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# Ecological Mythology of the Tegalwaru Community: An Actantial and Functional Analysis of the Kampung Hilang Legend

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### Abstrak

#### Kata Kunci:

Skema aktansial;  
Kesadaran ekologis;  
Mitologi ekologis;  
Struktur fungsional;  
Legenda Kampung  
Hilang.

Masyarakat Tegalwaru di Kabupaten Karawang, Jawa Barat, memiliki keterikatan erat dengan tradisi agraris dan nilai-nilai ekologis yang diekspresikan melalui mitos lokal. Salah satu yang paling menonjol adalah legenda *Kampung Hilang*, mengisahkan kehidupan harmonis warga Bakan Jati yang runtuh akibat ketidakhormatan terhadap makhluk sakral. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis skema aktansial dan struktur fungsional legenda *Kampung Hilang* sebagai representasi mitologi ekologis masyarakat Tegalwaru. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, data diperoleh melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi di Desa Mekarbuana. Sementara triangulasi sumber, metode, dan waktu diterapkan untuk menjamin kredibilitas serta validitas temuan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan adanya enam peran aktansial: pengirim (alam dan Dewi Sri); subjek (warga Bakan Jati); objek (keharmonisan ekologis); penolong (tradisi lokal, ritual, dan kesuburan alam); penentang (keserakahan, pelanggaran moral, dan hilangnya empati); serta penerima (warga Bakan Jati). Struktur fungsional berkembang melalui tiga tahapan, yaitu: situasi awal berupa keharmonisan; transformasi ditandai dengan ujian, konflik, dan bencana ekologis; serta situasi akhir ketika kampung Bakan Jati menjadi hilang akibat pelanggaran terhadap alam. Hasil penelitian ini menegaskan peran penting mitologi lokal dalam membentuk kesadaran ekologis dan merekomendasikan potensi integrasinya ke dalam pendidikan lingkungan berbasis budaya.

### Abstract

#### Keywords:

Actantial schema;  
Ecological  
awareness;  
Ecological  
mythology;  
Functional structure;  
*Kampung Hilang*  
legend.

Tegalwaru community in Karawang Regency, West Java, is closely tied to agrarian traditions and ecological values that are expressed through local myths. Among these, the *Kampung Hilang* (Vanished Village) legend is particularly significant, recounting the collapse of a once harmonious life in Bakan Jati Village due to the community's disrespect toward a sacred being. This study investigates the actantial scheme and functional structure of the legend as a representation of ecological mythology in Tegalwaru society. A qualitative approach was employed, with data obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation in Mekarbuana Village. To ensure credibility and validity, triangulation of sources, methods, and time was implemented. The analysis identified six actantial roles: sender (nature and Dewi Sri), subject (Bakan Jati residents), object (ecological harmony), helper (local traditions, rituals, and natural fertility), opponent (greed, moral violations, and loss of empathy), and receiver (Bakan Jati residents). Functionally, the narrative develops through three stages: an initial state of harmony; a

transformation marked by trials, conflicts, and ecological disasters; and an ending in which Bakan Jati Village vanishes as a consequence of ecological transgression. The findings highlight the vital role of local mythology in shaping ecological consciousness and suggest its integration into culturally grounded environmental education.

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## INTRODUCTION

Tegalwaru is recognized as a region rich in ecological resources, including hilly landscapes, community forests, and river streams that serve as vital sources of livelihood for the surrounding communities. However, over the past few decades, this area has faced significant ecological pressures due to illegal logging, land-use change, and excessive exploitation of water resources (Karim et al., 2021). The impact of environmental degradation has become increasingly evident through various hydrometeorological disasters, such as flash floods, seasonal droughts, and the declining quality of soil and water. Although the government has issued several conservation policies, community participation in preserving the ecosystem remains constrained, mainly due to weak ecological awareness rooted in local values.

Amid this growing ecological crisis, attention to the role of local wisdom has emerged as an alternative approach to strengthening ecological consciousness and promoting sustainable environmental practices. One form of enduring and evolving local wisdom in the Tegalwaru community is legend. These legends passed down orally across generations, are widely believed to be true and contain both moral and spiritual messages (Dégh, 1996; Narzari, 2018; Schram, 1984; Syam et al., 2024; Zakirova et al., 2023). Among the various narratives embedded in the oral traditions of Tegalwaru, the *Legenda Kampung Hilang* (The Legend of the Lost Village) stands out for its distinct ecological values. This legend recounts the disappearance of Kampung Bakan Jati due to a catastrophic flood, believed to be the consequence of a violation of cosmic and ecological order. In the story, disaster strikes after villagers kill a *kancil* (mouse deer), which is traditionally regarded as a sacred creature and a messenger of nature that maintains ecological balance.

