

MAḤABBAH AND FANĀ': NARRATIVE SEMIOTICS OF SUFIS VALUES IN THE SHORT STORY "ARINĪ ALLĀH" BY TAUFIQ AL-ḤAKĪM

Uswatun Khasanah^{1*}, Moh Sony Fauzi²

^{1,2}Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: 220301110078@student.uin-malang.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Actant Scheme;
Fanā'; Maḥabbah;
Short Story;
Sufism.

This study aims to analyze the values of Sufism, particularly the concepts of *maḥabbah* (divine love) and *fanā'* (annihilation of the self), as reflected in the short story "Arinī Allāh" by Taufiq al-Ḥakīm, using the narrative semiotic approach based on A. J. Greimas's theory. The research seeks to uncover the representation of Sufi values within the narrative structure and their influence on the development of the main character. A qualitative descriptive method was employed, with data collected through a close reading of the story and note-taking based on the theoretical framework. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which involves data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the story contains clear elements of the protagonist's spiritual journey in search of the essence of God, which cannot be perceived physically but may be experienced through divine love. These results contribute to the enrichment of literary and Sufi studies by demonstrating how Sufi values are embedded within modern literary works through narrative semiotic analysis.

Article History:

Received: 2025-04-19
Revised: 2025-04-28
Accepted: 2025-06-02
Publish: 2025-06-10

المخلص

الكلمات المفتاحية:

مخطط أكتانت؛ فناء؛
محبة؛ قصة قصيرة؛
صوفية.

تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل القيم الصوفية، لا سيما مفهومي المحبة والفناء، في القصة القصيرة "أرني الله" لتوفيق الحكيم، وذلك من خلال اعتماد المنهج السيميائي السردى وفقاً لنظرية أ. ج. جريماس. يهدف البحث إلى الكشف عن تمثيلات القيم الصوفية في بنية القصة وتأثيرها في تشكيل الشخصية الرئيسية. وقد استخدم المنهج الوصفي الكيفي، مع اعتماد أسلوبين في جمع البيانات، هما: القراءة التحليلية المتأنية لمضمون القصة، وتدوين البيانات في ضوء الإطار النظري. وتم تحليل البيانات وفقاً لمنهجية مايلز وهوبرمان، المتمثلة في خطوات جمع البيانات، واختزالها، وعرضها، وصولاً إلى الاستنتاجات. وتظهر نتائج الدراسة أن القصة تتضمن تجليات واضحة لرحلة روحية تقود الشخصية الرئيسية إلى البحث عن جوهر الله، الذي يتعدى إدراكه بالحواس المادية، ولكن يمكن الشعور به عبر المحبة الإلهية. وتبرز هذه النتائج أهمية القصة في إثراء الدراسات الأدبية والصوفية من خلال توظيف أدوات التحليل السيميائي السردى في قراءة الأعمال الأدبية الحديثة

This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license.



INTRODUCTION

Sufis are often referred to as lazy individuals who only focus on worship without caring about worldly life. They believe that this world is temporary and cannot provide eternal satisfaction like the afterlife. Sufism is also often labeled as heretical. These

teachings are considered inconsistent with Islamic principles and are believed to lack proper moral values. In essence, being a Sufi does not merely require silent devotion to Allah, but also encourages individuals to bring benefit to themselves, others, and their religion in both this world and the hereafter (Pradinata, 2024).

According to Harun Nasution, as cited in Mawadati and Bakar (2025), Sufism is a discipline that explores the spiritual methods through which a Muslim may approach Allah (God), seeking a direct connection and the realization of His divine presence. Sufism does not only focus on the outward aspects of worship, but also emphasizes the inner experience of drawing closer to God (Happid et al., 2025). As a manifestation of *lḥsān*, Sufism represents a deep appreciation of religion that offers spiritual liberation, guiding individuals to recognize themselves and ultimately come to know God (Amin, 2012).

Sufism is described as a form of spiritual practice encompassing three key dimensions: purification of the soul, ethical behavior, and religious social movements. These practices are founded upon the transcendental values conveyed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and upheld within Sufi tradition (Sa'yati et al., 2022). As a moral movement, Sufism inherently carries values within its teachings. Sufi values refer to all elements that reflect the essence of Sufi teachings (Kahfi et al., 2023). Among these values are *maḥabbah* and *fanā'*

According to Ibn Taymiyah, as cited in A. F. S. Ahmad (2005), *maḥabbah* (love) in the context of Sufism refers to the heart's inclination toward Allah—not merely for His blessings, but solely for His essence—without any feeling of burden. He also stated that *maḥabbah* entails obeying Allah's commands and avoiding His prohibitions while being content with and accepting every decree and destiny ordained by Allah. Ibn Taymiyah regarded love as the foundation of all religious practices. Moreover, he believed that everything in the universe originates from love. The essence of faith, according to him, is "love for the sake of Allah" and "hatred for the sake of Allah." Love, he emphasized, is the origin of all creation and the driving force behind all movement in the universe. As he expressed, "Love is the source of origin of all creatures that exist and all religious practices" (Taymiyah, n.d.).

