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Semiotic Analysis of Qur'anic Environmental Ethics: A Julia Kristevan Approach to Ecological Responsibility

Analisis Semiotik Etika Lingkungan Al-Qur'an: Pendekatan Julia Kristevan terhadap Tanggung Jawab Ekologis

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Abstract

In the face of the global ecological crisis, the understanding of environmental ethics in the Qur'an has often been limited to normative and legal aspects. This study aims to reveal the symbolic and affective dimensions in Qur'anic verses related to environmental ethics using Julia Kristeva's semiotic approach. The research uses a qualitative descriptive method with text analysis of the Qur'an through the concepts of phenotext, genotext, and chora. The results show that the Qur'an teaches environmental ethics that are not only normative but also intuitive and affective, shaping a deeper ecological awareness. This study contributes theoretically by presenting a new approach in Qur'anic exegesis on ecotheology, opening emotional and spiritual dimensions in understanding ecological responsibility. The originality of this research lies in the application of Kristeva's semiotic theory to interpret environmental ethics in the Qur'an.

Keywords: Ecological Awareness; Ecotheology; Environmental Ethics; Kristeva's Semiotics; Qur'anic Interpretation

Abstrak

Dalam menghadapi krisis ekologis global, pemahaman etika lingkungan dalam Al-Qur'an seringkali terbatas pada aspek normatif dan hukum. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap dimensi simbolik dan afektif dalam ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an terkait etika lingkungan dengan menggunakan pendekatan semiotika Julia Kristeva. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan analisis teks Al-Qur'an melalui konsep fenoteks, genoteks, dan chora. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Al-Qur'an mengajarkan etika lingkungan yang tidak hanya normatif tetapi juga intuitif dan afektif, membentuk kesadaran ekologis yang lebih mendalam. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi teoretis dengan menyajikan pendekatan baru dalam tafsir Al-Qur'an terkait ekoteologi, membuka dimensi emosional dan spiritual dalam memahami tanggung jawab ekologis. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada aplikasi teori semiotika Kristeva untuk menafsirkan etika lingkungan dalam Al-Qur'an.

Kata Kunci: Kesadaran Ekologis; Ekoteologi; Etika Lingkungan; Semiotika Kristeva; Tafsir Al-Qur'an



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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the world has faced a worsening ecological crisis. Sya'roni et al. explain that the global ecological crisis is caused by environmental damage and excessive exploitation of natural resources.¹ This phenomenon not only threatens the survival of living beings but also affects the global ecological balance. Islam, thru the Qur'an, provides guidance on how humans should care for nature as part of their responsibility as caliphs on earth.² However, the traditional understanding of the Qur'an's environmental ethics is often limited to normative and legal aspects without considering the symbolic, affective, and emotional dimensions within the text.³ This leads to the need for a deeper interpretation of verses that speak about ecological responsibility, using a more in-depth theoretical approach, such as Julia Kristeva's semiotic theory, which allows for a deeper interpretation of the symbolic and affective meanings hidden within the Qur'anic text.

Previous studies on sacred texts using Julia Kristeva's semiotic and intertextual approaches have predominantly focused on three major clusters. The first cluster is a comparative narrative study between the Qur'an and the Bible/Tanakh, such as Askar and Aziz, whose studies cover the theme of the creation of the universe.⁴ Tammimi examines the symbolism of the deep sea in the story of Moses,⁵ Auzia and Safitri represent the figure of Prophet Ibrahim's father,⁶ Irfani studies the story of Prophet Ayub,⁷ and Masbur discusses the dynamics of Satan's temptation in the story of Adam.⁸ The second cluster, such as Pratama et al., Nursidik, and Hidayat et al., focuses on the deconstruction of theological terms and authority, such as the meaning of *Ruh al-Qu'dus* and the interpretation of the concept of *jihad fi sabillillah*, as well as an analysis of virtual da'wah authority.⁹ The third cluster, by Majid et al. and Suhemi, focuses on the

