

Abstrak: Studi ini menyelidiki filsafat iluminasi sufi Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī dan mengeksplorasi potensi kontribusinya terhadap kesadaran lingkungan kontemporer. Krisis ekologis global yang semakin mendesak telah memicu perdebatan lintas disiplin ilmu tentang akar penyebab dan solusi yang komprehensif. Beberapa pemikir kontemporer berargumen bahwa krisis ekologi merupakan manifestasi dari krisis ontologis yang lebih mendasar, yaitu hilangnya relasi harmonis manusia dengan alam. Dalam konteks ini, filsafat Islam, khususnya aliran iluminasi (*ishrāq*) yang dikembangkan oleh Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, menawarkan perspektif unik yang dapat memperkaya diskursus lingkungan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengintegrasikan konsep ontologis dan epistemologis Suhrawardī dengan prinsip-prinsip ekologi kontemporer untuk menawarkan perspektif baru tentang hubungan manusia-alam. Pendekatan deskriptif-analitis digunakan untuk menganalisis teks-teks filosofis Suhrawardī dan menghubungkannya dengan teori-teori ekologi modern. Studi ini mengungkapkan bahwa konsep *aṣālah al-māhiyah* (realitas esensial) Suhrawardī dan epistemologi iluminasinya, yang memandang semua makhluk sebagai emanasi cahaya ilahi, menantang pandangan dunia antroposentris. Perspektif ini mendorong dua prinsip ekologi fundamental: egalitarianisme iluminatif biosferik dan keseimbangan iluminatif. Prinsip-prinsip ini menekankan keadilan sosial dan keseimbangan lingkungan, mengakui manusia sebagai bagian integral dari alam dengan tanggung jawab untuk melestarikannya. Dengan menggeser hubungan manusia-alam dari dikotomi subjek-objek ke interaksi antar-subjek, filsafat Suhrawardī dapat meningkatkan kesadaran tentang isu-isu lingkungan dan menginspirasi praktik-praktik yang lebih berkelanjutan. Integrasi antara kebijaksanaan spiritual dan kesadaran ekologis ini menawarkan pendekatan holistik untuk mengatasi tantangan lingkungan kontemporer.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Biospheric Egalitarianism, Equilibrium-Illuminative, Iluminasi, Konservasi Lingkungan, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, Tasawuf Ekologis.*

Introduction

The global environmental crisis we are facing today is an urgent issue that demands immediate attention. Scientists warn that we are approaching ecological tipping points that could threaten human survival and biodiversity (Steffen et al. 2018, 8253–59). Despite efforts through environmental policies and green technologies, these measures appear insufficient to address the root causes of the problem. Some contemporary thinkers argue that the ecological crisis is fundamentally a spiritual crisis and a crisis of perspective (Tucker and Evelyn 2003, 36–54). The dominant materialistic and anthropocentric worldview of modern civilization has led to human alienation from nature and a loss of reverence for the earth (Nasr 1996, 56–58; Onin and Alfawa’ra 2023, 1–5).

In this context, the Islamic spiritual wisdom tradition, particularly sufism, can significantly contribute. Sufism, with its emphasis on the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) and the interconnectedness of all creation, offers a solid philosophical foundation for developing a more profound environmental ethic (Foltz 2003b, xliii). Several scholars have explored the potential of sufism in providing inspiration for the environmental movement, developing what is called “eco-sufism” or “ecological sufism” (Özdemir 2003, 1–15).

One sufi figure whose thoughts are particularly relevant to this discussion is Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (1154-1191 CE), the founder of the illumination philosophy (*ḥikmat al-ishrāq*) in the Islamic intellectual tradition. Although Suhrawardī lived long before the emergence of the modern environmental crisis, his ontological and epistemological views on light and illumination have important implications for understanding and treating nature (Razavi 1997, 1–7; Ihsan, Perdana, and Sutoyo 2022, 84–108).

Suhrawardī continued the views and ideas of Ibn Sīnā. Both philosophers were deeply rooted in the Peripatetic (Aristotelian) tradition, emphasizing reason and logic. Suhrawardī inherited and developed Ibn Sīnā's concepts of existence, essence, and the nature of reality (Aminrazavi 2003a, 203–14). He developed a mystical approach called illumination or *ishrāqi* (Tiam 2015, i–x). Suhrawardī's ontological view, known as the ontology of essence or *aṣālah al-māhiyah*, emerged from the debate regarding ontology in Islamic philosophy (Nur 2002, 148–52). Suhrawardī developed a complex metaphysics of light, in which all reality is understood as levels or gradations of light, from the light of lights (*nūr al-anwār*) to absolute darkness (Walbridge 2000, 9–10). In this view, everything in the universe possesses a dimension of light or consciousness, albeit at varying levels. This implies that all creation has intrinsic value and cannot be reduced to mere material objects for exploitation (Rizvi, n.d., 71,72,92).

