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Moral Values in the Fable "*An-Nahlah wan-Namlah*" by Ridwan Syukri: An Actantial and Functional Structure Study

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Abstract

Children's fable stories are closely related to good values that become a supporting tool for children's growth process. Since narrative in storytelling is critical, this study aims to dissect the potential and functional structure in narratological studies and explore the moral values in the fabled story *Al-Nahlah wa An-Namlah* by Ridwan Syukri. This story is one of the Arabic children's stories in the *Qashah lil Athfal* anthology, with most of the stories belonging to the fable genre. The theory used in this research is narratology based on the perspective of A.J. Greimas. The method applied is descriptive qualitative. The data sources in this research are divided into two: (1) primary data sources, namely the fabled story *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah* by Ridwan Syukri, and (2) secondary data sources, which are taken from various literature reviews to support the analysis process in this study. The data analysis technique follows the perspective of Miles and Huberman, which includes data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of this study show that the story of *Al-Nahlah wa An-Namlah* has a perfect actantial structure. In addition, the functional structure fulfills all the required stages according to the functional structure in general. After analyzing both structures, the researcher concluded that there are two central values, namely (1) hard work and (2) care, which are undoubtedly essential to introduce to children to have moral learning since childhood.

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INTRODUCTION

Narrative structure in children's literature is not just a story framework but also shapes the reading experience, directs moral interpretation, and instills life values in children's minds. Although many studies have highlighted the importance of fairy tales as an educative medium, there is still a gap in understanding how narrative structure works in structuring meaning and conveying moral messages effectively because narrative is a central element in a literary work, as a semiotic representation and event (Shobana & Prabhaka, 2024). It also connects characters and themes, enriching the depth and impact of the story (Kumalasari & Surur, 2023). In other words, narration plays a role in making it easier for readers to understand the plot and storytelling techniques built by the author (Azam Muttaqin et al., 2024). Similarly, the narrative is also inseparable from the structures that cover it. It allows systematic analysis of meaning and contributes to the understanding of narrative dynamics in literary works (Karnanta, 2015).

The understanding of the narrative plays a vital role in children's development by conveying feelings, thoughts, and essential life values (Shohrat, 2024). Of course, the moral aspects of children's literature have a positive impact (Krissandi, Damai Sagita et al., 2018). As said by (Latifah et al., 2021), children's literature at least has benefits in (1) recreative or entertaining, (2) didactic, which means educating readers with the values contained, and (3) morality, where stories can provide moral knowledge to readers. In addition, children's literature can also encourage self-understanding, empathy, and appreciation of language while developing a child's creativity and love of learning (Afash, 2024).

This learning refers to knowing whether something is good or bad, where literature indirectly becomes an educational tool that can help develop children's competencies and skills (Huda, 2023). Therefore, learning literature in children is as important as empowerment and education (Emmanuel, 2022), where every narrative is like human values, religion, and customs (Ananda et al., 2021). Reading materials for children's literature are also diverse, including picture books, folktales, fables, legends, fantasies, and historical stories. Of all these various stories, in general, they are packaged in the form of storytelling or narration and then presented with pictures to make the story more interesting (Latuconsina et al., 2022).

In this fable story research, the researcher uses the object of children's story research with the title "An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah," a children's story

by Ridwan Syukri. According to (Juanda, 2018), fables are animal stories about the value of life that can be explored as a means of educational literacy for children. In addition, animal characters in literary works are a reflection of whole humans but still provide impressive moral treats (Sarumpaet, 2010). The purpose of fable stories is to provide moral guidance, help deal with ethical dilemmas, and support character development to solve the moral crisis in society (Nurtriana et al., 2022). The story *An-Nahlah Wa An-Namlah* is one of the children's stories collected in the anthology story "Qashah lil 'Qthfal," in which there are 33 stories containing various themes. Researchers chose the story *An-Nahlah Wa An-Namlah* as the object of research because the story has a short narrative. However, it is broad if studied further, especially in structure and morals.

The characters in the story of *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah* include bees and ants. The storytelling structure is delivered gradually and to the point. The ant has a persistent personality and never gives up. His physique began weakening at one point, and he could no longer carry food. His good fortune befell him when a bee helped him by giving him honey so that his physique became strong again. In essence, this story has values that will undoubtedly provide aspects of morality to children so that they can distinguish between good and evil. So, to see in detail the story structure and moral values in the fable "*An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah*" by Ridwan Syukri, researchers will explore further using A.J. Greimas' Narratology theory.