Fanā' (self-dissolution), according to Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, is the disappearance of everything except Allah. Literally, *fanā'* means death or disappearance; in the Sufi context, it refers to a state of emptiness—forgetting or becoming unaware of everything other than God (Ahmad, 2025). Linguistically, *fanā'* is derived from the Arabic root *fā-nūn-yā'*, whose basic verb forms include *faniya* (he perished) and *yafna* (he perishes). This root conveys meanings related to annihilation, dissolution, loss, or destruction (Fathony & Harahap, 2023). Abū Bakr al-Kalabāḍī also defines *fanā'* as the loss of all desires stemming from the ego (*nafs*), the detachment from all human actions, and the absence of personal motives, such that the individual becomes unaware of their own feelings and consciously detached from all worldly concerns. In this condition, the Sufi perceives only one ultimate reality—Allah—no longer even aware of their own existence, having fully merged into the Divine presence (Yusuf et al., 2025).

Sufistic studies have a close connection with aesthetics, particularly through literary works. These two elements are inherently intertwined. Human beings have the spiritual obligation to draw closer to God through the teachings conveyed by prophets, saints, and scholars. Literature serves as a medium to respond to and reflect on the phenomena occurring in the surrounding world. Literary works—such as short stories—can function as powerful tools for conveying and introducing Islamic values, including those rooted in Sufism (Machrus & Sudikan, 2023).

Taufiq Al-Ḥakīm's short story "Arinī Allāh" serves as an engaging literary work through which the concepts of *maḥabbah* and *fanā'* can be explored in the context of

religiosity. The story centers on a father who becomes obsessed with fulfilling his son's request to "show Allah." His quest begins with consultations with various scholars, which fail to provide the answers he seeks, until he encounters a devout worshipper who guides him toward the essence of divine love. This spiritual journey mirrors the stages of *maḥabbah*, emphasizing sincerity and devotion. Ultimately, the protagonist comes to understand the essence of divine love and undergoes ego dissolution—an experience aligned with the Sufi concept of *fanā*².

This short story depicts a spiritual quest initiated by the innocent question of the father's son. In "Arinī Allāh", the process of seeking God is not represented through miracles or physical appearances, but rather through a profound inner journey. The materialistic society of the city serves as a metaphor for the modern world, which is distanced from divine values, while the hermit symbolizes the true spiritual path. Each step the father character takes signifies a stage in his journey toward divine love—moving from confusion and thirst for truth to the eventual relief found in accepting humanity's inability to see God with the naked eye. Thus, "Arinī Allāh" is not merely the story of a child's request, but an allegory of the human spiritual journey toward God.

Using A.J. Greimas' semiotic approach, the spiritual conflict in this short story can be structurally analyzed to reveal the power relations among the characters. Greimas builds upon the insights of his predecessors, emphasizing the interconnectedness of language and signs as essential to the process of meaning-making (Ahkam, 2023). He is a central figure in the development of actantial theory, which offers a systematic framework for analyzing narrative structures (Alandira et al., 2024). The actantial model explains the roles and actions of characters within a story, allowing for a deeper understanding of how narratives are constructed (Widjanarko et al., 2023).

The actant model or actantial scheme was developed as a simplification of Vladimir Propp's structural theory, transforming it into a paradigmatic opposition through the concept of "actants"—a term that refers to the functions and roles of each element within a narrative (Ratih et al., 2023). Actants represent categories of actors or forces that share similar characteristics. This model focuses on the processes involved in achieving or undergoing an action, and actants can be either concrete beings or abstract entities (Misriyani et al., 2022). In narrative analysis, actants may refer not only to characters but also to intangible elements such as love, freedom, empathy, concern, or even envy—elements that influence the progression of the story (Muttaqin et al., 2024).

According to Greimas (as cited in Widjanarko et al., 2023), the actantial model consists of six core roles that structure a narrative. First, the *Sender* is the initiator of the desire or mission—the one who inspires or enforces the pursuit within the story. Second, the *Object* is the goal or reference that the subject aims to attain. Third, the *Subject* is the character assigned by the sender to pursue the object. Fourth, the *Receiver* is the one who ultimately benefits from the subject's success in obtaining the object. Fifth, the *Helper* is the character or force that assists the subject in achieving the goal. And sixth, the *Opponent* (often also called the *Inhibitor*) is the character or force that obstructs or challenges the subject in their quest.

In conducting this research, several relevant previous studies were found. Research by Hanapi et al. (2024), Mawaidi et al. (2024) and; Shomary (2022) discusses Sufistic values in literary works. Another study by Tasman & Hadi (2024) reveals that, according to Rabi'ah Al-Adawiyah, *maḥabbah* is vertically oriented, meaning it is directed solely toward Allah SWT, independent of other creatures, rewards, or punishments. In contrast, Ibn Taymiyyah views *maḥabbah* as horizontally oriented, meaning it is aimed at Allah SWT while still acknowledging the existence of other creatures and the concepts of rewards and punishments. Additionally, (Junaidin, 2021) explores the concept of *fanā*², highlighting that

it refers to the loss of personal self-awareness or detachment from the self. Research on Greimas' narrative semiotics has also been conducted by HS & Parninsih (2021) and; Ramadhan & Rohanda (2024), demonstrating the application of the six actantial roles—sender, object, subject, recipient, helper, and opponent—in various narrative structures. And research by Umami (2023), in addition to studying narrative semiotics, also have similar objects in the same author and book or anthology of short stories even though with different short story titles.

