**Western Sufism: Readings on the Development of Sufism in the Western World in the Modern Era**

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**Abstract**

In the modern century, the attention of activists in the study of Islamic mysticism towards Sufism in the west is growing along with the development of the Muslim community in the West, which are generally followers of Sufism. When did Sufism begin to develop in the West and who spread and polarized Sufism in the West? This article will focus on exploring it with a qualitative research model and using content analysis methods. The findings obtained are that the development of Sufism in the west began in the 17th century with the translation of Sufism texts, then it became more serious in the 19th century which was developed by Western adventurers who met directly with Sufis and peaked in the 20th century which accelerated the development of Sufism in West. Among the western adventurers who contributed to the spread of Sufism in the West, namely: Louis Massignon, Arthur John Arberry, Hendry Corbin and Annemarie Schimmel. In current developments, Sufism in the west is patterned into 3 (three) characteristics, namely; hybrid (hybrid sufism), perenial (perenial sufism) and transplants (transplant sufism).

**Keywords:** Sufism, Western World, Modern Era.

***Abstrak***

*Pada abad modern, perhatian pegiat studi mistisisme Islam terhadap tasawuf di barat tumbuh seiring dengan berkembangnya komunitas muslim di Barat yang umumnya merupakan penganut tasawuf. Kapankah tasawuf mulai berkembang di Barat dan siapa penyebar serta polarisasi tasawuf apa saja yang ada di Barat. Artikel ini akan fokus untuk mengeksplorasinya dengan model penelitian kualitatif dan menggunakan metode analisis isi. Adapun temuan yang diperoleh bahwa perkembangan tasawuf di barat di mulai pada abad 17 dengan adanya penterjemahan teks-teks tasawuf, lalu semakin serius pada abad 19 yang dikembangkan oleh petualang Barat yang bertemu langsung dengan para sufi dan puncaknya terjadi pada abad 20 yang mempercepat perkembangan tasawuf di Barat. Di antara petualang barat yang berjasa dalam menyebarkan tasawuf di Barat, yaitu: Louis Massignon, Arthur John Arberry, Hendry Corbin dan Annemarie Schimmel. Dalam perkembangan saat ini, tasawuf di barat terpola menjadi 3 (tiga) karakteristik, yaitu; hibrida (hybrid sufism), perenial (perenial sufism) dan transplants (transplant sufism).*

***Kata Kunci:*** *Tasawuf, Dunia Barat, Era Modern.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The development of Sufism in the west in the last decade has become an interesting issue for activists in the study of mysticism in Islam. Attention to Sufism in the west grew along with the development of the Muslim community in this region, most of whom adhered to Sufism.[[1]](#footnote-1) Sufism is believed to be one of the factors in the conversion of people's beliefs in the west to Islam. The attitude of tolerance and openness contained in Sufism is quickly accepted by western society,[[2]](#footnote-2) and then becomes an attraction and has influence among non-Muslims to get to know Islam more closely.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Referring to the significant development of Islam and Sufism in the west, it raises several questions about when did Sufism enter the west? How is the network and who are the figures who play a role in the process of transmitting Sufism to the west? Unlike the study of Sufism in the east (Islamic world), the study of Sufism in the west is rare and almost does not become an object of research of interest to most research.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Eric Geoffroy in The Contributon of Sufism to the Construction of Contemporary Europe’s Moslem argues that although the academic studies of western scientists on Sufism began in the 17th century AD, the introduction of westerners to Sufism and Islamic spirituality has occurred since the Middle Ages. According to him, for several decades Islamic spirituality had an influence in Christian circles in the Middle Ages, for example about the legend and Sufism of the famous Rabī`ah al-`Adawiyah in France. Likewise, the story of the spirituality of the events of the Prophet Muḥammad’s SAW. *isrā‘ wa mikrāj* became the inspiration for the Italian author Dante Alghieri (d. 1321) to create a divine drama. Furthermore, the mystical doctrine of Saint Thessa and in the 16th century AD, is also believed to have borrowed many elements from *Maghrib*-Andalusian Sufism.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The development of studies and the introduction of western (European) people to Sufism began to show seriousness since the 17-19 century AD along with the expansion of westerners in the Muslim world.[[6]](#footnote-6) As stated by Edwar Said and Carl W. Ernst, the initial interest of Western scientists in the study of Sufism was based on the interests of European colonialists to collect data on the culture, socio-cultural, beliefs of the population who were under the supervision of their colonial government.[[7]](#footnote-7) Although several names of Islamic Sufis were known to Europeans before the colonial era such as Rabī`ah al-`Adawiyah, Ibnu al-Farīd or al-Sa`dī, in general, Europeans and Americans did not have a serious interest in the tradition of Sufism until well into the 19th century AD. Attention to Sufism only emerged after the colonial powers strengthened their power in colonized areas such as in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Early studies of Sufism in the 17th century AD were started by the orientalists Sir William James (d. 1794) and Sir John Malcom (d. 1833). Both of them conducted a study of the Sufistic poems of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī and the Sufistic poems of Persian origin written by Hafiz (d. 1389). The purpose of the study of Sufism by these two orientalists is not yet independent, so they still show partiality and suspicion towards Islam. Both of them still see Sufism in Islam as part of civilization mixed with outside influences so that Sufism is not purely derived from Islamic teachings.[[9]](#footnote-9)