Narratology is a theory that falls into the study of structuralism (Ermawan et al., 2019), which examines the structure of the narrative and how it affects the reader's perspective on the story (Zhakulayev et al., 2023). Narratology can also be referred to as a theory of narrative discourse or a set of concepts about storytelling (Hajek, 2022). In addition, narratology itself develops based on linguistic analogies such as syntax, such as the relationship between the subject, predicate, and object of the sufferer (Suarta & Adhi Dwipayana, 2014). One of the narratological theories that can be used in literary research is A.J. Greimas' narratology. A.J. Greimas' narrative theory is built on the fundamental understanding that narrative texts are composed of structural dyadic analogies in linguistics, which originates from Ferdinand de Saussure on the one hand and Vladimir Propp's fairy tale narrative theory on the other (Karnanta & Yudha, 2018).

A.J. Greimas also developed the theory of narratology, one of the branches of semiotics, later known as narrative semiotics. Greimas' narrative semiotics belongs to the concept of structuralism.

In implementing his narrative semiotics, a text reviewer cannot be separated from the structures of the text being studied. The structures in which the texts speak and produce new and living signs (Istiqomah & Nor, 2017). In his theory, A.J. Greimas introduced two fundamental concepts in narrative structure, namely actantial structure and functional structure (Wenno et al., 2021). The actantial structure refers to the six categories of characters (actants) that perform narrative functions, while the functional structure relates to the roles played by these actants in driving the plot and conveying meaning in a narrative (Fernández, 2021). The fable *An-Nahlah Wa An-Namlah*, which will be the object of this research, implementatively contains structures that produce meaning to be interpreted.

Several studies have discussed similar variables regarding object and theory similarities in this fable research. The relevant previous studies based on the similarity of objects, namely (1) research on Islamic characters in children's stories, (Puspitasari & Hidayatulloh, 2020; Waluyo, 2018; Zulfitri et al., 2020) Which explains how the role of parents and teachers educate through fairy tales to children (2) research on multicultural values in children's literature with an interactive model approach, explaining that every child's story is closely related to values, (Yangsén & Sukarismanti, 2023) and (3) research on the exploration of moral values in text and context in stories (Muassomah, 2020; Nurtriana et al., 2022). Meanwhile, some studies that have the same theory include: (1) analysis of A.J. Greimas' narratological structure in the film, which utilizes the narrative structure and reveals the relationship between men and women depicted in the film (Karnanta & Yudha, 2018), and (2) analysis of the actant and functional schemes in folklore, which shows that there are actant and functional differences in each version of the Mbah Bongkok story (Karim et al., 2023; Misriyani et al., 2022; Yuniasti, 2019).

Based on previous studies, The study of substantial and functional elements in fable narratives, primarily through the approach of A.J. Greimas' narratology theory, is still limited and has not been explored in depth. This study has similarities and differences. The similarity lies in the fundamental study using A.J. Greimas' narratology theory and exploring moral values. The difference lies in the object of research in the form of a fable entitled *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah* by Ridwan Syukri, which is contained in the children's story anthology *Qashas lil 'Athfal*. This study will discuss the narrative structure in the fable story, where the actantial structure includes subject, object, sender, receiver, helper, and opponent. The functional structure includes the initial situation,

transformation (proficiency test, main stage, glorious stage), and final situation. The way moral values are embedded in children's literature is not only shaped by its content but also by its narrative structure. Understanding the narrative helps reveal how these values are conveyed through character roles, plot progression, and thematic elements. This topic has not been studied in a complex way in previous studies, so the researcher decided to discuss it in this study.

This study is positioned as an update based on the similarities and differences with previous research. This study adds to the findings in the study of narratological structure, including the exploration of moral values in Ridwan Syukri's fable *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah*. This study aims to dissect the actantial and functional structures in narratological studies and explore the moral values in the story. The benefit of this research is to increase readers' understanding of narratological studies and their relation to literary works. This research is based on the idea that every story cannot be separated from structural aspects, thus making a narrative in the storytelling complete and perfect. In addition, narrative mapping can make it easier for readers to comprehensively understand the story's details and how its substance provides meaning. Therefore, the researcher needs to conduct this study to explain to readers, especially literature scholars, that every storytelling, even fable stories, is closely related to the narrative structure. In addition, this study can also be a reflection for fable writers to maintain the quality of the story by inserting moral messages that later become lessons for children.