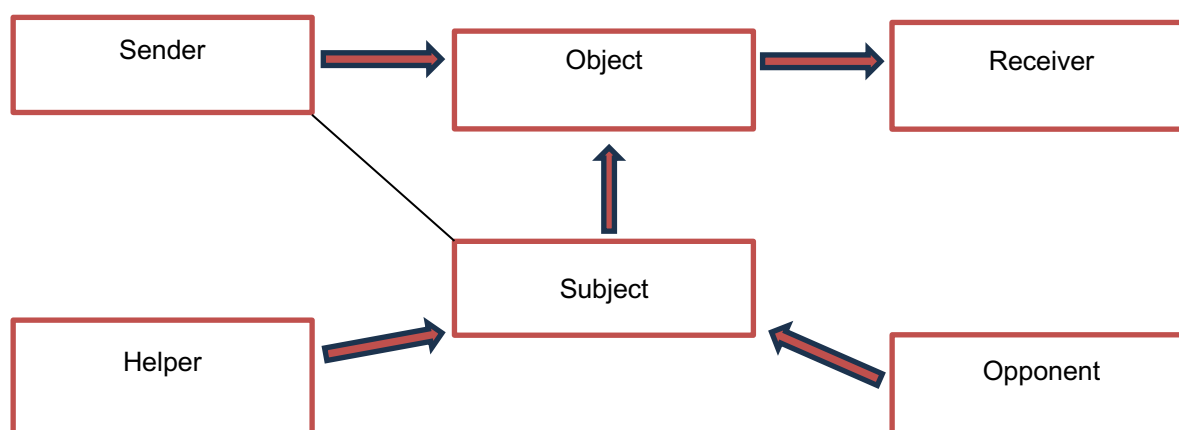
The transgression of this customary prohibition is understood not merely as a moral error but as a manifestation of disharmony between humans and nature. The narrative has thus come to be interpreted as a collective warning about the importance of preserving the harmony and sanctity of ecological relationships inherited from ancestral teachings (Berkes, 2017; Lushombo, 2025; Lyons et al., 2016; Niko, 2025; Suzuki, 1993).

Accordingly, the *Legenda Kampung Hilang* functions as a form of entertainment and an instrument for cultivating ecological awareness grounded in local knowledge systems. Therefore, the study of this legend is essential as a strategic step toward safeguarding oral cultural heritage and as a contribution to documenting, analyzing, and actualizing folklore as a relevant source of knowledge for scientific development.

This study adopts the narratological theory developed by Greimas (1983), selected for its relevance in providing a systematic and structured analytical framework for narrative, particularly within the context of folklore. Greimas formulated a narrative approach that not only examines the surface structure of a story but also reveals its symbolic and conceptual deep structure (Awadallah, 2024; Healy, 2022; Hu et al., 2024; Park & Kim, 2025; Reo & Parker, 2013; Ventsel, 2024). This theoretical lens enables researchers to trace the interrelation between narrative elements and the cultural values embedded within the story.

Greimas's narratology is a refinement of the functionalist approach initially introduced by Vladimir Propp. In his seminal study of Russian folktales, Propp identified thirty-one basic narrative functions that appear sequentially across various stories (Finlayson, 2016; Hasanuddin et al., 2021; Nursari et al., 2020; Sudikan, 2017). Propp's approach is descriptive and chronologically based, focusing primarily on the patterns of character actions. He outlined that story characters undergo a series of events that can be classified functionally (Khoirunnisa, 2023; Lindley, 2005; Musaev et al., 2022; Onega & Landa, 2014). Although Propp's model has significantly contributed to narratological studies, it is limited to linear narratives and less equipped to explain more complex interrelations among character roles.

In response to these limitations, Greimas developed a structuralist approach through the concept of the actantial model. This model aims to identify fundamental roles in any narrative without relying on the chronology of events (Ampleman & de Vries, 2024; Hernandez et al., 2023; Rahmani & Pirnajmuddin, 2022; Teuw in Taum, 2011; Wang & Roberts, 2005). Greimas's actantial model consists of six actantial roles: subject, object, sender, receiver, helper, and opponent (Ampleman & de Vries, 2024; Audrin et al., 2024; Nensilanti et al., 2025; Sulistyorini & Andalas, 2017; Webb & Cloutier, 2024). These six actants are illustrated in the following figure.