Based on the previous studies mentioned above, the researchers found both similarities and differences. The similarity lies in the analytical framework and the focus of the study—namely, Greimas' narrative semiotics theory and the exploration of the concepts of *maḥabbah* and *fanā'*. The difference, however, lies in the object and field of study. Most previous research tends to examine the concepts of Sufism, *maḥabbah* and *fanā'*, within the realm of literature. The novelty of this research lies in its application of Greimas' narrative semiotics theory to analyze the Sufistic concepts of *maḥabbah* and *fanā'* in a literary work, specifically the short story “Arinī Allāh” by Taufiq Al-Ḥakīm. Thus, the position of this research is to expand and contribute to the study of Sufistic concepts, particularly *maḥabbah* and *fanā'*, through the lens of Greimas' narrative semiotics theory. The objectives of this study are: (1) to analyze the representation of Sufistic values in “Arinī Allāh” by Taufiq Al-Ḥakīm and (2) to explore the impact of these values on the main character. It is hoped that this research will enrich both literary and Sufistic studies, particularly in understanding the role of semiotics in conveying Sufistic concepts within literary works.

The type of research conducted in this study is descriptive qualitative research (Muftahatus et al., 2022). This approach is used as a technique for understanding and analyzing the text. The research focuses on comprehending a phenomenon related to actions, behaviors, or other aspects performed or possessed by the research subject. The data found within the short story will be presented in the results and discussion sections (Farhah et al., 2022). The formal object of this research is the study of A. J. Greimas' narrative semiotics.

Greimas' actantial theory is used to analyze the narrative structure and the relationships between characters in the short story. The actantial scheme consists of six main elements: sender, object, subject, receiver, helper, and inhibitor (Afrilla et al., 2025). In this study, the actantial scheme is applied by identifying the role of each character within the narrative. The child character functions as the sender, initiating the main character's spiritual journey. The father character serves both as the receiver of the object and as the subject, tasked with finding the object (the existence of God). The hermit character acts as the helper, guiding the father's spiritual journey, while the city community serves as the inhibitor, posing obstacles in the search. Through this analysis, the study aims to explore the main character's journey, reflecting the Sufi concepts of *maḥabbah* and *fanā'*.

The primary data source for this research is the short story “Arinī Allāh” by Taufiq Al-Ḥakīm, which was published on the Hindawi.org website in 2023. The secondary data sources consist of books and journals that support this study. The data collection techniques employed are reading and note-taking. First, the researchers read the entire short story to fully understand its content. Then, relevant data is recorded based on the theoretical framework applied in the study.

The analysis technique used in this research is the Miles and Huberman (1994) model data analysis technique. This analysis model consists of several stages, namely first data collection, at this stage the researcher conducts a literature study first to verify the data and prove that the problem to be studied really exists, then the researcher reads the entire content of the short story, and records the data related to the study. Second, data reduction, which is the process of summarizing, simplifying all data that has been obtained through

the first stage, then formed into a writing that will be analyzed for Sufism values using Greimas' narrative semiotics study. Third, data presentation, this plays a role in processing data in a more concrete and clear form. Fourth, drawing conclusions or verification, which is the last stage in the data analysis model of Miles and Huberman. Conclusions lead to the questions the researcher asked earlier. This conclusion drawing is one of the processes that refers to factors when conducting research, therefore researchers must conduct research carefully so that clear and interesting conclusions can be drawn.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Actant Scheme Analysis

Greimas' semiotic narrative approach provides a systematic framework for analyzing the relationships between characters in "Arinī Allāh's" short story. Through the actant analysis, this research successfully reveals how Sufistic values are represented in the story. The following is the structure of the actant analysis:

Sender. In this short story, the sender, or originator of the thought, is the child. The child character in this story asks his father to show him Allah. This statement is evident through the following conversation:

فقال الطفل: إنك يا أبتِ تتحدث كثيرًا عن الله، أرني الله!

Meaning: *The son said, "Father, you always talk about Allah. Show me Allah!"*

In the context of Sufism, the child as the sender carries symbolic meaning. His request to his father to show Allah reflects the human desire to directly comprehend the nature of God. From a Sufi perspective, the child can be interpreted as a symbol of the human soul yearning for a direct connection with the Creator through divine love, or *maḥabbah*.

Receiver. In this short story, the person who receives the object is the father. It is stated that the father accepts the child's request and is willing to fulfill it.

Subject. In this story, the father also serves as the subject, as he is the central figure. The father is assigned by the sender (the child) to find the object. This is illustrated in the conversation that follows.

-وإذا طلبت إليك أن تذهب لتراه ثم ثريني إياه؟

-سأفعل يا بُني، سأفعل.

Meaning: *The son kept insisting, "And if I were to ask you to go and see Him, only then would you show Him to me—how?" Eagerly, the father replied, "I will do it, my son. I will do it."*

The father's physical quest symbolizes the spiritual journey undertaken by a Sufi. His inability to physically see God highlights the limitations of human perception and reinforces the Sufi understanding that God can only be truly experienced inwardly.

Object. In this short story, the object is the act of seeing God. This vision of God represents the goal that the subject (the father) seeks to attain at the request of the sender (the son). The child asks to be shown God, as reflected in the following conversation.

فقال الطفل: إنك يا أبتِ تتحدث كثيرًا عن الله، أرني الله!

Meaning: *Then the son said, "Father, you always talk about God—show me God!"*

The object in this context symbolizes the attainment of the spiritual peak: the oneness with God.

Helper. In this short story, the hermit serves as the helper. He becomes a guiding figure who leads the father toward a deeper understanding of divine love and helps him invoke God's love. This is illustrated in the following two conversations.

