

Revealing the Values of Eco-theological Islamic Education in the Blora *Manganan* Tradition through the Perspective of Scientia Sacra Nasr

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Abstract

The global environmental crisis stems from the modern desacralization of nature. This study explores the *Manganan* tradition in Blora, Indonesia, as a living system of Eco-theological Islamic Education through Seyyed Hossein Nasr's *Scientia Sacra*. Using a qualitative phenomenological design, this study collected data through participant observation, semi-structured interviews with six informants, and documentation in Panolan Village, Blora, in July 2025. The data were analyzed using phenomenological-hermeneutic interpretation and validated through source and time triangulation. The research reveals three core dimensions. First, ontologically, the community maintains a sapiential vision perceiving nature as a Theophany (*Tajalli*) -a living reflection of the Divine-rejecting materialist commodification. Second, ethically, the ritual restores the human role from the exploitative Promethean Man to the stewarding Pontifical Man (*Khalifah*), interpreting environmental degradation through spiritual causality. Third, pedagogically, the tradition operates as a Pedagogy of the Sacred, transmitting values through embodied knowledge and mimesis rather than theoretical instruction. This study concludes that *Manganan* transcends cultural preservation, functioning as a resilient eco-theological mechanism that offers a spiritual counter-narrative to secular modernity and fosters grassroots environmental sustainability.

Keywords: *Eco-theology, Manganan Tradition, Scientia Sacra, Pedagogy of the Sacred, Seyyed Hossein Nasr.*

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary global ecological landscape is undergoing a critical transformation. Recent scientific reports confirm that the climate crisis has transcended the status of a potential threat, evolving into an undeniable existential reality.¹ Data

¹A. Sajjad et al., "Assessment of Carbon Footprint and Possible Interventions to Reduce Its Impact at University of Balochistan, Quetta, Pakistan: The First Attempt," *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 1194, no. 1 (2023): 012019, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1194/1/012019>;

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indicate a significant surge in global carbon emissions, primarily driven by uncontrolled deforestation and a chronic dependence on fossil fuel sectors, which directly threatens the pillars of global food security. This phenomenon of physical degradation, through the lens of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, is not merely a failure of natural resource management but an external manifestation of a profound spiritual and epistemological crisis within modern humanity, which has lost its vision of the sacred.² Contemporary man has metamorphosed into the Promethean Man, a rebel against Heaven who perceives nature not as a theophany (a reflection of the Divine Face) but solely as a material object (it-object) to be exploited indefinitely for mere economic ambition.³

Although scientific data, such as the Carbon Brief report, continues to present alarming facts, existing global responses tend to be trapped in technocratic-secular approaches that have proven ineffective in curbing the rate of destruction. Conventional solutions -ranging from carbon trading to energy transition policies- often fail to address the root of the problem because they still operate within the paradigm of modern science, which, according to Nasr,⁴ has performed a desacralization of knowledge. Modern science has effectively extinguished nature by severing its spiritual lifeblood, reducing it to a hollow, mechanical machine. Consequently, environmental conservation efforts lose a solid ontological and ethical foundation; nature is protected only for anthropocentric survival, not out of respect for its inherent sanctity. The failure of this paradigm necessitates a fundamental reorientation in how humans understand and interact with the environment -a shift from domination toward reverence- which can only be achieved through the restoration of Sacred Science (*Scientia Sacra*).

The destructive impact of this desacralized view of nature is not confined to global discourse; it has tangibly struck the heart of agrarian life in Indonesia. As noted in reports from the BMKG,⁵ climate change has triggered extreme weather anomalies leading to hydrometeorological disasters⁶ and massive crop failures,⁷ forcing farmers to confront a natural environment that is increasingly hostile toward human presence. Amidst this ecological vulnerability, communities in the Blora Regency offer a distinct response

Unesa, "Isu Lingkungan Global Dan Perubahan Iklim 2025 — Krisis Nyata Yang Tak Bisa Lagi Diabaikan," Fkp.Unesa.Ac.Id, 2025; Zeke Hausfather, "State of the Climate: 2025 in Top-Three Hottest Years on Record as Ocean Heat Surges," <https://www.carbonbrief.org/>, 2026, <https://www.carbonbrief.org/state-of-the-climate-2025-in-top-three-hottest-years-on-record-as-ocean-heat-surges/>.

² Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Kebutuhan Akan Sains Sakral*, ed. Syihabul Furqon and Raja Cahaya Islam (Yayasan Al-Ma'aarij Darmaraja, 2022).

³ Cyril Caminade et al., "Impact of Recent and Future Climate Change on Vector-Borne Diseases: Climate Change and Vector-Borne Diseases," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1436, no. 1 (2019): 157–73, <https://doi.org/10.1111/nyas.13950>.

⁴ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred* (New York Press, 1989), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-2217-0>.

⁵ "Gagal Panen Di Sulawesi Tengah Akibat Perubahan Iklim: Tantangan Dan Upaya Adaptasi," Bmkg.Go.Id, 2025.