Furthermore, Suhrawardī's illuminationist epistemology emphasized the importance of direct experiential knowledge (*'ilm ḥuḍūrī*) alongside discursive knowledge (Yazdi 1992, xii,24). This paves the way for an intuitive and spiritual understanding of nature that goes beyond a purely rationalistic approach. Through self-purification and spiritual practice, one can achieve illumination (*ishrāq*) in which the true reality of nature is revealed (Aminrazavi 2003b, 203–14).

Several contemporary scholars have begun to explore the relevance of Suhrawardī's thought for environmental and ecological issues. Seyyed Hossein Nasr sees the philosophy of illumination as an important source for developing a "sacred science of nature" that is much needed in the era of ecological crisis (Nasr 1996, 1–20; Sadowski 2024, 3–9). Nasr argues that the illuminationist view can help overcome the subject-object dualism that has resulted in human alienation from nature.

Kaveh L. Afrasiabi examines the ethical implications of Suhrawardī's metaphysics of light on human-nature relations. He argues that Suhrawardī's concept of gradations of light provides an ontological basis for respect for biodiversity and ecosystem integrity. Every creature, from the simplest to the most complex, has a unique position in the hierarchy of light and therefore has intrinsic value that must be respected (Afrasiabi 2003, 281–98). This view aligns with Seyyed Hossein Nasr's emphasis on

understanding nature as a theophany or manifestation of divine presence (Nasr 2007, 85–90).

Mohammed Rustom explores how Suhrawardī's illuminationist epistemology can enrich our understanding of nature. He argues that Suhrawardī's emphasis on presential knowledge (*'ilm ḥuḍūrī*) opens up the possibility for a direct experience of the sacredness and beauty of nature that goes beyond mere empirical observation (Rustom and Sebastian 2020, 404–16). This approach resonates with the concept of "ecological wisdom" discussed by Fazlun Khalid in the context of Islamic tradition (Khalid 2019, i–x).

While Suhrawardī's philosophy offers a rich framework for understanding the interconnectedness of all beings, its direct application to contemporary ecological issues is still a developing field. Efforts to relate Suhrawardī's thoughts to these issues are still at an early stage and require further elaboration. The complexity of his thought, the need to bridge the gap between philosophy and practice, and the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration are key challenges. To further develop this area, in-depth analysis of Suhrawardī's texts, comparative studies, case studies, and dialogue with contemporary ecological thought are crucial steps. By taking these steps, scholars can unlock the full potential of Suhrawardī's philosophy to inspire sustainable practices and address contemporary environmental challenges. This reflects the broader challenge of applying classical philosophical thought to contemporary issues, as discussed by Nasr and Muzaffar Iqbal in the context of Islamic natural philosophy (Nasr 2007, 1–212).

The study of eco-sufism using Suhrawardī's *ishrāqi* approach is still very new and limited. This research investigates how Suhrawardī's philosophy of illumination can provide a novel framework for addressing the ecological crisis. By analyzing his concepts of light, interconnectedness, and direct experience, this study aims to shift the prevailing paradigm of human domination over nature towards a more holistic and respectful relationship. Specifically, it explores how Suhrawardī's ideas, including his concept of light hierarchy, can support the idea of illuminative biospherical egalitarianism, fostering a more equitable and balanced relationship among all beings within the natural world. This research seeks to understand the practical implications of these insights for achieving illuminative ecological balance and to contribute to the development of a richer and more diverse discourse on eco-sufism by demonstrating the relevance of classical Islamic thought for contemporary environmental challenges.

Biography of al-Suhrawardī

Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, a 12th-century Islamic philosopher and mystic, is a pivotal figure in the history of Islamic thought. His

illuminationist philosophy, a departure from the more rationalistic approach of his predecessors, offers a unique perspective on the nature of reality and human consciousness. As the world faces a growing ecological crisis, Suhrawardī's ideas, with their emphasis on the interconnectedness of all beings and the divine light that permeates the universe, offer a valuable lens through which to understand and address these challenges. His thought continues to inspire and intrigue scholars and thinkers, and its relevance to contemporary issues is increasingly recognized.

Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥya ibn Ḥabashi ibn Amīrak Abū al-Futūḥ al-Suhrawardī, a prominent Persian philosopher and founder of the School of Illumination (*ishrāq*), was born in 549 AH/1154 AD in the small town of Suhraward, northwestern Persia. His life, though brief, left an indelible mark on Islamic philosophy and sufism. Tragically, he died through execution in Aleppo in 587 AH/1191 AD, earning him the sobriquet "*al-Shaykh al-Maqtūl*" (the Murdered Teacher), and "*al-Shahīd*" (the Martyr) (Tiam 2015).

Al-Suhrawardī's intellectual journey began with rigorous studies in philosophy and theology under Majd al-Dīn al-Jīlī in Maraghah. He then furthered his education in Isfahan under Fakhr al-Dīn al-Mardīnī (d. 594 AH/1198 AD). His passion for logic led him to study the renowned work "*al-Baṣā'ir*" by 'Umar ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī, under the guidance of the logic expert Zahir al-Farsī (Nasr 1996, 434–65). Not content with formal education alone, al-Suhrawardī embarked on extensive travels across Persia, Anatolia, Damascus, and Syria, seeking out sufis to deepen his understanding of mysticism and ascetic practices (Sumadi 2015, 227–304).