فقال الناسك بصوته العميق اللطيف: أيُّها الرجل! إن الله لا يُرى بأدواتنا البصرية، ولا يُدرك بحواسِّنا الجسدية؛ وهل تسبر عمق البحر بالإصبع التي تسبر عمق الكأس؟!

Meaning: *In a soft and deep voice, the hermit said again, "My son, God cannot be seen with our eyes, nor can He be touched with our physical senses. Can we trace the depths of the sea with fingers that can only reach the bottom of a glass?"*

ورفع الناسك رأسه إلى السماء، وقال: يا رب، ارزقه نصف ذرّة من محبتك!

Meaning: *The hermit raised his head toward the sky and said, "O God, grant him Your love, even if it is only the weight of half a kernel of corn!"*

Opponent. In this short story, the city society acts as an inhibitor, hindering the main character in his search for the object. This is evident in the following text:

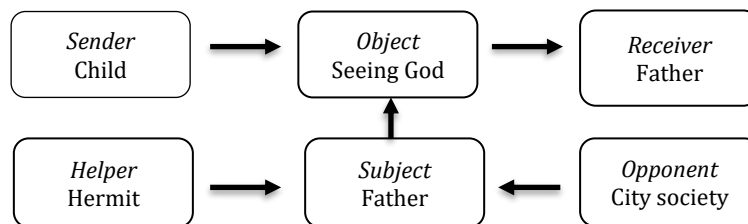
ونَهَضَ الرجل، ومضى لوقته وجعل يطوف بالمدينة يسأل الناس عن بُغيته، فسَخَرُوا منه، فهم مشغولون عن الله ومشاهدته بأعمالهم الدنيوية

Meaning: *The father rose from his seat and spent the day wandering through the streets of the city. He kept asking people about his problem, but unfortunately, no one could answer him. They were too preoccupied with worldly affairs and had forgotten Allah.*

The interaction between these actants gives rise to Sufistic dynamics where the sender's (son's) request triggers the subject's (father's) search which is helped by the helper (hermit) and faces obstacles from the opposant(society). The values of *maḥabbah* and *fanā'* arise as a result of the interaction of divine love obtained through guidance and struggle against worldly temptations.

The following is a diagram of Greimas' theory, linked to the above explanation:

Figure 1. The Actantial Model Flow of Greimas in the Short Story "Arinī Allāh"



The link between the actant scheme and the Sufistic values in the short story "Arinī

Allāh” is as follows. The Sender, the child, through his innocent request to “show Allah,” initiates the father's spiritual journey. Symbolically, the child represents the inner voice or divine spark that awakens *syauq* (longing) in the human soul to seek Allah—an image commonly found in Sufi literature. In the actantial scheme, the child serves as the trigger that leads both to the object (divine vision) and the transformation of the recipient. The Subject is the father, who stands at the center of the narrative as the main seeker. He responds to the sender's call and begins his journey in search of the Divine. The Object is the vision of Allah, placed at the top of the actantial model, representing the ultimate goal of the spiritual journey. In Sufism, this corresponds to *maʿrifah*, the highest level of divine knowledge and awareness.

The Receiver is also the father, who, through his journey and struggle, attains spiritual transformation marked by the states of *maḥabbah* (divine love) and *fanāʾ* (self-annihilation). He lies on the same axis as the sender and the object, signifying the flow of spiritual progression and realization. The Helper, the hermit, is positioned at the lower part of the scheme as a symbol of empowering support. He serves as a spiritual guide (*mursyid*), and through wisdom and prayer, he facilitates the father's inner awakening and progress on the path to God. Finally, the Opponent is represented by the city dwellers, who embody materialism, distraction, and spiritual ignorance. These societal elements act as barriers that hinder the father's quest for the Divine.

To further strengthen the understanding of each actant's role within the narrative structure, this study applies Greimas' three actantial axes to clarify the narrative dynamics in the short story. First, the Axis of Desire (Subject – Object) reflects the father's strong desire to fulfill his son's request by striving to experience a divine vision; in the context of Sufism, this corresponds to *al-irādah*, the sincere will or longing (*maḥabbah*) to draw closer to God. Second, the Axis of Power (Helper – Opponent) is represented by the ascetic who acts as a helper by providing spiritual guidance and praying for the father, while the urban society represents the opponent, serving as a barrier through materialism, ridicule, and spiritual neglect. This axis reflects the Sufi concept of *mujāhadah*, the inner struggle to overcome worldly distractions in the pursuit of spiritual truth. Third, the Axis of Transmission (Sender – Receiver) involves the child, as the sender, who initiates the spiritual journey with a simple yet profound question about seeing Allah, and the father, as the receiver, who undergoes a deep spiritual transformation. This illustrates how a seemingly small spark—like a child's question—can serve as divine inspiration (*ilhām*), leading someone to seek God. The journey ultimately culminates in *fanāʾ*, the mystical union in which the self dissolves into divine presence.

Sufistic Values In “Arinī Allāh's” Short Story

“Arinī Allāh's” short story represents several Sufistic values through the father character's spiritual journey. The following is a description of the Sufistic values.

