

THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN THE WEST AND ISLAM IN ECOLOGY: Naess's Ecology and Al-Qusyairi's Sufism

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Abstract

*This article seeks to discuss the encounter of Arne Naess's theoretical ecology model and al-Qusyairi's Sufism theory, eco-sufism. To examine their relationship, this article employ Arne Naess's triangulation model of shallow ecology, deep ecology, and complexity, which in Al-Qusyairi's Sufism is referred to as *tauhid*, *tazkiyyat an-nafs*, and *muhāsīn*. Thus, this article highlights the sufi figure of *akhlāqī* (al-Qusyairi) as the subject of philosophical content. This article argue that to lead modern society towards a deeper understanding and practice can be accomplished with spirituality and ecology proceeding together (juxtaposition) in fostering "respectful" behavior toward all creatures. This approach benefits the environment (nature-oriented) and also enriches the individual's spirituality (God-oriented).*

*[Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji keterkaitan antara ekologi Arne Naess dan sufisme al-Qusyairi: ekosufisme. Untuk mengkaji relasi keduanya, artikel ini menggunakan model triangulasi Arne Naess tentang shallow ecology, deep ecology, dan complexity yang dalam sufisme disebut dengan *tauhid*, *tazkiyyat an-nafs*, dan *muhāsīn*.*



Berbeda pada kajian umum, artikel ini menyoroti tokoh sufi akhlāqī (al-Qusyairi) sebagai obyek pembahasan yang bermuatan filosofis. Artikel ini menawarkan sebuah jalan yang menuntun masyarakat modern ke arah pemahaman dan praktik lebih mendalam tentang spiritualitas dan ekologi yang berjalan bersamaan (juxtaposisi) dalam menciptakan perilaku “yang menghormati” terhadap semua makhluk. Tidak hanya menguntungkan lingkungan (nature-oriented) akan tetapi juga memperkaya spiritualitas individu (God-oriented).]

Keywords: *Ecology, Sufism, Ecosufism, Environment*

Introduction

In the modern, the majority of society has succumbed to significant intellectual and spiritual degradation.¹ The implications of this dual degradation have led contemporary society into an environmental crisis.² Drastic climate changes, mounting waste, air pollution, deforestation, and other environmental damages have become pressing global concerns.³ These conditions depict a state of incomplete scholarship. Without a holistic scholarly approach, individuals often resort to fragmented solutions, proving ineffective in addressing environmental issues. Available solutions tend to target specific aspects of the environmental crisis without considering the entire complex and interrelated system. Such a constellation is referred to as “knowledge voids.”⁴ To address these ecological challenges, every society, including the Muslim, bears the responsibility to protect and preserve nature. This responsibility extends beyond ecological reasoning alone, encompassing profound spiritual values.

¹ René Guénon, *The Crisis of the Modern World* (Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001), p. 14.

² Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1990), p. 13-14.

³ “Perubahan Iklim Ekstrem hingga Pencemaran Tanah jadi Masalah Lingkungan yang Disorot Warga Dunia | Databoks,” accessed November 26, 2023, <https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2023/01/31/perubahan-iklim-ekstrem-hingga-pencemaran-tanah-jadi-masalah-lingkungan-yang-disorot-warga-dunia>.

⁴ Christoph Mueller-Bloch and Johann Kranz, “A Framework for Rigorously Identifying Research Gaps in Qualitative Literature Reviews,” 2015.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr argue that the environmental crisis occurs a modern humans tend to move away from the spiritual dimension of their lives. Due to the loss of their connectivity with the spiritual dimension, modern humans view nature as purely economic value. Furthermore, Seyyed Hossein Nasr observes that nature is now regarded merely as a “prostitute” by modern humans. Therefore, the solution to overcoming the desacralization of nature is to reintroduce the spiritual dimension into the lives of modern humans. Involving the spiritual dimension means recognizing the “presence of God” in nature for, indeed, nature is a manifestation of God.⁵

At first glance, the above paragraph indicates the necessity for a strong understanding of the active relationship between God, humans, and nature (later mentioned G-H-N), intertwined in a unified and inseparable system of life. In the context of Islam al-Qusyairi—a Muslim thinker—discusses the G-H-N relationship as a dialectical integration. Al-Qusyairi’s G-H-N relationship is based on his sufi thought, which includes; (1) *tauhīd* (unity); (2) *tazkiyyat an-nafs* (self-purification); and (3) *muhāsīn* (good behavioral). Furthermore, in the ecological context, the author employs Arne Naess’s triangulation approach. He assesses that the foundation of human views and treatment of nature consists of three aspects; (1) shallow ecology (anthropocentrism); (2) deep ecology (bioegalitarianism); and (3) complexity (interconnectivity).⁶

Earlier sources discussing nature and Sufism can refer to the work by Abū Bakr al-‘Afīfī, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi*.⁷ The discussion map in that book outlines a general overview of Ibn ‘Arabi’s thought on ethics, aesthetics, psychology, the cosmos, and so forth. Yusūf

⁵ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature...*, p. 18–19.

⁶ Louis P. Pojman, *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*, 7th edition (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2015), p. 218–20.

