# CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER EQUALITY: ANALYSIS OF JACQUES LACAN'S PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY ON AMINA WADUD'S THOUGHTS

**Nadhiraturrahmi Aidina[1]✉, Nada Rahmatina[2], Rijal Ali[3]**
[123]Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

| Keywords : | ABSTRACT |
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| *Amina Wadud, Jacques Lacan, Qur'an, Women, Psychoanalysis* | *This study aims to examine Amina Wadud's thoughts in her interpretation of the Qur'an using Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic approach. The literature review research method is used as a research approach that involves various sources of literature, including Amina Wadud's works, especially "Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective," as well as related literature that discusses Lacan's thoughts, Islamic feminism, and the interpretation of the Qur'an. Based on Lacan's mirror stage and his psychoanalytic concepts to analyze the construction of Amina Wadud's self-identity and gender roles in the interpretation of the Qur'an, it is found in the results of this study that there is identification related to gender identity, inequality, and rejection of patriarchal traditions in Amina Wadud's thoughts reflected in her interpretation. One of them is in QS. Al-Nisā [4]: 1, showing the construction of Amina Wadud's self-identity and gender roles in the interpretation of the Qur'an.* |
| **Kata kunci :** | **ABSTRAK** |
| Amina Wadud, Jacques Lacan, Qur'an, Perempuan, Psikoanalisis | Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pemikiran Amina Wadud dalam tafsirnya terhadap Al-Qur'an dengan pendekatan psikoanalisis Jacques Lacan. Metode penelitian kajian kepustakaan digunakan sebagai pendekatan penelitian yang melibatkan berbagai sumber literatur mencakup karya-karya Amina Wadud, terutama *"Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective,"* serta literatur-literatur terkait yang membahas pemikiran Lacan, feminisme Islam, dan tafsir Al-Qur'an. Berdasarkan Lacan's *mirror stage* dan konsep-konsep psikoanalisisnya untuk menganalisis konstruksi identitas diri dan peran gender Amina Wadud dalam interpretasi Al-Qur'an maka didapati dalam hasil penelitian ini bahwa adanya identifikasi terkait identitas gender, ketidaksetaraan, dan penolakan terhadap tradisi patriarki dalam pemikiran Amina Wadud tercermin dalam tafsirnya. Salah satunya terdapat dalam QS. Al-Nisā [4]:1, memperlihatkan adanya konstruksi identitas diri dan peran gender Amina Wadud dalam interpretasi Al-Qur'an. |

✉ Corresponding author :
Email Address : nadhiraturrahmiadn@gmail.com

## INTRODUCTION

The presence of Amina Wadud's interpretation cannot be separated from her subjectivity as a female scholar who fights for gender equality in Islam. The involvement of women in all aspects is an inevitability that cannot be avoided in the current era. Restrictive actions against women's space for movement will actually have serious impacts on various sectors of life. However, ironically, in some places, the restriction and limitation of women's participation in public spaces still occurs until present day. Among the causal factors is a gender-biased religious understanding. The assumption of women as second-class creatures, the cause of problems, and the stereotype of women's duties as mothers are some of the factors that shape and maintain gender-biased views. Responding to this phenomenon, Amina Wadud offered a new reading of the Qur'an that is friendly towards women. Like other interpretations that reflect the conditions and personal experiences of the interpreter, Wadud's interpretation is also influenced by the social, cultural, and academic contexts that surround it. Wadud, through a feminist hermeneutic approach, challenges traditional interpretations that she believes are gender-biased and rooted in patriarchal dominance in religious discourse.

Amina Wadud's thoughts were born from the dynamic interaction between her experiences as a Muslim woman in a society that often limits the role of women and her knowledge in religious studies. Studies related to Amina Wadud's interpretation are not something new. Previous studies that have similar material objects to this article can be mapped into three categories. *First*, studies that examine Amina Wadud's hermeneutics and views in general (Dewi, 2013)(Amin, 2020)(Bahri & Fiqria, 2022). *Second*, comparative studies that compare Amina Wadud with other figures (Khotibi, 2020) (Ai & Salaeh, 2022). *Third*, thematic studies that detail Amina Wadud's thoughts in small themes (Saida, 2013)(Ulum, 2017)(Zakiruddin & Sitorus, 2022). From this typology, Amina Wadudis interpretation tends to be studied as the final result without delving into the intellectual and social processes that form it. This approach often ignores the role of context in the development of an idea, even though the context is very influential in understanding the origins of thought and its relevance when applied in various different situations and environments.