Maḥabbah (Love)

According to Ibn Taimiyah, *maḥabbah* is the heart's inclination toward Allah without neglecting love for other beings (Taimiyah, n.d.). This concept is reflected in the spiritual journey of the father in “Arinī Allāh's” short story, who maintains his love for Allah while still deeply loving his son. The Sufistic values related to *maḥabbah* in this story include:

(1) The inclination of the heart to Allah. The father expresses his love for Allah through his conversations with his son, frequently speaking of Him. This constant mention of Allah sparks the child's curiosity and leads to his request to be shown God. In response, the father sincerely seeks a way to answer his son's request, despite knowing that it is logically impossible. This sincere effort demonstrates a deep love for Allah—consistent with

Ibn Taimiyah's view of *maḥabbah* as obedience to God's commands without feeling burdened. This is illustrated in the following excerpt from the story:

–وإذا طلبت إليك أن تذهب لتراه ثم تُريني إيَّاه؟
–سأفعل يا بُني، سأفعل.

Meaning: *the son kept insisting "and if I were to ask you to go and see him, only then would you show him to me, how?". Eagerly, the father replied "I will do it my son, I will do it".*

(2) Harmony between divine love and love for others. The father not only loves Allah but also deeply loves his son. This reflects Ibn Taimiyah's (in Tasman & Hadi, 2024) concept of *maḥabbah* in a horizontal sense—loving Allah while still maintaining love and compassion for His creation. The balance between divine love and human affection is portrayed clearly in the following excerpt from the short story:

نظر الرجل يوماً إلى طفله، وقال: شكراً لله! أنت لي نعمة من الله!

Meaning: *one day the father looked at his son and said "thank you Allah! You are the most precious favor Allah has given me!"*

(3) Acceptance of Allah's destiny. In the short story, it is written that:

فقال الناسك بصوته العميق اللطيف: أيُّها الرجل! إن الله لا يُرى بأدواتنا البصرية، ولا يُدرَك بحواسِّنَا الجسدية؛ وهل تسبر عمق البحر بالإصبع التي تسبر عمق الكأس؟!

Meaning: *In a soft and deep voice, the hermit again said, "My son, God cannot be seen with our eyes, nor can He be touched by our physical senses. Can we trace the depths of the sea with fingers that can only reach the bottom of a glass?"*

From the hermit's words, the father realizes and accepts that God cannot be seen with the naked eye in this world. He then asks the hermit to pray for God's love on his behalf. In the end, the hermit prays to God, asking Him to grant His love to the father, even if it is as small as half the weight of a kernel of corn.

ورفع الناسك رأسه إلى السماء، وقال: يا رب، ارزقه نصف ذرة من محبتك!

Meaning: *the ascetic lifted his head to the sky and said "O Allah, give him your love even if it is only the weight of half a kernel of corn!"*

After the hermit prayed for him, the father character then left the hermit in a state of increased *maḥabbah*.

The physical journey of the father character represents the inner journey in Sufism, which includes. (1) Visiting Scholars. In the early stages of his search, the father seeks understanding through formal religious knowledge or sharia. He consults several scholars in his town, but their answers do not convince him. This search implies that intellectual understanding alone is insufficient to attain *ma'rifah* (gnosis or spiritual knowledge). (2) Meeting a Hermit: During his journey, the father encounters a hermit on the outskirts of the city. The hermit serves as a spiritual teacher, guiding the father toward deeper truths.

Through the hermit's guidance, the father reaches the peak of his *maḥabbah* (divine love) for Allah.

Fanā' (Self-Dissolution)

The concept of *fanā'* in this study refers to the perspective of Abu Yazid al-Bustami, who views *fanā'* as the dissolution of the human ego, allowing consciousness to be fully centered on Allah. The Sufistic values in this short story are evident in the father's spiritual journey after receiving God's love. These values include:

First, the destruction of the ego. After receiving God's love, even if it is only as small as the weight of half a kernel of corn, the father experiences a state of transcendence. He loses his worldly consciousness and no longer recognizes his family. This aligns with Abu Yazid's concept of the destruction of the ego. This is illustrated in the following excerpt from the short story:

فسلموا عليه فلم يرد السلام، فتقدّم الناسك إليه قائلاً: انتبه إليّ، أنا الناسك، فلم يتحرك الرجل، فتقدّم إليه طفله جزعاً، وقال بصوته الصغير الحنون: يا أبتي، ألا تعرفني؟ فلم يُبدِ حراكاً

Meaning: *They greeted him, but he did not respond. The hermit then said to him, "Do you still remember me, the hermit whom you came to see?" But the man remained motionless. Next, it was his son's turn to approach with anxious expectation. In a small, soft voice, he asked, "Father, do you not recognize me?" Unfortunately, there was not a single movement from the man.*

Second, fusion of self with Allah. In the state of *fanā'*, the father character only "sees" the presence of Allah, no longer aware of his own existence or the life of the world around him. This aligns with Abu Yazid's view that a Sufi in such a state witnesses only one truth: the absolute reality of Allah. This is illustrated in the following fragment from the short story:

ولكن الناسك هزّ رأسه قانطاً، وقال لهم: لا جدوى! كيف يسمع كلام الآدميين مَنْ كان في قلبه مقدار نصف ذرةٍ من محبة الله؟ والله لو قطعتموه بالمنشار لما عِلِمَ بذلك!

Meaning: *however, the hermit shook his head and said to them "there is no benefit! How can one who has attained the love of Allah even if he weighs only half a kernel of corn hear the words of men? By Allah even if you cut him with a saw, he will not realize it".*

The Impact of Sufistic Values on The Main Character

A Deep Sense of Maḥabbah

Through the spiritual journey undertaken by the father character, driven by his desire to provide answers for his son, he experiences a sincere inclination of the heart toward Allah, known as *maḥabbah*. This deep sense of *maḥabbah* is evident from the moment he begins his quest to understand God's existence. He travels around the city, asking people and even scholars, yet he does not find answers that satisfy him. Despite this, he does not give up and continues his search until he finally meets a hermit.