⁶ Utia Afidah, "Wilayah Cepu Blora Kembali Terendam Banjir, 5 Kelurahan Terdampak," Jateng.Id, 2026, <https://beritajateng.id/blora/wilayah-cepu-blora-kembali-terendam-banjir-5-kelurahan-terdampak/>.

⁷ Deny Irwanto, "Warga Di 196 Desa Blora Kesulitan Air Bersih," *Metrotvnews.Com*, 2024, <https://www.metrotvnews.com/read/bD2C1RrB-warga-di-196-desa-blora-kesulitan-air-bersih>.

through the *Manganan* (Earth Alms) tradition. Unlike modern technical approaches that frequently fail to mitigate crises, the Blora community maintains this ritual as a form of devotion and gratitude (*syukur*) to God -a cultural mechanism believed to maintain harmony between humans and the cosmos.⁸ This tradition serves as a final bastion, guarding the community's consciousness from being swept away by the currents of exploitative agricultural industrialization.

While the *Manganan* tradition plays a central role in the sustainability of the community's socio-cultural ecosystem, existing academic studies tend to be trapped in reductionist sociological or theological-normative analyses. As found in the study by Malik et al.⁹ in Pati, research focus remains dominated by efforts to revitalize the ritual to align with Islamic creed and avoid polytheistic practices, positioning the tradition merely as an object of theological purification. Conversely, an Islamic jurisprudence approach characterizes the research of Pribadi and Andaryu,¹⁰ who frame *Sedekah Bumi* in Tenggarong through the lens of 'Urf (customary law) and its function as a catalyst for social solidarity among farmers. These two primary currents of literature, while providing significant contributions to aspects of Sharia legality and social cohesion, leave a fundamental lacuna: they have yet to address the ritual's pedagogical dimension as a vehicle for the transmission of metaphysical knowledge. There remains a paucity of literature framing *Manganan* as an informal educational system that transmits the values of Sacred Science (*Scientia Sacra*). Few studies have utilized the perennial philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr to uncover how this ritual truly functions to instill a theological consciousness that nature is a sacred entity to be revered, rather than a mere resource to be exhausted.

This article aims to bridge this epistemological gap by repositioning *Manganan* in Blora not merely as a custom, but as a Pedagogy of the Sacred. By adopting Nasr's *Scientia Sacra* perspective, this study argues that the *Manganan* ritual functions as an unwritten curriculum that transforms the farmer's consciousness from a Promethean Man -who feels entitled to exploit the earth- into a Pontifical Man who acts as a bridge (pontifex) between Heaven and Earth. Through a phenomenological analysis of ritual symbols, this article seeks to demonstrate that Blora's local wisdom offers an eco-spiritual educational model vital for the recovery of the contemporary environmental crisis.

⁸ Ahmad Syukri, "Sedekah Bumi: Bakti Masyarakat Blora Untuk Kelestarian Budaya," *Bloranews.Com*, 2016; Suparmin, "Sedekah Bumi Campur Bawur Desa Panolan," *Paninews.Com*, 2024, <https://www.paninews.com/2024/07/sedekah-bumi-campur-bawur-desa-panolan.html>.

⁹ Muh. Syauqi Malik, "Revitalization of The Earth's Alms Tradition With Islamic Rituals in Digital Era," *KHATULISTIWA: Journal of Islamic Studies* 13, no. 2 (2023): 102–14, <https://doi.org/10.24260/khatulistiwa.v13i2.2378>.

¹⁰ Guntur Pribadi and Lilik Andaryu, "The Earth Charity Tradition of the Farming Community of Bukit Biru Village in Tenggarong in Perspective 'Urf," *International Journal on Advanced Science, Education, and Religion (IJoASER)* 7, no. 4 (2024): 300–308, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33648/ijoaser.v7i4.516>.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative phenomenological-hermeneutic approach¹¹ to explore the lived experience of the Blora community regarding the sanctity of nature.¹² The selection of phenomenology is predicated on the research objective to transcend a mere physical description of the Manganan ritual sequence, aiming instead to explore the underlying structure of consciousness regarding nature's sanctity.¹³ Methodologically, this study fuses Max van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenological framework with Seyyed Hossein Nasr's *Scientia Sacra*, emphasizing the dialectic pursuit of inner, esoteric meaning (*batin*) concealed within outward, exoteric ritual forms (*zahir*). To preserve the authentic emic perspective, the primary researcher rigorously applied the principle of Epoché (bracketing) through the maintenance of a Reflexive Bracketing Journal prior to and during fieldwork.¹⁴ In this journal, the researcher explicitly documented personal theological preconceptions, academic biases regarding Javanese syncretism, and prior theoretical knowledge of Nasr's framework. By consciously externalizing these preconceptions, the researcher entered the lifeworld of the participants with an open, non-judgmental stance, preventing premature theoretical imposition during data collection.¹⁵