RESEARCH METHOD

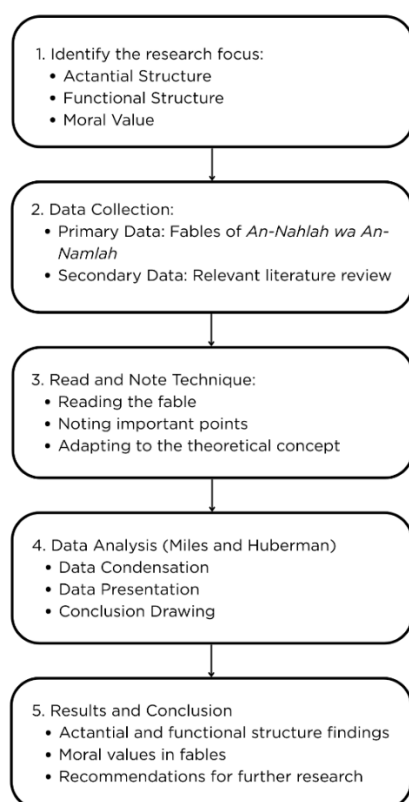
This research uses qualitative descriptive research, which is research that analyzes and interprets the findings of facts, symptoms, problems, and events that are happening in the field naturally in the context of a particular time (Fiantika et al., 2022). Qualitative research is particularly relevant for analyzing narrative structure, which can help in providing a deeper understanding of a text (Utari & Fajriah, 2023). This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of literary texts, especially in understanding their structure and moral values. Therefore, this method is used to analyze the actantial and functional structures in the fable *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah* based on A.J. Greimas' narratology perspective.

The actantial structure includes aspects of the subject, object, sender, receiver, helper, and opponent. The functional structure includes the initial situation, transformation (proficiency test, main stage, glory stage), and the final situation. In

addition, the researcher will explore the moral values contained in this fable. The data sources used in this research are divided into two: (1) primary data sources and (2) secondary data sources. Primary data sources come from Ridwan Syukri's fable *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah*. Meanwhile, secondary data sources are various literature studies that support the analysis process in this research. The existence of primary and secondary data sources is a parameter for the ideality of a study, and in order to produce accurate research (Sahir, 2021).

The data collection techniques used were reading and recording. In this study, researchers read and recorded important points related to the value of honesty, which were then adjusted to the functional structure of A.J. Greimas' Naratology theory. Furthermore, data analysis techniques in this study were carried out using data analysis techniques according to Miles and Huberman, namely (1) data condensation, which refers to the process of selecting, concentrating, or simplifying data transformation on an object under study, (2) data presentation, is a structured and concise set of information related to conclusions and actions can be drawn, while (3) conclusion drawing, is the end in data analysis, to maintain openness and skepticism, and to answer rationality related to the formulation of problems in this study (Fiantika et al., 2022).

Diagram 1. Descriptive Qualitative Research Flowchart



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the careful re-reading of the fable *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah*, the researcher found data related to the actantial strategy and functional strategy and its moral value. The findings of the reduced data are as follows:

Actantial Structure in *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah* Children's Story

The potential structure is a structure that serves to guide the course of the story (Kumalasari & Surur, 2023). Classically, A.J. Greimas says six actants usually have their functions and roles in stories. These actants include: (1) the sender, which is someone or something that serves as the source of ideas or the driver of the story; (2) the object, which is the intended actant; (3) the subject, which is the actant given the task by the sender to find the object; (4) the helper, which is the actant that helps the subject in carrying out its task; (5) the opponent, which is the actant that hinders the subject's task; and (6) the recipient, which is the actant that receives the results of the subject's work as the recipient of the object (Azam Muttaqin et al., 2024). Based on this explanation, it can be understood that the actant is not always a human figure but can be an action or an event (Reza, 2019). Applicatively, the actant structure helps to analyze how characters interact and contribute to the development of the narrative by emphasizing the dynamics of actions and goals in the story (VERBIVSKA, 2023).

