

Cosmic Redemption Concepts in the Mythology of *Pante* Tradition of Indonesian Manggarai Community

Sefrianus Juhani^{a,*}, Raymundus I Made Sudhiarsa^a,
Alexander Jebadu^b, Bernadus Raho^b, Józef Trzebuniak^c

^aSekolah Tinggi Filsafat Teologi Widya Sasana Malang, Jawa Timur, Indonesia

^bInstitut Filsafat dan Teknologi Kreatif Ledalero, Maumere, Nusa Tenggara Timur, Indonesia

^cCollegium Bobolanum Warsaw, Poland

*corresponding author: juhanisefri27@gmail.com

Received: 08-12-2022; Revised: 06-04-2023; Accepted: 06-06-2023

DOI: 10.31291/hn.v12i1.669

Abstract

This study aims to explore the cosmic redemption concepts in the mythology of the *pante* tradition in Manggarai community. *Pante* tradition was an attempt to promote an attitude of respect for non-human creations so that nature would return to its harmonious state. The data was obtained through interviews with several key informants who were very close to these myths, including some palm tappers from several villages in Manggarai. From interviews and collected documents, several myths were found in the *pante* tradition. In Manggarai mythology, it is believed that there is inseparable relationship between humans, non-human creations, and the Supreme Being. Each creation has a contribution to the survival of the others and has eschatological future. The Manggarai people also believe that there is a place for the eternal life called *pa'ang be le*. This finding contributes to the development of ecological theology in the Indonesian Catholic Church and the universal Church. In addition, the awareness of the ultimate future for all creation strengthens the commitment of the Christians to preserve the environment.

Keywords: *Cosmic redemption, mythology, pante tradition, Manggarai community, church.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membahas konsep penebusan kosmis dalam mitologi tradisi pante pada masyarakat Manggarai Indonesia. Tradisi ini bertujuan menimbulkan sikap menghargai terhadap ciptaan non-manusia sehingga alam kembali harmonis. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara dengan beberapa informan kunci yang mengenal baik mitos-mitos tersebut yang berasal dari beberapa desa di Manggarai. Dari wawancara dan dokumentasi, ditemukan beberapa mitos dalam tradisi pante. Diceritakan adanya hubungan yang tidak terpisahkan antara manusia, ciptaan non-manusia, dan Yang Maha Esa. Setiap ciptaan memiliki kontribusi untuk kelangsungan hidup yang lain. Semua ciptaan ini memiliki masa depan eskatologis. Orang Manggarai juga percaya bahwa ada tempat bagi semua yang hidup abadi, yang disebut pa'ang be le. Temuan ini dapat memberikan kontribusi bagi perkembangan teologi ekologis dalam Gereja Katolik Indonesia dan Gereja universal. Selain itu, kesadaran akan masa depan terakhir bagi semua ciptaan menggerakkan umat beriman untuk melestarikan lingkungan.

Kata kunci: *Penebusan kosmik, mitologi, tradisi pante, Masyarakat Manggarai, Gereja.*

Introduction

Today, ecological crisis occurs in almost in all places in the world and caught the attention of academics, environmental activists, government, religion, and other groups including in the Manggarai-Flores region, Nusa Tenggara Timur, Indonesia. There has been major ecological crisis in Nuca Lale (another name for the Manggarai area) which impacted the environment. To begin with, there is lack of water sources as a result of deforestation (Purwanto et al., 2020: 1–2) and damage to marine ecosystems by garbage disposal, crop failure, and various diseases as a result of agricultural pesticides (Haryanto, 2020; Mulu et al, 2020). While these problems were caused by human misbehave towards the environment, there could be an underlying factor that may contribute to the lack of environmental awareness, namely the decline of cosmic redemption

concept. Many Manggaraians believe that only humans that are redeemed, while other creations (environment and other creatures) are not.

The cosmic redemption can be found in Scripture, tradition and conventional religious doctrines. One of religious literature that describes the cosmic redemption is Sathya Sai Baba. Sathya Sai Baba as quoted by Linda Goff and Paul Smoker mentions: “Rain falling in different parts of the world flows through thousands of channels to reach the ocean...and so, too, religions and theologies, which all come from man's yearning for meaning, they too, flow in a thousand ways, fertilizing many fields, refreshing tired people, and at last reach the ocean.” In many traditional cultures and religions, there are teachings about the future of all creation (human and non-human creations) to give meaning to what exists (Linda & Paul, 1994). The teachings about the future of creation is found in myths, traditional rituals, and song verses sung in traditional ceremonies.