Wadud's thoughts cannot be seen as something that emerged spontaneously. The assumption that the emergence of a thought cannot be separated from the subject's identity. Waduds thoughts on the interpretation of the Qur'an and the issue of gender equality are greatly influenced by her identity as a Muslim woman, academic, and feminist activist. This is also influenced by her social environment, education, and life experiences that place her at the intersection of Islamic tradition and the struggle with gender injustice experienced by Muslim women. Through her work *Qur'an and Woman,* Wadud constructs arguments to reinterpret the Qur'anic verses related to women from a more just and equal perspective. This study aims to examine the relationship between Amina Wadud's interpretation and the influence of the social and cultural environment that shapes her thinking. The focus of this study is formulated in three main problems. *First*, to examine Amina Wadud's biography related to her family background, education, and life experiences that influence her views. *Second*, to trace Amina Wadud's interpretation in interpreting the Qur'anic verses related to women, especially the issues of gender equality and justice. *Third*, this study aims to uncover the intellectual motivation behind Amina Wadud's feminist interpretation as reflected in her work. These problem formulation is designed to ensure that the research remains directed and focused on the initial goal, in order to critically understand Amina Wadud's thought that emerged as a response to her personal identity and the social context that surrounds her.

## METHOD

This study is a library research and uses a qualitative method. The data sources used in this study consist of primary and secondary sources. The primary source is obtained from her book entitled *Qur'an and Women: Rereading the Sacret Text from a Woman's Perpective* and several other literatures that contain explanations of Amina Wadud's biography. The secondary sources are other literatures related to this study. The data that has been obtained is then analyzed using Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory. This theory is used to analyze the relationship between Amina Wadud's interpretation products and her socio-cultural environment.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Jacques Lacan's Theory

His full name is Jacques Marie Emile Lacan. He was born on April 13, 1901 and was the first child of Emilie and Alfred Lacan (Patel, 2016, p. 1). Jacques Lacan is a psychoanalyst who is famous for developing a theoretical view of psychoanalysis, often called "Lacanian Psychoanalysis". The theories he developed were influenced by the thoughts of Sigmund Freud and the structuralism of Ferdinand de Saussure (Wijayati & R., 2021, p. 162). Lacan began his thinking with the foundation of Freudian psychoanalysis, but he later included elements of Saussure's structuralism. This can be seen in his understanding of consciousness as something that does not fully reach the point of "real". Lacan criticized the view of ego psychology which sees humans as central objects that have self-awareness. For him, consciousness is never fully actualized and is more like a process of "mirroring when the subject involves himself in reflecting on himself (Patel, 2016). In contrast to ego psychology, which humans are often seen as objects that have self-awareness, Lacan presents the concept of the subject of dualism. This view creates a gap or incompleteness in the subject. He emphasizes the existence of determinism between "the real" and "the symbolic". This can cause the subject to be trapped in the order of "the other" which constructs identity and reality (Zahid, 2019, p. 127).

Lacan wanted to develop Freud's theories which became an integral part of Freud's theory of psychosexual development. Lacan wanted to understand and re-arrange this concept according to his own theoretical framework. Therefore he tried to combine Freud's psychoanalytic concepts with elements of structuralism and linguistics. He identified three phases of development as representing the human psychic process. Each phase reflects the stage of individual development from a Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective. Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory is one of the most influential psychoanalytic theories of the 20th century. Lacan's theory offers a new perspective on the development of the human personality, especially on the role of language and symbolism in the formation of identity. Lacan's theory is based on three main concepts, namely:

