



Eco-Theology: Purification of Respect Against *Du'a Ngga'e* Ende-Lio Tribe

Marianus Angi Nara¹, Raymundus I Made Sudhiarsa², Petrus Yuniarto³

^{1,2} Master Theological Philosophy, Widya Sasana College of Theological Philosophy, Malang, Indonesia

³ University of Santo Tomas Manila, Philippines

Abstract

Each culture has its unique approach to understanding the concept of safety, and the Ende-Lio culture on Flores Island, Indonesia, is no exception. In the Ende-Lio culture, the concept of salvation is known as "*Du'a Ngga'e*," which forms the basis of understanding life's purpose, balance with nature, and relationship with the universe. This paper focuses on understanding *Du'a Ngga'e* as a theological concept that emphasizes the importance of maintaining balance in human interaction with nature, gods, and ancestral spirits. This concept represents the belief that good actions and righteous ethics will ensure the safety of individuals and communities in this world and towards life after death. Therefore, *Du'a Ngga'e* emphasizes caring for nature, maintaining a harmonious relationship with the universe, and living with high ethics. This study illustrates how Ende-Lio cultures understand and integrate the concept of ecological theology in their daily lives. The concept of *Du'a Ngga'e* inspires positive action in safeguarding nature and promoting a healthy relationship between humans and the universe.

Keywords : *Du'a Ngga'e*, Ende-Lio, Eco-Theology, Environmental Damage

Correspondence : Marianus Angi Nara, nararian87@gmail.com, Master Theological Philosophy, Widya Sasana College of Theological Philosophy, Malang, Indonesia, 2 Jalan Terusan Rajabasa, Malang, East Java, Indonesia, 65146

- 1) All the Authors involved in this manuscript stated, we have no conflicts of interest to disclose,
- 2) The funds used are personal funds and do not come from any organization,



1. Introduction

Du'a Ngga'e is a theological concept that permeates the people's daily life of Ende-Lio. This concept includes the idea that human salvation depends on relationships with gods and ancestral spirits and the correct ecological and ethical balance in human interaction with the universe. In this view, safeguarding nature and keeping individuals and communities safe is inseparable. This is an essential thing that must be considered by all Ende-Lio people. However, the fact is that the local community does not pay attention to this ancestral heritage. Many things were done that illustrate that the people of Ende did just that. One example is that on 22 June 2021, the Environmental Office of Ende Regency issued a statement regarding environmental issues in Ende District. One of them uses drugs (pesticides) unwisely. As happened in Ranakolo Village, Maurole District (Dala and Mutiara, 2019).

Concerning concerns about the above issues, this scholarly article aims to delve deeper into the concept of Du'a Ngga'e in the Ende-Lio culture and how this view influenced how they viewed salvation. Geographically, the people of the Ende-Lio tribe embrace Christianity, and Christianity also teaches the importance of maintaining the relationship between humans and nature. In short, the above concern becomes an anxiety of today's theology related to their daily religious practice. So, understanding the concept of Du'a Ngga'e can be described as a path of redemption that combines man's relationship with nature, spirituality, and true morality.

Several scientific articles have dealt with problems that are almost the same as this scientific work. However, the author found differences between this article and the previous article. The differences include the article "The Relationship between the Concept of Ngga'e Prayer as the Ultimate Reality of the Ende-Lio Tribe and the Christian Faith." Written by Mathias Jebaru Adon, Rikardus Depa Cycle and Vincent Rixnaldi Masut. In *Al-Hikmah: Journal of the Study of Religions*. Volume 7 Number 2 of 2021 (257-272) underlines the importance of dialogue between culture (which emphasizes the highest reality of the concept of Du'a Ngga'e) and Christian faith. This inculturation must be maintained despite challenges such as the development of science, which emphasizes rationality and critical reasoning, as well as the challenge of migration. This scientific article further highlights the practice of Dua Ngga'e religiosity as the highest reality that needs to be maintained.