- 1 Mokh. Sya'roni et al., "Ecotheological Insights from Prophetic Hadiths: Reframing Islamic Environmental Ethics Based on SDGs," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 106, no. 5 (November 2025), <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.106.51>.
- 2 Hooshyar Hossini et al., "The Environment from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Divine Teachings," *Journal of Health Reports and Technology* 9, no. 2 (April 21, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.5812/jhrt-133381>.
- 3 Afrizal Nur et al., "Qur'anic Ecotheology and the Ethics of Forest Protection in Indonesia," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 26, no. 2 (July 31, 2025): 351–82, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v26i2.6312>.
- 4 Ahmad Askar and Muhammad Aziz, "A Comparative Study of the Bible and the Qur'an on the Creation of the Universe Using Julia Kristeva's Intertextuality Method," *Hanifiya: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 7, no. 1 (April 24, 2024): 51–60, <https://doi.org/10.15575/hanifiya.v7i1.34035>.
- 5 Muhamad Tubagus Soleh Tammimi, "Simbolisme Laut Pada Kisah Musa Dalam Al-Quran Dan Tanakh: Teori Intertekstual Julia Kristeva," *Amsal Al-Qur'an: Jurnal Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 2, no. 2 (July 18, 2025): 296–308, <https://doi.org/10.63424/amsal.v2i2.366>.
- 6 Nadia Tamara Rifa Auzia and Nuraisyah Safitri, "The Representation of Azar and Terah in the Qur'an and the Bible: Julia Kristeva's Intertextuality Perspective," *ABHATS: Jurnal Islam Ulil Albab* 6, no. 2 (September 8, 2025): 187–98, <https://doi.org/10.20885/abhats.vol6.iss2.art7>.
- 7 Muhammad Irfani, "Intertextuality Of The Story Of Prophet Ayub In The Qur'an And The Bible (Julia Kristeva Semiotic Approach)," *Al Muhibidz: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 4, no. 2 (August 26, 2024): 227–40, <https://doi.org/10.57163/almuhibidz.v4i2.130>.
- 8 Masbur Masbur, "The Whisper of Satan in the Story of Adam: An Intertextual Analysis of the Qur'an and the Bible through Julia Kristeva's Framework," *El-Sunan: Journal of Hadith and Religious Studies* 3, no. 1 (April 30, 2025): 25–36, <https://doi.org/10.22373/el-sunan.v3i1.7516>.
- 9 Masrul Maulana Pratama et al., "Julia Kristeva Intertextual Reconfiguration of Interpretation of Rūh Al-Qu'dus: An Analysis of Tafsir Ath-Thabarī and Al-Kabīr on Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]:87," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 33, no. 2 (December 31, 2025): 545, <https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v33i2.38735>. and Ihsan Nursidik, "Semiotics Analysis of the Quran Text About Jihād Fī Sabīlillah in Julia Kristeva's Semanalisis to Intertextuality Approach," *Jurnal At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alqur'an Dan Tafsir* 7, no. 1 (June 23, 2022): 17–35, <https://doi.org/10.32505/at-tibyan.v7i1.3016>. and M. Riyan Hidayat et al., "Otoritas Dakwah Virtual Dalam

methodological aspects of semiotics in general, both thru Greimas's actantial model applied to the story of Prophet Jonah, and thru the application of various semiotic theories in interpreting light symbols.¹⁰

Although the ten studies above have successfully dissected the textual and intertextual dimensions, there is a significant gap in contemporary practical ethics, particularly regarding the environment. Based on the literature reviewed above, Kristeva's approach is more often used to dissect "figures" or "legal/doctrinal terms," but no one has yet touched upon how the semiotic process (the layer of latent meaning) in the Qur'an can construct human ecological responsibility amidst the global environmental crisis. The novelty of this research lies in exploring "Environmental Ethics in the Qur'an" as a dynamic system of signs. While previous research (such as Askar & Aziz or Tammimi) viewed nature and the sea as narrative objects or static theological symbols, this study positions ecological texts as subjects capable of shaping readers' intuitive consciousness. Its novelty lies in the effort to transform environmental verses from mere "normative commands" into "affective-existential awareness" thru deep semiotic reading.

This research aims to uncover the latent and dynamic layers of meaning in the ecological verses of the Qur'an thru Julia Kristeva's semi-analytic approach in order to formulate a new framework for environmental ethics. Specifically, this study aims to map how the processes of intertextuality and semiotic disposition in the verses of the Qur'an are able to transform human understanding from mere rulers of nature to preservers who have a deep connection with the ecosystem. By identifying the shift in meaning from the genotypic to the phenotypic level, this research is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of Islamic ecotheology that is more responsive and applicable in addressing the current global environmental crisis. This research is based on the argument that the current ecological crisis is rooted in the superficial understanding of sacred texts, which are only understood in a legal-formal way, thus losing their spiritual driving force. It is assumed that the Qur'anic text regarding the environment is not merely static normative instructions, but rather a productive textual space where ethical meaning is continuously constructed thru the experiences of its readers. Therefore, thru Kristevan analysis, this research argues that rediscovering the intuitive semiotic dimension in revelation will be able to guide ecological responsibility beyond the anthropocentric paradigm that has long dominated environmental policy.

Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with the type of library research. The primary data in this study are verses from the Qur'an related to the theme of ecology, such as Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 205 and Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 31, while the secondary data include scientific literature that has been retrieved from the Scopus and Google Scholar databases and previously mapped, as well as primary books on semiotic theory. Data collection techniques were carried out thru documentation using the close reading method to identify ecological sign units in the text. The data analysis steps begin with data reduction, thematic data presentation, and conclude with drawing conclusions validated thru triangulation of literature sources to maintain objectivity in interpretation.

Tafsir Rahmat H. Oemar Bakry: Analisis Intertekstualitas Julia Kristeva," *An-Nida'* 47, no. 1 (July 1, 2023): 98, <https://doi.org/10.24014/an-nida.v47i1.23022>.

10 Nurahman Majid, Rohanda Rohanda, and Muhammad Nurhasan, "The Story of Prophet Yunus (PBUH) in the Qur'an: A Narrative Analysis Using Greimas's Actantial and Functional Models," in *Gunung Djati Conference Series*, vol. 55, 2025, 492–504, <https://conferences.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/gdcs/article/view/2908>. and Emi Suhemi, "Semiotics in Qur'anic Interpretation: The Application of Semiotic Theory in the Tafsir of Jalalain, Ibn Kathir, and Al-Tabari on QS. An-Nur Verse 35," *El-Sunan: Journal of Hadith and Religious Studies* 2, no. 1 (April 30, 2024): 93–108, <https://doi.org/10.22373/el-sunan.v2i1.5695>.

In-depth analysis was conducted by applying Julia Kristeva's semiotic framework, which dissects text thru two main levels: the genotext and the phenotext. The analysis process began by tracing the genotext to uncover the semiotic drives and latent layers of meaning behind the language structure of ecological verses, then shifted to the phenotext to see how these meanings are manifested in the symbolic communication structure. Thru an intertextual approach, these ecological texts are linked to the context of contemporary environmental crises to examine the process of meaning transformation (transposition). With this technique, the research is able to go beyond mere formal textual analysis, allowing for the formulation of intuitive and affective environmental ethics constructions based on the internal dynamics of sacred texts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theoretical Framework: Kristeva's Semiotics in Qur'anic Interpretation

Julia Kristeva, a prominent figure in the fields of literary theory and semiotics, introduced a profound approach to language as a dynamic system of signs. In his view, language is not a fixed structure, but rather a constantly changing and evolving process of meaning-making.¹¹ Kristeva uses the concepts of phenotext, genotext, and chora to explain how meaning is formed in texts. Phenotext refers to observable and directly analyzable language structures that are grammatically and syntactically sound. Genotexts, on the other hand, refer to the unseen, latent meaning, namely the affective and emotional drives hidden behind the words. Meanwhile, the chora is a pre-symbolic space that represents the inner human experience before meaning is formalized into symbols or rules.¹² These concepts will be used to analyze verses from the Qur'an related to environmental ethics.

In the context of Qur'anic interpretation, Kristeva's semiotic approach offers a new way to delve deeper into meaning beyond normative and literal readings. This theory allows readers to understand the Qur'anic text as a system that not only conveys moral and legal commands but also functions as a space for the formation of more complex affective, emotional, and symbolic meanings.¹³ Thus, a semiotic reading of the Qur'an can take us beyond mere normative messages into a deeper experience of human relationships with nature. Therefore, this approach is important for understanding how environmental ethics in the Qur'an is shaped not only thru explicit commands but also thru the symbolic and affective dimensions interwoven in the language of revelation.¹⁴

Kristeva also emphasizes the importance of intertextuality, which means that a text does not stand alone, but is always connected to other texts that shape its meaning.¹⁵ In the interpretation of the Qur'an, this concept is highly relevant, considering that the Qur'an is a text composed of many interconnected layers of meaning. For example, verses related to the environment cannot

11 Olena Verbivska, "Comparative Analysis of Semiotic Approaches to the Notion of Textual Communication between An Author and A Reader (A. J. Greimas, F. Rastier, J. Kristeva)," *Bulletin of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. Philosophy*, no. 7 (2022): 5–9, <https://doi.org/10.17721/2523-4064.2022/7-1/11>.

12 Mustafa Alhemeedawi and Ahmed Basim Saadoon, "Julia Kristeva's the Semiotic and the Symbolic Reading of Adrienne Rich's 'Planetarium' and Carol Ann Duffy's 'Havisham,'" *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies* 5, no. 4 (December 31, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v5i4.1498>.

13 Nursidik, "Semiotics Analysis of the Quran Text About Jihād Fī Sabīlillah in Julia Kristeva's Semanalisis to Intertextuality Approach."

14 Ayesha Orakzai, "The Scriptural Analysis of Environmental Sciences in Islam," *Al-Idah* 43, no. 1 (June 30, 2025): 13–27, <https://doi.org/10.37556/al-idah.043.01.0937>.