1. *The Real*

The initial stage of subject development according to Lacan is called "the real". The real is an existential dimension that exceeds linguistic and symbolic representation which is unstructured, undefined, and cannot be fully represented by language (Lacan, 1999, p. 263). The real involves primary experience without mediation or interpretation, like human instinctual and instinctive experiences. In this phase, a baby, who is still dependent on another subject, such as the mother, only understands his needs and their fulfillment without realizing that he and the object of satisfaction are different entities. Lacan sees this as "a sense of self", where the baby does not yet have the ability to separate himself from the object of satisfaction. The real is the natural psychic condition of humans before the baby is able to distinguish himself from the object of satisfaction. This phase changes when the baby begins to distinguish himself from other objects and realizes his need to be recognized by "the other". As occurs through the so-called mirror phase, the baby wants recognition from other subjects to form his identity (Evans, 1996, p. 62).

2. *The Imaginary*

The imaginary is a reality dimension formed by images of self and other objects. These images are formed through the process of identification by individuals who view themselves and others as objects. This phase begins around the age of 6-18 months, where the baby begins to feel

himself as a split subject, but also as a whole unity. At this stage, the baby sees himself as if he were looking at himself in front of a mirror, forming an initial understanding that the image of himself in the mirror is his whole identity. At this stage, Lacan asserts that the structure of the subject is permanent and fixed. During this process, the baby is continuously attracted and pulled by his own reflection. The separation of self from other subjects, especially "mother" is seen in the baby's understanding of sex and gender roles. The baby will continue to try to achieve this fullness by achieving the ego ideal, which is obtained from identification with the reflection of the mirror and trying to match it with the concept of the self he wants (Evans, 1996).

3. *The Symbolic*

Symbolic is a dimension formed by the language system and social symbolism. Language becomes a sign of the subject's identity with the concept of "the other". The mirror phase describes the subject communicating with the duality of the imaginary and symbolic determining its subjectivity. The symbolic order contains laws and regulations that regulate desire, and the subject is always in the imaginary and symbolic level. Although the imaginary seems real, it is only an illusion of what happens at the symbolic level. Desire arises because the imaginary is released, while the subject is trapped in the symbolic. The subject lives with hidden requests and seeks satisfaction, but satisfaction always faces dissatisfaction because desire continues to be in the symbolic level that cannot fully satisfy it (Evans, 1996).

These three phase concepts help Lacan explore further the dualism in the human psyche, between what is real (*the Real*) and what is represented in language (*the Symbolic*). According to Lacan, human personality is formed through the interaction between these three dimensions. In the early stages of development, babies are in the Real dimension. Babies are not yet able to distinguish between themselves and other objects, and do not yet have a clear identity. In the next stage, babies enter the imaginary dimension. Babies begin to form images of themselves and other objects through the process of reflection. Babies see themselves in the mirror, and identify themselves with the image they see. In the final stage, babies enter the symbolic dimension. Babies begin to learn language and begin to enter the social order. This process will have an impact on the development of their identity. By learning language, babies can construct meanings, establish social relationships and be involved in the socio-cultural order.

Lacan argues that human identity is never fully crystallized. For him, identity is always in a continuous process of formation throughout life. This view is reflected in the ongoing conflict between individual identity and the dimension of *the Real*. This unstructured dimension of reality is a challenge to the formation of a stable identity. This shows the inability of humans to fully establish identity in a defined form. Lacan believes that incompleteness is the nature of human identity; incomplete identity creates a constant urge to search for and complete the missing part. Language and symbolism as part of the symbolic dimension act as sources of conflict in the process of identity formation. Language is not always able to fully convey reality or experience, thus the identity represented in language is always limited (Lacan, 1999).

**Biography of Amina Wadud**

The woman known as Amina Wadud Muhsin previously had the name Mary Teasley. She was born in a village in Baethesda, Maryland, United States on September 25, 1952 AD (Rusydiana & Azami, 2021, p. 90). At that time, the United States was in the post-World War II period. America was in turmoil with the civil rights movement, fighting for the rights of African-Americans, including women's rights. Amina Wadud was born into a religious family background that strongly adhered to Protestant Christianity. However, in other sources, it is said that her family had an Orthodox Christian background (Saeed, 2016, p. 326). Her father was a Methodist minister (Khotibi, 2020), while her mother was of black Arab-African descent (Arsal et al., 2020, p. 484). Wadud grew up in a poor family. She is the child of eight childreen, three girls and five boys (Baidawi, 2005, p. 109).

Amina Wadud converted to Islam when she was 20 years old in 1972, which she later considered as "Thanks Giving Day". The process of her conversion to Islam began with her interest in the concept of justice in Islamic teachings. In accordance with her hopes when she

converted to Islam to anticipate the avoidance of religious and social discrimination often experienced by African-American women (Arsal et al., 2020). Previously, Amina Wadud tried to hide her African-American heritage by wearing a hijab while living in America. In her article "American Muslim Identity: Race and Ethnicity in Progressive Islam", she differentiates between Indigenous Muslims of African-American descent and Immigrant Muslims from Arab and non-Arab countries. Wadud states that Indigenous Muslims are known as descendants of slaves from West Africa. In 1975, Wadud moved to Libya, where she experienced gender struggles related to her identity and Islamic practices. Wadud also built a network of Muslim women in Libya to promote women's rights as an effort for social and financial protection. Amina Wadud became active in speaking out and exploring gender issues in Islam. With this background, Amina Wadud has formed a critical and progressive view of the role of women in society and religion (Syamsuddin, 2008, p. 4).

Amina Wadud began her primary and secondary education in Massachusetts (Arsal et al., 2020). She obtained her bachelor's degree in religious studies at the University of Pennsylvania in 1975. After that, she continued her postgraduate education by completing a master degree at the University of Michigan in 1982 with a concentration in Near Eastern Studies. Amina Wadud's academic achievements continued to grow, she also earned a Ph.D. at the University of Michigan with a concentration in Arabic and Islamic Studies in 1992 (Wadud, 1999, p. 20). During this period, the Islamic world was experiencing political and social changes in various countries. Factors such as leadership transitions, independence movements, the development of social and political movements, economic conditions, regional conflicts, and the influence of globalization triggered changes in the political and social order in various Islamic countries. In this era, there was also the development of the Islamic Movement which involved various interpretations of the role of women in society and religion. In addition to pursuing formal education, Amina Wadud also showed her enthusiasm in pursuing informal education. She took advanced Arabic language skills at Cairo University, as well as Qur'an studies and interpretation at the same institution. Her search for Islamic knowledge also took her to Al-Azhar University, she added dimensions of scientific education in understanding religion and philosophy (Irsyadunnas, 2015, p. 130). Her desire to continue learning and understanding Islamic literature led her to receive an award as Professor of Islamic Studies in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Virginia Commonwealth University. (Junaedi et al., 2019, p. 657). This recognition reflects her contribution in shaping Islamic views at the academic level, and her passion for expanding Islamic understanding and knowledge.

Amina Wadud's life did not always run smoothly. Having been married several times and being the mother of five children, she experienced economic difficulties after divorcing her husband. Apart from teaching as a substitute teacher in public schools and Islamic schools in Philadelphia, she was also involved in the second wave feminist movement in Europe, especially on issues of women's welfare in European Muslim societies. As a very productive Muslim feminist figure, Amina Wadud actively responded to gender issues, particularly the patriarchal treatment that befell women. Her desire to respond to gender injustice was expressed through her works. Her most famous work is *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspevtive*. Through her research, she offers a reinterpretation of the Qur'anic verses that tend to be misogynistic. Her work has been published repeatedly and translated to various languages such as Turkish, Arabic, English, and Indonesian (Esack, 2015)

Amina Wadud's concern about gender issues that had been written in her first book was not enough to satisfy her intellectual desires. She continued to explore her dissatisfaction by exploring new dimensions of the unfair treatment of women in society. According to her, this treatment was increasingly rooted and marginalized women. In 2006, she continued her intellectual project by publishing her second book entitled *Inside the Gender Jihad, Women's Reform in Islam*. In the book, she created critical ideas about defending women's rights in Islamic intellectual history. Amina Wadud stated the need for reform in Islam and the need to reinterpret the verses of the Qur'an according to the times. These two works were produced after Amina Wadud had been a

widow for 30 years with 5 children, her sons named Muhammad and Khalilullah, and her daughters are Hasna, Sahar, and Alaa (Wadud, 1999).

Amina Wadud has also written many articles and essays discussing issues of gender, human rights, and pluralism. Some of Amina Wadud's famous articles and essays are "Qur'an and Woman in Comparative Perspective" (2007), this article presents a comparison between the interpretation of the role of women in the Qur'an with the perspectives of other religions, thus opening up space for interfaith dialogue. In her another essay entitled "Islam Beyond Patriarchy Through Gender Inclusive Qur'anic Analysis" (2009), Wadud discusses an inclusive analysis of the Qur'an towards gender that can overcome the dominance of patriarchy in the understanding of Islam. Another article "Gender Jihad in American Muslim Interpretive Traditions" (2011) provides a broader explanation regarding the interpretive tradition of American Muslims in dealing with gender issues. Amina Wadud also examines the Western feminist perspective on the Qur'an in her article entitled "Western Feminist Readings of the Qur'an: Transgressions and Transformations" (2013), in which she presents an innovative perspective on the role of women in Islam. In her essay "Islam, Justice, and the Political" (2015), Wadud examines the relationship between Islam, justice, and political dynamics (Mutrofin, 2013, p. 260).

Amina Wadud as an Islamic scholar did not escape being in the spotlight and received various controversial responses when she became a lady imam or female imam. In 2005, she led mixed Friday prayers with more than 100 male and female worshipers at the Episcopal St. John Cathedral in New York (Bakar, 2018, pp. 169–170). Her actions sparked a debate about women in Islamic worship. Diverse opinions among Muslims at that time led to divisions in views. Many condemned and rejected her actions from various Muslim circles around the world. As a result, Amina Wadud experienced consequences in the form of ostracization, defamation, and persecution. Amina Wadud also received repeated threats and was even the target of sharp criticism when facing attempts to overthrow her position at Virginia Commonwealth University. Some have declared her an apostate, an accusation that can result in the death penalty under Islamic law (Arsal et al., 2020). The sharp response and reaction of the world community towards Wadud was due to her controversial ideas and her steps in reconstructing the formulation of classical fiqh. However, Wadud's role was limited to being an Islamic thinker and not a Mujtahid in the field of fiqh (Ismail, 2015, p. 50). Amina Wadud's thoughts reflect her intellectual anxiety regarding injustice in society. Through her methodological approach in interpreting the Qur'an that focuses on gender and justice, she tries to redefine religious concepts that she considers no longer appropriate to the modern context, especially related to gender studies.

## Gender Equality: Amina Wadud's Interpretation

As a progressive Muslim thinker, Amina Wadud sees inequality between men and women as being caused by a gender-biased understanding of religious teaching. One of the important effort to eliminate this inequality is to renew and correct the interpretation of Qur'anic verses as an important source in forming a person's religious understanding. In her work, *Qur'an and Women: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perpective*, Amina Wadud attempts to look again at how the Qur'an views women through the Qur'an's explanation of the process of women's creation. Although there are differences when the Qur'an describes the creation of men and women, she believes that there is no fundamental difference in terms of the value given by God to both. There is no indication that women have fewer or more limitations than men. Amina Wadud emphasizes that women and men are two categories of humans who are given the same or equal attention and are endowed with the same or equal potential. The Qur'an does not differentiate between men and women in terms of creation, purpose, or the rewards it promises (Wadud, 1999).

The restriction of women's roles in private spaces and their participation in public spaces is partly caused by interpretations that tend to marginalize women. According to her, the Qur'an and its interpretation are two different things. It's just that the two things are often equated with the assumption that the interpretation of the Qur'an is a representation of the views of the Qur'an as a whole. The fact shows that interpretation is a reflection of the results of someone's reading of the Qur'an, which is influenced by subjectivity that cannot be removed from the person. Therefore,

Amina Wadud considers that there is no truly objective interpretation. Departing from this, she then uses her perspective as a woman to analyze the Qur'an (Wadud, 1999).