During his travels, al-Suhrawardī's reputation as a scholar grew, eventually leading him to the court of Prince al-Malik al-Zāhir Ghāzī, the Governor of Aleppo and son of the renowned Sultan Saladin al-Ayyubi. The prince, impressed by al-Suhrawardī's wisdom, appointed him as his teacher. This privileged position allowed al-Suhrawardī to disseminate his philosophical teachings within the palace (Nasr 1996, 434–64).

However, al-Suhrawardī's rising influence and unconventional ideas stirred controversy among the established religious scholars. The judges, viziers, and *fuqaha'* (jurists) of Aleppo, envious of his prominence and wary of his teachings, lobbied for his execution. This tragic turn of events cut short the life of one of Islamic philosophy's most innovative thinkers (Nasr 1996, 465–96).

Despite his untimely death, al-Suhrawardī left behind a rich corpus of philosophical works. His magnum opus, "*Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*" (The Philosophy of Illumination), along with other significant works such as "*al-Mashāri*," "*al-Muqāwwamāt*," and "*al-Talwīḥāt*," continue to be studied and debated to this day. These works showcase his unique ability to synthesize various philosophical and sufism traditions (Marcotte 2001,

359–419).

Shams al-Dīn al-Sahrazūrī, a biographer and commentator on al-Suhrawardī's works, praised his unprecedented ability to combine experiential (*dhawqiyyah*) and discursive (*bahthiyyah*) approaches to knowledge. Al-Sahrazuri compared him favorably to renowned sufis like al-Busthami and al-Hallaj, noting that while they may have been equals in practical mystical knowledge, only al-Suhrawardī succeeded in harmonizing theory and practice so effectively (Razavi 1997, 87). Al-Suhrawardī's philosophical system, known as Illuminationism, represents a unique synthesis of Peripatetic philosophy, Platonic ideas, Hermetic thought, and sufism. This innovative approach has had a lasting impact on Islamic philosophy, particularly in Iran, where it continues to be studied and developed to this day (Ziai 1990, 465–67).

Suhrawardī's Illumination Concept

1. Background of the Illumination Concept

The emergence of Suhrawardī's illumination theory was fundamentally a critique of the rigidity inherent in peripatetic logic, a system previously elaborated by Ibn Sīnā. Suhrawardī's approach introduced a spiritual-intuitive perspective to counterbalance the prevailing logical paradigm. At that time, peripatetic logic held sole authority in scientific discourse, basing truth on the accuracy of syllogisms, propositions, concepts, and definitional problems. However, Suhrawardī identified numerous weaknesses in this model of knowledge acquisition (Muslih 2010, 5–23).

In Suhrawardī's view, knowledge cannot be obtained merely through definition, as the peripatetics believed. He argued that the peripatetic approach merely reduced or limited the genus (*jins*). Suhrawardī contended that an organism could not be understood simply by combining substance and accident that is, between genus (*jins*) and differentiation (*faṣl*). Instead, he proposed that the definition (*ta'rīf*) requires intermediary objects that are arranged to explain an organism fully (Muslih 2010, 10–15). Suhrawardī elucidated this perspective in his seminal work, *al-Ḥikmat al-Ishrāqiyyah*:

In an object that is defined for a subject who does not understand it, defining is achieved by classifying everything that makes the object-specific, either in unit, partiality, or collectiveness. The definition must be made clearer than the object, and not equivalent, more vague, or even unknown without something that defines it. Another result of misperception is when making the reason for the existence of a particular object as a general meaning to determine it in the form of an associative equivalent, such as the person who said "(the reason why) black catches the eye is because it is a color," so he could apply the same thing to white (Fayyadl 2003, 78).

This view emphasizes Suhrawardī's sharp criticism of peripatetics, which requires something outside the thing being defined and without

which the thing cannot be explained. In peripatetic logic, defining something must be preceded by defining its genus, which must first be specified according to something more obvious. In this logic, the concept of an independent thing never exists. Just as the concept of a “plate” would never exist without a “spoon” or “fork,” because the concept of a “plate” always depends on the existence of other eating utensils. Likewise, “cutlery” cannot be conceptualized without other types of utensils. This suggests a subject-object relationship that occurs in definition activities (Widigdo 2014, 117–26).

Therefore, Suhrawardī saw the need for a breakthrough to perceive reality as an independent subject without requiring the existence of something else. His illumination concept aimed to address this problem. The logic of illumination transcends categories, emphasizing the capture of essence between subjects (Davar 2024, 19–34). This approach allows for a more holistic and interconnected understanding of reality.

2. Debate between *Aṣālah al-Māhiyah* and *Aṣālah al-Wujūd*

The discussion regarding *aṣālah al-māhiyah* is central to the ontological concept initiated by Suhrawardī. In this ontological conception, Mulla Sadra and Suhrawardī held differing views on the nature of reality. Mulla Sadra advocated the concept of *aṣālah al-wujūd*, while Suhrawardī promoted the concept of *aṣālah al-māhiyah* (Nur 2002; Al-Fayyadl 2003). This dichotomy between existence and *māhiyah* (essence) sparked a prolonged debate between adherents of *aṣālah al-wujūd* (ontology of existence) and *aṣālah al-māhiyah* (ontology of essence). The discussion centered on the fundamental question: “What constitutes reality in the external world?” (Widigdo 2014, 117–26).

