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Profiles of wives in *Hikayat Fartana Islam* and *Hikayat Siti Latifah*: A comparative literary study

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Abstract: *Hikayat Fartana Islam and Hikayat Siti Lathifah are two classical Nusantara manuscripts that preserve profound discourses on marital ethics, female agency, and spiritual salvation in Islamic thought. Although originating from distinct linguistic traditions, Malay and Acehnese, both texts construct romantic commitment not merely as a domestic contract, but as an existential nexus bridging human obligations and divine transcendence. This study aims to analyze the structure of marital discourse, representations of the ideal wife, and mechanisms of spiritual transformation across human and metaphysical entities in both manuscripts. Employing a qualitative descriptive method combined with comparative literature and philological text analysis, this study examines the edited texts and translations of both manuscripts. The findings reveal that while Hikayat Fartana Islam utilizes an instructive-didactic dialogue between the Prophet Muhammad and Fartana Islam to enforce reciprocal domestic duties and eschatological accountability, Hikayat Siti Lathifah individualizes these religious tenets through an intense narrative hagiography. In both texts, love operates across entities, connecting the mortal sphere of spousal relations to transcendent spiritual realms, where female marital fidelity, patience, and bodily sacrifice function as direct conduits for divine favor and spiritual salvation.*

Keywords: *comparative literature, Hikayat Fartana Islam, Hikayat Siti Lathifah, marital ethics, spiritual transformation*

INTRODUCTION

Oral literature and classical written traditions are forms of cultural heritage that encompass worldviews (Odularu et al., 2024), values (Pang & Wu, 2023), and social norms of a community (Gwerevende & Mthombeni, 2023). In the context of Southeast Asian Islamic history, classical manuscripts serve not only as historical repositories of vernacular languages but also as communicative mediums designed to transmit theological doctrine, ethical ideals, and sacred worldviews across generations (Muhardis, 2023). Within the Nusantara archipelagic sphere, the reception and vernacularization of Islamic teachings were profoundly mediated through regional literary genres, most notably the *hikayat*. The *hikayat* was rarely conceived as mere imaginative fiction; rather, it operated as a pedagogical instrument and an authoritative moral guide that framed everyday human encounters, especially the sacred covenant of marriage, within an expansive cosmological architecture.

In contemporary scholarship, the study of traditional domestic ethics in Indonesian classical literature has gained vital urgency against the backdrop of changing modern social realities. Modern socio-religious challenges, such as soaring divorce rates and the fragmentation of family institutions, frequently highlight an acute crisis in understanding the philosophical and spiritual underpinnings of marital partnerships (Prasetya, 2020). Statistical data from religious courts across Indonesia demonstrate

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consistent annual increases in divorce cases, often triggered by economic strains and disputes over spousal rights and obligations. While contemporary sociological inquiries address these phenomena through legalistic and empirical frameworks, they often overlook the rich historical-literary discourses that traditional societies utilized to foster marital harmony and psychological resilience. Classical manuscripts, preserved through centuries of scribal devotion, offer an indispensable window into how marital relationships were conceptualized not simply as legal contracts, but as sacred covenants intertwined with metaphysical consequences.

Among the wealth of surviving indigenous texts, *Hikayat Fartana Islam* (HFI) and *Hikayat Siti Lathifah* (HSL) stand out as exemplary treatises addressing spousal relationships, marital piety, and spiritual transformation. *Hikayat Fartana Islam*, composed in classical Malay using the Jawi script, preserves a didactic consultation between a prospective bride and the Prophet Muhammad, outlining the spiritual merits, moral responsibilities, and cosmic perils governing conjugal life. In parallel, *Hikayat Siti Lathifah*, an indigenous Acehnese text recorded in poetic Jawoe meter, dramatizes the life of an ascetic woman whose initial reluctance toward earthly matrimony is transformed into a heroic journey of conjugal devotion, ascetic restraint, and posthumous heavenly reward. Although both manuscripts share the common thematic core of the "ideal wife" (*citra istri salehah*) in Islam, they approach this ideal through distinct linguistic mediums, structural stylistics, and narrative strategies.