The feminine perspective she uses to analyze the Qur'an verses is supported by a holistic method which she claims produces new and fresh conclusions. The products of Qur'anic interpretation that she has encountered thus far tend to be traditional and reactive. Traditional works are presented atomistically and there is almost no attempt to identify themes and discuss the relationships between verses of the Qur'an thematically. There is almost no methodology to connect various ideas, syntactic structures, principles, or similar themes in the Qur'an. Slightly more advanced than traditional interpretation, Amina Wadud considers the reactive type of interpretation to come from women's awareness of their constraints as individuals and members of society that are often attached to the Qur'an. However, this awareness is still not enough if it is not accompanied by a comprehensive analysis. This results in the improvement of women's positions that they seek based on reasons and methods that are not in accordance with the Qur'anic view of women. This gap was entered by Amina Wadud by presenting a holistic interpretation, an interpretation that attempts to present a comprehensive and non-partial view of the Qur'an. To present an understanding of the Qur'an that is friendly to women, she proposed Fazlur Rahman's double movement hermeneutic method as a new offer in interpreting gender-biased Qur'anic verses. The three important aspects emphasized in it are (1) the context in which the Qur'an was revealed; (2) the grammatical composition of the text which includes how the Qur'anic text conveys the message it states; and (3) the worldview of the Qur'an (*weltanschauung*) (Mas'udah, 2018, p. 130).

According to Amina Wadud, the eradication of gender hierarchical inequality begins with the understanding of the creation of men and women as explained in QS. Al-Nisā [4]: 1 (Wadud, 1999). The word *nafs* in the verse grammatically means feminine, and is the antecedent of a feminine verb or adjective. However, conceptually, the word *nafs* is neither masculine nor feminine and is an essential part of everyone, both men and women (Unsi, 2022, p. 342). The same thing also applies in the meaning of the word *zawj* which is mentioned in the same place, QS. Al-Nisā [4]:1. Grammatically, the connotation of the word *zawj* is masculine and is the antecedent of a masculine verb or adjective (Unsi, 2022). In the conceptual framework, the word does not refer to masculine or feminine. In several mentions, apart from referring to humans, the word *zawj* is used for plants (QS. al-Rahman [55]: 52) and animals (QS. Hud [11]:40) (Junaedi et al., 2019). Starting from the possible meaning of the antecedent, Amina Wadud proposed a new meaning that is different from most commentators who interpret *nafs* as male, especially Adam and *zawj* as female or Eve. Amina Wadud concluded that the verse explains the origin of all humans is one *nafs*, which is part of a system of unity-pairs: *nafs* and its *zawj*. The pair in question is male and female (Wadud, 1999).

Following up on the previous interpretation, Amina Wadud stated that although humans were intentionally created in pairs of men and women, the Qur'an did not provide clear characteristics for each part of the pair. Starting from here, Amina Wadud put forward a new breakthrough in understanding the function of giving birth for a woman. According to her, although the Qur'an clearly describes the relationship between women and giving birth to children, this information refers to the view of the biological function of the mother, not to the psychological perception and parenting culture (Wadud, 1999). She felt that such an affirmation was necessary, considering that many people believed that women could only be mothers. Meanwhile, in the Qur'an itself, there is no indication that being a mother is absolute for women. Respect, sympathy, and responsibility towards mothers in QS. Al-Nisā [4]: 1 is a form of respect in general, this does not mean that giving birth is the main role of a woman. The role as a mother is often characterized by a negative stigma that tends to limit women's space to only the domestic sphere. One example is the leadership issue, where men are considered more suitable to be leaders, both in the family and in society (Wadud, 1999).

**Lacan's Theory Analysis of Amina Wadud's Thoughts**

Understanding of individuals can be described through three interrelated stages of development. These stages involve the reality phase, the imaginary phase, and the symbolic phase. All of these stages will form a cycle that can reflect the dynamics of human experience.

