

"BELAN EVAV"
(CULTURAL HERMENEUTICS OF SOPHIA PERENNIS IN THE *BELAN*
TRADITION AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO INTER-RELIGIOUS
HARMONY IN KEI ARCHIPELAGO)



BY:
JOSEPH ELL
NIM: 23200011028

STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
SUNAN KALIJAGA
YOGYAKARTA

Submitted to the Graduate Program of UIN Sunan Kalijaga
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (M.A.)
Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies Program
Islamic Thought and Muslim Societies Concentration

YOGYAKARTA
2025

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

The undersigned:

Name : Joseph Ell
Student ID : 23200011028
Academic Level : Master's Degree (S2)
Graduate Program : Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies
Concentration : Islamic Thought and Muslim Societies

Herewith solemnly declare that this thesis is my own original work and research, except for quotations and references which have been duly acknowledged.

Yogyakarta, July 11, 2025
Respectfully declared,




Joseph Ell
NIM: 23200011028

PLAGIARISM – FREE STATEMENT

The undersigned:

Name : Joseph Ell
Student ID : 23200011028
Academic Level : Master's Degree (S2)
Graduate Program : Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies
Concentration : Islamic Thought and Muslim Societies

Herewith solemnly declare that this thesis is free from any form of plagiarism. Should it be proven at any time that this thesis is not my original work or contains elements of plagiarism, I fully accept that I shall be subject to academic sanctions and legal consequences in accordance with the prevailing laws and regulations.

Yogyakarta, July 11, 2025
Respectfully declared,



Joseph Ell
NIM: 23200011028

SUPERVISOR'S OFFICIAL MEMORANDUM

To:
The Honorable Director of the
Postgraduate Program
State Islamic University (UIN)
Sunan Kalijaga
Yogyakarta

Assalamu'alaikum wr. wb.

With due respect, I hereby state that after providing supervision, guidance, and revisions to the thesis entitled: **BELAN EVAV: THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE (Cultural Hermeneutics of Sophia Prennis in the Belan Tradition and Its Contribution to Inter-Religious Harmony in Key Archipelago)**

Authored by :

Name : Joseph Ell
Student ID : 23200011028
Faculty : Postgraduate Program, UIN Sunan Kalijaga
Yogyakarta
Degree Level : Master's Degree (S2)
Study Program : Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies
Concentration : Islamic Thought and Muslim Societies

I am of the opinion that this thesis is eligible to be submitted to the Graduate Program in Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, for examination as part of the requirements to obtain the academic degree of Master of Arts (M.A.).

Wassalamu'alaikum wr. wb.

Yogyakarta, July 11, 2025
Supervisor


Dr. Munirul Ikhwan, LC., M.A.
NIP. 19840620 201801 1 001



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SUNAN KALIJAGA
PASCASARJANA

Jl. Marsda Adisucipto Telp. (0274) 519709 Fax. (0274) 557978 Yogyakarta 55281

PENGESAHAN TUGAS AKHIR

Nomor : B-920/Un.02/DPPs/PP.00.9/08/2025

Tugas Akhir dengan judul : BELAN EVAV (*Cultural Hermeneutics of Sophia Perennis in The Belan Tradition and Its Contribution to Inter-Religious Harmony in Kei Archipelago*)

yang dipersiapkan dan disusun oleh:

Nama : RD JOSEPH ELL, S.FIL
Nomor Induk Mahasiswa : 23200011028
Telah diujikan pada : Senin, 04 Agustus 2025
Nilai ujian Tugas Akhir : A

dinyatakan telah diterima oleh Pascasarjana UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

TIM UJIAN TUGAS AKHIR



Ketua Sidang/Penguji I

Ahmad Rafiq, S.Ag., M.Ag., MA., Ph.D.
SIGNED

Valid ID: 68a4f69f41698



Penguji II

Dr. Munirul Ikhwani
SIGNED

Valid ID: 689ef2a759490



Penguji III

Dr. Nina Mariani Noor, S.S., M.A.
SIGNED

Valid ID: 689edbf7aaf77



Yogyakarta, 04 Agustus 2025
UIN Sunan Kalijaga
Direktur Pascasarjana

Prof. Dr. Moch. Nur Ichwan, S.Ag., M.A.
SIGNED

Valid ID: 689edce1428ad

MOTTO

“Difference is a necessity, but unity is a grace”



DEDICATION PAGE

With deep respect and heartfelt gratitude, I dedicate this thesis to: the Diocese of Amboina; His Excellency, the Bishop of the Diocese of Amboina; my fellow priests and the People of God in the Diocese of Amboina; my almamater, the Postgraduate Program of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta; my parents and family; all those who have supported me with their prayers and care throughout my academic journey; and to everyone who loves God, unity, and harmony.



ABSTRACT

This study affirms that the sacred and the profane are deeply embedded within human existence—reflected in both soul and body, spirit and matter, idealism and actuality. These dimensions also manifest themselves in the human environment: in religion, doctrine, and religious practice, and even in the particular experiences of humans with their world, especially through customary law and culture. From this perspective, the present study contributes to the understanding of perennial and sacred wisdoms as lived realities among the traditional Kei people, a community that experiences the interplay between the sacred and the profane through concrete empirical practices. Secularized desacralization, disharmony rooted in egocentrism, and alienation through conflictuality have reshaped people's view of living together in a shared world.

Within this context, the Belan tradition in the Kei Archipelago stands as a model of a “common house” for the traditional Kei society. It offers a space for unity and communion (*ain ni ain*), togetherness and harmony, realized through relational systems such as *roa-nangan* (encounter and mutual enlivening), *kovaat mir* (social role and position), and embodied in spiritual beliefs and ritual practices. Through this tradition, the *tomat Evav* (Kei people) contribute to a form of “sacred knowledge” – what Seyyed Hossein Nasr refers to as *The Sacred Science* – universal and eternal values, a primordial wisdom that reconciles difference within unity. Such unity is sacred because it originates from the One God; reverence for life is sacred because it is the reason for our existence; preserving human dignity is sacred because human beings are noble creations of God; and justice is sacred because humanity yearns for peace. These values are alive in the Belan tradition and are even legitimized through the customary law of *Larvul Ngabal*.

This research is a qualitative study that, methodologically, adopts an interdisciplinary approach by integrating ethnography with the hermeneutics of *Sophia Perennis*, utilizing interviews, field documentation, and document analysis as its main techniques of data collection. Ethnography serves as the initial method to understand Belan as a cultural practice within Kei society. Culture is seen as a “text” to be read, interpreted, and understood contextually. *Belan* is not only concerned with empirical reality but also with metaphysical dimensions, the perennialist approach is essential in uncovering the universal truths it contains. *Sophia Perennis* allows us to interpret *Belan* as an expression of cosmic harmony and divine order as embodied in the symbolic world of Kei society. The perennial values embedded in the Belan tradition offer meaningful contributions to interreligious unity and harmony in the Kei Archipelago. Difference is inevitable, like body and soul, but unity is a sacred value, a *rahmatan lil-‘alamin*, a Divine mercy and blessing for all beings.

Keywords: *Belan, Belan Roa – Nangan, Nuhu Evav, Kei Archipelago, Larvul Ngabal, Sophia Perennis*

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

All praise and gratitude be to Allah Subhānahu wa Ta‘ālā for His abundant mercy, guidance, and grace, which have enabled me to complete this thesis entitled: “*BELAN EVAV: THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE (Cultural Hermeneutics of Sophia Perennis in the Belan Tradition and Its Contribution to Inter-Religious Harmony in the Kei Archipelago)*.” This thesis is the fruit of my intellectual journey in the *Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies* program, born out of a dialectic between two poles of knowledge: empirical science and philosophy. I firmly believe that reality never stands alone—it is like body and soul: distinct, yet inseparable. With this spirit, I have endeavored to adopt an interdisciplinary, even transdisciplinary approach, combining ethnography as an empirical method and *Sophia Perennis* as a philosophical and metaphysical path. This academic program has provided a dialogical space for meaningful encounters across knowledge, faith, and cultures.

As a Catholic priest, I came with a deep longing to understand Islam not merely as an object of study, but as a path of wisdom and truth—worthy of being approached with reverence and love. This process has not only been an academic pursuit, but also a personal transformation—so that I may one day be present in society with greater wisdom and contribution, especially in academic forums and in spaces of interfaith and intercultural dialogue. Throughout the process of writing this thesis, I have received generous support from many parties who have served as mediators of faith, ethics, and knowledge. Therefore, allow me to express my sincere and respectful gratitude to:

1. The Bishop of the Diocese of Amboina (Mgr. Inno Ngutra), my beloved parents, Mr. Paulus El and Mrs. Fransiska Ditubun, together with Sr. Alexa Yonsion, BSMC, whose prayers, spiritual sacrifices, encouragement, and unwavering support—both physical and spiritual—have sustained me throughout this journey."
2. Prof. Noorhaidi Hasan, S.Ag., M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Rector of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta.

3. Prof. Dr. Moch Nur Ichwan, S.Ag., M.A., Director of the Postgraduate Program at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta.
4. Mr. Najib Kailani, S.Fil.I., M.A., Ph.D., Head of the Postgraduate Program in Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies, from whom I have received valuable insights and references on Islamic anthropology—both in the classroom and through personal discussions.
5. Mr. Mohammad Yunus, Lc., M.A., Ph.D., my academic advisor, who introduced me to *Islamic Religious Science* through an interdisciplinary approach.
6. Dr. Munirul Ikhwan, Lc., M.A., my thesis supervisor, who taught me Islamic Thought for four semesters, humbly guided and accompanied me throughout the process, encouraged me, and generously provided time for dialogue and consultation.
7. Mr. Ahmad Rafiq, S.Ag., M.Ag., M.A., Ph.D., Dr. Nina Mariani Noor, S.S., M.A., Dr. Sunarwoto, S.Ag., M.A., Dr. Suhadi, S.Ag., M.A., Prof. Zulkipli Lessy, and all lecturers and academic staff of the *Postgraduate Program in Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies* at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, who have generously shared their knowledge.
8. The Archbishop of Semarang (Mgr. Robertus Rubiyatmoko), the presbyters of the Archdiocese of Semarang, Parish Priest of Christ the King Parish, Baciro (Fr. Andreas Novian Ardi Prihatmoko, Pr), my fellow residents at Baciro Parish House—Fr. Antonius Wahadi Martaatmadja, Pr and Fr. Albertus Hesta Hana Wijayanto, Pr—as well as the entire faithful of the King Parish Baciro, who have provided me with support and care.
9. Traditional leaders, the King of Tual Mr. Djafar Tamher, the King of Faan Mr. Patris Renwarin, the King of Ohoitahit, and traditional leaders from Wain Ohoivut, Hollat, Ohoiren, Ohoidertom, Ohoidertutu, Dullah, Ohoitel, Watran, Lairkamor, Waltlar, Rumaat, Revav, Tanebar Evav, Hoar Ngutru, Letvuan, and Semawi. Mr. Paulus El, Mrs. Fransiska Ditubun, and Mr. Kristianus El have not only been interpreters of customary expressions, but also discussion partners at home throughout the research process. My thanks also to Mr. Yulius Kameubun,

Mr. Everestus Kameubun, Mr. A. Lobja, Mr. Efrem Silubun, and Mr. Benedictus Mayabubun for sharing deeply meaningful Kei oral traditions and ritual songs.

10. Mrs. Yen Chen and PT. Bintang Delapan Group, fellow priests of the Diocese of Amboina, Mr. Rolland Kasihuw, the youth of the Kei Archipelago, my sisters Teresia Ditubun and Serafina S. El, and my brothers Yulius Balbal El, Ignatius El, and Marcel Rizal El—who faithfully accompanied me through villages, helped transcribe interviews, and to Mas Bomby for the artistic canoe sketch, and Nike Pasaribu for editorial assistance.
11. Fellow students in the postgraduate community at UIN Sunan Kalijaga, seniors in the Ph.D. program, the *Postgraduate Student Association (KMP)*, colleagues in the *Islamic Thought and Muslim Societies (ITMS)* concentration (Yusuf, Wildana Rahmah, Nafa), and Mr. Edeck, my friend. They have been critical and friendly discussion partners—both in classrooms and in the many corners of Yogyakarta’s cafés. From these shared moments, I learned that academic dialogue does not end in formal spaces but thrives in casual conversations and daily encounters.
12. And all others whose names I cannot mention individually but who have in various ways supported this research and thesis writing process.