⁷ Abū al-A‘lā ‘Afīfī, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939).

al-Qardāwī, in *Ru'yat al-Bī'ah fi Syarī'at al-Islām*,⁸ argue the importance of environmental conservation through a *syariah* perspective. However, al-Qardāwī has not yet addressed the aspect of the environmental crisis and its management in a global context. Similarly, Muzaffar Iqbal in his work *Science and Islam*.⁹ Posits that one's understanding of "Islam" and "science" greatly shapes their view of nature. He suggests that by expanding the reach of knowledge about science and technology, it is possible to reshape the lifestyle configurations of individual Muslims. With this approach, nature can be protected and preserved once again. Next, in the field of interpretation, Ahmad Ridla Syahida, in his dissertation entitled *Ekosufisme dalam Tafsir Indonesia Kontemporer*¹⁰ has elaborated on the thoughts of Indonesian interpretation scholars (Hasbi as-Shiddieqy, Hamka, Quraish Shihab, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs Tafsir) regarding the G-H-N relation.

Based on the literature above, no researchers have yet reviewed the triadic relation (G-H-N) from the perspective of *akhlāqī* figures (al-Qusyairi), but rather their reviews are based on the views of philosophical Sufism such as Ibn 'Arabi, as well as other contemporary figure. Therefore, this article seeks to fill the void left by previous researchers. It is the linkage between ecology (Arne Naess; shallow ecology, deep ecology, complexity) and Sufism (al-Qusyairi; *tauhīd*, *taẓkiyyat an-nafs*, *muḥṣīn*) that subsequently forms the construction of al-Qusyairi's Ecosufism. With the relation of God-human-nature, and by placing nature in a central position, it is possible to form a harmonious vertical (God-oriented) and horizontal (nature-oriented) relationship.

⁸ Yusūf al-Qardāwī, *Islam Agama Ramah Lingkungan*, trans. Abdullah Hakim Syah (Jakarta: Pustaka al-Kautsar, 2002).

⁹ Muzaffar Iqbal, *Science and Islam: Greenwood Guides to Science and Religion* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2007).

¹⁰ Ahmad Ridla Syahida, "Ekosufisme di dalam Tafsir Indonesia Kontemporer," *Ph.D thesis*, Jakarta, Institut PTIQ, 2022).

Thus, ecology and Sufism are the main focuses of the discussion, which are then critically dialogued to determine whether the two are separate domains or whether they are interrelated.

A Brief Biography of al-Qusyairi (376- 465 H/986 M)

Al-Qusyairi's real name was Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzan ibn 'Abd al-Mulk Ibn Ṭalḥah Ibn Muḥammad al-Qusyairi an-Naisābūrī asy-Syāfi'. He was born in the month of Rabī' al-Awwal in the year 376 H in a small village called Ustu, near the city of Naisabur in the land of Khorasan. He was a great *sufi* with the title *Zain al-Islām* (the Ornament of Islam). He was a medieval Muslim intellectual who mastered various fields of knowledge such as *tafsīr*, *fiqh*, *uṣūl*, hadith, and *kalam*.¹¹

Al-Qusyairi came from a family that greatly valued education, so his youth was filled with journeys of seeking knowledge. As a renowned figure in the field of Sufism, he did not neglect other areas of scholarship. Al-Qusyairi studied *fiqh* with Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr aṭ-Ṭūsī, *uṣūl fiqh* with Abū Bakr ibn Faurāk, *ilm al-kalam* with Abū Ishāq al-Isfarayain, and others.¹²

Subsequently, Al-Qusyairi went to Nishapur, where he met and studied Sufism with a renowned scholar named Abī 'Alī ad-Daqqāq.¹³ His teacher became al-Qusyairi's spiritual guide until he was also married off to his daughter named Kadbānū Fāṭimah. His wife was very influential in supporting al-Qusyairi when he taught his knowledge. Therefore, it can be said here that al-Qusyairi was a *sufi* who greatly appreciated the spiritual potential of women.¹⁴

¹¹ Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzan ibn 'Abd al-Mulk al-Qusyairi, *Ar-Risalah al-Qushayriyyah* (Jeddah: Dār al-Minhāj, 2017), p. 16–17.

¹² Anisa Listiana, "Menimbang Teologi Kaum Sufi Menurut Al-Qusyairi dalam Kitab Al-Risalah al-Qusyairiyah," *Kalam*, Vol 7, No. 1, 2013, pp. 202.

¹³ 'Abdullah Husain, *At-Taṣawwuf wa al-Mutaṣawwifah* (Inggris Raya: Hindawi, 2017), p. 44–45.

¹⁴ Camille Adams Helminski, *Women of Sufism: A Hidden Treasure* (Colorado: Shambhala Publications, 2003), p. 48–49.

The works of al-Qusyairi are very diverse. Among his monumental works is *Laṭā'if al-Isyārah*, a *kitab tafsir* (exegesis book) with a sufistic approach. *Ar-Risālah al-Qusyairiyyah*, which is an encyclopedia of the spiritual legacy of 3rd and 4th century Hijri *sufi* scholars,¹⁵ and *Nahw al-Qulub*, which is an integrative study of Arabic grammatical science and Sufism.¹⁶ Al-Qusyairi's thoughts had a significant influence on the next generation of Muslim intellectuals. As a *sufi* who adhered to Asy'ari theology, al-Qusyairi was close friends with al-Juwaini, who was a teacher of al-Ghazali. While al-Qusyairi sought to bring Asy'ari theology closer to Sufism, it was al-Ghazali who successfully integrated the two.¹⁷ His monumental work in the field of *tafsir*, *Laṭā'if al-Isyārah*, greatly contributed to inspiring Ibn 'Arabī and Mullā Sadrā.¹⁸

Systemic Ecological Paradigm

The human obligation to care for and manage the environment and all created beings on the face of the Earth is a trust bestowed by the Creator. This conservation effort not only constitutes obedience to the Divine but also provides sustainable benefits for human life across all eras.¹⁹ The term “ecology” originates from the Greek word “*oikos*,” meaning “house” or the place where individuals reside in a household. *Oikos* is also employed in the term “economics,” where *oikos* denotes “house,” and *nomos* signifies “rule/law,” pertaining to the fulfillment of living necessities and the exchange of goods within society for survival.

