

## Literary Reception and Religious Transformation in the Reading of the *Manāqib* of the *Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya* Order in Lamongan

Hamam Al Marisma\*

Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, Indonesia

[hammamcoy@gmail.com](mailto:hammamcoy@gmail.com)

\*Correspondence

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### Abstract

This study examines literary reception and religious transformation in the recitation of *Lujayn al-Dānī fī Manāqib al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī* within the community of the *Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya* Order (TQN) in Lamongan. In contrast to previous studies that primarily emphasize the ritualistic and social dimensions of *manāqib* gatherings, this research positions the text as a living religious work that generates transformative effects through reader interaction. Employing a qualitative approach with a religious ethnographic design, the study integrates Wolfgang Iser’s reception theory – particularly the concepts of the implied reader and *Wirkung* (effect) – with participatory observation and in-depth interviews. The findings reveal that the reception of the *manāqib* text produces multidimensional religious transformations: psycho-spiritual (inner tranquility and strengthened *tawakkul*), devotional praxis (increased intensity of *dhikr* and religious practices), social (enhanced solidarity and communal cohesion), and cultural (reinforcement of Sufi identity and the legitimization of spiritual authority). The *manāqib* text does not merely function as a hagiographic narrative; rather, it operates as a performative agent that shapes religious habitus through repetitive collective recitation. This study broadens the application of literary reception theory to the analysis of classical Sufi religious texts and affirms that *manāqib* functions as a living text, continually interacting with social realities and the spiritual experiences of its congregation.

**Keywords:** *Literary Reception, Religious Transformation, Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya Order.*

### INTRODUCTION

The tradition of *manāqib* recitation constitutes one of the enduring and evolving religious practices within Indonesian Muslim society. Etymologically derived from the Arabic term *manāqib* (the plural form of *manqabah*), the concept refers to narratives recounting the virtues, merits, and exemplary qualities of a saint (*walī*), particularly one who holds a distinguished spiritual status in the sight of God.<sup>1</sup> In the Indonesian context, *manāqib* recitation is most prominently associated with the eminent Sufi figure, Shaykh

<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Ta’rifin, “Tafsir Budaya Atas Tradisi Barzanji Dan Manakib,” *Jurnal Penelitian* 7, no. 2 (2010): 13.

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‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, whose virtues are widely narrated in *Lujayn al-Dānī fī Manāqib al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī* authored by Ja‘far al-Barzanjī. This tradition extends beyond a mere ritual activity; it has come to shape patterns of religiosity, social solidarity, and spiritual identity within ṭarīqa communities.<sup>2</sup>

This study specifically focuses on Lamongan as the research locus due to its distinctive socio-religious characteristics within the landscape of Sufi practices in East Java. Unlike other regions such as Suryalaya (West Java) or Jombang (East Java), where institutionalized pesantren structures strongly dominate ṭarīqa practices, the TQN community in Lamongan reflects a hybrid religious space in which rural religiosity, informal majelis networks, and local socio-economic dynamics intersect. The persistence of manāqib recitation in this context is not merely sustained by institutional authority, but also by communal religiosity embedded in everyday social life. This makes Lamongan a relevant site to examine how a classical Sufi text operates within a dynamic and less formally structured religious environment.

A number of studies indicate that *manāqib* gatherings are understood by participants as a means of drawing closer to Allah, attaining inner tranquility, and strengthening social solidarity. Muslih et al. (2025),<sup>3</sup> for instance, underscores the spiritual and social dimensions of *manāqib* recitation as a medium for fostering intimacy and communal cohesion. Similarly, Siswanto (2022) found that the *manāqib* tradition contributes to the work ethic of certain communities, as it is believed to bring spiritual blessings.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, *manāqib* recitation embodies not only a theological dimension but also exerts tangible influence within social and cultural spheres.

On the other hand, Sufi practices including *manāqib* recitation have not been immune to criticism. Certain groups regard them as practices potentially deviating from the purity of the sharī‘a or even classify them as *bid‘a* (reprehensible innovation). Such critiques are historically rooted in purification movements initiated by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb in the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, empirical evidence demonstrates that *manāqib* recitation has undergone revitalization and continues to attract adherents across diverse segments of society. This phenomenon suggests that the practice possesses a resilient cultural and spiritual vitality that cannot be reduced merely to allegations of doctrinal deviation.

Within academic scholarship, most studies on *manāqib* have concentrated on its historical background, underlying motives, or social functions. Slamet Yahya (2020), for example, highlights the historical and socio-psychological dimensions of the *manāqib* tradition, emphasizing that the practice is maintained because it is perceived as consistent

<sup>2</sup> Sayyid al-Shaykh Ja‘far ibn Hasan al-Barzanji, *Lujayn Al-Dani Fi Manaqib al-Qutb al-Rabbani al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani* (Menara Kudus, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Mohammad Muslih et al., “Qurban as Cultural Transformation and Islamic Moderation in Indonesia: From Religious Ritual to Humanitarian Ethics and Interfaith Coexistence,” *Islam Transformatif: Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 2 (2025): 202–17, <https://doi.org/10.30983/islamtransformatif.v9i2.10188>.

<sup>4</sup> Siswanto Siswanto, “Strengthening Spiritual Leadership in Preserving Religious Culture and Local Wisdom in Madrasah,” *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 3 (2022): 907–20, <https://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v6i3.3357>.

with the teachings of the Qur'an and Ḥadīth and as a source of spiritual blessing.<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Nurzakka (2022),<sup>6</sup> employing a *living ḥadīth* approach, demonstrates that the recitation of *manāqib* functions as a medium for internalizing values of discipline and religiosity within Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). Meanwhile, Muhammad Sakti Garwan (2021), through a phenomenological perspective, identifies a socio-material dimension within the practice, including the tradition of providing food and distributing envelopes to participants.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the diversity of perspectives employed, a significant analytical gap remains insufficiently explored—namely, how the *manāqib* text, as a work of religious literature, is understood by its readers and how such interaction generates religious transformation. Most existing studies tend to position *manāqib* primarily as a ritual practice or social phenomenon, rather than as a living text that acquires meaning through the process of reader reception. Yet, as emphasized in literary reception theory, the meaning of a text is not static; rather, it emerges from the dynamic interaction between the text and its readers.

Literary reception theory, as developed by Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, provides a relevant analytical framework for understanding this phenomenon.<sup>8</sup> Jauss introduced the concept of the *horizon of expectation*, referring to the background of experiences, cultural norms, and prior knowledge that shape how readers interpret a text.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, Wolfgang Iser emphasizes the concepts of the *implied reader* and *Wirkung* (effect), suggesting that a text is structured in such a way as to invite the reader's active participation in the construction of meaning.<sup>10</sup> From this perspective, the recitation of *manāqib* is not merely a repetitive ritual activity; rather, it constitutes an interpretive process that engages the congregation's spiritual experiences, social backgrounds, and theological frameworks.

