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Ecological Protection Reasoning in Exegesis of Qur'an Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 56 in the Medieval Period

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Abstract

As ecological crises intensify globally, environmental themes have become prominent in contemporary Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir). However, ecological interpretation had its own distinct dynamics during the medieval period, even though environmental degradation was not as severe as in recent decades. The interpretation of nature protection in Qur'an Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 56 reveals diverse understanding among medieval scholars, challenging the notion that pre-modern interpretations were purely fragmentary or ideological. This study addresses two research questions: a) How was Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 56 interpreted ecologically in the medieval period? b) What hierarchical environmental ethics emerge from these medieval interpretations? Using qualitative methodology through literature review, this research focuses on the phrase "la tufsidu fi al-ardi" ("do not cause corruption on the earth"). The study analyzes interpretations from the ninth to fourteenth centuries as primary sources, employing Richard Sylvan and David Bennet's environmental ethics framework. The findings reveal three distinct interpretative approaches to the prohibition of earthly corruption: anthropocentric, ecocentric, and theocentric. The prevalence of theocentric interpretations demonstrates that theological argumentation remained central even when addressing material ecological issues. Environmental degradation was understood not merely as physical exploitation but as spiritual corruption resulting from human disregard for divine ordinances. This research contributes to understanding the continuity between pre-modern and modern ecological interpretations, suggesting the value of interdisciplinary approaches linking Islamic exegesis with contemporary environmental policy.

Keywords : tafsir, ecology, medieval period, Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 56

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INTRODUCTION

Qur'anic exegesis or *tafsir* has traditionally been characterized as dogmatic, repetitive, and ideological. However, this characterization warrants reconsideration when examining interpretations of nature and ecological themes. The Qur'an presents numerous verses emphasizing ecological balance and environmental protection. Ecological terminology, including *al-bi'ah* (environment), *al-'alamin* (the entire universe), and *al-ard* (earth), appears frequently, underscoring the interconnectedness of creation and humanity's custodial role (Rahman et al., 2024). Contemporary ecological studies examine organismal interactions, distribution patterns, and ecosystem contributions (Peter & Isaac, 2024).

The preservation of nature in Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 56 manifests through interpretative frameworks distinct from modern exegesis. The phrase "*la tufsidu fi al-ardhi*" ("do not cause corruption on the earth") transcends mere prohibition of environmental destruction, establishing a cosmological framework governing divine-human-natural relationships. Al-Tabari (2001) interpreted this prohibition primarily as addressing theological disobedience. Al-Razi (1981) conceptualized it as a doctrine safeguarding humanity's material dependence on nature, while Al-Qurtubi (1999) approached it through Islamic jurisprudential principles regarding environmental protection. As Saleh (2020) observes, these diverse interpretations demonstrate *tafsir's* role in cultural discourse and the integration of disciplines within the Qur'anic paradigm. Although environmental crises were not prominent during this period, ecological discourse received substantial scholarly attention.

In contemporary environmental discourse, Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 56 frequently represents Islamic environmental ethics. Previous research has examined three primary dimensions: first, the relevance of Qur'anic text to social context, with Marhayuni and Faizi (2022), as well as Ramadhan (2019), demonstrating its normative foundation for environmental preservation through education and technological advancement. Second, modern interpretative approaches, particularly through M. Quraish Shihab's *Tafsir al-Mishbah* (Maryadi, 2016; Mustakim, 2017; Permata, 2022; Purwanti, 2021). Third, *maqashidi* studies establishing the relationship between environmental conditions and Islamic legal objectives (Wati & al-Ma'mun, 2022).

This research addresses existing scholarly gaps by examining pre-modern

exegetical perspectives and analyzing how the evolution of *tafsir* as an independent discourse influences ecological interpretation. Two research questions guide this investigation: a) What are the predominant tendencies in pre-modern ecological interpretations of Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 56? b) How do these interpretations reflect hierarchical environmental ethics?

This study contends that despite *tafsir's* status as a distinct discipline from Qur'anic textual studies, it remains underexplored in academic research. Methodological constraints and the prevalence of modern scientific integration have marginalized traditional *tafsir* studies in academic discourse. Nevertheless, pre-modern *tafsir* works contain rich intellectual traditions. By examining ecological themes as a major current in modern interpretation, pre-modern exegetical arguments can establish classical discourse within contemporary academic frameworks. This approach challenges misconceptions about pre-modern interpretative literature as merely repetitive, dogmatic, or partial. Regarding Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 56, pre-modern exegetes or *mufassirun* offered diverse interpretations, demonstrating neither monotony nor repetition. The verse's prohibition against earthly corruption functions beyond environmental preservation doctrine, incorporating distinct ecological dimensions. These interpretative dynamics predated contemporary environmental crises, contradicting assertions of pre-modern exegetical stagnation.