From the Kei Archipelago, I carry with me a message of harmony born from the Belan tradition. Difference is a gift, and unity is a *rahmatan lil-‘ālamīn*—a mercy for all creation. May the Almighty God, Allah Subhānahu wa Ta‘ālā, *Duad Karatat*, bless us in our efforts to build a more peaceful and harmonious world.

Yogyakarta, July 11, 2025
The Author,

Joseph El

NIM: 23200011028

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY	ii
PLAGIARISM – FREE STATEMENT	iii
THESIS APPROVAL PAGE.....	IV
SUPERVISOR’S OFFICIAL MEMORANDUM.....	V
MOTTO.....	vi
DEDICATION PAGE	vii
ABSTRACT.....	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xv
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xvi
GLOSSARY.....	xviii
CHAPTER I.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background	1
B. Research Questions	7
C. Research Objectives	8
D. Significance of the Study	8
E. Literature Review	9
F. Theoretical Framework	19
G. Research Methodology.....	26
H. Systematic Structure.....	31
CHAPTER II.....	34
<i>NUHU EVAV: THE LIVING SPACE OF THE KEI PEOPLE</i>	34
A. Nuhu Evav: The Kei Archipelago	34
B. The Origins of The Kei People.....	37
C. Natural and Cultural Space	41
1. Geology of the Kei Archipelago	41

2. Vegetation and Agriculture.....	47
3. Cultural Practices	49
4. Geography and Demography	52
D. Belief System and Religion.....	57
1. Traditional Belief System.....	57
2. Religion.....	59
E. Crisis and Social Conflict.....	61
CHAPTER III	65
BELAN AS “A JOURNEY” (THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF ‘BELAN)	65
A. <i>Belan Roa – Nangan</i> (Sea-Land Boat).....	65
B. <i>Belan Roa</i> (Belan at Sea): <i>Belan Rat</i> (The King’s Belan) & <i>Belan Fuun</i> (The War Belan).....	72
1. <i>Belan Rat</i> (Decorative <i>Belan</i> used by the King)	75
2. <i>Belan Fuun</i> (War Boat)	78
3. <i>Kovaat</i> (Position and Role)	81
C. A Process with Rituals.....	92
1. <i>Saduvung</i> (Customary Forum).....	94
2. The Materials and Forms of Rituals (Local Belief Practices).....	101
D. <i>Belan Nangan</i> (<i>Belan</i> on the Mainland).....	117
1. <i>Roa-Nangan</i> as a Metaphor.....	119
2. Role Division System.....	123
3. Kindship Networks are Expending	137
E. Belan Based on Customary Law (Larvul Ngabal).....	143
CHAPTER IV	154
BELAN AS THE SOPHIA PERENNIS OF THE KEI PEOPLE	154
(A Sophia Perennis Hermeneutics with Inter-Religious Contributions)	154
A. Sophia Perennis: A Hermeneutical Framework for the Sacredness of the Belan Tradition.....	154
1. Sophia Perennis as Universal Wisdom.....	155
2. Critique of Modernism.....	158
B. The Religious Condition among the Traditional Kei Society	159
C. Sophia Perennis in The Belan Tradition.....	171
1. Unity: Dunyai Ngelyoan and Dunyai Kavunin.....	171

2. Scientia Sacra (Sacred Science).....	179
3. <i>Ain ni Ain</i> : The Epistemology of Unity among the Kei People	183
4. Relational Harmony: The Esoteric and Exoteric Dimensions in the Belan....	188
5. Human Being as Spiritual Creatures	196
6. The Analogy of Mitin Evav (The Coconut Blossom Sheath)	199
CHAPTER V	202
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	202
A. Conclusion.....	202
B. Recommendation.....	205
BIBLIOGRAPHY	207
APPENDIX	217



STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
SUNAN KALIJAGA
 YOGYAKARTA

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter I

- Table 1.1. Visual Scheme of the Theoretical Framework, p. 21.
- Table 1.2. Research Steps, pp. 27-28.
- Table 1.3. Systematic Structure of the Thesis, pp. 31-33.

Chapter II

- Table 2.1. The division of marine and terrestrial zones by the traditional Kei society, pp. 41-42

Chapter III

- Table 3.1. Examples of Traditional Sayings Related to Customary Meetings or Forums (*Saduvung*), p. 95.
- Table 3.2. *Toar Taroman* for a specific task or work, p. 103.
- Table 3.3. Example of timber-hauling song from *Ohoi* Semawi, p. 109.
- Table 3.4. An Example of a Belan Roa - Nangan Ritual Chant
Shared between Dew and El, p. 120.
- Table 3.5. The alliance of customary institutions at the levels of *Ohoi* (village), *Utan* (a cluster of villages), and *Lor* (one or more Utan) within the Kei customary society, pp. 133-134.
- Table 3.6. An instance of *Rinin Lar*—a customary welcoming ritual—carried out as part of the ceremonial procession to receive a newly assigned priest in a local village, pp. 138-139.
- Table 3.7. Ritual song lyrics performed during the encounter between the *Yan'ur* and *Mang'ohoi*, pp. 141-142.
- Table 3.8. The *Larvul Ngabal* customary law and *Sasa Sor Fit* (Commandments and Prohibitions governing concrete aspects of daily life), pp. 145-146.

Chapter IV

- Table 4.1. The division of the *esoteric* and *exoteric* dimensions of the *Belan*, pp. 190-191.

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter I

Figure 1.1. Research Methodology Scheme, p. 30.

Chapter II

Figure 2.1. Map of the Kei Archipelago, p. 53.

Figure 2.2. Population Statistics of Kei Archipelago, p. 54.

Chapter III

Figure 3.1. Documentary example of a traditional *Belan* boat once occupied by a local king in the Kei Archipelago. Source: Capt. H. Gottfr. Langen, *Key – oder KII – Inseln, des O. I. Archipelago*, p. 74.

Figure 3.2. *Belan* in the Meti Kei Festival Procession, 2017, p. 74.

Figure 3.3. Basic sketch of the *belan rat* structure, p. 76.

Figure 3.4. The structural features and basic form of the *Belan*—a traditional ceremonial boat occupied by a king in the Kei Archipelago, p. 77.

Figure 3.5. The *Belans* and Traditional Weapons. Source: C. M. Pleyte Wzn., *Etnographische Atlas van de Zuidwester en Zuidooster – Eilanden, Meer Bepaaldelijk der Eilanden Wetar, Leti, Babar en Dama, Alsmede Der Tanimbar, Timor Laut, en Kei Eilanden* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1893), p. 78.

Figure 3.6. The general structure and basic form of the *Belan* commonly used as a war boat, p. 79.

Figure 3.7. The hierarchical structure and functional roles aboard the *belan*, p. 81.

Figure 3.8. An *Akbitan* leading the *belan* procession, p. 83.

Figure 3.9. The appearance of *Bardingil*, *Marvehe*, and *Akbitan* during the *Belan* procession at the Meti Kei Festival in 2017, p. 89.

Figure 3.10. The *belan* and its structural elements, p. 90.

Figure 3.11. A chart illustrating *Toar Taroman* (customary prayer) performed by a *Mitu Duan* (spiritual authority), p. 104.

Figure 3.12. A place for offering ritual materials, p. 106.

Figure 3.13. The *Rasamala* tree, or *Ai Der*, as the primary material for constructing a *Belan*, p. 107.

Figure 3.14. A *Mituduan* performing the *toar taroman* ritual in front of a *sasi* marker. Source: C. M. Pleyte Wzn., *Etnographische Atlas*

van de Zuidwester en Zuidooster – Eilanden, Meer Bepaaldelijk der Eilanden Wetar, Leti, Babar en Dama, Alsmede Der Tanimbar, Timor Laut, en Kei Eilanden (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1893), p. 108.

- Figure 3.15. Customary leaders (Tokoh Adat) from Ohoiren explaining the process of building a *belan*, p. 110.
- Figure 3.16. The parts of the *belan* structure, p. 112.
- Figure 3.17. The structural design of the front section of the *Belan*, p. 113.
- Figure 3.18. *Belan Inso Yaas Anwel* song, performed by the people of Ohoi Ohoiren, p. 117.
- Figure 3.19. The *Roa - Nangan* Symbol, p. 121.
- Figure 3.20. *Ngur* (sandy terrain), *Lutur* (a seven-tiered stone arrangement encircling an old settlement), *Woma* (the central place of a village, traditionally used as a site for customary gatherings), and the symbol of the *Belan* at the village gate, p. 124.
- Figure 3.21. A schematic flowchart depicting the formation of social structures and the development of the *Larvul Ngabal* customary legal system, p. 128.
- Figure 3.22. The Process of Customary alliance, p. 133.
- Figure 3.23. Several examples of the symbolic practice of *Belan Nangan* (land-based *Belan*) and the ritual procession of *Rinin* (customary prayer for welcoming guests) during a celebration, p. 138.
- Figure 3.24. Two varieties of young coconuts used in the *Rinin* ritual, p. 139.
- Figure 3.25. Examples of *Huwear* in the Past and Present

Chapter IV

- Figure 4.1. A schematic description of the relationship between *Dunyai Kavunin* (the invisible or transcendent world) and *Dunyai Ngelyoan* (the visible or empirical world).

GLOSSARY

Term	Meaning
<i>Ain ni Ain and manut ainmehe ni tilur, vuut ainmehe ni ngifun</i>	: The philosophy of unity, togetherness, and brotherhood in the Kei Archipelago.
<i>Belan</i>	Traditional Boat
<i>Belan Roa</i>	: Belan at the Sea
<i>Belan Nangan</i>	Belan on the land. The Belan on land symbolizes a metaphorical meaning
<i>Belan inso, yat anwel</i>	Kei proverbs related to dynamic life, growth, and success
<i>Duad Ler-Vuan</i>	: Expressions of divinity by the Kei people in ancient times
<i>Duad Karatat</i>	The Almighty God
<i>Duad Kabav</i>	: The ancestral world, an extension of the Almighty God's hand, is close to humans and the empirical world
<i>Duad Nabi</i>	: God as understood by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). An expression of divinity by the Muslim community in Kei
<i>Dunyai Ngelyoan</i>	: The visible world (empirical and physical world)
<i>Dunyai Kavunin</i>	: The unseen world (transcendent and immaterial)
<i>Evav</i>	: Local name(s) for Kei
<i>Enbal</i>	: Traditional cuisine of the Kei ethnic group
<i>Fit roa, Fit nangan</i>	The seven sea and land zones in the Kei Archipelago.
<i>Koi Maduan</i>	: Kinship between clans or villages formed through mutual assistance in the past
<i>Nuhu Evav</i>	: Local name(s) for Kei Archipelago
<i>Nuhu Yuut</i>	: Kei Besar Island
<i>Nuhu Roa</i>	: Kei Kecil Islands
<i>Nuhu Tutu</i>	: The Southern Part of Kei Kecil Islands
<i>Nuhu Tavuun</i>	: The Northern Part of Kei Kecil Islands

<i>Nuhu Met Duan</i>	The original owner of the village, the first ruler of a territory, the first inhabitants of an area
<i>Maren</i>	: Mutual cooperation, collaboration, and helping one another
<i>Mitin Evav</i>	A philosophy of togetherness among the Kei people: unity in diversity.
<i>Mitu Duan</i>	A person or a group of people (clan) who hold spiritual authority
<i>Ohoi</i>	: Village. The Kei people recognize several types of villages: <i>Ohoi Soa</i> , which are smaller customary villages; <i>Ohoi Orang Kai</i> , the parent villages comprising several customary villages; and <i>Ohoi Rat</i> , the main village overseeing both <i>Ohoi Orang Kay</i> and <i>Ohoi Soa</i> , where the king resides.
<i>Lanit</i>	: The Sky
<i>Larvul Ngabal</i>	: Kei Customary Law
<i>Rinin</i>	Ritual of purification and prayers for safety
<i>Rahan Dek Kafwar</i>	: Brotherhood between two clans, like 'twin clans,' usually established through agreements or marriages that took place in the past.
<i>Saduvung</i>	: Customary forum for discussing traditional cases
<i>Sdov</i>	: Discussion, or dialogue within a customary forum to reach consensus and find solutions.
<i>Toar Taroman</i>	: Ritual prayers in Kei culture
<i>Tomat Evav</i>	: Kei People
<i>Teabel</i>	: A brotherhood agreement between villages based on a specific historical event
<i>Veveu Evav</i>	: Kei Local Languages
<i>Yan'ur – Mang'ohoi</i>	: Kinship based on marriage