¹⁵ Institut Agama Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah (ed.), *Ensiklopedi Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1992), p. 796–98.

¹⁶ Khaerul Anwar, “Nahwu Sufistik: Kajian Tasawwuf dalam Kitab Nahw Al-Qulub Karya Imam Al-Qusyairi,” *Tsaqofiya : Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Arab*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (2021), pp. 167.

¹⁷ Simuh, *Pergolakan Pemikiran dalam Islam* (Yogyakarta: IRCiSOD, 2019), p. 131–33.

¹⁸ Mukti Ali, *Islam Mazhab Cinta: Cara Sufi Memandang Dunia* (Bandung: PT Mizan Pustaka, 2015), p. 66–67.

¹⁹ Al Purwa Hadiwardoyo, *Moral dan Masalahnya* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1990), p. 97.

Thus, if ecology is the science that studies the “structure of nature,” and norms for “managing” and “preserving” nature, then it is humanity that bears the moral responsibility to safeguard and nurture the environment without exploiting it for personal gain. Consequently, humans must be accountable for preserving the environment for the collective well-being.²⁰

Since the early 20th century, efforts to manage natural resources have been guided by concepts such as preservation, conservation, sustainable yields, and carrying capacity. The idea of sustainability has a long history in natural resource management.²¹

In the 1980s, awareness of neglecting environmental and social issues in conventional development practices by national governments and international development institutions prompted the integration of sustainability concepts into development planning. Consequently, over the past few decades, awareness has grown that the failure to recognize the dynamic interdependence between social systems and ecology is a primary cause of the conservation challenges faced by resource managers in forestry, fisheries, and other resource management fields.²²

Explanation of the combined dynamics of socio-ecological systems utilizes concepts such as scale, thresholds, nonlinearity, emergence, surprises, heterogeneity, and path dependence to depict the attributes of complex adaptive systems. The concepts of adaptive cycles and panarchy²³ are employed to model these dynamics. The adaptive cycle delineates four phases, including (1) growth and exploitation, (2) conservation, (3)

²⁰ Anton Baker, *Kosmologi dan Ekologi: Filsafat Tentang Kosmos Sebagai Rumah Tangga Manusia* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1995), p. 34.

²¹ Sharachchandra M. Lélé, “Sustainable Development: A Critical Review,” *World Development*, Vol. 9, No. 6, 1991, pp. 607–21.

²² Terence P. Hughes (et.al.), “New Paradigms for Supporting the Resilience of Marine Ecosystems,” *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*, Vol. 20, No. 7, 2005, pp. 380–86.

²³ In the context of ecological discussions, panarchy refers to a theory that describes the complex dynamics and interdependencies within social-ecological systems. It recognizes the nested nature of adaptive cycles at various scales. Panarchy suggests that smaller and faster adaptive cycles within the system can potentially trigger cascading effects throughout the entire system.

collapse, and (4) reorganization within dynamic socio-ecological systems.²⁴ Meanwhile, panarchy elucidates the intricate interactions between nested adaptive cycles at various scales.

In panarchy, the collapse of smaller and faster adaptive cycles can trigger cascading effects throughout the entire panarchy. Conversely, larger and slower adaptive cycles at higher levels have conditioning effects on the smaller and faster adaptive cycles beneath them. This dynamic interplay between scales explains the balance between “change” and “stability” in socio-ecological systems. By employing such concepts, it becomes possible to understand how socio-ecological systems interact and achieve a balance between change and stability.

However, it does not stop there; the enhanced understanding of uncertainty and conflicts arising from the complex cross-scale interactions in socio-ecological systems, along with the influences of external drivers of change, pose challenges to the effective design of institutions for managing sustainable socio-ecological systems. One of the main challenges is creating institutions with the capacity to provide knowledge and incentives that foster learning processes and experimentation in adaptive ecosystem-based management.²⁵ Additionally, with an increasing emphasis on transformative capacity in recent years, the design of institutions for social-ecological management needs to consider broader socio-ecological change processes.

The complex relationship between humans and the environment has given rise to various ecological approaches.²⁶ These diverse approaches strive to explain and provide solutions to the environmental crisis faced by modern society. Broadly speaking, these approaches in ecological discourse are classified into two clusters, namely shallow ecology and deep ecology.

²⁴ Crawford Holling, “Understanding the Complexity of Economic, Ecological, and Social Systems,” *Ecosystems*, Vol. 4, No. 2001, pp. 390–405.

²⁵ Raymundo E. Russo, (ed.), *Wetlands: Ecology, Conservation and Restoration* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2008), p. 22–23.

²⁶ Sonny Keraf, *Etika Lingkungan Hidup* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2010), p. 45–165.