This study employs a qualitative approach utilizing descriptive-analytical presentation and content analysis as its methodological framework. The research examines pre-modern *tafsir* interpretations of ecological relationships among humans, nature, and the divine. The primary focus is the exegesis of Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 56 from the third to ninth centuries CE drawing from fourteen *tafsir* texts. This temporal scope begins with Al-Tabari's seminal work, which established *tafsir* as distinct from hadith studies, and concludes with the concise (*mukhtasar*) *tafsir* of Jalalain. Secondary sources comprise scholarly journals, books, and academic publications. The study systematically collects pre-modern *tafsir* data and analyzes them through an interpretative framework based on Richard Sylvan and David Bennet's environmental ethics trilogy. This approach facilitates examination of varying ecological interpretations, revealing dominant trends and alternative

narratives in pre-modern exegetical discourse.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Trilogy of Environmental Ethics

1.1. Nature is materially supportive of human survival.

However, the utilization of nature often ignores the limits of reasonableness. This means that human needs for nature are limited to consumptive objects. Protection efforts are marginalized by the high level of exploitation. The imbalance between protection and production has resulted in damage to the balance of natural ecosystems. The rise of the earth's temperature, the erosion of atmospheric layer and the depletion of polar regions are a small part of the impact that ultimately harms humans (Bing Lu, 2024: 2). Rising temperatures contribute to habitat loss and shift in species distributions, leading to a decline in biodiversity. Many species may face extinction if they cannot adapt or migrate to suitable habitats (Antonella, 2017). Fundamentally, the environmental crisis is not just the destruction of nature, but is so complex because it is intertwined with economic, political and social conditions; recently religion has also been involved. Part of the effort in tackling the climate crisis is to build a normative narrative based on ethical review. A popular notion of environmental ethics is the trilogy of environmental ethics by R. Sylvan and D. Bennet in the book *The Greening Ethic*, namely: Anthropocentrism

Anthropocentrism is a view positioning humans as the center of nature (central). This centrality positions human interests at the top of the ecosystem. So that other ecosystems are seen as materialistic elements to fulfill human needs (Sylvan & Bennett, 1994). There are at least two arguments showing the centrality of humans. The first is the classical theological tradition (Jewish-Christian) departing from textual readings that nature exists to be conquered and controlled by humans (White, 1967). The second is the anthropocentric ideas of early generation thinkers, such as Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Rene Descartes and Immanuel Kant (Keraf, 2010). Humans are the center of ecosystem, so their needs and interests occupy the top position above other elements. The implication is that everything other than humans (the other) will only have value if it supports human interests. Nature has no intrinsic value in itself independently. As a result, nature is seen as an object, tool and means for the fulfillment of human needs that must be controlled and taken advantage of

(Keraf, 2010). The anthropocentric view also denies the role of humans in maintaining the existence of nature. Nature is seen as having its own system in maintaining its sustainability. So there is no wrong way for humans to use nature.

Some anthropocentric benchmarks are as follows:

- 1.1.1. Human interests are the pinnacle of the ecosystem
- 1.1.2. There is no morality in nature
- 1.1.3. Nature is a tool and means for humans (instrumental relation)
- 1.1.4. Nature has no independent value

1.2. Biocentrism

In the perspective of biocentrism, it is not only humans but also nature that has value. The value of nature is independent of human interests. Whether nature is beneficial to humans or not, it still has a value that must be protected. This theory bases the value of morality on all living things whether in humans or other living things. Ethics applies to the entire biotic community, that is, the community of animate beings (Sylvan & Bennett, 1994). Biocentrism has two views. Firstly, nature has its own intrinsic value independent of human interests. This means that every life and living thing has value and worth in itself. Secondly, nature is treated as moral whether or not it is beneficial to humans. This means that there are values of goodness, manners and life orientation from the universe that humans must begin to appreciate (Keraf, 2010).