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The *Belan*, a traditional boat indigenous to the Kei Archipelago, remains relatively unknown and underappreciated outside its native context. Within Indonesian academic and public discourse, it has yet to receive serious attention as a cultural artifact of significance. This study argues that the *Belan* warrants scholarly exploration not due to the researcher's personal background, but because of the fundamental values it embodies—values that are deeply intertwined with the cultural and spiritual identity of the Kei people. As a representation of Indonesia's broader maritime heritage, the *Belan* encompasses both physical and metaphysical dimensions. It functions not only as a material vessel but also as a symbolic construct laden with spiritual meaning. This research aims to examine these dual aspects through the framework of perennialism, identifying the enduring values embedded within the *Belan* and their implications for the socio-religious dynamics of Kei traditional society.¹ By engaging this analysis, the study positions the *Belan* as a living cultural practice grounded in shared meaning and collective identity—resonating with Emile Durkheim's theories of mechanical and organic solidarity and Roland Robertson's notion of glocality. Despite the

¹ In this writing, the term "Tradisional" (with a capital "T") is used specifically to refer to customary communities or Indigenous societies that consciously preserve, inherit, and practice the cultural values, norms, social institutions, and ritual systems passed down through generations as an integral part of their collective identity. The use of a capital letter in "*Tradisional*" is intended to distinguish between: "*traditional*", in its general sense, which refers to old-fashioned or pre-modern practices, and "*Tradisional*", as a living, dynamic social entity with cultural authority and customary legitimacy in governing the lives of its members. This usage is not merely historical, but underscores the continuity and contemporary relevance of ancestral traditions that continue to be enacted in the everyday life of such communities.

encroachment of modern secularism, the *Belan* continues to offer a relevant and resilient model of cultural cohesion and spiritual continuity.

Durkheim offers a valuable perspective which, as noted by Robertson in *Global Culture and Consciousness*, emphasizes that “consciousness and culture possess a certain degree of autonomy.”² This suggests that culture and consciousness hold power and function independently to some extent from social structures. Culture enables the emergence of consciousness, while individual consciousness, in turn, flourishes when it engages with a larger reality. In this sense, culture forms the basis upon which individuals can cultivate awareness. The *Belan*, as part of the local cultural tradition in Kei, functions as such a medium. It offers both individual and collective meaning. More than a mere social symbol or artifact, the *Belan* possesses a degree of autonomy that helps shape the collective consciousness surrounding its intrinsic values. Even amid the secularizing tendencies of modernity, the *Belan* continues to embody metaphysical significance. Awareness of its presence and role can act as a counterpoint to secularism, which often tends to fragment or diminish the relationship between the sacred and the profane. When the spiritual dimensions of the *Belan* are neglected, it risks becoming a mere cultural relic, stripped of its transcendent essence.

In this context, a perennialist approach becomes essential. Perennialism recognizes the universal spiritual truths embedded within various religious and cultural traditions. Thinkers such as René Guénon, Frithjof Schuon, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr emphasize that understanding human existence requires attention to metaphysical and

² Roland Robertson, *Global Culture and Consciousness*, in *Global Culture: Consciousness and Connectivity*, edited by Roland Robertson and Didem Buhari-Gulmez, (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 6.

transcendent realities. The *Belan*, in this view, is not solely a material practice but a symbolic vessel that connects the human realm with transcendent meaning through its rituals, forms, and cultural expressions. Aristotle referred to such metaphysical grounding as *ta meta ta physica*—that which lies beyond the physical—or "being qua being."³ Thomas Aquinas later developed this notion through the concept of *Actus Purus* (Pure Actuality), identifying it as God, the ultimate ground of all existence.⁴ Every created entity, by its essence, participates in this Pure Actuality, in which reside the highest values: truth, goodness, love, and compassion. These values act as ontological principles that shape and limit the form of creation (*per eam ejus amplitude contrahitur*).⁵ Perennialism upholds these transcendent realities as universal truths—the *highest wisdom*,⁶ which, as Seyyed Hossein Nasr argues, are accessible through *scientia sacra*, or sacred knowledge. Such knowledge originates not from empirical observation alone, but from revelation, tradition, and what Nasr, drawing on thinkers like Mulla Sadra, calls *intellectual intuition*. This includes *presential knowledge* (*al-'ilm al-hudūri*), a direct, inner apprehension of reality beyond mere rational constructs.⁷ For Nasr, true knowledge lies in the spiritual and transcendental realm—

³ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), Book I, Chapter 1, pp. 3-4.

⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947), p. I, q. 2, art. 3.

⁵ "*Forma autem non perficitur per materiam, sed magis, per eam ejus amplitude contrahitur*" translates to: "The form is not perfected by matter, but rather, it is limited by it." ST., I, q.7, a.2.

⁶ Schuon, Frithjof. *The Transcendent Unity of Religions*, trans. Peter Townsend (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1984), pp. 7-9, pp. 18-20.

⁷ In Islamic tradition, *al-'ilm al-huduri* refers to a type of intuitive knowledge that does not depend on external representations or concepts, but rather directly presents itself to consciousness. It is a direct experience of reality, which, according to philosophers like Mulla Sadra, is considered the highest form of knowledge. This kind of knowledge is immediate and self-evident, bypassing the need for intermediaries or abstract reasoning, reflecting a deeper, more experiential understanding of the world. Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), pp. 95-97.

knowledge of *al-Haqq*, the Absolute Reality. Humans are endowed with the capacity to recognize this reality through revelation and intellectual reflection. Furthermore, the cosmos itself and traditional art function as mediums of divine manifestation (*theophany*).⁸ In this light, the symbolic elements within the *Belan* can be seen as a sacred pathway—connecting humans to transcendent values such as unity, love, harmony, and peace. These are not only cultural ideals but metaphysical realities grounded in the structure of the cosmos.⁹ For these reasons, this study adopts the perennialist framework to analyze the universal spiritual values embedded in the *Belan* tradition.

Indonesia is a maritime nation comprising over 17,500 islands—around 6,000 of which are inhabited¹⁰—with a sea area of 3.28 million km², exceeding its landmass of 1.91 million km². Positioned strategically between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, Indonesia functions as a major axis for global maritime traffic.¹¹ This geography not only enriches its marine resources but also fosters diverse maritime cultures imbued with philosophical and customary significance. Across the archipelago, maritime heritage is deeply intertwined with religion and spirituality, shaping societal identity and cohesion. Religion, culture, and local wisdom function as an integrated praxis, forming patterns of behavior and reinforcing social bonds. In the Kei Islands, these dimensions converge in traditions such as *belan*, where maritime life is interlaced with

⁸ William C. Chittick (ed.), *The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (Bloomington, Indiana: World Wisdom Inc., 2007), p. 131, pp. 189-203.

⁹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Need for a Sacred Science* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 14-16, pp. 25-27.

¹⁰ Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Kemaritiman dan Investasi, *Laporan Tahunan 2023* (Jakarta: Kemenko Marves, 2023), accessed November 10, 2024, <https://maritim.go.id>.

¹¹ Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), *Statistik Indonesia 2023* (Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023), accessed November 10, 2024, <https://www.bps.go.id>.

spiritual and cultural meaning. The *belan*, while functionally a boat, also embodies ancestral connection, cosmological belief, and the ethical values that sustain harmony with nature and the divine.

This study highlights the scientific significance of these interrelations, especially given the limited academic exploration of religion and culture in Eastern Indonesia. Scholarly attention has predominantly focused on Western Indonesia, as seen in works such as Clifford Geertz's *The Religion of Java*¹² and *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali*,¹³ Anthony Reid's *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*,¹⁴ and John R. Bowen's *Muslims through Discourse*.¹⁵ These works have profoundly contributed to understanding the entwinement of religion and culture in shaping local identities. However, the Kei Islands remain understudied, despite their rich integration of religious practice and local wisdom in daily life.

As a native of Kei, I have personally witnessed how Muslims and Christians coexist while upholding traditions like *belan*. They observe *shalat* and celebrate Holy Mass, while also participating in customary rituals. From the *mimbar* to the *dakwah*, and from sacred traditions to village rituals, the message of unity is shared through both religious and cultural voices. This coexistence reflects not syncretism, but a dynamic dialectic between faith and tradition—an interpretive synergy that enriches human experience and strengthens communal life.

However, this harmony faces significant threats. Modernization and secularization have altered perspectives, elevating individualism and materialism while diminishing the role of sacred traditions. Global cultural shifts have led to the marginalization of local customs, threatening spiritual continuity and communal

¹² Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

¹³ Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980).

¹⁴ Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680, Volume One: The Lands below the Winds* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988).

¹⁵ John R. Bowen, *Muslims through Discourse: Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

integrity. As Clifford Geertz noted in *The Religion of Java*, religion, tradition, and social structure can coexist, yet are vulnerable to fragmentation under modern pressures.¹⁶

The Kei community firmly believes that neglecting *adat* threatens social stability and interfaith harmony. The horizontal conflict in Maluku (1999–2003), particularly between 1999 and 2002, illustrates the dangers of cultural disintegration, with violent clashes between Muslims and Christians resulting in widespread casualties, displacement, and the collapse of the *orang basudara* (brotherhood) ethos. Birgit Brauchler, in *Cultural Solutions to Religious Conflicts?* underscores how the *Pela-Gandong* tradition functioned as a grassroots mechanism for peacebuilding by fostering inclusive reconciliation beyond religious boundaries.¹⁷ In the Kei Archipelago, a similar but shorter conflict occurred. According to Craig Thorburn in *The Contesting Politics of the Kei Islands*, its brevity—lasting about three months—was due to the community’s deep-rooted commitment to cultural values and customary law.¹⁸

The *Pela-Gandong* tradition in Ambon shares essential features with Kei’s customary structures, including *teabel*, *koi-maduan*, *rahan dek-kavwar*, and kinship systems like *yanur-mangohoi* and the *belan* tradition—the focus of this study. The *belan* functions not only as a maritime vessel but as a cultural symbol of unity, conflict

¹⁶ Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 227–229.

¹⁷ Birgit Bräuchler, “Cultural Solutions to Religious Conflicts? The Revival of Tradition in the Moluccas, Eastern Indonesia,” *Asian Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 37, No. 6, SPECIAL FOCUS: Revitalisation of Tradition and New Forms of Religiosity: Perspectives from Southeast Asia (2009): pp. 872–891.

¹⁸ Craig C. Thorburn, “The Contesting Politics of the Kei Islands, Indonesia,” *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 2008: p. 45.

resolution, and grassroots solidarity. P. M. Laksono, in *The 'Adat' Contribution for the Villages to Develop Independently*, highlights how *adat* structures such as *kepala ohoi* (village heads), *soa*, and *seniri* (customary elders) compensate for governmental limitations in Kei, activating local initiatives like *maren* (mutual cooperation) and *yelim* (voluntary contribution) that are rooted in collective values.¹⁹

As a cultural tradition, the *belan* encapsulates customary law, social roles, kinship based on *fangnanan* (affection), *ain ni ain* (mutual belonging), and the principle *vuut ain mehe ni ngifun, manut ain mehe ni tilur* or *ain ni ain* principle—“unity in diversity.”²⁰ It represents the communal journey toward shared goals, binding individuals within a collective vessel, guided by internalized values that promote both personal integrity and social harmony. This symbolic and functional richness inspires the present research, which employs ethnographic methods to explore the meaning and role of *belan* in Kei society. By interpreting its significance through the lens of perennial philosophy, this study seeks to uncover how the *belan* tradition embodies enduring spiritual and cultural wisdom in a rapidly changing world.