The first paradigm, shallow ecology, tends toward solving environmental issues through technological changes and behavioral adjustments within the existing economic and political systems. However, this approach is often pragmatic, meaning it addresses environmental problems without radically changing the underlying social structures and fundamental values. As such, shallow ecology is still largely an extension of European and North American anthropocentrism in environmental discourse—it preserves wilderness and biodiversity based on the “interests” of human welfare.²⁷ Therefore, shallow ecology still exhibits an anthropocentric-mechanistic character and fails to provide an equitable position (juxtaposition) in forming an active relationship between humans and other organisms (nature).

The second paradigm, deep ecology, is a concept introduced by Arne Naess.²⁸ It offers a more holistic and philosophical perspective. This concept is based on the idea that humans are not separate entities from nature, but rather an integral part of the overall ecosystem. Going beyond shallow ecology, in its epistemic structure, deep ecology presents ecological and political criticism of the “origins” and “historical development” of civilization itself.²⁹ This includes what it claims as the adverse effects of technology, agriculture, domestication, population growth, science, industry, and division of labor.³⁰ In short, this view emphasizes the importance of respecting all forms of life and prioritizing ecological well-being over narrow economic considerations. With its relational-systemic (holistic) model and the equality between humans and nature, the author believes that deep ecology occupies a strategic position in protecting and preserving the environment.

²⁷ J. Baird Callicott and Robert Frodeman, (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2009), p. 206.

²⁸ Louis P. Pojman, *Environmental Ethics...*, p. 218.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 219–20.

³⁰ Callicott and Frodeman, *Encyclopedia of Environmental...*, p. 40.

A brief overview of Arne Naess reveals his significant role as a central figure in the development of the “deep ecology” concept around the early 1970s.³¹ Naess’s exploration of philosophical corridors and environmental ethics in a deep or profound manner rejects traditional views that treat nature merely as an exploitable resource. Naess’s thinking introduces the novel idea that nature possesses “intrinsic” value independent of human interests, advocating for a fundamental transformation in how humans relate to the environment. Beyond deep inquiry, these steps involve an “impulsive” recognition of entities, systems, and elements interacting with humans. This also encompasses self-expansion, maturation, and a deeper understanding of oneself with the full acknowledgment of one’s potential. Additionally, it includes the ability to deeply connect with a place, understand the most intimate life-form needs that must be met, and achieve a profound rootedness.³²

To attain a deep ecological impression, this signifies the necessity for direct experiences and contemplation of nature to evoke a sense of interconnectedness and empathy toward nonhuman life (other organisms). Furthermore, this concept underscores the obligation to address the root causes of environmental issues, including consumerist thinking and relentless economic growth. Through his written works, Naess endeavors to build a “deeper” and “sustainable” ecological awareness to confront global environmental challenges.

Next, in formulating the G-H-N relationship, the author defines it with a three-theory framework (triangulation) from Arne Naess; shallow ecology (anthropocentrism/God), deep ecology (bioegalitarianism/human), and complexity (unity/nature). In the shallow ecological movement, a psychological understanding of intense and expansive

³¹ László Erdős, “Arne Naess and the Deep Ecology Movement,” in László Erdős (ed.), *Green Heroes: From Buddha to Leonardo DiCaprio* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), pp. 93–96.

³² Carien de Jonge and Gail Whiteman, “Arne Naess (1912–2009),” in Jenny Helin (et al.), *The Oxford Handbook of Process Philosophy and Organization Studies* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

identification with the environment becomes the main focus. Meanwhile, the deep movement stems from a philosophical perspective that emphasizes that reality is inherently interconnected, and overcoming alienation from the whole can occur through the experience of identity. However, these ideas are often rejected by some environmental philosophers as “irrational” thinking or nonsense (rubbish), which can be caused by a narrow view of the concept of irrationality itself.

Arne Naess argue that in the shallow ecological movement, intense and wide identification is described and explained psychologically. In the deep movement this philosophy is at least taken seriously: reality consists of wholes which we cut down rather than of isolated items which we put together. In other words: there is not, strictly speaking, a primordial causal process of identification, but one of largely unconscious alienation which is overcome in experiences of identity. To some “environmental” philosophers such thoughts seem to be irrational, even “rubbish.” This is due to a too-narrow conception of irrationality.³³

Regarding deep ecology and bioegalitarianism, Arne Naess reject the traditional view that dichotomizes humans from their environment. Arne goes further by replacing it with a unified relational perspective, where organisms are “recognized” as integral elements within the biosphere network with intrinsic relationships that define their existence. The proposed total-field model not only dismantles the concept of man-in-environment, but also rejects the separation between objects and their contexts in any analysis.³⁴ When humans and nature reach a point of juxtaposition, an egalitarian consciousness with all the inhabitants of nature is created. Naess articulates this as “biospheric egalitarianism.” This conception is acknowledged as a fundamental principle—even though real-world practices in nature still involve actions such as killing, exploitation, and oppression—yet, ecological fieldworkers nurture a

³³ Louis P. Pojman, *Environmental Ethics...*, p. 225–226.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

deep respect for the diversity of ways and forms of life. They firmly uphold the axiomatic value that every being has the “same right” to live and flourish. They also oppose the restriction of these rights solely to humans, which is considered a form of detrimental anthropocentrism. This is what Naess said in more detail.³⁵

The third framework, complexity, is a concept distinct from mere complication. It is a fundamental principle in ecosystem theory, which highlights the difference between chaotic systems and those with underlying principles. Complexity can also be referred to as a systemic approach, meaning it refers to the “understanding” and “approach” to the living environment that recognizes and emphasizes the interconnections and mutual dependencies among various components within an ecosystem. With this systemic framework, consideration is not only given to the individual parts of the ecosystem but also to the “relationships” between those parts and to the system as a whole (relational-systemic/ holistic).³⁶