The research was conducted in Panolan Village, Blora Regency, Central Java, selected purposively due to its distinct status as an agrarian stronghold that persistently maintains traditional ritual purity amidst rapid agricultural modernization. Informants were recruited using a combination of purposive sampling and a gatekeeper-assisted approach,¹⁶ where initial field access was facilitated by the Village Head, who introduced the research team to local cultural custodians. Subsequently, maximum variation sampling was employed to recruit six key informants representing three distinct socio-cultural typologies: Keepers of Tradition (traditional elders and the local cleric to elucidate historical-theological foundations), Practitioners (tenant farmers, ritual cooks, and village officials to investigate ethical, practical, and socio-political dimensions), and Transmitters (educators and youth leaders to examine intergenerational value

¹¹Serge F. Hein and Wendy J. Austin, "Empirical and Hermeneutic Approaches to Phenomenological Research in Psychology: A Comparison.," *Psychological Methods* 6, no. 1 (2001): 3, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1037/1082-989X.6.1.3>; Rasha Alsaigh and Imelda Coyne, "Doing a Hermeneutic Phenomenology Research Underpinned by Gadamer's Philosophy: A Framework to Facilitate Data Analysis," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 20 (2021): 16094069211047820, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211047820>.

¹²Clark Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods* (SAGE Publications Inc., 1994); Kitty Maria Suddick et al., "The Work of Hermeneutic Phenomenology," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 19 (2020): 1609406920947600, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920947600>.

¹³Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, Dan R&D*. (Alfabeta, 2022).

¹⁴Bradley Edward Roberts, "Husserl's Epoche and the Way of the Sword: Exploring Pathways into Phenomenological Inquiry," *Qualitative Research Journal* 19, no. 4 (2019): 391–402.

¹⁵Nur Syam, *Sosiologi Islam Dalam Multi-Perspektif*, 1st ed. (Yayasan Nur Syam Center, 2025); Roberts, "Husserl's Epoche and the Way of the Sword: Exploring Pathways into Phenomenological Inquiry"; John Bednall, "Epoche and Bracketing within the Phenomenological Paradigm," *Issues in Educational Research* 16, no. 2 (2006): 123–38.

¹⁶Annamaria Bagnasco et al., "Theoretical Sampling," *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 70 (2014): e6-7.

transmission).¹⁷ To adhere to publication ethics and ensure privacy, informant identities were anonymized using alphanumeric codes (e.g., INF.KT-01), INF.KT-02), as detailed in the data matrix.

Table 1. Research Informants

Informant Category	Informant Code*	Role/Typology	Time & Duration (Estimated)	Data Collection Focus (Instrument Focus)
A. The Keepers of Tradition (KT)	INF.KT-01	Village Elder / Custodian of the Sacred Site (<i>Juru Kunci Punden</i>)	Pre- & Post-Ritual (2 x 60 mins)	Oral history of the <i>punden</i> , prayer protocols (<i>pakem</i>), and the meaning of <i>sangkan paraning dumadi</i> (the origin and destiny of being) within the ritual.
	INF.KT-02	Village Religious Official (<i>Modin</i>) / Cleric (<i>Kyai</i>)	During Ritual Procession (45 mins)	Prayer texts (Javanese mantras & Islamic prayers) and the concept of <i>wasilah</i> (intermediary) in prayers directed toward nature.
B. The Practitioners (TP)	INF.TP-03	Senior Tenant Farmer (Male)	Morning in the Rice Field (60 mins)	Farming ethics, perception of the land (inanimate object vs. mother), and responses to pests or crop failure.
	INF.TP-04	Maker of the <i>Gunungan</i> (Female)	D-1 of Ritual (Kitchen) (90 mins)	Meaning of food ingredients, the feeling (<i>rasa</i>) while cooking for the ritual, and the concept of <i>ngalap berkah</i> (seeking blessings).
	INF.TP-05	Village Head / Official	Village Office (30 mins)	Policy support, mass mobilization, and the social function of the ritual.
C. The Transmitters (TT)	INF.TT-06	School Teacher / Youth Leader	Afternoon (60 mins)	Methods of transmitting traditional values to the youth and the challenges posed by gadgets/modernity.

Note: Codes are categorized as KT (Keepers of Tradition), TP (The Practitioners), and TT (The Transmitters).

Data were gathered through three integrated qualitative techniques: participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and artifact analysis.¹⁸ The primary researcher immersed in the ritual field for three weeks, directly observing the *uborampe* (offering) preparation in domestic kitchens, the *gunungan* procession, and communal prayers at the *punden* (sacred site), systematically compiling field notes to record sensory, spatial, and emotional dynamics. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in naturalistic settings in the local Javanese language, navigating between *Krama Inggil* (formal register) for elders and *Ngoko* (informal register) for peers. With the explicit consent of participants, all interviews were audio-recorded using a high-fidelity digital recorder, yielding approximately 9.5 hours of audio data transcribed verbatim in the original Javanese language. To prevent semantic distortion during translation into English,

¹⁷Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, *Dasar-Dasar Penelitian Kualitatif* (Pustaka Belajar, 2003); Imam Gunawan, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Teori Dan Praktik*, Cet. 2 (Bumi Aksara, 2014).