**Figure 1. Greimas's Actantial Schema**

The actantial schema, as formulated by Greimas, refers to structural positions within a narrative that may be occupied by various entities, human characters, objects, abstract ideas, or other symbolic agents (D'Armenio et al., 2025; Hernandez et al., 2023; Mohseni, 2024; Peverini, 2024). This framework emphasizes the entities and their functions within the narrative structure. Such an approach enables a more flexible narrative analysis, as a single actantial position can be filled by diverse elements depending on the context and relational dynamics within the story (Ampleman & de Vries, 2024; Hautsalo et al., 2024; Moenandar et al., 2024; Schmittten & Bucher, 2024; Varjo et al., 2022). For instance, in one story, the "helper" might be a human character, while in another, it could be a tool, an animal, or even a particular moral value.

The relationships among elements within the actantial schema represent the narrative dynamics that drive story progression. Mapping roles such as the subject pursuing the object and the presence of helpers and opponents actantial analysis reveals the conflicts and objectives underlying the characters' actions. Furthermore, the roles of the sender and receiver illuminate the communicative dimensions and motivational forces within the narrative. This schema positions the story as a coherent and multi-layered structure (Ampleman & de Vries, 2024; Audrin et al., 2024; Rendon Cardona et al., 2022), in which each role serves a strategic function in constructing tension, resolution, and character transformation.

The implications of this concept extend the understanding of narrative structure. Narratives are no longer viewed merely as chronological sequences of events but as complex systems representing struggles among values, ideologies, and meanings (Çanakpınar et al., 2024; Catellani, 2022; Lee & Kim, 2023; Normandin, 2024). Characters are not simply agents of action but represent ideological positions that interact within a narrative field (Brandt, 2025; Salerno, 2021; Shen, 2024). Therefore, actantial

mapping becomes an effective tool for uncovering the symbolic dimensions of folklore, including cultural, ethical, and even ecological values embedded in the story.

In addition to the actantial schema, Greimas also developed the functional model to describe the dynamic structure of narrative progression. This model emphasizes the universal developmental pattern of stories, which can be analyzed through three main phases: the initial situation, transformation, and final situation (Friedmann, 2021; Putra et al., 2022; Sulistyorini & Andalas, 2017; Taum, 2011). These three stages illustrate a linear plot progression and reflect shifts in status, relationships, and values experienced by the protagonist.

The initial situation typically presents a state of equilibrium later disrupted by a particular event or challenge, thus prompting a transformation phase (Sulistyorini & Andalas, 2017; Taum, 2011). The transformation stage constitutes the core of narrative dynamics, encompassing a series of trials or crises that the subject must confront (Sulistyorini & Andalas, 2017; Taum, 2011). Greimas further divides the transformation phase into several sub-stages, including the stage of competence (where the protagonist's abilities are tested), the main stage (involving the central challenge or climax), and the stage of glorification or triumph (where the subject achieves their goal or undergoes significant change) (Sulistyorini & Andalas, 2017; Taum, 2011). In the final situation, all conflicts move toward restoration or the reestablishment of balance (Sulistyorini & Andalas, 2017; Taum, 2011). Thus, the functional structure highlights the segmentation of events and the symbolic processes that reflect moral, social, and ideological values. The following table presents the functional model to clarify the stages of narrative development.

I	II			III
Initial Situation	Transformation			Final Situation
	Competence Phase	Main Phase	Glorification Phase	

**Table 1. Greimas' Functional Structure**

The application of Greimas's functional model in this study aims to examine structural transformation dynamics within the *Legenda Kampung Hilang* (The Legend of the Lost Village) regarding plot development and the accompanying value-laden content. Through the functional stages, the researcher can identify patterns of conflict, the creation of resolution, and the embedded or internalized moral and ecological messages. This approach conceptualizes narrative structure as a multilayered field of meaning wherein symbolic forces are in continuous opposition and interaction.

This study integrates the actantial schema and the functional model to comprehensively explore the narrative structure and ecological context of *Legenda Kampung Hilang*. Such a narratological approach allows for an in-depth analysis of how legends transmit local wisdom, particularly values related to human-environment relationships in the Tegalwaru community. Furthermore, it opens interpretive space to view the narrative's form and content as part of an oral cultural heritage that is not only aesthetic but also educational and symbolic. Local narratives of this kind contain essential messages for cultural and ecological sustainability and reflect traditional knowledge systems that remain relevant in contemporary contexts.

The study of narrative structures using narratological approaches—especially Greimas's actantial schema and functional model—has seen extensive development and application across various texts. In the context of short stories, Santoso & Soelistyowati (2020) analyzed *Tsuru no Ongaeshi*, while Khasanah & Fauzi (2025) examined Sufistic values in the story *Arinī Allāh* through a semiotic-narrative lens. Both studies demonstrate that actantial structures consistently support the thematic values of the narratives.

In the field of film studies, works by Karnanta (2015), Shiyam (2024), and Sumiyadi et al., (2022) reveal how actantial and functional patterns shape character construction and the representation of cultural values in audiovisual texts such as *Air Terjun Pengantin*, *Wadjda*, and the film adaptation of the *Malin Kundang* legend. Similarly, Nurdiani et al., (2025) analyzed the YouTube channel *Bestie Life–Ḥayātun afḍal*, illustrating the applicability of narrative structure in popular digital content.

