become alms (*sadaqah*). Alms are not only for humans, but also for animals, plants and nature. In this sense, whoever practices conservation or planting; he/she has given much alms.<sup>59</sup> This is a concrete action of humans as a *khalifah* who has responsibility to preserve this Earth. Therefore, the basic knowledge of ecological movement struggled by the women in Ath-Thaariq is based on traditionally local knowledge combined with Islamic values, the *tauhid*.

### B. Love for the Nature

Epistemology also addresses about how knowledge is applied into practices. In this context, epistemology is defined as how the women in the pesantren apply the integration of eco-feminism and Islam to interact with nature. Eco-feminism teaches humans to treat nature with love. The women manifest their love for nature with the following principles;

*First*, the women appreciate a principle of heterogeneity. In preserving the nature, eco-feminism respects for togetherness and diversity. Deforestation and the destruction for nature

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<sup>57</sup> Interview with Nisa Wargadipura, 27 March 2018.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Ibang Lukmanurudin and Nisa Wargadipura, 14 September 2016.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Ibang Lukmanurudin, 14 September 2016.

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<sup>55</sup> Interview with Nisa Wargadipura, 1 February 2016.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Hilma, Salwa and Nunung, 27 March 2018.

through homogenization and private ownership by capitalism leads to a process of destroying biodiversity.<sup>60</sup>

Women very concerns and care for issues of biodiversity, either plants or animals. In maintaining their agricultural system, the women apply the concept of biodiversity of plants. The pesantren have around 52 types of food plants. This food is local food with a concept of biodiversity. According to Nissa Wargadipura and Salwa, female students have also learned to plant various types of plants in the pesantren from an early age. This aims to educate and strengthen the students about importances of heterogeneity in interacting with humans or nature.

The women refer to verses in the Qur'an discussing about protection of the biodiversity. Ibang argued that Allah is a creator and a leader for all His creations including animals. He is who gives blessings and who know where the animals live and where their food is. Allah says in Q.S. Hud (11): 6: "*And there is not a beast in the earth but the sustenance thereof dependeth on Allah. He knoweth its habitation and its repository. All is in a clear Record*";

*Second*, the women develop a principle of relatedness of all His creations. In the eco-feminism context, the women are aware that they are dependent on the nature. Therefore, they strongly struggle to fertilize and reproduce their field or yards of their houses. This awareness is related to a tradition producing and preserving the life. They channel the fertility from their livestock to forests. Thus, the balance between nature and humans can happen.<sup>61</sup> Cooperative roles of the women and nature can ensure the sustainable life and its balance.

Cultivating their farming, the women in the pesantren respect for all creatures in area of the pesantren. They believe that there is relatedness between humans and nature. Consequently, they do not damage and destroy other God's

creations (*'adamul fasād*). They provide spaces for snakes, wombs, microbes, caterpillars, butterflies and others. The wombs are pilulated and developed.<sup>62</sup> They are given spaces to live. They also build bushes as a space for snakes and big trees for birds;

*Third*, implementing a concept of *khalifah*. They actively encourage for holiness of the nature. In the eco-feminism epistemology, the nature is believed as sources of life. The nature is considered sacred. This principle is a concrete spirituality of the eco-feminism to encourage recovering the holiness of life. The life in the Earth can be preserved if everyone respects and values every form of life in the Earth as holiness and a respected essence.<sup>63</sup> Because of the holiness, there is no reason to damage or destroy the nature. On the other hand, it will be preserved, maintained and saved.

In Islamic traditions, the holiness of the nature is considered as a responsibility of humans of being *khalifah* in the Earth. When the humans relate with God, it means that there is no God except Allah. Therefore, the humans at the same time have positions as *khalifah*, God's representatives.

As a *khalifah*, humans discern that the Earth is a holy place. They should make messages from the sky earthed, for example Allah has attributes of *al-raḥmān* (lovely), *al-raḥīm* (merciful), *al-Razāq* (generous)... The God's attributes should be earthed by the *khalifah*.<sup>64</sup>

Based on the interview, it can be argued that the humans as *khalifah* should treat the Earth as a holy place. They must not pollute it with wastes, destroy or exploit it. These practices are manifestations of recognizing the holiness. Beside these, the humans obey to treat the Earth and every God's creation by implementing attributes of Allah (*asmāul ḥusnā*);

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Hilma, 26 March 2018.

<sup>63</sup> Vandana Shiva et al., *Ecofeminism*, 19.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Ibang Lukmanurudin, 17 February 2018.

<sup>60</sup> Vandana Shiva, *Bebas Dari Pembangunan*, 58.

<sup>61</sup> Vandana Shiva, *Bebas Dari Pembangunan*, 59.

Fourth, preserving the environment, such as planting, is religious piety or a good deed leading to a blessing (*berkah*). Implementing this concept, the women refer to a Hadits. The Hadits stated that the Prophet Muhammad told that one of continually blessed good deeds is giving alms, building relationships (*silaturahmi*), planting and fixing waterways. The Hadits tells a meaningful lesson about ecology because it mentions about planting and water. If there is no water, the plants cannot grow. Whoever builds waterways, preserves an ecosystem or plants trees means he/she has saved religious piety for hereafter (*yaum al-akhir*).<sup>65</sup>

Hence, this leads to what Nissa and Ibang have discussed, the blessings. The value of blessings does not reduce divine values and is not affected by markets. The values continue together with moral values. Food and nutrients women or men in the pesantren are completely enough. They do not depend on market or the other parties. They have enough rice, corn, vegetables and fish. They become self-sufficient;

Last, the women believe that planting is *ṣadaqah* (alms). This principle is included in a Hadits saying that if someone plants, and some birds eat his/her plants, the eaten plants become alms. The alms are for not only humans, but also animals, plants and nature.<sup>66</sup> In other words, people who love to plant and preserve trees are considered giving a lot of alms. The more trees are planted, the more oxygen is given. It is because humans need oxygen every second. This is called *ṣadaqah* (alms) in a form of oxygen. This is also a concrete action of humans as representatives or custodians (caliph) on the earth who have an obligation to preserve it. In addition, if the women have traveled outside the city by bus, train or plane, they are suggested to plant trees after the travelling as an exchange of carbon dioxide that was released by the vehicles.

<sup>65</sup> interview with Ibang Lukmanurudin, 17 February 2018.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Ibang Lukmanurudin, 14 September 2016.

Therefore, it can be concluded that women interacts with nature by implementing some principles: (a) heterogeneity, (b) relatedness of all God's creation without doing harm (*'adam al fasād*), (c) holiness of the nature by following attributes of Allah (*asmāul husnā*), (d) preserving the environment as a religious piety and (e) planting as a form of alms.

## Conclusion

Responding to environmental crisis in Indonesia, especially in Garut, the women of pesantren Ath-Thaariq have integrated the eco-feminism and Islamic values. In ontological approach, they believe that there is no dualism between humans (either women or men) and nature. They also apply a concept of *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn* as an effort to interact and make peace with nature. In epistemological approach, they combine local knowledge and Islamic values. They also treat nature with great love by principles of heterogeneity, relation of human and nature, and holiness of nature. They also believe that preserving the environment is a form of pious deeds and planting trees is *alms*.

Therefore, what the women practice is a new model of environmental movement in Islam, and it can be applied by other Muslim women worldwide. Protecting and preserving the environment is a common responsibility of all humans, regardless of gender. Due to this premises, both women and men have the same responsibility to maintain the environment.

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