B. Research Questions

This research adopts a cultural hermeneutics approach through ethnographic methods to explore the symbolic characteristics of the *Belan* tradition in the Kei archipelago and interpret the presence of *sophia perennis* — perennial wisdom — within it. The main aim is to investigate how the symbolism embedded in *Belan* can

¹⁹ P.M. Laksono, “The *Adat* Contributions for the Villages to Develop Independently: Cases from the Kei Islands, Souteast Maluku Regency”, *Humaniora*, volume 28, Number 3, October 2016: pp. 254-264.

²⁰ Paskhalis Maria Laksono, *The Common Ground in The Kei Islands: Eggs from One Fish and One Bird* (Jogjakarta: Galang Press, 2002), pp. 1-5.

contribute to strengthening social harmony in a multi-religious society. Based on this focus, the following research questions are formulated:

1. How can the symbolic characteristics of the *Belan* tradition in Kei society be understood through ethnographic inquiry?
2. To what extent does the *Belan* tradition embody values of *sophia perennis* that are relevant for interreligious life in the Kei archipelago?

C. Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Describe and analyze the symbolic elements of the *Belan* tradition in the Kei Islands through in-depth ethnographic exploration.
2. Identify and interpret the perennial values embodied in *Belan*, and evaluate their relevance for fostering social harmony and interreligious coexistence within Kei society.

D. Significance of the Study

This research carries theoretical and practical significance in five critical domains: local culture, perennial philosophy, responses to modernity, practical spirituality, and interfaith engagement.

1. From a cultural perspective, the study contributes to a critical reinterpretation of the *Belan* tradition by uncovering its context, essence, and symbolic meaning. This exploration not only supports cultural preservation but also recovers neglected forms of local spirituality.

2. In relation to perennial philosophy, this study represents an applied analysis of *sophia perennis* within the specific cultural context of *Belan*. The study moves beyond abstract or universalist notions of perennial wisdom by grounding them in a concrete, lived tradition. It thus critically examines the presence and relevance of universal spiritual values embedded within a particular cultural-religious expression.
3. This research offers a cultural and spiritual response to the forces of modernity and globalization that often undermine traditional values, by reaffirming *Belan* as a tradition that preserves spiritual depth and communal cohesion amid socio-cultural change.
4. This study promotes a praxis-oriented approach to spiritual symbols. Rather than treating them as abstract representations, the values within *Belan* are explored as actionable principles that support shared life, solidarity, and mutual respect in the everyday lives of communities.
5. This study contributes to social and religious harmony, particularly in the fields of interreligious dialogue, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding. By exploring the empirical reality of Kei society, it reveals how the spiritual values embodied in *Belan* can serve as social capital to bridge religious divides and foster spaces of harmony.

E. Literature Review

Academic research on *belan* as a local cultural entity of the indigenous communities in the Kei Islands—and more broadly within the context of Eastern Indonesia—has yet to receive substantial scholarly attention. In fact, within the wider

Nusantara maritime heritage, *belan* stands as a cultural phenomenon that deserves deeper discussion, especially due to its strong ties to ritual and spirituality, which reveal the philosophical and metaphysical meanings embedded within it. Moreover, *belan* holds significant value for conflict resolution and interreligious dialogue within local communities. If this theme were to be explored and brought into academic discourse, it would enrich scholarly knowledge and contribute to the expansion of harmonious coexistence. Additionally, a perennialist approach to local traditions—particularly in the case of *belan*—has not yet been employed by scholars in practical scientific studies in the Kei Archipelago.

1. Academic Studies on *Belan* in the Kei Archipelago

In the context of scholarly research, we encounter studies on traditional boats, such as those conducted by Pierre-Yves Manguin on the maritime history of the Nusantara, and Horst H. Liebner, who examined traditional Nusantaran boats, drawing upon Manguin's historical and archaeological data. According to Manguin, the archipelago had already developed a tradition of large vessels for maritime and trading purposes by the first millennium CE. One such example is the *K'un-lun po*, a ship recorded in Chinese sources as measuring 50 meters in length and capable of carrying up to 600 tons. There were also smaller types of boats, such as the *kora-kora* (used in several Moluccan islands like Tidore, Ambon, and Seram) for both warfare and trade, or the *sandeq* in South Sulawesi. Nusantaran boats have undergone significant evolution in both practice and function. The *sandeq*, for instance, is now also used for racing and has come to represent certain cultural values such as courage and endurance. According to Liebner, each type of boat in the archipelago is shaped by

local conditions—such as geographical location, availability of raw materials and tools, the intended purpose of the vessel, the type of sail employed, and other related factors.²¹ Liebner has examined traditional evidence of boat-building and usage within the Austronesian region, particularly in Sulawesi, but has not extended his research further eastward to areas such as Maluku and the Kei Islands. Both Manguin and Liebner focus largely on the historical and archaeological evidence of traditional boats; however, they do not reflect on the ritual and spiritual meanings embedded in these traditional maritime practices.

MacKnight, in *The Study of Praus in the Indonesian Archipelago*, explains that boats (Malay: *prau*, *prahu*, or *proa*) function as means of transportation across waters, yet their essence is understood contextually according to local cultural traditions. In Sumatra, for example, the *baluk* refers to a type of boat with breast-stroke paddles and sails used primarily for trade, while smaller *baluk* boats were employed in warfare. Additionally, *ballones* and *nambangues* were human-powered boats used for fishing and riverine transport. In Tidore and its surrounding areas, the *kora-kora* is known as a multifunctional boat that, in the 16th century, was used to transport large quantities of goods and people.²² In the Kei Archipelago, the boat is known as *belan*, a term imbued with special cultural and symbolic meaning.

Cécile Barraud, a French anthropologist, is the only scholar known to have conducted dedicated research on boat traditions in the Kei Archipelago. In her work

²¹ Horst H. Liebner, *Perahu-perahu Tradisional Nusantara* (Makassar: P3MP Unhas, 2002), pp. 24-38; Cf. Liebner, *Indigenous Concept of Orientation of South Sulawesi Sailors*, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 2005, Vol. 161, No. 2/3 (2005), pp. 269-317.

²² C.C. MacKnight, *The Study of Praus in the Indonesian Archipelago*, *The Great Circle*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (OCTOBER 1980):117-128.

translated by Ignasius Refo, titled “Tanebar Evav: Suatu Masyarakat dari Rumah-rumah yang Bergerak menuju ke Arah yang Luas”, she outlines several indicators of the enduring presence of traditional boat traditions in Kei. First, the Kei people are known for their expertise in ship and boat construction. Historically, they taught boat-building techniques to the inhabitants of the Aru Islands and other neighboring islands in Maluku. This traditional model of ship construction has been preserved, although it is now in decline.²³ This context reflects the broader Austronesian maritime condition, as examined by Horst H. Liebner in his study of sailing vessels, and also parallels the Southeast Asian maritime context described by Pierre-Yves Manguin, particularly in his analysis of archaeological evidence of large trading ships used by maritime kingdoms in the western part of Southeast Asia and the Indonesian archipelago during the 16th and 17th centuries.²⁴

Secondly, the construction and sale of sailing vessels are embedded within a complex ritual framework, running parallel to— and comparable with—rituals surrounding war canoes. Villages often participate in these ceremonies or celebrations with a conscious adherence to customary law, including its accompanying sanctions. Sailing vessels are sometimes constructed and sold as a form of restitution for moral or social transgressions. Importantly, the proceeds from such sales are not integrated into the everyday economic circulation. Thirdly, traditional Kei boats—whether large or small—occupy a distinctive place in Kei culture. They are essential not only as

²³ Cécile Barraud, *Tanebar-Evav: Suatu Masyarakat dari Rumah-Rumah yang Bergerak menuju ke Arah yang Luas* (*Tanebar Evav Une Societe de Maisons Tournee Vers Le Large*), trans. Ignasius S. S. Refo, MA. (Yogyakarta: Penebar Media Pustaka, 2019), p. 13.

²⁴ Pierre-Yves Manguin, "The Southeast Asian Ship: An Historical Approach," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 11, no. 2 (September 1980): 266–276.

means of communication and transportation but also as cultural symbols representing society, customary institutions, and their functional organization.²⁵ Pierre-Yves Manguin, in *Shipshape Societies: Boat Symbolism and Political Systems in Insular Southeast Asia*, emphasizes that the maritime world of the Nusantara is characterized by a deep correlation between boat traditions and the social structures they embody.

A similar insight is offered by Barraud, as cited by Refo in “*Dari Kapal Menuju Masyarakat*”, who argues that in socio-anthropological terms, the Kei people understand traditional boats not merely in relation to maritime utility but in connection with broader social meanings. Refo identifies three types of traditional transportation used by the Kei: *habo* (also spelled *hibo*), *belan*, and *sleb* (or *sileb*). Each type serves a specific social function and bears significance in communal life. *Habo* refers to large canoes (traditional ships) ranging from 10 to 15 meters in length, often used for inter-island voyages or the transportation of specific materials. *Belan*, on the other hand, carries special meaning—not only as a physical vessel capable of holding up to 60 paddlers for warfare—but also as a sacred symbol associated with customary rituals and ancestral symbolism. Meanwhile, *sleb* refers to small boats, used primarily for practical purposes in short-distance marine and river transport, and often employed by fishermen for catching fish.²⁶ In fact, the Kei also recognize other forms of traditional vessels, such as *bauk*—boats used to carry specific materials—and *rau*, which serve both inter-island travel and daily subsistence activities.

²⁵ Barraud, p. 14.

²⁶ Ignatius S. S. Refo, “Dari Kapal menuju Masyarakat,” paper presented at STPAK St. Yohanes Penginjil Ambon, 2014., pp. 20–21.

In her study of the village community of Tanebar-Evav in the Kei Islands, Barraud delves deeper into the essence of the boat—not merely as a physical object located on the shore, but as an ideological symbol tied to social values, cosmology, and the hierarchical structure of society. Within this context, Barraud specifically identifies the boat in question as the *belan*. The *belan* thus functions not only as a tangible artifact but also as an ideological symbol embedded in the social fabric of a particular community. According to Barraud, the *belan* constitutes a “representation of the whole”—an encompassing image of society that integrates both the living and the dead, the masculine and the feminine, as well as internal and external relations. It becomes a metaphor for the interconnection between the material and spiritual realms.²⁷ Barraud’s research offers a significant contribution to understanding *belan* as an integral part of the Kei people’s local wisdom. Through a metaphorical-anthropological lens, she unveils the symbolic structure of *belan* as a representation of society. However, her study does not yet engage with the transcendental dimension or explore *belan* through the lens of *sophia perennis*. In this regard, the present study seeks to extend the discourse by offering a perennialist interpretation that reveals the spiritual and universal values embedded in the *belan* tradition.

2. A Perennialist Perspective on Local Culture

In 1951, Richard D. Mosier sought to integrate perennialism into culture, particularly within the field of education. Mosier’s core argument was that since the early decades—especially through the rational philosophies of Plato and Aristotle,

²⁷ Cécile Barraud, “The Sailing-Boat: Circulation and Values in the Kei Islands, Indonesia,” in *Tanebar-Evav: Une société de maisons tournée vers le large* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 1979), p. 126.

followed by Augustine and Aquinas—the orientation of philosophy has evolved and found renewed meaning in the realms of humanism, Neo-Scholasticism, Thomism, Neo-Platonism, and humanism, all of which have responded to the dynamics of social life, the Church, and secular society. According to Mosier, the revival of these “ancient systems” in a modern form is what is referred to as perennialism. In this context, Aristotelian, Thomistic, Scholastic, and Neo-Platonic forms of perennialism stand as an antithesis to modernity, which tends to be secular, progressive, and pragmatic, aiming instead to return educational culture to essentialism. In his view, progressivism has led society into a new, unstable culture prone to crisis, largely due to its secular practices that create a divide between the sacred and the profane—a defining characteristic of the twentieth century.²⁸ Mosier's work primarily highlights perennialism within the sphere of education, without delving into customary culture or the essential elements of local cultural traditions. Nevertheless, he has emphasized culture as one of the vital elements of the “past” (tradition) that must be revived in this increasingly fluid era.