From this encounter, the father receives a profound lesson in divine love. The hermit teaches him that God cannot be seen with the naked eye or through the senses. This revelation deepens the father's sense of *maḥabbah*. The pinnacle of his love comes when he

realizes that, while he cannot see God, he can feel His love. The father then asks the hermit to pray for Allah's love, even if it is only as small as half a kernel of corn. After this moment, he feels that he has received Allah's love, though it may be as light as half a kernel of corn, yet he experiences it as immensely great.

This perspective aligns with Ibn Taimiyah's view (Mustamin, 2020), who regards *maḥabbah* as the foundational essence of all religious devotion. A further reinforcement of this concept is provided by Rābi'ah al-'Adawiyah, who emphasizes that love for Allah should stem solely from His worthiness to be loved—independent of fear of Hell or hope for Paradise. The father's unwavering effort to fulfill his son's seemingly impossible request, despite the absence of rational or empirical solutions, reflects a form of sincere and unconditional devotion. His encounter with the ascetic deepens this spiritual orientation, where he learns that God is not to be perceived through the physical senses, but rather experienced inwardly through the heart. This understanding mirrors Rābi'ah's doctrine, in which *maḥabbah* is marked by inner stillness and complete spiritual surrender.

Loss of Consciousness

After receiving the hermit's prayer, the father undergoes a profound transformation. He enters the state of *fanā'*, the cessation of self-consciousness, where the individual self dissolves completely into the existence of God. This change is evident when he does not return home after meeting the ascetic. Days later, he is found on a rock in the mountains, gazing at the sky. He no longer recognizes the world around him, not even his son, whom he had loved so dearly. People who encounter him try to greet him, but he does not respond.

The hermit explains that the father has reached such a deep state of divine love that he is no longer affected by his surroundings. This state of *fanā'* indicates that the main character has experienced not only intellectual and emotional shifts but also existential changes. He has ascended to such a high spiritual level that the world no longer holds any appeal for him. The ascetic even notes that if the father's body were to be cut with a saw, he would not feel it. This reflects Abu Yazid's teaching that *fanā'* is the state of a Sufi who witnesses only the divine truth and is no longer aware of himself or his surroundings.

This condition reflects al-Hallāj's (in Cholil, 2024) renowned mystical declaration, "*Anā al-Ḥaqq*" ("I am the Truth"), which many Sufis interpret not as a literal claim to divinity, but as a profound expression of complete *fanā'*—the annihilation of the self in which only the reality of God persists. In al-Hallāj's view, *fanā'* represents the dissolution of duality between the lover and the Beloved, resulting in a union of essence rather than of form. The protagonist's silence symbolizes this inner unification, where the self is entirely effaced, leaving no capacity to respond to worldly distractions.

Alienation from The Social World

In this context, *fanā'* represents the success of the main character's spiritual journey, where he dissolves his personal ego and achieves a deeper understanding of divine love. This process of self-annihilation leads him to experience a profound connection with the divine, transcending worldly concerns and attachments. By losing his individual identity, he reaches a state of unity with God, where the focus is entirely on the divine presence, and his sense of self is no longer central. In Sufism, *fanā'* is a transformative state, often seen as the ultimate goal for a seeker, representing complete submission to God's will and an immersion in divine love.

However, this state of spiritual enlightenment comes with the consequence of alienation from the social world. As the father character becomes more immersed in divine love and loses his worldly ego, he begins to withdraw from the people around him. At the end of the story, he no longer responds to his surroundings, not even recognizing his family or his son. The people who once interacted with him stop doing so, unable to relate to his altered state. This withdrawal signifies the tension between spiritual transcendence and

social disconnection, illustrating that reaching a higher spiritual state can often lead to isolation from the material world and the people within it. His alienation is a natural byproduct of his journey toward *fanā'*, highlighting the tension between the spiritual realm and the physical world.

Another perspective offered by Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī (in Arifka, 2025), a prominent figure in Sunni Sufism, emphasizes that the highest form of *tawḥīd* is *tawḥīd al-muwaḥḥidīn*—a state in which the seeker perceives nothing but God. According to al-Ghazālī this represents the peak of divine gnosis (*ma'rifah*), where the individual becomes completely absorbed in the presence of the Divine and witnesses no existence apart from Him. In this state, the multiplicity of nature dissolves into unity, and all that remains is the awareness of the One. This level of realization is referred to as *fanā' fī al-tawḥīd* or *'ayn al-ma'rifah*, signifying that the Sufi no longer perceives any being other than God.

This study finds that “Arinī Allāh’s” short story represents key Sufistic values, particularly *maḥabbah* and *fanā'*. This finding aligns with previous research by Tasman and Hadi (2024) on *maḥabbah* and Junaidin (2021) on *fanā'*. However, this study offers a novel contribution by integrating Greimas' narrative semiotics theory to analyze the concept of Sufism in “Arinī Allāh’s” short story. The primary distinction lies in the object of study—“Arinī Allāh’s” short story—which has not been widely discussed in a Sufistic context.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that Taufiq Al-Ḥakīm’s short story “Arinī Allāh” strongly represents Sufistic values, particularly the concepts of *maḥabbah* (divine love) and *fanā'* (self-immersion in God). Using A.J. Greimas' semiotic narrative approach, the father character’s journey in fulfilling his son’s request to “show Allah” is analyzed through an actantial structure, which includes the sender, subject, object, receiver, helper, and inhibitor. This spiritual process illustrates how the father undergoes an inner struggle to reach a state of sincere *maḥabbah* toward Allah and attains *fanā'* by dissolving his worldly ego. The concept of *maḥabbah* is exemplified by the father’s loving effort to not only love Allah vertically but also to maintain horizontal love for his son, in line with Ibn Taymiyyah’s view. In contrast, the concept of *fanā'* is reflected in the father’s loss of worldly awareness after receiving the radiance of divine love. He no longer recognizes his social environment or even his own family. This demonstrates that the values of Sufism can be meaningfully integrated into modern literary narratives with both strength and depth.