An independent study of new Sufism was carried out by Lt. James William Graham an employee and staff of William Jones. This activity was then followed by Friedrich August Tholuck (d. 1877). Tholuck wrote an article entitled Sive Sufismus, Sive Theosophia Persarum Phanteistica (Sufism or The Pantheistic theosophy of the Persian).[[10]](#footnote-10) Tholuck’s writings according to Carl W. Ernst can be categorized as the first European book to discuss Sufism.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Research and studies on Sufism after Tholuck were carried out by several scientists such as the British orientalist Edward H. Palmer and Reihant Dozy (d. 1883) a Dutch scholar who wrote an essay published in 1897 entitled “Essai sur I histoire de Islamise”. The studies of these scientists still conclude that Sufism is not purely from the teachings of Islam. Another figure who is better known in providing an interpretation of Islam is Ernst Renan (d. 1892). Renan uses race theory and linguistics in looking at Sufism in Islam. According to him, the Sufistic tradition that developed artistically in the form of poetry and metaphysical expressions was the influence of the Ariyan race, not because of the influence of the Semitic race. Renan’s thinking was later rejected and criticized because it was considered to have demeaned everything from the East (Arabic) region as the Semitic race. [[12]](#footnote-12) Renan’s thinking as an orientalist is considered not independent and tends to side with one race. Renan’s ideas then influenced the views of the orientalist and Islamic scholar from Hungary, namely Ignaz Goldziher (d. 1921).[[13]](#footnote-13)

In the early 20th century several Muslim countries except Persia, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Turkey were under foreign powers (Christian Europe). This process of colonization had begun a decade earlier by controlling a Muslim-majority country. In some areas within Muslim territories, local institutions and Sufi groups became centers of resistance against the colonialists. The militancy and brotherhood contained in the Sufi group became a threat to the colonials in smoothing their efforts to control the areas inhabited by Muslims. The strength of the coalition government and the Sufis can be seen as happened in the government of the Safavid kingdom in Iran which could rule from 1501-1732 AD.[[14]](#footnote-14)

The power of the Sufi group became the attention of the colonial group because it was feared to be a force that could resist and hinder the colonialization process. The existence of Sufi groups and *ṭarīqah* in several places was a center for resistance against the colonialists.[[15]](#footnote-15) The involvement of Sufi groups and *ṭarīqah*, among others, occurred in West Sudan, Libya, which was driven by the Sanusiyyah order in their resistance to France and Italy. The leader of this group was shaykh Idris who was later exiled to Egypt. Shaykh Idris later became king of Libya in 1951.[[16]](#footnote-16)

The resistance of the Sufis and *ṭarīqah* against colonialism also occurred in al-Jazair in the face of French colonialism which lasted from 1830-1900 AD.[[17]](#footnote-17) The presence of Syaykh Aḥmad Muṣṭafa al-`Alawī and his *ṭarīqah*followers who are members of several *ṭarīqah* groups such as the Qādiriyyah *ṭarīqah* have contributed to the resistance to French aggression. This later became evidence that the Sufi movement has a history in politics such as in al-Jazair.[[18]](#footnote-18)

The spread of colonialism by Europeans has created waves of migration of Asians and Africans to Europe, and since 1920 AD Sufism (Sufism) began to spread in Europe. One of the Sufi orders that developed in the early 20th century AD was the `Alawī *ṭarīqah* which was founded by a Sufi originating from al-Jazair, namely Syaykh Aḥmad al-`Alawī (d. 1934). This Syaykh had visited France in 1926 to participate in the inauguration of the Great French mosque which was built to commemorate the Muslim soldiers who died during the first world war.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Not all Sufism that developed in Europe is the result brought by immigrants. Several Sufi orders in several European countries such as the Bektahis order in Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia have existed in this region since the Middle Ages. Religious culture and Sufism in Balkhan are largely formed as a legacy of the past century.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This research is a qualitative research. Where is the development of Sufism in the west which is the focus of his research. The reason for choosing this research—because—unlike Sufism in the east which is commonly studied, Sufism in the west is a rare study, so it is important and interesting to study how Sufism develops in the west. The method used in this research is content analysis. The content analysis method is a method used to obtain knowledge by providing details on the object under study, or how to handle a certain scientific object by sorting out one understanding with other meanings, to simply obtain clarity about the matter (Sudarto, 2002: 59). The research steps carried out are data inventory; collect data related to the development of Sufism in the west, as well as those related to it. Then, a content analysis was carried out so that the meaning between one concept and another was clear.