The study of perennialism within local cultures remains very limited; however, scholarly inquiries into this field will significantly broaden our ideological horizons regarding its essence and existence. The Perennial Philosophy (*Philosophia Perennis*, or in Frithjof Schuon's terms, *sophia perennis*) is a philosophical concept that gained popularity in the 20th century amidst global conflicts such as the world wars, the rapid development of industrialization and secularization, the deep-rooted individualism

²⁸ Richard D. Mosier, *Perennialism in Education*, History of Education Journal, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Spring, 1951), pp. 80-85.

within social classes, and the widening gap between the sacred and the profane in modern human life. The perspective was written by perennialist Seyyed Hossein Nasr, serves as a contextual reference for the contemporary popularization of the perennial philosophy in response to these conditions. From his perspective within the urban centers of the Western world, Nasr intuitively sensed the loss of an essential dimension of life: the spiritual meaning of the cosmos. As Nasr writes:

Even religious individuals, in such a condition, have lost their sense of the spiritual meaning of nature. The natural world has been reduced to a mere “object” stripped of meaning, while at the same time, the void created by the disappearance of this vital aspect of human existence continues to dwell within the human soul, manifesting itself in various ways—sometimes through violence and despair.²⁹

Nasr's critical analysis in reading the ‘signs of the times’ carries significant implications for how humanity interprets the cultural heritage within society. Customary spaces, for example, have been diminished by the secularization movement, leading to the loss of a cultural identity that is both cosmological and spiritual in nature. Richly meaningful local wisdom has been eliminated from the reflective space of human consciousness, and the transcendent values embedded within traditions have been neglected due to the disharmony between the sacred and the profane dimensions.

In the contemporary era, R. Walsh, in *Human Survival* (1993), reminds us that all contemporary global crises have their roots in human psychology and collective consciousness. Humans possess a tendency to dominate, and subsequently, they consciously exploit nature and its resources without attributing meaning to their actions or considering the harmony of the cosmos between humans, nature, and the

²⁹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis in Modern Man* (London, Boston, Sydney, Wellington: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1968), p. 17.

traditions of cultural communities. According to him, the cosmological crisis is fundamentally a spiritual crisis, as it reflects a disconnection between the sacred and the profane.³⁰ Similarly, Almut Beringer, in *Reclaiming a Sacred Cosmology: Seyyed Hossein Nasr, the Perennial Philosophy, and Sustainability Education* (2006), critiques the gap created by modernity, which seemingly distances the spiritual dimension from profane-cosmological reality. Beringer examines the idea of a religious order of the cosmos, with a particular focus on sacred cosmology as a fundamental cultural element and its often-overlooked spiritual dimension. According to her, nature and the environment within particular cultures contain timeless elements of metaphysics, epistemology, and cosmological ontology. Beringer employs Seyyed Hossein Nasr's concept of *Sacred Cosmology* to analyze the cosmological aspects of reality, which are inherently inseparable from the spiritual-metaphysical dimension.³¹

In *Frithjof Schuon and the Perennial Philosophy* (2010), Harry Oldmeadow explains that the foundational and influential ideas of cosmological perennialism originate from Frithjof Schuon.³² According to Schuon, there exists a *sapientia*—a

³⁰ R. Walsh, *Human survival: A psycho-evolutionary analysis*, ReVision 16 (2), 1993, p. 87.

³¹ Beringer's study was inspired by a question posed in Volume 11 of the *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*: "where is the place for religion in environmental education?" is rephrased in this essay to become, "where is the place for a religious view of the order of nature in environmental education?" Almut Beringer, *Reclaiming a Sacred Cosmology: Seyyed Hossein Nasr, the Perennial Philosophy, and Sustainability Education*, Canadian Journal of Environmental Education, 11, 2006, 26-42.

³² Frithjof Schuon (1907–1998) was born into a German family in Basel, Switzerland, in 1907. He received his early education there until the death of his father, after which he was raised by his mother in Mulhouse and became a French citizen. From a young age, Schuon exhibited an interest in the East, drawn to the serene melodies of the *Bhagavad Gita* and to traditional art. As he grew older, he developed a deep inclination toward metaphysics and the works of Plato. The writings of René Guénon provided philosophical affirmation for his intellectual intuition, particularly in the field of metaphysics. His fascination with tradition led him to explore various spiritual heritages across Asia. In 1932, he traveled to Algeria, where he studied traditional Islamic civilization, including Sufism, and met Shaykh al-'Alawi. He later journeyed to Morocco in 1935, and in 1938, he met Guénon in Cairo. Schuon became widely known for his reflections on spiritual traditions across cultures, including those of Asia and the Native American Sioux and Crow peoples. Through his writings, he emerged as a central figure in the

pure wisdom (*intellectus purus*)—which is inherent in the fabric of reality. This wisdom represents a universal metaphysics and an orthodoxy that is embedded within the cosmological order itself. Schuon emphasized the inseparability of wisdom and sacredness. For him, true knowledge is not merely intellectual, but spiritual and moral—rooted in simplicity and purity of heart. In light of this, he did not hesitate to criticize the overt secularity of modernism. He expressed deep reverence for earlier sages and spiritual masters across traditions, including St. John of the Cross, Shankara, Plato, Dionysius the Areopagite, Meister Eckhart, and Angelus Silesius. Of St. Thérèse of Lisieux—"the Little Flower"—he once remarked: "*her littleness was her greatness.*" Schuon's ethical orientation is perhaps best captured in the personal maxim he adopted: "*the good, the whole good, and nothing but the good.*" This principle reflects his belief in the presence of universal values inherent in the human being, regardless of religious background. It is precisely for this reason that Schuon—and later Seyyed Hossein Nasr—could offer a profound and legitimate critique of secularism, particularly when it undermines the essential and foundational values rooted in tradition, culture, and religion.³³

Perennial philosophy, or *philosophia perennis*, may be described as a rational engagement with the transcendent and metaphysical dimensions of reality. It holds that all authentic religious and spiritual traditions contain within them a universal wisdom. In other words, it affirms the existence of a timeless truth—one that transcends the particularities of religious forms and historical expressions. With this transcendental

perennialist-traditionalist school of thought, deeply engaged with art, spirituality, and metaphysics. Ibid., 51–52.

³³ Ibid.

orientation, empirical reality—as bound to material objects—holds little central significance in perennialist inquiry. Thus, socio-cultural approaches that are focused on material phenomena are often seen as inadequate for understanding metaphysical or sacred dimensions of existence. There emerges, then, an almost unbridgeable chasm between the profane and the metaphysical-sacred. Many modern thinkers tend to identify *the Real* exclusively with that which is sensory, measurable, and empirically verifiable, while relegating the metaphysical and transcendent to the realm of blind belief, unverifiable and existentially dubious. Such assumptions continue to dominate contemporary academic discourse, which may explain why perennialist studies of tradition and local culture remain marginal—especially in the context of Indonesia. This absence is even more pronounced in Eastern Indonesia, such as in the Kei Archipelago, where rich sacred traditions persist yet are largely neglected within academic and philosophical research inspired by metaphysical perennialism.

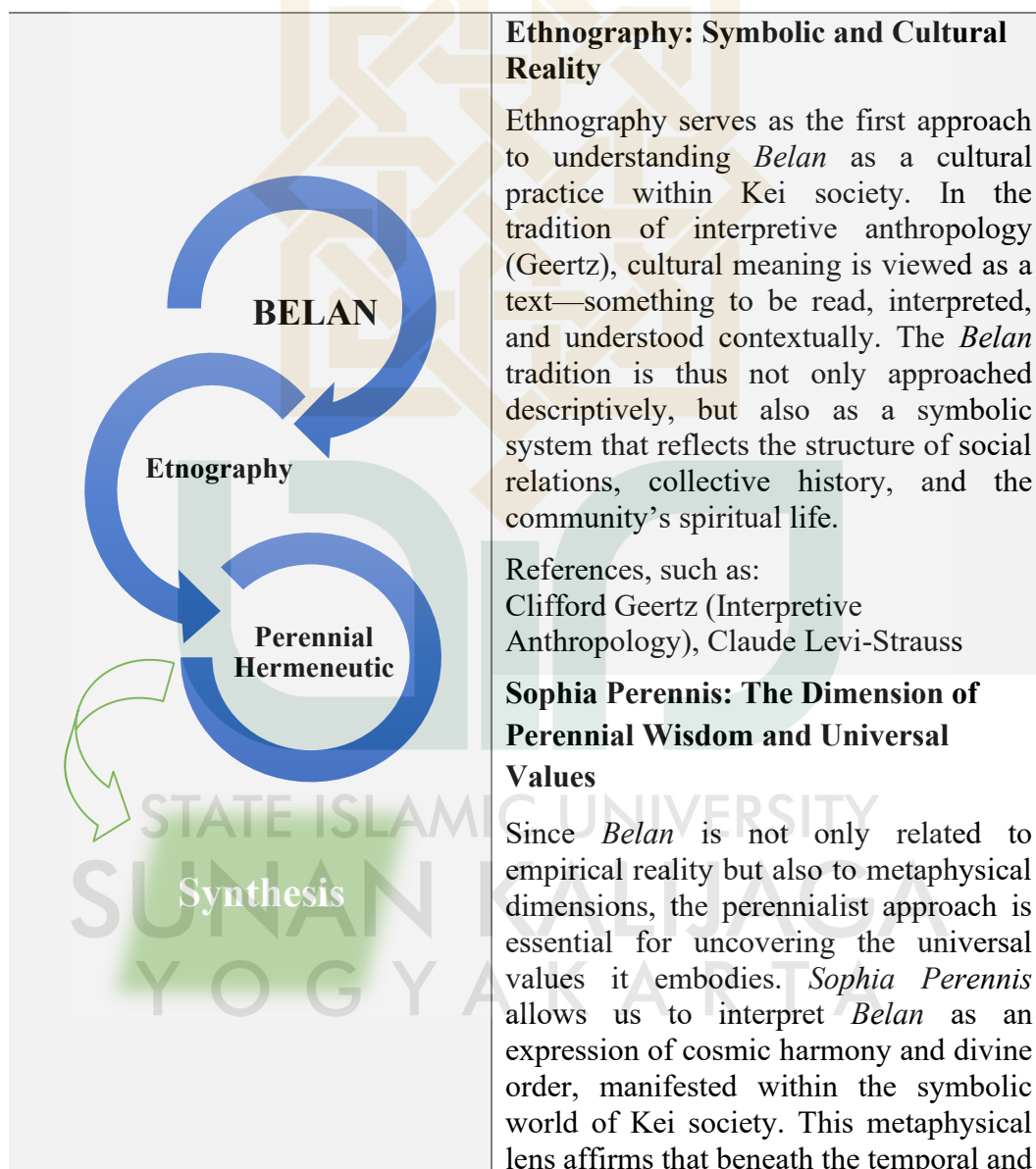
F. Theoretical Framework

Engaging with reality entails an epistemological awareness of the human being as an extensive entity—one that inhabits both a space of practice and a realm of meaning that extends beyond concrete reality. Martin Heidegger refers to this as “*sein-in-der-welt*” (being-in-the-world), emphasizing that human existence (*Dasein*) is never isolated, but always situated within a *hermeneutischer Zirkel* (hermeneutic circle), through which understanding of the whole and its parts emerges in dynamic interplay.³⁴ These particular human realities possess an inner core of wisdom, which

³⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 78-82.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr calls the “*perennial philosophy*” or *sacred wisdom*, aimed at preserving *cosmic harmony*.³⁵ In this context, *Belan*, as an extensive cultural reality in Kei society, is not merely a matter of ritual practice or symbolic form—it constitutes a *collective consciousness*,³⁶ a shared awareness that imbues existence with meaning.

VISUAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK SCHEMA



³⁵ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 25-28.

³⁶ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995), 43-50.

	<p>cultural layers of ritual lies a deeper, timeless wisdom—one that reflects the unity of truth and the sacred structure of reality, common to all authentic spiritual traditions.</p> <p>References, such as: René Guénon, Frithjof Schuon, Seyyed Hossein Nasr</p>
<p>Within this framework, Belan is understood as a socio-cultural symbol in its local context (ethnography), and simultaneously as a spiritual representation of the cosmic order (<i>sophia perennis</i>). As such, it becomes a bridge of meaning between the empirical and the metaphysical realms. In other words, the author approaches Belan not merely as an object of anthropological study, but as a hermeneutic vehicle through which universal values can be accessed and socio-religious harmony can be strengthened.</p>	

Table I.1. Visual Scheme of the Theoretical Framework

1. Ethnography as an Interpretation of the Cultural Meaning of Belan

Ethnography is not merely a description of culture but an interpretation of symbols and social practices within the context of a community's collective experience. Clifford Geertz emphasizes that culture is a text that must be read and interpreted, whereby every cultural act constitutes a symbolic expression of the system of meaning embedded within a community. In this study, *belan* is understood as a "cultural text" that contains the narrative structure, collective values, and relational history of the Kei people. This interpretive ethnographic approach treats customary symbols and actions not as neutral objects, but as entities with profound meaning, which can only be understood through a dialogical engagement between the researcher and the cultural reality being studied.

