

and it was not good anymore

AND IT WAS NOT GOOD ANYMORE

THE ECOFEMINIST THEOLOGIES OF SALLIE MCFAGUE AND CATHERINE KELLER AND
THE DIALECTICAL THEOLOGY OF K.H. MISKOTTE.
A SYSTEMATIC-THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH.

EN ZIE, HET WAS NIET GOED MEER

DE ECOFEMINISTISCHE THEOLOGIE VAN SALLIE MCFAGUE EN CATHERINE KELLER EN
DE DIALECTISCHE THEOLOGIE VAN K.H. MISKOTTE.
EEN SYSTEMATISCH-THEOLOGISCH ONDERZOEK.

(with a summary in Dutch)

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Protestantse Theologische Universiteit te Utrecht,
op gezag van de rector, prof. dr. K. Spronk,
ingevolge het besluit van het college voor promoties
in het openbaar te verdedigen te Utrecht
op maandag 30 september 2024 om 15.30 uur

door

CAROLA ELISABETH DAHMEN

geboren op 13 juli 1985
te Wiesbaden

Promotor: prof. dr. H.E. Zorgdrager
Tweede promotor: prof. dr. R. H. Reeling Brouwer

Contents

I	• INTRODUCTION	9
1.1	Introduction.....	10
1.2	Climate activism and the ecological crisis	11
1.3	A theological problem with “nature”: Miskotte as one of the main interlocutors	15
1.4	Rethinking ecology in Christian theology.....	19
1.5	Origins of ecofeminism and ecofeminist theologies	21
1.6	The main conversation partners in this study: McFague, Keller, and Miskotte ..	22
1.7	Ecofeminism and Miskotte: a challenge.....	23
1.8	The concepts of “nature” and the “more-than-human nature”	26
1.9	Connecting theology and ecology: different types of theology	27
1.10	Methodology: Biography, life writing, and epistemology	29
1.11	Again the question of normativity	31
1.12	Academic and ecclesiastic context.....	32
1.13	Overview	34
II	• ECOLOGY, FEMINISM, AND ECOFEMINIST THEOLOGY	37
	Introduction: I am body.....	37
2.1	Ecological thinking as a background for ecofeminist theology.....	40
2.1.1	The endlessly cited White-thesis.....	40
2.1.2	Beginnings of ecotheology: John Cobb and the process thought	43
2.1.3	More radical ecological thinking.....	46
2.2	Embodiment and transcendence in feminist theology.....	48
2.2.1	The problem with the body	48
2.2.2	Everyday life and transcendence	51
2.3	Ecofeminist theology: ecology, women, and God	53
2.3.1	An ecofeminist foremother: Rosemary Radford Ruether	54
2.3.2	Global ecofeminism	57
2.3.3	Dorothee Sölle: “Leib” theology.....	59
2.3.4	Deep incarnation	61
2.3.5	Moltmann’s (almost) ecofeminist creation theology.....	62
2.3.6	Ivone Gebara: Trinity and evil	65
2.3.7	Mother Earth, Postcolonial and Liberation Theologies.....	68
2.3.8	The importance of the land	69
2.3.9	Spirituality and the strength facing structural sin.....	70
2.4.	Conclusion.....	72

III • SALLIE McFAGUE AND THE BODY OF GOD	75
Introduction.....	75
3.1 A theologian's embodiment: a biographical approach to McFague's theology	76
3.1.1 Sallie McFague's youth	77
3.1.2 A young professional.....	79
3.1.3 Becoming an ecofeminist theologian	81
3.1.4 At home in Canada.....	84
3.2. Metaphorical theology	87
3.2.1 Idols, symbols, and metaphors.....	88
3.2.2 Metaphorical theology.....	91
3.3 The Body of God	95
3.3.1 A new view on reality: the organic model.....	96
3.3.2 McFague's common creation story.....	97
3.3.3 Constructing embodied transcendence	103
3.3.4 God's face.....	103
3.3.5 The spirit as breath of God.....	107
3.3.6 The scope of incarnation.....	111
3.3.7 The shape of incarnation.....	113
3.3.8 God and evolution	115
3.3.9 The "dark" side of the body	117
3.3.10 Sacramentality and Martin Buber	118
3.3.11 Negative sacraments.....	120
3.4 Conclusion.....	122
 IV • CATHERINE KELLER AND DIFFERENCE FROM THE DEEP	 125
Introduction.....	125
4.1 Catherine Keller's personal and theological entanglements	128
4.1.1 The restless spinner: Keller's education	128
4.1.2 The radical poet: Theopoetics	130
4.1.3 A monster of hermeneutics	132
4.1.4 The rooted traveler: Transdisciplinary approaches	136
4.2 Face of the Deep: Genesis 1:2	139
4.2.1 Creation out of the depth.....	139
4.2.2 The problem with the creatio ex nihilo.....	140
4.2.3 Genesis 1 and the Enuma Elish.....	142
4.2.4 Ex nihilo and Genesis 1:2	144
4.2.5 A special case of tehomophobic theology: Karl Barth and Genesis 1:2	146
4.2.6 To love the tehom in reading Genesis 1	148
4.2.7 Voices of the Amsterdam School: The hidden narrative of Genesis 1:2....	151
4.2.8 Concluding on Genesis 1:2.....	157