15 Andrea Lesic-Thomas, "Behind Bakhtin: Russian Formalism and Kristeva's Intertextuality," *Paragraph* 28, no. 3 (November 2005): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.3366/para.2005.28.3.1>.

be understood solely within their context, but must also be linked to other verses that speak about the creation of nature, cosmic balance, and humanity's role as stewards on earth.¹⁶ Thru this intertextual perspective, we can understand that the discourse on the environment in the Qur'an is not merely a series of commands or prohibitions, but also a part of a larger narrative about humanity's relationship with the universe.

Within the framework of Kristeva's semiotics, the phenotext plays a crucial role in deconstructing the apparent and explicit meaning of a text.¹⁷ The verses of the Qur'an that mention matters related to nature and the environment often use clear and direct language, such as prohibitions against environmental destruction or commands to maintain ecological balance. However, analysis at the phenotext level is not sufficient to reveal the entire ecological message contained in the Qur'an. Kristeva proposed the idea that to fully understand a text, we must delve into the latent meaning hidden behind the apparent linguistic structure. In this regard, genotexts make a significant contribution, as they help us grasp meanings that are not directly revealed but greatly influence readers in forming their perceptions and attitudes toward nature.¹⁸

Additionally, the concept of chora has significant relevance in understanding how the Qur'an shapes a deeper ecological awareness in its readers. In Kristeva's view, the chora is a pre-symbolic space that encompasses inner experiences that cannot be expressed directly thru language or symbols. The chora is the place where meaning is first felt before being formed into more structured symbolic or linguistic forms.¹⁹ In the context of environmental ethics, chora provides an illustration of how ecological awareness is not only shaped by external rules or norms, but also by deep internal experiences of human relationships with nature. In this regard, the Qur'an shapes this ecological awareness thru language that speaks not only at the level of commands or prohibitions, but also at the inner level, encouraging readers to feel interconnectedness and responsibility toward nature.²⁰

By applying Kristeva's semiotic theory to the interpretation of the Qur'an, we can see that the meaning of environmental ethics in the Qur'anic text serves not only as moral and legal regulation, but also as a space for the formation of ecological awareness that involves affective and symbolic dimensions. This understanding makes an important contribution to the study of contemporary interpretation, where the reading of the Qur'an is not limited to normative analysis, but also touches upon the psychological and emotional dimensions of the reader.²¹ In this study, we are not only looking at the Qur'an as a source of law, but also as a revelation that shapes the way we perceive and interact with the natural world around us.

16 Abdul Fatah and Imam Taufiq, "Environmental Interpretation: Hermeneutic Analysis Of The Interpretation Of Anthropocentric Verses In Al-Qur'an," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 27, no. 2 (December 31, 2019): 191, <https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v27i2.6409>.

17 Elena Skorohodova et al., "Language and Text as Generic Components of the Cultural Semiotic Framework," *Asian Social Science* 11, no. 19 (July 30, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v11n19p221>.

18 Shobibur Rizki Maulana, "Hubungan Ayat-Ayat Kestarian Lingkungan Dalam Al-Qur'an, Bibel, Dan Torah Dengan Filsafat Lingkungan (Analisis Intertekstualitas Julia Kristeva)," *Mafatih* 2, no. 2 (November 30, 2022): 99–108, <https://doi.org/10.24260/mafah.v2i2.980>.

19 Dian Shang, "Daoism Concepts in Kristeva's Chora," *Communications in Humanities Research* 4, no. 1 (May 17, 2023): 590–94, <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7064/4/20220885>.

20 Handan ARICI and Hacer AK, "A Perspective on Sustainable Ecology in the Light of the Qur'an," *OPUS Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi* 19, no. 46 (March 30, 2022): 380–92, <https://doi.org/10.26466/opusjsr.1093375>.

21 Muhammad Yusuf Pratama et al., "Living the Qur'an: Exploring Dalā'il Al-Khairāt in Indonesia as a Bridge Between Devotional Tradition and Emotional Experience," *Millati: Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 9, no. 2 (June 27, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.18326/millati.v9i2.3944>.

Selection of Qur'anic Verses: Criteria and Justification

The selection of Qur'anic verses relevant to environmental issues cannot be separated from a broader contextual understanding of the moral and ecological messages contained in the revelation. The main criteria used in selecting these verses are their thematic relevance to the problems of environmental damage and excessive consumption, as well as their compatibility with the principles of Islamic environmental ethics.²² In this case, Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 205 and Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 31 were chosen because they explicitly address the issues of environmental damage and excessive consumption, which are relevant to current global ecological challenges. Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 205 highlights the destruction of plants and animals, while Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 31 speaks of the prohibition of *israf* or wastefulness in consumption, both of which are highly relevant issues to the global ecological crisis.