To better understand this debate, it's crucial to first elucidate the meanings of form and *māhiyah*. The dichotomy of form and *māhiyah* in viewing reality was first introduced to the Islamic intellectual world by al-Fārābī (Muslih 2010, 15–17). This dichotomous concept was also introduced by the Greek philosopher Aristotle in the previous generation. Aristotle posited that reality is divided into two at its metaphysical level: “matter” and “form” (Russel 2004, 78–90). For instance, a “ball” has matter in the form of the physical ball itself, while the shape of the ball represents its “ball-ness.” Bertrand Russell succinctly captured this idea, writing, “Your essence is who you are based on your truest self” (Russel 2004, 189).

In Islamic philosophy, *māhiyah* is used in two different senses: *māhiyah* in unique and *māhiyah* in general. *Māhiyah* in a unique sense relates to the answer to the question, “What is it?” In this case, *māhiyah* derives from the expressions *mā huwa* and *mā hiya*. Its meaning generally indicates something using which something else comes into existence or which constitutes the reality of something. The source of the word *māhiyah* in

this sense is the expression *ma bihi huwa huwa* (Attas 1995, 76–89; Nasr 1989, 89).

The term *wujūd* (existence) has sparked various interpretations among Muslim philosophers. From their efforts to understand the meaning of existence, several understandings have emerged: first, “existence is something using which something else becomes possible to know”; second, “existence is something which is the source of all effects”; third, “that which makes it possible to know something is its form” (Nasr 1989, 78–89).

Apart from *wujūd* and *māhiyah*, another term that needs to be understood is *mawjūd*. Even though the word *mawjūd* still comes from the same root word as *wujūd*, it has a different meaning. The term *mawjūd* means “that which exists”, while *wujūd* means “the act of existing”. From this, we can conclude that *māhiyah* refers to the mind’s conception of an external object, seen based on itself and insofar as it is pure, complete, and utterly different from its form. In other terms, *māhiyah* means “what”, while *wujūd* means the “existence” of tangible reality (Nur 2002, 84–108).

Two more essential terms need to be understood: *asil* and *i’tibārī*. In this study, the word *asil* refers to objective reality, while *i’tibārī*, according to Toshihiko Izutsu, comes from the word *i’tibārī*, which means a subjective way of looking at something, namely something that is produced through analytical reasoning (Izutsu 1960, 56–68).

In the view of adherents of *aṣālah al-wujūd*, *wujūd* is *asil* while *māhiyah* is only the form of *i’tibārī* depicted by a person’s ratio (Nur 2002, 84–108). More clearly, the real form of something is the actual reality, just like a “stone” whose form is always there even if it is not perceived by human reason as being a *māhiyah*.

Meanwhile, adherents of *aṣālah al-māhiyah*, including Suhrawardī, state that *māhiyah* is something real or *asil* while the form is only *i’tibārī*. In this case, Suhrawardī explains that the difference between *māhiyah* and existence is at the conceptual level, whereas in the concrete external world, both are a single reality. So, conceptually, *aṣālah al-māhiyah*’s opinion can be applied. In other words, the concept of reality only exists if the *māhiyah* of that reality has been digested by reason (Nur 2002). In his work, Suhrawardī states:

...An object that is unknown in all its respects cannot be an object of search; likewise when it is known from all its aspects. But here, the object is known from one aspect and is not known from the aspect that is specific to what we know. This usually only happens in the form of propositions and justifications... “If someone believes in the existence of a bird called Quqnuq without seeing it with his own eyes and looking for its specifications, even though he only knows the general aspects such as the nature of birds.” “An existence occurs in a single meaning and understanding of objects such as “black,” “substance,” “man,” and “horse.” It is the meaning that is digested by the mind which is more general from these objects (Sumadi 2015, 230).

This explanation asserts that the essence of something always precedes its form as a concept in the human mind, or what is called essence without precedence for something. From this debate, visible differences can be drawn from the views of the two schools. Adherents of *aṣālah al-māhiyah* discuss reality conceptually, while adherents of *aṣālah al-wujūd* discuss reality concretely. It could be said that the first view prioritizes mental relationships, while the second prioritizes concrete or direct relationships. Suhrawardī, as a proponent of *aṣālah al-māhiyah*, prioritizes a mental approach rather than a real approach. This perspective then becomes the foundation of his epistemology in producing his illumination view, particularly in the empirical concept. By emphasizing the primacy of essence over existence, Suhrawardī's philosophy opens up new avenues for understanding reality, consciousness, and the nature of knowledge itself.