4.3	Apophatic pantheism	158
4.3.1	The depth of God, the difference of God, and the Spirit	159
4.3.2	Immanence, transcendence, and apophatic pantheism	162
4.3.3	Evil and sin: the “dark” side of creation?	165
4.3.4	Keller’s struggle now and then	168
4.4	Recapitulating	173
V	• “AT THE BREAST OF NATURE” – MISKOTTE, “NATURE,” AND CREATION	175
5.1	Introduction to Miskotte’s life and theology	178
5.1.1	Miskotte’s embodiment	178
5.1.2	Judaism, Old Testament, and better resistance	183
5.1.3	Miskotte is not Barth	187
5.2	The delight of “nature” and “creation”	187
5.3	The dreadfulness of “nature” and “creation”	203
5.4	Divine providence and the dreadful “nature”	210
5.5	Conclusion	217
VI	• “FAITHFUL TO THE EARTH” – PAGANISM, GENDER, AND “NATURE” IN MISKOTTE’S THINKING	219
6.1	Miskotte under fire: Kune Biezeveld	220
6.2	<i>Edda en Thora</i>	227
6.2.1	<i>Edda en Thora</i> as a work of resistance	228
6.2.2	The scope of <i>Edda en Thora</i>	230
6.2.3	“Nature” in the Edda	235
6.2.3a	“Nature” as chaos	235
6.2.3b	“Nature” as eternal becoming	237
6.2.3c	“Nature” as fate	239
6.2.3d	Following the natural instincts	240
6.2.3e	Losing oneself in “nature”	241
6.2.4	Concluding on <i>Edda en Thora</i>	243
6.3	<i>Het gewone leven</i>	245
6.3.1	Introducing <i>Het gewone leven</i>	246
6.3.2	The “daily” life	248
6.3.3	The “natural” life and the countryside	249
6.3.4	The enchanting beauty of “nature”	251
6.3.5	“Nature” and anthropocentrism	252
6.3.6	The natural and gender	255
6.3.7	New insights: Miskotte’s view on female ministers and “gender-in-relation”	258

6.3.8 The “spiritual” life	262
6.3.9 Spiritual life and gender	263
6.3.10 “Simple” life	266
6.3.11 The ordinary life as the good, the reconciled life in creation	269
6.4 Conclusion	272
VII • INCARNATIONAL STRUGGLES	277
7.1 A meditation	277
7.2 A crisis in the night	278
7.3 A matter of incarnation	281
7.4 The cosmic scope of incarnation	284
7.5 Horizon of all flesh	287
7.6 Queer paganism	292
7.7 Cosmic salvation	293
7.8 A last imaginative landscape: The song of resistance	299
SUMMARY	303
SAMENVATTING	314
BIBLIOGRAPHY	327
APPENDIX	
- Citations in original Dutch	347
Chapter 4	347
Chapter 5	347
Chapter 6	357
- Index of persons	361
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	367
CURRICULUM VITAE	370

CHAPTER I
Introduction

Remember Cassandra?

Daughter of Priam, King of Troy, back in the old Greek days

Apollo, one of the gods in town, asked her to share his bed
 She accepted the offer but instead of laying down her head
 She asked him for the gift of prophecy in return
 Apollo fixed it right away and came to collect what he had earned
 But then she turned him down and walked away

Filled with rage he summoned her asking for just one last kiss
 Cassandra offered him her lips in order not to make it worse
 But when his burning lips touched hers he turned his gift into a curse
 By spitting in her mouth he ensured that she would not be heard
 That her predictions would be mocked that no-one would believe her words

And so it happened that Cassandra warned time and time again
 Of future ill, the fall of Troy, but all her efforts were in vain
 Though her predictions were all true she could not prevent
 The Trojan horse from riding in killing her dad and all his men
 Who had laughed at her and called her names: prophet of doom declared insane

You sense the wind of change Cassandra
 Long before the others do
 How come we laugh away your words
 And simply turn our backs on you

If you had kept your promise
 Would we have listened
 If you had kept your promise Cassandra
 Would we have listened to you
 If you had kept your promise

Remember Cassandra?