¹⁸Steven A. Stolz, "The Practice of Phenomenology in Educational Research," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 55, no. 7 (2023): 822–34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2022.2138745>.

a rigorous Cross-Language Translation Protocol was established;¹⁹ key Javanese ontological terms (such as *rasa*, *ngalap berkah*, and *sangkan paraning dumadi*) were intentionally retained in italics with contextual explanations, and translated transcripts underwent back-translation checks validated by a Javanese linguistic and cultural scholar.

Data analysis did not follow generic linear reductionism; instead, it operationalized Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutic Circle, progressing through three iterative, non-linear phases.²⁰ First, a Naïve Reading was performed through repeated reading of verbatim transcripts and observation notes to gain an open, holistic immersion into the participants' lived experience.²¹ Second, Structural Analysis was conducted through horizontalization, treating all statements as having equal value initially, where significant statements expressing the sanctity of nature were isolated into Meaning Units and grouped into thematic clusters using iterative phenomenological coding (such as "Nature as Living Mother" and "Spiritual Reciprocity").²² Third, Comprehensive Interpretation achieved a Gadamerian fusion of horizons, where the emic experiences of the Bloro community were integrated with the philosophical framework of Nasr's *Scientia Sacra*, culminating in the theoretical formulation of the Pedagogy of the Sacred.²³

To establish rigor and trustworthiness (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability), source and time triangulation were conducted alongside formal Member Checking, where draft summaries of thematic findings and translated transcript excerpts were brought back to key informants to confirm interpretive accuracy.²⁴ Ethical considerations were strictly enforced throughout the study; institutional research ethics approval was secured prior to fieldwork, and Informed Consent (written or recorded verbal consent for non-literate elders) was obtained. To guarantee privacy and anonymity, all personal identifiers were replaced with alphanumeric codes (e.g., INF.KT-01), and raw audio data were stored in encrypted, password-protected cloud storage accessible solely to the primary research team.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Manganan tradition in Panolan Village, Bloro, unfolds as an annual communal gathering anchored at the local *punden* (sacred ancestral site). During the ritual procession, villagers assemble carrying *ambengan* (baskets containing cooked rice and traditional side dishes) to perform communal prayers led by local religious and traditional

¹⁹Nicholas E. Evangelopoulos, "Latent Semantic Analysis," *WIREs Cognitive Science* 4, no. 6 (2013): 683–92, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/wcs.1254>.

²⁰Gustaf R. Rame, "Hermeneutika Fenomenologis Paul Ricoeur," *Missio Ecclesiae* 3, no. 1 (2014): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.52157/me.v3i1.33>; Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Christian University, 1976).

²¹Julien Murzi and Lorenzo Rossi, "Naïve Validity," *Synthese* 199, no. 3 (2021): 819–41, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-017-1541-6>.

²²Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man* (Mandala, 1988), <https://doi.org/10.2307/1569702>.

²³Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*.

²⁴Jonathan Smith et al., *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research* (SAGE Publications Inc, 2009).

figures, which is subsequently followed by the shared consumption of the meal. Rather than operating merely as a static cultural display, the physical sequence of Manganan serves as an empirical focal point where socio-ecological bonds and communal solidarity are actively enacted and reaffirmed by the villagers.

The historical narrative of Manganan is intrinsically intertwined with the village's foundational origins and agricultural cycles. Field observations reveal that the community does not experience the event as a routine post-harvest celebration, but rather as an act of spiritual indebtedness and ancestral reverence. As articulated by the Village Head, it is a tradition of gratitude and homage to ancestors: "*Manganan kanggo wong Panolan niku perwujudan rasa Syukur setelah panen... Selain bentuk Syukur, manganan sejatinya jadi ajang ziarah leluhur.*" (Manganan for Panolan people is a manifestation of gratitude after harvest... Besides gratitude, it is essentially a pilgrimage to ancestors). (Interview with INF.TP-05, 23 Juli 2025). This empirical reality demonstrates how the ritual serves as an essential bridge connecting the living community, their physical territory, and their spiritual progenitors. Through the lens of Seyyed Hossein Nasr's *Scientia Sacra*, this phenomenon serves as a living manifestation of Sacred Science resisting the modern desacralization of nature.²⁵ The findings and analysis are categorized into three key eco-theological themes below.

Nature as Theophany and Metaphysical Symbolism

Moving beyond the surface procession, the lived experience of the Panolan community reveals an underlying eco-theological consciousness regarding their natural environment. Fieldwork establishes that land and water are not perceived as inanimate material resources or mere instruments for agrarian production, but as living, sacred entities that demand moral reciprocity. This personified relationship with nature is explicitly articulated by the Elder of Panolan Village (INF.KT-01):

"Loh, sanes benda mati, Mas. Bumi iku coromono Ibu, Banyu iku koyo Getih. Punden iki ora mung wit meh utawa sumber banyu biasa. Niku pancer, ono sing mbaureksa. Yen awake dewe macul, iku jane kudu nembung kalih sing mbahureksa. Ora oleh sembrono, kudu kulanuwun."

