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ARABIC RELIGIOUS LITERATURE AS A LATENT ECOLOGICAL ARCHIVE: ECOTHEOLOGICAL READINGS IN WEST JAVANESE PESANTREN

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ABSTRACT

This article examines ecological imagination in Arabic religious literature taught in West Javanese pesantren. While pesantren have long been recognized as central institutions for the transmission of Islamic knowledge, moral formation, and the preservation of kitab kuning traditions, the ecological meanings embedded in Arabic literary and religious texts remain underexplored. Existing studies tend to separate the study of pesantren textual traditions from the study of eco-pesantren practices, leaving insufficient attention to how Arabic religious literature may function as a source of ecological awareness. Using a qualitative textual-cultural approach, this study combines ecocriticism, Islamic ecotheology, content analysis, and limited ethnographic observation. The primary textual data include selected fragments from *Qaṣīdat al-Burdah*, *Ta'līm al-Muta'allim Ṭarīq al-Ta'allum*, *al-Ḥikam al-'Aṭā'iyyah*, and *Dīwān al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī*, while contextual data are drawn from selected pesantren traditions in West Java, including Cipasung, Buntet, Ath Thaariq, and the Ekopesantren movement. The findings show that Arabic religious literature in pesantren contains a latent ecological archive. Natural images such as water, rain, light, earth, trees, valleys, and cosmic order function not only as rhetorical ornaments, but also as signs of divine mercy, beauty, balance, and moral responsibility. However, these ecological meanings often remain implicit because pesantren pedagogy tends to emphasize linguistic mastery, rhetorical appreciation, memorization, and general moral instruction. This study argues that ecotheological hermeneutics can reveal the ecological potential of Arabic religious texts while connecting classical Arabic imagery with the local ecological experiences of West Javanese santri. The article contributes to the study of Nusantara religious literature by showing that pesantren-based Arabic literature can serve as a bridge between textual tradition, Islamic environmental ethics, and contemporary ecological consciousness.

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Keywords: Arabic religious literature; pesantren; ecotheology; ecological imagination; kitab kuning

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mengkaji imajinasi ekologis dalam sastra agama Arab yang diajarkan di pesantren Jawa Barat. Sementara pesantren telah lama diakui sebagai institusi pusat untuk transmisi pengetahuan Islam, pembentukan moral, dan pelestarian tradisi kitab kuning, makna ekologis yang tertanam dalam teks-teks sastra dan agama Arab masih kurang dieksplorasi. Studi yang ada cenderung memisahkan studi tradisi tekstual pesantren dari studi praktik eco-pesantren, sehingga kurang memperhatikan bagaimana sastra agama Arab dapat berfungsi sebagai sumber kesadaran ekologis. Menggunakan pendekatan tekstual-kultural kualitatif, studi ini menggabungkan ekokritisisme, ekoteologi Islam, analisis konten, dan observasi etnografi terbatas. Data tekstual utama mencakup fragmen-fragmen terpilih dari Qaṣīdat al-Burdah, Ta'līm al-Muta'allim Ṭarīq al-Ta'allum, al-Ḥikam al-'Aṭā'iyyah, dan Dīwān al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī, sementara data kontekstual diambil dari tradisi pesantren terpilih di Jawa Barat, termasuk Cipasung, Buntet, Ath Thaariq, dan gerakan Ekopesantren. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa sastra agama Arab di pesantren mengandung arsip ekologi laten. Gambar-gambar alam seperti air, hujan, cahaya, bumi, pohon, lembah, dan tatanan kosmik berfungsi tidak hanya sebagai hiasan retoris, tetapi juga sebagai tanda kasih sayang ilahi, keindahan, keseimbangan, dan tanggung jawab moral. Namun, makna ekologis ini sering kali tetap implisit karena pedagogi pesantren cenderung menekankan penguasaan linguistik, apresiasi retoris, hafalan, dan instruksi moral umum. Studi ini berpendapat bahwa hermeneutika ekoteologi dapat mengungkap potensi ekologis dari teks-teks agama Arab sambil menghubungkan citra klasik Arab dengan pengalaman ekologis lokal santri Jawa Barat. Artikel ini berkontribusi pada studi sastra agama Nusantara dengan menunjukkan bahwa sastra Arab berbasis pesantren dapat berfungsi sebagai jembatan antara tradisi tekstual, etika lingkungan Islam, dan kesadaran ekologis kontemporer.

***Kata kunci**: sastra agama Arab; pesantren; ekoteologi; imajinasi ekologis; kitab kuning*

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary environmental degradation has led scholars of religion, literature, and Islamic education to reconsider how ecological awareness is formed through inherited textual traditions. In Muslim contexts, environmental responsibility is developed not only through policy or activism but also through theological concepts, ethical instruction, and literary-symbolic

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ways of reading creation. Islamic ecological thought has long associated nature with divine trust, balance, and responsibility through concepts such as *tawḥid*, *khalifah*, *mizan*, *amanah*, *rahmah*, and *maslahah.*[1] In Indonesia, this question is especially relevant because pesantren function as institutions of Islamic knowledge, moral formation, and cultural transmission. The legal recognition of pesantren through Law No. 18 of 2019 affirms their roles in education, *da'wah*, and community empowerment.[2] This article, however, does not treat pesantren ecology primarily as environmental activism or institutional practice. In line with religious literature studies, it asks how Arabic religious literature transmitted in West Javanese pesantren stores, shapes, and potentially activates ecological imagination within the broader field of Nusantara religious literature.

Arabic religious literature occupies a central place in pesantren intellectual culture. The *kitab kuning* tradition forms one of the most important textual foundations of pesantren learning and sustains the transmission of Islamic knowledge through Arabic and Arabic-script texts across generations.[3] Dhofier identifies the kiai, santri, mosque, dormitory, and *kitab kuning* as constitutive elements of pesantren life, while later scholarship emphasizes pesantren's ability to adapt Islamic knowledge to Indonesian social and cultural contexts.[4] This study

[1]Richard C Foltz, Frederick M Denny, and Azizan Baharuddin, *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); S.H Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature* (New York, NY: New York, NY: Oxford University Press., 1996); A Saniotis, "Muslims and Ecology: Fostering Islamic Environmental Ethics," *Contemporary Islam* 6, no. 2 (2012): 155–71, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-011-0173-8.

