

## SUFISTIC LITERATURE AND THE SPIRITUAL ANXIETY OF MODERN MAN: A Hermeneutic Reading of Meditation Poems By Abdul Hadi W.M.

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### *Keywords:*

Sufistic Literature;  
Abdul Hadi W.M.,  
Meditation Poetry,  
Henry Corbin,  
Rudolf Otto;

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#### *Article history:*

Received 2025-12-05

Revised 2025-12-25

Accepted 2025-12-30

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### ABSTRACT

Literature serves not only as a medium of aesthetic expression, but also as a space of transcendental experience that allows humans to experience and reflect on their relationship with the Divine. This article examines the Meditation poem by Abdul Hadi W.M. as a representation of sufistic literature in the context of modern Indonesian literature. This research aims to uncover how poetry presents a spiritual experience through symbols, imagination, and poetic language that is visionary. The approach used is Henry Corbin's sufistic hermeneutics, especially the concept of imaginalist mundus (the imaginary realm), as well as Rudolf Otto's religious phenomenology of numinous experience as *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. The results of the analysis show that Meditation poetry constructs a symbolic space that cannot be reduced to a mere rational allegory, but rather represents the spiritual reality experienced existentially. Symbols such as light, birds, holy cities, lions, worms, and the sacrament of nothingness serve as imaginary images that present mortal experience, ontological mortality, and the search for divine essence. This poem displays the tension between the search for God in formal religious institutions and the discovery of God as an inner reality that resides in man. Thus, Meditation shows that literature can be an effective contemplative medium in responding to the spiritual anxieties of modern man. Poetry is not merely an aesthetic text, but a space of religious experience that connects the empirical world with a transcendental dimension. This research confirms Abdul Hadi W.M.'s position as a modern Sufi poet who continues the tradition of Sufistic literature in the context of contemporary Indonesian culture..

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Literature does not solely function as a vehicle for aesthetic expression, but also as a medium for conveying philosophical, ethical, and spiritual values. In the dynamics of modern human culture, literature has a strategic role because it not only reflects social reality, but also provides a space for contemplation that is transcendental. Through symbolic and imaginative language, literature is able to present an inner experience that goes beyond intellectual entertainment, while inviting readers to reflect on the meaning of life more deeply. In this context, literature has become one of the important mediums for modern humans to bridge empirical experience with a spiritual dimension. (Manshur, 2012, hlm. 3)

Modern Indonesian literature began to emerge around the beginning of the 20th century, with an important milestone in the formation of Balai Pustaka, the colonial government's publishing body that facilitated the birth of more modern Malay-language novels, poems, and short stories. Writers such as Marah Rusli (Siti Nurbaya), Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, and Chairil Anwar began to break the chain of oral tradition and create works that were more personal, realistic, and critical of the social conditions of society. The language used is closer to everyday conversation, no longer tied to classical standard rules, and open to experimentation with form and meaning. (Erowati, 2011, hlm. 15) If classical literature emphasizes many perfect characters, fate-determined, and moral messages that are universal, modern literature is more daring to raise complex characters, real life, and social problems such as poverty, injustice, love, and individual inner turmoil. The themes are much more diverse, ranging from city life, criticism of the government, to the search for identity. The form is also freer, such as poetry no longer has to be patterned in rhymes or poems, novels and short stories can take any point of view, and dramas can depict the struggle of modern humans with all their complexities. In addition, modern literature can also be very personal, each writer has his own style, no longer representing a collective voice like in classical literature. (Erowati, 2011, hlm. 15; Rismawati, 2017, hlm. 81)

Among the various styles and schools in literature, Sufism occupies a distinctive position because it departs from a deep inner appreciation of the essence of life and man's relationship with God. The presence of sufistic values in literary works shows that the spiritual dimension can be harmoniously integrated with the beauty of language. Sufistic literature not only offers an aesthetic experience, but also shapes the religious and spiritual consciousness of its readers through symbols, metaphors, as well as profound emotional expressions. In Islamic religious practice, Sufism is a spiritual approach that emphasizes personal closeness between humans and God. This closeness is not always expressed through rational theological discourse, but through inner experiences that are often symbolic and aesthetic. Therefore, literary works, especially poetry, became an effective medium for Sufis to express Divine love, longing, fear, and even total surrender to God. Language in Sufistic literature serves not only as a means of communication, but also as a means of transforming spiritual experience into a universally lived form. (Risdayah dkk., 2019, hlm. 85)