**THEORY OF ENTRY AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUFISM INTO THE WESTERN WORLD**

Mark Sedgwick put forward the theory of the entry of Sufism into the western world in two ways:

*First,* through the involvement of Sufi figures in introducing Sufism itself.[[20]](#footnote-20) According to this theory, the contact of westerners with Sufism, which had begun in the 17th century AD, became more active and intensive, especially after the emergence of European adventurers who then made contact with Sufi circles in the 19th century AD. The expansion of Europeans through exploration (adventure) and Colonism allows among them there are people who are looking for the truth to find Sufistic values. This group rejects the positivist ideology of Europeans and the mechanistic, materialistic and secularization of Western Christianity which they consider to have lost its exoteric content. [[21]](#footnote-21)

The failure of positivism and mechanistic ideologies became the motivation for these adventurers to seek and find a metaphysical awakening in external spiritual forms such as Sufism (sufism). Some names such as Richard Burton (d. 1890) an English adventurer, Etienne Dinet (d. 1929) French orientalist, Isabella Eberhardt writer from Switzerland (d. 1904), Ivan Agueli (d. 1917) famous Swedish artist, [[22]](#footnote-22) and Rudolf Freiher Von Sebotendof (1875–1945), [[23]](#footnote-23) were important figures in the process of developing Sufism in the West, especially at the turn of the 19–20 century AD.

Eberhardt (d. 1904) was an explorer and journalist in al-Jazair (Algeria) who sided with the Arabs against the French. He was once accused of spying for the activities of local shaykhs. At the age of 23, he had initiated with the Qadiriyah order in Tunisia and was seriously studying the aspects of Sufism. This journalist died 4 years later in a flood that hit al-Jazair. [[24]](#footnote-24)

Rudolf Freiher Von Sebotendof (1875–1945) was a sailor and adventurer who later became acquainted with Islam. Although it is believed to have embraced Islam, it does not clearly follow the Sufi order. In 1913 he returned to his country and published his findings in 1924 under the title Die Praxis der alten Turkischen Freimauerei (The Practice of Ancient Turkish Freemansory). After these two figures, more active contact with eastern Sufism was carried out by John Gustave Agueli (1869–1917) and Rene Guenon (1886–1951).

John Gustave Agueli (1869–1917) was an important figure in the history of the development of Sufism in the West. Agueli is a Swedish national and lives in France. At a young age (22 years) he joined the Theosopichal Society which then brought him together with a young doctor from Italy. This young doctor later became his friend to share in knowing Islam which led to his interest in the Islamic world. Two years later the two moved to Egypt and became involved with weekly news issues in Egypt. While in Egypt John Gustave Agueli studied at al-Azhar University under the tutelage of `Abd al-Raḥman Illaysh al-Qabīr. Under the guidance of his teacher Agueli entered and learned about the Syadziliyyah order and later converted to Islam and changed his name to `Abd Ḥadi al-Maghribī. He is active in writing articles on Sufism and Islam (sufism and Islam). His writings then made important contributions to traditionalist thinkers such as Rene Guenon.[[25]](#footnote-25)

John Gustave Agueli is known as an artist and painter. Through his paintings, Agueli reveals the deepest meanings of Sufistic values. In the history of the development of Western Sufism specifically in Europe, this figure is credited with spreading the metaphysics of Ibn `Arabī. His article entitled “Universality in Islam” became one of the references in understanding Islam in the West. Through this article he describes Islam as a religion that contains wisdom values. Seyyed Hossein Nasr said Agueli was a pioneer of Sufism on the European continent.[[26]](#footnote-26)

After the death of John Gustave Agueli, the driving force of Sufism moved into the hands of perennial thinkers such as Rene Guenon. Guenon is a convert who entered the world of Sufism and later became an important figure after Agueli as a transmitter of Sufism to the West. This character, besides being a perennial wing, is also a follower of the *Syāżiliyyah ṭarīqah*. This shows that in the history of the development of Sufism in the West in its early phases it was only played by the *Syāżiliyyah* congregation. This *ṭarīqah* is a Sufism organization that is popular among Western scholars and intellectuals who adhere to the traditionalist school.[[27]](#footnote-27)