Several studies show that the concept of cosmic redemption is also shared and lived by many religious and cultural communities. Andrew Ray Williams who studied the cosmic redemption of the Pentecostal Church discovered that Pentecostal theologians have recently begun to research the relationship between Pentecostal theology and ecology. However, their studies paid little attention to the relationship between Pentecostal eschatology and eco-theology. On this basis, Williams emphasized the importance of developing cosmic redemption in the Pentecostal Church. He, therefore, explored how a broader Pentecostal eschatology can provide fresh opportunities to develop Pentecostal eco-eschatology. In establishing Pentecostal cosmic redemption, he brought together the

eschatological contributions of Peter Althouse, Frank Macchia, and Larry McQueen. These figures assert that the old earth was not annihilated at the second coming of Christ, but that all creation was transformed into the new earth (Williams, 2018).

Other researchers such as Wibowo, Sugihardjo, and E. Lestari who examined the influence of myths and local wisdom on Mount Lawu, Magetan Regency found that local myths and wisdom have values and teachings that can help the community to protect and preserve nature. The Lawu people believe that the empirical nature is always impregnated by the supernatural. Everything in nature, whether it be hills, mountains, or rivers, are inhabited. Nature is sacred, hence it must be guarded and preserved by the local community. When nature is not taken care of and preserved, its balance can be disturbed and the spirits in the forest will be angry and give a lot of trouble to humans. This study indicated that the existence of spirits in creation has its own purpose to achieve the future as expected by its Creator. Humans should protect the environment, as mandated by local myths and wisdom (Wibowo & Sugihardjo, 2021).

The concept of cosmic redemption, as found in the several cultural contexts above, is also shared by the people of Manggarai-Flores. Manggarai is an area located in the western part of the island of Flores. This area has a size of 7,106 km² (Toda, 1999). The Manggarai region is divided into three districts, namely Manggarai, West Manggarai and East Manggarai. Manggarai people have a unique culture with various kinds of myths. One of the myths told from generation to generation is the mythology in *pante* tradition. In this myth, it is told about how the world, humans, plants, and animals were created by *Morin agu Ngaran* (Creator) (Verheijen,

1991: 173). The myth itself has many definitions, according to the point of view of those who define it. Kazazi, as quoted by Moniri defines myth as a kind of ancient ideology. This philosopher explains further that myth is an ideological school where humans understand themselves and the world (Moniri & Dohniyatkar, 2019). Myths are not a by-product of human thinking about the universe and the basic concepts of life, but are a way of life for people. On the basis of this understanding, we assumed that the mythology in *pante* tradition that exists in society maintains values as the guidelines for people's lives, one of which is cosmic redemption. This paper aims to specifically explore the cosmic redemption dimension in the mythology of *pante* traditions.

Literature Review

Key Concepts in Cosmic Redemption

Cosmic redemption is an important point in the discussion of eschatology. Eschatology is a rational discourse on the last things. There are three important objects of eschatological study, namely the last things, the future things and definitive things (Nitrola, 2001: 19-26). Cosmic redemption is an event that will be experienced by the cosmos at the end of time. The concept of cosmic redemption cannot be separated from the concept of spirituality. According to researchers and authors of *The Spiritual Brain*, Mario Beauregard and Denyse O'Leary, spirituality is any experience that can bring humans into contact with the divine. Ruth Beckmann Murray and Judith Proctor Zenter argue that spirituality is related to a desire to be attuned to the universe and to seek answers about infinity. This becomes even more apparent when humans face emotional stress, physical illness, or death. Similarly, Christina Puchalski, Director of

the George Washington Institute of Spirituality and Health, argues that spirituality is a human aspect that refers to the way humans seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connection with the present, with themselves, others, nature, and sacred things (Delegran, 2016). In this paper, spirituality is understood as a spirit that moves humans to find meaning related to questions about eschatological issues, the sacred, human relations with nature, oneself, and each other.

All religions and cultures share the belief that there is a meaning to be sought from all events. Mythology, traditional rituals, cultural arts and various cultural elements contain meanings that are related to human existential questions such as eternal life, the sacred, and so on. The Catholic religion whose theoretical basis used in this paper to analyze mythology in the Pante tradition, has clear teachings regarding cosmic redemption. This is seen in the Scriptures and in the doctrines of the Church.

There are many biblical texts that speak of the renewal of the universe with all of creation in it. A discussion of the eschatological hope of creation can be found in (among many) Isa. 65:17-18 (Edwards, 2017:10). The text wrote:

For behold, I am creating a new heaven and a new earth;
the former things will no longer be remembered, nor will
they arise in the heart. But rejoice forever in what I created,
for behold, I created Jerusalem full of joy and its
inhabitants full of joy.