As addressed by Fritjof Capra, this systemic paradigm acknowledges that everything in the universe is interconnected within a complex network. All living systems depend on each other and interact within a larger (macro) ecosystem. Furthermore, this paradigm model emphasizes the interdependence of humans with nature and the importance of maintaining ecosystem balance. Humans cannot exist separately from the environment, and each of our actions has an impact on the balance of nature. Thus, this paradigm rejects the view that endless growth is merely a “possibility.” Instead, ecological sustainability necessitates limits and equilibrium in growth. Through such descriptions, this systemic ecological paradigm transforms how we perceive the relationships among “humanity,” “environment,” and “other organism life.”³⁷

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

³⁶ Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and The Rising Culture* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1983), p. 78–82.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 271–276.

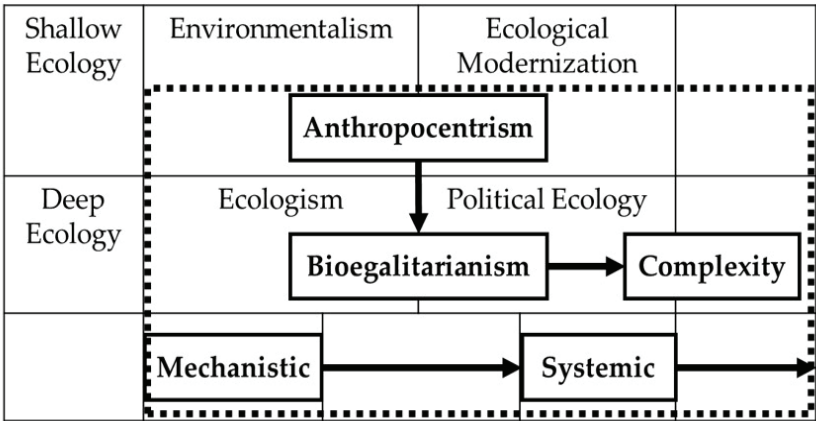
In line with Arne Naess, this approach seeks to understand ecological processes, patterns, and cycles on a broader and deeper scale. This includes production activities carried out by humans themselves, such as making shoes, using maps for travel, and more. It illustrates that humans also integrate various activities into their daily work patterns. This level of complexity is especially evident in organisms, lifestyles, and interactions within the biosphere, which profoundly influence the perspective of ecologists and demand a systemic approach to respond to environmental issues.

In clear statement, Arne Naess argue that complexity, is not a complication. The theory of ecosystems contains an important distinction between what is complicated without any Gestalt or unifying principles—man may think of finding our way through a chaotic city—and what is complex. A multiplicity of more or less lawful, interacting factors may operate together to form a unity, a system. Such complexity makes thinking in terms of vast systems inevitable. It also makes for a keen, steady perception of the profound human ignorance of biospherical relationships and therefore of the effect of disturbances.³⁸

Arne Naess, through the triangulation concept that encompasses shallow ecology (anthropocentrism), deep ecology (bioegalitarianism), and complexity (integrative), offers it as a way to understand different approaches to the environment. Shallow ecology, which is anthropocentric, emphasizes environmental protection mainly for the benefit of humans and often views nature as a resource to be managed. Then, deep ecology or bioegalitarianism, recognizes the equality of all forms of life and the intrinsic value within them, promoting symbiotic relationships and preventing the over-exploitation of nature. The third approach, integrative complexity, combines a systemic understanding of natural complexity and interdependence within ecosystems, with an awareness that human actions must consider the entire web of life and

³⁸ Louis P. Pojman, *Environmental Ethics...*, p. 220.

the long-term consequences of human intervention. Naess’s triangulation offers a rich framework for analyzing and responding to environmental issues holistically and sustainably. Look at the following table:



Al-Qusyairi’s Ecosufism Thought

Addressing environmental degradation requires a diversity of environmental ethics strategies to be implemented, including Ecosufism. This concept is an innovative approach within the *sufi* tradition that combines two forms of awareness: (1) concern for the environment; and (2) spiritual consciousness. Suwito NS argue that the concept of Ecosufism is already known among adherents of Universal Sufism, also known as The Sufi Order in the West, which was founded by Hazrat Inayat Khan who passed away in 1927.³⁹

The term Ecosufism combines two key elements, “eco” relating to the environment, and “Sufism” relating to spirituality. This philosophical merger is intended to integrate the potential of environmental wisdom derived from the Qur’an, hadith, and their interpretations, which result in jurisprudence, ethics, mysticism, and theology.⁴⁰ Therefore, in this

³⁹ Suwito SN, *Eko-Sufisme, Konsep, Strategi, dan Dampak* (Purwokerto: STAIN Press Purwokerto, 2011), p. 33.

⁴⁰ Husni Thamrin, *Eco Islamic Culture Pendekatan Sosiologi Lingkungan dalam Penyelamatan Lingkungan* (Yogyakarta: Magnum Pustaka Utama, 2019), p. 7.

subsection, the author examines al-Qusyairi's *sufi* thought concerning the relationship between G-H-N as a foundation for the harmonious integration of environmental wisdom.