(Look, the Earth [land] is not a dead object, brother. The Earth is like a mother, water is like blood... If we hoe [the land], we should essentially ask permission... One cannot be careless; one must ask for permission. (Interview with INF.KT-01, 25 Juli 2025).

This statement illuminates an emic ontology wherein everyday agrarian practices are continuously mediated by deep respect for the unseen spiritual guardians (*ingkang mbaureksa*) of the land. When interpreted through Seyyed Hossein Nasr's framework of *Scientia Sacra*, these empirical findings illustrate how the Manganan tradition transcends the boundaries of a mere agrarian rite, functioning as a living manifestation of Sacred Science that resists the modern desacralization of nature.²⁶ By viewing the Earth as a

²⁵Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Religion and The Order of Nature* (Oxford University Press, 1996).

²⁶Nasr, *Religion and The Order of Nature*; Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*.

nurturing mother (*Ibu*) and water as life-bearing blood (*Getih*), the cosmological worldview of the Blora community stands in stark contrast to the post-Cartesian mechanistic paradigm that enforces a rigid dichotomy between human subjects and natural objects.²⁷ Analyzed through this lens, the cultural practice of *kulanuwun* (seeking permission) signifies a sapiental vision: a perception of nature that elevates it from an impersonal “It” (object) to a sacred “Thou” (subject) endowed with intrinsic spiritual dignity.²⁸ Here, nature is recognized as a Theophany (*Tajalli*), a direct reflection and manifestation of Divine attributes within the material realm.²⁹

This finding fundamentally challenges and systematically redefines dominant paradigms in the existing literature regarding Javanese agrarian rituals. On one hand, conventional functionalist and socio-anthropological studies, such as those by Pribadi and Andaryu,³⁰ as well as classical Geertzian interpretations,³¹ frequently reduce local rituals to mere utilitarian instruments for maintaining social cohesion, economic coping mechanisms, or legalistic adaptations under the rubric of *‘Urf* (customary law). On the other hand, puritanical or strict normative readings often mischaracterize these practices as empty syncretism or theological deviations.³² This study argues that both perspectives suffer from an epistemological myopia; by focusing exclusively on outward social or formal dimensions, they fail to penetrate the underlying metaphysical reality. As demonstrated in Panolan, social solidarity and communal bonding are not the primary drivers of the ritual, but rather an epiphenomenon, a natural byproduct, of a much deeper ontological consciousness. This position aligns with and extends the work of Misridah et al.³³ and Woodward,³⁴ confirming that the core of Javanese Islamic traditions is deeply rooted in an expression of Aqidah (faith) and metaphysical Tawhid, wherein social harmony flows directly from a restored cosmological balance between humanity, nature, and the Divine.

This ontological depth is visually and physically manifested through the metaphysical symbolism of the *Gunungan* and *Punden*. A female practitioner (INF.TP-04) elucidated the vertical transformation of meaning within the offering:

²⁷René Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, 4th ed. (Hackett Pub., 1998).

²⁸Kenneth Kramer, *Martin Buber’s I and Thou: Practicing Living Dialogue* (Paulist Press, 2003); Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, ed. trans. Walter Kaufmann (Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970).

²⁹Hariyanto, “Transformasi Tasawuf Modern Menurut Nasaruddin Umar Dan Relevansinya Dalam Masyarakat Multikulturalisme Di Indonesia,” *Hikamia: Jurnal Pemikiran Tasawuf Dan Peradaban Islam* 4, no. 1 SE-Articles (2024): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.58572/hkm.v4i1.68>; Nasaruddin Umar, *Tasawuf Modern (Jalan Mengenal Dan Mendekatkan Diri Kepada Allah SWT)* (Republika, 2014).

³⁰Pribadi and Andaryu, “The Earth Charity Tradition of the Farming Community of Bukit Biru Village in Tenggara in Perspective ‘Urf.”

³¹Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (University of Chicago Press, 1976).

³²Andrew Beatty, *Varieties of Javanese Religion: An Anthropological Account*, in *Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), <https://doi.org/DOI:%2010.1017/CBO9780511612497>.

³³Wahab et al., “Local Wisdom-Based Character Values in Millennial Madurese Community: A Study of Molothén Traditions,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 1 (2020): 57–77, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2020.91.57-77>.

³⁴Mark R. Woodward, *Islam Jawa: Kesalehan Normatif Versus Kebatinan*, Cet. II (LKIS, 2004).

“Ngapa kok bentuke gunung? Niku simbol munggah maring Gusti Allah. Sayur karo palawija niku asale saking ngisor, ditata munggah dadi siji teng pucuk... Bedo nek sampon didongani, niku insyaallah angsal berkah. Mangan sithik mawon, raose marem, soale wonten nur dunga neng jerone.”