3. The Myth of the Cave: An Analogy of the Idea of Goodness as the Source of All Ideas

Suhrawardī's illumination concept bears similarities to al-Fārābī's emanation theory of ten intellects. The fundamental principle in this philosophy posits Allah as the light and source of all entities, from which other lights emerge as the foundation of material and spiritual nature (Razavi 1997, 46). Suhrawardī's approach to ontological reality through a mental perspective introduces a distinctive style to Islamic philosophy. His views on *aṣālah al-māhiyah* and illumination present a novel epistemology that is not only rational and anthropocentric but also transformative and spiritualistic in nature (Marcotte 2001, 400–401).

In epistemology, three essential elements form the foundational basis: first, the subject and tools of knowledge; second, the object of knowledge; and third, the relationship between the subject or tool of knowledge and the object of knowledge, or the process of knowing (Wijaya 2020, 67–80). Knowledge objects fall into two categories, determined by their relationship to the knowing subject. Some objects form a unity with the subject, while others remain separate. The former is termed an "immanent" object, intrinsic to and part of the knowing subject, and is considered a present object. The latter is called a "transitive" object, existing independently outside the subject, and is regarded as an absent object (Assya'bani and Falach 2022, 52–64).

The interaction between object and subject manifests in two approaches, which determine the nature of the resulting knowledge. The distinction lies in whether the object or subject initiates the act of knowing. The "immanent" object precedes the subject's consciousness, becoming a mental representation of the known entity. This mental representation activates the subject's intellectual faculties, driving the act of knowing. Knowledge originating from an immanent object is acquired

through presence (*ḥudūrī*), a form of knowledge whose relationship exists within its framework, considered true without implications from external objects. The tool of knowledge employed here is intuition, hence this type of knowledge is also known as intuitive knowledge (Warno 2023, 333).

Conversely, transitive objects emerge later, after the subject's awareness of the object arises, as the object is not directly present in the subject's mind. Knowledge of transitive objects is obtained through acquisition (*ḥuṣūlī*) and must adhere to correspondence truth, a theory based on criteria regarding the correspondence between the subject's statement and the stated object (Wijaya 2020, 89–97).

Suhrawardī's illumination theory proposes that the truth of reality can be perceived both correspondingly and intuitively, or through an epistemology based on both acquisition (*ḥuṣūlī*) and presence (*ḥudūrī*). In this framework, physical objects are considered absent objects, while present objects are entities manifested in the identity condition of an individual's mind, previously referred to as *māhiyah* or essence. Suhrawardī posits that empirical experience is communication between essences in the form of light, occurring between the essence of the subject and the essence of the object. This implies that the essence of the external object must be present in the subject's mind, while the subject endeavors to capture the object's essence. Suhrawardī characterizes the essence or *māhiyah* of an object as a light entity (Wijaya 2020, 89–97).

The process by which the subject presents the object's essence through mental activity is what Suhrawardī terms "self-awareness" or "*idrāk al-anā'iyah*". Analogous to the awareness of pain as a form of knowledge of one's felt pain, this view considers awareness as consciousness of one's essence. An individual who realizes their essence is simultaneously aware of every existence at the same level, as all existing reality originates from a single light or the radiance of God's light, which Suhrawardī designates as *nūr al-anwār*. This radiance is categorized into two types of light: first, light with a form that becomes an attribute for another, termed accidental light or *nūr al-ʿarīḍ*; second, light that is not an attribute for others, called abstract light or *nūr al-mujarrad* and pure light or *nūr al-mahd* (Wijaya 2020).

Everything that realizes its essence is pure light, manifested as an appearance identified with pure light or *nūr al-mahd*. In other words, pure light is a manifestation of its essence. Pure light, as part of abstract light, is a unified entity that differs in intensity and appearance. Consequently, the concept of "I" is equivalent to other "I" s, as they constitute a single unity of pure light. This implies that humans and all appearances in the universe are one unit of pure light. In Suhrawardī's philosophy, the material that forms light is called *barzakh*, a body or matter designated as a particular substance (Fayyadl 2003, 89; Sumadi 2015, 227–304).

Through this method, reality is not known through a subject-object

relationship but rather through immanent intuitive awareness. This approach extends to supernatural phenomena not visible to human senses, which can be apprehended through intuitive awareness. Suhrawardī elucidates:

You will not find yourself unless the subject recognizes itself, and that is the essence of your I-ness. In that I-ness, all subjects are associated who recognize themselves and their I-ness. Under any circumstances, the character of recognition (*mudrikiyyah*) is thus not an accident or something external... From this, it can be seen that the character of unity is not external to the perceiving subject; it appeared to him, through him (Fayyadl 2003, 90).

Finally, empiricism in Suhrawardī's philosophy does not originate from human senses but from awareness of one's essence as pure light. This innovative approach to epistemology and ontology offers a unique perspective on the nature of reality and human consciousness within the Islamic philosophical tradition.

Aristotle's Philosophy: Critique of Plato's Ideas

1. The Absurdity of the Transcendent Forms of Platonic Ideas

While Lynn White's argument in "*The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis*" has been influential, it has also been subject to criticism and debate. Some scholars argue that his focus on two specific chapters of Genesis oversimplifies the complex relationship between the Judeo-Christian tradition and environmental attitudes. They point out that other passages in the Bible promote stewardship and care for creation (White 1967, 1203–7). It's important to note that White's thesis was not solely based on religious texts. He also emphasized the role of technology and Western culture in shaping our relationship with the environment (Taylor, Wieren, and Zaleha 2016, 306–78). His argument sparked important discussions about the human impact on the natural world and the need for a more sustainable approach.