[2]Republik Indonesia, "Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 18 Tahun 2019 Tentang Pesantren" (Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia, 2019).

[3]Martin van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu; Comments on a New Collection in the KITLV Library," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 146, no. 2/3 (1990): 226–69, https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-90003218.

[4]Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai Dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia* (LP3ES, 2011); R W Hefner, *Islamic Schools, Social Movements, and Democracy in Indonesia* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2019); S Sauri, N Nursyamsiah, and Y Nurbayan, "A Critique of Local Wisdom Values in Indonesia's Pesantren," *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences*

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focuses on four Arabic religious texts: *Qasidah al-Burdah* by al-Busiri, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim Tariq al-Ta'allum* by al-Zarnuji, *al-Hikam al-'Ata'iyyah* by Ibn 'Ata'illah al-Sakandari, and *Diwan al-Imam al-Shafi'i*. These texts represent four genres central to pesantren literary transmission: devotional poetry, ethics of learning, Sufi aphorism, and moral-didactic poetry. Their symbolic references to water, rain, light, earth, trees, travel, humility, discipline, and divine order provide a relevant textual basis for examining ecological imagination. The corpus is selected not because these works are modern environmental manuals, but because their aesthetic and theological structures can be productively read through ecocriticism and Islamic ecotheology.

Previous scholarship has developed along several separate trajectories. Pesantren studies generally emphasize institutional formation, religious authority, curriculum, moderation, social transformation, and local adaptation.[5] Studies of *kitab kuning* and Arabic learning tend to focus on textual preservation, linguistic competence, pedagogy, moral education, and the continuity of classical Islamic scholarship.[6] Eco-pesantren and Islamic environmental education studies commonly analyze conservation programs, forest landscapes, green pesantren practice, ecological character formation, or environmental themes in curricula.[7]

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and Humanities 26, no. T (2018): 37–50, https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85064511644&partnerID=40&md5=5cde7c2cc5cbb16f01601adf7e7f6937.

[5]Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai Dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia*; Hefner, *Islamic Schools, Social Movements, and Democracy in Indonesia*; Sauri, Nursyamsiah, and Nurbayan, "A Critique of Local Wisdom Values in Indonesia's Pesantren."

[6]Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu; Comments on a New Collection in the KITLV Library"; U Farida and A Kasdi, "Women's Roles in Iḥyā' 'Ulūm Al-Dīn and Method of Teaching It at Pesantrens in Indonesia," *Al-Jami'ah* 59, no. 1 (2021): 163–90, https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2021.591.163-190.

[7]R Taufiqurrochman, "Linking Environmental Education and Arabic Language Teaching: Curriculum Analysis of Madrasa and Pesantren in Indonesia," *Studia Ecologiae et Bioethicae* 23, no. 2 (2025): 73–85, https://doi.org/10.21697/seb.2024.5845; Subaidi et al., "Eco-Pesantren: Islamic Education in Forest Conservation Landscapes," *Fudan Journal of the*

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Recent Arabic literary studies have shown that ecological issues can be read through Arabic poetry, diasporic fiction, and ecofeminist criticism, yet these discussions rarely connect Arabic literature to Indonesian pesantren textual culture.[8] As a result, scholarship on pesantren ecology and scholarship on Arabic religious literature often remain methodologically separated: one emphasizes institutional environmental practice, while the other emphasizes linguistic, philological, or pedagogical dimensions of text.

Existing studies have not treated Arabic religious literature in pesantren as a latent ecological archive. This term refers to a textual repository of ecological meanings that are not presented as modern environmental doctrine but are embedded in natural imagery, symbolic language, moral discipline, spiritual humility, and theological views of creation. The archive is "latent" because these meanings often remain implicit within conventional pesantren reading practices that prioritize grammar, memorization, *balaghah*, and general moral instruction. These meanings become visible when the texts are read through ecocriticism and Islamic ecotheology, which interpret nature as divine sign, moral trust, and a field of human responsibility.[9] This definition also clarifies the boundary of the study: the article does not claim that classical Arabic religious texts are environmental treatises in the modern sense; rather, it argues that their literary

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Humanities and Social Sciences 16 (2023): 541–67, https://doi.org/10.1007/s40647-023-00386-w.

[8]H Y A Mohsen, R S Hashim, and M M Raihanah, "Green Sana'a and the Yemeni Landscape: Environmental Poetics of Abdulaziz Al-Maqaleh," *Asiatic* 16, no. 1 (2022): 137–49, https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85148665607&partnerID=40&md5=bf6032bfb7b186488694e91eb95b56e6; P Elrefaei, "Arabic Literature and Ecofeminism," in *The Routledge Handbook of Ecofeminism and Literature*, 2022, 126–36, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003195610-12; E K Mukattash, "Transnationalizing Ecocritical Studies in Arab Diasporic Fiction: A Case Study of Fadia Faqir's My Name Is Salma," *American, British and Canadian Studies* 38, no. 1 (2022): 179–200, https://doi.org/10.2478/abcsj-2022-0010.

[9]Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (University of Georgia Press, 1996); Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature*; Foltz, Denny, and Baharuddin, *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*; Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 3rd ed. (Routledge, 2023).

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and theological structures contain ecological potential that can be critically reactivated in pesantren contexts.

This study is guided by three research questions. (1) How does Arabic religious literature taught in West Javanese pesantren represent nature, beauty, and the relationship between humans and God's creation? (2) How can these representations be interpreted through Islamic ecotheology? (3) How does pesantren-based Arabic religious literature transmit ecological imagination within the tradition of Nusantara religious literature? Accordingly, the objectives are: to identify ecological imagery and natural aesthetics in selected Arabic religious texts; to analyze their theological and ethical meanings; and to explain how these textual meanings participate in the transmission of ecological imagination.

Theoretically, this article integrates three complementary frameworks. Ecocriticism provides a framework for examining how literature imagines the relationship between human beings and the physical environment.[10] Islamic ecotheology offers interpretive concepts for understanding nature as divine creation, moral trust, and a field of responsibility, through concepts such as *tawḥid, khalifah, mizan, amanah* and *rahmah.*[11] Pesantren studies situate Arabic religious texts within living traditions of recitation, commentary, authority, and local adaptation. These three frameworks are complementary rather than competing: ecocriticism identifies the ecological potential of literary language; Islamic ecotheology provides the theological grammar through which that potential is interpreted; and pesantren studies explain the institutional and pedagogical context in which these texts circulate. Rohmana's study of West Javanese pesantren literature demonstrates that pesantren texts can carry social and historical agency well beyond doctrinal instruction alone, establishing a precedent for reading pesantren texts as culturally

[10]Glotfelty and Fromm, *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*; Garrard, *Ecocriticism*.