In religious texts, such as the Qur'an, narratological analysis has been employed by Istiqomah (2017) and HS & Parninsih (2021) in their studies of the stories of Ṭālūt and *Ashab al-Jannah* and by Widjanarko et al., (2023) in the study of contemporary spiritual fiction. These studies affirm that Greimas's narrative model applies to sacred texts to analyze the relationships between values and roles.

Fables and animal tales have also become the subject of narratological research. Nugraha et al., (2025) explored moral values in the fable *An-Nahlah wan-Namlah*, while Asyura et al., (2021) applied Greimas's schema to the oral story *Ulat Entaduk*. These studies confirm that fable narratives exhibit complex and systematic structures.

Popular literature has also received considerable attention. Fadhillah (2019) edited and analyzed the *Hikayat Maharaja Rawana*, while Misriyani et al., (2022), Roki et al., (2019), and Yuniasti (2019) examined narrative structures in the novels *The Maze Runner*, *Surga Sungsang* and *Lelaki Harimau*, respectively. These studies emphasize character transformation and conflict through Greimas's actantial and functional



framework. Adaptation studies have also been conducted by Bhakti & Setijowati (2023), who compared two versions of *The Little Mermaid*, and Riyanti & Tjahjandari (2024), who juxtaposed the *Lutung Kasarung* folktale with a *Marjan* advertisement. Both studies illustrate the cross-media applicability of Greimas's narrative structure.

In the folklore and oral literature domain, Afrilla et al., (2025) examined folktales from Riau, while Karim et al., (2023) investigated mythological figures in Karawang's folktales. Astuti & Taum (2017) explored the cosmological narratives of the Sumba people using Greimas's model. These studies show how local mythology is closely tied to the worldview of indigenous communities. Additional studies by Bahari et al., (2019), Mustafa (2017), and Kambang (2017) demonstrate the readability of actantial and functional patterns in Dayak and Kalimantan oral traditions. Wulandari et al., (2020) and Ratna & Intan (2021) also traced narrative structures in origin stories from Jambi and *Ciung Wanara*, respectively. These findings reinforce the assumption that Greimas's narrative structure is relevant for unpacking collective storytelling traditions.

These studies affirm that folktales exhibit mappable narrative patterns through actantial and functional schemas, which serve as practical tools to uncover embedded cultural, moral, and religious values. However, few studies have explicitly explored the narrative structure of folktales, including their ecological functions and role in shaping community attitudes toward the environment. This is the distinct contribution of the present study on *Legenda Kampung Hilang*, which emphasizes the environmental dimension of local narratives—not only as symbolic structures but also as instruments for cultivating ecological awareness and behavior among the people of Tegalwaru. Such narratives also hold potential as alternative epistemological sources for environmental education and culturally grounded sustainable development.

This study aims to describe the actantial and functional structures of *Legenda Kampung Hilang*. Accordingly, the study seeks to reveal the relationships among characters and symbolic elements in shaping the story's mythological structures and moral values. Additionally, it aims to interpret *Legenda Kampung Hilang* as a form of local wisdom the community utilizes to foster ecological behavior. This research broadens the scope of narratological inquiry by integrating an ecocultural perspective. The findings may inform the development of environmental education grounded in local wisdom and serve as the basis for formulating culturally embedded conservation strategies in regions where oral traditions remain strong.

## METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative research design with structural narrative analysis to examine meaning-making processes within folklore. This approach was chosen because it aligns with the nature of folkloric data, which typically emerges from oral traditions rich in cultural and symbolic values (Endraswara, 2021). Structural narrative analysis, based on Greimas's narratology, was applied through the actantial schema and functional model to reveal narrative structures, while interpretive reading was used to uncover ecological symbolism embedded in the worldview of the Tegalwaru community. The methodological framework was further supported by ecological mythology concepts, yet kept concise to emphasize strategies for bridging oral traditions with contemporary ecological challenges faced by the community.

The research site was Mekarbuana Village, Tegalwaru Subdistrict, Karawang Regency, West Java. This location was purposively selected for two reasons: its strong oral tradition, particularly the *Legenda Kampung Hilang*, and its current ecological pressures due to development. These conditions make it a relevant setting for studying how folklore transmits ecological awareness into modern contexts.

Data in this study comprised (1) oral storytelling of the *Legenda Kampung Hilang* obtained through narration by informants and (2) supporting documents, literature, and field observations. Two key informants were selected purposively for their narrative competence and cultural authority: D (80 years old), a village elder who has preserved and transmitted the legend since childhood, and Y (62 years old), a cultural activist and storyteller actively engaged in community forums.