Cécile Barraud has, in fact, broadened readers' horizons regarding the essence of *belan* within the Kei community, although the transcendental and metaphysical aspects

have yet to receive particular attention in her research. Especially in her explanation of *the sailing-boat*, it becomes evident that *belan* should not be viewed merely as a material object, but rather as an ideological entity that reflects elements of human life, as well as cosmological and spiritual dimensions. However, a systematic explanation of its transcendental elements was not part of Barraud's anthropological exploration. Moreover, the practice of perennial philosophical analysis, which serves as the approach of this present study, lies beyond the scope of Barraud's research. Nevertheless, her work has provided the researcher with a broadened horizon for interpreting the *belan* tradition. This ideological meaning demonstrates that *belan* essentially encompasses two inseparable dimensions: the physical-material and the spiritual-metaphysical. These two dimensions function synergistically to sustain the stability of communal life.

The physical identity of *belan* specifically constitutes the domain of empirical ethnography explored by the author. From this perspective, *belan* represents the local wisdom practiced by customary groups in particular regions, both at the village level (*ohoi*, in the Kei language) and across several villages under a customary administrative territory, led by a *raja* or what is locally known as *rat-schaap*. It carries a unique historical narrative within Kei's local society. *Belan* is rooted in the maritime life of the traditional Kei people, whose geographic reality is predominantly shaped by living among clusters of islands. The sea serves as the main link between these islands and the communities that inhabit them. Historically, *belan* has played a vital role as the primary means of transportation, a tool for economic activities, and even as a symbol of communal identity among Kei's indigenous people. Over time, the meaning

of *belan* has evolved to become an integral part of valuable cultural traditions, serving as a distinctive marker of an *ohoi* or *rat-schaap*, based on their unique historical and symbolic background.

In addition, *belan* is embedded within customary rituals that have been incorporated into the annual cultural celebration now known as the “Festival Pesona Meti Kei” (*met ef*). A remarkable feature of the *belan* tradition is its presence in every *ohoi*, which are religiously diverse, with Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism as the major religions. At the *rat-schaap* level, different allied *ohoi* may adhere to different religions, yet they integrate this spirit of unity under the shared name of *belan*. In the lead-up to the festival, various prayer rituals and customary ceremonies are performed, rowers are selected according to their customary status and roles, and inter-village customary visits take place. During the festival, *belan* from each *rat-schaap* showcases its distinct identity through specific symbols and traditional ornaments. They demonstrate strength and solidarity through healthy competition, warmly celebrated by people of diverse religious backgrounds. Prayers from different faiths are offered together, symbolizing unity and harmony, making the festival a joyful celebration without boundaries of division.

2. Sophia Perennis: Universal Values within the Symbolic Entity of Belan

To grasp the spiritual and universal dimensions of the *belan* tradition, this study employs the framework of perennial philosophy (*sophia perennis*), particularly as developed by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Frithjof Schuon, and René Guénon. From this perspective, symbols and customary practices—including *belan*—are regarded as reflections of a metaphysical reality that is eternal. Local traditions, within this

framework, are seen as "manifestations" of divine wisdom, which reveals itself in symbolic forms according to each cultural context. *Sophia perennis* enables us to interpret *belan* as a medium of connection between humans and the cosmos, between the visible and the invisible, between the local and the universal. *Belan* thus becomes a means of preserving *cosmic harmony*, namely, the order of spiritual and ecological balance that forms the foundation of life within the Kei community.

The metaphysical dimension of *belan* will be extensively discussed through the lens of this perennial hermeneutic perspective. Within this line of thought, *belan* is inherently linked to spiritual and transcendent aspects, which do not exist separately from its historical and socio-cultural dimensions within customary life. Historically, *belan* integrates the maritime heritage of a particular community. This heritage is transmitted through narratives, often in the form of "sacred stories" that carry symbolic meanings concerning origins, struggles, bravery, and experiences regarded as sacred. Mircea Eliade explains that "sacred stories" reveal awe (*tremendum*), majesty (*majestas*), and attraction (*mysterium fascinans*) that influence communal existence through the transmission of moral messages and cultural values.³⁷

In its social dimension, *belan* is presented as a symbol that the customary community believes to be a sacred space containing fundamental values for organizing social life and realizing the common good. This sacred quality does not stand alone but is intrinsically related to the transcendent reality known as *Dunyai Kavunin*, which is traditionally regarded as the Principle of cosmic order. Eliade, through his concept

³⁷ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1987), pp. 10-11.

of the phenomenology of religion, has also explained that traditional societies often perceive the world through two complementary dimensions: the sacred and the profane. Sacred space is understood as the place where human beings feel connected to the cosmic forces that govern the order of the universe, thereby creating stability in both social and personal life.³⁸

The people of Kei regard *Duad Ler Vuan* or *Duad Karatat* as manifestations of a cosmic force that ensures the equilibrium of both the metaphysical and empirical realms. This cosmological belief finds expression in the tradition of *Belan*, conceived as a sacred space that embodies fundamental values essential to the cohesion of social life. The sanctity of *Belan* is reflected in the prescribed roles and responsibilities of each member of society, whether at the level of the *ohoi* (village) or within the broader customary administrative structures (*loor/ratschaap*). The proper fulfillment of these roles is considered vital to the maintenance of social harmony, whereas the neglect or violation of such responsibilities is believed to engender social disorder. Over time, the spiritual dimension of *Belan* has evolved into a form of perennial spirituality, internalized by the community as a universal moral good that transcends religious boundaries and fosters an inclusive sense of communal belonging."

3. Belan as a Synthesis

By integrating ethnographic inquiry with the perspective of *Sophia Perennis*, this study positions *Belan* as a form of collective consciousness that encompasses two interrelated dimensions: as a system of social symbols embedded within Kei culture, and as a sacred medium that reflects universal values of harmony, order, and

³⁸ Ibid.

spirituality. This synthesis allows *Belan* to be understood not merely as an element of local cultural heritage, but as a source of wisdom that remains profoundly relevant for cultivating social harmony and interreligious coexistence within the pluralistic society of Kei. In a historical context where secularism increasingly deepens the divide between the material and the spiritual, or between the profane and the sacred, local traditions such as *Belan* reaffirm the existential unity of these dimensions and direct humanity towards its sacred nature. The tradition of *Belan* invites individuals to rediscover their existence as spiritual beings, living in accordance with primordial values bestowed by the Divine. Within this realm, the human person does not journey alone. One navigates the course of life *together with* fellow human beings of different faiths, doctrines, and religious traditions; together with nature, the environment, and ancestral customs; and ultimately, in profound relation with the Divine. *Belan* symbolises this human journey towards God, with the sea as a metaphor for the temporal world and the harbour as the ultimate destination — the Absolute Reality.

G. Research Methodology

1. Reserach Approach

This study employs a qualitative interpretive approach with two complementary theoretical frameworks, namely:

- a. Ethnography, as a method to deeply understand cultural phenomena through participation, observation, and interviews within the social context of the Kei people.
- b. Hermeneutics of Sophia Perennis, as a philosophical framework for interpreting the profound, spiritual, and universal meanings behind cultural

symbols, rituals, and narratives, referring to the principles of perennial wisdom (*philosophia perennis*).

The combination of these two approaches does not constitute *mixed methods* in the technical sense (i.e., combining quantitative and qualitative techniques) but rather represents a Interdisciplinary approach, which enables the connection between empirical experiences of the community and the unveiling of metaphysical, universal values.

2. Type of Research

This study is a *qualitative interpretive - ethnographic research*, focusing on exploring cultural, symbolic, and spiritual meanings within the life of the Kei community, particularly concerning the *Belan Evav* tradition, and how this tradition reflects universal principles found within Sophia Perennis.

3. Research Steps

RESEARCH PHASE	STEPS	DETAIL ACTIVITIES	DURATION
1. Research Planning	Determining the Focus of the Research	Identify aspects of the <i>Belan</i> tradition to be studied: spiritual-transcendental, symbolic, and social dimensions.	2 Weeks
	Selecting Research Locations	Choose villages (<i>ohoi</i>) that serve as centers for <i>Belan</i> practices, either based on dominant religion or strong customs. Research will cover three <i>ohoi</i> in Kei Kecil and three <i>ohoi</i> in Kei Besar.	
	Formulating Research Questions	Examples: How is <i>Belan</i> understood and practiced? How does the <i>Belan</i> tradition	

		interact with local religions? What symbols are associated with <i>Belan</i> ? What values are recognized within the tradition? How does it influence social and religious harmony?	
	Obtaining Research Permits	Handle official permissions with the government and local traditional authorities.	
2. Data Collection	Participatory Observation	Participate in and document rituals or traditional practices using audio-visual tools (photos and videos).	4-6 Weeks
	Semi-Structured Interviews	Conduct interviews with traditional leaders, religious figures, and community members.	
	Study of Local Data	Analyze <i>Belan</i> symbols and collect related customary documents.	
	Field Notes	Record detailed observations, social interactions, and narrative reflections during the research process.	
3. Data Analysis	Organizing Data	Categorize data based on themes such as symbolism, spiritual elements, and social harmony.	3-4 Weeks
	Ethnographic Analysis	Identify patterns and social relationships from the collected data.	
	Perennialism Analysis	Relate findings to perennialism theories.	
	Data Triangulation	Compare observations, interviews, and document studies to ensure the validity of findings.	
4. Preparation of Results	Description of Findings	Develop descriptive narratives about the <i>Belan</i> tradition.	2 Weeks
	Socio-Cultural and Religious Analysis	Explain the existence of <i>Belan</i> and its role in fostering social harmony in Kei's multi-religious society.	
	Philosophical Reflection	Elaborate on the values or <i>sophia perennis</i> within the	

		<i>Belan</i> tradition that contribute to inter-religious harmony in Kei.	
5. Writing and Revision	Drafting the Research Report	Compile the report following a systematic structure and based on field findings.	2 Weeks

4. Data Collection Methods

a. Participatory Observation

Participating in activities related to the *Belan* tradition, observing the atmosphere, social interactions, and symbolism, as well as oral traditions and signs associated with *Belan*. These observations are then documented through field notes, photographs, or videos.

b. Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews are conducted with key respondents, such as traditional leaders, *Seniri Ohoi* (village leaders), and the general public within the research area. The interviews focus on traditional knowledge, experiences, and events related to the *Belan* tradition. Interview recordings are made with the respondents' consent for documentation and analysis purposes.

c. Field Notes

The researcher documents all forms of interactions and observations and then develops narrative reflections on the research process. Field notes will concentrate on issues raised during the research.

5. Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis follows a hermeneutic procedure, consisting of the following stages:

a. Ethnographic Description

Presentation of data from observations and interviews in a contextual narrative format following ethnographic principles.

b. Symbolic and Cultural Interpretation

Exploration of the symbolic meanings of the Belan tradition using cultural theory, semiotics, and local Kei cosmology.

c. Philosophical Interpretation within the Sophia Perennis Framework

Linking empirical findings with the principles of perennial wisdom, such as the concepts of unity, relational harmony, and the sacred-profane relationship, as articulated by perennialist thinkers such as René Guénon, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and Frithjof Schuon.