[11]Foltz, Denny, and Baharuddin, *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*; Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature*; Saniotis, "Muslims and Ecology: Fostering Islamic Environmental Ethics."

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generative rather than merely pedagogical.[12] The novelty of this article lies in bringing these frameworks together within the specific field of Nusantara religious literature, positioning Arabic literary texts transmitted in pesantren as a latent ecological archive that can be reactivated through ecotheological hermeneutics.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative textual-cultural design combining textual analysis, ecotheological hermeneutics, directed content analysis, contextual field observation, and semi-structured interviews. This design was selected because the article examines Arabic religious literature not merely as linguistic material, but as a religious-literary corpus transmitted within pesantren reading traditions. The primary focus remained on Arabic religious texts, while field observation and interviews served as contextual data to clarify how these texts are read, taught, and interpreted in West Javanese pesantren.

The study was conducted at three named pesantren in West Java: Pondok Pesantren Cipasung, Buntet Pesantren Cirebon, and Pesantren Ekologi Ath Thaariq Garut, alongside engagement with the broader Ekopesantren movement. These sites were selected purposively because they represent different forms of pesantren textual culture: classical kitab kuning learning, Arabic literary instruction, moral-didactic education, and ecological pesantren practice. Contextual field observation was conducted across twelve sessions over four months, focusing on Arabic text-learning sessions, teacher explanations, santri participation, recitation practices, and the physical environment of each pesantren, including cleanliness practices, gardens, water use, and agricultural activities.

The textual corpus consisted of four Arabic religious works: *Qaṣīdat al-Burdah* by al-Būṣīrī, *Ta'līm al-Muta'allim Ṭarīq al-Ta'allum* by al-Zarnūjī, *al-Ḥikam al-'Aṭā'iyyah* by Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh al-Sakandarī, and *Dīwān al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī*. Arabic textual fragments were selected based on four criteria: first, the passage

[12]J A Rohmana, "Al-Qur'a¯n Wa Al-Isti'ma¯r: Radd Al-Shaykh Al-Ha¯jj Ahmad Sanusi (1888-1950) 'alá Al-Isti'ma¯r Min Khila¯l Tafsi¯r Mal'ja' Al-Ta¯libi¯n," *Studia Islamika* 22, no. 2 (2015): 297–332, https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v22i2.1921.

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contains natural imagery such as water, rain, light, earth, trees, gardens, sky, animals, valleys, or cosmic order; second, the passage carries theological or ethical meaning; third, the passage is relevant to pesantren moral instruction;[13] and fourth, the passage can be interpreted through Islamic ecotheological concepts. Each selected passage was analyzed by considering its Arabic expression, transliteration, translation, literary imagery, theological meaning, and ecological implication. In the case of Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, which contains no direct natural imagery in the selected excerpt, ecological meaning is located at the level of ethical formation rather than explicit natural reference; this interpretive move is theoretically supported by Islamic ecotheology's emphasis on moral discipline as a prerequisite for ecological consciousness.

Sixteen informants participated in semi-structured interviews: three kiai or pesantren leaders, four Arabic or kitab kuning teachers, six santri, and three actors involved in ecological pesantren programs. Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on involvement in Arabic religious text learning, familiarity with pesantren value transmission, and knowledge of environmental practices in pesantren. Data saturation was assessed through thematic redundancy across informant categories. Interviews explored four themes: the use of Arabic religious literature in pesantren learning; the interpretation of natural imagery in Arabic texts; the relation between adab and ecological responsibility; and the possible connection between textual learning and ecological consciousness. Interview data served as supporting contextual evidence rather than primary data.

Data analysis was conducted in four stages. First, the Arabic passages, observation notes, and interview summaries were organized into textual and contextual data groups. Second, the selected Arabic fragments were coded according to natural imagery, theological meaning, ethical value, and ecological implication. Third, observation and interview data were used to contextualize how these textual meanings were transmitted in

[13]Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu; Comments on a New Collection in the KITLV Library"; Farida and Kasdi, "Women's Roles in Iḥyā' 'Ulūm Al-Dīn and Method of Teaching It at Pesantrens in Indonesia."

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pesantren learning. Fourth, the coded data were interpreted through ecotheological hermeneutics by connecting literary imagery with Islamic concepts of creation, balance, trust, mercy, humility, and moral responsibility. The coding framework is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1.
Coding Framework for Textual and Contextual Analysis

Data source	Coding category	Indicator	Analytical purpose
Arabic religious texts	Natural imagery	Water, rain, light, earth, trees, gardens, sky, animals, valleys, cosmic order	To identify ecological symbols in the selected corpus
Arabic religious texts	Theological meaning	Divine mercy, beauty, dependence on God, balance, creation as sign, moral trust	To interpret nature through Islamic ecotheology
Arabic religious texts	Ethical value	Humility, restraint, gratitude, discipline, responsibility, *adab*	To relate literary meaning to moral formation
Pesantren observation	Textual transmission	Recitation, explanation, memorization, teacher-santri interaction	To examine how Arabic texts are pedagogically transmitted
Interviews	Contextual understanding	Interpretation of nature, *adab*, ecological responsibility, and pesantren habits	To clarify how ecological meanings are understood in pesantren settings

Source: Author's personal documentation.

Research credibility was strengthened through source triangulation, method triangulation, and theoretical triangulation. Source triangulation compared Arabic texts, observation notes, and interview data. Method triangulation combined textual analysis, observation, and interviews. Theoretical triangulation connected ecocriticism, Islamic ecotheology, and pesantren studies. Ethical procedures included explaining the study's

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purpose to participants, obtaining informed consent before interviews, using institutional names where participants consented to identification, and respecting pesantren authority and the sacred status of Arabic religious texts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

The following findings are presented as evidence, with interpretation reserved for the Discussion section. The textual corpus consists of four works representing four genres of Arabic religious literature associated with pesantren learning: devotional poetry, ethics of knowledge, Sufi aphorism, and moral-didactic poetry. Table 2 presents the primary textual evidence.