Data collection procedures were conducted through five steps: (1) observation of storytelling contexts, (2) in-depth semi-structured interviews, (3) audio recording of narration, (4) verbatim transcription, and (5) translation from Sundanese into Indonesian while maintaining symbolic meanings. Secondary data from literature and documentation were used to strengthen the conceptual framework and contextualize findings.

To ensure data validity, the study applied source, method, and time triangulation. Source triangulation compared information from multiple narrators; method triangulation combined observation, interviews, documentation, and textual analysis; while time triangulation involved repeated engagements with informants across different sessions. In addition, member checking was conducted to validate transcriptions and interpretations. Research ethics were observed through informed consent, transparency of objectives, and confidentiality of informants' personal data.



Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles et al., (2018), which includes three stages: (1) data reduction by focusing on relevant narrative and ecological aspects, (2) data display through narrative descriptions and schematic diagrams of actantial roles and functional stages, and (3) conclusion drawing and verification through interpretive analysis. This process enabled the identification of actantial elements, sequencing of narrative stages, and linking of ecological symbolism with the cultural strategies of the Tegalwaru community in maintaining environmental balance.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

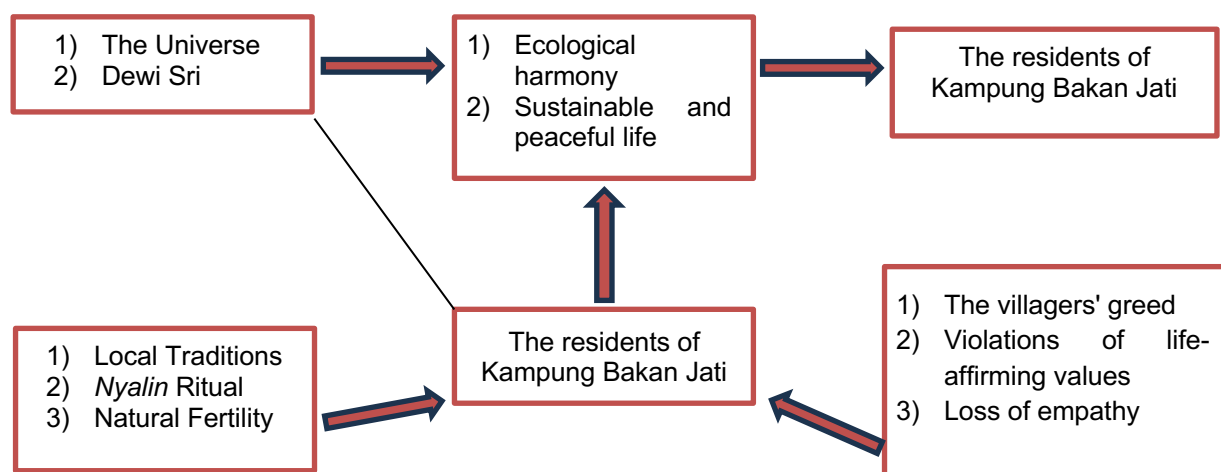
### Synopsis of the Legend of Kampung Hilang

The *Legend of Kampung Hilang* narrates the story of a traditional village called Kampung Bakan Jati, located along the banks of the Cigeuntis River. The village is depicted as a place of ecological harmony, surrounded by bamboo forests and fertile rice fields. Its inhabitants lived peacefully and prosperously, practicing sustainable agrarian livelihoods while upholding local wisdom traditions, such as the *nyalin* ceremony, a ritual of gratitude to God and Dewi Sri for bountiful harvests. However, this harmony was disrupted when, one night, an exhausted mouse deer (*kancil*) emerged from the forest and approached the village. Its unusual presence aroused the villagers' curiosity, which soon transformed into an exploitative impulse. Lacking empathy for the creature, the villagers captured, slaughtered, and consumed it in a festive celebration. This event marked a pivotal turning point in the narrative. The following day, a catastrophic disaster struck without warning. Torrential rains fell incessantly, the Cigeuntis River overflowed, and a devastating flash flood swept through the village. Homes, rice fields, and even human lives were obliterated. Nothing remained of Kampung Bakan Jati. From that moment on, the area became known as *Kampung Hilang*, the "Lost Village," a symbol of physical and spiritual disappearance resulting from violations of ecological order and human values.