Rene Guenon is an important figure from the traditionalist school who is also considered a pioneer to revive renaissance values. As a traditionalist, Rene Guenon views that modernization in the West has resulted in a crisis as a bias apart from the transmission of tradition. According to Rene Guenon, Western society must return to the primordial roots of truth (origin). The primordial teachings that we mean are the teachings that have been outlined by every world religion.[[28]](#footnote-28)

After his introduction to Sufism under the guidance of John Gustave Agueli, Rene Guenon then tried to develop the teachings of perennial thought in several book series which he sent to elite groups to restore traditional civilization.[[29]](#footnote-29) Rene Guenon’s thoughts had an influence on intellectuals in the West and some of them embraced Islam. Rene Guenon himself converted to Islam in 1912 and later joined the *Syāżiliyyah ṭarīqah* under the guidance of John Gustave Agueli. He then used his Islamic name `Abd al-Wāḥid Yaḥya and spent his life as a Muslim in Egypt from 1930 until the end of his life. [[30]](#footnote-30)

Sufism in Rene Guenon’s view is a way for humans to regain spiritual calm. According to him, the modern crisis is increasing and then becoming a global crisis due to being surrounded by power. Matter becomes the goal and causes endless competition, enmity and even machine wars. According to Guenon, this causes the planet Earth’s ecosystem to be damaged and destroyed. Humans are getting away from the introduction to the metaphysical.[[31]](#footnote-31)

After the death of Rene Guenon, the Sufism movement by Western leaders was continued by his own student, Fritjof Schuon. This figure converted to Islam under the name `Isa Nūr al-Dīn. Schuon then took his place in the activities of the `Alawi order as a branch of the *Syāżiliyyah* congregation founded by syaykh Aḥmad `Alawi in al-Jazair. After the death of syaykh `Alawi the followers of Fritjof Schuon believed that Schuon was Muqaddam because he had been given a diploma by Syaykh `Alawi after his death through a dream he had.[[32]](#footnote-32) Schuon is the founder of the *Maryamiyyah ṭarīqah*, the name of this *ṭarīqah* is inspired by the holiness of Maryam, the mother of Prophet Isa. However, the *Maryammiyyah* was more of a sect than a form of *ṭarīqah*. In the late 20th century several professors of religious studies became followers of Schuon including Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Houston Smith, Martin Lings, Titus Burckhartd (1908-1984). Burckhardt is best known as the author of a book entitled “Introduction to the Sufi Doctrine”.

The *Chistiyyah* *ṭarīqah* is one of the congregations besides the *Syāżiliyyah ṭarīqah* which is well developed in the west. This *ṭarīqah* comes from India which is attributed to Mu`īn al-Dīn Ḥasan Chishti (d. 1236). This *ṭarīqah* was developed to the West by a *murshyd* named Inayat Khan (d. 1927). Although these two *ṭarīqah*, *Chistiyyah* and *Syāżiliyyah*, are believed to have existed simultaneously in the West, there is no contact between the two. Inayat Khan moved to New York around 1910 and married his student Ora Raya Baker in music class. His wife then led the branch of the congregation in America. Ora Raya Baker later established two study centers in Francisco and later became an important figure in the Inayat Khan group.[[33]](#footnote-33)

In addition to the *Chistiyyah* and *Syāżiliyyah**ṭarīqah,* there are several other forms of Western Sufism (Western Sufism). This Sufism movement was founded by Eastern Sufis and by Westerners themselves after the squares and meetings between them. Interest in the world of Sufism is more based on the search for identity and alternative peace of life, as well as their liking for music and stories with Sufistic nuances. Sufism then became the psychology of religion. Among the prominent Sufism associations and movements is the Ibn `Arabī Society. [[34]](#footnote-34)

The largest and most widely developed order in the West, especially in Europe, is the *Naqsyabandiyyah ṭarīqah* which was founded in Central Asia in the 14th century by Bahā‘ al-Dīn Naqsyaband. The followers of this *ṭarīqah* originally came from immigrants who came from Asia and later developed extensively in Europe. One of the *Naqsyabandiyyah* branches in Europe is the Naqsyabandiyyah Ḥaqqānī led by Muḥammad Naẓīm Ḥaqqānī from Cyprus. Besides the Naqsyabandiyah Ḥaqqānī, there is also the Ni`matullāhi *ṭarīqah* from Iran which was founded by Syaykh Ni`matillāh. The Ni`matullāhi *ṭarīqah* is a Shi`i *ṭarīqah* and has a strong position in Iran to this day. In Europe this *ṭarīqah* was originally led by Jawad Nurbakhs. In 1983 he took up residence in London and became the center of the Ni`matullāhi *ṭarīqah* and became the European Center for this congregation.[[35]](#footnote-35)