The novelty of this comparative investigation lies in its holistic synthesis of philological critique and comparative literary analysis, examining how love and duty operate "across entities." Existing studies on *Hikayat Fartana Islam* have predominantly focused either on single-manuscript philological editions or localized legal inquiries into spousal obligations (Partiningsih, 2003; Setyawati, 2014). Similarly, initial studies on *Hikayat Siti Lathifah* have primarily remained within the boundaries of descriptive single-text transliteration and cataloging (Rizwanah, 2023). A comprehensive comparative framework that places these two seminal texts into critical dialogue, juxtaposing the didactic question-and-answer structure of the Malay tradition with the hagiographic, narrative-driven Acehnese verse, has not yet been undertaken. Furthermore, reading these texts through the prism of *"love across entities"* allows us to decipher how physical human love is mediated by divine commands, encounters with spiritual emissaries (such as the Prophet, angels, and eschatological visions), and personal spiritual transformation. This study fills that scholarly void by elucidating the profound convergence and artistic divergence between two regional treasures of Indonesian literary heritage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Narratives depicting love that traverses ontological and existential boundaries are present across diverse global media and cultural contexts. In theoretical discourse, romantic narratives that intersect with metaphysical alterity inevitably probe the limits of the self, agency, and cosmic responsibility. Rajan (2010) argues that romantic narrative form inherently harbors an ontological tension between empirical, mundane existence and an aspirational, transcendental order. Romantic trajectories compel protagonists into encounters that destabilize self-sufficiency, demanding an inward

surrender or ethical elevation. Song (2009) similarly investigates how identity and duality operate within aesthetic frameworks, observing that when two divergent subjectivities or existential conditions meet, the resulting synthesis creates a liminal space wherein neither identity remains unchanged. In literature dealing with sacred ethics, the encounter between human subjects is frequently mirrored by a higher vertical relationship with the divine or supernatural cosmos.

Beyond human-centered narratives, love that transcends physical boundaries has been documented in relational studies across natural and ecological systems. For instance, in Yunnan flower cultivation, small-scale farmers construct affective and kinship relationships with flora through bodily perceptions of botanical needs, illustrating how care, devotion, and affective bonds can extend across species boundaries (Sun, 2022). Furthermore, inquiries into sacred sites emphasize that spiritual transformation occurs at the intersection of material human action and metaphysical landscapes (Verschuuren, 2010). Natural and domestic spaces become biocultural sanctuaries when invested with transcendent meaning. In Eastern metaphysical frameworks, the non-dual interpenetration of personal consciousness and universal divine reality forms the core of spiritual liberation (Yeats, 1961). Within Islamic mystical theology, love (*mahabbah* or *'isyq*) is the supreme gravitational energy of creation; earthly human affection (*hubb*) is conceptualized as an allegorical ladder (*al-majaz*) through which the soul ascends toward genuine divine realization (*al-haqiqah*).

However, in classical Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and traditional didactic literature, marital love is also situated within explicit social, legal, and patriarchal structures. Critical feminist examinations of traditional Islamic texts, such as those synthesized by Abdul-Rahim (2020) in assessing the foundational works of Fatima Mernissi, demonstrate how socio-religious texts historically negotiated male-female dynamics. These texts established marital frameworks where female obedience and domestic devotion were systematically intertwined with spiritual salvation and social order. In classical Nusantara literature, this intersection produced texts that were simultaneously spiritual treatises and manuals of domestic conduct.

In the field of Indonesian philology, the textual transmission of religious wisdom relies on the rigorous recovery and contextual interpretation of ancient manuscripts (Baried et al., 1994; Djamaris, 2002; Ikram, 1997; Suryani, 2012). Both Malay and Acehnese literary environments produced distinct responses to Islamic marital philosophy. In Malay literature, didactic prose manuals emphasized direct prophetic transmission and explicit ethical balance (Sangidu, 2016). Conversely, Acehnese literary tradition favored rhythmic poetic narratives (*hikayat*) that transformed theological doctrines into evocative, narrativized examples (L.K. Ara, 2013). By evaluating *Hikayat Fartana Islam* and *Hikayat Siti Lathifah* through this comparative and symbolic theoretical lens, we can comprehend how traditional Nusantara authors conceptualized the marriage covenant as a spiritual crucible where mortal spousal commitment intersects with heavenly salvation.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive, qualitative, and comparative narrative method integrated with philological text analysis (Josselson & Hammack, 2021; Sutopo, 2002).