### Actantial Structure of the Legend of Kampung Hilang

The actantial structure of the *Legend of Kampung Hilang* reveals a complex interplay of symbolic roles within the narrative. In this structure, the sender is represented by the cosmos and Dewi Sri; the object comprises ecological harmony and sustainable, peaceful life; the receiver is the community of Kampung Bakan Jati; the villagers of Kampung Bakan Jati likewise embody the subject; the helpers are local traditions, the *nyalin* ritual, and the fertility of nature; while the opponents consist of the villagers' greed, violations of life-

affirming values, and the erosion of empathy. The following diagram (Figure 2) presents the actantial structure of the *Legend of Kampung Hilang*, following the framework proposed by Greimas.



**Figure 2. Actantial Schema of the *Legend of Kampung Hilang***

Based on the actantial schema presented above, the sender actants in the *Legend of Kampung Hilang* consist of two primary entities: (1) the cosmos, representing the moral and cosmic forces that maintain ecological order, and (2) Dewi Sri, the personification of fertility and prosperity, venerated by the villagers through the *nyalin* ritual. Both actants function as sources of value, motivating the community to pursue a harmonious existence with nature and serving as symbolic drivers for preserving ecological balance passed down through generations.

The subject's goal is ecological harmony and a sustainable, peaceful life. The ideal condition portrayed at the beginning of the narrative reflects an ordered relationship between humans and nature, an equilibrium that forms the story's gravitational center. Therefore, the object represents a tangible manifestation of the ecological and spiritual balance that the community aspires to uphold.

The subject of the narrative is the collective villagers of Kampung Bakan Jati, who initially strive to maintain their harmonious way of life. They are portrayed as living according to their natural surroundings through agricultural practices, reverence for nature, and adherence to traditional rituals. However, as the narrative progresses, they also become the agents of failure—succumbing to greed and violating the moral values that had once sustained their relationship with the environment.

In pursuit of the object, the subject is supported by several helper actants, including (1) local traditions, such as the *nyalin* ritual as an expression of gratitude for harvests and reverence for Dewi Sri; (2) natural fertility, such as productive lands, clean rivers, and

agricultural abundance; and (3) cultural wisdom, passed intergenerationally. These helpers symbolize ecological and cultural mechanisms supporting the community's sustainable existence.

Conversely, the subject's effort to preserve harmony is obstructed by opponent actants, namely: (1) the villagers' greed, manifested in the killing of the mouse deer without empathy; (2) violations of life-affirming values, including a shift from collectivism toward exploitative anthropocentrism; and (3) the loss of empathy, as evidenced by a collective moral collapse. These opposing forces provoke ecological degradation and precipitate the disaster as nature's response to human moral transgressions.

The receiver in this narrative is also the villagers of Kampung Bakan Jati. In this role, they experience a paradoxical fate: on the one hand, they once received the blessings of peaceful life and abundant natural resources; on the other, they also bear the consequences of their actions in the form of a devastating natural disaster that eradicates the village. This dual position underscores that the receiver in this legend benefits from pursuing the object and suffers the repercussions of failing to uphold ecological and spiritual values.

This actantial analysis reveals that the narrative conflict in the *Legend of Kampung Hilang* is not merely external (between humans and nature) but also internal, marked by a rupture in the community's collective consciousness regarding the sacred values they once upheld. The story emphasizes that ecological destruction is not solely the result of natural forces but a direct consequence of moral and spiritual degradation within society (Dahlmann, 2025; Efendi et al., 2024; Jena & Kar, 2023; Sukmawan et al., 2018; Efendi et al., 2025). Thus, the *Legend of Kampung Hilang* conveys mythological meaning and delivers a powerful ecological message: disrupting human–nature relations can lead to irreversible devastation.

### **The Functional Structure of the *Legend of Kampung Hilang***

The functional structure of the *Legend of Kampung Hilang* can be divided into three primary stages: the initial situation, the transformation, and the final situation. Each stage represents the dynamic progression of the narrative plot, shifting from order to chaos due to the erosion of ecological and moral values within the community.

#### ***Initial Situation***

At the story's beginning, Kampung Bakan Jati is depicted as an agrarian community living in harmony with nature. The villagers lead simple yet meaningful lives grounded in values of cooperation (*gotong royong*), spirituality, and reverence for the environment.

Their houses are built from natural materials, fertile lands are cultivated wisely, and every harvest is celebrated with gratitude through the traditional *nyalin* ceremony offered to Dewi Sri. These internalized local values shape a harmonious relationship between humans and their environment (Alim et al., 2024; Bahrudin et al., 2024; Effendy & Suhandi, 2024; Faizah, 2024; Hotimah & Albaburrahim, 2024; Jonathan, 2022; Sembiring, 2020). This stage represents a world that is sacred and in balance.