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّ سَعْيٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَهُنَّ لَكُمُ الْحَرْثُ وَالنَّسْلُ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَسَادَ ﴿٢٥﴾

“And when they leave (you), they strive throughout the land to spread mischief in it and destroy crops and cattle. Allah does not like mischief.”

﴿يَبْنِي أَدَمَ حُدُوفاً زِينَتُكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُّوا وَأْشْرِبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴾

“O Children of Adam! Dress properly whenever you are at worship. Eat and drink, but do not waste. Surely He does not like the wasteful.”

These two verses not only prohibit directly visible damage but also highlight the moral and spiritual dimensions of human actions toward nature. The selection of these verses is based on the concept of caliph (steward of the earth), which explicitly includes humanity's responsibility to maintain the balance of nature.²³ Classical commentaries such as those by Al-Thabari and Ibn Kathir affirm that the environmental damage occurring encompasses both ecological and moral aspects, as it harms the sustainability of other creatures' lives.²⁴ These verses can be seen as a representation of human responsibility toward nature, which is not only related to laws or regulations but also to spiritual and affective awareness. Julia Kristeva's semiotic framework provides space for a deeper exploration of how the symbolic and affective dimensions of these verses shape emotional responses to ecological damage.

Table. 1. Comparison of Criteria for Selecting Verses from the Qur'an

Criteria for Selecting Verses	Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 205	Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 31
Main Topic	Environmental damage (damage to crops and livestock)	Moderate consumption (prohibition of <i>israf</i>)
Relevance to the Ecological Crisis	Highlighting the exploitation of nature and damage caused by humans	Emphasizing the waste of natural resources
The Function of Ethics	Prohibition of destructive actions, moral responsibility	Regulating consumption behavior to prevent ecosystem damage

22 Sya'roni et al., “Ecotheological Insights from Prophetic Hadiths: Reframing Islamic Environmental Ethics Based on SDGs.”

23 Sya'roni et al.

24 Al-Thabari, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Ay Al-Qur'ān*, Juz' 3 (Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr, 1995). and Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Adzīm*, Juz' 1 (Beirut, 1999).

Moral/Spiritual Dimension	Human failure to internalize responsibility as caliph	Self-control as part of ecological awareness
Semiotic Approach	Destruction as an expression of inner tension (genoteks)	Moderation as ecological awareness before social norms are applied (chora)

Source: Author Analysis

Furthermore, the selection of Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 205 and Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 31 was also driven by a desire to explore layers of meaning that are not only normative but also contain deeper affective values. In this context, the phenotext and genotext in Kristeva's semiotics allow readers to identify not only what the text explicitly says, but also how the text resonates within the reader's inner consciousness and shapes their ethical orientation toward the environment (See Table 1). These two verses create tension between explicit commands and inner turmoil, leading to the formation of a broader and more comprehensive ecological awareness. Furthermore, this opens up the possibility for readers to feel a connection with nature before committing to written legal rules.

Kristeva's semiotic approach provides a new dimension in the interpretation of Qur'anic verses related to the environment. Thru the concept of chora, which refers to the pre-symbolic space that shapes inner consciousness, we can understand how these verses form a more intuitive inner orientation toward nature.²⁵ Chora, in this case, provides an illustration of how ecological messages are not only received as rigid legal norms, but also translated into emotions, feelings, and experiences that shape a person's ecological understanding before they commit to external rules. Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 205 and Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 31 help to peel back this layer, revealing how Qur'anic texts shape an ecological consciousness that touches the affective and intuitive dimensions of human beings.

The second criterion in selecting verses is the direct relevance of the text to contemporary environmental issues. Environmental damage caused by overexploitation, deforestation, climate change, and unsustainable resource management is a phenomenon that demands an immediate response from all segments of society, including within a religious context.²⁶ The selected verses are expected to provide new insights that can be applied to environmental management today. Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 205 speaks of the damage caused by human hands, while Qur'an Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 31 reminds humanity not to consume excessively, a principle relevant in addressing the consumerist lifestyle that harms ecosystems. Thus, these two verses are not only a source of moral teachings, but can also be translated into a guide for concrete action in saving the environment.

Semiotic Analysis of Qur'anic Verses on Environmental Ethics

In Julia Kristeva's semiotic approach, text is understood as a dynamic space that functions to communicate meaning thru two main layers: the phenotext and the genotext.²⁷ Phenotext, which refers to the visible and linguistically analyzable layer, describes how the structure of language in the verses of the Qur'an explicitly defines environmental damage. For example, in Surah Al-

25 Manar Abdel Aty Abdel Rahman Gamie, "An Inter-Semiotic Eco-Version of the Qur'an Based on Michael Cronin's Eco-Translation Theory," *مجلة البحث العلمي في الآداب* 24, no. 5 (July 1, 2023): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.21608/jssa.2023.307668>.