The primary objective is to reveal the structural organization, symbolic representations, and spiritual transformations embedded within the marital discourses of *Hikayat Fartana Islam* and *Hikayat Siti Lathifah*. A comparative literary approach (*sastra bandingan*) is utilized to identify thematic convergences, ideological resonances, and stylistic divergences between two distinct cultural and linguistic traditions within Islamic Nusantara.

The research objects and data sources comprise two classical manuscripts preserved in national and regional archives. The first source is the Malay manuscript *Hikayat Fartana Islam* (HFI), preserved at the Academy of Malay Studies Library, University of Malaya, Malaysia, under call number MSS 2. This manuscript, written in Jawi script on European paper, consists of 7 pages inscribed in *naskhi* calligraphy. Comparative catalog references include copies held at the National Library of Indonesia (Perpusnas ML 42 D, ML 388 D, ML 576) (Behrend, 1998; Ronkel, 1909; Sutaarga et al., 1972). The second data source is the Acehnese manuscript *Hikayat Siti Lathifah* (HSL), cataloged under inventory number 07.285/2250 at the Museum of Aceh, Banda Aceh. The HSL manuscript is a unique codex (*codex unicus*) comprising 20 folios (18 written pages) inscribed on watermarked European paper (dated to circa 1710) in Acehnese verse using the Jawoe script (Rizwanah, 2023).

The research data consist of textual units, including lexical items, phrases, sentences, rhymed couplets, and structural narrative episodes, that delineate marital expectations, female behavior, spousal rights and obligations, supernatural interventions, and spiritual reward or punishment. Data collection was carried out through systematic philological steps: physical manuscript description, text transcription/transliteration, content extraction, and comparative categorization. Data reduction focused on identifying shared motifs such as prophetic advice, washing the husband's feet, marital permission, sexual fidelity, trials of illness and death, and eschatological rewards.

Data analysis followed an interactive analytical model consisting of continuous data reduction, thematic display, and grounded hermeneutic interpretation. Thematic categorizations were cross-referenced against Islamic scriptural sources cited within the manuscripts, specifically Quranic verses (e.g., Surah Ar-Rum: 21, An-Nisa: 34, Al-Baqarah: 223, Al-Isra: 23, Al-Ahzab: 33) and prophetic traditions (e.g., *jannah al-mar'ah tahta aqdam zawjiha*). Textual validity was achieved through philological criticism, internal consistency checks across linguistic variants, and source triangulation with authoritative regional dictionaries, particularly the *Kamus Aceh-Indonesia* (Bakar, 1985).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The comparative analysis of *Hikayat Fartana Islam* and *Hikayat Siti Lathifah* demonstrates that both classical texts formulate marital life not merely as a worldly socio-legal contract, but as a primary spiritual vehicle through which human beings, particularly women, attain transcendent salvation. Despite sharing an identical core objective of promoting marital stability, mutual harmony, and spousal fidelity in

accordance with Islamic teachings, the two manuscripts diverge significantly in their structural genre, communicative strategy, character depiction, and stylistic execution.

Hikayat Fartana Islam presents a prescriptive, pedagogical discourse structured entirely around an extended catechistic dialogue (*tanya-jawab*) between the female seeker, Fartana Islam, and the Prophet Muhammad. In this text, conjugal duties are enumerated in an orderly, legalistic, and didactic manner, where each physical act of domestic service is explicitly paired with an extraordinary eschatological reward or terrifying punishment. In contrast, *Hikayat Siti Lathifah* embeds identical theological and ethical injunctions within an emotive biographical narrative. Siti Lathifah is not merely a passive recipient of advice; she is an individualized literary protagonist whose dramatic life trajectory, from mystical renunciation of marriage, to absolute conjugal self-abnegation, to posthumous martyrdom, serves as a living embodiment of the texts' ideals.

The primary comparative dimensions and findings of both texts are systematically mapped in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Comprehensive Philological and Thematic Comparison of *Hikayat Fartana Islam* and *Hikayat Siti Lathifah*