Through literature, especially poetry, complex spiritual experiences can be conveyed in a subtle and nuanced way. This makes literature a relevant Sufistic space of expression, especially in responding to the spiritual anxieties of modern society. The theme of God's existence and man's relationship with the Transcendent is the center of attention in Sufi literary works. Sufi poets not only emphasized the beauty of diction, but also inserted the values of Sufism as the main substance of their work. With its expressive and aesthetic nature, literature is an effective medium to convey Islamic teachings in a persuasive and reflective manner. The tradition of Sufistic literature has actually developed since the classical period of Islam, as seen in the works of figures such as Jalaluddin Rumi, Rabiah al-Adawiyah, and Ibn 'Arabi. Their poetry and prose are a means of expressing longing for God, spiritual journeys, and the search for meaning in life. However, in the context of modern Indonesian literature, sufistic values undergo a distinctive transformation process. Indonesian writers did not simply reproduce classical forms, but processed them in different social, cultural, and historical contexts, so that sufistic values remain relevant to the challenges of modern times. (Manshur, 2012, hlm. 1) In the treasures of Indonesian sufistic literature, several big names are

worth mentioning, ranging from Hamzah Fansuri who wrote Sufism-style poems in the 16th-17th centuries to Amir Hamzah who was known for his religious poetry during the time of Pujangga Baru. (Hadi, 1984)

Writers see themselves as faqir, merchants or children of hulubalang (who are not afraid of Javanese spears, says Hamzah Fansuri). Amir Hamzah refers to himself as 'mufassir kata', which means more or less the same as a merchant's son. They also often call themselves talib (seekers), salik (spiritual pathfinders), shawqi (God's guides) and 'asyiq (passionate lovers like Majnun). A faqir is one who is in dire need of God (faqr), because only God is rich and abundant (fadl), while man actually has nothing (faqir) and therefore needs Him very much. If a writer is a salik, then his work is a suluk or spiritual path. Inside are spiritual resting terminals. The final terminal is the unity (uns) with God. Happiness is symbolized by the arrival of a seeker at the top of a mystical or cosmic mountain, namely Mount Qaf. As stated by Amir Hamzah in the last line of "Hanya Satu": "Serupa Musa di puncak Tursina". Classical Malay works are full of descriptions of journeys to the mountains, such as the works of Javanese writers. We also find this in Kuntowijo's novel "Khotbah di Atas Bukit". Or Sutardji Calzoum Bachri's poem "Para Peminum". (Hadi, 2020, hlm. 19)

According to Abdul Hadi WM, Sufistic literature can also be called transcendental literature. This is because these works present spiritual experiences that are difficult to explain with ordinary logic, such as feelings of ecstasy, spiritual longing, and mystical union with God. (Hadi, 2001, hlm. 56) The study of spirituality in literature has become increasingly significant in the midst of modernity that tends to prioritize rationality, materialism, and efficiency. Technological developments, the dominance of social media, and consumptive lifestyles have given birth to real existential crises in the life of modern society. Many individuals experience alienation from themselves, loss of meaning in life, and longing for transcendental experiences. This phenomenon is reflected in the increasing spiritual search outside of formal religious institutions, including the rise of meditation practices, popular spirituality, and various forms of meaning-seeking that are circulating in the digital space.

In the context of modern Indonesian literature, Abdul Hadi W.M. is one of the important figures who consistently presents sufistic values in his works. As a poet, thinker, and cultural expert, Abdul Hadi W.M. combines symbolism, spiritual metaphors, and philosophical contemplation in his poetry. His works not only stand out aesthetically, but also contain a spiritual depth that reflects the experience of Sufism authentically. This intellectual effort is a continuation of the spiritual tradition that has been alive for a long time and colors the development of Islam in Indonesia. Abdul Hadi explained that many Western and Eastern scholars emphasized that writers, especially Sufi writers, played a central role in the formation of Islamic culture in the Malay archipelago. Malay literature also not only serves as an aesthetic medium, but also becomes an important foundation of Islamic culture. However, the richness of this Islamic art tradition is now largely forgotten. The weak understanding of the history of Islamic culture has caused some Muslims, including the educated, to doubt the existence of Islamic art in Indonesia. This loss of historical awareness has an impact on the crisis of cultural identity and self-confidence, which is exacerbated by an education system that does not provide space for the introduction of the achievements of Islamic civilization and culture, especially in the fields of art and literature. (Hadi, 2012)

Because of his tendency towards literary spirituality, since the 1970s, Abdul Hadi W.M. has been known as a prominent writer in carrying Sufistic styles. This identity was further strengthened through his academic works, one of which was the book *Tasawuf yang Tertindas*, which was a development of his doctoral dissertation entitled *Estetika Sastra Sufistik: Kajian Hermeneutik terhadap Karya-karya Syekh Hamzah Fansuri*. Through a hermeneutic approach and spiritual aesthetics, Abdul Hadi not only examines the classical Malay Sufi literary tradition, but also places himself as the successor of the tradition in the context of modern Indonesian literature. (Hadi, 2001) Abdul Hadi W.M.'s poems are also inseparable from his intellectual background in the fields of philosophy and Sufism. He blends intellectual reflection with spiritual experience, so that his poems can be read as a mirror of the spiritual journey of a modern Sufi living in the midst of contemporary reality.

One of his poems that is relevant to show his perspective on Sufism is the poem *Meditasi*. This poem features existential contemplation, an atmosphere of inner silence, and the search for the essence of God's existence and presence through symbolic and contemplative language. In *Meditasi* poems, sufistic values such as awareness of the world's mortality, mortal experience (self-wandering in the presence of God), and longing for divine light are expressed poetically. This poem is also a response to the spiritual anxiety of modern humans who live in a world full of noise and hustle. Through a quiet atmosphere, inner reflection, and light symbols, Abdul Hadi W.M. invites readers to enter the tafakkur space and rerealize the transcendental dimension in life.

Based on this context, this research is important to examine how the Meditation poem by Abdul Hadi W.M. represents the values of sufistic literature and reflects the spiritual anxiety of modern society. This research not only contributes to the study of literature, but also to the study of Islam, especially Sufism. Through an interdisciplinary approach, this research is expected to show that literature is an effective medium in conveying divine values and answering the spiritual crisis of modern humans, as well as enriching the treasure of thought about the relationship between literature and spirituality.

## 2. METHODS

This research uses a hermeneutical-phenomenological approach by combining Henry Corbin's sufistic hermeneutics and Rudolf Otto's religious phenomenology. These two approaches were chosen because they both place religious experience as an ontological reality that cannot be reduced to a purely rational, theological, or sociological construction. In the context of the poem *Meditation* by Abdul Hadi W.M., this approach allows for a reading that does not stop at literal or allegorical meaning, but rather penetrates the symbolic layer as an expression of a living spiritual experience.

### a) *Henry Corbin's Sufistic Hermeneutics: The Mundus of the Imaginalists and the Active Imagination*

The main framework of hermeneutics used in this study refers to Henry Corbin's thought about the imaginalist mundus (al-'alam al-mithal), that is, the world between the sensory realm and the pure intellectual realm. (Wasserstrom, 1999, hlm. 148) Corbin asserts that reality does not only consist of the physical world and the rational world, but also a third world that has its own ontological existence, namely the imaginary world. This world is the realm where spiritual forms manifest themselves in symbolic images that are experienced in a visionary way. (Corbin, 1977, hlm. 6–9; Wasserstrom, 1999, hlm. 5)

In contrast to the subjective imagination which is psychological imaginary, Corbin introduced the concept of active imagination as a spiritual organ that allows humans to access imaginary reality. Active imagination is not a sensory faculty, but an organ of spiritual knowledge that transmutes sensory data into spiritual symbols. Through active imagination, religious experiences are not only understood conceptually, but are experienced as real existential events. (Corbin, 2002, hlm. 11–15)

In this framework, symbols are not understood as rational allegories that simply wrap up abstract meanings, but rather as primary phenomena (Urphänomen) that reveal something that cannot be presented in any other way. (Wasserstrom, 1999, hlm. 92–93) Corbin asserts that symbols are irreducible and can never be explained once and for all. It must be constantly re-elaborated in every spiritual encounter, just as a musical score always demands a new interpretation in each performance. (Corbin, 2002, hlm. 27–31)

Corbin makes a clear distinction between symbols and allegories. Allegory is an artificial figuration of something that is essentially rationally knowable, while symbols announce a different realm of consciousness from rational evidence. Symbols are the "cipher" of a mystery that can only be presented through visionary language. (Corbin, 2002, hlm. 32–35) Thus, the Sufistic reading of poetry does not aim to explain symbols rationally, but to reveal the inner meaning (haqīqah) hidden behind metaphors (majāz).

### b) *Rudolf Otto's Religious Phenomenology: The Numinous Experience*

To complement Corbin's Sufistic hermeneutic framework, this study also uses the phenomenology of Rudolf Otto's religion, specifically the concept of numinous experience. Otto introduced religious experience as a sui generis category that cannot be reduced to ethics, morality, or theological rationality. The holy is not a derivative of moral values, but a transcendent reality that man experiences directly in religious consciousness. (Otto, 1950, hlm. 5–7)

Otto calls the deepest elements of religious experience numinous, which manifest in the emotional structure of *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. *Mysterium* refers to the Completely Other (das ganz Andere), a reality that transcends all rational categories of man. *Tremendum* refers to man's metaphysical vibrations, awe, and ontological diminution before the Absolute. Meanwhile, *fascinans* point to the attraction, love, longing, and ecstasy that entices the human soul to draw closer to Him. (Otto, 1950, hlm. 12–14, 1950, hlm. 31–33)

In numinous experience, humans experience what Otto calls creature-feeling, that is, the ontological feeling of being's transience before the Almighty. These feelings are pre-discursive emotions that precede all

theological formulations and belief systems. It is the existential consciousness of self-absence immersed in the presence of the Absolute. (Otto, 1950, hlm. 10–11)

This experiential structure has a direct correspondence with Sufistic concepts such as *fanā'* (the disappearance of the ego), *faqr* (ontological poverty), *haibah* (the vibration of divine fear), and *mahabbah* (divine love). In Sufism, divine experience always contains the tension between distance and closeness, horror and longing, detachment and attachment. It is this tension that shapes the spiritual dynamics of a *salik* on the journey to God.

### 3. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Research on the works of Abdul Hadi W.M. has been carried out from various perspectives, ranging from the study of Sufistic literature, structural analysis, Islamic aesthetics, to thematic readings on the issue of divinity and death. These studies show the important position of Abdul Hadi W.M. in the development of modern Indonesian literature, especially as a poet who consistently integrated spiritual experience and religious reflection into poetic language.

The research of Sujarwoko et al., *Ekspresi Sufistik Bentuk Pantun dan Syair dalam Puisi-puisi Abdul Hadi W.M.*, has comprehensively examined the expression of Sufistic values in the poetry of Abdul Hadi W.M. The focus of this research lies in the expression of the main themes of Sufism such as *mahabbah ilahiyah* (Divine love), *syauq* (spiritual longing), and *tajalli* (Divine revelation), which are expressed through distinctive symbols such as light, night, silence, and inner journey. Sujarwoko shows that Abdul Hadi W.M.'s poems are not only representational, but also contain a participatory dimension of spiritual experience. Readers are not only invited to understand the meaning, but also engage in a contemplative process that resembles spiritual practice. However, this study still tends to be descriptive and has not explicitly linked the Sufistic expression to the social conditions and spiritual anxieties of modern society. (Sujarwoko dkk., 2024)

On the other hand, Wahyu Unggul Widodo's (2024) research, *An Analysis of the Intrinsic and Extrinsic Element of the Poem "Tuhan, Kita Begitu Dekat" by Abdul Hadi W.M.*, uses a structural approach to examine the intrinsic and extrinsic elements in the poem. He shows that the poem "God, We Are So Close" is built through simple diction but full of meaning, strong imagery, and metaphors that describe the closeness and dependence of humans to God. The dominant elements of feeling in this poem are peace, tranquility, and spiritual intimacy. (Widodo & Nurwanti, 2024) Although this study has succeeded in mapping the structure and meaning of poetry in detail, the approach used is still limited to formal analysis and has not elaborated on the dimensions of Sufism conceptually or contextually.

The same thing is shown in Aziza Aulia Azzahra's (2022) research, *Analisis Struktural Puisi Sendiri Karya Abdul Hadi W.M.* She highlights aspects of inner structure and birth in the poem *Sendiri*, and shows that the poem contains emotional nuances such as loneliness, anxiety, and alienation, which are expressed through connotative diction, strong imagery, and comparative *majas*. The theme of solitude is understood as the poet's existential experience, while the poet's mandate directs the reader to reflection and self-control. (Azzahra, 2022) Although this study reveals the poet's inner turmoil, the spiritual and Sufistic dimensions have not yet become the main focus of the analysis.

A different analysis of Abdul Hadi has been presented by Fuad Mahbub Siraj and Zikraini Alrah (2022) in the article *The Concept of Islamic Aesthetic of Abdul Hadi WM.* He placed Abdul Hadi W.M. as a Muslim intellectual who understood Islamic aesthetics as a spiritual path to wisdom (*ma'rifat*). For Abdul Hadi, beauty in art does not stop at the formal aspect, but culminates in moral achievements and divine knowledge. Islamic aesthetics is seen as a means of religious experience that is not only individual, but also has a social and historical dimension. (Siraj & Alrah, 2022) This research provides a strong conceptual framework for Abdul Hadi W.M.'s aesthetic thought, but does not specifically discuss how the concept is articulated in certain poems or associated with the spiritual problems of modern society.

Meanwhile, the research of Wiranta, Murtini, and Asep Yudha Wirajaya (2019) entitled *Gagasan Kematian dan Ketuhanan dalam Sajak-sajak Abdul Hadi W.M.*, has shown existential themes such as death and divinity as universal issues in Abdul Hadi's poems W.M. He emphasized that the poet's

understanding of God and death is inseparable from the Javanese-Madurese cultural background and the social context that surrounds it. Formal elements of poetry such as diction, rhyme, and typography are seen as important in shaping the poet's outlook on life.(Wiranta dkk., 2019) Although this study shows Abdul Hadi's sensitivity to existential issues, the approach to Sufism as the main framework of analysis has not been developed in depth.

Thus, it can be said that the study of Abdul Hadi W.M.'s work generally still focuses on structural analysis, Islamic aesthetics, and the disclosure of spiritual and divine themes. The sufistic values in the poetry of Abdul Hadi W.M. have been identified and described, but most of the research still stops at the level of mapping the themes, symbols, and formal structures of literary works. This research wants to position itself differently by focusing on Meditasi poetry as a representation of Sufistic literature that directly responds to the spiritual anxieties of modern society. Different from previous research that tends to be textual and descriptive, this study integrates the study of Sufistic literature with the contemporary socio-cultural context, especially existential crises, the alienation of modern humans from transcendental values, and the search for the meaning of life in the midst of the dominance of rationalism and materialism.

#### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

##### Biography Abdul Hadi W.M.

Abdul Hadi Widji Muthari or better known as Abdul Hadi W.M. (June 24, 1946 - January 19, 2024) is one of the leading Muslim writers, cultural figures, poets, and scholars in Indonesia. He is widely known for his works with sufistic nuances, his thoughts on Islamic aesthetics, and his contributions to the study of Malay literature in the archipelago and Islamic philosophy. ("Abdul Hadi W.M.," 2025; Hadi, 2016a) Abdul Hadi was born in Sumenep, Madura, into a devout Muslim family. His parents managed the An-Naba Islamic Boarding School, which later helped shape his religious and aesthetic sensibilities. From childhood, he was introduced to readings of philosophy and world literature, such as the works of Plato, Socrates, Imam al-Ghazali, Rabindranath Tagore, and Muhammad Iqbal. His love for poetry and the world of writing grew from an early age, with strong influences from Amir Hamzah and Chairil Anwar. ("Abdul Hadi W.M.," 2025; Sugono, 2003)

He completed his primary and early secondary education in Sumenep, then he continued his high school education in Surabaya. After that, Abdul Hadi studied at the Faculty of Letters, Gadjah Mada University (UGM), majoring in Philology and Indonesian Literature, then continued his studies in Western Philosophy at the same university, although he did not complete it until the final level. He also studied Cultural Anthropology at Padjadjaran University, Bandung. In the next period, Abdul Hadi expanded his intellectual experience by participating in the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa, United States, and living in Hamburg, Germany, to study literature and philosophy. ("Abdul Hadi W.M.," 2025; Sugono, 2003)

His academic career was further strengthened when in the early 1990s he taught Islamic Literature at the University of Science Malaysia (USM). At the university, he completed his master's and doctoral studies. His dissertation on Sufistic literature Hamzah Fansuri was later published as the book *Sufism That Was Oppressed* and received the Mastera Literature Prize in 2003.(Sugono, 2003) Apart from being an academic, Abdul Hadi is active as an editor of various literary and cultural media, including *Gema Mahasiswa*, *Mahasiswa Indonesia*, *Budaya Jaya*, *Ulumul Qur'an*, and the daily *Berita Buana*. He has also served as Chairman of the Jakarta Arts Council and is involved in various national cultural and Islamic institutions. ("Abdul Hadi W.M.," 2025; Sugono, 2003)

As a poet, Abdul Hadi W.M. produced many poetic works that were published both in the form of anthologies and spread in various magazines and newspapers. Some of his poetry collections include *Terlambat di Jalan* (1968), *Laut Belum Pasang* (1972), *Cermin* (1975), *Meditasi* (1975), *Tergantung pada Angin* (1975), *Potret Panjang Seorang Pengunjung Pantai Sanur* (1975), and *Anak Laut Anak Angin*. His poems make extensive use of natural imagery and inner experience as a medium of religious and philosophical expression.(Rustapa dkk., 1998, hlm. 1) Abdul Hadi's poetry is known to be full of philosophical, religious, and psychological themes, especially human existential anxiety. Philosophical themes are the most dominant themes, in addition to social, mythical, romantic, and religious themes. The theme of sexuality almost never appears in his works.(Rustapa dkk., 1998, hlm. 137) This shows his aesthetic and ideological consistency as a sufistic poet.

Rustapa et al.'s research analyzed 61 poems of Abdul Hadi written between 1966-1981. The poems were selected as a research sample and grouped into three time spans, namely 22 poems from the period 1966-1970, 16 poems from the period 1971-1979, and 23 poems from the period 1980-1981. This sorting is not intended as an aesthetic periodization, but rather as a practical strategy to facilitate analysis. The study examines the physical data of the poem, such as the title, publication data, and word count, as well as the structure of the poem which includes the setting, characters, point of view, and language, in order to understand the meaning contained in it. (Rustapa dkk., 1998, hlm. 4) In his aesthetic view, Abdul Hadi emphasized that the highest beauty in Islamic art is inseparable from moral and spiritual achievements, which boil down to wisdom or *ma'rifat*. He sees the function of aesthetics as a means of enlightenment of the soul, namely the awakening of man's deepest awareness of monotheism as the core of Islamic teachings. (Hadi, 2016b, 2016a)

Abdul Hadi W.M.'s position in the history of Indonesian literature is considered very important. Waluyo placed him as an important poet after Taufik Ismail's generation. In fact, in Rendra's interview in 1970, Abdul Hadi was mentioned as one of the great talented poets along with Sutardji Calzoum Bachri. Both proved to give a strong color to the development of Indonesian poetry in the 1970s, with Abdul Hadi developing poetry with *sufistic* and conventional nuances, while Sutardji developing concrete poetry and mantras. (Azzahra, 2022; Waluyo, 2002) Thus, Abdul Hadi W.M. can be seen as a central figure in the development of modern Indonesian literature, especially in introducing and strengthening *sufistic* poetry as the mainstream. His works not only enrich the treasures of Indonesian literature, but also play a role in presenting spiritual and philosophical dimensions as a counterbalance to the secular and hedonistic tendencies of modern literature.

### **Meditation Poetry Text (Hadi, 1982)**

#### **Meditasi**

##### *I*

*Kupeluk sinar bulan. Tubuhku kedinginan.*

*Di gerbang cahaya yang berkilauan akan segera nampak di depan kita sebuah gereja tua. Ketika lonceng berbunyi beribu burung terbang ke sana hendak mensucikan diri. Sebab selalu ditempuhnya jalan yang sama, selalu dinyanyikannya lagu yang sama dan sesat di sarang yang sama.*

*Lalu kita dengar paduan suaranya. Seperti deru angin di pantai. "Demi Jesus, pahala sorga dan kenikmatan, akan kami hapuskan dosa kami seluruhnya," begitu nyanyian mereka. "Tuhan, pujaan Ayub dan Yusuf, gembala Musa dan Muhammad – bentangkanlah pada kami jalan yang benar dari aroma bintang dan buah-buahan."*

*O, burung-burung, sudahkah kau baca Farid Attar?*

*Yerussalem dan Mekkah tidak seluas hati dan jiwa ini.*

*Pohon-pohon rindang lebat tumbuh juga dalam hatimu.*

*Nyanyikanlah itu sepanjang pagi sepanjang sore.*

##### *II*

*Di sini semenjak lama aku adalah seorang rahib yang mengheningkan cipta dalam sebatang kayu.*

*Kebenaran kudapat dari embun dan mawar.*

*Abadi.*

*Seperti ciuman perempuan dan bintang-bintang.*

*Tapi perempuan tua ini selalu merayuku dan minta aku menyusu pula hingga kering dan mandul teteknya.*

*Itulah dunia.*

##### *III*

*Akupun sudah letih naik turun candi, ke luar masuk gereja dan mesjid.*

*Tuhan makin sempit rasa kebangsaannya,*

*"Musa! Musa! Akulah tuhan orang Israel!" teriaknyanya*

*Di mesjid, di rumah sucinya yang lain ia berkata pula:  
 "Akulah hadiah seluruh dunia, tapi sinarku memancar di Arab."  
 Aku termenung. Apa kekurangan orang Jawa?  
 Kunyanyikan Bach dalam tembang kinanti dan kupulas Budha jadi  
 seorang dukun di Madura.  
 Aku menemu sinar di mata kakekku yang sudah mati.  
 Bila hari menahun dan kota jadi benua, aku akan bikin negeri di sebuah  
 flat karena aku pun adalah rumah-Nya.*