26 Sya'roni et al., "Ecotheological Insights from Prophetic Hadiths: Reframing Islamic Environmental Ethics Based on SDGs."

27 María De los Angeles Iglesias, "La Semiólogía de La Productividad y La Teoría Del Texto En Julia Kristeva," *Revista de Filología y Lingüística de La Universidad de Costa Rica* 7, no. 1–2 (January 1, 2006): 59, <https://doi.org/10.15517/rfl.v7i1-2.16396>.

Baqarah [2]: 205, the phrase **وَالنَّسْلَنَ الْحَرْثَ وَهُنَّكَ** (destroying crops and livestock) conveys a very clear warning about destructive actions toward nature. This linguistic structure provides a direct illustration of ecological damage as a violation of the fundamental principle of cosmic harmony.

Table 2. Semiotic Analysis of Verses in the Qur'an

Semiotic Layer	Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 205 (Environmental Damage)	Qur'an Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 31 (Moderate Consumption)
Phenotext (Apparent Meaning)	Human-induced destruction of nature (explicit prohibition against damaging crops and livestock)	Prohibition against wastefulness (moderation in consumption)
Genotext (Unseen meaning)	The tension between external norms and moral/spiritual failure in protecting nature as caliph	The inner urge to waste that affects ecological awareness
Chora (Pre-Symbolic Space)	The formation of ecological awareness through inner experiences related to environmental destruction	Ecological awareness of the balance that shapes self-control in consumption

Source: Author Analysis

At the phenotext level, the meaning of this verse is very explicit: damage is a violation of humanity's obligation to protect nature. However, this meaning only scratches the surface and does not delve deeper into the emotional or affective impact caused by such actions. To fully understand the impact of Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 205, we need to continue the analysis to the genotextual level. Here, the latent meaning contained in this verse points to a deeper understanding of how acts of environmental destruction can evoke inner tension and negative affect in the reader's consciousness. At the genotext level, the language used not only conveys legal prohibitions but also creates tension between destructive actions and higher moral principles, namely the caliph (steward of the earth).²⁸ Environmental destruction in this context is not only a violation of the law but also a moral and spiritual failure. In Kristeva's semiotic understanding, this act of destruction can be interpreted as an expression of uncontrolled affective drives, which goes beyond mere normative transgression and leads to the destruction of the human inner order.²⁹

The concept of chora in Kristeva's semiotics is also highly relevant in understanding the depth of meaning contained in this verse. Chora refers to the pre-symbolic space that shapes human experience before meaning is codified into symbols or social norms.³⁰ In the context of Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 205, chora can be understood as the inner human consciousness formed by a deep emotional connection with nature. Damage to nature is not only seen as a violation of external rules, but also as an inner feeling that drives humans to experience interconnectedness with nature and a responsibility for its preservation. Chora serves as the foundation for the emergence of ecological awareness, which drives attitudinal changes before legal rules are accepted. In this case, the verse fosters a more intuitive ecological awareness

28 Rakhmat, "Islamic Ecotheology: Understanding the Concept of Khalifah and the Ethical Responsibility of the Environment."

29 Julia Kristeva and Margaret Waller, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (Columbia University Press, 2024), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/kris21459>.

30 Julia Kristeva and T Moi, *The Kristeva Reader*, European Perspectives (COUP) Series (Columbia University Press, 1986), <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=UK4XHweWFuIC>; J Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, European Perspectives: A Series in Social Thought and Cultural Criticism (Columbia University Press, 2024), <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=NinoEAAAQBAJ>.

before norms are applied.³¹

Qur'an Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 31, which speaks about the prohibition of *israf* (excessiveness) in consumption, can also be analyzed thru the layers of phenotype and genotype to delve deeper into its ecological meaning. At the phenotypic level, this verse explicitly regulates human behavior in using natural resources by emphasizing moderation. The prohibition against wastefulness reflects social norms that regulate human consumption to prevent it from exceeding reasonable limits. Linguistically, this verse provides clear and structured instructions on how humans should behave toward nature and existing resources. The use of words that lead to self-control demonstrates the important role played by the symbolic in Kristeva, which regulates the system of values and norms in society.

However, as in Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 205, the genotextual layers in Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 31 reveal a deeper meaning. Here, we see that the prohibition against extravagance serves not only as a social command, but also as a response to uncontrolled human desires. At the genotext level, this verse touches upon the psychological and affective dimensions of humanity, which are related to the desire to continue consuming more without considering the impact on the environment. Within Kristeva's semiotic framework, the drive to overconsume can be seen as an expression of the tension between human desire and social constraints. This leads to a more complex reading of how Qur'anic texts shape human behavior toward nature, not only thru external laws, but also thru self-control triggered by inner awareness.