Analytical Dimension	**Hikayat Fartana Islam (HFI)**	**Hikayat Siti Lathifah (HSL)**
Language & Script	Classical Malay; Jawi script (*khat naskhi*)	Acehnese language; Jawoe script (*khat naskhi*)
Manuscript Status	Multiple witnesses (*naskah jamak*; UM MSS 2, Perpusnas ML 42 D, etc.)	Unique codex (*codex unicus*; Museum of Aceh 07.285/2250)
Textual Structure	Instructive-didactic dialogue (*soal-jawab*) between Fartana and the Prophet	Poetic narrative (*sanja'* rhymed verse) with a linear plot: Introduction, Life Narrative, Conclusion
Protagonist Role	Inquiring seeker; representative archetype of prospective brides	Active spiritual agent; ascetic saint (*wali*) undergoing rigorous marital testing
Concept of Spiritual Love	Horizontal spousal duty directly linked to vertical divine reward (*surga/pahala*)	Ascetic love for God redirected into unconditional devotion to her mortal husband (*Zubir*)
Domestic Servitude Motifs	Washing feet (reward of camels/palaces); immediate obedience; cheerful speech	Washing/drying feet with hair; burning hair as lamp fuel; spatial confinement
Inter-entity Dynamics	Prophetic counsel mediating between human marriage and eschatological realities	Prophetic intervention, angelic descent at burial, post-mortem vision of paradise/hell
Eschatological Imagery	Purity of faces like full moons vs. faces turned black as coal with pus and blood	Assembly of houris (*bidadari*) vs. woman with a dragon (*uleue naga*) piercing her breast
Contemporary Relevancy	Mitigating divorce rates through reciprocal marital duty and mutual self-control	Cultivating marital resilience, steadfast fidelity, and spiritual mindfulness

As shown in Table 1, both texts operate at the intersection of terrestrial human relationships and transcendent metaphysical realities. While *Hikayat Fartana Islam* provides the explicit legislative blueprint for marital harmony, *Hikayat Siti Lathifah* supplies its profound narrative and emotional realization.

Discussion

Cross-Entity Love Narrative

In classical literary theory, romantic narratives that intersect with metaphysical alterity inevitably probe the limits of the self, agency, and cosmic responsibility. Beyond human-centered narratives, love that transcends physical boundaries has been documented in relational studies across natural and ecological systems. For instance, in Yunnan flower cultivation, small-scale farmers construct affective and kinship relationships with flora through bodily perceptions of botanical needs, illustrating how care, devotion, and affective bonds can extend across species boundaries (Sun, 2022). In a parallel manner, within *Hikayat Fartana Islam* and *Hikayat Siti Lathifah*, marital romance is never confined to an isolated, mundane space between two mortal bodies. Rather, marital devotion functions as a trans-entity bridge connecting the terrestrial realm of daily labor to the celestial realm of divine pleasure, angelic witnesses, and eschatological accountability.

In *Hikayat Fartana Islam*, the narrative begins with an existential inquiry regarding marriage:

> *"Bismillahirrahmānirrahīm... tatkala mengadap Baginda Rasulullah Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam. Maka ujar Fartana Islam: 'Ya Rasulullah, hamba datang kepada Sayid hendak bertanya akan peri orang yang bersuami dahulu kala, adapun sekarang ini banyaklah orang hendak akan hamba.' Sabda Rasulullah: 'Sungguh kamu hendak bersuami?' Maka disahut Fartana Islam sebut: 'Inilah maka hendak hamba datang kepada Sayid hendak bertanyakan peri orang yang bersuami dahulu kala...'"* (HFI).

> "Bismillahirrahmānirrahīm... upon meeting the Messenger of Allah (Rasulullah) Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam, Fartana Islam said: 'O Messenger of Allah, I have come to you to ask about the nature of those who were married in times past; for at present, there are many who wish to marry me.'
> The Messenger of Allah replied: 'Do you truly wish to take a husband?' Fartana Islam answered: 'That is precisely why I have come to you—to inquire about those who were married in times past...'" (HFI).

Here, the act of entering into marriage is framed not merely as a personal social choice, but as a momentous transition that requires prophetic authorization and metaphysical comprehension. Fartana does not seek worldly counsel regarding financial contracts; she seeks the *peri*—the intrinsic spiritual essence and eternal implications—of marital union. The love that Fartana is about to enter is an inter-entity covenant: by submitting to her mortal husband, she directly engages the divine presence of Allah. The

text repeatedly emphasizes that the physical body of the husband becomes the site through which the wife touches transcendent grace:

> *"Ya Fartana Islam, barang siapa perempuan membasuh kaki suaminya maka dibalaskan Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala sebuah mahligai dianugerahkan Allah akan perempuan itu, bermula di dalam mahligai itu lima ratus anak-anakan... bertitahkan ratna mutu manikam akan mutiara bercahaya-cahaya di dalam surga"* (HFI, MSS 2: 3).
>
> "O Fartana Islam, for any woman who washes her husband's feet, Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala shall reward her by bestowing upon her a palace; within this palace, there shall be five hundred figures—adorned with precious gems and radiant, luminous pearls—situated in Paradise" (HFI, MSS 2: 3).