Some anthropocentric benchmarks are as follows:

- 1.2.1. Every living thing has value independently
- 1.2.2. Does not include abiotic (non-living) elements
- 1.2.3. Abiotic elements become moral subjects
- 1.2.4. The existence of nature is not limited to fulfilling human needs

1.3. Ecocentrism

Ecocentrism is the opposite of anthropocentrism in that all organisms (plants, animals, humans, etc.) in the natural ecosystem are equal (Sylvan & Bennett, 1994). Ecologically, living (biotic) and non-living (abiotic) things are interconnected with each other. Therefore, moral obligations and responsibilities are not only limited to the living. The same moral obligations and responsibilities also apply to all ecological realities (Keraf, 2010). This ecological reality is what Aldo Leopold refers to in Earth Ethics. This ethical

construct seeks to expand the boundaries of community to include the land, water, plants and animals, or collectively the earth itself (Leopold & Schwartz, 1968). However, such a concept does not necessarily prevent and stop the total activity of fulfilling human needs from nature. The land ethic seeks to assert and affirm the earth's right to exist and develop naturally while generating respect as one part of the ecological community on the one hand and as an ethical subject of the moral community on the other hand (Keraf, 2010). Ecocentrism views humans as part of an ecological community in which each component is connected. Humans (moral actors) as one of the parts in the network have the responsibility to maintain other biotic and even abiotic components or elements in order to maintain the balance of the ecosystem.

Some anthropocentric benchmarks are as follows:

- 1.3.1. Humans are part of an ecological community along with nature.
- 1.3.2. Nature is included in the moral subject
- 1.3.3. Nature and humans are symmetrical
- 1.3.4. The existence of nature is not limited to fulfilling human needs

2. The Trend of Ecological Interpretation in Q.S Al-A'raf [7]: 56 in the Medieval Age

In the study of interpretation, Q.S. Al- A'raf [7]: 56 is very popular in interpretive studies in the context of bringing up ecological discourse. The protection of nature is clearly stated in the sentence لا تقسوا في الأرض. In Arabic grammar, the use of *lam nahi* indicates a prohibition order. In fiqh studies, the use of the letter is sufficient to indicate the status of actions that should not be done (haram). In addition, the mention of the earth as the object subject to action shows the basic concept of broad environmental concern. The interlocutor who is not limited to personal and gender indicates a command that applies in general without exception. The presentation of the language on the one hand emphasizes the prohibition and on the other hand contains a broad etymological meaning making this verse an arena for dynamic interpretative exploration. It is not surprising that this verse is used as a starting point for modern interpretive studies in narrating the concept of ecology in the Quran.

The diverse genres of interpretation make the treasures of medieval tafsir not only an important phase in formulating interpretive traditions. Many medieval commentaries are intellectual legacies not departing from an empty space. The articulation built in sowing the

Quranic text and the socio-culture around the horizon of the *mufassir* certainly involves different ideas and methodologies. Generalizing the historiography of *tafsir* in medieval times affirms that the diversity of *tafsir* traditions in this period is very broad (Mubarak, 2016). In this research context, the tendency of ecological interpretation in Q.S. Al- A'raf [7]: 56 by the *mufassir* in the 3rd-9th centuries H is divided into three:

2.1. Human Dependence on Nature

Human's need for nature is absolute. This dependence makes the relationship between humans and nature consumptive between subjects and objects. The presence of nature is supported by the interests of human survival. In the context of medieval era interpretation, the sentence *la tufsidu fi al-ardi* in Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 56 is interpreted with the prohibition of destruction on five aspects, namely: *nafs* (self), *mal* (property), *din* (religion), *nasl* (offspring), and *aql* (mind). The main benefit in the world, according to al-Razi, is none other than these five aspects. He continued that *la tufsidu fi al-ardi* means preventing the entry of damage to something existing. So this represents all forms and means of destruction (Razi, 1981). Al-Biqai interprets *fi al-ardi* to mean acts of shirk and *ẓalim*. Like al-Razi, he sees the prohibition as a form of prevention of damage to the five aspects (*adyan, abdan, 'aql, ansab, and amwal*) (Al-Biqai, n.d.). Similarly, Abu Hayyan also sees the prohibition as clearly intended to prevent damage to the self (*nafsi*), offspring (*nasl*), property (*mal*), mind (*aql*) and religion (*din*). He also interpreted the prohibition as general, meaning all means and forms of damage to something existing (A. H. Andalusi, 1993). Thus, human benefit as contained in the five aspects above must be maintained from destructive actions.