Table 1. Actantial Structure in the Fable *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah*

Actant	Elements in the Story
Subject	Ant
Object	Object Strength to work again Ant weaknesses (conditions that trigger the search for solutions)
Sender	Ant
Receiver	Ant
Helper	Bee
Opponent	Physical weakness and sadness of ants

Based on A.J. Greimas' actantial scheme above, the story *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah* fulfills all the actantial elements, namely: (1) subject, (2) object, (3) sender, (4) receiver, (5) helper, and (6) opponent. In this story, the subject actant is the ant, who is also the main character. Ants are portrayed as persistent, with a strong desire to regain their strength and work optimally again. The object actant is the ability to work again, as the ant needs energy to be active like before. This is the subject's primary goal. The sending actor is the ant's

weakness, which triggers its desire to reach the object. In the story *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah*, the ant's physical weakness becomes the main reason for the ant to find a solution to regain its strength.

After that is the recipient actant, which the ant also characterizes; next is the recipient, the ant, where he gains strength and the ability to work again. The helper is the bee character. As the researcher stated earlier, a helper is an actant that helps the subject carry out its duties. The bee is described as a figure who helps the ant to achieve its goal. The bee provides honey, which helps restore the ant's strength and supports the goal. The final actant, the barrier, is the ant's physical weakness, which makes it helpless and unable to work efficiently. The interpretation highlights the interaction between the actors, which enhances the story's development. Each actor complements the other, creating a well-structured narrative.

Functional Structure in the *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah*

According to A.J. Greimas, the functional structure in narratology is a structure that serves as a plot in a story. In other words, this model serves to clarify the flow of the narrative to understand the content of the story better (Qomariyah et al., 2023). The functional structure is divided into three parts, namely: (1) the initial situation, (2) transformation, proficiency test, primary test, glory stage, and (3) the final situation (Istiqomah & Nor, 2017). The initial situation is a condition of wanting to get something. In the transformation stage, the proficiency test is defined as a situation where the subject moves and the emergence of helpers and opponents; the main stage is a shift in space and time, and the glorious stage is the arrival of a superior. The final situation, where the object has been obtained and accepted by the recipient, and the end of the desire for something, as well as the end of the story (Yuniasti, 2019).

Table 2. Functional Structure in the *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah*

I	II	III
	Transformation	
Initial Situation: The ant character is described as diligent and eager to work at the beginning of the story. He diligently	Proficiency Test: At this stage, ants face physical weakness. The ants become less active and feel sad that they cannot work to their full potential. Main Test:	Final Situation: After the ant recovers, the story ends with a better situation. The ants regained

collects grains of wheat, and he does it consistently.	The ant eventually meets a bee, who acts as a helper in the story. The bee hears the ant's cries and offers honey as medicine to restore the ant's strength.	their strength, labored, and formed a friendship with the bees.
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Glory Stage:

After drinking honey from the bee, the ant managed to regain its strength.

As the researchers have described in the table above, the children's story *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah* is about an ant character with a persistent and tenacious nature to work. However, his physique slowly weakens until the bees provide honey one day, which is believed to increase strength. This story teaches the importance of helping and caring for others. To see in detail the functional structure in the children's story *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah*, the following researchers describe the corresponding data:

(1) كَانَ يَا مَا كَانَ فِي قَدِيمِ الزَّمَانِ، كَانَتْ هُنَاكَ نَمْلَةٌ تَعْمَلُ بجد وَنشاطًا، وَ كَانَتْ تَجْمَعُ حَبَّاتِ الْقَمْحِ وَتَحْمِلُهَا إِلَى بَيْتِهَا الْمَوْجُودِ دَاخِلَ الْأَرْضِ، خَيْثُ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَيُّ أَحَدٍ الْوُصُولَ إِلَيْهِ

(1) “Once upon a time, an ant worked diligently and hard. The ant collected grains of wheat and carried them to its nest in the ground, where no one could reach them” (Syukri, 2019, p. 22).