The work *Lujayn al-Dānī* itself occupies a distinctive position within the tradition of Arabic literary prose (*nathr adabī*). It combines elements of historical biography with imaginative narratives of *karāmah* (saintly miracles), thereby situating itself between non-fictional and imaginative prose. Such a textual structure creates a broad interpretive

<sup>5</sup> Slamet Yahya, "Tradisi Manaqib Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani Di Musala Raudlatut Talibin Kembaran Kebumen," *IBDA': Jurnal Kajian Islam Dan Budaya* 18, no. 2 (2020): 18, <https://doi.org/10.24090/ibda.v18i1.3505>.

<sup>6</sup> Muhammad Nurzakka, "Training Discipline of Students in The Manakib Reading Tradition at Nurul Qur'an Pakunden Islamic Boarding School Ponorogo," *Jurnal Living Hadis* 7, no. 1 (2022): 55–74, <https://doi.org/10.14421/livinghadis.2022.2728>.

<sup>7</sup> Muhammad Sakti Garwan, "Kajian Fenomenologi Agama Dan Implikasinya Pada Tradisi Manakiban Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani," *Al-Tadabbur* 6, no. 1 (2021): 11, <https://doi.org/10.46339/al-tadabbur.v6i1.349>.

<sup>8</sup> Mitzi Kirkland-Ives, "Introduction: Audiences and Reception: Readers, Listeners, and Viewers," in *Audience and Reception in the Early Modern Period* (Routledge, 2021); Nour El Houda Abada, "The Concept of Reception: An Epistemological Transition from Literary Studies to Media Research," *Aleph* 12, no. 2 (2025): 383–99.

<sup>9</sup> Hans Robert Jauss and Elizabeth Benzinger, "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," *New Literary History* 2, no. 1 (1970): 7–37, <https://doi.org/10.2307/468585>.

<sup>10</sup> Brook Thomas, "Reading Wolfgang Iser or Responding to a Theory of Response," *Comparative Literature Studies* 19, no. 1 (1982): 54–66.

space, enabling readers to appropriate and negotiate meaning in accordance with their own experiential contexts.<sup>11</sup> Within the context of the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya Order (TQN) in Lamongan, the recitation of the text is understood not merely as the reading of a saint's biography, but as a medium for the internalization of Sufi values and the legitimization of spiritual authority.

The religious transformation emerging from this practice can be observed across multiple dimensions. Theologically, participants interpret *manāqib* as a source of spiritual reinforcement, a means through which prayers are believed to be answered, and a medium for reflecting upon mortality. Sociologically, the tradition strengthens solidarity and reinforces bonds of fellowship (*silaturahmi*). Culturally, *manāqib* functions as a foundational pillar of the community's spiritual identity.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, religious transformation is not confined to the individual sphere; it is also collective in nature, shaping an institutionalized religious habitus within the *ṭarīqa* community.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyze how the literary reception of the *manāqib* text generates religious transformation within the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya community in Lamongan. The focus of this inquiry extends beyond the meanings constructed by the congregation in relation to the text; it also examines the concrete impact of these interpretations on their religious behavior and consciousness. By integrating a literary reception approach with ethnographic methods, this research seeks to bridge literary studies and Islamic studies within a cohesive and integrative analytical framework.

The contribution of this study lies in extending the application of literary reception theory to the context of classical Sufi religious texts. Whereas the theory has predominantly been employed in the analysis of novels or modern literary works, this research demonstrates its relevance for understanding text-based religious practices rooted in traditional sources. Furthermore, the study offers empirical insight into the religious dynamics of a local *ṭarīqa* community an aspect that is often overlooked within mainstream academic discourse.

Accordingly, the recitation of *manāqib* within the TQN community in Lamongan cannot be understood merely as a repetitive ritual; rather, it constitutes a hermeneutical process that generates religious transformation. The interaction between text, reader, and social context gives rise to spiritual experiences that reinforce both religious identity and spiritual authority. This constitutes the central emphasis of the present study: the *manāqib* text lives through the reception of its readers, and it is precisely through this dynamic process that religious transformation is formed.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a religious ethnographic design to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of *manāqib* text reception and the religious

<sup>11</sup> al-Barzanji, *Lujayn Al-Dani Fi Manaqib al-Qutb al-Rabbani al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani*.

<sup>12</sup> Iklil Nafisah and M. Sos, *Metamorfosis Jiwa: Refleksi Filosofis Atas Transformasi Religius Kaum Milenial* (Detak Pustaka, 2025), 13.

transformation occurring within the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya Order (TQN) community in Lamongan.<sup>13</sup> A qualitative approach was selected because the focus of this research extends beyond the text *Lujayn al-Dānī* by Ja'far al-Barzanjī to encompass the subjective experiences of the congregation in interpreting the text through the practice of *manāqib* recitation. This study therefore regards *manāqib* not merely as a biographical-hagiographical text, but as a living text that acquires meaning through social interaction and the spiritual experiences of its readers.

Methodologically, this study integrates literary reception theory particularly Wolfgang Iser's concepts of the *implied reader* and *Wirkung* (effect)—with an ethnographic approach. Reception theory is employed to analyze how the *manāqib* text creates space for reader participation in the construction of meaning, while ethnography is utilized to understand the practice of *manāqib* recitation as a contextualized socio-religious phenomenon. The integration of these two approaches enables an analysis that moves beyond textual structure alone, encompassing the congregation's responses and the transformational impact generated through their engagement with the text.

The research was conducted in Lamongan Regency, East Java, with the primary subjects consisting of members of the TQN community who regularly participate in *manāqib* recitation. The selection of this location was based on the intensity of *manāqib* practices and the congregation's strong attachment to *Lujayn al-Dānī* as the principal textual reference within the tradition.<sup>14</sup> Research informants were selected purposively, comprising individuals who demonstrate active involvement in *manāqib* gatherings, including the *murshid* (spiritual guide), members of the assembly's leadership, and congregants who consistently participate in the recitation sessions.

The study involved 12 key informants, consisting of one *murshid*, three majelis administrators, and eight active congregants who regularly participate in *manāqib* recitation. This number is considered sufficient to capture variation in experiences while maintaining depth of qualitative inquiry. In terms of positionality, the researcher occupied a semi-insider position. While not formally affiliated as a member of the *ṭarīqa*, the researcher possesses prior familiarity with pesantren-based religious culture, which facilitated access to participants and ritual spaces. At the same time, analytical distance was maintained to minimize normative bias and ensure critical interpretation of the data.