In this text, the Israelites believed that God would restore all creation in the future. He will change the old creations with the new ones. In this time of renewal, “the wolf will live with the sheep and the leopard will lie down with the goats. The calf and the lion cub will

eat grass together, and a small child will herd it. The wolf will live with the sheep, the leopard will lie down with the young goats” (Isaiah 11:6). This eschatological hope is not a utopia. The Israelites were confident that this hope would be fulfilled.

This eschatological hope continues to be lived out by Christians in the New Testament. Paul is one of the important figures who bequeathed and explained the meaning of eschatological hope. In his letter to the Romans, Paul saw all creation waiting eagerly for its deliverance. “He speaks of creation groaning as if it were in labor pains” (Rom 8:22), and “the Christian community is groaning in anticipation of the full redemption” (Rom 8:23). “The Spirit also groans with the Christian community, and with the wider creation, in prayer too deep to say” (Rom 8:26) (Edwards, 2017:14).

The Apostle Paul saw non-human creations share with humans in liberation and renewal in Christ. In 1 Corinthians, taking pictures of the great cosmic victory, he speaks of the risen Christ as the one who overcame death and all negative forces so that all things are subject to Him, and then “commits the kingdom to God the Father” (1 Cor 15:24). Paul was well aware that man did not have a clear view of the final transformation of all things in Christ. What we have in Christ is not vision, but promise and hope: “For in hope we are saved (Rom 8:24-25). Paul asserts that a radical new existence will be for those who abide in Christ. “So whoever is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.” (2 Cor 5:17). Apart from Paul, Peter also preached about the hope for the future of all creation. It is found in 2 Pet 3:3: “But according to His promise, we are waiting for a new heaven and a new earth, where there is truth” (Edwards, 2017:15).

There are also many Church fathers who spoke of cosmic redemption. There was St. Clements who wrote “the day of judgment has come like a fiery furnace, and a part of the heavens will be destroyed, and the whole earth will be like lead melted in a fire, and the work of every man, the secrets of his private and public life will be revealed.” The idea here does not seem to mean the annihilation of the earth, but rather the purification and cleansing of the heavens and the earth where they are melted like lead in a blazing fire (Falconer, 2019: 121). Similarly, Irenaeus argued that all things (humans, plants, animals, and soil) are directed toward fulfillment when the kingdom of God comes. Therefore, he awaited the coming of the Kingdom of God. He rejected the Platonic view that saw material things as bad and evil because they could not be saved. Instead, he saw that there were positive things in material things because God wanted them to exist. With such an understanding, then all materials must be perfected by God in His Kingdom (Edwards, 2017: 36). The same view was expressed by Athanasius of Alexandria who asserted that eternal fulfillment and salvation are not only for humans. God changes and perfects all creations according to their own way of being. This is possible because of the work of God through Christ and the Holy Spirit (Edwards, 2017: 61). Basilus added the Spirit not only acts as a "giver of life", but also as a "perfect" or He who brings everything to its eschatological completion in God (Edwards, 2000: 145-146).

The initial state of all creation was very good (Gen 1:31). This state was disturbed after men into the sin (Gen), they brought other creations to suffering. This situation creates a longing in creation to return to its initial state, as it was in the Garden of Eden before humans ate the forbidden fruit (Moltmann, 1985: 39). The suffering

experienced by the world today cannot eliminate the basic purpose that has been instilled in creation, which is to experience glory in the Kingdom of God. It is contained in the Nicene credo. All creation will have its place in God and all will be restored and saved (Tanner, 2011).

The discussion of renewal into a new creation is explained in depth by Thomas Aquinas in his commentary on the salvation of matter and soul. This scholastic theologian believed that matter was saved along with the soul. There are several basic reasons for this view. *First*, its main foundation is the resurrection of Christ. Thomas Aquinas states that after the resurrection, the body of Christ reunites with his soul: The body which Christ possesses after the Resurrection is a real body (*verum*), and has the same properties as before. Aquinas further asserts that the resurrected body of Christ is an “integral” body, which has within itself flesh, bones, blood, etc. The body also contains the same properties as before death, though it is now glorified, imperishable and no longer subject to death. Aquinas also considered it appropriate that the body, which was taken back by the soul of Christ in the resurrection, had the wounds suffered in the passion. Although now the body is “spiritual”, it is real and solid, can be touched and seen, and can eat and drink. This resurrection of Christ is the guarantee of a material resurrection. The body is matter, which is formed from various other materials (Aquinas, 2009: 194-198).