Data (1) shows the initial situation in the functional structure. Implicitly, the data quoted above describes an atmosphere in which the ant, who acts as the subject, is a character who is diligent and keen to work. This shows the initial situation or state of how the character is introduced. Furthermore, the story moves towards the transformation stage, as shown in the following data:

(2) وَبَعْدَ مُزَوْرَ زَمَنٍ طَوِيلٍ، صَارَتْ النَّمْلَةُ أَقْلَّ نَشَاطًا، وَلَمْ تَعُدْ تَمْلِكُ تَفْسَ الْقُوَّةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ تَتَمَتَّعُ بِهَا مِنْ قَبْلُ. حَزَنْتِ النَّمْلَةُ وَجَلَسَتْ تَحْتَ

شَجَرَةٍ، وَبَدَأَتْ تَبْكِي يَسْتَبِي مَا أَصَابَهَا مِنْ ضَعْفٍ وَوَهْنٍ.

(2) "After a long time, the ant became less active and no longer had the strength it had before. The ant felt sad and sat under a tree crying because of its weakness and powerlessness" (Syukri, 2019, p. 22).

Data (2) is the first stage in transformation, the proficiency test. Usually, at this stage, there is a movement of the subject, affecting the presence of helpers or opponents. If the ant character was previously described as strong, the story later transforms into one where the ant becomes weak and can no longer work optimally.

The presence of the helping actant, the bee, characterizes the main stage in the functional structure. The bee offers the ants to drink her honey, which is believed to give them strength. As in the previous actant data, strength is the main object or goal the ant character seeks. In the end, the ant agrees to the bee's offer, as in the data below:

(3) وَجِئْنَاكَ مَرَّتْ نَحْلَةٌ مِنْ فَوْقِ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ، وَسَمِعَتْ بُكَاءَ النَّمْلَةِ وَسَأَلَتْهَا: لِمَذَا تَبْكِينَ؟ مَا النَّمْلَةُ وَالْحُزْنُ بَادِيَ عَلَى الَّذِي أَصَابَكَ؟ أَجَابَتْ وَجُمِهَا: لَقَدْ صِرْتُ ضَعِيفَةً، وَلَمْ أَعُدْ قَادِرَةً عَلَى الْعَمَلِ كَمَا فِي السَّابِقِ.

(3) "A bee flew past the tree and heard the ant's cry. The bee asked: Why are you crying? What has happened to you? The sad ant replied I have become weak and no longer able to work like I used to" (Syukri, 2019, p. 22).

(4) ابْتَسَمَتِ النَّحْلَةُ وَقَالَتْ: هَذَا أَمْرٌ بَسِيطٌ وَحَلُّ الْمَسْأَلَةِ لَيْسَ عَسِيرًا. تَعَجَّبَتِ النَّمْلَةُ لِقَوْلِهَا وَسَأَلَتْهَا يَغْفُضُوكَ: وَمَا هُوَ الْخُلُّ؟ رَدَّتِ النَّحْلَةُ قَائِلَةً: لَدَيَّ عَسَلٌ لَذِيذٌ وَعَجِيبٌ، إِذَا أَكَلْتِ مِنْهُ سَتَصِيرِينَ قَوِيَّةً كَمَا فِي السَّابِقِ. أَحَبَّتِ النَّمْلَةُ هِيَ أَعْطَانِي الْقَلِيلَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ: الْفِكْرَةَ وَقَالَتْ الْعَسَلِ.

(4) "The bee smiled and said: This is a small problem, and the solution is not difficult. The ants were astonished and asked curiously, 'What is the solution?' The bee replied, 'I have delicious and magical honey. If you eat it, you will become strong like before.' The ant liked the idea and said: 'Come on, give me some of that honey.'" (Syukri, 2019, p. 23).

After the main stage of transformation, there is the glorious stage. At this stage, it is usually characterized by a superior event or achieving a goal for the subject. The ant, which was initially weak and unable to work, finally regains strength after drinking the honey given by the bee so that he can work again to become strong and work actively. As the data below

(5) وَافْقَتِ النَّحْلَةُ عَلَى طَلَبِ النَّمْلَةِ، وَتَوَجَّهَتَا مَعًا إِلَى مَنْزِلِ النَّحْلَةِ. وَمَا أَنْ مَرَّتْ سَاعَاتٌ مِنْ تَنَاوُلِهَا لِلْعَسَلِ، صَارَتِ النَّمْلَةُ قَوِيَّةً وَوَتَشِيظَةً كَمَا كَانَتْ فِي الْمَاضِي.

(5) "The bee agreed to the ant's request and went together to the bee house. After a few hours of the ant-eating honey, he became strong and active like before" (Syukri, 2019, p. 23).