The ecological crisis has been a topic of growing concern since the 1960s, with discussions intensifying in the 1980s as awareness grew about the imbalance in human-environment relationships. This phenomenon reached its peak when many people began to recognize the unrest occurring in nature. Lynn White notably argued that the ecological crisis stems from the anthropocentric view of the Judeo-Christian tradition, which posits humans and nature as separate entities (Amirullah 2015, 13–15).

The paradigm of environmental domination asserts humans' absolute power to control and utilize nature according to their needs and desires, without regard for ecological balance, sustainability, or the rights of other organisms in the ecosystem (Schroeder, Coyne, and Farndon 2019, 63–79). This anthropocentric view, also known as the anthropocentrism

paradigm, refers to a perspective that sees humans as the central or dominant creature over the natural environment. In this context, humans are assumed to have rights and control over natural resources and ecosystems, often leading to excessive use or exploitation of nature without consideration for its long-term impacts on the environment (“Anthropocentrism | Human-Centered Philosophy & Ethics | Britannica,” n.d.).

This approach can lead to practices such as excessive deforestation, pollution, overexploitation of natural resources, and human-caused climate change. Anthropocentrism does not consider the balance of ecosystems and the long-term impacts of human activities, which can also harm biodiversity and natural sustainability. In recent years, this idea has been heavily criticized for causing severe environmental problems (Nasr 1990, ii–xi). Environmental damage also occurs due to capitalist production and consumption principles that disregard environmental concerns. This happens because capitalism requires humans to continue producing profits in business competition. This attitude then becomes a source of disaster for nature and ecological balance (Irawan 2017, 1–21)

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, an Islamic philosopher, attributes the ecological crisis to the rejection or indifference towards the spiritual dimension in treating nature, similar to modern perspectives that eliminate the spiritual element in life and prioritize worldly-oriented views. In a similar vein, Fritjof Capra traces the global crisis on Earth to modern humans’ view of the world (Capra 2002, i–vi).

Suhrawardī’s concept of ‘illumination’ offers a highly relevant critique of the natural domination paradigm, particularly anthropocentrism. In Suhrawardī’s view, natural reality is not only seen as a collection of objects that can be utilized exclusively but also has deeper spiritual and essential aspects. This perspective has a significant impact on how we view the relationship between humans and nature and our responsibility to protect the environment. Suhrawardī put forward the epistemological concept of the “science of light” (*ḥikmat al-ishrāq*), emphasizing that true knowledge is obtained not only through reason but also through inner enlightenment and divine light. This view rejects the materialistic approach that tends to dominate human views of nature. In the context of the natural domination paradigm and criticism of anthropocentrism, Suhrawardī’s ideas of enlightenment have implications as the basis for a holistic view.

The concept of enlightenment teaches that nature has spiritual and essential aspects that are deeper than just physical objects. This causes humans to see nature as part of a larger reality, not just something that can be exploited. By embracing this perspective, we can move towards a more balanced and respectful relationship with the natural world.

2. Hylomorphism: A Response to the Absurdity of Platonic Ideas

In the introduction, we explained that Suhrawardī's concept of illumination will be used as an epistemological basis for viewing the natural environment. In this case, Suhrawardī's Illumination shows a connection between natural reality and humans in the form of pure light. The pure light that exists is the light emanating from *nūr al-anwār*, which is divided into two categories of light. First, light that has a shape and becomes an attribute for others is called accidental light or *nūr al-āriḍ*. Second, light that is not an attribute for others is called abstract light or *nūr al-mujjarrad*, and pure light or *nūr al-mahd* (Suhrawardī 2010, 128–30).

Through an intuitive understanding of natural reality, an understanding is formed that humans and nature are the same entity and act as fellow subjects in this life. With this, humans will be able to better appreciate their natural surroundings like a fellow *nūr al-mahd* or pure light. Thus, the concept of Pure Light brings values that go beyond the limits of instrumental and intrinsic values and opens up a new dimension in people's view of nature and existence. This concept views nature not only as objects that can be utilized or have intrinsic value but also as an expression of divine existence that has deep spiritual value. Pure Light invites humans to see nature as a reflection of a higher reality. This avoids a narrow view of nature as a source of utilization (Chittick 2007, 54–67).

The public is invited to reflect on the depth of nature's existence and appreciate the spiritual values it contains. This concept encourages humans to think about the essential relationship between nature and humans. Humans are reminded that they are a miniature world that reflects the macro world so that human actions towards nature have a broader and deeper meaning. In this regard, moral and ethical values are an integral part of human interaction with nature (Foltz 2003b, 78, 98, 106).