The research data consist of both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through participatory observation and in-depth interviews. Observation was conducted by directly attending *manāqib* recitation sessions in order to examine ritual dynamics, expressions of religiosity, patterns of social interaction, and the relationships of authority between teacher and disciple. Semi-structured interviews were carried out to explore the congregation's understanding of the content of the *manāqib*, their motivations for participation, and the transformations they perceived after engaging in the recitation.

<sup>13</sup> J. W. Creswell, *Desain Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, Dan Pendekatan Campuran*, ed. 8 (2018), 14, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429469237-3>.

<sup>14</sup> Miza Nina Adlini et al., "Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Studi Pustaka," *Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan* 6, no. 1 (2022): 975, <https://doi.org/10.33487/edumaspul.v6i1.3394>.

Secondary data include the text *Lujayn al-Dānī* as well as supporting documents such as event pamphlets and archival records of the *manāqib* assembly.

Data analysis was conducted in several stages, including reduction, categorization, and theoretical interpretation. Interview and observational data were first reduced and organized into principal thematic categories, such as theological interpretation, social dimensions, cultural aspects, and forms of religious transformation. Subsequently, the data were analyzed through the framework of Wolfgang Iser's literary reception theory in order to identify how the text generates effects upon its readers and how these effects are manifested in changes in attitudes, devotional practices, and patterns of religious relations.

Data credibility was maintained through both source and methodological triangulation, achieved by cross-checking interview results among different informants and integrating findings from observation and documentation. Furthermore, member checking was undertaken to ensure that the researcher's interpretations accurately corresponded to the meanings and experiences conveyed by the participants. In this study, the researcher recognizes their role as the primary research instrument; accordingly, reflexivity formed an essential component of the analytical process, ensuring that interpretations remained contextually grounded and closely aligned with the social realities of the congregation.

Through this approach, the research method functions not merely as a technical procedure for data collection, but as an interpretive framework for understanding how the recitation of *manāqib*, as a work of religious literature, is transformed into a spiritual experience and a social practice that shapes the religiosity of the TQN congregation in Lamongan.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya Order (TQN) Community in Lamongan and the *Manaqib* Text

The congregation's reception of the *manāqib* text within the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya Order (TQN) community in Lamongan demonstrates that the recitation of *Lujayn al-Dānī fī Manāqib al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī* is not perceived merely as the reading of a biographical text, but rather as a spiritual practice imbued with theological, social, and cultural significance.<sup>15</sup> In this context, the *manāqib* text functions as a medium that bridges hagiographic narrative and the congregation's lived religious experience. It does not stand as a closed historical document; rather, it becomes enlivened through collective recitation, *dhikr*, and communal prayer. This phenomenon indicates that the meaning of *manāqib* does not reside statically within the text itself, but emerges through the process of interaction between the text and its readers, as articulated within the framework of literary reception theory.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> al-Barzanji, *Lujayn Al-Dani Fi Manaqib al-Qutb al-Rabbani al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani*.

<sup>16</sup> Arief Subhan et al., *Membaca Ulang Dakwah: Perspektif Filsafat, Sejarah, Dan Antropologi Di Era Kontemporer* (Star Digital Publishing, 2025), 11.

Conceptually, the congregation's reception of *manāqib* may be understood through the perspective of Wolfgang Iser, who positions the reader as an active agent in the construction of meaning. The text provides narrative structures, symbols, and interpretive gaps that are subsequently filled by the reader's experiences, beliefs, and horizon of expectations. Within the TQN community, this horizon of expectations is shaped by the teachings of the *ṭarīqa*, the authority of the *murshid*, and a Sufi tradition transmitted across generations.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the recitation of *manāqib* does not occur within a neutral interpretive space, but rather within an established framework of belief. The congregation approaches the text with the conviction that the accounts of the *karāmah* of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī are not merely symbolic narratives, but representations of a saint's spiritual proximity to God—proximity that is believed to mediate blessings for those who engage in its recitation.

In the theological dimension, the congregation's reception indicates that *manāqib* is understood as a means of spiritual reinforcement and a medium of *tawassul* (seeking nearness to God through the intercession of a saint).<sup>18</sup> The narratives of piety, asceticism (*zuhd*), and the extraordinary virtues attributed to al-Jīlānī construct an image of the saint as a conduit of blessing. The congregation believes that through reading and listening to the *manāqib*, they attain inner tranquility, facilitation in worldly affairs, and protection from hardship. This interpretation aligns with earlier findings indicating that *manāqib* recitation is perceived as a practice that fosters closeness to God while simultaneously providing spiritual fulfillment and a sense of existential serenity.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, theological reception does not cease at the level of comprehending the narrative content; rather, it develops into a conviction regarding the text's spiritual efficacy.

Furthermore, theological reception is closely related to the congregation's perception of the concept of *karāmah*. The miracle narratives contained in *Lujayn al-Dānī* are not approached from a rationalistic framework; rather, they are accepted as a legitimate component of the Sufi tradition. The congregation does not question the empirical plausibility of these extraordinary events; instead, they interpret them as symbols of a saint's nobility and as evidence of his proximity to God.<sup>20</sup> In this context, the text functions as a medium for the internalization of values such as piety, *tawakkul* (trust in God), and sincerity. The recitation of *manāqib* becomes a moment of spiritual reflection, during which the congregation contemplates the saint's life journey as a moral and religious exemplar.

The congregation's reception also encompasses a significant social dimension. The tradition of *manāqib* recitation is conducted collectively, thereby creating an

<sup>17</sup> Nafisah and Sos, *Metamorfosis Jiwa: Refleksi Filosofis Atas Transformasi Religius Kaum Milenial*.

<sup>18</sup> Pati Tais Rahma, *Manakib Syekh Abdul Qodir Al-Jailani Sebagai Media Dakwah Di Pondok Pesantren Sentot Alibasya Kota Bengkulu*, 2022.

<sup>19</sup> Yahya, "Tradisi Manaqib Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani Di Musala Raudlatut Talibin Kembaran Kebumen," 19.

<sup>20</sup> Ishomuddin, "Resilience of Religious Culture and Supply Chain Practices in Traditional Islamic Communities in Industrial Era 4.0 in East Java," *International Journal of Supply Chain Management* 9, no. 2 (2020): 929–36, <https://doi.org/10.59160/ijscm.v9i2.4696>.

intensive space for social interaction. The *majelis manāqib* brings together individuals from diverse social and economic backgrounds within a shared spiritual forum. In practice, this collective recitation reinforces solidarity and a sense of togetherness, consistent with various studies that highlight the social function of *manāqib* gatherings as a means of strengthening intimacy and communal cohesion.<sup>21</sup> Accordingly, the reception of the text generates not only individual meaning but also social cohesion that reinforces the collective identity of the community as members of the *ṭarīqa*.