### **Transformation**

The transformation stage in the *Legend of Kampung Hilang* is divided into three phases: competence, primary, and glorification. The narrative development of the story unfolds as follows:

#### **Competence Phase**

The transformation begins when an exhausted and frightened mouse deer (*kancil*) emerges from the forest and enters the vicinity of Kampung Bakan Jati. The presence of the deer functions as a symbolic test of the villagers' moral integrity. Their response to the animal reflects the shifting values within the community. Whereas they had previously upheld compassion and ecological harmony, they now exhibit signs of greed and a loss of empathy. Instead of protecting the deer, the villagers capture, slaughter, and consume it in a celebratory feast. This moment marks the beginning of the rupture in their ecological and spiritual values.

#### **Main Phase**

The killing and feasting on the mouse deer constitute the villagers' ethical transgression against living beings and ecological order. A community that once practiced reverence toward nature becomes profane and anthropocentric. The festive night—marked by the consumption of deer meat—is portrayed as eerily silent, signaling the impending disaster as a consequence of moral violation. The narrative tension peaks now as the silent sky ominously foreshadows the coming catastrophe.

#### **Glorification Phase**

The following day, a massive ecological disaster strikes as a devastating flood obliterates the entire village—the Cigeuntis River overflows, erasing all traces of Kampung Bakan Jati. Houses are swept away, fields are submerged, and the storm carries off cries of despair. This moment represents the tragic downfall of a community that failed to preserve the inherited ecological order. The destruction is both physical and symbolic—the village disappears from the map, and with it, the collective ecological consciousness of its people.

### ***Final Situation***

The final situation in the legend is total erasure—both spatial and cultural. Kampung Bakan Jati is no longer visible and survives as a myth and bitter memory under the name "Kampung Hilang" (The Lost Village). No ruins remain, nor any physical evidence of the past. What is left is a rice field by the Cigeuntis River, believed to stand on the submerged remnants of the lost village. The community refers to the area as Kampung Hilang, a symbolic warning of collective wrongdoing and a reminder not to repeat the neglect of ecological values. This stage affirms the view of Dancer (2021), Efendi et al., (2025), Rahman & Cindi (2024), Jannah & Efendi (2024), Sukmawan (2015), and (Tabarok et al., 2024), that ecological collapse constitutes a form of nature's retribution for humanity's violation of the principles of harmony.

### **The Construction of Ecological Mythology in the Legend of Kampung Hilang**

The *Legend of Kampung Hilang* represents a form of ecological mythology constructed symbolically and narratively through a complex story structure. In this context, ecological mythology refers to local community narratives that not only embody cultural and spiritual values but also contain moral and ecological teachings transmitted across generations (Bowers, 1996; Dalyan et al., 2024; Dondukova & Bulgutova, 2021; Gogoi, 2024; Silalahi & Purwanto, 2025; Suzuki, 1993). Employing a narratological approach, this study reveals how the construction of ecological mythology within local legends actively shapes the Tegalwaru community's worldview regarding the human–nature relationship.

This study highlights nature not merely as a setting or aesthetic element but as a narrative actor capable of responding to human actions. In the *Legend of Kampung Hilang*, ecological destruction is not portrayed solely as a natural disaster but as an ethical consequence of collective moral violations—such as greed, loss of empathy, and the transgression of life-affirming values. Nature acts as a "moral enforcer," thereby introducing a cosmological concept in which ecosystem balance is maintained when human beings live by the sacred and ecological principles passed down by their ancestors.

Structurally, the actantial and functional schemas indicate a transformation in values. The residents of Kampung Bakan Jati, initially positioned as subjects striving to maintain ecological harmony through local practices such as the *nyalin* ritual and cooperation (*gotong royong*), ultimately fall into collective moral failure that triggers cosmic intervention in the form of a flood. This narrative reflects a distinctive folkloric logic wherein morality is

reinforced through symbolic punishment by natural forces. Thus, the legend serves as entertainment or cultural heritage and a meaningful vehicle for ecological education.

The strength of this study lies in its approach, which goes beyond merely inventorying folk narratives, as seen in previous research by Dewi (2015), Nursa'ah (2014), Hasyim & Muqoddas (2015), and Enda & Bano (2021), which focused mainly on descriptive mapping of folklore. In contrast, this research offers a more advanced analysis by reconstructing the narrative structure of the legend and tracing recurring narrative patterns across various versions of local folklore. This approach aligns with the perspectives of Kieven (2020), Koster (2020), Nisa & Andalas (2021), and Vickers (2020), who argue that folktales possess core motifs that are adaptive to socio-ecological environments while maintaining consistent mythological structures.

Moreover, this study emphasizes that the *Legend of Kampung Hilang* carries ecological and spiritual significance. In many folktales, mythological figures such as Mbah Bongkok in the Tegalwaru community (Karim et al., 2023) and Mbah Bajing in Kecopakan (Andalas, 2017) are believed to hold profound spiritual influence over the community. This phenomenon is supported by the findings of Afdholy & Murti (2020), Macatangay (2022), and Rahman (2022), which demonstrate that mythological figures in folklore often serve as spiritual mediators for communities facing life challenges, including ecological disasters.