Another previous article was "The Concept of Ecological Theology in the Ngeti Uma Ritual in the Ende-Lio Community." Alfredo Reynold Reba, Sefrianus Juhani, Aprilius Bedu Beke, Bruno Rhaki Mbani, Edwinandus Dhajo Reda, Fransiskus B. Bop Dala, and Charles Dule wrote this article. In the *Journal of Catholic Religious Education Research*. Vol. 02. No.02 September 2022. 178-195. This article emphasizes the ritual of ngeti uma (opening of new fields). This activity usually begins with the Do'a Ngga'e feeding ritual. This ritual aims to honor Du'a Ngga'e and show the excellent relationship between the Ende-Lio Community and Du'a Ngga'e, who is believed to be the Creator. Another thing is the interdependence between creation and the guarantee of salvation as offered by the teachings of the Christian faith.

This study aims to provide an understanding of salvation theology towards the appreciation of the concept of Du'a Ngga'e, which is believed by the Ende-Lio tribe community to be the highest reality and also the Creator. That is his passion, and a theological message is contained in it. The methodology used in this scientific paper is the method of discourse. Several articles that deal with



the same question more or less become the main foundation and literature. The findings are described descriptively to give a complete and complete picture.

2. Results and Discussion

2.1. Du'a Ngga'e: The Ultimate Reality of the Ende-Lio Tribe

Etymologically, Du'a Ngga'e means Dua means God, and Ngga'e means God. Du'a Ngga'e means Allah is the Sovereign of everything on earth. The people of the Ende-Lio tribe believe that Du'a Ngga'e is the highest being, thus instilling respect, reluctance, and fear towards Du'a Ngga'e. As religious creatures, humans have certain beliefs about something unique and special. Humans, both individuals and specific groups, have unique beliefs. We can find this in the Ende-Lio tribe (one of the tribes on Flores Island, NTT). The Ende-Lio tribal community believes in the Ngga'e Prayer as a concept of the Ultimate Reality or divine entity. In this cultural context, the Du'a Ngga'e is considered the highest, all-powerful, and the source of all life and existence (Arndt, 2002). In other words, the Du'a Ngga'e expresses the Ende-Lio people's faith in the existence of the highest reality or the Most Holy (Arndt, 2002).

This Supreme Reality, or the Most Holy, is called God in Christianity. For the Ende-Lio tribal people, the name Du'a Ngga'e was born from history and reflects their mystical experiences. This magical experience is mainly related to the belief in God's power over the realities that occur in everyday life. This belief is an awareness of the existence of God who appears. Du'a Ngga'e's self-statement is the source of life that gives existence and essence to everything in the universe. The highest being in the Ende-Lio Society has transcendent and immanent characteristics, as in the teachings of the Catholic Church, which is also understood to be the origin and source of all things. In other words, Du'a Ngga'e is also believed by the Ende-Lio people to have the ability and power of God in the Catholic Church, who creates and destroys creation. The Du'a Ngga'e represents the role of the Most High on earth and with creation. Apart from that, the Ende-Lio people believe in the Du'a Ngga'e, which regulates, protects, and governs everything that happens on earth.

2.2. Du'a Ngetha Lulu Wula: god the Creator

Du'a Ngga'e, as the highest being, means that Allah is the master of everything on earth (Minggu, 2023). For the people of the Ende-Lio tribe, Du'a Ngga'e is the highest being who has power over everything, and to create and be the organizer of all their creations on earth is called the Two Ghetu Lulu Wula. The people of the Ende-Lio tribe believe in this terminology as God the Creator, as in Christianity. Christianity believes in God as the origin and source of all things. He created all things through the Word. The people feel the same about the Ende-Lio tribe. The two Ghetas of Lulu Wula are reflected as the Creator. It comes from a place that is utterly incomprehensible to man. It existed before everything existed and was made (Tonda, 2021). Du'a Ghetu Lulu Wula means god enthroned in Heaven and symbolizes God residing on the throne.