The use of the concept of *chora* in Qur'an Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 31 allows us to delve deeper into how moderation in consumption can function as a form of deeper ecological awareness. *Chora*, which refers to the pre-symbolic space, allows readers to experience the value of balance and moderation before this meaning is translated into structured social norms.³² In the context of overconsumption, *chora* plays a role in shaping inner feelings about ecological responsibility before regulations or laws are established. This verse, therefore, not only regulates external behavior but also shapes inner attitudes that encourage humans to feel content and not get caught in destructive consumer patterns that harm nature. This shows that ecological interpretation can move beyond external laws and focus more on cultivating a deep ecological consciousness within humans.

Thru these two verses, we can see that Kristeva's semiotic approach provides a new dimension in understanding the environmental ethics of the Qur'an. Not only does it consider text as a structure that governs human behavior, but it also takes into account the affective and emotional tensions that shape human understanding of nature.³³ Phenotext, genotext, and *chora* work together to reveal deeper layers of meaning, which not only speak to moral laws but also to the inner human experience that shapes ecological consciousness.³⁴ By using Kristeva's semiotics, it can be understood that environmental ethics in the Qur'an is not just about following external rules, but also about forming an ecological consciousness that originates from a deeper inner space.

Ethical Implications: Beyond Legalism - Towards Ecological Consciousness

Understanding environmental ethics in the Qur'an, thru Kristeva's semiotic analysis, opens up space for readings that go beyond the legalistic or normative interpretations often found in

31 Rocco Filippone Pergola and Marco Innamorati, "Between Ecocide and Gratitude: Polis-Analytical Considerations Toward A Cultural Metamorphosis in Ecology," *World Futures* 74, no. 5 (July 4, 2018): 270–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02604027.2018.1492286>.

32 Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*.

33 Fahruddin Faiz, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an: Tema-Tema Kontroversial* (Yogyakarta: eLSAQ Press, 2011).

34 Orakzai, "The Scriptural Analysis of Environmental Sciences in Islam."

traditional commentaries. Generally, verses that discuss the environment, such as Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 205 and Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 31, are often understood as moral commands that regulate human behavior toward nature, focusing on the prohibition of damage and waste.³⁵ However, thru a semiotic approach, we can see that environmental ethics in the Qur'an does not only function as external rules to be followed, but also as a deep shaper of ecological consciousness. This reflects the affective and emotional dimensions that operate beyond the visible legal or symbolic structures. Thus, environmental ethics in the Qur'an, as analyzed thru Kristeva's concept of *chora*, has the potential to transform our perspective on nature, not just as an object to be exploited but as an entity that needs to be protected with full ecological awareness.

This understanding has implications for how we view the role of humans as caliph on earth, not just as managers or rulers of nature, but also as an integral part of the broader ecosystem.³⁶ The concept of the caliphate is often understood legalistically as a mandate to manage the earth according to God's law, but Kristeva's semiotic approach shows that this role also contains deep emotional and spiritual dimensions. As caliphs, humans are not only commanded to care for nature externally thru moral actions, but they must also internalize these ecological values within their inner consciousness.³⁷ By using the concept of genotexts, which reveals the latent affective drives of meaning, we can understand that responsibility toward nature stems not only from legal obligations, but also from a deep sense of emotional connection with the earth as part of God's creation. This emphasizes the importance of ecological awareness formed thru inner experience, before being implemented in concrete actions.

Furthermore, Kristeva's semiotic approach opens up new insights into our understanding of ecological damage. In Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 205, the damage that occurs is not only the result of external violations, but is also a manifestation of the imbalance in human inner awareness toward nature.³⁸ Kristeva's concept of *chora* highlights the pre-symbolic space, which is human consciousness before symbolic and social rules are applied.³⁹ In this case, environmental damage is not only caused by physically destructive actions, but is also a reflection of poorly channeled inner tension. Environmental ethics in the Qur'an, therefore, leads to the formation of a deep ecological awareness, which encompasses human affective dimensions and intuition toward nature, before symbolic and legal meanings are applied.⁴⁰ This ecological awareness serves as an internal driver, motivating individuals to act wisely toward nature, not just out of legal obligation, but also due to an emotional connection with the environment.