Al-Qusyairi's Sufism thought centers on his concept regarding the formation of a servant's attitude and actions towards their Lord. He strongly emphasizes that self-purification is the main path for a servant who wishes to discover divine truths. Upon finding these truths, an individual is expected to have the potential to act benevolently towards all of His creatures. In general, the core essence of the *sufi* tradition is self-purification (*taẓkiyyat an-nafs*). This constitutes the principle of the Sufi tradition, emphasizing the practice of self-purification rather than merely wearing woolen garments, as commonly understood in Sufism.⁴¹ Al-Qusyairi states that there is a positive relationship between the holy people (the *sufis*) and Allah. That is, Allah always guides and fulfills all their needs, and they, in turn, fulfill the rights of Allah through worship and obedience to Him.⁴²

In the concept of self-purification, an individual who sincerely and diligently works to improve their actions will always be under the guidance of Allah. For example, when someone abandons everything forbidden by the *syariah*, they will be freed from the chains of carnal desires, and if they are freed from the shackles of carnal desires, what remains is only sincerity in worshipping Him.⁴³ It should be emphasized that although self-purification is the core essence of Sufism, it is actually just a means to reach the ultimate goal, which is to attain divine secrets (*tauhīd*).⁴⁴ These divine secrets are achieved through a servant's closeness with their Lord.

⁴¹ Zakī Mubārāk, *At-Taṣawwuf al-Islāmī fī al-Adab wa al-Aḥlāq* (Inggris Raya: Hindāwī, t.t.), p. 191.

⁴² Carl W. Ernst, *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam* (Boston; London: Shambhala, 2011), p. 84.

⁴³ Abū A'lā 'Aḥīfī, *At-Taṣawwuf: as-Ṣaurah ar-Rūḥiyyah fī al-Islām* (Inggris Raya: Hindāwī, 2020), p. 161–162.

⁴⁴ Jean-Louis Michon and Roger Gaetani, (eds.), *Sufism: Love & Wisdom: The Perennial Philosophy Series* (Bloomington, Ind: World Wisdom, 2006), p. 92.

Al-Qusyairi asserts that closeness here refers to the disappearance of a servant's worldly (materialistic) consciousness and the inclination of their heart to focus solely on Allah.⁴⁵

This constitutes the distinctive feature of the sufi tradition. *Sufis* do not merely seek knowledge in a manner akin to jurists (*fuqahā*). Beyond that, they enrich themselves through ongoing mystical experiences (*tajribat aṣ-ṣūfiyyah*). Al-Qusyairi elucidates this by stating that jurists focus on everything permitted and prohibited by Allah. In contrast, *Sufis* concentrate on all aspects related to the spiritual journey towards Allah. While jurists adjudicate something based on Allah's law, *Sufis* speak about Allah.⁴⁶

There are two aspects that must be considered in the process of self-purification: understanding the concept of *syariah* and *hakikat*. Al-Qusyairi states that the *syariah* is like a foundation, and in this case, it pertains to ritual worship. Meanwhile *hakikat* is a person's inner vision to achieve divine truth. Both must be interconnected and should not be separated from one another. This is because any form of devotion that is not based on the spirit of divine truth is futile. Conversely, if the spirit of truth is not grounded in the *syariah* as its foundation, it will not reach its goal or will be in vain. He added to the relationship between the two (*syariah-hakikat*) by quoting his teacher:

سمعت الأستاذ أبا علي الدقاق يقول: قوله (إياك نعبد) حفظ للشريعة
(وإياك نستعين) إقرار بالحقيقة

"I heard my teacher Abu 'Ali ad-Daqaq say: His words (only to You do we worship) mean keeping the *syariah*, and (and only to You do we seek help) mean establishing the essence."⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzan ibn 'Abd al-Mulk al-Qusyairi, *Ar-Risālah al-Qusyairiyyah*..., p. 95.

⁴⁶ Arthur F. Buehler, *Recognizing Sufism: Contemplation in the Islamic Tradition* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2016), p. 54–55.

⁴⁷ Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzan ibn 'Abd al-Mulk al-Qusyairi, *Ar-Risālah al-Qusyairiyyah*..., p. 282.

As creatures bestowed with special privileges, humans are seen as beings entrusted by Allah to be the stewards, or caliphs, on Earth. In interpreting QS. al-Baqarah verse 30, al-Qusyairi expounds that this verse is a way for Allah to demonstrate His power in the creation of humans. He also emphasizes that in the Qur'an, Allah never states that He created the *'Arjy*, Paradise, and so on. It is only the creation of humans that Allah declares, which can be seen as a form of respect for the human figure tasked as a *kehalifah* to manage the earth. Moreover, the Angels' query about the potential of humans to cause corruption and shed blood on earth does not constitute a denial of Allah's will, but rather they are inquiring about the essence of that creation. As creatures who are *ma'sūm* (free from sin), the Angels' virtue lies in their constant obedience to Allah's commands. On the other hand, the virtue of Adam (human) lies in their potential to master knowledge.⁴⁸

In the Sufism tradition, if a person has come to know their Lord, they can be referred to as an *'arif* (one who knows).⁴⁹ According to al-Qusyairi, an *'arif* can be characterized by three things: the light of *ma'rifah* does not die out in their *wara'*, the purity of their inner self does not lead to outwardly bad behavior, and the blessings bestowed upon them by Allah do not lead them to anything that is forbidden by Allah.⁵⁰

Regarding the concept of Ecosufism, al-Qusyairi's thoughts can be observed when he interprets environmental verses. He emphasizes that humans should be mindful of their inner states and actions. For example, in QS. al-Mā'idah verse 32, al-Qusyairi explains that in terms of human actions, anyone who commits harm against another is as if they have harmed all of His creatures. Conversely, anyone who does good to another is as if they have done good to all of His creatures. He stresses

⁴⁸ Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzan ibn 'Abd al-Mulk al-Qusyairi, *Tafsīr al-Qusyairi al-Musammā: Laṭā'if al-Isyārah*, 1 edition (Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah Beirut, 2007), p. 33.