Table 2.
Textual Evidence of Ecological Imagination in Selected Arabic Religious Literature

1. *Qaṣīdat al-Burdah*
Arabic excerpt: أَمْ هَبَّتِ الرِّيحُ مِنْ تِلْقَاءِ كَاظِمَةٍ، وَأَوْمَضَ الْبَرْقُ فِي الظَّلْمَاءِ مِنْ إِضَمِ
Transliteration: *Am habbat al-rīḥu min tilqā'i Kāẓimatin, wa awmaḍa al-barqu fī al-ẓalmā'i min Iḍami*
Translation: Or has the wind blown from the direction of Kāẓimah, and has lightning flashed in the darkness from Iḍam?
Ecological imagery: Wind, lightning, darkness, and place.
Theological meaning: Nature appears as an affective sign that awakens memory, longing, and spiritual consciousness.
Ecological implication: Natural phenomena become media for devotional memory and for perceiving creation as spiritually meaningful.
2. *Ta'līm al-Muta'allim*
Arabic excerpt: مَنْ لَمْ يَذُقْ ذُلَّ التَّعَلُّمِ سَاعَةً، تَجَرَّعَ ذُلَّ الْجَهْلِ طُولَ حَيَاتِهِ
Transliteration: *Man lam yadhuq dhulla al-ta'allumi sā'atan, tajarra'a dhulla al-jahli ṭūla ḥayātihi*
Translation: Whoever does not taste the humility of learning for a moment will drink the humiliation of ignorance throughout life.
Ecological imagery: No direct natural image; the passage expresses an ethical ecology of learning.
Theological meaning: Humility, discipline, and restraint are presented as foundations of knowledge.
Ecological implication: Ecological awareness requires ethical formation, not only environmental information.
3. *al-Ḥikam al-'Aṭā'iyyah*
Arabic excerpt: الْكَوْنُ كُلُّهُ ظُلْمَةٌ، وَإِنَّمَا أَنَارَهُ ظُهُورُ الْحَقِّ فِيهِ

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Transliteration: *Al-kawnu kulluhu ẓulmatun, wa innamā anārahu ẓuhūru al-Ḥaqqi fīhi*
Translation: The entire cosmos is darkness; it is illuminated only by the manifestation of the Real within it.
Ecological imagery: Cosmos, darkness, and light.
Theological meaning: Creation becomes meaningful through divine presence and disclosure.
Ecological implication: Nature is not inert matter, but a field of divine manifestation that demands humility and contemplation.
4. *Dīwān al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī*
Arabic excerpt: سَافِرْ تَجِدْ عِوَضًا عَمَّنْ تُفَارِقُهُ، وَانْصَبْ فَإِنَّ لَذِيذَ الْعَيْشِ فِي النَّصَبِ
Transliteration: *Sāfir tajid 'iwaḍan 'amman tufāriquhu, wanṣab fa-inna ladhīdha al-'ayshi fī al-naṣabi*
Translation: Travel, and you will find replacement for what you leave; strive, for the sweetness of life lies in effort.
Ecological imagery: Travel, movement, place, and embodied encounter.
Theological meaning: Ethical formation takes place through movement, effort, and openness to the wider world.
Ecological implication: Ecological imagination is shaped through embodied relation with place, landscape, community, and created realities.

Source: Author's personal documentation.

As shown on Table 2, textual corpus consists of four works: *Qaṣīdat al-Burdah* by al-Būṣīrī, *Ta'līm al-Muta'allim Ṭarīq al-Ta'allum* by al-Zarnūjī, *al-Ḥikam al-'Aṭā'iyyah* by Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh al-Sakandarī, and *Dīwān al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī*. These texts represent four genres of Arabic religious literature commonly associated with pesantren learning: devotional poetry, ethics of knowledge, Sufi aphorism, and moral-didactic poetry. The findings show that ecological imagination in these works appears not as explicit environmental doctrine, but as a latent textual structure embedded in natural imagery, spiritual discipline, moral restraint, and theological reflection on creation.[14]

The institutional data were drawn from three pesantren contexts that demonstrate the continuity of kitab kuning learning and the emergence of ecological pesantren practices. Pondok Pesantren Cipasung shows the persistence of kitab kuning recitation as a central component of santri education, while Buntet

[14]Muḥammad ibn Sa'īd al-Būṣīrī, *Qaṣīdat Al-Burdah*, n.d.; Burhān al-Dīn al-Zarnūjī, *Ta'līm Al-Muta'allim Ṭarīq Al-Ta'allum*, n.d.; Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh al-Sakandarī, *Al-Ḥikam Al-'Aṭā'iyyah*, n.d.; Al-Khīn and Al-Bughā, *Al-Fiqh Al-Manhajī Alā Mazhab Al-Imām Al-Shāfi'ī* (Damaskus: Dar al-Qalam, 1996).

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Pesantren Cirebon represents an older pesantren formation that maintains classical salafi learning alongside modern educational adaptation.[15] Pesantren Ekologi Ath Thaariq Garut and the Ekopesantren movement provide institutional evidence that Islamic education and ecological practice are increasingly being brought into direct relation within West Javanese pesantren life.[16]

The first finding shows that Arabic religious literature represents nature as an affective and theological sign. In *Qaṣīdat al-Burdah*, al-Būṣīrī's reference to wind, lightning, darkness, and named landscapes does not function merely as decorative poetic imagery. The line "*Am habbat al-rīḥu min tilqā'i Kāẓimatin, wa awmaḍa al-barqu fī al-ẓalmā'i min Iḍami*" evokes a landscape in which natural phenomena become triggers of memory, longing, and devotional intensity. Wind and lightning are not presented as neutral physical events; they structure the emotional movement of the poem and draw the reader into a spiritual atmosphere. In pesantren reading traditions, such imagery is often explained through *balāghah*, especially *tashbīh*, *isti'ārah*, and *majāz*. However, an ecotheological reading shows that the imagery also directs attention to nature as a medium through which divine mercy, beauty, and longing are imaginatively experienced.