Second, the resurrection of the body occurs in the event of the resurrection of man. He asserted that the natural reality of man is a creature that exists as a soul and a body, that the human soul is naturally united with the body. It is natural desire for the soul to unite

with the body. Therefore, the soul will experience complete calm, if it is reunited with the body. This moment is called by Aquinas the first perfection which will lead to the final perfection. The final perfection is an encounter with God, the Creator (*Visio beatifica*) (Aquinas, 2009: 117).

Third, the fact that all creation has a soul. The quality of the soul differs from one type of creation to another. Plants have a vegetative soul, animals have a sensitive soul, and humans are endowed with a rational soul. These souls are hierarchical. At the lowest rank of the soul hierarchy is the vegetative soul. This soul lacks feelings and rationality. On the second rank is the sensitive soul; where all non-human animals exist, which have exterior and interior senses in addition to vegetative qualities but are less rational. Third, there is the human soul, which has the three qualities of a vegetative, sensitive, and rational soul. Aquinas claims that this rational model makes humans the *imago Dei* (Aquinas, 2009: 83-84; McLaughlin, 2012: 81). According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) no. 366, the soul is “something that cannot die or immortal, it cannot perish if at the time of death it separates from the body, and it will reunite with the body on the day of resurrection” (United States Catholic Conference, 1997: 93). With the existence of a soul in plants, animals and humans, they will experience renewal at the time of resurrection, which makes all of them a new creation.

After talking about the resurrection of Christ and man as the basis for the resurrection of matter, Thomas Aquinas explained how other creations, apart from humans, could rise. The other creations will experience a resurrection. Their resurrection occurs in participating in the resurrection of Christ and of mankind. This means that the

resurrected human body carries within itself the four main elements that make up the matter (fire, water, air, and earth) of all creations. In this sense, all creation that contains the four elements undergoes a resurrection like humans. Regarding the conditions experienced by all creations after the resurrection, Aquinas said that the conditions experienced by the creations are different from the conditions experienced by humans after their resurrection (Aquinas, 2009: 129-130).

After discussing the final status of all creation, a question lingers whether the cosmic renewal is only happening in the last days or it is occurring now, in this world? This question relates to aspects of continuity and discontinuity of the renewal. In dissecting the issue of continuity and discontinuity between the new creation and the old creation, the author begins by citing what the Church teaches in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. CCC no. 280 wrote:

Creation is the foundation of “all God's saving plans,” the “beginning of the history of salvation” that culminates in Christ. Conversely, the mystery of Christ casts conclusive light on the mystery of creation and reveals the end for which “in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”: from the beginning, God envisaged the glory of the new creation in Christ (United States Catholic Conference, 1997: 73).

This CCC statement wishes to emphasize that there is an aspect of continuity in creation. That continuity is seen in the purpose that God has given to each of creation, even though that purpose will be revealed in the mystery of Christ. Through this goal, God through Christ directs humans to always be on the right track, so that this natural goal can be achieved. How does God practically direct all creation toward its fulfillment in Christ?

Regarding the question above, there are many theologians who contribute their thoughts. For example, Thomas Aquinas said "God in maintaining His creation, He did not perform a completely new action, but by continuing the action that was already made at the time of the *esse* giving (at the time of the initial creation)". From this statement, Aquinas emphasizes the continuity of God's actions by adopting Aristotle's concept of *causa prima* and *causa secunda*. This theologian asserts that God not only creates but He also supports, regulates, and attracts creation from moment to moment, but in an indirect way as *causa prima* (main cause). It is involved through a secondary cause. He uses the creation of a higher intellectual level to direct the lower one (Aquinas, 2009: 97). Here, humans who have reason should be co-actors with God in helping other creations, in order to achieve their ultimate goal of being with God in His glory.

Continuing what has been explained by Aquinas, Catholic theologian Denis Edwards talks about the continuity of God's actions by starting from the concept of natural law and outside of natural law. The laws of nature he identified as science. He said that God's actions can be realized from inside and outside the laws of nature. He quotes Stoeger who explains that the laws of nature as we know them through science are models constructed from what happens in nature; that law is not isomorphic with nature; and that the complex and rich reality of the world around us far exceeds our capacity to model it in our scientific theories and laws. Therefore, God acts not only through the laws we know, but He also acts beyond the laws of nature known to man today (Edwards, 2015: 487).