(Why is it shaped like a mountain? It is a symbol of ascending to God... arranged upwards to become one at the peak... if the prayer has been recited, it becomes a blessing. Eating just a little feels satisfying because there is Light from the prayer inside it). (Interview with INF.TP-04, 24 Juli 2025).

Visual analysis of archival documentation further corroborates this theophanic manifestation.³⁵ The *Gunungan* is constructed with structural precision, tapering upwards to function as an Axis Mundi, visually representing the principle of *Tawhid* (Unity) and serving as a bridge between the *Nasut* (terrestrial/profane) and the *Lahut* (Divine/sacred) realms.³⁶

Furthermore, the theological clarification provided by the Custodian (INF.KT-01): *“Awake dewe iku mboten nyembah wit-witan utawi petilasan... Kita ngormati sing ghaib minangka makhluk Gusti sing luwih sepuh”* (We do not worship trees or water... We respect the unseen as God’s creatures), demonstrates the community’s intuitive mastery of the Hierarchy of Being (Interview with INF.KT-01, 25 Juli 2025). This distinction effectively counters allegations of polytheism (*shirk*),³⁷ confirming that the ritual serves not as idolatry, but as an epistemological mechanism to access knowledge by presence (*al-‘ilm al-hudhuri*) regarding the sanctity inherent in matter.³⁸

Restoration of the Pontifical Man: Ecological Ethics and Spiritual Causality

The restoration of the human function as a steward of nature is empirically evident in the ritual’s material culture. The deliberate use of teak leaves -rather than plastic- to wrap thousands of *Sego Berkat* portions transcends economic necessity, symbolizing a conscious return to nature. Phenomenologically, the collective prayer led by the Modin facilitates a transference of sanctity; food that was once a mere economic commodity is transmuted into a sacred entity (*berkah*). Consequently, the community’s scramble for these packets is driven not by physical hunger, but by a metaphysical desire to internalize the blessings imbued within the matter.

This ontological awareness engenders a rigorous agricultural ethic, elevating the ritual from a custom to a moral imperative. A Senior Tenant Farmer (INF.TP-03) articulated a profound psychological and spiritual anxiety regarding ritual omission:

“Nek ora disedekahi, rasane ngganjel, mboten mampeh neng ati. Sanes wedi gagal panen mawon, tapi ora ilok kalih Gusti Sing Akarya Jagad. Sego berkat bungkus godhong jati niku sanes panganan tok, niku wujud matur nuwun kita.”

³⁵Pandawa.ID, *Sedekah Bumi Desa Panolan 2025*, aired 2025, on Creator Pandawa.ID.

³⁶Fakhruddin Faiz, *Filsafat Kebahagiaan: Dari Plato, via Al-Farabi Dan Al-Ghazali, Sampai Ki Ageng Suryamentaram*, IX (PT. Mizan Pustaka, 2025); Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religions*, ed. Willard R. Trask (Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1956).

³⁷Malik, “Revitalization of The Earth’s Alms Tradition With Islamic Rituals in Digital Era.”

³⁸Mehdi Ha’iri Yazdi, *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence* (State University of New York Press, 1992), <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.18252864>.

Alam sampun paring gesang, mosok manungsa mboten paring sedekah wangsul?"

(If alms are not given, it feels unsettling... it is unethical towards God who created the universe... Nature has given life; should humans not give alms in return?). (Interview with INF.TP-03, 25 Juli 2025).

Furthermore, the community interprets environmental degradation through the lens of spiritual causality. INF.TP-03 explicitly links ecological failure to human moral transgression:

"Sinten sing dosa? Nggih manungsa piyambak... Tapi nek manungsa srakah, lali sedekah, nggih diparingi wereng utawi tikus. Panen gagal niku sanes cobaan tok, niku tegurane Gusti."

(Who is sinning? It is humans themselves... if humans are greedy, forgetting to give alms, then they are given planthoppers or rats. Crop failure is... a reprimand from God). (Interview with INF.TP-03, 25 Juli 2025).

These findings validate Nasr's critique of the Promethean Man -the autonomous modern subject whose rebellion against Heaven precipitates cosmic disequilibrium.³⁹ In response, *Manganan* functions as a mechanism to reinstate the human role as the Pontifical Man (*Khalifah fil Ardh*). This role carries the divine mandate to nurture (*imarah*) rather than corrupt (*fasad*) the earth.⁴⁰ The ritual is perceived as a restorative intervention for soil degraded by modernization, as described by the Village Modin (INF.KT-02):

"Manganan niki carane warga mriki ngadhemke bumi... supados Gusti Allah paring sehat malih dumateng bumi sing mpun kesel dipaculi terus." (*Manganan* is the community's way of cooling the earth... so that God grants healing to the earth that is exhausted).

Pedagogy of the Sacred: Transmission via Participation

The mechanism of value transmission within the *Manganan* tradition offers a fundamental epistemological critique of the modern secular education system, which routinely bifurcates intellectual cognition from sacred spiritual values, a phenomenon Seyyed Hossein Nasr identifies as the secularization of the curriculum⁴¹. While modern environmental education typically relies on abstract classroom instruction that treats ecological crises as mere technical problems to be solved through scientific data,⁴² the

³⁹ Mansur Hidayat, "Islamic Eco-Theology: Religious Narratives in the Climate Crisis in Indonesia," *Bulletin of Indonesian Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (2023): 197–212, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.51214/biis.v2i2.678>; Nasr, *Kebutuhan Akan Sains Sakral*.

⁴⁰ Abbas Sofwan Matla'il Fajar, *Fikih Ekologi: Etika Pemanfaatan Lingkungan Di Lereng Gunung Kelud* (Deepublish, 2021).

⁴¹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Traditional Islam in the Modern World* (K. Paul International, 1990).

⁴² Parker J. Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1993); Della Rahmayani et al., "Integrasi Kosmologi Jawa Dan Ekoteologi Islam Dalam Pemikiran Seyyed Hossein Nasr," *Panangkaran: Jurnal Penelitian Agama Dan Masyarakat* 9, no. 2 (2025): 276–300, <https://doi.org/10.14421/panangkaran.v9i2.4660>.

Sedekah Bumi ritual employs an operative model of the Pedagogy of the Sacred. Within this indigenous paradigm, value transmission occurs not through discursive lecturing or formal ethical mandates, but through embodied knowledge, sensory immersion, and mimesis (direct imitation).⁴³

Field observations reveal an active, non-coercive process of intergenerational cultural regeneration anchored in early childhood participation. Small children are observed carrying *ancak* (offering baskets) and eagerly participating in the *gunungan* scramble, a visceral process of habituation that instills an unwritten, implicit curriculum that human existence is fundamentally defined by sharing and ecological interdependence.⁴⁴ Far from being an obsolete relic resisting modern tools, the ritual demonstrates dynamic adaptability; the local Youth Organization (Karang Taruna) utilizes digital platforms such as Instagram to document and disseminate ritual aesthetics.⁴⁵ This digital engagement illustrates that technological modernity can be adopted as an external instrument (*wasilah*) to preserve the essence of the Primordial Tradition (Sophia Perennis) without eroding its intrinsic sacred value.⁴⁶ A Youth Leader (INF.TT-06) elucidated the effectiveness of this non-discursive pedagogical mechanism:

“Gak enek ceramahe, Mas. Lare-lare niku namung niteni lan melu-melu... Mboten usah didawuhi aja ngerusak alam, tapi kanthi ningali wong tuwane ngurmati pari, lare niku rumasuk piyambak. Ilmu niku mboten saking buku, tapi saking lakon.” (There are no lectures, brother. The children just observe and follow along... There is no need to order them not to damage nature; by seeing their parents respect the rice plants, the children absorb it themselves. Knowledge does not come only from books, but from action). (Interview with INF.TT-06, 25 Juli 2025).

When contextualized within critical educational literature, this empirical reality systematically challenges dominant pedagogical assumptions that reduce environmental learning to formal information processing. Classical and contemporary educational theorists, such as David Orr and C.A. Bowers, have long argued that Westernized formal schooling often functions as an agent of ecological alienation by detaching students from their local habitats and teaching them to view nature through a utilitarian lens.⁴⁷ Furthermore, studies on indigenous learning modalities by Gregory Cajete confirm that authentic ecological stewardship cannot be generated through cognitive theory alone; it

⁴³ Max van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 2nd Editio (Routledge, 2016), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315421056>.

⁴⁴ Rohim Habibi et al., “Transformative Social Spirituality Among Santri Goba Gabul: An Ibn Khaldunian Study Of Hidden Curriculum,” *Jurnal El-Tarbawi* 18, no. 2 (2025): 347–67, <https://doi.org/10.20885/tarbawi.vol18.iss2.art8>.

⁴⁵ Pandawa.ID, *Sedekah Bumi Desa Panolan 2025*.

⁴⁶ Frithjof Schuon, *The Fullness of God: Frithjof Schuon on Christianity* (World Wisdom, Inc., 2004).

⁴⁷ David W. Orr, *Ecological Literacy: Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World* (State University of New York Press, 1992); Chet A. Bowers, *Educating for Eco-Justice and Community* (University of Georgia Press, 2001); Rohim Habibi, “The Construction of Religious Moderation Based on Local Wisdom: A Study of the Samin Community in Blora,” *Al-Jadwa: Jurnal Studi Islam* 5, no. 2 (2026): 186–96, <https://doi.org/10.38073/aljadwa.4285>.

demands a relational, place-based pedagogy rooted in lived experience (*lakon*).⁴⁸ By prioritizing *lakon* over text-based instruction, the Blora community bypasses the limitations of secularized schooling, cultivating an intuitive, embodied eco-literacy that permanently connects the learner to the sacredness of matter.

This non-discursive pedagogy ensures the continuity of the chain of wisdom (*silsilah hikmah*), directly countering the secularization of knowledge which, according to Nasr, severs the transcendent link between the human knower (*al-‘aqil*) and the Divine Source (*al-Ma‘qul*).⁴⁹ This pedagogical framework actively cultivates a spiritual mindset that prioritizes metaphysical blessing (*berkah*) over narrow material calculation—a critical distinction highlighted by the Village Elder (INF.KT-01) in his response to the skepticism of the youth:

“Kula jawab: Iki dudu mbuwang, Le. Iki mbalekne rasa syukur. Menawi lare sekolah ngangge mikir bathi-rugi, kula ajari mikir berkah. Nek alam rusak mergo kimia, pintermu sekolah ora bakal iso nukulke pari”.

(I answer: This is not throwing away, son. This is returning gratitude. If school children use a profit-loss way of thinking, I teach a perspective of blessing. If nature is destroyed by chemicals, your school knowledge will not be able to grow rice). (Interview with INF.KT-01, 25 Juli 2025).

This intergenerational dialogue illustrates the profound resilience of indigenous Islamic wisdom in safeguarding the sacred perception of the land amidst the pressures of modern, technocratic rationality⁵⁰. By explicitly contrasting the profit-loss (*bathi-rugi*) logic of chemical-dependent modern agriculture with the blessing (*berkah*) orientation of ancestral gratitude, the elder exposes the ultimate fragility of secular scientism. The *Manganan* tradition thus functions as an active epistemological resistance, proving that indigenous spiritual traditions possess a robust, self-sustaining educational structure capable of maintaining ecological sanity where modern secular education frequently fails.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the *Manganan* tradition in Panolan Village, Blora, serves as an operative system of Eco-theological Islamic Education that actively resists the modern desacralization of nature. Analyzed through Seyyed Hossein Nasr’s framework of *Scientia Sacra*, the tradition offers a three-fold spiritual counter-narrative: ontologically by perceiving nature as a Theophany (*Tajalli*), ethically by elevating human agency from Promethean to Pontifical Man (*Khalifah*), and pedagogically by transmitting values through an embodied Pedagogy of the Sacred. Theoretically, these findings

⁴⁸Yulia Nesterova, “Rethinking Environmental Education with the Help of Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Traditional Ecological Knowledge,” *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 54, no. 4 (2020): 1047–52, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12471>.

⁴⁹Nasr, *Traditional Islam in the Modern World*.

⁵⁰Febi Nurul Safitri and Widya Lestari Ningsih, “Punden Janjang Dan Tradisi Manganan Janjang Di Blora,” *Kompas.Com*, 2022; Saichul Anam et al., “Islamization of Javanese Ritual: Ruwat Santri as a Reflection of Interfaith and Cultural Harmony in Indonesia,” *Harmoni* 24, no. 1 (2025): 82–105, <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v24i1.847>.

advance an ontological turn in Islamic Studies and Islamic Education by proving that classical metaphysics (*Tasawuf and Hikmah*) operates as a lived reality, thereby challenging both functionalist-reductionist views that trivialize rituals as mere social tools and puritanical critiques that dismiss them as theological deviations. Practically, this study provides a viable blueprint for local wisdom-based environmental education, demonstrating how indigenous sacred traditions can be leveraged into community-level and institutional eco-literacy programs as an authentic, faith-based alternative to technos-ecular environmental models.

Despite these contributions, this research acknowledges key methodological limitations that present valuable avenues for future scholarly inquiry. Geographically and empirically, the study was localized to a single agrarian village in Blora with six key informants, focusing on qualitative-hermeneutic interpretation rather than quantitative ecological metrics; hence, the findings cannot be uncritically generalized across all Javanese or Islamic contexts. To build upon this foundation, future research should undertake comparative studies across diverse agrarian and coastal Muslim communities in Southeast Asia to examine the broader resonance of *Scientia Sacra*. Additionally, scholars should explore practical frameworks for integrating this Pedagogy of the Sacred into formal pesantren and madrasah curricula, alongside longitudinal inquiries into how rapid digital modernization influences the intergenerational transmission of sacred ecological values among rural youth.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

In preparing this manuscript, the author used Google Gemini to assist in translating and paraphrasing the article into English. All results were then reviewed and revised by the author, who bears full responsibility for the final content of the publication.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Kadarismanto: Conceptualization, methodology, writing – original draft preparation, and overall supervision of the research. Adi Kusmanto: Data curation, formal analysis, investigation, and visualization of the ritual symbols. Rohim Habibi: Writing – review & editing, validation of the phenomenological-hermeneutic interpretation, and coordination of fieldwork. Abdulloh Hadziq: Conceptual framing, integration of Seyyed Hossein Nasr's *Scientia Sacra* framework, and literature review.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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