This social dimension may be interpreted through the concept of mechanical solidarity, whereby shared beliefs and religious practices generate strong bonds among members of the community. The recitation of *manāqib* thus becomes a symbol of spiritual unity, bringing congregants together within a shared religious experience. In certain contexts, the tradition also functions as a medium for expanding social networks and strengthening inter-family ties within the community.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the reception of the *manāqib* text carries implications that extend beyond the spiritual domain, as it contributes to the formation of a cohesive social structure within the community.

Within the cultural dimension, the congregation's reception of *manāqib* plays a crucial role in sustaining the continuity of Sufi tradition at the local level. *Manāqib* is regarded as part of a religious heritage that must be preserved. Participation in its recitation symbolizes commitment to the teachings of the *ṭarīqa* and serves as an expression of reverence toward the *murshid*. The *manāqib* text does not merely represent the narrative of a saint; it also functions as a medium for transmitting Sufi values such as *zuhd* (asceticism), patience, *tawakkul* (trust in God), and love of the Divine. Through repeated recitation, these values become internalized within the consciousness of the congregation, shaping a distinctive religious habitus.<sup>23</sup>

Interestingly, the congregation's reception does not always depend upon a deep linguistic comprehension of the Arabic text being recited. Some participants may not fully grasp the detailed narrative structure or vocabulary of the text, yet they remain convinced of its spiritual efficacy. This phenomenon indicates that, within a religious context, meaning is not determined solely by literary competence, but also by collective belief and the authority of the spiritual guide. Previous studies likewise observe that confidence in the benefits of *manāqib* often derives from the teachings of the *ṭarīqa* master, who affirms the text's spiritual blessing. In this sense, reception assumes a performative and authority-based character.<sup>24</sup>

From the perspective of literary reception theory, this condition indicates that the

<sup>21</sup> Bayani Dahlan and Nada Rahmatina, "Manakib Dalam Tradisi Masyarakat Banjar: Analisis Antropologis Dengan Pendekatan Dakwah Kultural," *Alhadharah: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 23, no. 1 (2024): 37.

<sup>22</sup> Muhammad Auffa Wirayudha, "Tradisi Penyediaan Sesajen Dalam Pembacaan Manakib Pada Masyarakat Banjar Perspektif Hukum Islam," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Jurisprudence, Economic and Legal Theory* 3, no. 1 (2025): 183.

<sup>23</sup> Muhammad Fajar Adyatama, "Tradisi Manakib-an Sayyidah Khadijah al-Kubra Di Mushalla Daruttaqwa Samarinda Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Masyarakat," *Salimiya: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Keagamaan Islam* 4, no. 3 (2023): 16.

<sup>24</sup> Azyumardi Azra, "Neo-Sufisme Dan Masa Depan," in *Rekonstruksi Dan Renungan Religi Islam* (Paramadina, 1996), 34.

*manāqib* text presupposes an *implied reader* endowed with particular Sufi convictions. The narrative structure comprising accounts of *karāmah*, supplications, and praises of the saint implicitly anticipates a reader who acknowledges the spiritual legitimacy of the figure portrayed. Members of the TQN congregation occupy this implied reader position, as they have been shaped by a *ṭarīqa* tradition that situates the saint at the center of the spiritual journey. Consequently, the process of reception unfolds harmoniously between the textual structure and the readers' horizon of expectations.

Overall, the congregation's reception of the *manāqib* text reveals a complex and multilayered dynamic of meaning-making. On the one hand, the text is read as a sacred narrative that mediates spiritual experience; on the other, it functions as an instrument for cultivating social solidarity and preserving cultural identity. This process of reception affirms that the recitation of *manāqib* is not merely a repetitive ritual, but a hermeneutical process involving continuous interaction between text, reader, and social context. A closer examination further demonstrates that the congregation's reception entails a negotiation of meaning between individual experience and the normative framework of the *ṭarīqa*. The text *Lujayn al-Dānī* provides narratives of the biography, virtues, and *karāmah* of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī; however, the concrete significance of these narratives is shaped by the ways in which congregants relate them to their lived realities. Interviews conducted in this study reveal that several participants perceive the recitation of *manāqib* as a resource for coping with life's challenges, including economic hardship, family conflict, and inner anxiety. The narratives of al-Jīlānī's patience and steadfastness in the face of trials serve as sources of inspiration, translated into everyday practices of patience and *tawakkul* (trust in God).

This process indicates that reception does not terminate at the level of textual comprehension; rather, it extends into existential appropriation. The congregation does not merely admire the saint as a historical figure of the past, but appropriates him as a moral reference in confronting contemporary circumstances. Within the framework of reception theory, this phenomenon may be understood as the actualization of the text within the reader's lived experience. What initially appears as a historical-hagiographical narrative becomes relevant because it is read within a horizon of expectations shaped by the congregation's spiritual and social needs. Accordingly, the meaning of the text remains contextual and dynamic, continually renewed through the interaction between narrative structure and lived reality.

The congregation's reception also reveals a close interconnection between the text and spiritual authority. Within the TQN community, *manāqib* recitation is generally led by a teacher or assembly leader who possesses recognized religious legitimacy. This authority plays a significant role in framing how the congregation understands the text. Brief explanations or *tausiyah* accompanying the recitation function as interpretive guides, directing the congregation's understanding toward particular values, such as obedience to the spiritual guide, the centrality of *dhikr*, and commitment to the devotional

practices of the *ṭarīqa*.<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, reception unfolds within a hierarchical relationship between teacher and disciple, in which the text serves as a medium for transmitting teachings and reinforcing spiritual authority.

This relationship reinforces the collective character of reception. The recitation of *manāqib* is not conducted individually or in isolation, but within a communal setting that generates a shared religious experience. The atmosphere of solemnity, collective supplication, and the sacred ambiance cultivated in the assembly deepen the congregation's emotional engagement with the text. Such collective emotion strengthens the conviction that the text possesses tangible spiritual efficacy. In this context, reception becomes a social event involving embodied presence, vocal expression, and spatial atmosphere, rather than a purely intellectual exercise.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, the repetition of *manāqib* recitation contributes significantly to the reinforcement of meaning internalization. The routine performance of *manāqiban* establishes patterns of religious habituation. Each time the text is recited, the congregation revisits a similar spiritual experience, allowing its embedded meanings to settle more profoundly within collective consciousness. Such repetition fosters what may be termed a shared religious memory, in which the text becomes woven into the very rhythm of communal life.<sup>27</sup> From this perspective, reception is not a one-time event of reading, but an ongoing process that continually shapes the congregation's spiritual identity.