In addition, the prohibition against the destruction of the earth is a form of harm prevention. Prohibition is nothing but a form of prevention of something that is harmful or contains danger. Al-Razi states that this verse shows the origin of something leading to harm is forbidden and its prevention is absolute. This verse clearly shows that what is beneficial is *halal* and what is harmful is *haram* (Razi, 1981). Ibn Kasir tends to see prohibition as a form of prevention of harmful things. He said that when things are done according to the decree and then damage occurs afterwards, there will be harm that will befall a servant. Therefore, Allah forbids destructive actions and orders people to worship, pray, humble themselves before Him, and ask Him (Ibn Katsir, 1999). Ibn Kasir seems to want to show Allah's compassion as well as His prohibition against something that can ultimately harm

humans themselves. Al-Biqai' also states that Allah's correction includes all the benefits mentioned in it, as mentioned in His words, "He covers the night with the day." (QS. Al-A'raf [7]: 56) (Al-Biqai, n.d.). Thus, humans are not allowed to damage the earth because the impact on themselves is actually harmful, including losing the benefits that have been given by Allah.

2.2. *Equality of Existential Rights*

The tendency to emphasize non-human elements is evident in some medieval interpretations. Examples such as trees, rain, and water feel the need to be alluded to rather than ignored as in previous patterns of interpretation. Not to equalize the position of humans and non-humans, but there seems to be attention to the composition of nature, amidst argumentative narratives related to human interests. Ibn Atiyyah states that the generality of the verse includes any damage, whether little or much. Then quoting the opinion of al-Dahhak, "the meaning is that you should not open the cover (blockage) of water and you should not cut down trees that bear fruit" (I. A. Andalusí, 2001). Similarly, al-Qurtubi also presents al-Dahhak's narration at the beginning of the interpretation. However, he adds that al-Dahhak's statement "is not general, meaning that only in the event of harm (threat) to a believer, but if the harm befalls the polytheists, then it is allowed." Furthermore, al-Qurtubi also said that "the Messenger of Allah himself closed the well of Badr and cut trees owned by the disbelievers" (Qurtubi, 1999). Cutting down trees and unblocking water as a form of damage to nature shows that al-Qurtubi and Ibn Atiyyah are aware that what is meant by the earth includes other elements of humans so that it is not ignored and feels important to mention in the interpretation.

Physical damage to non-human elements appears to be favored in this prohibition. The narrative built is sufficient to explain ecological awareness and at the same time does not see it solely as a relational relationship between God and humans as the previous interpretation pattern. In terms of the interpretation wording, Ibn Atiyyah and Al-Qurtubi are similar in seeing the generality of the form of damage in the verse. Both seem to favor the history of al-Dahhak which is placed at the beginning of the interpretation. The mention of trees and water as the object of damage is a sufficient indication of their concern for non-human elements. Ibn Atiyyah's statement is quite interesting, on the one hand favoring the narration of al-Dahhak and on the other hand including additional narrations after him with the content of the interpretation but not with the mention of the name of the narrator

like al-Dahhak (I. A. Andalusi, 2001). Al-Qurtubi notes that the generality of the prohibition has a condition when it causes harm to a believer (Qurtubi, 1999). However, there seems to be a tendency not to ignore natural elements. In terms of the form of interpretation, it appears that Ibn Atiyyah and al-Qurtubi have sympathy for non-human elements in the prohibition of destruction of the earth.