The aspect of discontinuity between the old creation and the new creation is the things that are renewed from time to time in each creation. Growth, changes in form from small to complex and from small to large are parts of the aspect of unsustainability. The complete renewal, which is seen as the final discontinuity, occurs in the event of the cross and resurrection of Christ.

Method

This study employed qualitative research design with phenomenological approach. Phenomenological research is a research that describes the human experience of a phenomenon as described by the participants (Creswell, 2016, pp. 18–19). The phenomenon studied is the mythology in the *pante* tradition of the Manggarai-Flores Community, NTT. Data was obtained from observations and interviews with several key informants. These key informants are traditional leaders and palm farmers. They are over 50 years old in age. They come from three villages, namely the villages of Lida-Coal, Ngalo and Rego. The selection of the participants was based on their knowledge about Manggarai mythology and palm reading. In the interview, there were two myths mentioned by the key informants, namely the origin of palm trees and the water sap as milk. After collecting data, the analysis of the existing data was performed, started by preparing and organizing the data. The authors organized raw materials, such as field notes and interview transcripts. Then the data was read and codes were made according to the theme. The next step was assertion. In this stage, the authors made declarative statements supported by confirmation of credible evidence from the data. Then the data was interpreted and the results of the interpretation were narrated in the form of a

research report, namely a scientific article (Cresswell & Poth, 2016: 239–253).

Result and Discussion

Mythology in the *Pante* Tradition

Pante is a tradition of tapping bunches of palm *mayang* to produce sap which is then made into *moke* and palm sugar (Raho 2020). There are many concepts mythology that exist in the *pante* tradition. In this paper, there are two myths being discussed in the study regarding the cosmic redemption. Both myths were expressed in some interviews with several palm tappers on June 29, 2017. The two myths are stories about the origin of palm trees and water sap like milk.

The myth was told by Verheijen. The informants narrate that:

In a village, lived an old man who had a child. Every day when they went to the garden, the child was always left at home. In a basket, they put food that she could eat during the day. One day, the little girl followed her parents into the garden with her food basket. But she did not know the way to the garden. As a result, the little girl got lost in the forest. In the afternoon when the father and mother returned home, they did not see her. They searched for the girl day and night, but they did not find her.

The next day the father went again to look for his daughter. Arriving in the forest, he saw a food basket from his daughter hanging on a tree and there was still food in it. The father called and called his daughter over and over, but there was no answer. But one time, when he called his daughter, suddenly he heard a voice coming from the top of the tree. Said the voice: "Don't look for your daughter, she is downstairs".

The father looked up and asked: "Where? I didn't see anything." Then the father looked up, but he saw no one at the top of the tree. Then the voice said again: "He is below, above the ground. You must water it every day and you must fence it with stones." The father looked around but did not see his daughter. The father asked again: "Where is my daughter? I can't find him here." He pointed to all the objects around him such as wood, stone, and plants, but the voice said: "No".

In front of the father was a young palm tree and had just emerged from the ground. As soon as the father pointed to the small palm tree, then the voice said: "Yes, that is your daughter." Then the father asked: "Why did she change like this and what will happen to her in the future?" The voice replied: "Don't worry, the child will benefit you." Then the father asked again: "So who are you?" The voice replied: "I am *Mori Kraeng*, Maker and Shaper. I have good intentions for you."

Every day the father watered the palm tree until it bears fruit. When it bears fruit, *Mori Kraeng* said, "Every day you have to knock on the stalk of the *mayang*. After patting it for three days, you should make a hole in the stalk. If the liquid comes out, you should hold it. Every day the hole must be dug a little so that the water still comes out."

When people drank the water that came out of the *mayang* stalk, it tasted sweet. They said: "This is the milk that tasted very delicious". After the fruit was ripe, the mongoose came to eat the fruit along with the seeds. And when they threw their excrement while walking everywhere, the seeds also came out, and then grew in that place and became a palm tree again.

It was also told that in a village there was a small family with a small child. They cultivate a garden in the middle of the forest. In the middle of the garden, there was a palm tree which at that time was not known as a palm tree. They cut the leaves of the palm tree, but not long after that the

palm fruit still produced a fruit called *longko* and mayang palm tree called *ndara*. As luck would have it, suddenly the child's mother died. After the death of the mother, the child could not stop crying. His father tried to give him various kinds of food and drink, but the boy couldn't stop crying.