In this remarkable passage, washing a human husband's feet is transformed into a cosmic currency that builds celestial palaces (*mahligai*) adorned with gems in paradise. The terrestrial act dissolves the divide between physical service and spiritual ascension. The human spouse is not merely a social partner; he serves as the ontological mediator of the wife's spiritual transformation.

Conversely, *Hikayat Siti Lathifah* dramatizes this cross-entity dynamic through a profound psychological and theological struggle. Siti Lathifah initially experiences romantic desire only toward the divine entity:

> *"Teuma jaweub Siti Lathifah,*
> *bèk that gundah dua digata*
> *Dilôn hai dua bèk ta peu kawén,*
> *hana meuchén kan judonya*
> *Hana nafsukan ureueng lakoe,*
> *lazat kamoe kan Allah ta'ala\"* (HSL).
>
> "Then Siti Lathifah answered,
> don't be too nervous you two\
> Dilon hai two do not marry,
> I don't know what to do with judonya\
> There is no husband's passion,
> you are the delight of Allah\" (HSL).

Her declaration that her soul's *lazat* (spiritual ecstasy) belongs solely to Allah reflects the classical Sufi tradition of ascetic renunciation (*zuhd*), evoking the historical archetype of Rabiah al-Adawiyah. Siti Lathifah perceives mortal men as potential distractions that might sever her uninterrupted communion with the divine. Her transformation from an ascetic solitary mystic into a dedicated wife requires a total reorientation of her theological worldview, executed directly by the Prophet Muhammad:

"Lom meusabda Rasulullah,
hai Lathifah ngö calitra
Jannat al-mar'ah tahta aqdam zawjiha
Syiruga ureueng binoe beuna ta paham,
diyub qidam judo gata
Meung h'an suami hai Lathifah,
sia payah 'ibadat gata
Jakalèe siribee thon bakti keu Tuhan,
kan judo tan bakti gata
'Ibadat keu Tuhan h'an meusampoe,
kan suami kureueng mulia\" (HSL).

"The Messenger of Allah said,
hi Lathifah this story\
Paradise al-mar'ah throne of the old man
Heaven's wife should be understood,
Down throws the judo knife\
If you don't have a husband, Lathifah,
it's hard to 'worship you\
A thousand years of devotion to God,
you judo without your devotion\
'Worship of God is infinite,
the husband is less noble\" (HSL).

The prophetic instruction establishes that in the economy of Islamic salvation, female spiritual perfection cannot bypass human domestic relations. The divine decree demands that vertical love for God must be authenticated through horizontal devotion to the husband. By accepting this prophetic counsel, Siti Lathifah consents to marry Zubir, deliberately turning her domestic life into an altar of sacred devotion. Her love across entities is achieved by recognizing the divine will embodied within her mortal spouse.

Structural Didacticism versus Narrative Hagiography

A critical divergence between the two manuscripts lies in their structural architecture and aesthetic methodology. *Hikayat Fartana Islam* adopts a strictly didactic, catechistic model. The entire text advances through the rhythmic recurrence of Fartana's formulaic inquiry: *"Ya Rasulullah, adakah lain daripada itu?"* (O Messenger of Allah, is there anything other than that?). This pedagogical inquiry-response mechanism serves a vital mnemonical and didactic purpose within classical Malay oral-written transmission (Sangidu, 2016). The Prophet's replies are structured as direct legalistic maxims, juxtaposing symmetrical pairs of virtues and vices:

Immediate Obedience vs. Neglect

Answering the husband's call promptly yields divine blessings equal to the hairs on her body, whereas intentional delay results in seventy years of torment in the flames of hell (HFI, MSS 2: 1).

Cheerfulness vs. Contempt

Speaking gently to the husband brings the spiritual merit of forty years of continuous litanies (*tasbih, tahlil, and selawat*), while turning away in disgust when kissed causes the wife's face to be blackened like charcoal on the Day of Judgment (HFI, MSS 2: 2–3).