Overall, this research enriches the study of Sufistic literature by offering a novel approach: using the theory of narrative semiotics to examine Sufi values in modern Arabic literary works. The integration of Greimas' theory with the concept of Sufism opens up new possibilities for reading literary works not only as aesthetic expressions but also as reflections of the human spiritual journey. Furthermore, this study emphasizes the importance of literature as a medium for understanding deep and transcendental religious experiences.

REFERENCES

- Afrilla, T., Permadi, T., & Nugroho, R. A. (2025). Skema Aktan dan Struktur Fungsional A. J. Greimas dalam Cerita Rakyat Riau “Si Umbut Muda Gelang Banyak.” *Genre*, 7(1), 42–55. <https://doi.org/10.26555/jg.v7i1.10645>
- Ahkam, A. F. (2023). Kisah Nabi Nuh A.S. Dalam Al-Qur'an dan Al-Kitab (Analisis Semiotika Strukturalisme Naratif A.J. Greimas). *Jurnal Al Wajid*, 4(2), 6–12. <https://doi.org/10.30863/alwajid.v4i2.5703>
- Ahmad, A. F. S. (2005). *Tasawuf antara Al-Ghazali dan Ibnu Taimiyah (Terjemahan*

Muhammad Muchson Anasy, t.t.). Khalifa.

- Ahmad, N. I. (2025). Konsep Fana , Baqa ', dan Ittihad Abu Yazid al -Busthami dan Relevansinya dalam Pendidikan Islam. *IHSAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 3(2), 165–173. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.61104/ihsan.v3i2.916>
- Alandira, P., Taufiq, W., & Rohanda. (2024). Struktur Naratif Kisah Raja Dzulkarnain Dalam Al-Qur'an : Analisis Semiotika Aktan A.J.Greimas. *Al-Mabsut: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Sosial*, 18(2). <https://doi.org/10.56997/almabsut.v18i2.1651>
- Amin, S. M. (2012). *Ilmu Tasawuf* (A. Zirzis & N. Laily (eds.)). AMZAH.
- Arifka, A. (2025). Mystical Experience in Sufism: the Study of Uniqueness of Sufism in Relation to Mysticism. *At-Thullab Jurnal*, 7(1), 52–69. <https://doi.org/10.20885/tullab.vol7.iss1.art4>
- Cholil, A. M. (2024). Al-Hallaj Menjemput Keabadian; Analisa Kritik Historis dan Pendekatan Eksistensialisme. *Jurnal Ilmiah Spiritualis (JIS)*, 10, 46–61.
- Farhah, E., Zahirah, A. T., Saputra, F. B., & Adilahanif, N. A. (2022). the Relevance of Taufiq Ismail'S "Qira'atul-'Alamat" in Enforcing the Character of the Indonesian Nation . *CMES: Jurnal Studi Timur Tengah*, XV(1), 83–93. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.20961/cmcs.15.1.60185>
- Fathony, B. V., & Harahap, N. (2023). Relevansi Ajaran Fana' Dalam Tasawuf Islam dan Nibbana Dalam Ajaran Buddhisme. *Al-Ittihad: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Hukum Islam*, 9(2), 47–61. <https://doi.org/10.31862/9785426311961>
- Hanapi, S., Baruadi, K., & Kadir, H. (2024). Nilai-Nilai Sufistik dalam Novel Hijrah Itu Cinta Karya Abay Adhitya. *Jurnal Ideas: Pendidikan, Sosial, Dan Budaya*, 10(4), 37–48. <https://doi.org/10.32884/ideas.v10i4.1710>
- Happid, Apdilla, R., & Ajmain, M. (2025). Maqam dan Ahwal dalam Tasawuf: Dinamika Perjalanan Spiritual Menuju Kedudukan Tinggi di Hadapan Tuhan. *PANDAWA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Dakwah*, 7(2), 1–9. <https://ejournal.stitpn.ac.id/index.php/pandawa>
- HS, M. A., & Parninsih, I. (2021). Semiotics Integration in Understanding Story on Al Qur'an (Applying Narrative Theory of A.J Greimas towards the Story of the People of the Garden on QS. Al Qalam 17-32). *Islah: Journal of Islamic Literature and History*, 2(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.18326/islah.v2i1.1-13>
- Junaidin. (2021). Konsep Al-Fana', Al-Baqa' Dan Al-Ittihad Abu Yazid Al-Bustami. *FiTUA: Jurnal Studi Islam*, 2(2), 40–51. <https://doi.org/10.47625/fitua.v2i2.314>
- Kahfi, R., Aisyah, S. N., Hijriyah, & Nasution, D. R. N. (2023). Klasifikasi Tasawuf: Amali, Falsafi, Akhlaki. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling (JPDK)*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31004/jpdk.v5i1.11658>
- Machrus, A. K., & Sudikan, S. Y. (2023). Nilai-Nilai Sufistik dalam Novel Majnun Sejak Berjumpa Layla Karya Candra Malik. *Bapala*, 10(2), 1–14. <https://ejournal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/bapala/article/view/53951>
- Mawadati, S., & Bakar, M. Y. A. (2025). Perspektif Filsafat Ilmu Tasawuf; Studi Tentang Epistemologi , Ontologi dan Aksiologi. *QOSIM: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial & Humaniora*, 3, 138–155. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.61104/jq.v3i1.739>
- Mawaidi, Liliani, E., Budiyanto, D., Prawira, M. P., & Bajuri, M. Z. J. (2024). Estetika Sufistik M. Fudoli Zaini: Kajian Sosiologi Sastra. *Caraka: Jurnal Ilmu Kebahasaan, Kesastraan, Dan Pembelajarannya*, 10(2), 269–281. <https://doi.org/10.30738/caraka.v10i2.17077>
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis*.
- Misriyani, A., Boeriswati, E., & Herlina, H. (2022). Aktan dalam Novel The Maze Runner Karya James Dashner: Kajian Naratologi A. J. Greimas (Actants in James Dashner's The