Another significant dimension of the congregation's reception is the belief in *barakah* (spiritual blessing). This belief is grounded not only in the narrative content of the text, but also in the conviction that the *manāqib* itself possesses intrinsic spiritual value.<sup>28</sup> As noted in previous studies, many congregants believe that the recitation of *manāqib* brings blessings and facilitates the resolution of life's difficulties. This conviction demonstrates that reception encompasses a performative dimension: the meaning of the text is actualized through practice and through faith in its tangible effects.

This phenomenon simultaneously responds to reductionist critiques that regard *manāqiban* merely as a socio-material practice. Although certain contexts may include elements such as communal meals or the distribution of gifts, the congregation's reception of the *manāqib* text within the TQN community indicates that their primary motivation is spiritual and theological in nature. The narratives of *karāmah* and the supplications contained in the text serve as sources of hope and inner tranquility, rather than simply as a backdrop for social activity. Accordingly, spiritual meaning remains at the core of reception.

More broadly, the congregation's reception of *manāqib* may also be understood as an articulation of local Sufi Islamic identity. Lamongan, as a social context, possesses

<sup>25</sup> Maghfur Ahmad, *Sufisme & Deradikalisasi Agama* (Penerbit NEM, 2024), 34.

<sup>26</sup> Muhammad Ainul Yaqin, "Zikir Manakib: Moderasi Islam Di Tengah Masyarakat Multikultural," 2018, 949–58, <https://doi.org/10.36835/ancoms.v0iSeries>.

<sup>27</sup> Nafisah and Sos, *Metamorfosis Jiwa: Refleksi Filosofis Atas Transformasi Religius Kaum Milenial*.

<sup>28</sup> Samsul Ariyadi, *Resepsi Al-Qur'an Dan Bentuk Spiritualitas Jawa Modern: Kajian Praktik Mujahadah Dan Semaan al-Qur'an Mantab Purbojati Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat* (Penerbit A-Empat, 2021), 24.

a strong religious tradition, and the practice of *manāqiban* constitutes one expression of its continuity. Through reading and preserving the *manāqib* text, the congregation not only reproduces Sufi values but also affirms their position within the broader religious landscape. In circumstances where Sufi practices frequently encounter criticism from purification-oriented groups, the sustained observance of *manāqiban* becomes a form of religious identity affirmation grounded in tradition.

Hermeneutically, the congregation's reception reveals a reciprocal relationship between text and experience. The text offers exemplary narratives, while the lived experiences of the congregation provide an immediate and concrete context for those narratives. This relationship is dialogical in nature: the text shapes the religious consciousness of the congregation, and at the same time, the congregation's experiences generate renewed meanings for the text. Such a dialogical process demonstrates that *manāqib* is not merely a literary heritage, but a living text continually renewed through social practice.<sup>29</sup>

When reconsidered through the lens of Wolfgang Iser's theory, this process affirms the concept of *Wirkung*, or the effect of the text. Such effects are not limited to momentary emotional responses; rather, they encompass the formation of long-term religious orientations. Congregants who regularly participate in *manāqiban* demonstrate an increased commitment to devotional practices, *dhikr*, and adherence to the teachings of the *ṭarīqa*.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, reception functions as a bridge between the text and religious transformation.

From the foregoing discussion, it may be concluded that the congregation's reception of the *manāqib* text within the TQN community of Lamongan is multidimensional in character. It encompasses theological interpretations that affirm *barakah* and *tawassul*, a social dimension that reinforces communal solidarity, and a cultural dimension that sustains the continuity of Sufi tradition. This process of reception unfolds within a framework of spiritual authority and collective experience, deepening the internalization of Sufi values. The *manāqib* text becomes living and dynamic because it is activated by its readers; through this very process, it shapes the religious consciousness and identity of the congregation.

### **Religious Transformation as an Effect of Reception**

It is important to emphasize that religious transformation observed in this study cannot be attributed solely to the *manāqib* text. Rather, it emerges from the interaction between multiple factors, including participation in *ṭarīqa* activities, the authority of the *murshid*, social reinforcement within the community, and broader socio-economic conditions. The *manāqib* text functions as one significant element within this constellation, but not as a single deterministic cause.

Religious transformation within the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya Order (TQN)

<sup>29</sup> Burhan Ali, "Problem Hermeneutika Dalam Etika Jamaah Salafi," *Yogyakarta: Thesis Konsentrasi Filsafat Islam, Program Studi Agama Dan Filsafat, Pascasarjana Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga*, 2007.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas, "Reading Wolfgang Iser or Responding to a Theory of Response," 23.

community in Lamongan cannot be separated from the process of reception of the *manāqib* text previously discussed. From the perspective of Wolfgang Iser's literary reception theory, a text does not merely present a narrative structure; it also generates *Wirkung* (effects) that influence the consciousness and behavior of its readers. In the context of the recitation of *Lujayn al-Dānī fī Manāqib al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī*, these effects are manifested in psycho-spiritual changes, the intensification of devotional practices, and the strengthening of commitment to the values of the ṭarīqa. Accordingly, religious transformation is not an external consequence detached from the text; rather, it emerges from the hermeneutical interaction between text and reader.

At the psycho-spiritual level, the most salient form of religious transformation is the emergence of inner tranquility and the strengthening of *tawakkul* (trustful reliance upon God).<sup>31</sup> Many congregants report that after participating in *manāqib* recitation, they experience a deeper sense of inner peace. The narratives of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī's patience and steadfastness in facing life's trials serve as a source of inspiration, motivating them to adopt a more accepting and composed attitude toward destiny. This transformation does not occur instantaneously; rather, it is formed through repeated and consistent engagement with the recitation. Such repetition fosters the gradual internalization of values, which in turn reshapes the congregation's inner orientation toward life.

This psycho-spiritual transformation is also closely linked to the intensification of *tirakat* (ascetic devotional discipline). Within the TQN community, *manāqib* recitation is often accompanied by specific practices such as *dhikr* and designated supplications. Active engagement in these practices deepens the congregation's spiritual experience and strengthens their religious discipline. Consistent with earlier research findings, *manāqiban* is not merely perceived as a ritual activity, but as a medium for cultivating religious character fostering greater patience, *tawakkul*, and steadfastness (*istiqāmah*).<sup>32</sup> Accordingly, religious transformation may be understood as a process of internalizing the Sufi values embedded within the text.

Beyond the individual dimension, religious transformation is also evident in observable changes in the congregation's religious behavior. Following regular participation in *manāqib* recitation, some members demonstrate an increased intensity in devotional practices, including supererogatory prayers (*ṣalāt sunnah*), *dhikr*, and active involvement in *majelis* activities. This enhancement is not driven merely by formal obligation, but by the emergence of a strengthened spiritual consciousness shaped by the exemplary narratives contained in the *manāqib* text. Accounts of al-Jīlānī's asceticism and perseverance establish a moral standard that encourages congregants to improve the quality of their worship. In this respect, the text functions as a normative model guiding religious conduct.