Fidelity vs. Betrayal

Fulfilling the husband's rights elevates the woman alongside Fatimah az-Zahra, whereas committing adultery behind his back casts her into the highest pit of hellfire (HFI, MSS 2: 3–4).

This binary rhetorical strategy leaves no room for narrative ambiguity. *Hikayat Fartana Islam* operates as an explicit behavioral catalog designed for direct community instruction.

In sharp contrast, *Hikayat Siti Lathifah* embeds these identical theological tenets within an evocative, tripartite poetic narrative consisting of an *exordium* (introduction), a biographical *batang tubuh* (narrative body), and an eschatological *kolofon* (conclusion) (Rizwanah, 2023). Rather than presenting abstract principles, the Acehnese author crafts complex dramatic scenes where the protagonist's faith is tested under severe physical and emotional duress.

The aesthetic pinnacle of this narrativization is the extraordinary episode where Siti Lathifah burns her own hair to illuminate her husband's meal:

"'Oh lheuh po ti ji rah tangan,
Zubir makan malam jula
Zubir makan Siti hadap,
na sikeujab padam pelita
Zubir makan dalam seupot,
Siti ji yup apui sigra
Siti ji yup pantas-pantas,
siulah h'an jitém nyala
Apui ji yup hingga hu lé,
lalu ji uree ngon rambutnya
Rambut ji lhap dalam minyeuk,
lalu jitôt ka meunyala
Rambut jihu ka miseue dien,
na ban tanglong peungeuh cahaya
Zubir kalen hireuen sangat,
salèh keuramat aneuk Anshari\" (HSL).

"'Oh after the owner of the hand,
Zubir dinner july\
Zubir eats Siti face,
for a moment turn off pelita\
Zubir eats in the dark,
Siti put out the fire immediately\

Siti ji yup deservedly,
please don't want to burn\
The fire burns until it burns,
then rubbed it with her hair\
Hair is drowned in oil,
then burn to ignite\
His hair is like dien,
there is a light source\
Zubir looked very surprised,
pious son of Anshari\" (HSL).

This scene functions as a brilliant literary synthesis of domestic obligation and mystical miracle (*karamah*). The failure of the household lamp creates a crisis of domestic hospitality. Rather than allowing her husband to eat in darkness, Siti Lathifah dips her tresses into lamp oil and ignites them. Miraculously, her hair burns brightly like a ceremonial lantern (*tanglong raya*) without consuming her flesh or causing pain. This episode elevates spousal service into a somatic miracle. Her husband Zubir recognizes this act not merely as wifely compliance, but as undeniable evidence of sainthood (*keuramat*). The text demonstrates that absolute marital devotion does not diminish female spiritual stature; instead, it becomes the very medium through which supernatural grace is manifested.

Liminality, Spatial Confinement, and the Crucible of Fidelity

Both manuscripts rigorously examine the theme of female spatial mobility, framing the threshold of the household as a crucial boundary between spiritual honor and moral chaos. In *Hikayat Fartana Islam*, the restriction on mobility is framed as a mandatory requirement of spousal permission:

> *"Maka sabda Rasulullah: 'Ya Fartana Islam, barang siapa perempuan puasa tiada memberitahu akan suaminya yang puasa itu, tiada diperkenankan Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala...'"* (HFI).
>
> "Then the Prophet said: 'O Fartana Islam, whatever woman fasting does not tell her husband who fasts, not pleased Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala ...'" (HFI).

The manuscript warns that engaging in supererogatory spiritual acts (such as voluntary fasting) or leaving the domicile without the husband's explicit knowledge invalidates the woman's piety. The domestic space is envisioned as an ordered moral sanctuary, protecting the wife from external moral pollution and upholding household stability.

In *Hikayat Siti Lathifah*, this ethical injunction is escalated into an agonizing moral crucible that tests the protagonist's loyalty to its ultimate limits. When Zubir must travel to Mecca to claim his paternal inheritance, he leaves an unbending injunction:

> *"Hai Lathifah deungö kamoe,*

bak tempat nyoe dudok gata
Nyan amanah bèk ta ubah,
lôn woe u Mekkah jak tueng areuta
Peu nyang kheundak talakèe jinoe,
yoh na kamoe judo gata
Digata bèk meuminah bak tempat,
melainkan shalat ngon istinja'\" (HSL).