This concept teaches humans that nature is not just a collection of materials that can be used but is a representation of a higher reality. In this way, humans are encouraged to believe that nature is a representation of the greatness of the creator, namely Allah, which shows the existence of a more profound and abstract nature (Al-Attas 1995). The Pure Light Concept also advises humans not to view nature as a resource that can be exploited. Viewing nature as a representation of a higher reality must be appreciated, not just pursued for material gain (Özdemir 2003, 60–72).

By seeing nature as a reflection of a higher reality, humans are reminded that all actions taken against nature have more profound consequences, both for the physical and spiritual environment. According to this perspective, nature has moral and ethical values that encourage humans to maintain balance and harmony in their interactions with it. As a form

of appreciation for God's broader creation, humans are asked to care for and preserve nature (Quadir 2013, ii-vii).

Understanding Pure Light teaches us that protecting nature means respecting spiritual values and the balance of the ecosystem (Walbridge 2000, 43-67). Therefore, the idea of Pure Light teaches humans to see nature more broadly and deeply. Nature is not just an object that can be utilized; it is a being that exhibits a higher nature. According to this perspective, protecting nature is a moral and spiritual responsibility, which includes an understanding of the balance between the material and spiritual dimensions of life (Nasr 2007, 4-89).

The concept of Pure Light also resonates with contemporary environmental ethics, particularly the idea of deep ecology proposed by Arne Naess. Deep ecology, like Suhrawardī's illumination philosophy, emphasizes the intrinsic value of all living beings and the interconnectedness of all life forms (Næss, Drengson, and Devall 2008, 3-16). This parallel between ancient Islamic philosophy and modern environmental thought demonstrates the relevance and potential contribution of Suhrawardī's ideas to current ecological discussions.

Moreover, the Pure Light concept can be seen as a bridge between science and spirituality in addressing environmental issues. It offers a framework for integrating empirical knowledge about ecosystems with a deeper, more intuitive understanding of nature's value and our place within it. This holistic approach is increasingly recognized as crucial for developing effective and sustainable environmental policies (Taylor 1986, 34,45,78).

3. Knowledge as a Process of Abstraction

Suhrawardī's concept of pure light necessitates the philosophy of the unity of humans and the environment, where this concept teaches that humans and the environment are an inseparable unit. According to Suhrawardī's thoughts, the concept of "pure light" can provide deeper insight into how environmental conservation can be related to the relationship between humans and nature. This concept emphasizes a balance between the physical and spiritual worlds, which can inspire broader environmental conservation approaches.

This aligns with the meaning of the environment itself, namely the unity of space with all objects, forces, conditions, and living creatures, including humans and their behavior, which influence nature itself. This perspective is in harmony with the concept of 'Biospherical egalitarianism,' a principle that teaches that humans and the environment are one unit that cannot be separated (Næss, Drengson, and Devall 2008, 45,67,80).

The concept of "Biospherical egalitarianism-illuminative" is an integration of Suhrawardī's thinking about illumination with Arne Naess's principle of biosphere egalitarianism, thus giving birth to a new model of

human relations with the natural environment. This model recognizes the interdependent relationship between spiritual light (illuminative) and equality in the biosphere (biosphere egalitarianism), with the ultimate goal of establishing sustainable ecological harmony (Drengson 2005; Næss, Drengson, and Devall 2008, 45–67).

Suhrawardī's illuminative concept teaches that spiritual light illuminates everything. In the context of biosphere egalitarianism, this gives rise to the understanding that spiritual awareness can illuminate society's view of nature, breaking down the boundaries that separate humans and the natural environment. Biosphere egalitarianism emphasizes that all forms of life have the same intrinsic value in the biosphere. In the "Biospherical Egalitarianism-Illuminative" model, this equality also refers to awareness of the divine nature in all natural entities by paying attention to the spiritual light circulating in each element (Devall and Sessions 1999, x–xii).

In Suhrawardī's view, understanding pure light encourages people to consider the critical relationship between nature and humans. According to this perspective, nature has a deeper connection to the spiritual dimension of humans than our physical environment. "Humans are a microcosm that reflects the macrocosm, a small world that reflects a big world," said Suhrawardī. This quote describes humans as a small representation of nature as a whole. Humans have material and spiritual dimensions that reflect the structure and hierarchy that exist in nature at large. Therefore, humans are reminded of their deep connection with nature as an integral part of a greater reality (Yazdi 1992, 104–35).

This understanding of pure light encourages humans to consider how each of their actions toward nature has broader and more profound effects. Not only as residents, but humans also have a moral and spiritual responsibility to maintain ecosystem balance and natural harmony. According to this perspective, the link between nature and humans cannot be separated, and every human action must be carried out, taking into account the ecological and spiritual consequences. Therefore, Suhrawardī's understanding of pure light encourages humans to realize that they are an essential part of nature and have a responsibility to care for and preserve the environment. By understanding this relationship, it is hoped that humans can take wiser and more responsible actions towards nature for the sake of the sustainability of life and ecological harmony.