One night the boy's father had a dream. In that dream, his dead wife was transformed into a palm tree that grew in the middle of their garden. The wife advised her husband: "Hit me with hoods made of *pante*, fig, or *labe* wood. And later when my bunches are soft and there is a fragrant smell coming out of it, cut me and make a hole in me. From the hole will come out water that tastes sweet. Give the water to our crying child and the child will be quiet."

The boy's father did as his wife told him and everything happened as his wife said. The father was beyond happy. He caught the water that came out of the bunch of mayang and gave water to his child who had been crying for weeks. As soon as the little boy tasted the sap water his father brought, his crying stopped. He didn't cry anymore. How happy the father was because his son stopped crying and he named the water sap "*wae susu de Morin* (milk from God).

Cosmic Redemption Concepts in the Mythology of *Pante* Tradition

Manggarai culture is strongly influenced by spirituality that drives their lives. Traditional rites, myths and other cultural aspects have underlying spiritual grounds. One of the questions in spirituality is about eternal life. Does man experience redemption alone or does his salvation include other creations (cosmic redemption)? This is an important question that must be answered. The myths in the *pante* tradition provide answers for this question. In the *pante* tradition,

cosmic redemption meanings are found in the following important aspects:

The first cosmic redemption concept is found in the story about the origin of the palm tree. The Manggarai people believe that the palm tree came from humans, namely the little girl who transformed into a palm tree. This is to emphasize that humans and other creations (palm trees) have a relationship that cannot be ignored. To ignore other creations is to deny the existence of man himself. As another form of a human, the palm tree which symbolizes other creations must be cared for. As man cares for himself, he should also take care of the other creations, which are the incarnations of himself. Humans are believed by the Manggaraians as a reincarnation of tree, particularly bamboo trees as mentioned in the mythology of the origin of humans (Verheijen, 1991).

From the myth of the origin of the palm tree and humans, it is known how God created all things. In creating things, God sometimes acts directly, that is, by speaking, then creation is made. Elsewhere, God uses other creations as a medium to create others. In the story of palm tree, the medium is a girl and a bamboo tree. This story is similar to the story of the creation of man in the Book of Genesis. In Genesis 2:7, God formed man from the dust of the ground. The use of other mediums as a means of God in shaping humans emphasizes the interdependence of creation that exists in the home with the cosmos. The Catholic Church, in CCC no. 340 writes: ..“no creature is self-sufficient, that creatures exist only in dependence on one another to complement each other in mutual service” (Indonesian Bishops' Conference, 1995: 91).

Creation through other mediums is the concept of creation from nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*) and is widely debatable. *Creatio ex nihilo* is a Latin term (creation from nothing) referring to the view that the universe, the entire space-time, was created by God not from pre-existing matter or from the divine substance itself (emanation). This view was widely, though not universally, accepted in the early Christian Church and was formally defined as a dogma by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. *Creatio ex nihilo* is now almost universally accepted by Jews, Christians and Muslims (Ward, 2021). The following questions arise whether palm trees come from humans, and whether humans come from bamboo trees? Do they deserve to be called *creatio ex nihilo*?

One possible explanation for above questions is that God created palm trees and humans out of nothing. This is evidenced by the shape of the palm tree and humans, which are completely different and do not exist in other creations. From the material aspect, they can be categorized as *creatio continua*, i.e. creations whose materials are derived from existing materials. However, in terms of form, they are completely new creations (created out of nothing), hence the church teaches two concepts regarding the creation, namely *creatio ex nihilo* and *creatio continua*.

Just as the Catholic Church believes that all creations reach its fullness in God during the eschatological period, the people of Manggarai also believe in the same thing. People believe that good humans will live with God. The place for those who have died is *pang be le* (Jebadu et al., 2021). What is less discussed in the beliefs of the Manggarai people are those related to the future of non-human creations. In Catholic teaching, the salvation of all creations can be

found in the discussion of the new world and the new creation. In eschatological times, the old world will be transformed into a new world in Christ. The foundation of this Church's belief is Christ Himself, who in His resurrection rose with His soul and body. The body of Christ carries in it all the elements of the world and non-human creation. This view is less visible in the beliefs of the Manggarai people.

The second cosmic redemption concept is that sacrifice is an important factor in the pursuit of eternal salvation. In the mentioned mythology, a small child was sacrificed by changing her form into a palm tree in order to give life to humans. Sap water or what is considered God's milk in the Manggarai belief can exist because of the sacrifice. Similarly, the palm tree also sacrifices itself by being beaten continuously to produce sap water for humans. From this concept, the value of sacrifice is something inseparable from salvation.