*Second,* the second way of entering and developing Sufism into the western world is through the study and translation of Sufism texts which have been started since the 17th century and reached their peak in the 20th century. [[36]](#footnote-36) Studies in this field have become a major contribution to the introduction of Westerners, especially Europeans, to Sufism.[[37]](#footnote-37) In this century the study of the east by the orientalists has a different pattern from the previous centuries. In the 20th century the orientalists tried to present knowledge and readings of Islam with a more objective and scientific approach. They made pilgrimages and studies of library manuscripts in the Middle East. [[38]](#footnote-38)

**INTRODUCTION OF SUFISM LITERATURE TO THE WESTERN WORLD IN THE MODERN AGE**

In the development of the study and translation of Sufism texts in the western world in the modern century, there were several important figures who contributed to the introduction of western society to Sufism literacy.[[39]](#footnote-39) Including the following:

1. **Louis Massignon**

This figure is one of the important figures in the process of introducing Sufism by westerners to the western world. Massignon is known as a researcher who conducted an in-depth study of al-Ḥallāj’s Sufism and concluded that Sufism has a major role in making Islam an international religion and is present in all parts of the world.[[40]](#footnote-40) Louis Massignon published his work in 1922.[[41]](#footnote-41) As stated by Muḥammad Galab, Louis Massignon is a Sufism expert from the west.[[42]](#footnote-42) Massignon’s important work entitled “La Passion de Husayn ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj: Martyr mystique de L’islam” is an important work that received a response from the Western world and the Islamic world. This work encouraged the growing interest of Western scholars in the fields of Sufism and Islamic mysticism. Throughout his academic career, Massignon earned the title of Professor Colledge de France. His work is considered to have had a great influence in the field of Sufism. This figure has been named the most important orientalist, especially in the field of Islamic mysticism and sociology studies in the 20th century. [[43]](#footnote-43)

From 1953 until his death in 1962, Louis Massignon was involved in active resistance against war and all forms of violence that result from it. Massignon tries to stop the culture of conflict and war by using a Sufistic approach, namely that people who fight in the name of Islam and Christianity are actually brothers and sisters in the faith because they both come from the Abrahamic religion, so they should love each other and have a good relationship.[[44]](#footnote-44)

1. **Arthur John Arberry**

Besides Massignon, the introduction of Sufism to the western world was also carried out by Arthur John Arberry by publishing a booklate on the history of Islamic Sufism "History of Sufism". A. J. Arberry tries to spread the existence of Sufism as a dimension of Islamic mysticism as well as various studies that have been carried out by western orientalists.[[45]](#footnote-45) A. J. Arberry (1905-1969) was an orientalist born in Bucklan, Porstmouth.[[46]](#footnote-46) This character is known to have an interest in classical studies and foreign languages. He served as head of the classical department at Cairo University from 1932–1934 and was assistant librarian at the India office, London from 1934–1939. Then worked in the ministry of information. He was awarded the title of Professor of Persian and Arabic in 1946 at the University of London. A. J. Arberrry published 6 of his works, namely “The Manifestation of Islamic Civilization and its Potrayal n the origins Texs”, “Ffty Poems of Hafiz”, “Discourses of Rumi Sermons”, “Poems of al-Munatanabbi: A Selection with Intoduction”, “Translatons & Notes”, “Revelation and Reason in Islam, Releigion in the Middle East”.[[47]](#footnote-47)

1. **Hendry Corbin**

Hendry Corbin (1903–1978) was a modern Western thinker known as a philosopher, theologian and Iraniologist (expert of Iranian civilization). He was a brilliance in Islamic studies as far as Westerners did in the twentieth century.[[48]](#footnote-48) This figure is a professor of Islamic Studies at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes etudes in Paris.[[49]](#footnote-49) Hendry Corbin was born in Paris to a Protestant family, but he was educated in a Catholic environment. Hendry Corbin has close ties to Louis Massignon, the director of Islamic Studies at the Sorbone. Through Louis Masiggnon Hendry Corbin knew the works of Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl, a mystical philosopher in the 12th century in Persia. Hendry Corbin reveals that Suhrawardī’s work has opened his spiritual life.[[50]](#footnote-50)

Hendry Corbin is known as a modern Western figure who explores Iranian (Persian) metaphysics a lot. There are three main works that can be said to be Hendry Corbin’s main reputation in English and then published in France in 1950, namely “Avicenna and The Visionary Recital”, “Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn `Arabi” and “Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth”. Another work on Central Asia and Iranian Sufism which was introduced by Zia Inayat Khan is “The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism”. Other important works are “En Islam Iranien; Aspects of Sprituels et philosophiques”. In Islamic philosophy Corbin wrote the book “History of Islamic Philosophy” which discusses the intricacies of Islamic philosophy and mysticism. One of the important points in this work is Hendry Corbin’s critique of Western scholars who doubt and reject the Quran as a source of mysticism or philosophy in Islam.[[51]](#footnote-51)

Hendry Corbin can be said to have contributed in introducing Sufism, especially the Sufism thought of Ibn `Arabi through his writing “Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn `Arabi”. This work further paved the way for Western studies and introductions to Sufism thought, especially philosophical Sufism.[[52]](#footnote-52) As stated by Mona Abaza in “Note on Hendry Corbin and Seyyed Hossein Nasr; Affinities and Diffrencess”, that Hendry Corbin and Seyyed Hossein Nasr are two figures who are credited with introducing Iranian philosophical thought in the East and in the West in the modern era. Especially Corbin, this figure is credited with introducing Mulla Sadra’s philosophical thoughts and the mysticism (Sufism) of Ibn `Arabi in the modern era.[[53]](#footnote-53) This character has a close relationship with Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Both of them have dedicated their thoughts to developing philosophical thought, especially Iranian Islamic philosophy.[[54]](#footnote-54)

1. **Annemarie Schimmel**

Annemarie Schimmel is one of the many western scientists who are serious about pursuing the study of Islamic Sufism. Orientalist born 7 April 1922 and died 26 January 2003 in Germany is an influential orientalist in the twentieth century. He wrote a lot about Islam and Sufism.[[55]](#footnote-55) He is a Nobel Peace Prize laureate from “the German Book Trade” in 1995 and is known as an Islamologist who is able to explain Islam well. His works entitled “Dechipering the Sings of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam” and “And Muhammad is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety” show his deep empathy for Islam. The publication of Salman Rusdhie’s “The Satanic Verses” was criticized by Annemarie Schimmel and she also gave support to the Islamic world for Salman Rusdhie’s death sentence. Annemarie Schimmel’s support later caused her nobel award to be criticized and became controversial.[[56]](#footnote-56)

Annemarie Schimmel is the first woman to serve as President of the International Association of the Study of Religion and is also a prolific writer, among her works relating to mysticism in Islam.[[57]](#footnote-57) These orientalist books are seen as an attempt to rectify Western misconceptions about Islam. Unlike most other orientalists, Schimmel had great sympathy for Islam. Therefore, in explaining and understanding Islam, Schimmel uses a different approach from other orientalists. He uses a phenomenological approach to see Sufism which is often misunderstood by some orientalists. Although this approach is not purely from himself and Schimmel admits this approach comes from Friedrich Heiler.[[58]](#footnote-58)

Schimmel was an activist for Rūmī’s Sufism. This figure spent 40 years on his research on Rūmī’s Sufism. He illustrates that the symptoms of Sufism are very broad, so that one will not be able to describe it completely and completely. Schimmel uses the symbol of knowledge to identify Sufism as Rūmī describes the knowledge of some blind people about an elephant. But none of these blind people can describe complete knowledge of the elephant.[[59]](#footnote-59) Annemarie Schimmel tries to provide an understanding that it is not easy to understand Islamic mysticism, so that it cannot be seen from one angle, and mysticism is not enough to be achieved intellectually, it needs to be understood from the basic roots and must be with open eyes - mysticism basically exists in all religions.[[60]](#footnote-60)

**POLARIZATION OF SUFISM IN THE MODERN WEST**

Marcia Hermansen, an expert on eastern thought in her writing Literary Production of Western Sufism, suggests that there are three polarizations of Sufism in the modern era that are developing in the west, namely hybrids Sufism, perenial Sufism and transplant Sufism.[[61]](#footnote-61)

Hybrid Sufism is a Sufism movement that still survives with the original sources of Islam. The hybrid Sufism movement also applies a blend of early Islamic doctrines (orthodoxy) with the practice of teachers (founders) of *ṭarīqah* teachings.[[62]](#footnote-62) Another characteristic of this Sufi movement is that there are efforts to transform and contextualize Sufism in Western socio-cultural life.[[63]](#footnote-63) This type still shows the close relationship between Sufism and the source of Islamic teachings and is involved in social life.[[64]](#footnote-64)