In *Qaṣīdat al-Burdah*, al-Būṣīrī employs images of rain, clouds, valleys, and flowing water to intensify the spiritual atmosphere of praise for the Prophet Muhammad. These images are not incidental embellishments. They organize devotional emotion through natural symbols associated with abundance, mercy, fertility, and divine generosity.[17] In pesantren pedagogy, such images are often approached through the categories of *balāghah*, including *tashbīh*, *isti'ārah*, and *majāz*. The textual evidence, however, indicates that natural imagery also carries a theological function: it directs the reader from sensory beauty

[15]Pondok Pesantren Cipasung, "Profil Dan Kegiatan Pendidikan Pondok Pesantren Cipasung" (Pondok Pesantren Cipasung, 2026); Buntet Pesantren, "Profil Buntet Pesantren Cirebon" (Buntet Pesantren, 2026).

[16]SMERU, "Pesantren Ekologi Ath Thaariq" (Organisasi Masyarakat Sipil Database, 2026); Ekopesantren, "Memberdayakan Komunitas Pesantren Untuk Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan Islam Dan Lingkungan" (Ekopesantren, 2026).

[17]al-Būṣīrī, *Qaṣīdat Al-Burdah*.

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toward transcendental awareness. Nature is therefore not presented as neutral scenery, but as a symbolic field through which beauty becomes religiously meaningful.

The second finding shows that ecological imagination in pesantrn Arabic literature is often latent rather than explicit. *Ta'līm al-Muta'allim* does not discuss environmental conservation directly, but its moral vocabulary of humility, discipline, patience, respect, and restraint provides an ethical basis for ecological consciousness. The statement "*Man lam yadhuq dhulla al-ta'allumi sā'atan, tajarra'a dhulla al-jahli ṭūla ḥayātihi*" emphasizes that knowledge requires humility and self-discipline. Within an ecotheological framework, this ethic is relevant because environmental destruction is often rooted in arrogance, excess, and lack of restraint. Thus, the ecological value of *Ta'līm al-Muta'allim* does not appear as a direct doctrine of conservation, but as a formation of the moral subject capable of living responsibly within God's creation.

The third finding concerns the cosmological dimension of Sufi aphorism. In *al-Ḥikam al-'Aṭā'iyyah*, the statement "*Al-kawnu kulluhu ẓulmatun, wa innamā anārahu ẓuhūru al-Ḥaqqi fīhi*" places the cosmos within a theological field of meaning. The world is not self-sufficient; it receives significance through the manifestation of the Divine. This aphorism is important for ecological interpretation because it challenges a purely instrumental view of nature. If the cosmos is meaningful only through divine disclosure, then nature cannot be reduced to an object of extraction, possession, or domination. It must be approached with humility, contemplation, and ethical responsibility.

The fourth finding shows that *Dīwān al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī* contributes to ecological imagination through the ethics of movement, encounter, and embodied experience of place. The line "*Sāfir tajid 'iwaḍan 'amman tufāriquhu, wanṣab fa-inna ladhīdha al-'ayshi fī al-naṣabi*" encourages travel, effort, and openness to new surroundings. Although the line does not speak directly about environmental care, it presents human life as relational, mobile, and dependent on encounter with the wider world. In pesantren contexts, such moral-didactic poetry can be read as an invitation to move beyond intellectual isolation and to recognize that

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knowledge is formed through disciplined engagement with places, communities, and created realities.

Eco-pesantren practices provide contextual support for this textual finding. They show that Islamic values and environmental responsibility can meet within pesantren life. However, in this article, eco-pesantren is not treated as the main evidence. Its role is to clarify the contemporary relevance of Arabic religious texts and to show how values such as *adab*, simplicity, responsibility, and care for creation may be extended into pesantren ecological habits.

The fifth finding concerns the mechanism of textual transmission in pesantren. Observation and interview data indicate that Arabic religious texts are commonly transmitted through recitation, translation, teacher explanation, memorization, and moral exemplification. This mechanism allows natural imagery and ethical concepts embedded in Arabic texts to enter the religious imagination of santri. However, ecological meanings often remain implicit because teaching practices tend to emphasize grammar, vocabulary, rhetorical beauty, and general moral instruction. This does not mean that pesantren pedagogy lacks ecological potential. Rather, it shows that the ecological archive of Arabic religious literature requires a more explicit interpretive strategy so that natural imagery, *adab*, humility, and divine order can be connected with contemporary ecological awareness.

The sixth finding concerns contextualization. Many natural images in classical Arabic literature emerge from Middle Eastern landscapes, such as deserts, oases, valleys, winds, lightning, springs, and palm trees. These images do not always correspond directly to the ecological experiences of West Javanese santri, who live within tropical, agrarian, wet, mountainous, and densely vegetated environments. This difference does not weaken the relevance of Arabic religious literature. Instead, it requires contextual hermeneutics. Images of wind, light, water, gardens, valleys, and travel can be dialogically connected with rivers, rainfall, rice fields, gardens, hills, springs, and pesantren environments in West Java. In this way, Arabic religious literature functions as a medium for transmitting ecological imagination

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within Nusantara religious literature without losing its classical textual authority.

Discussions

Arabic Religious Literature as a Latent Ecological Archive

The findings confirm that the four selected texts preserve ecological traces through natural imagery, disciplined subjectivity, cosmological symbolism, and ethical reflection on human conduct, even though none were composed as modern environmental treatises. In *Qasidah al-Burdah*, wind, lightning, darkness, and place form a poetic ecology of longing in which the natural world participates in religious memory. In *al-Hikam al-'Ata'iyyah*, the cosmos is meaningful because it is illuminated by divine presence, a view that resists the reduction of nature to material object and instead frames creation as a field of spiritual disclosure. In *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* and *Diwan al-Imam al-Shafi'i*, ecological imagination appears through ethical formation: humility, discipline, restraint, travel, and embodied encounter with the world.

This interpretation corresponds with the core assumption of ecocriticism that literature participates in shaping how communities imagine their relationship with the environment. Glotfelty and Fromm define ecocriticism as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment,[18] while Garrard emphasizes the cultural narratives through which human-nature relations are constructed.[19] The pesantren texts examined here complicate conventional ecocritical objects: they are neither modern environmental poems nor secular ecological fiction, yet they contain symbolic vocabularies through which nature becomes spiritually meaningful. This finding resonates with recent Arabic literary ecocriticism, which has uncovered environmental dimensions in Yemeni poetry and diasporic Arabic novels around loss, displacement, sustainability, and cultural attachment to landscape. It also supports Buendia's observation that medieval Arabic literature encodes moral and civilizational

[18]Glotfelty and Fromm, *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*.