2.3. A Theological Narrative of Nature

In the context of medieval *tafsir*, theological tendencies are very visible, including in the interpretation of Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: The sentence *la tufsidu fi al-ardi* is interpreted as a prohibition of destruction on earth with acts of sin and shirk. Thus, destroying nature directly transgresses doctrinal boundaries, which results in a decrease in the spiritual status of a servant in the eyes of God. Al-Tabari, al-Baidawi, and al-Suyuti interpret the prohibition of destroying the earth as the same as the prohibition of shirk and sin because it is a form of destruction (Baydawi, 1998; Suyuti & Mahalli, 1989; Tabari, 2001). Al-Tabari previously also mentioned in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 11 that the corruption referred to is doing what Allah has forbidden and forsaking what He has commanded (Tabari, 2001). Not different about syirk (*syirik*) and sin (*maksiat*), al-Ta'labi adds that invitations other than to worship Allah include the destruction of the earth (Thalabi, 2002). Al-Samarqandi is not much different, that the earth has become good when a prophet is sent, but sinful acts make the earth and its inhabitants damaged (Samarqandi, 1993). Al-Bagawi differs slightly in not mentioning the term shirk but corruption as sin and invitation to the obedience of other than Allah after the messengers were sent with laws based on the words of al-Hasan, al-Sudi, al-Dahhak, and al-Kalbi. The words of Atiyyah are also raised who said: "Do not sin on the earth, for Allah withholds rain and destroys your crops with your sins" because it has been restored by Allah by providing rain and fertility (Baghawi, 1988). Al-Bagawi tries to make things easier by explaining the practical consequences of sinning, if committed. Substantively, the main point made in this interpretation is to negate the damage when there is no opposition to Allah through *syirk* and sin.

Conceptually al-Mawardi and Ibn Jauzi mainstream theological relationship in seeing the prohibition of destruction of the earth. Improvements that have been shown by God through the provisions of *shara'* based on revelation revealed to His messengers. Al-Mawardi uses the phrase *ba'da isla hiba* to emphasize the narrative in terms of time, then parsed into four opinions; the prohibition of destroying the earth with *kufr* after being

repaired with *iman*, *ẓalim* with justice (*adl*), sin with obedience and killing *mukemin* while the life of the *mukemin* has been established. (Mawardi, 2007). In Ibn Jauzi's viewpoint, two other opinions are included: the prohibition of sinning because Allah withholds rain and destroys crops by committing sins after Allah has repaired the earth with rain and fertility and the prohibition of destroying the earth by denying the messengers after the earth has been repaired with their revelations (Jauzi, 2002). The improvements in the earth, which have been perfected by the messengers, are the main basis for building arguments against the prohibition of destruction.

3. Identifying the Trilogy of Environmental Ethics in the Interpretation of Q.S Al-A'raf [7]: 56 in the Medieval Age

The first category of interpretation pattern shows that human welfare occupies the main position in the significance of the interpretation built on the prohibition of destroying the earth. Actions that have the potential to damage the five aspects are considered to save the welfare so that they are prohibited. Al-Razi emphasized that the main benefits in the world are five aspects: life, property, offspring, religion and reason (Razi, 1981). Thus, it requires preventive efforts to maintain the sustainability of these aspects. Al-Biqai affirms that acts of destruction as *shirk* and *ẓalim* (Al-Biqai, n.d.), meaning that all forms of damage to tangible elements (exist) - including the mention of the five aspects at the beginning, are the result of non-compliance with the conceptions of *shara'* so that such transcendental labels appear as a form of denial of servants to God (Allah). The forms of prevention against damage to the five aspects are very practically shown to perpetuate human existence. Human status is favored so that the preservation of the elements that support human sustainability becomes a necessity.

Damage means that there is no prevention of the five aspects of the Shari'ah's objectives: soul, property, offspring, religion and intellect which have implications for human interests. Such a tendency of interpretation is very affirming of primordial human rights. The *mufassir* above feels enough to show the benefit of humans as the peak of ideals that must be built on earth and then appears unsympathetic to non-human elements so that it is simply ignored. Abu Hayyan is slightly aware of the existence of non-humans on earth which appears in the separation between the benefits of creatures (creation) which are general in nature and the benefits of the *mukallaf* (A. H. Andalusi, 1993). However, this attention is still in the shadow of human rights which are reflected in the five aspects. Although

preventing acts of destruction is expressed globally (not excluding non-human elements), the tendency to show human centrality is an indication allowing the consumptive side of anthropocentric ethics to enter. The lack of sympathy for non-human elements in the *tafsir* above is enough to illustrate human centrality as an indicator of anthropocentrism

The second category of interpretation shows the general purpose of the prohibition. Such an understanding substantively emphasizes that nothing deserves to be destroyed. This is no different from the land ethic, which recognizes that nature has the right to develop naturally (Leopold & Schwartz, 1968). Ibn Atiyyah seems to favor the narration of al-Dahhak that mentions water and trees (I. A. Andalusi, 2001). It shows there is a form of spiritual awareness that sees God "*rabb*", nature "*al-kaun*" and humans "*al-insan*" connected relationally (Munji, 2014), as *kbaliq* and *makbluq* that cannot be created without value. Damage is the opposite of *Istiqamah*, according to al-Qurtubi (Qurtubi, 1999), undermining the justice that has been established by Allah.

This tendency seems to be at odds with the interpretation of the first category which favors the rights as well as the interests of humans. It can be signaled that the purpose of Ibn Atiyyah and al-Qurtubi provide representative interpretation space for non-humans to show sympathy for the elements of nature in addition to the centrality of humans. When associated with the independence of the value of nature in the concept of deep ecology, damage to nature becomes a problem that cannot be ignored. There is no mention of theological implications such as *shirk* or *kufr* in their interpretation, making nature occupy an important position for humans. There is the possibility of a transcendent relationship that can be experienced by nature and humans without having to be stated doctrinally by theological arguments. In the current context, it appears that the land ethic termed by Aldo Leopold (Leopold & Schwartz, 1968), in practical form has been realized in the treasures of *tafsir* shown by Ibn Atiyyah and Al-Qurtubi. Implicitly, there is an interpretation that does not place human superiority above nature, showing the independence of values without having to be ridden first by human needs and interests. The principles of ecocentricity as viewed by Richard Sylvan and David Bennet, appear to appear in this interpretation pattern.

The third category of interpretation pattern shows mystical argumentation in seeing the prohibition of earth destruction. This narrative does not appear in the categorization of R. Sylvan and D. Bennet, but it is a characteristic of ecological ethics that appears in the Qur'an. In terms of form, the destruction of the earth is synonymous with two terms:

maksiat (disobedience) and *shirk* (alliance). Both refer to a condition where one does not care and obey God. The absence of rules as a result of disobedience has implications for human freedom of action, including in relation to the earth collectively. *Maksiat*, according to Asfahani, is a term applied to actions that are out of obedience. Meanwhile, *shirk* is divided into two: major *shirk*, associating partners with Allah and minor *shirk*, affirming attention to Allah as well as to others such as *riya'* (Asfahani, 1992). This means disobedience and even fellowship that occurred after the sending of the prophets and the enactment of laws as explained by al-Baidlowi (Baydawi, 1998). Another form is exemplified by al-Samarqandi by destroying mosques and leaving the congregation (*jama'ah*) (Samarqandi, 1993). Sharia provisions that have no specific indication mean that they cover all laws without exception. Human actions that go beyond the provisions that have been mandated by Allah to the messengers then include damage to the earth. Thus, the provisions of the law - as an implication of tawhid, provide a limit so that humans do not have the freedom to act arbitrarily on nature.

In terms of purpose, there seems no possibility other than believing in Allah to keep the earth protected from destruction. So the practical form that appears is an invitation to monotheize Allah. The destruction of the earth is the result of actions that associate partners with Allah. Faith is the main indication of the earth's benefit. By obeying His commands and prohibitions means there is no potential for acts of destruction of the earth. The mention of *shirk* and sin by Al-Tabari, al-Samarqandi, al-Mawardi, al-Bagawi, Ibn al-Jauzi, Al-Biq'a'i, al-Ta'labi, Jalalain, and al-Baidawi at the beginning of the interpretation shows that there is no compromise on faith to keep the earth preserved. So the key to preserving the earth is to monotheize Allah. Thus it appears that the best way to protect the earth from destruction is to believe so that Allah's decrees are not ignored.

The last pattern of interpretation seems to carry the theological agenda as a whole without any existential influence of creatures (humans and nature). This is unlike the first pattern tending to show human interests or the second pattern favoring non-human positions. This is a tendency formulating an ethics towards the environment that is purely based on a spiritual relationship to God. Thus, human beings act not on the basis of benefit or loss, but on the basis of absolute doctrine which if violated results in spiritual degradation. Nasr's view in this regard is relevant that the view of nature is based on metaphysical elements as well as transcendent as a form of manifestation of the Almighty

(Nasr, 1996). This model seems to affirm the view of classical scholars who see nature as a silent and implied book (Qaradhawi, 2001), even existing long before the Quran. The absence of superiority over humans or non-humans makes the last interpretation pattern tend to see environmental ethics in the frame of spirituality to God.