This interconnectedness is evident in Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 31, where the prohibition of *israf* (excessiveness) not only regulates human behavior socially but also reflects the importance of inner control over the desire to consume excessively.⁴¹ Within Kristeva's semiotic framework, the prohibition against waste at the genotext level is more than just an instruction to avoid extravagance; it is also a response to an inner drive that seeks to transcend boundaries. At this

35 Hossini et al., "The Environment from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Divine Teachings."

36 Nur et al., "Qur'anic Ecotheology and the Ethics of Forest Protection in Indonesia."

37 M Djidin and Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Indonesian Interpretation of the Qur'an on Khilāfah: The Case of Quraish Shihab and Yudian Wahyudi on Qur'an, 2: 30-38," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 57, no. 1 (June 29, 2019): 143-66, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2019.571.143-166>.

38 M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002).

39 Kristeva and Moi, *The Kristeva Reader*.

40 Syefrieni Syefrieni and Dindin Nasrudin, "The Construction of Environmental Philosophy Rooted in Religiosity," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 79, no. 2 (August 25, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i2.8442>.

41 M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 75.

level, moderation in consumption is not just about external control, but about cultivating an intuitive and affective inner awareness of the value of simplicity and balance.⁴² This encourages readers to feel sufficient, not just because of laws or regulations, but because of an appreciation for the importance of maintaining natural balance and avoiding environmental excesses. Thus, this verse not only emphasizes the prohibition but also fosters ecological awareness, leading to a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness between humans and nature.

The ethical implications of Kristeva's semiotic approach to the environmental ethics of the Qur'an open up space for a paradigm shift in understanding the relationship between humans and nature. This approach proposes that ecological responsibility is not just about following clear laws or regulations, but also about fostering a deeper ecological awareness. Using Kristeva's framework, we can understand that the verses of the Qur'an about the environment serve not only as moral instructions but also as a means of shaping an inner orientation that encourages humans to feel their responsibility toward nature.⁴³ This awareness flows from the *chora* space, where human inner feelings and intuition are nurtured before moral or legal actions are applied. Therefore, Qur'anic environmental ethics, within the framework of Kristeva's semiotics, is more than just external law; it is an understanding formed deep within human consciousness, simultaneously encompassing symbolic, affective, and ecological intuition dimensions.

This approach has the potential to transform how we view the caliphate in an environmental context. As humans entrusted with the responsibility of caring for the Earth, the caliph does not only function as a law administrator or nature regulator, but also as an individual who is emotionally and spiritually connected to the surrounding world.⁴⁴ By integrating ecological awareness into the core of the concept of caliphate, we begin to understand that our actions toward nature are not merely a codified moral obligation, but also an affective and intuitive responsibility. Therefore, to address the current global ecological challenges, we need to develop a holistic ecological awareness that goes beyond normative readings and toward cultivating a deep inner understanding of the importance of maintaining the balance of nature.⁴⁵

CONCLUSION

The main finding of this study is that understanding environmental ethics in the Qur'an is not only limited to the normative and legal dimensions, but also involves deep symbolic and affective layers. By utilizing Kristeva's concepts such as the *phenotext*, *genotext*, and *chora*, the research successfully demonstrates how the Qur'an in Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 205 and Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 31 can foster a more intuitive and affective ecological awareness in its readers. This has implications for how humans, as caliphs, should not only manage nature thru law, but also thru a deep inner and emotional connection with the environment.

The main contribution of this article lies in utilizing semiotic theory to delve deeper into the ecological meaning within the Qur'an, which has been understood only legalistically until now.

42 Shihab, 76.

43 Kristeva and Moi, *The Kristeva Reader*.

44 Ridho Mubarak, Faisal Eriza, and Ahmad Sayyidulhaq Arrobbani Lubis, "Islamic Liberation in Human Responsibility as a Caliph on Earth," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 105, no. 5 (September 2024), <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.105.512>.

45 Muhammad Yusuf Pratama et al., "Revitalization of Beach Tourism Area Through Integrated Waste Cleanup Movement for Environmental Sustainability, Case Study: Tirang Island," *Mimbar Integritas: Jurnal Pengabdian* 4, no. 1 (December 21, 2024): 235, <https://doi.org/10.36841/mimbarintegritas.v4i1.5686>.

This approach opens up new perspectives in contemporary interpretation, incorporating emotional, psychological, and spiritual aspects. However, a weakness of this article is the lack of further exploration regarding the practical application of this environmental ethics framework in the daily lives of Muslims or its implementation in environmental policy. Additionally, while this article makes a significant theoretical contribution, further research is still needed on its practical implementation.

As a recommendation for further research, it is suggested to examine how a more effective understanding of environmental ethics in the Qur'an can be applied in da'wah practices or public policies related to environmental protection. Further research could also develop applications of Kristeva's semiotic framework to examine other texts in Islamic literature related to ecotheology and ecosystems, and to explore how these teachings can play a role in more concretely and practically addressing the global environmental crisis.

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