"Oh Lathifah listen to us,
here you sit\
That trust should not be changed,
I'm going to Mecca to earn money\
What do you want to ask now,
when you have your judo\
Digata doesn't move like a place,
but prayer and intercession'\" (HSL).

Shortly after Zubir's departure, Siti Lathifah's mother arrives with devastating news: her father is mortally ill and desperately wishes to see his daughter for the last time. Siti Lathifah is thrust into a profound ethical dilemma between filial affection (*birr al-walidayn*) and marital fidelity to her husband's trust (*amanah*). When the mother appeals to the Prophet Muhammad to grant a dispensation, the Prophet upholds the absolute sanctity of the husband's covenant:

"Maka sabda Rasulullah,
jaweub neu sah u bak nisa
Hai perempuan ibu Lathifah,
darohaka kan Allah ku surôhnya
Ku yu darohaka kan suami?,
tiga kali tanyong sabda
... Jakalèe maté bapa jih nyan,
Allah peu ampôn barang desya
Desya gata desya ayah gata,
geu bôh lam Syiruga
Seubab bakti Siti Lathifah,
akan Allah ngon judonya\" (HSL).

"So the words of the Apostle,
your answer is valid\
Dear daughter of Lathifah,
rebellion against Allah.
Whose husband is a nobleman?,
three times asked words\
... The jackal died of his father,
Allah forgives sinful things\

Your sin is your father's sin,
thrown into Heaven\
Because of the devotion of Siti Latifah,
will be God with his judo\" (HSL).

The prophetic judgment reveals a radical theological hierarchy: by honoring her absent husband's command, Siti Lathifah not only secures her own salvation, but her profound fidelity acts as a vicarious atonement that forgives the sins of her dying father and mother, guaranteeing their entry into paradise. The spatial confinement of her room, which could easily be read as an oppressive domestic imprisonment, is reframed by the narrative as an ascetic retreat (*khalwah*). Her patient endurance transforms a painful familial separation into an act of supreme spiritual intercession. Her father dies without seeing her, yet he passes away in total spiritual contentment (*rida*), praising Allah for bestowing upon him a daughter of such unyielding moral integrity.

Spiritual Metamorphosis, Posthumous Fidelity, and Eschatological Visions

The ultimate demonstration of love across entities culminates in the texts' eschatological resolutions, where the boundaries between life, death, and eternity are dissolved. In *Hikayat Fartana Islam*, the transformation is framed through celestial promises: faithful wives are promised radiant visages on the Day of Resurrection, shining more brilliantly than the full moon of the fourteenth night (*bulan purnama empat belas hari bulan*), and are granted companionships with Fatimah az-Zahra in the seventh tier of Paradise (*surga Jannah an-Naim*) (HFI, MSS 2: 3–4).

In *Hikayat Siti Lathifah*, this spiritual metamorphosis is dramatized through Siti Lathifah's steadfast refusal to compromise her conjugal bond even after her husband's death. Following Zubir's passing, a distinguished companion of the Prophet, Ahmad Muda, falls deeply in love with her virtues and approaches the Prophet to solicit her hand in marriage. When the Prophet sends Bilal as an emissary to deliver the proposal, Siti Lathifah weeps and unequivocally rejects the suitor:

"Taba seumah lôn ngon saleuem,
diyub qidam Nabi kita
Kareuna ulôn ka suami,
h'an lé neu bri séb dum nyang ka
Sidroe ureueng lakoe,
h'an lé kamoe meuduek rukha
Kaséb Zubir keu suami,
bèk Allah bri paléng muka
Di donya kan trôh akhirat,
beureukat mu'jizat Nabi kita
Hareuem la-en ureueng laki,
dum sinaroe h'an meurila\" (HSL).

"Bring me greetings,
The Prophet is the one who kills the diyub.

Since I’m married,
you won't give me enough\
A husband,
you don't have to sit down anymore\
Zubir's husband,
don't Allah give you the first\
In this world the hereafter,
thanks to the miracle of our Prophet\
Hareuem other men,
the moon doesn't shine\” (HSL).