6. Research Methodology Scheme

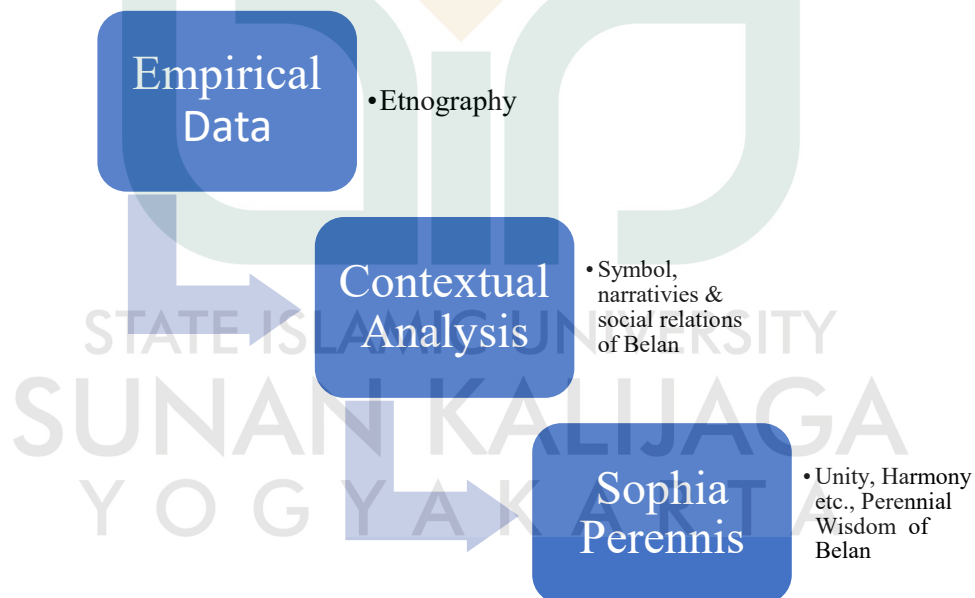


Figure 1.1. Research Metohology Scheme

H. Systematic Structure

CHAP.	TITLE & SUB-TITLE	CONTENT DESCRIPTION
CHAP. 1	Introduction	The introduction contains the background of the study, research questions, research objectives, research significance, literature review, theoretical framework, research method, and the systematic structure of the thesis.
	1. Background	This section raises the empirical reality as the background of the problem and explains the significance of the <i>Belan</i> tradition in the context of culturally-based scientific research with a particular focus on fostering interreligious social harmony.
	2. Research Questions	Determining the Focus and Research Questions, including: What is <i>Belan</i> ? This question aims to conceptually explore the <i>Belan</i> tradition, including its narratives, symbols, and meanings from an ethnographic perspective. How can the symbolic characteristics of the <i>Belan</i> tradition in Kei society be understood through ethnographic inquiry? To what extent does the <i>Belan</i> tradition embody values of <i>sophia perennis</i> that are relevant for interreligious life in the Kei archipelago?
	3. Research Objectives	The research is aimed at exploring the concept of <i>Sophia Perennis</i> within the <i>Belan</i> tradition and identifying its contribution to interreligious harmony.
	4. Research Significance	This section outlines the contribution of the research to theoretical development, addresses the existing gap in previous studies, enriches academic literature, and offers a new conceptualization through an ethnographic approach combined with the perennialist perspective.

	5. Literature Review	<p>The literature review presents previous studies in two main areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Boats in the Indonesian context and the Belan tradition in Kei in particular. This includes anthropological studies by scholars such as Pierre-Yves Manguin, Liebner, and Cecile Barraud. 2. Perennial Philosophy, referring to the works of perennialist thinkers such as René Guénon, Frithjof Schuon, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, especially on Sophia Perennis, focusing on themes such as unity, truth, virtue, prayer, and harmony.
	6. Theoretical Framework	<p>The theoretical framework provides an explanation of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ethnography: Symbolic and Cultural Realities. 2. The Hermeneutics of <i>Sophia Perennis</i>: The Dimension of Timeless Wisdom and Universal Values.
	7. Research Methodology	This section includes the research approach, research location and subjects, data collection techniques, and data analysis.
	Research Approach	This research employs a qualitative interpretive approach with two complementary theoretical frameworks: Etnography and Hermeneutics of Sophia Perennis. This research represents a transdisciplinary approach
	Research Location and Subjects	The research focuses on villages (<i>ohoi</i>) that serve as centers for the practice of the <i>Belan</i> tradition, characterized by a dominant religion or strong customary practices. The study covers 3 <i>ohoi</i> in Kei Kecil and 3 <i>ohoi</i> in Kei Besar.
	Data Collection Techniques	This study employs data collection techniques including participant

		observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis.
	Data Analysis Method	This study employs ethnographic description, symbolic and cultural interpretation, as well as philosophical interpretation within the framework of <i>Sophia Perennis</i> .
CHAP. II	Nuhu Evav: The Living Space of the Kei People	This chapter discusses the Kei Islands as a "living space," encompassing its geographical characteristics, demographics, and the social traditions established within it.
CHAP. III	Belan: "A Journey" [An Ethnographic Analysis of the Belan Tradition]	This chapter specifically examines the <i>Belan</i> tradition ethnographically, focusing on its background, cultural characteristics, symbols, and social practices developed by the traditional community.
CHAP. IV	Sophia Perennis within <i>Belan Evav</i>	This chapter presents a hermeneutic analysis of <i>Belan</i> using the perennialist framework, aiming to uncover the <i>Sophia Perennis</i> embedded in <i>Belan</i> , which contributes to interreligious life in the Kei Archipelago
CHAP. V	Conclusion: The Analogy of <i>Mitin Evav</i>	This chapter contains the conclusion, titled <i>The Analogy of Mitin Evav</i> . It is followed by several recommendations proposed by the researcher based on the findings of this study.
Appendices		This section contains interview transcripts, visual documentation of the research, and a list of informants and resource persons.
References		The reference list follows the scientific format in accordance with the thesis writing guidelines.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusion

The relationship between the Sacred and the Profane is embodied in the *Belan* tradition of the Kei Archipelago, *Nuhu Evav*. This study employs a combination of ethnographic-empirical methods and the hermeneutics of *Sophia Perennis* to interpret the interrelation between the sacred and the profane by uncovering the symbolic meanings embedded in the *Belan* tradition of the Kei people, while also exploring its contribution to social harmony within a multireligious society. The ethnographic approach provides empirical grounding through direct observation, cultural participation, and the elicitation of local narratives. Meanwhile, the hermeneutical approach opens interpretive space for uncovering perennial values as expressed in the practices, symbols, and customary beliefs of the Kei community.

1. Understanding the *Belan* Tradition through Ethnographic Approach

This research finds that the *Belan* tradition constitutes a symbolic structure that integrates the social, cosmological, and spiritual dimensions of Kei life. Through ethnographic analysis, *Belan* is identified as a communal-based social system that functions as a collective space for building relationships, performing social functions, and organizing roles within society. A key component of this structure is the *kovaat mir* system—a hierarchical but consensus-based structure of roles and statuses. *Kovaat mir* does not rely on coercive authority but stems from historical recognition rooted in the *Roa-Nangan* (sea and land) philosophy, which serves as the foundation of Kei social organization. Within this system, rights and responsibilities are distributed

equitably and functionally, based on tangible presence and contributions of individuals to the community. *Belan* thus serves as an articulative medium to structure social life in balance and harmony.

2. *Belan* as a Religious Metaphor and Spiritual Connectedness

Beyond a social structure, *Belan* also stands as a religious metaphor representing the spiritual beliefs of the Kei people regarding transcendental and metaphysical dimensions: *Duad Karatat* (the Supreme God) and the immaterial entities—both of which are also acknowledged in institutional religions. The *Belan* tradition reflects a belief system rooted in ancestral heritage, embedded in customary law, and passed down through generations. For the Kei people, *Belan* is not merely a boat for sailing; it is the vessel of life navigating the ocean of values, faith, and cosmological ties to ancestors and the Divine. In this light, *Belan* functions as a bridge between formal religion and indigenous belief, between tradition and spirituality. Thus, the religious values embodied in *Belan* may offer a unique contribution of Kei culture to fostering dialogue between religion and culture, between ritual and faith, and between social life and eschatological consciousness.

3. *Sophia Perennis* in the *Exoteric* and *Esoteric* dimensions of the *Belan* Tradition

Through the lens of *Sophia Perennis*, this study reveals that perennial wisdom is not external to tradition but is deeply embedded in the empirical realities of the *Belan* tradition, as seen in the symbolic and social practices of Kei society. These values manifest both esoterically and exoterically—in essence, in meaning, and in practice:

[1] *Unity of Origin and Destiny*. Reflected in the principle of *Ain ni Ain* and the metaphor *vuut ainmehe ni ngifun, ne manut ainmehe ni tilur*, which I also analogize as

Mitin Evav. This principle serves as the spiritual foundation for kinship and interreligious relations, asserting that all humans come from the same womb and grow from the same tree of life—thus enabling unity in diversity without erasing distinct identities. [2] *Lived Sacred Knowledge*. *Belan* encompasses a worldview of creation as sacred, governed by ancestral law (*Larvul Ngabal*), which aligns with religious ethical principles: truth, honesty, self-restraint, and respect for others. This is not doctrinal knowledge, but a form of shared wisdom that is lived. [3] *Human Beings as Spiritual Creatures*. Kei tradition does not separate spirituality from daily life. The connection with ancestors, land, and the Divine forms an existential consciousness. This resonates with *Sophia Perennis*, which regards the human being as a spiritual creature bearing moral responsibility. [4] *Relational Harmony in Diversity*. The *Belan* tradition teaches that living together requires orderly, just, and mutually respectful relations. Religious plurality is not a threat, but an integral part of the *Belan* formation, where each part supports the other. This principle reflects interfaith wisdom that views diversity as a gift. [5] *Larvul Ngabal as a Universal Ethical Code*. Kei customary law embodies universal principles structured into three parts: *Navnev*, *Hanilit*, and *Hawear Balwirin*, which are further enacted through the *sasa sor fit* (seven commandments and prohibitions) that align with religious moral teachings. In this context, *Larvul Ngabal* is more than customary law—it is a radiant expression of perennial wisdom.

The *Belan Evav* tradition in Kei society carries profound potential as a source of spiritual and social reflection that transcends the boundaries of religious identity. Ultimately, *Belan* offers a vessel for contemplating how humanity may live together in one boat, one tree of life, and one foundational value: that difference can coexist in

unity when people return to a common root. *Mitin Evav* symbolizes the safeguarding of diversity, and *Belan* becomes the shared path toward spiritual and social maturity. Here, *Sophia Perennis* finds its most tangible expression—not merely as a speculative idea, but as a life lived in meaningful harmony.

B. Recommendation

The author acknowledges the academic limitations of this study and hopes that, from within *Mitin Evav*, fruitful contributions to life may emerge through scholars and researchers who carry a sincere concern for the academic realm and for future-oriented, intergenerational research and publications. Therefore, the author offers the following recommendations:

1. *Advancing Academic Research on the Belan Tradition.* Studies on *Belan* as a tradition of the Kei traditional society remain significantly limited. Therefore, a broader and more systematic academic exploration is needed—through ethnographic research, cultural studies, and in-depth socio-historical analysis. This is essential not only to enrich academic literature but also to support the preservation of local traditions.
2. *Applying a Phenomenological Approach in Kei Tradition Studies.* The phenomenological approach—as developed by Edmund Husserl and Paul Ricoeur—offers a valuable perspective for understanding the deeper meanings of the *Belan* tradition as experienced by the Kei people themselves. In the Kei context, empirical studies using phenomenology remain rare and thus deserve special attention in future research.