4. Theocentrism: the Top of Environmental Ethics Hierarchy

Based on this search, the author sees that the ecological concept in the interpretation of Q.S. Al- A'raf [7]: 56 in the medieval era was dominated by theological nuances. The destruction of the earth is the result of the deviation of the law brought by the Prophets. This means that all things that violate the provisions of *shara'* are the implications of the destruction of the earth. The logic of thinking built directs the relationship between humans and nature which is mystical, transcendent and supra-rational. The encounter between theological (god) and material narratives (humans and nature) shows the big agenda of a large number of medieval *mufassirs* to make religion a bargaining value in guiding life. In addition, the encounter between the two shows an attempt to compromise on something that was originally considered profane to be drawn into the religious space. Such dominance shows an effort to mainstream theological discourse in interpretation in the medieval era.

Religious values become the link between humans, nature and God towards a more harmonious interaction (Abdillah, 2001). Pepper and Leonard saw that theological awareness in positioning nature can have a positive effect on environmental conservation efforts (Pepper & Leonard, 2016). Character formation in the theological process encourages empathy and care for environmental sustainability including the impact of its damage. In the context of this research, theocentrism becomes the centrality of dominant ecological ideas in the medieval era. Theological environmental ethics means seeing religion as a link between humans and nature. Humans as subjects are burdened with limits that at a practical level do not damage the rights of nature in their interactions. Such limits are transcendent as theological doctrines that cannot be contested. God has a prerogative role including regulating humans and nature. Theological provisions are built on obedience that is independent of other factors. This means that humans act not out of will, benefit or harm, but on the basis of absolute theological doctrine. Transgressing this limit results in a spiritual downgrade in the eyes of God. The doctrine is binding and unlimited.

On the other hand, the mainstreaming of ecological discourse in terms of theocentrism has resulted in other tendencies being marginalized. However, the choice to be

different from the mainstream of interpretation is not necessarily called a deviation. Different interpretative arguments can be seen as alternative efforts in retrieving ecological messages in the Qur'an. The anthropocentrism interpretation pattern presented by the first group of *mufassirs* cannot be understood as limited to the superiority of human interests as it is understood today, considering that the narrative that emerges does not implicitly deny the independence of natural values. The destruction of nature that threatens humans existentially is built to show the causal flow of actions against nature carelessly. Likewise, the ecocentrism interpretation pattern presented by the second group of *mufassirs* shows that human interests are not always in a central position. The equal rights implied in their interpretative narratives can be concluded that centrality is precisely built by the collective of all elements (biotic and abiotic) to work in balance without favoring or harming one party.

The centrality of theocentric ethics is certainly a value that is considered relevant in reconciling relationships between creatures on earth. In the context of environmental ethics today, the inequality in exploring the potential of nature is beginning to be realized when damage causes significant adverse impacts globally. This idea is precisely what wants to be resurrected with a more rational concept such as Nasr's ecosophy or eco-theology so that the ecological narrative is not limited to apologetics but is able to arouse empathy for natural concerns. But the fact that environmental ethics is not singularly interpreted in medieval interpretations, shows a critical attitude in constructing harmonious relations between humans and nature.

CONCLUSION

This research emphasizes that scientific activities, when guided by these moderation principles, can achieve meaningful goals, particularly in providing enlightenment and pursuing truth for the benefit of human life. Ibn Rushd's framework on moderation highlights the instrumental and intrinsic values of science, stressing the importance of directing scientific efforts towards realizing positive outcomes that contribute to human development across various fields.

The study's significant contribution lies in its conceptual framework, offering a structured model of moderation that can be applied to address contemporary challenges such as radicalism, exclusivism, and misuse of knowledge. Through a philosophical approach and hermeneutic analysis, this research provides an in-depth understanding of Ibn Rushd's perspectives and their relevance in fostering a balanced and tolerant scholarly attitude. This approach not only bridges classical and modern contexts but also demonstrates the applicability of moderation in addressing pressing societal issues.

However, this study acknowledges certain limitations. The analysis is primarily theoretical and focuses exclusively on Ibn Rushd's works, without integrating empirical data or comparative perspectives from other scholars. Future research could explore empirical applications of this moderation framework in educational institutions or academic communities. Additionally, comparative studies examining Ibn Rushd's moderation alongside other thinkers, such as Al-Ghazali or Thomas Aquinas, could provide a broader understanding of its universality and adaptability. By addressing these gaps, future research can further expand the practical implications of moderation in fostering harmony and advancing human development in diverse and pluralistic societies.

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