Her refusal establishes that for Siti Lathifah, marriage is an eternal, indissoluble bond. Zubir remains her singular, eternal spouse across all ontological realms, spanning the mortal world (*donya*), the intermediate realm (*barzakh*), and the afterlife (*akhirat*). Distressed by Ahmad Muda's continuous, well-intentioned visits to her perimeter, Siti Lathifah performs two cycles of prayer and supplicates for her own soul to be taken so that she may avoid any potential spiritual contamination:

“Ya Illahi bu Ya Rabbi,
po ku tabri ban ku pinta\
Jakalèe neu chén ngon ta sayang,
malaikat tron jak tueng nyawa\
Tabri beu matée ku hai Rabbi,
*bèk teugoe-goe lé lam donya**”* (HSL).

“O Divine Lord of Lord,
Who love all what we ask\
Don’t be afraid with our love,
Angels came down to take our soul\
Give me death, Ya Rabbi,
Don’t be afraid of the world\” (HSL)

Her death is met with an extraordinary supernatural response: thousands of angels descend from heaven to wash, shroud, and perfume her body. Her funeral is attended by the Prophet and his companions, solidifying her status as a crowned saint of heavenly devotion.

The narrative concludes with an eschatological dream-vision experienced by Ahmad Muda after reciting the Quran at her grave for forty-four consecutive days. In his vision, Ahmad witnesses the contrasting fates of souls in the hereafter. Faithful men and women are seen reclining in exquisite heavenly assemblies, served by celestial maidens (*bidadari*) holding Chinese fans (*kipah cina*). However, amidst these celestial splendors, Ahmad sees a horrifying sight:

“Teutapi perempuan kesukaran,
darohaka akan suaminya\

Neubrie bala uleh Tuhan,
bak dada perempuan uleue naga
Ahmad tanyong bak perempuan,
peu nyan tuan bak dadanya
Peu ka sebab bala bak Tuhan,
dipacokkan uleue bak dada
Jaweub perempuan tanyong Ahmad,
sit tan khidmat lôn akan zawja
Lôn keu Tuhan sangat bakti,
akan suami kureueng mulia
Nyoe keu balah lôn bak Tuhan,
dipacokkan uleue naga\" (HSL).

"But women of joy,
rebellious will her husband\
God bless you,
on the female breast of a dragon snake\
Ahmad asked the woman,
what is that master on his chest\
What is the cause of the Lord's calamity,
pinned snake on chest\
Ahmad's wife answered,
sit without my service will be married\
I am very devoted to God,
will husband be less noble\
This is my vengeance on the Lord,
crowned with dragon snakes\" (HSL).

This terrifying image of a woman whose pious vertical devotion to God was undermined by her arrogance and lack of service (*khidmat*) toward her earthly husband, resulting in a venomous dragon (*uleue naga*) piercing her breast, brings the narrative full circle. It reaffirms the overarching thesis shared by both *Hikayat Fartana Islam* and *Hikayat Siti Lathifah*: that true spiritual transformation in the Islamic tradition is inherently relational. Transcendence is not attained by escaping human relationships, but by sanctifying them through profound patience, selfless love, and unbroken fidelity.

CONCLUSION

This comparative study demonstrates that *Hikayat Fartana Islam* and *Hikayat Siti Lathifah* represent two interconnected literary models within the classical Islamic heritage of Nusantara, each articulating a sophisticated philosophy of marital ethics and spiritual transformation. While *Hikayat Fartana Islam* provides a structured, didactic framework that delineates reciprocal domestic responsibilities through direct prophetic dialogue, *Hikayat Siti Lathifah* elevates these principles into an inspiring hagiographic narrative. Both texts converge in their fundamental theological assertion: marital devotion is not an end in itself, but an earthly crucible through which the soul achieves

divine favor, moral refinement, and cosmic salvation. In these narratives, love operates across entities, linking the mortal actions of the household to the eternal consequences of the metaphysical cosmos.

The implications of these findings are profoundly relevant for both literary studies and contemporary social life. In an era marked by rising divorce rates, domestic instability, and the widespread commercialization of romantic relationships, these classical manuscripts offer a revitalizing perspective on the marriage covenant. They remind contemporary society that enduring marital harmony requires mutual self-restraint, spiritual intentionality, and a shared commitment that transcends superficial material conditions. Within educational and cultural realms, these manuscripts serve as invaluable resources for developing contextual character education, teaching ethical resilience, and demonstrating how classical Southeast Asian societies successfully integrated sacred scripture with rich regional literary traditions. Future scholarship should continue to explore other uncataloged regional manuscripts to further reconstruct the vibrant intellectual and spiritual tapestry of Nusantara's written heritage.

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