[19]Garrard, *Ecocriticism*.

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concern through metaphysical and religious narratives, recording modes of human self-understanding inseparable from wider perceptions of order, decline, place, and creation.[20]

Islamic ecotheological concepts such as *tawḥid, khalifah, mizan, amanah*, and *rahmah* allow the natural imagery of these texts to be read not only aesthetically but also theologically and ethically.[21] Through this frame, the texts become a reservoir of ecological meaning embedded within devotional, pedagogical, and spiritual discourse. Studies of Arabic manuscript cultures show that Islamic textual archives have preserved diverse dimensions of cultural, social, religious, and everyday life, including indirect evidence of human relationships with their environments.[22] Shefer-Mossensohn's caution that faith-based actors have had modest practical impact on sustainability is well-taken:[23] the claim here is not that Arabic religious texts automatically produce ecological action, but that they provide a symbolic and ethical reservoir that pesantren pedagogy can activate.

Islamic Ecotheology and the Reading of Nature as a Transcendental Sign

Within an Islamic ecotheological framework, nature is not a mute physical object or a passive background for human life, but creation, sign, trust, and moral field. *Tawḥid* affirms the unity of

[20]Mukattash, "Transnationalizing Ecocritical Studies in Arab Diasporic Fiction: A Case Study of Fadia Faqir's My Name Is Salma"; Mohsen, Hashim, and Raihanah, "Green Sana'a and the Yemeni Landscape: Environmental Poetics of Abdulaziz Al-Maqaleh."

[21]Foltz, Denny, and Baharuddin, *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*; Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature*; Saniotis, "Muslims and Ecology: Fostering Islamic Environmental Ethics."

[22]Y Akyürek, "The Formation Process and Nature of Sirah's Companions Generation Codexes," *Cumhuriyet Ilahiyat Dergisi* 27, no. 2 (2023): 706–25, https://doi.org/10.18505/cuid.1326558; T El-Leithy, "Living Documents, Dying Archives: Towards a Historical Anthropology of Medieval Arabic Archives," *Al-Qantara* 32, no. 2 (2011): 389–434, https://doi.org/10.3989/alqantara.2011.v32.i2.262.

[23]M Shefer-Mossensohn, "Modern Islamic Eco-Religion: Historical Contexts," *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 19, no. 2 (2025): 237–64, https://doi.org/10.1558/jsrnc.27632.

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the Creator and, by implication, the ontological connectedness of all creation; *khalifah* positions human beings as responsible stewards rather than absolute owners of the earth; *mizan* refers to cosmic balance; and *amanah* frames human agency as ethical responsibility before God. Nasr argues that the modern ecological crisis is inseparable from a spiritual crisis in which nature has been desacralized and reduced to exploitable matter.[24] Foltz, Denny, and Baharuddin similarly show that Islamic traditions provide ethical resources for understanding the environment as a divine trust rather than a merely economic resource.[25]

In *Qasidah al-Burdah,* images of rain, clouds, valleys, and flowing water invite a perception of nature as a medium of mercy and divine generosity.[26] In *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, the emphasis on humility, restraint, reverence, and responsibility constitutes an ethical disposition necessary for ecological consciousness.[27] In al-Hikam al-'Ata'iyyah, the repeated critique of ego and self-sufficiency offers a spiritual counterpoint to exploitative anthropocentrism.[28] The Islamic metaphysical view of nature as ayat (signs) deepens this reading: the visible world directs human attention toward transcendence, and natural images in Arabic texts can function as symbolic thresholds through which santri encounter the sacred order of creation.[29] Applied to pesantren literature, this means that water, light, earth, trees, and rain should not be confined to rhetorical analysis alone; ecotheological hermeneutics expands rhetorical beauty into theological perception.

Alumona and Baharuddin emphasize that human beings, as *khalīfah*, are entrusted with maintaining *mīzān* and preventing

[24]Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature*.
[25]Foltz, Denny, and Baharuddin, *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*.
[26]al-Būṣīrī, *Qaṣīdat Al-Burdah*.
[27]al-Zarnūjī, *Taʿlīm Al-Mutaʿallim Ṭarīq Al-Taʿallum*.
[28]al-Sakandarī, *Al-Ḥikam Al-ʿAṭāʾiyyah*.
[29]S H Nasr, "The Question of Cosmogenesis-The Cosmos as a Subject of Scientific Study," in *Studies in the Islam and Science Nexus: Volume 1*, 2017, 171–87, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315242187-19; N B Ismail, "The Qur'anic Exegesis, Reformism, and Women in Twentieth Century Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 24, no. 3 (2017): 469–501, https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v24i3.5187.

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fasād, or corruption and disorder.[30] This corresponds with the pesantren ethos of adab, where knowledge must produce disciplined conduct, not merely intellectual competence. Sufi perspectives further enrich this interpretation. Sakti describes nature as tajalli, a manifestation of the Divine that guides human beings toward spiritual realization,[31] which is especially relevant to al-Hikam, where the discipline of perception is central: reality must be read beyond ego, utility, and possession.

From Linguistic Aesthetics to Ecological Ethics

One of the central issues revealed by the findings is that pesantren reading practices typically approach Arabic religious texts through linguistic aesthetics: *nahwu*, *sarf*, *balaghah*, translation, memorization, and teacher-guided explanation. Such practices are essential for preserving Arabic textual authority. Yet when natural imagery is treated only as an example of rhetorical beauty, its ecological meaning remains underdeveloped. The reading proposed in this article does not reject linguistic learning; rather, it expands it. The image of wind in *Qasidah al-Burdah* may still be studied rhetorically, but it can also be interpreted as a sign of movement, longing, and divine mercy. The cosmic darkness and light of *al-Hikam* can be read both as Sufi metaphysics and as a critique of a desacralized view of nature. The moral discipline in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* can support ecological ethics because care for creation requires restraint, humility, and responsibility.

Ecocriticism and eco-aesthetics support this shift. Glotfelty and Fromm define ecocriticism as an inquiry into the relation

[30]N O Alumona and C M Alumona, "Ecomoderationism (Wasatiyyah) In Islamic Thoughts: Towards A Familial Affinity Between Man And Nature," *Cogito* 17, no. 2 (2025): 80–97, https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-105020740655&partnerID=40&md5=7d36da0d5ccb66c6d737a4f521d2929a; A Baharuddin and M N Musa, "Environmental Ethics in Islam," in *Islamic Bioethics: Current Issues and Challenges*, 2017, 161–82, https://doi.org/10.1142/9781783267507_0008.

[31]M.N.S.F. Sakti et al., "Nature as Revelation Across Abrahamic Mysticism: Sufi, Kabbalistic, and Christian Mystical Ecotheologies," *Pharos Journal of Theology*, 2026, 1–14, https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.107.123.

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between literature and the physical environment,[32] while Garrard emphasizes the cultural narratives through which societies imagine human-nature relations.[33] Bannon and Varandas argue that aesthetic experiences of beauty, harmony, and balance may become foundations for ecological ethics because they awaken sensitivity to the integrity of the natural world.[34] In a pesantren context, this insight allows the beauty of Arabic expression to be read not as an end in itself, but as an opening toward ethical responsibility.

Ecological consciousness is formed not only through scientific information but also through metaphors, stories, and culturally resonant expressions. Mamatova et al. show that linguistic expressions connected to water, place, and local ecological knowledge can strengthen affective and ethical ties to the environment.[35] Hamzah and Hassan similarly demonstrate that cultural language can integrate aesthetics, ethics, and environmental awareness through proverbs and inherited expressions.[36] These findings are relevant to pesantren Arabic literature because santri encounter nature through a layered language: classical Arabic imagery, Islamic theological concepts, and local ecological experience in West Java. Jarosz and Wenjuan

[32]Glotfelty and Fromm, *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*.

[33]Garrard, *Ecocriticism*.

[34]B E Bannon, "Re-Envisioning Nature: The Role of Aesthetics in Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 33, no. 4 (2011): 415–36, https://doi.org/10.5840/enviroethics201133445; M J Varandas, "The Land Aesthetic, Holmes Rolston's Insight," *Environmental Values* 24, no. 2 (2015): 209–26, https://doi.org/10.3197/096327115X14247121957607.

[35]A Mamatova et al., "The Influence of Language on Environmental Advocacy for Aquatic Conservation in Multicultural Coastal Societies," *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Environmental Studies* 5, no. 2 (2025): 757–68, https://doi.org/10.70102/IJARES/V5I2/5-2-66; A Milgin et al., "Sustainability Crises Are Crises of Relationship: Learning from Nyikina Ecology and Ethics," *People and Nature* 2, no. 4 (2020): 1210–22, https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.10149.

[36]Z A Z Hamzah and A F M Hassan, "Language and Thought in the Malay Proverbs," *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies* 11, no. 3 (2011): 31–51, https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-80052696322&partnerID=40&md5=a6dcfd7cfaa814f787492c8fd265bd99.

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further note that eco-aesthetics and ecolinguistics bring together aesthetic judgment, ecological knowledge, and ethical evaluation in order to rethink environmental problems beyond technical management.[37] Herrmann's concept of "fittingness" frames aesthetic judgment as a normative relation between human conduct and ecological context,[38] and asks precisely the question pesantren pedagogy should raise: what does it mean to live fittingly within God's creation?

The ethical turn must remain critical. Herrmann, Richardson, and Gobster warn that ecological aesthetics must ask whose values are prioritized and whether beauty is being used to exclude less visible forms of ecological care.[39] The strength of Arabic religious literature lies precisely in its ability to bind beauty with *adab*, restraint, gratitude, and accountability. Thus, the ecological contribution of pesantren literary learning does not emerge by replacing *nahwu*, *sarf*, *balaghah*, and *adab* with environmental slogans; it emerges when these disciplines are read more deeply, so that linguistic beauty becomes a path toward ecological ethics grounded in spirituality, local experience, and the sacred responsibility of living within creation.

Pesantren as a Space for Transmitting Nusantara Religious Literature and Contextualizing Arabic Ecological Imagery

[37]N Jarosz, "Indigenous and Local Knowledge and Aesthetics: Towards an Intergenerational Aesthetics of Nature," *Environmental Values* 32, no. 2 (2023): 151–68, https://doi.org/10.3197/096327122X16491521047053; Z Wenjuan, "Ecolinguistics: Towards a New Harmony," *Language Sciences* 62 (2017): 124–38, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2017.04.004.

[38]L Herrmann, "That Which Guilds the Lily: Moving from Aesthetic Value to an Ethical Aesthetic," in *Palgrave Studies in Sustainable Business in Association with Future Earth*, vol. Part F2323, 2024, 111–31, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-41606-4_6.

[39]Herrmann; B J Richardson, E Barritt, and M Bowman, "Beauty: A Lingua Franca for Environmental Law?," *Transnational Environmental Law* 8, no. 1 (2019): 59–87, https://doi.org/10.1017/S2047102518000195; P H Gobster et al., "The Shared Landscape: What Does Aesthetics Have to Do with Ecology?," *Landscape Ecology* 22, no. 7 (2007): 959–72, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10980-007-9110-x.

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The findings show that pesantren function as spaces of textual transmission in which Arabic religious texts are not read as isolated literary objects but are transmitted through recitation, translation, commentary, memorization, teacher authority, and moral habituation. Pondok Pesantren Cipasung demonstrates the continuing centrality of kitab kuning recitation, while Buntet Pesantren Cirebon represents an older pesantren formation that maintains classical textual traditions alongside modern educational adaptation.[40] Pesantren Ekologi Ath Thaariq illustrates a more explicit ecological orientation, making service to the earth, self-reliance, and care for others part of its learning culture.[41] Together, these sites suggest that pesantren should be understood as pedagogical ecologies where texts, bodies, habits, landscapes, and moral disciplines interact. The Ekopesantren program demonstrates that Islamic education and environmental knowledge can be institutionally connected; however, in this article, eco-pesantren serves as contextual support, not as primary evidence.