The people of the Ende-Lio tribe believe that Du'a Ngga'e created Du'a Ngga'e created everything in this world as the ultimate reality. This belief gives awareness that Du'a Ngga'e is the God who controls their lives, as believed by the Christian faith (Keriapy, 2017). Besides being considered the Creator, Du'a Ngga'e is also considered a God who lives side by side with humans. Or God, who is close to man and actively involved in human life. The term Ngga'e Ghale Wena Tana means that God



on earth is believed to be the guardian of human life on earth because it has energy or human nature, such as gentleness, mercy, goodness, justice, and also punishing those who are evil (Iki, 2021). In short, Du'a Ngga'e, believed by the Ende-Lio tribe, is the Supreme Reality that organizes, preserves and regulates everything on earth. Therefore, all Ende-Lio people are tasked with maintaining good relations and harmony between them and Du'a Ngga'e as the Ultimate Reality. And one way is to protect and preserve the universe for living things and nature.

2.3. The Concerns of the Ende-Lio Tribe Today

In this subtitle, the author presents the reality of life of the Ende-Lio tribe today. The life highlighted in this paper is how the Ende-Lio people respect Du'a Ngga'e, who is believed to be the creator and preserver of life. Some examples of cases, such as those described in the introduction above, are one example. The case in Ranokolo village related to the unwise use of pesticides is very troubling because it can damage the soil ecosystem. Irregular use of pesticides can pollute soil, water, and air, disrupt ecosystems by killing various other animals, and harm humans (Yuantari, 2011). Although the use of pesticides is beneficial for farmers in general, unwise and irregular use will have a substantial negative impact. In addition, environmental issues such as garbage, mining, forest burning, and so on often occur in the lives of the Ende-Lio tribe people today.

Our concern for environmental damage is our concern for the appreciation and respect of the Ende-Lio tribe community for Du'a Gheta Lulu Wulu, who is believed to be the creator and guardian. The damage issue illustrates the destructive relationship between the people of the Ende-Lio tribe and Du'a Ngga'e. It also demonstrates the lack of respect for creation. The respect for Du'a Ngga'e does not only lie in sacred worship, such as feeding or offerings but is also related to appreciation in the form of sound and correct life behavior. The issue of forest destruction is also a form of failure to respect Du'a Ngga'e in the terminology of Ngga'e Ghale Wena Tana (god who is brought by the earth), who controls and protects the earth (Arndt, 2002). This terminology also describes that Du'a Ngga'e exists, lives, and is present with humans, blessing people who believe and punishing people who break every rule. The blessings and punishments are given aim to protect and guard His creation (Reba, 2022)

2.4. Eco-Theology of the Purification Path

God, who is believed in the Catholic Church, and Du'a Ngga'e, considered by the people of the Ende-Lio tribe, are the highest beings who desire an unbroken relationship with His creation. This kind of relationship gives continuity of life to creation. This is indicated by the presence of plants or plants that give life to humans. Thus, man values and cares in a way peculiar to each creation. The thing that needs to be realized by the Ende-Lio tribal community is that the experience of Du'a Ngga'e as the highest form occurs in nature in everyday life. Starting from admiration for the universe, the people of Ende-Lio believe that behind all these realities, another divine force transcends humanity. Who is in the Christian faith as the One who is present and intervenes in human life? For God, the Christian faith in God is the determinant of life that exists within, the vortex of time, and everything is in Him and controlled by Him (Saeng, 2016).

The realms of the world created by the Supreme are supposed to be guarded, nurtured, cherished, and respected. This form of respect or respect, in addition to maintaining the relationship between the



Ende-Lio tribal community and Du'a Ngga'e, also aims to bring safety to the Ende-Lio community, both safety in today's world and safety in the hereafter. Creation, which decides its relationship with Du'a Ngga'e, must experience various disasters and deaths (Reba, 2022). Thus, the harmonious relationship between the people of the Ende-Lio tribe needs attention. However, the development of science and technology can influence humans to fade the intention and commitment to maintain and preserve creation. Departing from these concerns, the author offers a theological science that underlines the theology of salvation in the Christian faith. It should also be seen that the Ende-Lio people's concept of Du'a Ngga'e is similar to the idea of God or God in the Catholic Church. The people of Ende-Lio also believe Dua Ngga'e to have God-like abilities and power in the Catholic Church. He created and eliminated creation, and Allah and the Two Ngga'e must be concerned about the problems in creation so that both have an eschatological purpose and purpose for His creation (Reba, 2022).