Referring to this Sufism principle, it can be stated that it resembles the principles of neo-Sufism. Neo-Sufism or modern Sufism is understood as an attempt to fuse Sufistic values with worldly life. The practice of neo-Sufism and modern Sufism wants the emergence of Muslim behavior that is proactive towards worldly issues and regenerates a positive view of the world.[[65]](#footnote-65) Followers of this movement mostly consist of immigrants and people who were born in new areas and have socialized with their new environment.[[66]](#footnote-66) Examples of hybrid Sufism practices (hybrid Sufism) can be found in the practice of the Naqsyabandiyyah Ḥaqqānī *ṭarīqah*. [[67]](#footnote-67)

The second form of the Sufism movement that developed as stated by Marcia Hermansen is the transplant type. The transplant group consists of diaspora Sufis who are sharia-oriented and try to practice and imitate the original practices of the Sufi tradition. Transplant Sufism is adopted by Sufi groups who seek to maintain the authenticity of Sufism in its original form.[[68]](#footnote-68) This Sufism was brought by Muslim immigrants from their area of origin to be later developed in the diaspora and is still traditional.[[69]](#footnote-69)

Transplant and hybrid have the same principle in Sufism, namely a return to Islamic orthodoxy. The two differ in their openness to transformational efforts and the contextuality of Sufism. The hybrid group was more exposed than the transplant group. The al-Aḥbasy *ṭarīqah* is an example of the type of Sufism transplants.[[70]](#footnote-70)

Perennial Sufism as a form of Sufism teaching that adheres to the concept of eternal truth which is the basis and framework of all religions or known as perennial Sufism.[[71]](#footnote-71) Perennial wisdom or also called perennial philosophy is a philosophical concept that has existed since pre-modern times, which is then claimed to still be actual today. The perennial concept, both in philosophy and Sufism, at least discusses the issue of the existence and reality of God as the Absolute Substance. Perennial also discusses religious plurality as a reality that cannot be avoided in human life.[[72]](#footnote-72)

The basic concept of perennial Sufism is attributed to the ontologist of perennial philosophy. Perennial philosophy holds that truth is undivided and absolute. From this one truth emerge other truths. The perennial wisdom approach is usually used in religious studies in terms of seeing and acknowledging the existence of other religions and beliefs. Perennial wisdom requires the attitude of religious adherents to be open (inclusive) not closed (exclusive) to the differences that exist between religions.[[73]](#footnote-73)

Perennial philosophy is a method used to find common ground for esoteric values (common vision) in tracing the historical chain of exoteric diversity of religions.[[74]](#footnote-74) In the context of perennial absolute truth, there is only one. The truth that comes from the One (God) radiates various other truths like the sun’s rays that shine on various petals and then the leaves will turn red when the sunlight is caught by a rose. This symbolization illustrates the radiance of the Absolute Light in various religions.[[75]](#footnote-75)

Sufism and *ṭarīqah* movements with a perennial pattern can be found in several *ṭarīqah* organizations such as “The Sufi Order International” which was founded by Pir Vilayat Khan and his son Zia Inayat Khan. Other *ṭarīqah* movements and groups that are also perennial schools are “the Society for Order Sufi Studies of Idries Shah”, founded by Idries Shah, and The Tradition organization founded by Idries Shah’s brother, Omar Ali Shah.[[76]](#footnote-76) The presence of Inayat Khan (1882–1927 AD) an Indian mystic with the teachings of his Sufi order can be widely accepted by Westerners (Westerners). Inayat Khan uses a perennial thinking approach and tries to offer a universal Sufism paradigm to the western world.[[77]](#footnote-77)

The Sufi order brought by Inayat Khan became an established Sufism movement in the West, especially North America and Europe between 1910 and 1926. This order was even brought to Australia so that during the 20th century this *ṭarīqah* had branches in almost all continents. Inayat Khan teaches Sufism in English and does not apply the rules of conversion to Islam before studying his *ṭarīqah*. This method is one of the factors that makes Sufism widely accessible to westerners. Inayat Khan’s nearly 50 years of teaching is the only one that Westerners know well.[[78]](#footnote-78)

The idea of universality in Sufism developed by Inayat Khan was more quickly accepted by Sufism enthusiasts in the west. The perennial method applied by Inayat Khan is an elaboration in the search for points of similarity between religions, although each religion is different, the truth is one. Inayat Khan argues that all religions are like various forms of water which will change its name when the water reaches different places. Water will turn into the water of rivers, seas, lakes—even though they all come from one essence, namely water. This is the same as religion, according to him, the aspects of religion are different but the essence is the same.[[79]](#footnote-79) According to him, Sufis never ask questions about someone's religion and beliefs.[[80]](#footnote-80)