Methodologically, using a narratological approach in this study further strengthens the validity of its findings. Prior studies employing narratological methods—such as those by Santoso & Soelistyowati (2020), Khasanah & Fauzi (2025), Karnanta (2015), Shiyam (2024), Sumiyadi et al., (2022), Nurdiani et al., (2025), Nugraha et al., (2025), Asyura et al., (2021), Fadhilla (2019), Misriyani et al., (2022), Roki et al., (2019), Yuniasti (2019), Bhakti & Setijowati (2023), Riyanti & Tjahjandari 2024), Istiqomah (2017), HS & Parninsih (2021), and Widjanarko et al., (2023)—have shown that the actantial structure enables deeper thematic readings across various text types, including short stories, films, digital content, animal tales and fables, manuscripts, novels, intermedial adaptations, religious texts, and spiritual fiction.

However, few studies have specifically utilized narratological approaches to uncover ecological constructions within folklore. Accordingly, this research contributes a novel conceptual perspective by linking Greimas's narrative structures with ecological issues in folk narratives. At the same time, it reinforces the findings of Afrilla et al., (2025), Karim, et al., (2023), Astuti & Taum (2017), Bahari et al., (2019), Mustafa (2017), Kambang (2017), Wulandari et al., (2020), and Ratna & Intan (2021), who underscore that narrative



structures in folk tales reflect cosmological relations within Indigenous communities. Furthermore, this study expands the interpretive range of local mythology—not only as a spiritual symbol but also as an epistemological tool for understanding local ecological awareness.

This aligns with the view that folklore reflects past culture and is a cognitive resource for environmental education and sustainable development grounded in local values. Therefore, constructing ecological mythology in the *Legend of Kampung Hilang* becomes essential to comprehend. This is consistent with the arguments of Merchant (2004), Basso (1996), and Garrard (2023), who suggest that as a narrative legacy, ecological mythology functions as a living knowledge system shaping a community's relationship with its environment. Values such as balance, respect for living beings, and awareness of the moral consequences of human actions toward nature are at the core of this narrative. Consequently, this legend should be recognized as part of culture-based ecological education that is particularly relevant in today's environmental crisis.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the actantial schema and functional structure in the *Legend of Kampung Hilang*, it can be concluded that this folktale does not merely contain fictional or entertainment-oriented narrative elements but rather constructs an ecological mythology system rooted in the worldview of the Tegalwaru community. Through the actantial schema, it becomes evident that the cosmos and Dewi Sri serve as senders of ecological values, which the residents of Kampung Bakan Jati internalize as subjects. Environmental harmony and sustainable life are the primary goals to be achieved through cultural and spiritual practices, such as the *Nyalin* ritual and the preservation of natural fertility. However, the continuity of this object is threatened by opposing actants, such as greed, violations of vital values, and the erosion of social empathy.

Functionally, the *Legend of Kampung Hilang* represents a narrative pattern that reflects the transformation of society from a state of ecological harmony to the destruction caused by the violation of local values. The transformation stage, which includes trials of competence, the central conflict, and the final failure, signals a breakdown in the reciprocal relationship between humans and nature. The story ends in tragedy, serving as a symbolic punishment delivered by nature for human negligence. This structure demonstrates that local mythology shapes collective consciousness and functions as an educational medium for instilling ecological values.

The uniqueness of this study lies in its exposition of the ecological dimension embedded in the narrative structure of the legend. This perspective has been largely overlooked in prior research. Whereas previous studies have primarily focused on inventorying or labeling characters and motifs, this study contributes by uncovering the narrative relationships among actors, values, and ecological space within folklore. Greimas's structural approach enables the identification of a value system that is both narratively constructed and culturally grounded.

This study opens opportunities for further research and broader applications. First, the *Legend of Kampung Hilang* can serve as a foundation for developing character education with an ecological orientation at the primary and secondary education levels, particularly in teaching literature, social studies, or local content. Second, this narrative holds the potential for media adaptation into digital formats, such as animation, educational games, or short films, to foster environmental awareness from an early age. Third, further comparative research may be conducted on other folktales from Karawang or other regions containing motifs of ecological devastation caused by human error to identify universal and particular patterns in shaping environmental awareness within Indonesian society. Additionally, a transdisciplinary approach that integrates literature, ecology, and cultural anthropology can enrich the research outcomes, particularly in formulating strategies for environmental conservation rooted in local cultural practices. Thus, folklore is not only an element of intangible heritage but also a viable alternative epistemological resource supporting culturally embedded sustainable development.

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