Arabic texts do not circulate in pesantren as static imports from the Arab-Islamic past. They are localized through oral explanation, memorization, ritualized learning, teacherly authority, daily discipline, and communal practice. Alfathon argues that pesantren libraries operate as dynamic epistemological spaces where kitab kuning, manuscripts, and archives are preserved, studied, and reactivated.[42] Manshur further shows that Arabic literature in pesantren education contributes to the cultivation of piety, tolerance, cultural sensitivity, and literary appreciation. Asror and Mujahid explain that pesantren culture often operates through the principle of al-muhafazah 'ala al-qadim al-salih wa al-akhdh bi al-jadid al-aslah, preserving valuable

[40]Cipasung, "Profil Dan Kegiatan Pendidikan Pondok Pesantren Cipasung"; Pesantren, "Profil Buntet Pesantren Cirebon."

[41]Pesantren Ekologi Ath Thaariq, "Peduli Bumi, Peduli Sesama, Peduli Masa Depan" (Pesantren Ekologi Ath Thaariq, 2026).

[42]A M Alfathon, "Writing the Pesantren Library: A Conceptual and Framework Proposition," *Open Information Science* 9, no. 1 (2025), https://doi.org/10.1515/opis-2025-0022.

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inherited traditions while adopting better new practices.[43] This principle enables pesantren to maintain fidelity to classical Arabic religious literature while also responding to contemporary ecological concerns.

The final issue concerns the contextualization of Arabic ecological imagery. Many images in classical Arabic literature, including wind, lightning, valleys, deserts, oases, and springs, emerge from Middle Eastern landscapes and do not automatically correspond to the tropical, agrarian, wet, mountainous, and densely vegetated world of West Java. However, as Davis and Davis show, Middle Eastern ecological imagination has itself often been shaped by external narratives of aridity and mismanagement rooted in Western imperial discourse.[44] Hoffmann similarly criticizes ecological determinism that reduces complex human-environment relations to stereotypes of the Middle Eastern landscape.[45] These critiques prevent a simplistic contrast between "Arab desert ecology" and "West Javanese tropical ecology": classical Arabic natural imagery should be read historically, critically, and relationally, not dismissed as environmentally limited.

Ecotheological hermeneutics can help teachers connect desert with dry land, oasis with springs, rain with rice-field fertility, palm trees with local vegetation, and valleys with the rivers and hills of the Pasundan landscape. Moosavi et al. note that landscape projects in the Middle East have often adopted imported

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[43]F M Manshur, "Typical Literary Works of Pesantren on Righteousness Teaching within Cultural Transformation," *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 11, no. 4 (2020): 114–48, https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85098731476&partnerID=40&md5=048056a8faee149c18245ad2e63558f5.

[44]D K Davis, "Power, Knowledge, and Environmental History in the Middle East and North Africa," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42, no. 4 (2010): 657–59, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743810000863; D K Davis and E Burke III, *Environmental Imaginaries of the Middle East and North Africa*, *Environmental Imaginaries of the Middle East and North Africa*, 2011, https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-84904074256&partnerID=40&md5=6f544f0a5da1b2f9354eea41e795d109.

[45]C Hoffmann, "Environmental Determinism as Orientalism: The Geo-Political Ecology of Crisis in the Middle East," in *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 31, 2018, 94–104, https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12194.

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models without sufficient adaptation to local ecological processes and cultural values,[46] and Khirfan similarly shows that expert-driven climate planning can create a gap between institutional knowledge and local community understanding.[47] These studies underline the same methodological lesson: ecological meaning becomes effective only when it is translated into the social, cultural, and material world of the community concerned. For West Javanese pesantren, this translation is the condition that allows classical Arabic texts to remain intellectually alive and to serve as bridges between pesantren tradition, local ecological consciousness, and contemporary environmental ethics.

CONCLUSION

This study examined ecological imagination in Arabic religious literature transmitted in West Javanese pesantren by analyzing four canonical texts: *Qasidah al-Burdah, Ta'lim al-Muta'allim Tariq al-Ta'allum, al-Hikam al-'Ata'iyyah*, and *Diwan al-Imam al-Shafi'i*. The analysis demonstrates that these texts constitute a latent ecological archive: a repository of ecological meanings embedded in natural imagery, moral discipline, spiritual humility, and theological reflection on creation.

The findings reveal three interrelated layers of ecological imagination. First, nature functions as a symbolic and aesthetic medium for expressing divine mercy, beauty, balance, and dependence on God. Second, ecological meaning is often implicit because pesantren reading traditions prioritize linguistic mastery, grammatical explanation, rhetorical appreciation, memorization, and general moral instruction. Third, pesantren textual transmission provides a cultural space through which these implicit meanings can be reactivated and connected with contemporary ecological consciousness. The ecological potential of Arabic religious literature does not emerge by replacing

[46]S Moosavi, J Makhzoumi, and M Grose, "Landscape Practice in the Middle East between Local and Global Aspirations," *Landscape Research* 41, no. 3 (2016): 265–78, https://doi.org/10.1080/01426397.2015.1078888.

[47]L Khirfan, "Is Climate Change Relevant? Mainstreaming the Dialogue on Ecosystems and Their Services for Adaptation and Mitigation in Amman, Jordan: A Survey of a Societal Segment," *Environmental Research: Climate* 4, no. 4 (2025), https://doi.org/10.1088/2752-5295/ae1b2d.

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classical pesantren learning; it emerges by expanding its interpretive horizon from linguistic aesthetics toward ecological ethics.

This study carries implications for three related domains. For Nusantara religious literature studies, it demonstrates that pesantren-based Arabic literature can be treated as a primary object of ecotheological textual inquiry rather than merely as material for language learning or moral instruction. For pesantren curriculum development, the findings suggest that ecotheological hermeneutics, once integrated alongside existing *balaghah* and *adab* instruction, can transform the teaching of natural imagery from rhetorical exercise into ecological reflection. For Islamic ecotheology as a field, the article shows that the classical textual traditions of the Muslim world, including those transmitted in Indonesian pesantren, contain an underexplored ecological depth that ecotheological hermeneutics is well-positioned to recover.

This study is limited by its focus on four selected texts and field data from three West Javanese pesantren. Future research may strengthen and extend this inquiry through several more specific avenues: comparative studies examining how kiai across different pesantren traditions interpret water imagery in Qasidah al-Burdah; philological analysis of ecological metaphors across different printed editions of al-Hikam al-'Ata'iyyah used in pesantren settings; classroom-based observation of kitab learning sessions that explicitly engage natural imagery; and investigation of how pesantren ecological values are transmitted through digital media and contemporary Islamic literacy platforms.

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