Perennial ideas in Sufism were also developed by figures such as Rene Guenon, Frithjof Schuon, Martin Lings, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Titus Burckhardt. They are then known as perennial Muslim figures (Moslem Perennialist). This group took many Sufistic ideas from the Sufism of Ibn `Arabī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī. These two Sufis, namely Ibn `Arabī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī, are believed to have influenced the Western perspective on Sufism after knowing and associating with the Sufistic thoughts of these two medieval thinkers.[[81]](#footnote-81) As stated by William C. Chittick, the teachings of Ibn `Arabī’s Sufism are increasingly in demand in the west, especially after the expansion of two works by Hendry Corbin on Ibn `Arabī and Thoshihiko Izutsu, “Sufism and Taoism: Acomparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts”. Isutzu’s reading of Ibn `Arabī’s book “Fushush al-Hikam” is considered an in depth study of Ibn `Arabī’s thought.[[82]](#footnote-82)

Ibn `Arabī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī by Corbin are called *Fedeli d'amore* which is equivalent to the notion of *`Asīqūn*, *Muḥibbūn*, *Arbāb al-Hawa'*. This term is commonly used to describe and describe a servant who really loves Allah SWT.[[83]](#footnote-83) In particular, Ibn `Arabī—his teachings and figures are widely known in the West and even compared to great figures in the history of Western philosophy such as St. Thomas Aquinas. Western scholars describe the figure of Ibn `Arabī as follows:

“With a thriving Society, aplethora of critical studies and a quarterly Journal, Ibn `Arabī (or the *Syaykh al-Akbar*, te gerates master, as he is known in the Muslim world) has become associated with (to name but a few) quantum mechanics, Taoism, St Thomas Aquinas, Swedenborg, New Age mysticism, Kant and Chaos theory.”[[84]](#footnote-84)

Rūmī’s Sufism is also the main attraction in the development of Sufism in the west. Rūmī’s work “Mathnawi” is a work that is in great demand in the West because it contains the ideas and principles of human peace and security.[[85]](#footnote-85) The book “Mathnawi” encourages humans to be able to control themselves and be balanced (not in a hurry in a case) but to do proof. Peaceful messages of peace in the teachings of Sufism are what attracts and is suitable for a pluralistic western society.[[86]](#footnote-86)

The influence of Ibn `Arabī’s philosophical Sufism can be seen in the ideas of Sufism developed by Martin Lings. Martin Lings became an important figure in spreading the ideas of Sufism in this region. As a thinker with a perennial background, [[87]](#footnote-87) Martin Lings tries to offer Sufism to deal with the crises that occur in the modern century.[[88]](#footnote-88) Some of his Sufistic works such as, “What is Sufism”, “Return to the Spirit”, “Eleventh Hour”, “A Sufi Saint”, are some of Martin Ling’s works which are considered important in Sufism issues. In particular, his final work “A Return to The Spirit” contains many views of Martin Lings about the need for humans to return to religious traditions. As a Muslim, Martin Lings seeks to revive the traditions brought by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. as a reference for Muslims in dealing with their lives in the modern era.[[89]](#footnote-89)

Through this book Martin Lings also criticizes his teacher—Frithjof Schuon, about the transcendent unity of religions. Martin Lings disagrees with his teacher who thinks all religions are the same.[[90]](#footnote-90) For Martin Lings, although the divine religions originate from the same source, namely Allah SWT, each of them is different from one another in terms of worship. Martin Lings agrees that all esoteric divine religions have the same goal, namely to believe in Allah SWT. as God but exoteric there is an exclusivity that distinguishes one another.

**CONCLUSION**

In closing the discussion, it can be concluded that Sufism in the west developed in the 17th century and reached its peak in the 19th and 20th centuries which was developed by Western adventurers who had direct contact with Sufis, for example; John Gustave Agueli who became a follower of the Theosopichal Society and Rene Guenon who joined the Syadziliyyah congregation. Sufism also developed with the study and translation of Sufism texts. As for the Western figures (orientalists) who were instrumental in spreading the study of Sufism in the modern era, including; Louis Massignon, Arthur John Arberry, Hendry Corbin, and Annemarie Schimmel. The four orientalists view Sufism in a neutral manner, and are instrumental in providing an understanding of Sufism to Western society—as a science that has positive values. In the development of Sufism in the West in the modern era, there are 3 (three) polarizations of Sufism, namely: hybrid (hybrid Sufism), perennial (perenial Sufism) and transplants (transplant Sufism). This shows the adaptation of Sufism as one of Islamic scholarship with Western society.

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