1. *The Real*

Amina Wadud's life in the real phase describes her as a whole person with strong Orthodox Christian beliefs from her family background. Her father, a Methodist minister, was *the little other* who shaped her personality in the real phase. She was born and raised during the height of the civil rights movement fighting for the rights of African-Americans, including women's rights. The historical context is closely related to the experiences and struggles of African-American women. At that time, indigenous Muslims were known as descendants of slaves from West Africa. This context then becomes a subconscious force that is embedded in every development of Wadud.

The real phase or reality of Amina Wadud is also reflected as a major challenge she faces as a thinker who changes traditional views on the role of women. Her innovative views trigger threats and exclusion, considering that Wadud is considered a manifestation of a reality that is difficult to change in society. These threats do not only come from the general public, but also from certain segments of the community or movement, which respond with social isolation and rejection of her controversial ideas. Wadud detailed that society still strongly adheres to a patriarchal culture, values that support male domination and limit women's roles continue to develop. Apart from that, she also emphasized that conservative religious traditions are the main obstacle to positive change. Strict interpretations of religious teachings can also hinder progress, particularly regarding gender equality. Despite facing resistance and obstacles, Wadud continues to struggle to open up space for more inclusive and progressive interpretations of religious teachings, even though this is not always well received by her environment.

2. *The Imaginary*

Amina Wadud went through a complicated journey in finding her identity. This phase is the imaginary phase of Amina Wadud. Her recognition as a Muslim woman and her decision to wear the hijab are expressions of an effort to adjust her self-image according to the expectations of society and her desired self-identification. With this choice, she tries to hide her origins or characteristics that may conflict with prevailing norms. The hijab becomes a form of protection and management of self-image. This reflects an effort to create a self-image that is in accordance with the norms recognized by society, especially regarding the identity of Muslim women. Behind Wadud's choice, there is also social pressure to meet the standards of expectations and existing norms. This can create tension between the desired identity and a possible different reality. At this imaginary stage, Amina Wadud not only faces efforts to build the identity she desires, but also experiences the dynamics between social expectations, religious identity, and the desire to understand and be accepted by the society in which she lives.

3. *The Symbolic*

The symbolic phase occurs when the emergence of a new interpretation that she presents regarding gender equality becomes the main symbol of resistance against patriarchal norms that still influence society. She proposes a new understanding by bringing the concept of gender equality into the symbolic environment. This action, her idea is not only an idea, but also a symbol of change that involves new interpretations and meanings related to the position of women in religious life. One of the concrete actions that placed Wadud in the symbolic phase was when she chose to become an imam, Wadud considered that the role of the imam was limited only to men. When Amina Wadud led mixed Friday prayers in New York in 2005, this was not only a practical action, but also a symbolic one. This action gave rise to debate and controversial reactions from the community, creating a symbol of change in the traditional interpretation of the role of women in Islamic worship. Her decision to become a "lady imam" was not only a real action, but also a symbol that broke established norms and expectations regarding gender roles in religious practice.

Amina Wadud's journey has not been without challenges and controversy, this reflects her struggle as a progressive thinker. She faced resistance from society to her controversial ideas and confrontation with prevailing norms. However, her efforts to bring about change, as well as the symbolism of the change she carried, made her a figure who reflects resistance to gender inequality and social injustice. This entire cycle reflects the efforts of a thinker to bring about change and redefine the norms that affect the role of women in society.

## CONCLUSION

Amina Wadud's journey reflects the cycle of individual development through the phases of reality, imaginary, and symbolism. Her reality phase is manifested in the steadfastness of her family's Orthodox Christian beliefs influenced by the socio-historical history of civil rights and African-American identity. Her imaginary phase involves the struggle to find identity as a Muslim woman, marked by her choice of hijab and social pressures. Her symbolism phase includes her controversial interpretation of gender equality when she became a lady imam, thus becoming a symbol of resistance to patriarchal norms in religion. Despite facing resistance and controversy, Amina Wadud's journey of thought reflects her struggle to create change and redefine norms that affect the role of women in society.

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