#### IV

*Bercakap-cakap dari pintu ke pintu. Bernyanyi dari pintu ke pintu. Mengetuknya berkali-kali. Sudah lama aku  
 tak tahu di mana Dia sebenarnya, di mesjid, di kuil atautkah di gereja.  
 Pernah aku percaya benar pada cinta dan kebijaksanaan yang jauh dari kemauanku sendiri. Kata mereka,  
 "Berbaiklah kepada semua orang dan berjalanlah di jalan suci!" Bagi seekor keledai aku pun melenggang  
 membawa beban berisi hartanya dan sampai di sebuah gurun.  
 Kafilah tidak bisa menunjukkan jalan lagi. Kemi berpisah tengah malam. Bintang-bintang berloncatan gembira  
 di langit yang tinggi. Tapi di tengah kelaparan dan panas aku pun menjelma seekor singa. Aku tak mau lagi  
 mendengarkan khotbah dan nasehat. Sakramenku ialah ketiadaan. Sahabatku perobahan yang terus-menerus.  
 Dan kota suciku ialah hati. Kalau di menara itu nanti kuteriakkan azan cacing-cacing akan berkumpul  
 mendatangi di waktu magrib bersembahyang berzikir mendoakan ketentraman dunia yang baru.*

#### V

*Tidak. Sebaiknya kau datang saja di sore hari di saat aku bercermin.  
 Tapi jangan lagi mewujud atau menjelma.  
 Tuhan, siapakah namaMu yang sebenarNya? Dari manakah asalMu?  
 Apakah kebangsaanMu? Dan apa pula agamaMu?  
 Manusia begitu ajaib. Mereka pandai benar membuat ratusan teori  
 tentang Aku dengan susah payah. Tapi siapa Aku yang sebenarnya  
 Aku sendiri pun tidak pernah tahu siapa sebenarnya Aku, dari mana  
 dan sedang menuju ke mana.*

1974

### Analysis of "Meditasi" Poems

The Meditation Poem by Abdul Hadi W.M. can be read as a modern Sufistic text that represents religious experience in the form of imaginary symbols. This poem not only reveals an intellectual reflection on God, but presents the existential experience of the divine quest that the poet experiences as a spiritual subject. Using Henry Corbin's Sufistic hermeneutic approach and Rudolf Otto's religious phenomenology, this poem can be understood as a transcendental experiential space that reveals divine reality through visionary language.

#### 1. Poetry as an Imaginalist Mundus Space

Within the framework of Henry Corbin's hermeneutics, Meditation moves in the realm of the imaginalist mundus, that is, the world between which the sensory reality and the spiritual reality meet. This world is not a psychological fantasy, but has an ontological existence as a space for the appearance of spiritual reality in the form of symbolic images. From the first stanza, the poet presents an imaginary landscape that is empirically unrealistic:

*Kupeluk sinar bulan. Tubuhku kedinginan.*

*Di gerbang cahaya yang berkilaian akan segera nampak di depan kita sebuah gereja tua.*

The embraced moonlight, the gates of light, the old church that appears in the visionary space, and the birds flying towards self-purification form a symbolic world that cannot be reduced to physical description. This is the imaginary region that Corbin calls the epiphany space, where spiritual reality manifests itself in symbolic forms.

The birds that seek purification and are mentioned in the context of Farid Attar directly refer to *Mantiq al-Ṭayr* (Bird Deliberation), a sufistic allegory about the soul's journey to God. But in Corbin's framework, these birds are not just moral allegories, but symbols of the soul's ontological journey to the Absolute. By asking, "O, burung-burung, sudahkah kau baca Farid Attar?", the poet places himself in a mystical tradition across the ages that makes the journey of the soul the main axis of spirituality.

Statement, *Yerusalem dan Mekkah tidak seluas hati dan jiwa ini*, affirming that the true sacred space is not geographical, but inward. The holy city is no longer understood as a physical location, but rather as a spiritual reality present in human consciousness. Thus, this poem moves the center of holiness from the institution to the interior space of the soul.

### 1. *Numinus Experience and Creature-Feeling*

In Rudolf Otto's perspective, the poem of Meditation is loaded with numinous experiences that reveal the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* structure. The divinity is not presented as a rational theological concept, but rather as a reality that shakes the poet's existential consciousness.

In verse II, the poet describes himself as a monk who seeks truth from dew and roses:

*Kebenaran kudapat dari embun dan mawar.*

*Abadi. Seperti ciuman perempuan dan bintang-bintang.*

The symbols of dew, rose, woman, and stars form a fascinating field of numinous experience. The divinity exists as an alluring beauty, as a cosmic charm that transcends rationality. However, this experience also contains elements of anxiety and alienation:

*Tapi perempuan tua ini selalu merayuku dan minta aku menyusui pula*

*hingga kering dan mandul teteknya.*

*Itulah dunia.*

Here the world appears as a reality that sucks human spiritual energy. The world is depicted as an old barren mother, a symbol of material attachment that weakens spiritual potential. This is the expression of creature-feeling, the consciousness of the ontological transience of beings before the Absolute. The tension between divine attraction and worldly fetters is a typical structure of numinous experience. Man is attracted to God, but is constantly drawn back by the world.

### 2. *Criticism of the Institutionalization of God*

Verses III and IV present a sharp critique of the claim of formal religious exclusivity. The poet expresses the spiritual exhaustion of seeking God in religious institutions: "Akupun sudah letih naik turun candi, ke luar masuk gereja dan mesjid." God is described as having a "nationality" and being bound to a geographical identity:

*"Musa! Musa! Akulah tuhan orang Israel!"*

*"Akulah hadiah seluruh dunia, tapi sinarku memancar di Arab."*

This expression is not a theological critique, but rather a spiritual critique of God's reduction to a certain collective identity. In the sufistic perspective, God is a universal reality that transcends the boundaries of religion, nation, and culture. This realization reaches its peak in the statement:

*Aku pun adalah rumah-Nya.*

God is no longer sought outside, but is found in man's own existence. This is where the experience of mortal (ego melting) begins to appear. The subject is no longer separated from the divine presence.

In verse IV, the poet describes his spiritual transformation: "Sakramenku ialah ketiadaan. Sahabatku perubahan yang terus-menerus. Dan kota suciku ialah hati." Absence here is a symbol of mortality, the disappearance of the ego in the presence of God. The holy city as the heart affirms that the center of religious experience is in the human mind, not in the ritual building. The symbols of the lion and the worm form an ontological opposition between power and mortality. The lion symbolizes existential courage in taking the spiritual path without relying

on external authority, while the worm symbolizes the ontological humility of man. But it is precisely in mortality that remembrance and prayer take place.

### 3. God as an Indefinable Mystery

The final stanza features the culmination of the numinous experience as an unspeakable *mysterium*:

*Tuhan, siapakah namaMu yang sebenarnya? Dari manakah asalMu?  
Apakah kebangsaanMu? Dan apa pula agamaMu?*

These questions are not skepticism, but rather an expression of mystical awareness of the immortality of God's essence. God is *das ganz Andere*, the Wholly Other, which transcends all categories of language, concepts, and identities.

The next statement even reverses the subject's position:

*Aku sendiri pun tidak pernah tahu siapa sebenarnya Aku, dari mana  
dan sedang menuju ke mana.*

Here, divine experience is intertwined with self-experience. The subject who seeks God finds his or her own ontological alienation. This is the culmination of mortal experience in the form of existential anxiety that is characteristic of modern man.

Through a hermeneutical-phenomenological reading, *Meditasi* emerges as a modern sufistic poem that represents the spiritual journey of man in a world fragmented by modernity. Imaginal symbols form a transcendental space of experience where existential anxiety, the search for God, and the consciousness of ontological mortality converge. This poem shows that the search for God cannot be reduced to formal rituals or collective identities, but rather is a tense inner journey between the world and eternity, between ego and nothingness, between distance and closeness to the Absolute. Thus, *Meditasi* is not just an aesthetic text, but a contemplative space that connects modern man with an almost forgotten spiritual dimension. Abdul Hadi W.M. appears as a modern Sufi poet who presents Sufism as an answer to the crisis of meaning and metaphysical anxiety of contemporary humans.

### Conclusion

The *Meditasi* Poem by Abdul Hadi W.M. represents modern sufistic literature as a transcendental space of experience that presents the existential search for God through symbolic language and visionary imagination. Using Henry Corbin's Sufistic hermeneutic approach and Rudolf Otto's religious phenomenology, this study shows that poetry operates in the realm of *imaginalist mundus*, where spiritual reality manifests itself in the form of irreducible symbolic images. Symbols such as light, birds, holy cities, lions, worms, and the sacrament of absences form a numinous field of experience that contains the structure of *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. God is not presented as a formal theological concept, but rather as an inner reality that transcends geographical boundaries, religious identities, and religious institutions. The statement "*Aku pun adalah rumah-Nya*" confirms the Sufism view of the presence of God in human consciousness. In the context of modernity marked by a crisis of meaning and spiritual alienation, *Meditation* presents itself as a sufistic response that offers a contemplative path to the restoration of the transcendental dimension of life. Thus, Abdul Hadi W.M. affirmed his position as a modern Sufi poet who actualized the Sufistic literary tradition in the contemporary Indonesian cultural landscape.

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