3. *Strengthening Transdisciplinary Approaches and the Hermeneutics of Sophia Perennis.* This research has initiated a transdisciplinary approach by integrating ethnography and the hermeneutics of *Sophia Perennis* as a theoretical framework. This approach proves relevant and powerful in uncovering the deeper meaning of the *Belan* tradition—both empirically and philosophically. Therefore, it is recommended that transdisciplinary methods, especially the combination of social sciences, hermeneutics, and Perennialist studies, be further developed in the study of local cultures in the Kei Archipelago and beyond.
4. *The Importance of Documenting and Digitizing the Belan Tradition.* Given the limited availability of written and audio-visual documentation on the *Belan* tradition, there is a need to initiate systematic documentation projects, including digital preservation efforts. This would not only help safeguard the tradition but also facilitate access for researchers, younger generations, and the wider public.
5. *Encouraging Collaboration between Local and Global Researchers.* There is a need for synergy among local researchers, national scholars, and the international academic community in exploring, studying, and publishing knowledge on the *Belan* tradition and Kei culture. Such collaboration would strengthen research capacity and position local traditions within the context of global academic discourse.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ali, Kecia. *Makers of the Muslim Worlds: Imam Shafi'i - Scholar and Saints*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2011.
- Aristotle. *Metaphysics*. Trans. W. D. Ross. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924.
- Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica*. Trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province. New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947.
- Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS). *Statistik Indonesia 2023*. Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023.
- Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Maluku Tenggara (BPS). "Maluku Tenggara dalam Angka 2022-2024," Vol. 45, 2025.
- Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Tual (BPS). "Kota Tual dalam Angka (Tual Municipality in Figures) 2022-2024," Vol. 15, 2025.
- Barraud, Cécile. "The Sailing-Boat: Circulation and Values in the Kei Islands, Indonesia." Dalam *Tanebar-Evav: Une société de maisons tournée vers le large*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press & Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1979.
- . *Tanebar-Evav: Suatu Masyarakat dari Rumah-Rumah yang Bergerak Menuju ke Arah yang Luas*. Terj. Ignasius S. S. Refo, MA. Yogyakarta: Penebar Media Pustaka, 2019.
- Basman, dkk., *Sejarah Islam di Maluku: Teori dan Fakta*. Ambon: Balai Penelitian dan Pengembangan Agama, 2020.

Bell, Chaterine. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Benda, Harry J. *The Structure of Dutch Rule in Indonesia*. In *Continuity and Change in Southeast Asia*, edited by Harry J. Benda, 1–29. New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1968.

Bergh, G. van den. "The Kei Islands and Their Myths of Origin." *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, vol. 133, no. 4, 1977.

Beringer, Almud. *Reclaiming a Sacred Cosmology: Seyyed Hossein Nasr, the Perennial Philosophy, and Sustainability Education*. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, 11, 2006, 26-42.

Blackburn, S. *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Böhm, P. C.J. MSC. *Sejarah Kehadiran dan Karya Tarekat MSC di Maluku Tahun 1903-2020*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2021.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Braithwaite, John. *Restorative Justice and Responsive Regulation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Bräuchler, Birgit. *Cultural Solutions to Religious Conflicts? The Revival of Tradition in the Moluccas, Eastern Indonesia,* *Asian Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 37, No. 6, SPECIAL FOCUS: Revitalisation of Tradition and New Forms of Religiosity: Perspectives from Southeast Asia (2009), 872-891.

- Bruinessen, M. C. van. "Adat and Islam in Contemporary Indonesia." *Islamic Law and Society* 2, no. 2 (1995): 252–260.
- Chittick, William C. (ed.). *The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*. Bloomington, Indiana: World Wisdom Inc., 2007.
- Collier, Jane. *Transformation of Kinship*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.
- Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, *Sejarah Daerah Maluku*. Jakarta: Proyek Pengembangan Media Kebudayaan, 1977.
- Dietrich, Stefan. *Zur Stellung des Rats im Recht von Südost-Molukken*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1985.
- Dijk, Kees van. *Perubahan Kontur Masjid dalam Peter J. M. Nas dan Martien de Vletter (eds.). Masa Lalu dalam Masa kini Arsitektur di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2009.
- Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger*. London: Routledge, 1966.
- Durkheim, Émile. *The Division of Labor in Society*, trans. W. D. Halls. New York: Free Press, 1997.
- . *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Trans. Karen E. Fields. New York: Free Press, 1995.
- Eck, Diana L. *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.
- Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1987.

- Elson, R. E. *The Idea of Indonesia: A History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Evans-Pritchard, E.E. *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940.
- Fox, James J. *Inside Austronesian Houses: Perspectives on Domestic Designs for Living*. Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1993.
- Galvão, António. *A Treatise on the Moluccas (c. 1544) Probably the Preliminary Version of António Galvao's Lost Historia das Molucas*. Annotated and translated into English from the Portuguese manuscript in the Archivo General de Indias, Seville, by Hubert Th. M. Jacobs, S. J. Rome and St. Louis: Jesuit Historical Institute, Sources and studies for the history of the Jesuits III, 1971.
- Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973.
- . *The Religion of Java*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1960.
- Guénon, René. *The Symbolism of the Cross*. Terj. A. Macnab. Hillsdale: Sophia Perennis, 2004.
- Gungwu, Gung Wang. "The Nanhai Trade: A Study of the Early History of Chinese Trade in the South China Sea." *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 31, no. 2, 1959.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. 1. Boston: Beacon Press, 1984.

- Handoko, Wuri. *Karakteristik Arsitektur Masjid Kuno dan Perkembangan Islam di Maluku*. Amerta. *Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengembangan Arkeologi* Vol. 31 No. 1, Juni 2013: 1-80.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.
- Hoevell, G.W.C. Baron van. *De Kei-Eilanden*. Batavia: Albrecht & Amp; Kusche, 1889.
- Hughes, Edward J. "Wilfred Cantwell Smith and The Perennial Philosophy," *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 4, no. 1-2 (1992): 27-48.
- Huxley, Aldous. *The Perennial Philosophy*. New York: HarperCollins, 2004.
- Idris, Zulherman, and Desi Apriani. "Gender Roles and Kinship Systems in Indonesian Customary Law: Adaptation and Change." *Melayunesia Law Journal* 12, no. 1 (2020): 95–112.
- Ingold, Tim. *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. London: Routledge, 2011.
- Jalnuhubun, Julita M. at al. *Sejarah Agama Kristen Protestan di Desa Taar Kecamatan Pulau Dullah Selatan Kota Tual*. Jurnal Lani: Kajian Ilmu Sejarah dan Budaya, Vol. 5, Number 2, April 2024: 175-180.
- Jones, Richard. *Perennial Philosophy and the History of Mysticism*. Sophia no. 61 (vol. 3), 2022, 659-678.
- Katz, Steven T. *Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism*, in "Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis. Ed. by Steven T. Katz. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Kemaritiman dan Investasi. *Laporan Tahunan 2023*.

Jakarta: Kemenko Marves, 2023.

Laksono, Paskhalis Maria. *The Common Ground in The Kei Islands: Eggs from One Fish and One Bird*. Jogjakarta: Galang Press, 2002.

———. “The *Adat* Contributions for the Villages to Develop Independently: Cases from the Kei Islands, Souteast Maluku Regency.” *Humaniora*, volume 28, Number 3, October 2016, 254-264.

Levinas, Emmanuel. *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 1969.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *Structural Anthropology*. Terj. Claire Jacobson dan Brooke Grundfest Schoepf. New York: Basic Books, 1963.

———. *The Raw and the Cooked (Mythologies I)*. Terj. John dan Doreen Weightman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.

———. *The Savage Mind*. Terj. George Weidenfeld. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.

Liebner, Horst H. *Perahu-perahu Tradisional Nusantara*. Makassar: P3MP Unhas, 2002.

———. *Indigenous Concept of Orientation of South Sulawesi Sailors*. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 2005, Vol. 161, No. 2/3 (2005), pp. 269-317.

Lon, Yohanes S. “Bride-Wealth and the Respect for Women in Manggarai, Eastern Indonesia.” *Human Ecology* 49, no. 3 (2021): 315–328.

MacKnight, C.C. *The Study of Praus in the Indonesian Archipelago*. The Great Circle, Vol. 2, No. 2 (OCTOBER 1980): 117-128.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays*. London: Souvenir Press, 1948.

Manguin, Pierre-Yves. "The Introduction of Islam into Southeast Asia: From the 7th to the 15th Century," in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, ed. Nicholas Tarling. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

———. *The Southeast Asian Ship: An Historical Approach*. Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Sep., 1980): 266-276.

Masyithoh, Masyithoh, et al. "Customary Marriage as a Socio-Spiritual Institution in Indigenous Communities of Eastern Indonesia." *Walisongo Law Review* 10, no. 2 (2024): 130–145.

Moore, Sally Falk. "Law and Social Change: The Semi-Autonomous Social Field as an Appropriate Subject of Study." *Law & Society Review* 7, no. 4 (1973): 719–746.

Mosier, Richard D. *Perennialism in Education*. History of Education Journal, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Spring, 1951): 80-85.

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Knowledge and the Sacred*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989.

———. *The Need for a Sacred Science*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.

———. *Religion and the Order of Nature*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

- . *The Essential Frithjof Schuon*. Bloomington: World Wisdom Inc., 2005.
- . *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis in Modern Man*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1968.
- Ohoitumur, Johanis. *Moralitas Berbasis Perempuan*. In “Moralitas, Lentera Peradaban Dunia”, Seri Filsafat Atma Jaya: 31, edited by Andre Ata Ujan, et all. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2016.
- . *Beberapa Sikap Hidup Orang Kei, antara Ketahanan Diri dan Proses Perubahan*. “Tesis”. Manado: Sekolah Tinggi Seminari Pineleng – Manado, 1983.
- Oldmeadow, Harry. *Frithjof Schuon and the Perennial Philosophy*. Bloomington, Indiana: World Wisdom, Inc., 2010.
- Ostrom, Elinor. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Paden, William E. *Religious Worlds: The Comparative Study of Religion*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1988.
- Pires, Tomi. *Summa Oriental*. Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2016.
- Plato. *The Republic*. Trans. Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 1968.
- Plotinus. *The Six Enneads*, Volume 17. Great Books of The Western World, Stephen MacKenna and B. S. Page (trans.), Robert Maynard Hutchins (Ed.). Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1984.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1952.

Rahman, Fazlur. *The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975.

Refo, Ignasius S. *Dari Kapal menuju Masyarakat. Logos: Jurnal Pendidikan, Katekese, dan Pastoral*. [S. l.], v. 3, n. 1, 2014: 35–60.

———. *Perkawinan Tradisional Masyarakat Kei dalam Perspektif Teori Kekerabatan Claude Levi-Strauss*. STPAK St. Yohanes Penginjil Ambon, 2012. pp. 1-10.

Riedel, Gerard Fried. “Zesde Hoofdstu, De Keei – Of Ewaabu – Eilande,” in *De Sluik – En Kroesharige Rassen Tusschen Selebes en Papua*. ‘S-Gravenhage, Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1886.

Robertson, Roland. *Global Culture and Consciousness*, dalam “Global Culture: Consciousness and Connectivity”, edited by Roland Robertson and Didem Buhari-Gulmez. London and New York: Routledge, 2016.

Sanday, Peggy Reeves. *Women at the Center: Life in a Modern Matriarchy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002.

Schmitt, Charles B. *Perrenial Philosophy: From Agostino Steuco to Leibniz*. Journal of the History of Ideas, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 1966), 505-532.

Schuon, Frithjof. *The Transcendent Unity of Religions*. Terj. Peter Townsend. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1984.

———. *The Play of Masks*. Bloomington: World Wisdom, 1992.

———. "No Activity Without Truth." Dalam J. Needleman (Ed.), *The Sword of Gnosis: Metaphysics, Cosmology, Tradition, Symbolism*. London: Arkana, 1986.

- Shear, Jonathan. *On Mystical Experiences as Support for the Perennial Philosophy*.
Journal of the American Academy of Religion LXII/2: 319-342.
- Smith, Huston. *Is There A Perennial Philosophy?* Journal of the American Academy
of Religion, Volume LV, Issue 3, Fall 1987, 553–568.
- Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. *The Meaning and End of Religion*. New York: Macmillan,
1963.
- Sotillos, Samuel Bendeck. *A Wisdom that Transcends All Times and Places: An
Introduction to the Perennial Philosophy*. The Mountain Path 59 (1), 2022:
29-46.
- Strathern, Marilyn. *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with
Society in Melanesia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
- Tan, Mely G. "The Indonesian Chinese: Issues of Identity." *Journal of Southeast Asian
Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, 1991.
- Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge,
Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Thorburn, Craig C. *The Contesting Politics of the Kei Islands, Indonesia*, "Asia Pacific
Viewpoint, 2008, 45.
- Turner, Victor. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Chicago: Aldine,
1969.
- Vollenhoven, C. Van. *on Indonesian Adat Law: Selections from Het Adatrecht van
Nederlandsch-Indië*. 2 volumes. Vol. 1: 1918. Vol. 2: 1931. Edited by J. F.
Holleman. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff (Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-,
Land- en Volkenkunde Translation Series, 20, 1981.
- Walsh, R. *Human survival: A psycho-evolutionary analysis*, ReVision 16 (2), 1993,
87.