The damage above is also a church issue, so the Church is invited to rethink and call for the concept of salvation to be passed down to the Church. Today, the Church is quite concerned about environmental problems—various ways of bidding from the Church on the issue. The Christian faith views the nature of the world as God's creation. This concept is called ecology. Ecology comes from the Greek word Oikos, a house where people can live in one household. The word Oikos is also used in the term "economy," where Oikos is home while nomos is a rule/law; it is related to meeting the needs of life and exchanging goods in society for survival (Katu 2020). So, ecology is a discipline related to the human environment that studies the structure of nature and norms for managing and maintaining nature (Baker, 1995).

Human cares for and manages nature and other creations before God. This act of providence is a responsibility to God and benefits humans of all ages (Katu, 2020). The biblical basis of ecological theology lies in Genesis 1:28. God first commanded man to populate the earth, conquer and rule over the sea fish, the birds of the air, and all the animals crawling on the face of the planet. Man is God's agent in the effort to create order in carrying out his role as God's partner; this command aims to carry out God's mission in the work of salvation of all creation—the work of redemption of the entire universe and all creation, not just man being saved. Genesis 1:28 illustrates that man was given the responsibility to serve all creation. Thus, concerning today's living environment, the Church is called to care for the universe damaged by pollution, which has ruined the future of human life itself (Erari, 1995). More than that, preserving nature is an implementation of love for others.

Humanity's ecological crisis is rooted in human attitudes that do not pay attention to moral norms about the environment, even in relations with others. Humans view nature only as an object, which is helpful as a tool to meet material needs, so the atmosphere is only seen in an economic context, especially material benefits (Borrong, 2000). There are many ways for humans to find benefits from the environment, so humans do not realize that by destroying creation, they are wasting their civilization (Tristante, 2015). The teachings of the Christian faith emphasize that God commands man to rule over creation and administer the earth. Man is given the task of guarding or nurturing, not given the task of exploiting. If man fails to care for the planet, he falls into his responsibility as an agent of God (Drummond, 1999).

Humans and nature are two things that are interrelated and integral. Humans and nature are fellow creatures. Man is a unique creation because he is like God. Therefore, it is necessary to know



that humans have a decisive role in preserving or sustaining life around them (Yuono, 2019). Humans and nature are living things that depend on and need each other. The Church is well aware of this, so environmental conservation is an inseparable part of evangelism carried out by the Church as a fellowship of believers. Everyone who has lived in Christ and has accepted the gospel of Christ should be a pioneer in preserving the environment (Giawa, 2021). As an extension of God, Christians must always be aware of the responsibility to care for and keep creation. In short, Christianity also participates in maintaining the environment.

The Church is asked to be a faithful witness of the Gospel, the good news of God's reconciliation of the world through Christ's work on earth. God's work of redemption through Christ is not only limited to God's peace with humans but also God's work of reconciliation encompassing the entire created order of the universe. This Atonement is directed at humans and the universe (Yewangoe, 1983). The role of the Church should be to be an agent of reconciliation for an earth fragile by human exploitation. Christ's work reconciles man and the universe with God, where nature will be restored to its original state in a harmonious relationship (Katu, 2020). This Atonement becomes the fact that eschatology refers to the concept of salvation taught, which touches not only the spiritual dimension but also the constituency associated with material things (Volf, 1989).

The eschatological concept understood by Christianity is not only the salvation of humans but also the salvation of the universe and other creations of God. God's work of reconciliation refers to God's reconciliation with man and all His creations by establishing welfare and justice in the future. The Church has a role in upholding justice and welfare and continuing to voice the truth to care for the environment by participating in eschatology (Katu, 2020). Human work and maintaining the environment's health express worship that reflects the love for God. Man gives glorification to God. The same must be done by the people of the Ende-Lio tribe in glorification or respect for Du'a Ngga'e. The concept of eschatology based on the results of ecological theology can be a guide in the maintenance of the universe by the Ende-Lio tribal community created by Du'a Ngga'e.