<sup>31</sup> Dahlan and Rahmatina, "Manakib Dalam Tradisi Masyarakat Banjar: Analisis Antropologis Dengan Pendekatan Dakwah Kultural."

<sup>32</sup> Yahya, "Tradisi Manaqib Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani Di Musala Raudlatut Talibin Kembaran Kebumen," 17.

Religious transformation also has implications for strengthening the relationship between disciple and spiritual guide within the ṭarīqa structure. The recitation of *manāqib* not only recounts the virtues of saints of the past, but also reaffirms the importance of obedience to the *murshid* as the bearer of the spiritual lineage (*sanad*). In practice, congregants who experience spiritual impact through *manāqib* recitation tend to demonstrate greater loyalty and adherence to the guidance of their teacher. This indicates that religious transformation is not solely personal in nature, but also structural, as it reinforces the legitimacy of spiritual authority within the community.

At the social level, religious transformation is also reflected in the strengthening of solidarity and social concern. The routine practice of *manāqiban* creates a space of interaction that fosters closer relationships among congregants. This transformation is manifested in mutual assistance, the sharing of information, and active participation in other religious and social activities within the community.<sup>33</sup> Accordingly, the effect of textual reception does not merely shape individual consciousness, but also strengthens the social cohesion of the ṭarīqa community. This finding broadens the understanding that religious transformation is not exclusively private in nature; rather, it can manifest in collective social practices.

From the perspective of reception theory, this religious transformation demonstrates that the effect of the text is both performative and sustained. *Wirkung* does not arise solely in the immediate moment of recitation; rather, it extends into the sphere of everyday life. Within the TQN community of Lamongan, congregants who regularly engage in *manāqib* recitation exhibit patterns of religious behavior that are more stable and structured. This affirms that the *manāqib* text possesses the capacity to shape a religious habitus through a continuous and repeated process of reception.

Religious transformation may also be understood as a process of identity formation. By reading and internalizing the values embedded in the *manāqib*, congregants affirm their identity as members of a Sufi community. This identity is not merely symbolic; it is reflected in concrete practices, such as consistent attendance at *majelis* gatherings, commitment to ṭarīqa devotions, and the maintenance of social ethics. In contexts where Sufi practices frequently encounter criticism, this transformation functions as a form of religious identity affirmation grounded in tradition.<sup>34</sup>

Interestingly, this religious transformation does not occur uniformly among all congregants. The depth of change varies according to the intensity of involvement and the individual's prior religious background. Nevertheless, the general pattern indicates that the more consistently one participates in *manāqib* recitation, the stronger the transformation experienced. This observation reinforces the argument that textual reception has a direct correlation with the formation of religious behavior.

Religious transformation as an effect of reception within the Qadiriyya wa

<sup>33</sup> Deni Mulyadi et al., "Pengabdian Partisipatif Dan Transformasi Nilai Keagamaan: Studi Moderasi Beragama Di Gampong Lot Bener Kelipah Kecamatan Bener Kelipah Aceh," *HUBBUL WATHAN: Jurnal Riset Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat* 1, no. 1 (2025): 18.

<sup>34</sup> Ulil Akilah et al., *Konektivitas Budaya Dengan Jiwa Keagamaan* (Penerbit: Kramantara JS, 2025), 13.

Naqshbandiyya Order (TQN) community in Lamongan extends beyond psychological change or increased devotional intensity; it also reaches the ethical and practical dimensions of everyday life. In several interviews, congregants emphasized that participation in *manāqib* recitation encourages them to exercise greater caution in conduct, to guard their speech, and to improve social relationships. Narratives of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī’s exemplary honesty, simplicity, and compassion are translated into moral guidelines to be emulated. Consequently, religious transformation manifests in the cultivation of a more courteous and inclusive social ethic.

In this context, religious transformation may be understood as the internalization of ethical Sufism (*taṣawwuf akhlāqī*). Although this study centers on the reception of *manāqib*, the values embedded in the text intersect with the ethical Sufi framework that emphasizes *takhallī* (self-purification from blameworthy traits), *taḥallī* (adornment with praiseworthy virtues), and *tajallī* (the manifestation of divine illumination), as elaborated in Sufi teachings associated with ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. Through repeated recitation, congregants do not merely comprehend these values at a conceptual level; they endeavor to embody them in everyday life. This process demonstrates that the effect of reception extends beyond the symbolic realm and enters the sphere of ethical praxis.

Religious transformation is also evident in the strengthening of awareness concerning death and the afterlife. Sections of the *manāqib* that narrate the transience of worldly life and emphasize the importance of an otherworldly orientation cultivate a reflective consciousness among congregants. Many state that participation in the recitation reminds them of life’s limitations and encourages greater focus on righteous deeds. This heightened awareness reinforces an eschatological orientation characteristic of Sufi spirituality. Within the framework of reception theory, narratives of mortality and asceticism function as hermeneutical stimuli that shape the congregation’s life orientation.

Religious transformation is further reflected in the heightened participation of congregants in collective religious activities. After experiencing the spiritual impact of *manāqib* recitation, many become more actively involved in communal *dhikr*, study circles, and other socio-religious programs. This pattern indicates that the reception of the text generates intrinsic motivation to strengthen communal engagement. Such findings are consistent with Muhammad Nurzakka’s (2022) research, which demonstrates that the *manāqiban* tradition can function as a medium for internalizing discipline and religious commitment within pesantren communities.<sup>35</sup> Accordingly, religious transformation assumes a concrete practical dimension within the social structure of the community.

Another dimension of transformation concerns the reinforcement of spiritual authority. As previously discussed, the recitation of *manāqib* underscores the centrality of the saint and the *murshid* as spiritual guides. In this context, religious transformation is reflected in the increased obedience of congregants to the guidance of their teacher,

<sup>35</sup> Muhammad Nurzakka, “Training Discipline of Students in The Manakib Reading Tradition at Nurul Qur’an Pakunden Islamic Boarding School Ponorogo,” *Jurnal Living Hadis* 7, no. 1 (2022): 60, <https://doi.org/10.14421/livinghadis.2022.2728>.

both in devotional practices and in daily conduct. The authority of the *murshid* is not perceived merely as a formal structure, but as a continuation of a spiritual lineage (*sanad*) connected to the figure of al-Jīlānī. From the standpoint of reception, the *manāqib* text functions as a narrative legitimation that reinforces the hierarchical structure of the ṭarīqa.