The story in the mythology above is similar to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as taught by the Catholic Church. The salvation of all creation was realized because of the sacrifice of Christ. Christ's sacrifice made it possible for the entire universe to become a new creation. In relation to eschatological salvation, sacrifice is one aspect that is used as an assessment material. The Gospel of John 5:29 states that those who do good will come out and rise to everlasting life, but those who do evil will rise to be condemned. The concept of salvation means making sacrifices for the lives of other creatures.

There are two things that distinguish the sacrifice of the little girl who became a palm tree, the sacrifice of the palm tree itself, and the

sacrifice of Christ. The two differences include: the process that lead to the sacrifice and the purpose of the sacrifice. From a process perspective, Christ's sacrifice was His free choice; He did this to save all creations. He always had a dialogue with God the Father. In Gethsemane, Jesus asked His Father to let the cup of suffering pass from Him. However, due to His obedience to God the Father, He drank the cup of suffering himself. In this case, Jesus still had the freedom to choose to sacrifice or not. This free choice is different from the sacrifice of the little girl in the myth. Her sacrifice was not of her own volition. She changed her form by force, not by choice. She then became a palm tree, because of the will of *Mori Kraeng* (Creator).

The second difference lies on the purpose of the sacrifice. The sacrifice made by Jesus gave eternal salvation to all creation. Meanwhile, the safety from hunger provided by the palm tree and the girl was temporary. The palm tree might die or grow old, and is no longer give life to humans. This is different from the salvation brought by Christ. His salvation is permanent, eternal and definitive.

The third concept of cosmic redemption in Manggaraians' belief is on salvation. Manggaraians believe that salvation exists. Salvation is not something that will happen later (futurist eschatology), rather something that already exists in the present (presentist eschatology). Signs that a person is saved include: if he does not experience pain, disaster and strange things that disturb his life. Salvation as understood by the people of Manggarai is a collective salvation. It means that a person experiences salvation when he does not cut ties with his fellow beings, other creatures and *Mori Kraeng*. There are many traditional rituals performed in Manggarai culture whose

intention is restoring disturbed relationships. For example, there are rituals to restore relationships with animals that have been injured or trees that have been cut down without asking permission from the guardian spirits. The same recovery rituals also apply to relationship with God. All of these suggest that salvation does not belong solely to humans, but also by non-human creations. Humans experience salvation if other creations are kept from being damaged.

Conclusion

The ecological crisis that befell the earth today, one of which can be caused by the decline of the cosmic redemption understanding. Anthropocentrism teaches that humans are the center, as well as the highest creation who have complete dominion over the other creations. In this teaching, humans are considered as the only creation that has a definitive future and they will experience salvation, while the other creations have no eschatological dimension. This view could lead to the environment destruction, since environment was conceptualized to be separate and different from human redemption. Meanwhile, in cosmic redemption, all creation is believed to have a definitive future. All creation will be renewed and made a new creation, as it is written in the Christian Scriptures. The new creation is not only in the power of humans, but also is bestowed by the Creator on all creation in eschatological times.

The concept of cosmic redemption is not only taught in Christianity but also exists in the cultures of many societies including the Manggarai community in Flores. The concept of cosmic redemption is found in two myths in the *pante* tradition, namely aspects of the continuity and discontinuity of creation and the interdependence

relationship between creations. Another dimension is that the continuity of the cosmos is also determined by the sacrifice of each creation to support other creations, just like the girl and the palm tree did. Those are some aspects of cosmic redemption that can be found in the mythology of the *pante* tradition of the Manggarai people.

This paper contributes to theoretical and practical implications. Theoretical contribution is in the form of new theological treasures donated from the *pante* tradition. Practically, the dimension of redemption in the *pante* tradition can be included for catechesis in the Church. Additionally, the findings in this research can be used as a scientific foundation in advocacy activities for the environment.

References

- Aquinas, T. (2009). *Compendium of Theology*. Translated by R. J. Regan. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chamblis, J. (2021). Education. In *Britannica.com*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/education>.
- Cresswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (Fourth Edition). London: Sage.
- Deane-Drummond, C. (2008). *Eco-Theology*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd.
- Deane-Drummond, C. (2017). *A Primer in Ecotheology, Theology for a Fragile Earth*. Eugen, Oregon: Cascade Books.
- Edwards, D. (2000). Ecology and the Holy Spirit: The “Already” and the “Not Yet” of the Spirit in Creation. *Pacifica: Australasian Theological Studies*, 13(2), 142–159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1030570x0001300203>.
- Edwards, D. (2010). *How God Acts: Creation, Redemption, and Special Divine Action*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Edwards, D. (2015). Toward a Theology of Divine Action: William R. Stoeger, S.J., on the Laws of Nature. *Theological Studies*, 76(3), 485–502. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040563915593478>.