(Song by Nynke Laverman)¹

1 Nynke Laverman, "Cassandra," accessed October 19, 2023, <https://nynkelaverman.nl/song/cassandra>. From the album and theater performance "Plant", 2021.

1.1 Introduction

In 2019, they popped up on many German cars: the bumper stickers “FUCK YOU GRETA.” That year, Greta Thunberg spoke at the United Nations in New York, where she accused the world leaders of stealing the future of the generations to come: “How dare you?” she cried out. The young Swedish climate activist became world famous through her school strike that led to the worldwide demonstrations of “Fridays for Future” and her trip by sailboat to New York to avoid traveling by plane. Next to enthusiasm, people reacted with hate, denigration, and sexual harassment,² public reactions often seen in polarized debates.

I hadn’t expected, however, that a professor of systematic theology would share in the (sexual) harassment of Greta Thunberg. In 2019, the Lutheran theologian Ralf Frisch from Nuremberg, who calls himself a Barthian, published an online article “Zwischen Klimahysterie und Klimahäresie. Kleines Theologisches Spiel mit dem Feuer,” expressing his anger with the “climate hysteria” personified in the Swedish junior.³ As an illustration, he considers sticking a FUCK YOU GRETA bumper sticker on his car, right next to the bumper sticker “On the road in the name of the Lord.”⁴ Without the sexual connotation, he asserts, he sympathizes with the verbal assault of the “icon of climate apocalypse,” “the prophetess of the climate god.” For him, Greta Thunberg personifies a hysterical-cheerful and religious expectation of the end of times. He writes that belief in God in German society has vanished, and the evidence of the ecological crisis raises so much fear that pressure to behave ecologically is psychologically enforced. He is of the opinion that the climate movement must be viewed with the suspicion of ideology. For him, the moralism of the climate movement carries signs of heresy by asking humanity to save the Earth in a totalitarian manner without considering societal limitations. Frisch finds the climate movement to be absolutist in its principles, prone to violence, and lacking humor. He certainly pleads to care for the climate, but the debate should be disconnected from eschatological content, and most of all be embedded in the trust in God’s providence. He concludes that God’s mercy and grace should be embraced to prevent social coldness that divides those who can afford

2 *I Am Greta*, Film, Documentary (Prime Video, 2020).

3 Ralf Frisch, “Zwischen Klimahysterie und Klimahäresie. Kleines theologisches Spiel mit dem Feuer,” *Zeitzeichen*, 2019, <https://zeitzeichen.net/node/7759>. (accessed November 14, 2023)

4 “Unterwegs im Auftrag des Herrn.”

ecological consciousness and those who cannot. In the end, the FUCK YOU GRETA bumper sticker stays on Frisch's kitchen table, as he wants to provoke, not to "cast out the devil with Beelzebub."⁵

Frisch's provocation is condemned by German ecotheologians mainly because he accuses the climate movement of fearmongering.⁶ He seems to fear a religious revival of paganism in the climate movement that reminds him of the "totalitäre Urzustände" of Nazism. However, he seems to be fearless with regard to how climate change might affect "social coldness" in the future. But mostly, I think he burns his hand with his "theological fire play" because of his choice to focus his critique on a teenage girl using unacceptable sexual connotations. Moreover, the term he uses, *climate hysteria* is also problematic. Not only is it used by right-wing extremists,⁷ but the term *hysteria* – originally used in the *Corpus Hippocraticum* around the 5th century BC to indicate a mental disorder in women that should be cured by sexual intercourse⁸ – serves to feminize, sexualize, and humiliate climate activism.

1.2 Climate activism and the ecological crisis

Greta Thunberg, the declared icon and prophetess of climate activism, does not just share her personal opinion but bases her activism on a growing body of scientific evidence. This evidence supports the idea that the planet is currently experiencing climate changes that are leading us out of

-
- 5 Frisch, "Zwischen Klimahysterie und Klimahäresie. Kleines theologisches Spiel mit dem Feuer."
 - 6 Ruth Gütter et al., eds., *Zukunft angesichts der ökologischen Krise? Theologie neu denken*, e-Book (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2022), 7. Hans-Gerhard Klatt, "Mit der Angst gegen die Angst," *Junge Kirche* 82, no. 4 (2021): 11–13.
 - 7 Ronny Zasowk, "Echter Umweltschutz statt Klimahysterie!," npd, 2019, <https://npd.de/2019/03/echter-umweltschutz-statt-klimahysterie/>. (accessed November 14, 2023) Dieter Stein, ed., *Klima-Hysterie. Beiträge und Interviews zu einer neuen Zivilreligion* (Berlin: Junge Freiheit, 2019), 9–10. The arguments used by the authors from "Junge Freiheit," for example the lack of humor or the climate movement as an apocalyptic sect with Greta Thunberg as icon, are similar to Frisch's arguments. "Junge Freiheit" is seen as a right-wing extremist journal platform. Stephan Braun and Ute Vogt, eds., *Die Wochenzeitung "Junge Freiheit". Kritische Analysen zu Programmatik, Inhalten, Autoren und Kunden* (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaft, 2007).
 - 8 Cecilia Tasca, Mariangela Rapetti, and Bianca Fadda, "Women and Hysteria in the History of Mental Health," *Clin Pract Epidemiol Ment Health* 8 (2012): 110–19, <https://doi.org/10.2174/1745017901208010110>. Epub 2012 Oct 19. PMID: 23115576; PMCID: PMC3480686.

the climate stability of the Holocene and into a new geological epoch that some have labeled the *Anthropocene*. This term refers to the human impact on the planet, specifically through anthropogenic emissions that are causing the climate change.⁹ The concept of Anthropocene, however, is controversial, since not all humans are causing the same level of damage.¹⁰ The field of Anthropocene studies is criticized for a tendency to universalize the human being and disregard racial and colonial dimensions.¹¹ Additionally, the focus on humanity's responsibility to solve the problem can also suggest that human technology – which some believe has caused the issue in the first place – is the only solution in the Anthropocene epoch.¹² The human-centeredness or anthropocentrism which comes with the concept of Anthropocene might just be the very cause of the anthropogenic ecological damage.

There is an overwhelming scientific consensus that human activity is the primary cause of climate change. Since 1988, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has been publishing regular reports that inform governments and negotiators about the origins, consequences, and potential solutions and adaptations to climate change. These reports are a meta-analysis of research conducted by scientists from all over the world. While some have criticized IPCC reports for being unreliable or exaggerating the consequences of climate change,¹³ others believe that the IPCC is too conservative in its estimates.¹⁴ However, the reports are widely regarded as a trustworthy scientific source. Therefore, I mainly rely on the IPCC to understand the science of climate change. In recent years, the IPCC reports have become increasingly concerning, with the 2021 report's introduction stating:

-
- 9 Paul Crutzen, "Geology of Mankind: The Anthropocene," *Nature*, no. 415 (2002): 23.
 - 10 Jaap Tielbeke, *Een beter milieu begint niet bij jezelf [A Better Environment Does not Start with You]* (Amsterdam: Das Mag, 2020), chap. 1.1.
 - 11 Kathryn Yusoff, "The Inhumanities," *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 111, no. 3 (2021): 663–76.
 - 12 Catherine Keller, *Political Theology of the Earth. Our Planetary Emergency and the Struggle for a New Public* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 81–82.
 - 13 "Bronnen klimaatrapport niet betrouwbaar [Sources Climate Report Not Reliable]," *Trouw*, January 31, 2010, sec. Frontpage.
 - 14 Ann Henderson-Sellers and Kendal McGuffie, *The Future of the World's Climate* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2012), 35. Brian Tokar, *Toward Climate Justice. Perspectives on the Climate Crisis and Social Change* (Porsgrunn: New Compass Press, 2010), loc. 382. Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything. Capitalism vs. The Climate* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014).

It is unequivocal that human activities have heated our climate. Recent changes are rapid, intensifying, and unprecedented over centuries to thousands of years. With each additional increment of warming, these changes will become more prominent, resulting in long-lasting, irreversible implications [...] unless there are deep reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions, the goal of limiting warming well below 2°C and close to 1.5°C will be out of reach. The science is unequivocal, the changes are unprecedented, and there is no more time for delay.¹⁵

The populations of plants, fish, birds, and land animals are dwindling, and insects – which play a crucial role in the survival of other animals, including humans – are rapidly declining.¹⁶ The IPCC scientists have issued warnings about climate change's current and future repercussions. Greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane, released into the air by, among others, human industrial and agricultural activities, have caused the average global surface temperature to rise by approximately 1.1°C at the time of writing compared to the period between 1850 to 1900.¹⁷ This temperature rise has led to the melting of Arctic ice and the Greenland Ice Sheet and making snowfall rare in the Northern Hemisphere. Furthermore, rising sea levels are putting small islands and lower coastal regions in peril. The ocean, full of plastic particles, is experiencing increased acidification, and oxygen levels are declining due to the ingestion of carbon dioxide. Hunting, fishing, pollution, and human expansion are all contributing factors to the problem of biodiversity loss. Land is becoming increasingly infertile and uninhabitable for humans and animals, and regions are afflicted by heat waves and fires.¹⁸ Climate change is the most pressing ecological issue, but it is not the sole one affecting the well-being of humans and ecosystems. Nitrogen disposition, decline of water and ground quality, nuclear threats, and toxic pollution by pesticides all endanger life on Earth. Human intervention in ecosystems has had advantages

15 V. Masson-Delmotte et al., eds., *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (Cambridge: University Press, 2021).

16 Ibid.

17 H. Lee and J. Romero, eds., "IPCC, 2023: Summary for Policymakers," *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II, and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, 2023, 4.

18 Masson-Delmotte et al., *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*.

for some, such as food supply and health care, but that does not change the fact that it is now threatening life on Earth.

The theologian Frisch is critical of the climate movement for its fear-mongering. Might he have a point? The scientific community has issued clear warnings about climate change and other ecological issues, but interpreting the consequences of these issues can be difficult and lead to controversies. Some people accuse climate activists of exaggerating the possible outcomes.¹⁹ For instance, the use of the term “sixth mass extinction” is controversial. In Greta Thunberg’s *Climate Book*, Elizabeth Kolbert speaks of the “sixth mass extinction at hand.”²⁰ According to others, the sixth mass extinction is defined as a loss of biodiversity exceeding 60%. Climate change may “only” cause a “minor mass extinction,” but not the sixth mass extinction which could be caused by events like a nuclear war.²¹

As a layperson in the field of ecology, it is very difficult to assess the possible future consequences of climate change. However, is it really an issue of whether it is a *sixth mass extinction* or whether it is a *minor mass extinction*? Pointing to the extinction of animals, scientists make clear that life on Earth is in danger. Moreover, there has been a recent increase in extreme weather with fires, heat waves, droughts and floods causing many deaths. There are societal dangers that may arise if land becomes uninhabitable, food shortages emerge, and natural disasters disrupt communities. This is not only scary, but it shakes one of the basic principles of Christian faith: that God is a God of life. The fact that life on Earth, including human life, is seriously threatened by climate change and other ecological issues confronts and challenges theological thinking.²²

19 Michael Shellenberger, *Apocalypse Never. Why Environmental Alarmism Hurts Us All* (New York: Harper, 2020), chap. 4. “The Sixth Extinction Is Canceled.”

20 Elizabeth Kolbert, “Civilization and Extinction,” in *The Climate Book*, ed. Greta Thunberg (London: Allen Lane, 2022).

21 K. Kaiho, “Extinction Magnitude of Animals in the near Future,” *Sci Rep* 12, no. 1 (2022): 19593, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-23369-5>. PMID: 36418340; PMCID: PMC9684554. Kaiho warns of a “minor mass extinction” due to global warming, deforestation, and pollution, but he argues that a rate of 60% extinction is at the moment only thinkable with the scenario of nuclear war.

22 Catherine Keller presents the extinction of humanity as a possibility: Catherine Keller, *Facing Apocalypse. Climate, Democracy, and Other Last Chances* (New York: Orbis Books, 2021).

1.3 A theological problem with “nature”: Miskotte as one of the main interlocutors

Environmental “prophets and prophetesses” have been sounding the alarm since the 1960s and 1970s. The Club of Rome’s report *The Limits to Growth*²³ is a prominent example of such early warnings. The discussions surrounding the “environment” have grown increasingly divisive and have had an impact on theology and churches.

Many theologians and ecclesiastic initiatives are taking the ecological crisis very seriously. In the Netherlands, for example, the ecumenical movement inspired by the conciliar process of “Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation” was influential in the late 1980s and early 90s.²⁴ More recently, the “Green Churches” movement²⁵ has emerged as another significant effort. Additionally, an increasing number of theologians and Christians are taking part in the climate movement “Extinction Rebellion.” For them, protesting against the destruction of the “good creation” is a way to embrace God’s mercy and grace.²⁶

However, the concepts of “creation” and “nature” are theologically contested. Dutch ecofeminist theologian Trees van Montfoort notes a Protestant resistance against a “greening” of theology and “nature” spirituality. She blames the theologies of Karl Barth and Kornelis Heiko Miskotte for contributing to a suspicious and negative view of “nature” and creation, as well as the Western worldview in general.²⁷ Barthian Frisch’s anger towards the climate movement fits into this picture.

Barth was firm in his rejection of “natural theology.” As a student and young minister, Barth witnessed the moral failure of his liberal teachers who justified the First and the Second World Wars in the name of God. Hence, Barth considered experiencing God in “nature,” society, the human soul, and

23 Donella H. Meadows et al., *The Limits to Growth. A Report for THE CLUB OF ROME’S Project on the Predicament of Mankind* (Washington: A Potomac Associates Book, 1972).

24 Catharina J.M. Halkes, *...en alles zal worden herschapen. Gedachten over de heelwording van de schepping in het spanningsveld tussen natuur en cultuur [...and all will be Recreated. Thoughts about the Healing of Creation in the Field of Tension between Nature and Culture]* (Baarn: Ten Have, 1989).

25 “Groene Kerken [Green Churches],” accessed October 23, 2023, <https://www.groene-kerken.nl>.

26 Rozemarijn van ’t Einde, *Rebelleren voor het leven. Een dominee in actie voor klimaatrechtvaardigheid [Rebel for Life. A Minister in Action for Climate Justice]* (Utrecht: Kok, 2023).

27 Trees Van Montfoort, *Groene Theologie [Green Theology]* (Middelburg: Skandalon, 2019), 147–54. Trees van Montfoort, *Green Theology. An Eco-feminist and Ecumenical Perspective*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2022.

Nazism's "pagan" religiosity as corrupt. He contested the idea of "German Christians" of a general revelation and the glorification of the German nation that is based in "nature" and regarded as the natural creational order.²⁸ He believed that "nature" does not reveal God but only manifests *Volkstum*. He also believed that "nature" is not equivalent to creation, and knowing God as Creator is not self-evident. Instead of natural theology, Barth's "dialectical theology" emphasizes the qualitative difference between God and the world. That results in a radical criticism of human culture.²⁹ According to Barth, God is the *Ganz Andere*, who can only be known through faith in Christ.³⁰

A theological fear of overvaluing "nature" and its association with National Socialism can also be observed in the work of the Dutch interpreter of Barth, Miskotte. Miskotte will be one of my main interlocutors in this study. In his prophetic pamphlet *Edda en Thora* that he wrote just before the German invasion of the Netherlands in 1939, Miskotte warns about the "pagan" feelings of unity with "nature." According to Miskotte, feeling closely connected to the universe can lead to aggressiveness.³¹

Miskotte's suspicion of "nature" in the context of National Socialism was influential also after the war and is evident in the so-called "Amsterdam School" tradition. Frans Breukelman's biblical work is also noteworthy in this context. Breukelman's structural analysis of Genesis led him to the insight that Genesis 5:1a – "This is the book of the *toledot* of Adam, the human being" – is the key to understanding the rest of Genesis. According to Breukelman, the structure of Genesis is based on the *toledot*, the generations,³² and he suggests that the order of generations should start with the particularity of Israel, followed by humanity, and lastly the generations of heaven and earth.³³ While Genesis 1 begins with the story of creation, this structural analysis proposes an understanding of humanity (and the cosmos) through the lens of

28 Wilken Veen, *Collaboratie en Onderwerping. Het Duitse protestantisme in 1933* [*Collaboration and Submission. German Protestantism in 1933*] (Gorinchem: Narratio, 1991), 209–16.

29 Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief 1922*, 21st ed. (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2019). See for example the passage on the "judge" Rom. 2:3–5.

30 Mirjam Elbers, "Barth," in *25 Eeuwen Theologie. Teksten/Toelichtingen* [*25 Centuries of Theology. Texts/Illustrations*], ed. Laurens Ten Kate and Marcel Poorthuis (Amsterdam: Boom, 2017), 619–24.

31 K. H. Miskotte, *Edda en Thora. Verzameld Werk 7* [*Edda and Torah. Collected Works 7*], 3rd ed. (Kampen: Kok, 1983), 77, 98.

32 Martin Kessler and Karel Deurloo, *Commentary on Genesis. The Book of Beginnings* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), loc. 106.

33 F. H. Breukelman, *Bijbelse Theologie. Het eerstelingschap van Israël* [*Biblical Theology. Israel's Notion of Firstling*] (Kampen: Kok, 1992), 9, 11.

Samenvatting

Het onderzoek met de titel “En zie, het was niet goed meer. De ecofeministische theologie van Sallie McFague en Catherine Keller en de dialectische theologie van K. H. Miskotte. Een systematisch-theologisch onderzoek” heeft als doel de volgende onderzoeksvraag te beantwoorden: Hoe zouden we – gegeven het feit dat we geconfronteerd worden met de bedreiging van het leven op aarde – de relatie tussen God en de meer-dan-menselijke natuur moeten beschrijven en opvatten, gebaseerd op een geënceneerd gesprek tussen enerzijds de ecofeministische theologen McFague en Keller en anderzijds de dialectische theoloog Miskotte?

In hoofdstuk 1 wordt het onderzoeksveld afgebakend, de belangrijke gesprekspartners en de onderzoeksmethode gepresenteerd. Het probleem dat tot de onderzoeksvraag leidt, bestaat uit een ecologische en theologische component die met elkaar verbonden zijn. Wat de ecologie betreft: er is een overweldigende wetenschappelijke consensus dat antropogene emissie klimaatverandering veroorzaakt. De consequentie voor het leven op aarde is zeer zorgwekkend: extreem weer, verlies van biodiversiteit en het uitsterven van dieren. Klimaatverandering gaat gepaard met andere milieubedreigingen, zoals de dreiging van een nucleaire ramp. De aantasting van ecosystemen brengt het leven op aarde, inclusief de mensheid, in gevaar. Deze ecologische bedreiging staat op gespannen voet met een basisprincipe van het christendom, namelijk dat God een God van leven is.

Eco-theologie werd ontwikkeld in de jaren ‘60 en ‘70 van de vorige eeuw om zulke ecologische zorgen in het theologische discours te brengen. Een bijzondere tak van eco-theologie is ecofeministische theologie, die ecologische vragen vanuit een kritisch feministisch perspectief benadert. Ecofeministische theologie bekritiseert het hiërarchisch-dualistische denken dat niet alleen mensen van de “natuur” (een betere term is “meer-dan-menselijke natuur”) scheidt en vrouwen met de aarde en de immanente dimensie van het leven identificeert, maar ook God als geheel anders ziet dan het leven op aarde. Ecofeministische theologie brengt de vraag naar ecogerechtigheid naar voren en maakt duidelijk dat ecologische schade vaak disproportioneel de meest kwetsbare mensen treft. Vandaar dat ecofeministische theologie ook de

ongelijkheid op basis van gender, ras, socio-economische status, geaardheid en gezondheid aan de kaak stelt. De protestantse theologen Sallie McFague en Catherine Keller zijn belangrijke stemmen in de ecofeministische theologie. McFague heeft het invloedrijke model van de wereld als Gods lichaam ontwikkeld en daarbij de nadruk gelegd op goddelijke, immanente lichamelijkeheid. Keller heeft goddelijke lichamelijkeheid verder ontwikkeld met proces-, post-moderne en post-koloniale invloeden die haar tot een theologie brengen die apofatisch pantheïsme omhelst.

Terwijl eco/feministische theologie ecologische vragen zeer ernstig neemt, zijn er andere theologische tradities die de ecologische crisis niet zo serieus lijken te nemen. De Duitse theoloog Ralf Frisch heeft onlangs de aandacht getrokken door het provocatieve verwijt, dat klimaatactivisten angstzaaiers zijn. Frisch baseert zijn argumenten op het werk van Karl Barth die, in zijn tijd, de “natuurlijke theologie” afwees. Voor Barth en zijn Nederlandse vriend Kornelis Heiko Miskotte is de afwijzing van natuurlijke theologie en heidense gevoelens van eenheid met de “natuur” verbonden met hun profetische oppositie tegen de ideologie van het Nationaalsocialisme. In deze dialectische theologie moet God de geheel andere blijven, omdat de ervaring van God in de “natuur” tot de openbaring van *Volkstum* zou leiden. Terwijl er in deze theologische traditie ook aandacht is voor dieren- en milieubescherming, is de argwaan tegen de “natuur” en de “schepping” evident in het werk van Frans Breukelman en de zogenaamde “Amsterdamse School”, die beïnvloed was door Miskotte. De Nederlandse feministische theologe Kune Biezeveld heeft met haar kritiek op Miskotte erop gewezen, dat zo’n benadering tekortschiet in de waardering van de schepping en het dagelijkse leven. Biezeveld werd zelf ook beïnvloed door Miskotte, maar haar kritiek suggereert dat ecofeministische theologie en Miskotte’s theologie lijnrecht tegenover elkaar staan.

Miskotte is een belangrijke theoloog voor de Nederlandse protestantse traditie en zijn ambivalente kijk op “natuur” en “schepping” zijn problematisch in de context van ecologische bedreiging. Het theologische probleem met “natuur” is in Miskotte’s geval in het bijzonder interessant omdat hij bekend staat om zijn intense liefde voor de “natuur”. Dit onderzoek gaat na in hoeverre Miskotte’s theologie zou kunnen bijdragen aan een ontwikkeling van een theologie die uitgedaagd is door de ecologische bedreiging en in hoeverre het mogelijk is om ecofeministische theologie in een constructieve dialoog met de theologie van Miskotte te brengen, ook al lijken deze twee protestantse tradities lijnrecht tegenover elkaar te staan, in het bijzonder wat de vraag naar de verhouding tussen God en de meer-dan-menselijke natuur betreft.

Om de onderzoeksvraag te beantwoorden wordt een dialoog geënceneerd tussen de ecofeministische en dialectische theologie. De ecofeministische theologieën van McFague en Keller verschillen van de dialectische theologie. Het gaat om verschillende typen theologie: de benadering van Schrift en traditie en de integratie van het ecologisch denken zijn anders. Om deze verschillende stemmen met elkaar in een constructieve dialoog te brengen, heeft de auteur voor de methode van “life writing” gekozen. Deze methode gebruikt bewust biografische perspectieven en ervaringen als epistemologisch gereedschap om de theologieën van McFague, Keller, Miskotte en Biezeveld te benaderen. Ook past de auteur zelf “life writing” toe door over haar biografische achtergrond te schrijven. Zo’n reflectief perspectief correspondeert met een cultureel perspectief, dat de dominantie van de “Westerse” theologie bekritiseert. In deze studie worden culturele perspectieven benadrukt die niet de geprivilegieerde Europese theoloog representeren, om zo de geënceneerde dialoog te verdiepen. Als normatief criterium voor de geënceneerde dialoog is het voorstel van Serene Jones gebruikt, die het heeft over een imaginair landschap. Met een ecofeministische bril kijkt de onderzoeker naar de dialoog, maar ook naar de Schrift, niet om een nieuw dogma te construeren, maar om de relatie tussen God en de meer-dan-menselijke natuur in de protestantse traditie opnieuw te doordenken.

Hoofdstuk 2 vormt een beschrijvende achtergrond voor de theologieën van McFague en Keller en bereidt de geënceneerde dialoog met Miskotte voor. De focus ligt op lichamelijke als een belangrijk aspect van de ecofeministische theologie, waarbij ook aandacht is voor de vraag van transcendentie in de eco/feministische theologie, die onverenigbaar lijkt met Miskotte’s theologie.

Het hoofdstuk bevat drie delen: eco-theologie, feministische theologie en ecofeministische theologie. Het eerste gedeelte van hoofdstuk 2 gaat over de Lynn-White these, die een belangrijke impuls voor de eco-theologie heeft gevormd vanwege de aanklacht van antropocentrisme aan het adres van het christendom. De these wordt geëvalueerd door Gerrit Singgih vanuit een Indonesische context. Hij waarschuwt theologen om niet-Westerse religies niet te romantiseren. Om de invloed van procestheologie op de ecofeministische theologie in kaart te brengen, wordt Kellers mentor John Cobb Jr. geïntroduceerd. Hij baseert zich op de filosofie van Alfred North Whitehead, die de verwevenheid van alles met alles, God inbegrepen, onderstreept en over God denkt als de lokstem van het universum die uitnodigt voor nieuwe processen. Kellers theologie, maar ook McFague’s model van de wereld als Gods lichaam, is gebaseerd op proces-denken. Veel ecofeministische theologie is beïnvloed door proces-denken, maar er zijn ook