Another important aspect that enriches the understanding of religious transformation is its cultural dimension. The tradition of *manāqiban* in Lamongan is not merely a spiritual practice, but also an integral component of the community's religious-cultural identity. Previous studies indicate that in various regions, *manāqiban* functions to preserve local traditions while simultaneously reinforcing social solidarity.<sup>36</sup> Within the TQN community of Lamongan, religious transformation also entails active participation in preserving Sufi tradition as a form of cultural heritage. In this sense, the effect of reception encompasses the safeguarding of religious-cultural continuity. Religious transformation may likewise be interpreted as a response to critiques directed at Sufi practices. Historically, Sufism and *manāqiban* have often been challenged by purification movements that question the legitimacy of such rituals. However, the continuity and even intensification of *manāqiban* in Lamongan demonstrate that congregants do not merely preserve the tradition, but deepen their religious commitment through it. In this context, religious transformation functions as a form of cultural resistance against the delegitimization of Sufi practices. The reception of *manāqib* thus becomes a means of affirming both identity and belief.

Religious transformation is further evident in a broader dimension of social solidarity. The tradition of *manāqiban* frequently becomes an occasion for sharing and mutual assistance among congregants. Social activities such as collective cooperation (*gotong royong*), support for members in need, and participation in community initiatives tend to increase alongside the intensity of involvement in *majelis manāqib*. This pattern indicates that religious transformation is not confined to internal change, but also entails shifts in patterns of social relations. Within the framework of the sociology of literature, the effect of a text may extend beyond interpretation to shape collective social action.

From the perspective of reception theory, this entire process affirms that the *manāqib* text possesses a strong performative capacity. Its narrative structure highlighting exemplary conduct, *karāmah*, and spiritual proximity produces effects that transcend aesthetic experience. These effects shape a religious habitus internalized within the congregation. Such habitus is reflected in consistent devotional practice, an attitude of *tawakkul*, obedience to the spiritual guide, and commitment to social solidarity. In this sense, religious transformation may be understood as the concrete manifestation of the text's *Wirkung* in the lives of its readers.

It is important to note that religious transformation within the TQN community of Lamongan is neither revolutionary nor dramatic; rather, it is gradual and continuous. Change unfolds through the routine of recitation, the repetition of supplication, and

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<sup>36</sup> Sri Indrahti et al., "Tradisi Lokal Penguat Etos Kerja Di Daerah Industri Kreatif (Studi Kasus Di Mantingan Jepara Dan Trusmi Cirebon)," *Anuva: Jurnal Kajian Budaya, Perpustakaan, Dan Informasi* 2, no. 4 (2018): 458.

sustained social interaction within the *majelis*. In this context, religious transformation is more accurately conceived as an ongoing process of character formation and the cultivation of consciousness—slow yet stable. The reception of the text thus becomes a medium that continually renews the congregation’s spiritual orientation.

It may therefore be affirmed that religious transformation as an effect of reception in the recitation of *manāqib* encompasses multiple dimensions, including psycho-spiritual, ethical, devotional praxis, authority relations, social solidarity, and the preservation of cultural identity. The *manāqib* text does not remain confined to the status of a hagiographical narrative; rather, it functions as an agent shaping religious consciousness and conduct.

The interaction between text and reader generates changes that are both personal and collective, which in turn reinforce the continuity of the *ṭarīqa* tradition in Lamongan. In this respect, literary reception theory demonstrates its relevance within the context of Sufi religious texts, as it provides a framework for explaining how sacred narratives are transformed into lived praxis within a religious community.

### **Manāqib as a Living Text**

The recitation of *manāqib* within the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya Order (TQN) community in Lamongan demonstrates that *Lujayn al-Dānī fī Manāqib al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī* does not function as a static and closed text; rather, it operates as a living text within socio-religious practice.<sup>37</sup> The text continually acquires renewed meanings through collective recitation, ritual repetition, and sustained interaction between congregants and their spiritual guide. In this context, *manāqib* is not merely read; it is experienced, internalized, and actualized in everyday life. This is what renders *manāqib* a dynamic text one that is spiritually and socially productive within the living tradition of the community.

As a hagiographical work, *Lujayn al-Dānī* contains biographical narratives, praises, and accounts of the *karāmah* of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. Structurally, the text combines elements of non-fictional prose in the form of historical biography with imaginative components that narrate miracles and spiritual virtues. This synthesis creates a broad interpretive space in which readers may appropriate meaning. From the perspective of literary reception theory, the narrative gaps embedded within the text enable readers to fill them with their own religious experiences. Thus, meaning is not unilaterally imposed by the text; rather, it invites the active participation of the reader in its construction.

The notion of a living text is further evident in the repetitive recitation of *manāqib*. Each time the text is read within a *majelis*, it undergoes a renewed actualization of meaning. Recitations conducted in the context of a *ḥaul* commemoration, religious festivals, or specific communal events generate distinct interpretive nuances. In such settings, the text is not delivered mechanically; it is often accompanied by brief explanations or reflections from the spiritual guide or assembly leader. This practice

<sup>37</sup> al-Barzanji, *Lujayn Al-Dani Fi Manaqib al-Qutb al-Rabbani al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani*.

demonstrates that the meaning of the text is continually renewed through the social contexts that surround it. Consequently, *manāqib* functions as a text that remains in an ongoing process of reinterpretation.

The characterization of *manāqib* as a “living text” is supported by its ability to respond to contemporary concerns faced by the congregation. For instance, some participants interpret the narratives of patience and reliance on God as guidance in dealing with economic uncertainty and agricultural challenges in rural Lamongan. Others relate the text to modern anxieties, including job insecurity and family pressures. This indicates that the meaning of the text is not static, but negotiated in relation to changing social realities. However, it is also important to note that the vitality of the text is inseparable from the institutional structure of the *ṭarīqa* itself. Without the ritual setting and the authority of the *murshid*, the transformative effect of the text may not be equally sustained.

As a living text, *manāqib* also plays a significant role in shaping the collective memory of the community. The narratives of al-Jīlānī’s exemplary conduct are not merely remembered as accounts of the past; rather, they become part of a shared memory that informs and sustains the congregation’s spiritual identity.

Through regular recitation, these narratives become embedded within collective consciousness and function as moral references in everyday life.<sup>38</sup> In this context, *manāqib* functions as a medium for transmitting values that connects the present generation with the Sufi tradition of the past. This phenomenon aligns with earlier research indicating that in various regions, *manāqiban* serves not only as a ritual practice, but also as a vehicle for preserving tradition and sustaining religious identity.<sup>39</sup> Within the TQN community of Lamongan, *manāqib* serves as a symbol of the continuity of the spiritual lineage (*sanad*) and the legitimacy of the *ṭarīqa*’s teachings. The recitation of the text reaffirms the congregation’s connection to the saintly figure and to the established structure of spiritual authority. Accordingly, as a living text, *manāqib* generates not only personal meaning but also reinforces the social structure and religious hierarchy of the community.