The closure in the functional structure is the final situation. In this situation, it is marked by the end of events in a story. The story ends with a better situation, where the ants have regained their strength. In addition, the ants and bees also became friends after the event. As the data below :

فَشَكَرَتِ النَّمْلَةُ النَّحْلَةَ عَلَى كَرَمِهَا، وَتَابَعَتْ (6) عَمَلَهَا بِجِدٍّ وَنَشَاطٍ. وَمِنْذُ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ صَارَتَا صَدِيقَتَيْنِ.

(6) "The ant thanked the bee for its kindness and continued its work with vigor and diligence. From that day on, they became best friends" (Syukri, 2019, p. 23).

Moral Value in the fable *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah*

In the story of *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah*, an exemplary attitude is portrayed through the ant and bee characters. With a diligent and persistent attitude, the ant did not give up trying to work again despite his weakened physical condition. Likewise, the bee character sincerely helps the ant by giving him honey. This shows an attitude of caring for one another, which can provide a space for harmony in a relationship.

So, in outline, at least two character attitudes are most prominent in the story above: (1) the hard work of the ants and (2) the care of the bees. Both of these attitudes provide moral value and are not contrary to evil. From the ant's attitude, it can be contextually understood that hard work is the key to achieving life goals. Even though the ant eventually feels weak, he still seeks solutions. As for

the attitude of the bee itself, it teaches the importance of caring for others and being willing to help others in need. Bees also give honey to ants without expecting anything in return. She teaches that doing good should be done with sincere intentions, without expecting anything in return.

Table 3. Moral Value in the fable *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah*

Character	Character Attitude
Ant	Hard Work (Diligent)
Bee	Caring

Hard work and caring are two complementary and critical attitudes in life. Hard work is closely related to self-dedication and strength to achieve goals (Butler, 2017). As said by (Mariska, 2022), that hard work is an effort to get what you want. When it comes to early childhood, this attitude needs to be trained as early as possible so that children have enthusiasm and always try to get what they want to achieve. So, parents have an important role as the first educators in shaping children's character, including instilling life values in them (Billah & Rahman, 2023). In the story *An-Nahlah Wa An-Namlah*, the attitude of hard work of the ant character is characterized by the data below:

(7) كَانَتْ هُنَاكَ تَمْلَةٌ تَعْمَلُ بِجِدٍّ وَنَشَاطٍ، وَكَانَتْ تَجْمَعُ حَبَّاتِ الْقَمْحِ وَتَحْمِلُهَا إِلَى بَيْتِهَا الْمَوْجُودِ دَاخِلَ الْأَرْضِ

(7) "There was an ant who worked diligently and hard. It gathered grains of wheat and carried them to its nest in the ground" (Syukri, 2019, p. 22).

In data (7), Ants work hard and show resilience in the face of adversity. The words *بجد* (diligent) and *نشاط* (energetic) in the quote show how the ant tried vigorously despite its weakened physical condition. This aligns with the principle that success does not come instantly but through consistent effort. This attitude is important for children from an early age, teaching them that every goal achieved requires hard work and patience. (Riska & Marwiah, 2022).

In other words, instilling the value of hard work in children can make them not easily give up on doing something useful, such as in the world of education. If children have the value of hard work, they will be eager to study and never give up (Umami & Sobri, 2022). In addition, hard work is also closely related to discipline, which can help

children have good time management skills and make the learning process more optimal.

As for caring, it is also a social-moral value that cannot be separated in life. Caring is an attitude that reflects attention to others in need. About humans, of course, as living beings, there will always be interactions with each other, which, of course, complement and need each other (Hemalia & Hakim, 2022). There is a study that says that in the story *An-Nahlah Wa An-Namlah*, the attitude of caring is described in the data below:

(8) لَدَيَّ عَسَلٌ لَذِيذٌ وَعَجِيبٌ، إِذَا أَكَلْتِ مِنْهُ سَتَصِيرِينَ قَوِيَّةً كَمَا فِي السَّابِقِ

(8) "I have delicious and magical honey. If you eat it, you will become strong like before" (Syukri, 2019, p. 23).