4. Potentiality, Actuality, and God as the Basis of Actualization

The concept of "Equilibrium-Illuminative" combines two main elements: "equilibrium," which refers to a state of balance and harmony, and "illuminative," which refers to enlightenment or deep understanding (Schroeder, Coyne, and Farndon 2019, 123–45). This concept aims to create a picture of how humans can achieve balance and harmony in

their relationship with nature and in their spiritual and intellectual development. “Illuminative-Equilibrium” emphasizes the importance of maintaining balance in all aspects of human life, from relationships with nature and relationships between humans to personal development. This balance can be achieved through a deep understanding of the essence and values that exist within humans and their environment (Nasr 1996, 36–40).

The “illuminative” element emphasizes the importance of having enlightenment and deep understanding when making decisions and actions. By having this enlightenment, humans can see reality more clearly and comprehensively so that decisions taken do not only consider individual interests but also how they impact nature and society (Aminrazavi 2003b, 23–25).

By combining the concepts of “equilibrium” and “illuminative,” humans are directed to achieve harmony in various aspects of life by considering the impact and implications of their actions. These ideas call on humans to take balanced and informed action and have a deep awareness of how their actions can contribute to the sustainability of nature and collective prosperity.

In Suhrawardī’s view, the concept of pure light invites humans to see nature as a form that depicts divine greatness and beauty. This is in line with the idea that nature is not just a product of chance but also reflects the design and desires of a higher creator. In this view, nature becomes an artistic entity that expresses the order and beauty underlying its existence (Ziai 1990, 12–15).

Suhrawardī told humans that nature has very complicated and harmonious patterns and structures. Nature was not created haphazardly but with a precision that reflects higher wisdom and intelligence. The concept of pure light encourages humans to see the beauty and order of nature as a reflection of the spiritual light that exists in nature *al-ishraq*, or the world of light (Ihsan, Perdana, and Sutoyo 2022, 84–90).

This concept invites humans to understand that natural beauty is part of a divine message that invites us to appreciate the greatness of the Creator and reflect on the wisdom contained in all aspects of nature. This view encourages humans to consider God’s wisdom and grace that radiates from natural existence. Nature gives us beautiful and unique evidence that there is a God. The beauty and tranquility of nature remind humans of the existence and majesty of the Creator (Chittick 2007, 60).

In the context of global warming, for example, the idea of “illuminative balance” can be used by combining a deep understanding of the impacts of global warming with efforts to maintain a balance between environmental protection and human needs. The “illuminative” approach directs humans to understand in depth the impact of global warming on biodiversity, human life, and the environment. This understanding

includes comprehending the greenhouse effect, melting ice, rising sea levels, and the increasingly severe impacts of weather extremes. This understanding increases awareness of the urgency of the problem and the need for action (Özdemir 2003; Muhammad et al. 2024, 1–16).

The application of the Equilibrium-Illuminative concept in addressing environmental issues can lead to more holistic and sustainable solutions. By combining scientific understanding with spiritual insight, we can develop approaches that not only address the symptoms of environmental problems but also their root causes. This may involve rethinking our economic systems, reimagining our relationship with technology, and reconsidering our consumption patterns in light of their spiritual and ecological implications (Foltz 2003a, 25,67).

Moreover, the Equilibrium-Illuminative concept can inspire new forms of environmental education and awareness. By incorporating both scientific knowledge and spiritual wisdom, we can foster a deeper connection to nature and a more profound sense of responsibility for its preservation. This approach could potentially lead to more effective environmental policies and practices, as it addresses both the rational and emotional aspects of human decision-making (Quadir 2013, 45–89).

Suhrawardī's philosophy of illumination, as expressed through concepts like pure light, Biospherical Egalitarianism-Illuminative, and Equilibrium-Illuminative, offers a rich and multifaceted approach to understanding and addressing our current ecological challenges. By integrating spiritual insights with scientific understanding, it provides a framework for developing more sustainable, respectful, and harmonious relationships with the natural world.

Conclusion

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that environmental conservation discourse can apply Suhrawardī's Illumination views as a basis and way of viewing the natural environment. The concept of *nūr al-mahd* or pure light initiated by Suhrawardī offers a unique perspective in understanding human-nature relations. Suhrawardī's illumination view, which is based on the concept of *aṣālah al-māhiyah* or essence ontology, provides a philosophical framework that sees existence as an essence captured by the human mind, with the essence of everything that exists in the form of pure light which is the emanation of *Nur al-Anwar* or Light above Light.

Suhrawardī's pure light concept has significant relevance in facing the global challenge of environmental sustainability. This approach can overcome criticism of the anthropocentrism paradigm which tends to dominate nature, inviting humans to see nature as *tajāliyyat* or a manifestation of divine reality that must be respected. This concept also goes beyond the dichotomy of instrumental and intrinsic value,

encouraging a more holistic approach to environmental conservation. The integration of illuminative and equilibrium-illuminative biospherical egalitarianism brings dimensions of social justice and ecological balance, emphasizing that humans are an inseparable part of nature who must care for it with full responsibility. In this way, Suhrawardī's Concept of Pure Light provides a philosophical framework capable of inspiring a holistic, long-term vision of the world, resolving tensions between humanity and nature, and generating deep insights into the relationship between the natural and spiritual worlds.

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