The concept of a living text may also be understood through the lens of a living tradition. In practice, *manāqib* is not positioned as a literary document confined to archival preservation; rather, it constitutes an integral component of the rhythm of religious life. It is recited on various social occasions, such as *haul* commemorations, family gatherings, and community events.<sup>40</sup> Accordingly, the text becomes embedded within cultural practices that are continuously reproduced and transmitted across generations. This continuity indicates that *manāqib* fulfills a social function that extends

<sup>38</sup> Saiful Bahri and Sukron Fahmi, “Pendampingan Revitalisasi Tradisi Manaqiban Sebagai Penguatan Spiritualitas Dan Sosial Keagamaan Di Desa Mangaran,” *Journal Homepage Https://Gerbangjurnal. Alfalah. Id/Index. Php/Pengabdian* 1, no. 01 (2025): 17.

<sup>39</sup> Salamah Noorhidayati and Kharis Mahmud, “Manaqiban of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Al-Jailani Tradition: Study of Living Hadith in Kunir Wonodadi Blitar East of Java,” *Kalam* 12, no. 1 (2018): 2010.

<sup>40</sup> Martin Beckstein, “The Concept of a Living Tradition,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 20, no. 4 (2017): 491–510.

beyond its purely literary dimension.

From the perspective of Wolfgang Iser's reception theory, a living text is one that generates a sustained *Wirkung* (effect) over time.<sup>41</sup> Such effects do not end in momentary emotional experiences; rather, they continue in the formation of consciousness and action. Within the TQN context, *manāqib* shapes a religious habitus reflected in consistent devotional practice, obedience to the spiritual guide, and active participation in collective activities. This process affirms that the text possesses performative capacity—one capable of shaping social reality. Notably, the vitality of the *manāqib* text is also influenced by broader socio-political contexts.<sup>42</sup> Historically, Sufi practices and *manāqiban* have faced criticism from purification movements that question the legitimacy of such rituals. Yet, precisely within such circumstances, the recitation of *manāqib* increasingly affirms the congregation's Sufi identity. The text becomes a symbol of cultural resistance and the affirmation of tradition. In this sense, *manāqib* as a living text not only shapes religious consciousness but also functions as a medium for articulating identity amid evolving religious discourses.

A living text likewise reflects an openness to adaptation. On various occasions, the recitation of *manāqib* is adjusted to local contexts—whether through the use of vernacular introductions, the addition of specific supplications, or its integration with local traditions. Such adaptations do not diminish the authority of the text; rather, they enhance its relevance within the social fabric of Lamongan. Accordingly, the vitality of the *manāqib* text resides in its capacity to engage with local culture without relinquishing its spiritual substance.

Overall, *manāqib* as a living text demonstrates that the relationship between text and reader is dialogical and dynamic. The text offers sacred narratives and symbols of exemplary conduct, while readers contribute contemporary contexts and concrete experiences. This interaction generates evolving meanings, fosters religious transformation, and reinforces the identity of the *ṭarīqa* community. From this perspective, *manāqib* is not merely a work of religious literature, but an active agent in shaping religious consciousness and social structure in Lamongan.

Accordingly, the recitation of *manāqib* within the TQN community of Lamongan illustrates that religious texts can function as living entities that continually engage with social realities. Through repeated reception and the religious transformation it produces, *manāqib* becomes a bridge between classical Sufi narratives and the contemporary lives of congregants. This conception simultaneously broadens the scope of literary reception theory into the domain of traditional religious texts, demonstrating that meaning is shaped not only by modern readers engaging contemporary literature, but also by religious communities engaging classical hagiographical works.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas, "Reading Wolfgang Iser or Responding to a Theory of Response," 57.

<sup>42</sup> Moh Nor Ichwan et al., "Sufism And Quranic Interpretation: Bridging Spirituality, Culture, and Political Discourse in Muslim Societies," *Ulumuna* 28, no. 2 (2024): 655–80, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v28i2.1082>.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the recitation of *Lujayn al-Dānī fī Manāqib al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī* within the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya Order (TQN) community in Lamongan is not merely a repetitive ritual practice, but a process of literary reception that generates multidimensional religious transformation. Through the theoretical framework of Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, the study finds that the meaning of the manāqib text is not static; rather, it emerges from the dynamic interaction between the text’s narrative structure and the congregation’s horizon of expectations—shaped by ṭarīqa tradition, the authority of the murshid, and collective spiritual experience. This reception produces theological interpretations affirming *barakah*, *tawassul*, and the legitimacy of *karāmah*; social meanings that strengthen solidarity and communal cohesion; and cultural meanings that sustain the continuity of local Sufi identity.

Religious transformation arising as an effect of reception (*Wirkung*) encompasses psycho-spiritual changes such as inner tranquility and strengthened *tawakkul*, intensification of devotional practices and *dhikr*, reinforcement of authority relations between disciple and murshid, and the enhancement of social solidarity within the community. This transformation is gradual and continuous, formed through repetitive recitation and the internalization of ethical Sufi values such as patience, ascetic restraint, and steadfastness. In this regard, the manāqib text functions as an important element in shaping a religious habitus institutionalized in the congregation’s daily practices, although such transformation also occurs within a broader framework of ṭarīqa activities, social interaction, and spiritual authority.

This research contributes to the development of literary and Islamic studies by extending the application of literary reception theory to the analysis of Sufi religious texts. Whereas reception theory has predominantly been applied to modern literary works, this study demonstrates its relevance in understanding classical hagiographical texts as living texts. Moreover, it enriches contemporary Sufi studies by affirming that the practice of manāqiban encompasses not only ritual dimensions, but also serves as a medium of religious transformation and the articulation of cultural identity at the local level.

However, this study has several limitations. First, it is confined to a specific local context, namely the TQN community in Lamongan, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other ṭarīqa communities with different socio-cultural characteristics. Second, the qualitative approach, while providing depth of understanding, relies heavily on participants’ subjective narratives, which may be influenced by social desirability and normative religious expectations. Third, although this study attempts to avoid textual determinism, the complex interplay between textual reception, institutional authority, and broader socio-economic factors still requires further exploration.

Future research is therefore recommended to conduct comparative studies across different regions or ṭarīqa communities in order to examine variations in the reception of manāqib texts. In addition, integrating mixed methods or longitudinal approaches could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how religious transformation evolves

over time. Further studies may also explore the role of digital media, generational differences, and contemporary socio-political dynamics in shaping the reception of Sufi texts, thereby offering a more nuanced understanding of how “living texts” operate within changing modern contexts.

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