- Maze Runner Novel: A Study of Narrative A. J. Greimas). *Indonesian Language Education and Literature*, 8(1), 59. <https://doi.org/10.24235/ileal.v8i1.7028>
- Muftahatus, S., Rahmayati, G. T., & Prasetyo, Y. C. (2022). Strategi Dalam Menjaga Keabsahan Data Pada Penelitian Kualitatif. *Al-Adad : Jurnal Tadris Matematika*, 1(2), 54–64. <https://doi.org/10.24260/add.v1i2.1113>
- Mustamin, K. (2020). The Concept of Mahabbah Rabi'ah Al-Adawiyah. *Farabi*, 17(1), 66–76. <https://doi.org/10.30603/jf.v17i1.1351>
- Muttaqin, N. A., Nugroho, Y. E., & Supriyanto, T. (2024). Skema Aktan dan Struktur Fungsional A.J. Greimas dalam Novel Brianna dan Bottomwise Karya Andrea Hirata. *Jurnal Bastra*, 9(1), 186–198. <https://doi.org/10.36709/bastra.v9i1.313>
- Pradinata, A. (2024). Sufisme dalam Novel Api Tauhid: Analisis Kepribadian Tokoh Said Nursi Perspektif Maqom Tawakal. *Spiritualita: Journal of Ethics and Spirituality*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30762/spiritualita.v8i1.2146>
- Ramadhan, G., & Rohanda, R. (2024). *Perubahan Nasib Tokoh Utama Dalam Cerpen Nikosia Karya Saadi Youssef (Analisis Semiotika Naratif A.J Greimas)*. 8(1), 53–66. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15642/jilsa.2024.8.1.53-66>
- Ratih, R., Diana, P. Z., & Suwartini, I. (2023). Skema Aktan Dan Struktur Fungsional A.J. Greimas Dalam Cerita Rakyat “Putri Bungsu Dan Ular N’Daung” Dari Bengkulu. *Pena Literasi: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, 6(2), 154–162. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24853/pl.6.2.154-162>
- Sa'yati, L., Oktarina, D., & Junaidi, A. S. (2022). Melihat Darwis, Sufi Pengembara dalam Novel Akunya Dia (2020) karya Reza Amirkhani: Tinjauan Realisme Magis. *Jazirah: Jurnal Peradaban Dan Kebudayaan*, 3(2), 125–133. <https://doi.org/10.51190/jazirah.v3i2.73>
- Shomary, S. (2022). Reading Sufistic Value in a Collection of Mencari Sebuah Masjid Poetry Edited by Husnu Abadi and Nopri Ahadi. *GERAM*, 10(1), 117–125. [https://doi.org/10.25299/geram.2022.vol10\(1\).9389](https://doi.org/10.25299/geram.2022.vol10(1).9389)
- Taimiyah, I. (n.d.). *At-Tuhfah Al-'Iraqiyah fi Al-A'mal Al-Qalbiyyah*.
- Tasman, A., & Hadi, M. S. (2024). Mahabbah In The Perspective of Rabi ' ah Al-Adawiyah and Ibn Taimiyah. *Abdurrauf Journal of Islamic Studies*, 3(3), 215–231. <https://doi.org/10.58824/arjis.v3i3.172>
- Umami, E. A. (2023). *The Actant and Functional Scheme of Greimas in the Short Story Wa Kanat Al-Dunya By Taufiq Al-Hakim (Narrative Semiotics of A.J. Greimas)*. 4(2), 129–146. <https://doi.org/10.18326/isliah.v4i2.307>
- Widjanarko, K. I., Yuwana, S., & Rengganis, R. (2023). Representasi Struktur Naratologi Dalam Kumpulan Karya Dewi Lestari: Kajian Naratologi A.J Greimas. *Bahtera Indonesia; Jurnal Penelitian Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, 8(2), 542–552. <https://doi.org/10.31943/bi.v8i2.451>
- Yusuf, M. Y. H., Karania, R. A., Ajmain, M., & Aisy, S. R. (2025). The Concept of al-Fana', al-Baqa', and Ittihad in Tasawuf. *JIIIC: Jurnal Intelek Insan Cendikia*, 2(3), 4370–4379. <https://jicnusantara.com/index.php/jiic>