⁴⁹ Abū A'lā 'Afīfī, *At-Taṣawwuf: Aṣ-Ṣaurah ar-Rūḥiyyah fī al-Islām...*, p. 221.

⁵⁰ Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzan ibn 'Abd al-Mulk al-Qusyairi, *Ar-Risālah al-Qusyairiyyah...*, p. 645–46.

that in living their lives, humans should always consider and provide a positive impact on one another.⁵¹

Similarly, when he interprets QS. al-An'am verse 141, he notes that in addition to creating "ẓāhir gardens" like those of dates, pomegranates, and others, Allah also created "inner gardens." The inner gardens referred to here are the human hearts, which also have the potential to bear fruit, just like the physical gardens. This fruit can be seen through a person's condition and actions. If the ẓāhir gardens have reached the time of harvest, then the way to honor this moment is by harvesting and utilizing their fruits. Meanwhile, the heart, as an inner garden, must also honor this moment by being grateful to Allah as the giver of blessings. Al-Qusyairi adds that when a person is immersed in love for the giver of blessings (Allah), it is more virtuous than being thankful for the blessings themselves. Here is what Qusyairi said in *Laṭā'if al-Isyārah*:

شهود المنعم في عين النعمة أتم من الشكر مع وجود النعمة

*"Witnessing Allah as the giver of favors is more perfect than being grateful when favors are present."*⁵²

When interpreting QS. ar-Rūm verse 41, al-Qusyairi explains that the term "*al-barr*" (land) in this verse refers to a person's "self" (physical aspect), while "*al-baḥr*" (sea) refers to a person's inner self (spiritual aspect). The corruption of a person's self is caused by their indulgence in things prohibited by Allah. On the other hand, the corruption of a person's inner self is caused by their negligence (*al-gaflah*), leading their heart to be filled with negative qualities, such as ill intentions, envy, jealousy, and the like.⁵³

⁵¹ Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzan ibn 'Abd al-Mulk al-Qusyairi, *Tafsīr al-Qusyairi al-Musammā: Laṭā'if al-Isyārah*..., p. 262.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 315.

⁵³ Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzan ibn 'Abd al-Mulk al-Qusyairi, *Tafsīr al-Qusyairi al-Musammā: Laṭā'if al-Isyārah*, 3 edition (Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah Beirut, 2007), p. 12.

Furthermore, in QS. Sad verses 27-28, he asserts that Allah created the heavens and the earth with the purpose that humans might seek the truth behind them. This is not like the assumption of the disbelievers who claim that the heavens and the earth exist by themselves or in vain. He adds that here lies the clear distinction between the *muḥṣin* (one who does good) and the *muḥṣid* (one who causes corruption).⁵⁴

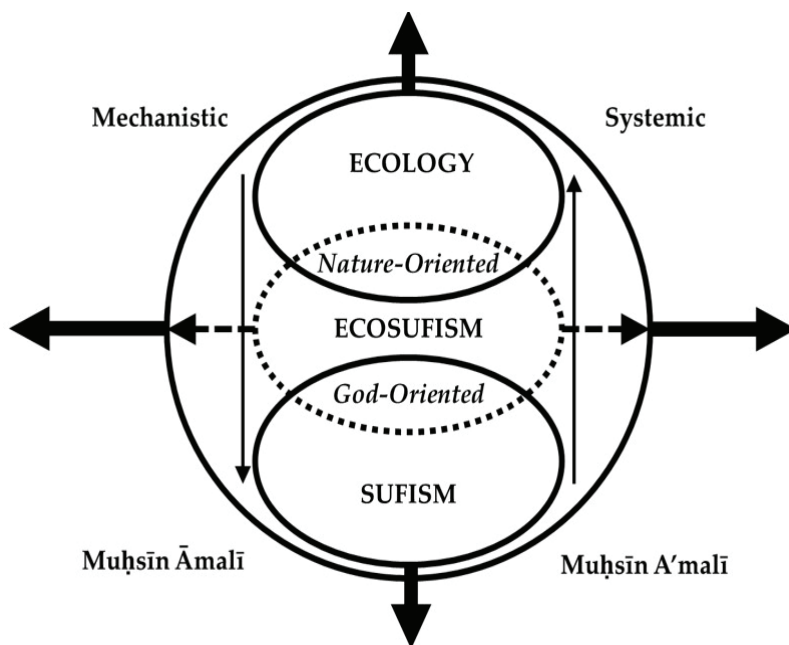
It should be noted that in Islam, the concept of *ihṣan* is one of the main variables that must exist within a Muslim, in addition to Islam (practice/pillars) and *iman* (belief). *Ihṣan* is a positive behavior that is a continuation of these two elements. This means that to become a complete human being (*al-insān al-kāmil*), it is necessary to integrate these three aspects.⁵⁵ In this context, one manifestation of *ihṣan* is an individual's focus on carrying out everything commanded by Allah, namely, caring for the environment and refraining from causing harm to it, as the environment is a trust from Allah entrusted to humanity.