3. Conclusion

The people of the Ende-Lio tribe highly respect Du'a Ngga'e as the highest being, creator, organizer, and protector. Many ways are done as a form of respect, such as feeding or offerings. However, the life of the people of the Ende-Lio tribe failed in the practice of respect for Du'a Ngga'e. One of the violations of this passion is forest destruction caused by the irregular use of chemicals. Without realizing it, this kind of practice reflects a failure in the life of the Ende-Lio people. The people of the Ende-Lio tribe believe that Du'a Ngga'e created everything in this world as the ultimate reality. This belief makes them realize that Du'a Ngga'e is the God who rules over their lives, as the Christian faith believes. So, the vocation of the people of the Ende-Lio Tribe is like that of Christians, namely caring for and caring for nature. This call aims to save the universe because the salvation that Jesus Christ gives is not only to man but also salvation to the universe. This redemption gave the people of the Ende-Lio tribe a sense of awareness of the importance of preserving the universe.



References

- Arndt, P. (2002). *Du'a Nggae Supreme Form and Religious Ceremony in the Lio Region (Central Flores)* (E. Y. Embu (ed.); Fisi). Puslit Candraditya
- Baker, Anton. (1995). *Cosmology and Ecology: A Philosophy of Cosmology as a Human Household*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius
- Borong, Robert P. (2003). *New Earth Ethics*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia
- Dala, Y., & Mutiara, C. (2019). Evaluation of Rice Field Soil Fertility in Ranokolo Village, Maurole District, Ende Regency. *Agrica* (pp. 9–17). <https://doi.org/10.37478/agr.v12i2.304>
- Drummond, Celia Deane. (1999). *Theology and Ecology*. Jakarta: BPK gunung Mulia
- Erari, karel Phill. (1995). *Justice for the Weak: A Book to Commemorate the 67th Anniversary of Prof. Dr. Ihroni, M.A.* Jakarta
- Giawa, Hasan. (2021). The Church and the Environment: A Biblical Theological Reflection on the Concept of Church Mission According to Mark 16:15. *Journal of Grace Theology* (pp. 33-44). <https://journal.sttrem.ac.id/index.php/jtr/article/view/46>
- Iki, A. (2021). *Interview on Du'a Nggae'e Supreme Being*. Maumere.
- Keriapy, F. (2017). Local Wisdom as a Bridge to Theology and Culture Frets'. *Journal of Ready Theology*.
- Minggu, Kosmas. (2023). Pati Ka Ti Sepa " Sacrificial Rites of Ende-Lio Indigenous People in Ende Regency. *Open Journal Systems* (pp. 1-15). <https://doi.org/10.33578/mbi.v17i8.342>
- Reba, Alfredo Reyonold. (2020). The Concept of Ecological Theology in Ngeti Uma Ritual in Ende-Lio Community. *Journal of Catholic Religious Research* (pp. 178-195). <https://doi.org/10.52110/jppak.v2i2.62>
- Remikatu, Jefri Hina. (2020). Ecological Theology: An Ethical Issue towards a Christian Eschatology. *Journal of Biblical and Practical Theology* (pp. 65-85). <https://ojs.sttbc.ac.id/index.php/ibc/article/view/12>
- Saeng, Valentinus. (2016). *Dayak Mualang Religion in Myth, in Riyanto, F. X. E. A. et al. (eds.) Local Wisdom of Pancasila, Grains of Indonesian Philosophy*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.
- Tonda, M. (2021). *Interview Culture as Identity March 05, 2021*. Ende.
- Tristanto, Lukas awi. (2015). *The Call to Preserve Creation*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius
- Yewangoe, A.A. (1983). *Reconciliation*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia. 1983



-
- Yuantari, MG Catur. (2011). *The Impact of Organochloring Pesticides on Human Health and the Environment and its Countermeasures. Journal of Proceedings of the National Seminar on the Role of Public Health in Achieving MDG's in Indonesia, 187-199.*
- Yuono, Yusup Rogo. (2019). Fighting for Environmental Ethics Through Interpretation of Creation Theology as a Foundation for Environmental Management-Preservation. *Journal of Systematic and Practical Theology.*