Data (8) shows a caring attitude from the bee to the ants when she offers delicious and magical honey. The bee also says that if the ant eats the honey, it will become as strong as before. The attitude of caring also cannot be separated from social awareness. Caring is an important behavior that must be instilled in early childhood. Because it is an example of good character and can be done in everyday life, it is necessary to care so that children have a high sense of empathy and responsibility in the future (Mariska, 2022).

This is in line with Alfred Adler, who states that caring is a sense of unity with fellow humans that reflects membership in the community. In addition, social care also reflects an interest in helping others, which starts from the immediate environment and includes attention, sympathy, empathy, and a spirit of helping for the common good (Chasanah & Mustaqim, 2024). In practice, caring builds mutual dependence that supports life and success. In other words, caring can strengthen cooperation early on and promote well-being and social cohesion (Vaish & Grossmann, 2022).

The fable *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah* tells the story of the ant's struggle and the bee's kindness and conveys moral messages relevant to real life. The value of hard work teaches us that success requires diligent effort while caring reminds us of the importance of sharing and supporting others. By understanding and applying these two values, children can grow into individuals who are persistent in pursuing their dreams and caring for others around them. Therefore, this story can be an effective medium in children's character education from an early age.

From the analysis of the fable *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah*, it is found that the actantial and functional structures in this story effectively

illustrate the dynamics of relationships between characters and the development of the storyline. The actantial structure shows that each character has a specific role in building the narrative (Ashirova, 2024), where the ant, as the subject, aims to regain its strength, while the bee acts as a helper who provides a solution in the form of honey. The presence of opposing elements, namely the ant's physical weakness and sadness, further strengthens the conflict in the story.

Meanwhile, the functional structure analysis shows that the story follows a clear narrative flow, starting from the introduction of the character and his problem, then the transformation stages that include tests of endurance and the presence of helpers, until finally reaching a satisfactory resolution. This pattern reinforces the themes of hard work and resilience and emphasizes the importance of mutual cooperation and caring for others.

As an implication of this study, theoretically, the results of this study strengthen the structuralism approach in literary studies (Karim et al., 2023; Karnanta & Yudha, 2018; Misriyani et al., 2022; Yuniasti, 2019), particularly in analyzing how narrative elements work systematically to create meaning in a text. This study confirms that children's stories can have complex structural depth despite using simple language by identifying substantial and functional patterns. In addition, this study also shows that fables such as *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah* not only convey moral messages explicitly but also through their narrative structure. In other words, understanding the substantial and functional patterns can help identify the moral values contained in children's stories.

As for practical implications, the results of this study can be a reference for educators in teaching literature to children. By understanding the substantial and functional structures, teachers can help students analyze stories more systematically and interestingly, thus improving their understanding of the moral messages contained in the stories. In addition, publishers and writers of children's stories can use the results of this study as a reference in crafting compelling narratives. Children's books can become more meaningful educational tools by ensuring that stories have a clear structure and strong moral values.

CONCLUSION

The actantial structure in the children's story *Al-Nahlah wa An-Namlah* consists of six actants: (1) the ant's weakness characterizes the sender; (2) the receiver, the ant; (3) the object, the

power to work again; (4) the subject, the ant; (5) the helper, the bee; and (6) the barrier, the ant's physical weakness, and sadness. Thus, the actantial scheme in this story fulfills the criteria of being a perfect scheme because it includes all six elements of Greimas' actantial structure. The functional structure includes: (1) the initial situation, which is characterized by the portrayal of the ant as a diligent and consistent person; (2) the overall transformation, where the ant who feels physically weakened then meets a bee who gives honey as a medicine, and after drinking it, the ant manages to regain its strength. Finally, in (3), the final situation is characterized by a situation where the ant is not only able to recover from the situation but is also more eager to work and establish friendships with bees. Although the narrative is very short, the story of *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah* indirectly provides profound messages and lessons as reflections and role models for children. The story of *An-Nahlah wa An-Namlah* teaches two central moral values: hard work and caring. The hard work portrayed by the ants shows that perseverance is the key to overcoming obstacles. In contrast, the bee's sincere gesture of helping the ants teaches the importance of caring and giving without expecting anything in return. This research is expected to be a reference for future studies that are more critical and in-depth. For future research that will examine children's literature, it can further explore the values contained in it. As a benchmark for a more comprehensive understanding of moral values, it can use psychoanalysis theory, structuralism, or the concept of moral education.

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