In QS. al-A'rāf verse 56, al-Qusyairi clarifies the concept of *muḥṣin* (one who does good) by dividing it into two meanings: “*Muḥṣin* of action” (*muḥṣin a'malī*) and “*muḥṣin* of aspiration” (*āmali*). A “*muḥṣin* of action” is a servant who is always obedient to Allah, and their obedience has a positive impact on their surroundings. Meanwhile, a “*muḥṣin* of aspiration” is a sinner who constantly strives to improve themselves. A *muḥṣin* will always endeavor to have a positive impact on their surroundings, even if only through words, because their greatest motivation in doing is their profound love for Allah.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁵⁵ Arthur F. Buehler, *Recognizing Sufism...*, p. 46–47.

⁵⁶ Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzan ibn ‘Abd al-Mulk al-Qusyairī, *Tafsīr al-Qusyairī al-Musammā...*, p. 338–39.



Regarding arrogance, al-Qusyairi mentions that arrogance is the beginning of all evil deeds, which in this case can be associated with human behavior that exploits nature. The emergence of arrogance in a person is due to their negligence in remembering Allah.⁵⁷ He further stated:


إذا زكا الأصل نما الفرع وإن خبث الجوهر لم يطب ما تحلل منه وإن طاب
العنصر فالجزء يحاكي أصله، والأسرة على السريرة فمن صفا باطن قلبه
زكا ظاهر فعله، ومن كان بالعكس فحاله بالضد

*"If the root is good, then the branches will grow; if the core of something is bad, then whatever comes from it will not be good; if an element is good, then its parts will follow suit (be good). A person is identical to their core (their heart), so whoever has a pure heart, their actions will be pure; whoever is the opposite, then their condition will also be opposite."*⁵⁸

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

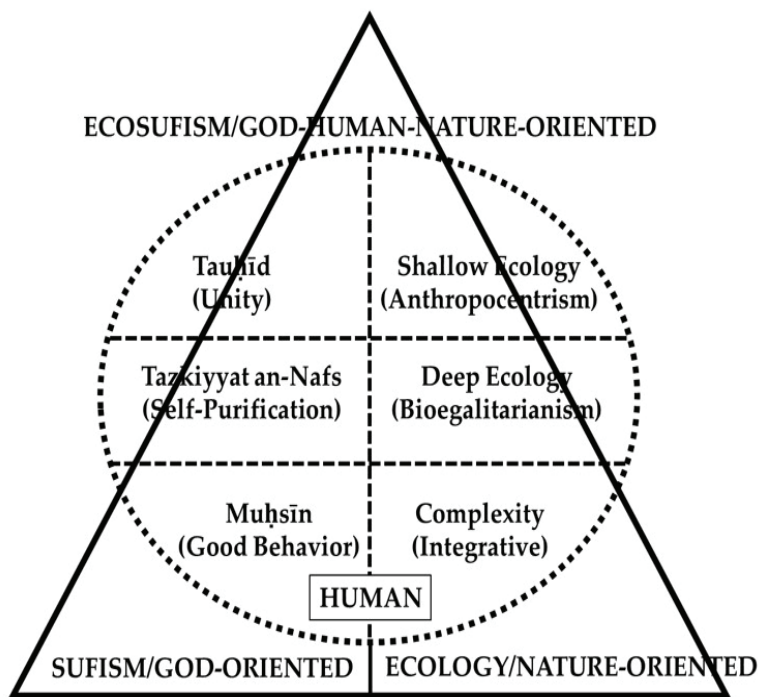
Here he depicts the human self as a land) *al-balaḍ*). If the core of that land (the heart) is pure, then its actions will be good, and the converse is also true. This means that the quality of human behavior, whether good or bad, must be viewed from the quality of the heart. Therefore, if there are humans who exploit nature, there must be an issue within their hearts that leads to such bad behavior.

God	Human		Nature
	Zahir Garden	Syarī'ah	Muḥsīn Āmalī
	Inner Garden	Ḥaqīqah	Muḥsīn A'malī
	'Ārif		
	<i>Tauḥīd</i> ←	← Tazkiyyat an-Nafs ←	

Conclusion

Ecosufism is a synthesis between “ecology” and “Sufism” that combines spiritual depth with environmental concern. The three concepts proposed by al-Qusyairi such as *tauḥīd* (unity), *tazkiyyat an-nafs* (self-purification), and *muḥsīn* (good behavior), can be integrated through the ecological triangulation of Arne Naess. This includes shallow ecology (anthropocentrism), deep ecology (bioegalitarianism), and complexity (integrative approaches), in order to create a holistic approach to the environment. *Tauḥīd*, which refers to the unity of God and humanity, is synonymous with the principle of shallow ecology that positions humans at the central point (anthropocentric). *Tazkiyyat an-nafs*, relating to self-purification, can certainly strengthen the idea of building individual character. And this is synonymous with deep ecology, where the implication of self-purification is to cultivate a sensitivity to equality with all natural organisms (bioegalitarianism). Lastly, the concept of *muḥsīn*, which teaches good behavior, is synonymous with complexity. Integration with the concept of complexity provides an understanding

that the ecological reality is a system that is interconnected and dynamic, requiring a comprehensive and multidimensional approach. Just as sufism sees the interconnection between God, humans, and nature (G-H-N).



By integrating the thoughts of al-Qusyairi and Arne Naess, Ecosufism offers a path that leads modern society towards a deeper understanding and practice. That is, spirituality and ecology go hand in hand (juxtaposition) in an effort to create behavior “that respects” all creatures, not only benefiting the environment but also enriching individual spirituality.

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