- Edwards, D. (2017). *Christian Understandings of Creation: The Historical Trajectory*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Edwards, D. (2020). The Relationship Between the Risen Christ and the Material Universe. *Denis Edwards in His Own Words*, 4, 167–184. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1bjc3mp.16>.
- Erb, M. (1999). *The Manggaraians: A Guide to Traditional Lifestyles*. Singapore: Times Editions.
- Falconer, R. (2019). “A Vision of Eschatological-Responding to an African Environmental Renewal: Ecological Ethic”. Edited by D. K. N. Rodney L. Reed. *God and Creation* (pp. 119–142). United Kingdom: Langham Global Library.
- Haryanto, B. (2020). *Indonesia : Country Report on Children’s Environmental Health. March 2020*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/reveh-2019-0088>.
- Jebadu, A., Raho, B., & Juhani, S. (2021). The Kélah Ritual of The Manggaraians in Flores-Eastern Indonesia and Its Theological Significance for Roman Catholics. *Heritage of Nusantara: International Journal of Religious Literature and Heritage*, 10(2), 193–219. <https://doi.org/10.31291/hn.v10i2.622>.
- Leidenhag, Joanna. (2019). “Unity Between God and Mind? A Study on the Relationship Between Panpsychism and Pantheism”. *Sophia*, 58, 543–561. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11841-018-0688-z>.
- Marlinda, M., et al. (2020). Marine Debris Dan Mikroplastik: Upaya Mencegah Bahaya dan dampaknya di Tempode, Salama Village, Manggarai Regency, NTT. *Radang Tana: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 3(2), 79–84.
- McLaughlin, R. (2012). “Thomas Aquinas’ Eco-theological Ethics of Anthropocentric Conservation”. *Horizons*, 39(1), 69–97. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0360966900008549>.
- Moltmann, J. (1985). *God in Creation, An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*. London: SCM Press Ltd.
- Moltmann, J. (1996). *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*. London: SCM Press Ltd.
- Moniri, H. & Dohniyatkar, N. (2019). “Myth and Use of Mythology in Poetry of Islamic Revolution”. *International Journal of*

- Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Science*, 8(2), 148–157. <https://doi.org/10.33945/sami/ijashss.2019.2.3>.
- Nitrola, A. (2001). *Trattato di Eschatologia, Spunti per un Pensare Escatologico*. Milano: San Paolo.
- Paus Fransiskus. (2016). *Ensiklik Paus Fransiskus Laudato Si'*. Translated by Martin Harun. Jakarta: Departemen Dokumentasi Penerangan Konferensi Waligereja Indonesia.
- Purwanto, E., et al. (2020). *Agroforestry as Policy Option for Forest-Zone Oil Palm Production in Indonesia*. 1–34.
- Raho, A. R. (2018). Greening the Apocalypse: A Pentecostal Eco-eschatological Exploration. *PentecoStudies*, 205-229.
- Raho, A. J. (2020). *Kokor Gola Kolang, Pesan-Pesan Kearifan Tradisi Pante Pembuatan Gula Aren Di Manggarai Barat*. Maumere: Penerbit Ledalero.
- Tanner, N. (2011). *The Church in Council*. London: I. B. Tauris.
- Verheijen, J. A. (1991). *Manggarai dan Wujud Tertinggi*. Jakarta: Lipi-Rul.
- Ward, K. (2021). *Creatio ex Nihilo*. Retrieved from <https://www.encyclopedia.com/education/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/creatio-ex-nihilo>
- Toda, D. N. (1999). *Manggarai Mencari Pencerahan Historiografi*. Ende: Nusa Indah.
- United States Catholic Conference. (1997). *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. <https://doi.org/10.5840/em200227816>
- Verheijen, J. A. J. (1991). *Manggarai dan Wujud Tertinggi*. Jakarta: LIPI-RUL.
- Williams, A. R. (2018). Greening the Apocalypse: A Pentecostal Eco-eschatological Exploration. *PentecoStudies*, 205-229.
- Wibowo, A., & Sugihardjo, E. L. (2021). “Synergy Between Myth and Local Wisdom in Ecology Balance of Climate Change in Java, Indonesia”. *IOP Conf. Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 724, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/724/1/012110>.
- Ward, K. (2021, January 12). *Creatio ex Nihilo*. Retrieved from Encyclopedia.com: