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REPRESENTATION OF MORAL AND CULTURAL VALUES IN THE LEGEND OF BATU MACAN AS ORAL LITERARY HERITAGE OF LAHAT REGENCY

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Abstract: As a form of cultural heritage, legends contain educational values that the younger generation must understand so that these values can be passed down and implemented through successive generations. Although it is associated with a specific place name, the *Batu Macan* 'Tiger Stone' legend in Lahat Regency contains a moral message or an important lesson that remains largely unknown to the younger generation.The *Batu Macan* 'Tiger Stone' legend in Lahat Regency is one such example where the significant moral or lesson it conveys remains largely unknown to the younger generation. This study aims to explore the moral and cultural values embedded in the *Batu Macan'* legend. The research employs a qualitative approach, specifically utilizing content analysis. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed. Data were sourced from texts of the Legend of Batu Macan found in various online articles. Information was gathered through documentation and literature review, then analyzed using content analysis, with source triangulation utilized to verify data validity. The results indicate that the legend encompasses moral values such as obedience to counsel, prohibitions against deviant behavior, and the consequences of violating norms as well as cultural values, including beliefs regarding supernatural figures and curses, and the practices of *basoh rumeh* and *basoh marge*. These findings demonstrate the interplay between moral and cultural values in the preservation of local culture, thereby enriching the study of local culture-based oral literature.

Keywords: culture; legend; oral literature; moral values; cultural values

REPRESENTASI NILAI MORAL DAN BUDAYA DALAM LEGENDA BATU MACAN SEBAGAI WARISAN SASTRA LISAN KABUPATEN LAHAT

Abstrak: Sebagai salah satu bentuk warisan budaya, legenda mengandung nilai-nilai edukatif yang perlu dipahami oleh generasi muda agar nilai-nilai tersebut dapat diwariskan dan diterapkan dari generasi ke generasi. Meskipun berhubungan dengan nama tempat, legenda Batu Macan di Kabupaten Lahat merupakan salah satu contoh pesan moral atau pelajaran penting yang terkandung di dalamnya belum banyak diketahui oleh generasi muda. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali nilai-nilai moral dan budaya yang tertanam dalam legenda Batu Macan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode analisis isi. Data diperoleh dari teks legenda Batu Macan yang terdapat dalam berbagai artikel daring. Informasi dikumpulkan melalui dokumentasi dan tinjauan pustaka, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis isi, dengan triangulasi sumber untuk memverifikasi validitas data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa legenda ini mencakup nilai-nilai moral—seperti kepatuhan terhadap nasihat, larangan berperilaku menyimpang, serta konsekuensi dari pelanggaran norma—dan nilai-nilai budaya, termasuk

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kepercayaan mengenai sosok supranatural dan kutukan, serta praktik adat *basoh rumeh* dan *basoh marge*. Temuan ini memperlihatkan keterkaitan antara nilai-nilai moral dan budaya dalam pelestarian budaya lokal, sehingga turut memperkaya kajian mengenai sastra lisan berbasis budaya setempat.

Kata Kunci: budaya; legenda; sastra lisan; nilai moral; nilai budaya

INTRODUCTION

Oral literature is a form of literary work that emerges and develops within community life and is preserved from one generation to the next through oral transmission (Dwipayana, et al., 2024). It is conveyed through spoken expressions that contain various cultural values and experiences of the community (Armando, 2021). Hasanah and Andari (2020) point out that oral traditions encompass social and cultural values that can serve as a learning resource for the community, even though their continuity faces challenges from social change and the development of modern media. Alifuddin et al. (2022) similarly found that the oral literature of the Wakatobi people contains pedagogical and ethical values, as well as local knowledge that play a role in their social life. In the same vein, Novianti (2022) explains that Indonesian folk narratives are linked to the formation of national identity, the dissemination of shared values, and character education. These findings underscore that oral literature should be understood not merely as a relic of the past, but as a source of cultural knowledge that remains relevant to contemporary life. Consequently, the documentation and study of local legends are essential for uncovering the values they contain, while simultaneously supporting the sustainability of regional cultural heritage.

As a genre of oral literature, the legend is distinct in that it links events—believed or remembered by a community—to specific figures, places, objects, and collective experiences. Through its narrative structure, a legend can represent how a community interprets human relationships with one another, the natural world, power, and the spiritual realm. In their study of the legends of Telaga Ngebel and Lake Ranu, et al. (2017) demonstrate that legends can be analyzed through their structure, function, and cultural values, which reflect the identity of the community that upholds them. Similarly, Ifan (2024) found that the legends of the Bima people embody values such as kinship, respect for nature, religious belief, tolerance, and social ethics. Meanwhile, Barkah and Desman (2025) show that the structure of Indonesian folklore can represent cultural identity through patterns of conflict, familial relationships, tensions between humans and nature, and the moral consequences of characters' actions. These studies indicate that legends serve as cultural texts that can be interpreted to understand the value systems of the societies from which they emerge. Consequently, the study of legends should look beyond the mere sequence of events or the origins of a place; it must also

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consider the symbolic meanings and cultural values constructed through characters, conflicts, settings, and the resolution of the narrative.

Unlike myths, legends are not regarded as sacred narratives. Instead, they are folktales that develop from the collective experiences of communities and are passed down orally from one generation to the next (Ifan, 2025). One legend that remains familiar to the people of Lahat Regency is the *Batu Macan* 'Tiger Stone' legend. This legend tells the story of Si Pahit Lidah, a figure believed to possess supernatural powers that enable him to turn living beings into stone through his curses. To this day, the legend remains alive in the collective memory of the local community and is associated with various local beliefs, including the traditions of basoh rumeh and basoh marge, which are still recognized as part of the cultural practices of the local people. This demonstrates that the *Legend of Batu Macan* is not merely a folktale but also a part of the cultural heritage that continues to hold significance in community life.

The *Batu Macan* legend linked to specific locations or objects often become part of a community's collective memory, forging a symbolic connection between the narrative, the geographical space, and local identity. However, the moral and cultural values within the *Batu Macan* legend should not be predetermined solely based on the name or physical form of the object at the heart of the story. Instead, these values must be explored through the various versions of the tale as they exist within the community, the accounts provided by storytellers, the context in which the stories are told, and the meanings attributed to them by the community itself. The story recounts the figure of Si Pahit Lidah, who is believed to possess supernatural powers that enable him to turn living beings into stone through curses as a consequence of violating certain norms. This indicates that legends serve not only as a form of entertainment but also as a means of transmitting values and cultural traditions that remain part of community life. As a form of oral literature, legends do not merely recount events but also represent values that have developed within society (Handani & Nafianti, 2017). Therefore, the *Legend of Batu Macan* offers considerable potential for further study as part of the local cultural heritage that continues to hold relevance for the people of Lahat Regency

Studies on local legends across various regions demonstrate that folklore can embody values such as responsibility, respect for elders, honesty, solidarity, courage, and the relationship between humans and nature. Fitriyah and Winarni (2024), for instance, identified character-building values within the Acehnese folktale *Amat Rhang Manyang*, including religiosity, honesty, hard work, a love for peace, and responsibility. Similarly, Kencana (2024) showed that folklore from Bengkulu represents moral values and social wisdom concerning the relationships between humans and God, others, the self, and the natural world. These findings provide a foundation for examining the *Batu Macan* legend within

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its specific context, avoiding the generalization of research results from other regions.

The issue prompting this research concerns the need to document and interpret the values embedded in local legends, ensuring that this oral literary heritage is not merely perceived as a story about a specific location, but also understood as a representation of a community's social and cultural life. Oral traditions may undergo transformations during the transmission process due to generational differences in experience, shifts in communication patterns, and a diminishing space for storytelling in daily life. Hasanah and Andari (2020) highlighted challenges regarding the sustainability of oral traditions as their role is increasingly displaced by social media. Anggraini et al. (2022) demonstrated that folklore can be utilized in education to introduce local culture, while Sa'ida (2020) found that folklore can serve as a medium for instilling moral values in children through the behavior of the characters. Furthermore, research on the *Batu Macan* legend must be grounded in reliable data, such as interviews with storytellers, documented versions of the tale, and an exploration of the socio-cultural context of Lahat Regency. Without adequate documentation and analysis, the moral messages and cultural representations within a story risk being passed down merely as narrative summaries, lacking any explanation of their meaning or their relevance to the community that upholds them. Consequently, the central focus of this research is to examine how moral and cultural values are represented in the *Batu Macan* legend, and how these values relate to the worldview of the people in Lahat Regency.

The urgency of this research lies in the effort to strengthen the documentation, understanding, and transmission of oral literature as an integral part of the cultural identity of Lahat Regency. Research on folklore demonstrates that traditional narratives can serve as a medium for character education, the reinforcement of identity, and the introduction of local wisdom to the younger generation. Anwar et al. (2023), for instance, examine the use of folklore through the Value Clarification Technique, highlighting its relevance to children's character education. Widiono et al. (2026) discuss the representation of cultural values within Lampung folklore as a reflection of the community's worldview. Meanwhile, Firdaus (2025) emphasizes the potential of folklore in moral education and the preservation of cultural identity through critical literacy. Consequently, an examination of the moral and cultural values embedded in the *Batu Macan* legend can yield scholarly documentation that elucidates the values inherent in the story and their connection to the social experiences of the people of Lahat. The findings may also serve as a resource for developing regional literature teaching materials, fostering cultural literacy, and supporting community-based efforts to preserve oral traditions. Thus, this research is aimed not only at identifying the moral messages within the story but also at explaining the

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representational function of the legend as a piece of oral literature that encapsulates collective memory and local cultural values.

Based on this rationale, the present study aims to describe the representation of moral and cultural values in the *Batu Macan* legend as a form of oral heritage from Lahat Regency. The research focuses on identifying moral values—manifested through the actions and conflicts of the characters—as well as uncovering cultural values reflected in social relationships, beliefs, customs, and the community's worldview, while interpreting how these values relate to the local context. A qualitative approach will be employed, utilizing narrative analysis of documented versions of the story, supplemented by interviews with storytellers or cultural figures, alongside source triangulation to ensure the accuracy of the interpretation. This strategy aligns with the research conducted by Alifuddin et al. (2022), which employs interviews, observations, and documentation to examine the pedagogical value of oral literature, as well as Hasanah and Andari (2020), who link the documentation of oral traditions to the social and cultural values of a community. Through this analysis, the research is expected to contribute to the study of regional oral literature, expand the documentation of the cultural heritage of Lahat Regency, and provide an empirical basis for utilizing legends in education and cultural preservation programs. The novelty of this research lies in its specific findings regarding the representation of moral and cultural values within the *Batu Macan* legend, based on field data and verifiable versions of the story.

The moral values reflected in the legend include prohibitions against behavior that deviates from accepted norms, obedience to advice, and the consequences faced by characters for actions that violate established norms. Meanwhile, cultural values are reflected in the community's belief in curses, the existence of figures with supernatural powers, and cultural practices that continue to be preserved today. Moral values serve as guidelines for distinguishing right from wrong in human behavior within society (Permata Sari et al., 2023), whereas cultural values comprise a set of values that develop within a community, are collectively held, and guide people's lives (Handani & Nafianti, 2017). Thus, legends can be understood not only as works of oral literature but also as representations of the social and cultural life of the communities from which they originate. Therefore, examining the moral and cultural values embedded in the *Batu Macan* legend is important because it can reveal the relationship between literary texts, belief systems, and cultural practices that continue to exist in the community today.

Research on moral and cultural values in legends and folktales has been conducted by several researchers with different subjects and areas of focus. Siahaan et al. (2023), in their study of the legends of Lake Lau Kawar and

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Pawang Ternalem, identified several moral values reflected in the characters' behavior and the sequence of events in the stories. Hutabarat, et al (2026) also found that there were cultural and moral values in the folklore in Aceh entitled *Misteri Batu Terbelah* 'the Cut Stone Mystery' and Watipu, et al. (2026). in the folklore of Wa Bhaleno Ponda Keke Kaluku Wakatobi people. Their findings indicate that legends can serve as a medium for conveying moral values related to character development and behavioral guidelines within society. Meanwhile, Handayani et al. (2021), in their study of the Legend of Siti Payung, identified cultural values that represent the life and perspectives of the community. Their research demonstrates that legends serve not only as folktales but also as a means of preserving local culture and a source of learning for younger generations. These two studies indicate that moral and cultural values in folktales are closely connected to community life, although their subjects and research focuses differ from those of the present study.

Based on the background outlined above, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) What moral values are found in the *Batu Macan* legend in Lahat Regency? and (2) What cultural values are reflected in the legend?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive research design. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for providing an in-depth description of the moral and cultural values contained in the *Batu Macan* legend in Lahat Regency, based on an analysis of the legend's text. The research data are presented in the form of descriptive narratives organized systematically around the research focus, thereby providing a comprehensive depiction of the meanings contained within the legend. Qualitative research is a type of research conducted in natural settings that emphasizes understanding the meaning of the data obtained (Wahidmurni, 2017). Therefore, this approach is considered appropriate for uncovering the moral and cultural values contained in the *Batu Macan* legend through an interpretation of the text's content based on the social and cultural context of the community to which it belongs.

The subject of this study is the *Batu Macan* legend that has taken root in the community of Lahat Regency. The study focuses on analyzing the moral and cultural values contained within the legend. The primary data source for this study consists of the text of the *Batu Macan* legend, obtained from several popular articles published online. These articles were selected purposefully, taking into account the suitability of the story's content, the completeness of the narrative, the consistency of the plot, and their relevance to the oral traditions prevalent in the community of Lahat Regency. The use of multiple articles as data sources was intended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the legend's content while comparing similarities and differences in the presentation of the story.

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Supporting data sources, such as books, scholarly articles, and research findings discussing oral literature, legends, moral values, and cultural values, were used as a conceptual foundation in the analysis process. Data collection was conducted through documentation and literature review. The documentation technique was used to compile the text of the *Batu Macan* legend from various popular articles, while the literature review was used to obtain theories and previous research findings relevant to the focus of this study.

The research instrument in this study is the researcher themselves (human instrument), supported by data analysis guidelines. In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument, responsible for determining the research focus, collecting data, identifying relevant data, classifying data, and interpreting the meaning contained within the research data. The analysis guidelines were used to help the researcher identify data based on indicators of moral and cultural values found in the text of the *Batu Macan* legend. The units of analysis in this study consisted of words, phrases, sentences, dialogues, and narratives containing moral and cultural values in accordance with the research focus. The data that was identified was then grouped based on categories of moral and cultural values to facilitate the analysis process and the drawing of conclusions.

Data validity in this study was ensured through source triangulation. This technique involved comparing the content of the *Batu Macan* legend as presented in several popular articles published online. The comparison focused on the consistency of the plot, characters, events, and the moral and cultural values present in each version of the legend. This step aims to obtain consistent, relevant, and reliable data so that the analysis results have a higher level of validity. Triangulation is a technique for verifying data validity by using other sources to compare against the data that has been obtained (Nugraha, 2023). Through this process, researchers can identify similarities and differences in information across sources, ensuring that the data used in the study is truly aligned with the research focus.

The data analysis technique used in this study is content analysis. Content analysis is a method used to identify, classify, and interpret the messages or meanings contained in a text (Rozali, 2022). This technique was chosen because it aligns with the research objective, which is to uncover the moral and cultural values found in the *Batu Macan* legend. The analysis process was carried out in several stages, namely: (1) thoroughly reading and understanding the text of the *Batu Macan* legend obtained from several popular articles; (2) identifying units of analysis, such as words, phrases, sentences, dialogues, or narratives that contain moral and cultural values; (3) coding each data point according to the categories of moral and cultural values; (4) grouping the data based on the predetermined categories; (5) interpreting the meaning of each data point by referring to the

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theories of moral and cultural values used in the study; and (6) compiling the results of the analysis descriptively to draw conclusions consistent with the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis of the moral and cultural values of the *Batu Macan* legend are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Moral Values and Cultural Values

Data Unit/Code	Subcategory	Category	Operational Definition
Data 1/NM1	Complience	Moral Values	The protagonist's obedience to the advice of authority figures
Data 2/NM 2	Prohibited behaviors	Moral Values	Rules prohibiting deviant behavior
Data 3/NM 3	Consequences	Moral Values	Fixed penalties for violations
Data 4/NB 1	Spiritual figures	Cultural Values	Belief in figures with supernatural powers
Data 5/NB 2	Curses	Cultural Values	Belief in the power of words to transform objects
Data 6/NB 3	Traditional practices	Cultural Values	Cultural rituals as a response to violations

Based on an analysis of the *Batu Macan* legend in Lahat Regency, it is evident that the story contains two main elements of value, namely moral values and cultural values. These two values are interrelated and together form the complete meaning of the story. These values are evident through the sequence of events, the characters, the conflicts that arise, and the community's beliefs that have been passed down from generation to generation.

The moral values in the *Batu Macan* legend are evident through the presence of advice, adherence to rules, prohibitions against wrongdoing, and the consequences characters face as a result of their actions. Through these elements, the story illustrates the importance of ensuring one's behavior aligns with prevailing norms. Meanwhile, cultural values are evident in the belief in curses, supernatural beings, and traditions that are still upheld by the local community. These cultural elements reveal how the community views the relationship between humans, nature, and forces beyond themselves.

In this presentation, the research data is divided into two main categories, namely moral values and cultural values. Each category is then further broken down into several subcategories based on the findings from the text in the *Batu Macan* legend. This categorization is intended to make the analysis process more focused and to facilitate an understanding of the types of values contained within the story. Furthermore, the systematic organization of the data aims to reveal the

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relationships between the story's elements, the characters' behaviors, and the community's worldview as reflected in the legend. Thus, the research analysis focuses not only on the plot but also examines the social and cultural meanings that emerge from this folktale.

Moral Values

Obedience to Advice

DATA (1)
"Oleh Si Pahit Lidah, macan tersebut diingatkan agar tidak mengganggu masyarakat desa. Namun, macan tersebut tidak menuruti apa yang disampaikan Si Pahit Lidah."
"*Si Pahit Lidah warned the tiger not to disturb the villagers. However, the tiger did not heed Si Pahit Lidah's warning*." (Januastuti, 2019).

The data indicates that the conflict in the story stems from a failure to heed the advice given by a character in a position of authority. Advice serves as a form of warning intended to teach lessons about virtuous conduct, encourage one to do good, and caution against bad behavior (Hidayah et al., 2024). In this context, Si Pahit Lidah is not only portrayed as a character with supernatural powers but also as a symbol of a figure who has the authority to uphold rules and moral values within society. Conversely, the tiger is portrayed as the party that violates norms by ignoring the warnings that have been given, and this action gives rise to conflict and consequences in the story.

Based on the findings, it was determined that compliance with advice is regarded as a fundamental moral value. Noncompliance not only affects the individual who disobeys but also triggers broader consequences, namely the emergence of conflict that leads to punishment. Thus, this legend underscores that advice should not be viewed as trivial but rather as part of the social mechanism for maintaining order.

Upon closer examination, the cause-and-effect patterns depicted in the story, such as advice, transgressions, and punishments, reveal a didactic narrative structure. The story not only conveys a sequence of events but also guides the reader or listener toward the understanding that every action has specific consequences. In this context, the legend serves as a means of moral education conveyed indirectly through the plot. Sanctions are imposed on someone who commits a violation as a form of action against behavior that does not conform to existing rules (Rinaldi, 2022). The imposition of sanctions aims to foster a sense of responsibility and serve as a deterrent to prevent the violation from recurring. Thus, the punishment depicted in the *Batu Macan* legend.can be understood as a

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means of conveying a moral message to the community, urging them to always adhere to prevailing norms and advice.

Furthermore, the value of compliance in this story can be understood as a reflection of a culture that upholds norms and respects established authority. A compliant attitude is viewed as a crucial element in maintaining order and social relationships within the community. Therefore, violations of specific rules or advice are considered forms of deviance that can disrupt social balance and thus warrant sanctions. Social harmony is created through peaceful social relationships, mutual respect, and a spirit of cooperation in communal life (Firdausi, 2023). Thus, compliance with norms in the *Batu Macan* legend.can be interpreted as the community's effort to maintain social harmony and preserve cultural values passed down from generation to generation.

Larangan terhadap Perilaku Menyimpang (Zina)

DATA (2)
"Menurut cerita wanita tersebut adalah wanita pezinah sedangkan anak yang sedang digendongnya adalah anak hasil perzinahan."
"*According to the story, the woman was an adulteress, and the child she was carrying was the product of adultery*." (Januastuti, 2019).

This data contains moral values related to the prohibition against deviant behavior, particularly adultery. In the story, a violation of this norm not only affects the main character but also involves another party, namely the child born as a result. This demonstrates that the impact of deviant behavior is not limited to the individual but can extend to the social environment.

The punishment, in the form of a curse turning the perpetrator into stone, can be interpreted as a powerful symbol. The transformation into stone not only signifies physical punishment but also symbolizes the end of social life. The individual who violates the norm is, as it were, "frozen out" of community life, loses their role, and no longer has a space to interact normally.

From a social perspective, this value suggests that society has clear moral boundaries regarding behavior deemed deviant from prevailing norms. Through legends, society conveys the message that every violation will result in specific consequences. The punishment or consequences depicted in extreme terms in the story serve to instill fear and act as a deterrent for the community, preventing them from committing similar acts; thus, social control is necessary. Social control plays a dual role in community life. In addition to maintaining order and stability, it also reflects the social values embraced and developed within the community. Therefore, the *Batu Macan* legend can be understood as a medium

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used by the community to preserve the social values and rules that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Furthermore, the presentation of values in the story demonstrates how moral norms are upheld through a narrative. Through the plot and the consequences faced by the characters, the community is taught to avoid actions that contradict prevailing moral values. Conveying messages through a storyline is considered more effective because it is easier for the public to understand and accept, particularly among the younger generation (Pitri et al., 2025). Thus, the *Batu Macan* legend can be understood as a means of instilling moral values and reinforcing moral norms so that the public continues to behave in accordance with existing norms.

Consequences of Actions

DATA (3)
"Hingga Si Pahit Lidah murka dan mengutuk macan tersebut menjadi batu."
"Until Si Pahit Lidah flew into a rage and cursed the tiger, turning it into stone."
(Januastuti, 2019).

The data indicates a strong correlation between the characters' actions and the consequences they face in the story. Si Pahit Lidah's anger emerges as a reaction to actions deemed to violate established rules or norms. The curse placed on the tiger, turning it into stone, symbolizes a permanent punishment that cannot be reversed. This event demonstrates that every transgression will ultimately result in consequences that the perpetrator must face.

Furthermore, this part of the story contains a moral lesson that relates to responsibility and awareness of the consequences of every action. Thus, the *Batu Macan* legend teaches that one must be able to consider one's behavior so as not to cause harm to oneself or those around them. The punishment received by the tiger character serves as a symbol that actions contrary to norms will result in specific consequences. Therefore, this story serves not only as entertainment but also as a means of conveying advice regarding behavior, obeying rules, and taking responsibility for one's actions.

Interestingly, the consequences in this story are not portrayed lightly but rather as absolute punishments. This highlights the importance of moral education in life. Moral education is an effort to guide character development toward a more positive direction (Andrian et al., 2024). By presenting clear consequences, the story serves as a reminder that every action has an impact for which one must be held accountable.

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Cultural Values

Belief in Supernatural Figures

DATA (4)
"Si Pahit Lidah (a powerful figure who has the ability to cast curses through his words)" (Januastuti, 2019).

The data indicates that the community believes in mystical figures who possess powers beyond those of ordinary humans. Si Pahit Lidah is portrayed as a figure who holds authority not only in terms of power but also in upholding and enforcing prevailing norms.

This finding reflects a system of belief within society that still acknowledges the existence of supernatural powers. The supernatural refers to phenomena beyond the laws of nature and is often associated with occult or mystical forces (Togatorop et al., 2023). Belief in figures possessing supernatural powers indicates that society recognizes the existence of forces beyond ordinary human capabilities that can influence social life.

In the story, the figure with supernatural powers serves not only as a narrative element to strengthen the plot but also as a symbol of power and authority that is both respected and feared by the community. His presence demonstrates that prevailing norms and rules are considered to possess a power that must not be violated carelessly. Thus, the supernatural elements in the *Batu Macan* legend can be understood as part of the community's beliefs, used to reinforce moral values and uphold social norms in communal life.

Furthermore, the presence of a supernatural figure in the story indicates that the community has a symbolic figure representing certain shared values. This figure not only acts as a character in the story but also plays a crucial role in conveying moral messages to the community. In the context of the *Batu Macan* legend, Si Pahit Lidah can be understood as a symbol of moral authority that plays a role in maintaining social order through advice, curses, or punishment for violations. The presence of this supernatural figure demonstrates the community's belief in a specific power that is respected and serves as a guide in social life. Folklore is a cultural component passed down across generations and serves as a marker of community identity (Dadang & Susilo, 2021). Through folklore, communities pass down not only stories but also the values, beliefs, and worldviews that have evolved within their lives. Therefore, the character of Si Pahit Lidah in the *Batu Macan* legend can be understood as part of the folklore that reflects the cultural values and belief systems of the local community.

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Belief Systems Regarding Curses

DATA (5)
"Sampai saat ini patung dua ekor macan itu masih tetap ada." (Januastuti, 2019).
"*To this day, the statues of the two tigers are still there*." (Januastuti, 2019).

The data indicates that the community still believes in the existence of the tiger stone as tangible evidence of the events described in the legend. The presence of statues or stones believed to be the incarnation of a tiger means that these folk tales are not merely understood as fairy tales, but are also believed to be true stories that actually happened. This belief demonstrates a strong connection between oral traditions and the social reality that has developed within the local community.

This phenomenon indicates that the boundary between story and reality becomes blurred within the community's belief system. Legends are no longer viewed merely as entertainment but have become part of the cultural beliefs passed down from generation to generation. The existence of the "tiger stone" serves as a form of legitimization that reinforces the community's belief in the curse of Si Pahit Lidah. With the presence of physical evidence that is still believed in today, the community has grown even more convinced that every event in the legend holds its own truth and contains a message that must be respected and preserved.

In cultural studies, this demonstrates a strong connection between myths and the social life of a community. Myths are not merely understood as stories about the origins of an event, but also contain moral values and behavioral guidelines that serve as a reference in social life (Patty et al., 2024). Belief in the curse within the *Batu Macan* legend is part of how the community understands the world and explains various phenomena occurring in their surroundings.

Through myths, communities develop a belief in the connection between human actions and the consequences they face. These beliefs are then passed down from generation to generation, becoming an integral part of the community's culture and belief system. Thus, the mythical elements in the *Batu Macan* legend not only strengthen the narrative but also reflect the worldview and cultural values that have evolved within the community.

Cultural Practices (Basoh Rumeh and Basoh Marge)

DATA (6)
"...menyembelih kambing sebagai basoh rumeh dan menyembelih kerbau sebagai basoh marge."

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"...slaughtering a goat as basoh rumeh and slaughtering a water buffalo as basoh marge." (Januastuti, 2019).

The data indicates the existence of cultural practices that have developed as a response to violations of social norms. The basoh rumeh and basoh marge rituals serve as symbolic acts of purification and also function as social mechanisms to restore balance in community life. This finding is particularly significant because it demonstrates that the *Batu Macan* legend extends beyond the realm of storytelling and has tangible implications for community life. This story serves as the basis for legitimizing the cultural practices carried out by the community, thereby revealing a strong connection between oral literature and social practices in daily life.

Furthermore, the existence of social sanctions in the form of ostracism prior to the ritual indicates that the community possesses a structured system of social control. Ostracism functions as a form of social pressure to make the individual aware of their mistake, while the ritual serves as a means to reintegrate that individual into the social order.

In this context, the legend also serves as a symbolic foundation that reinforces cultural practices within community life (tradition). Tradition is the manifestation of human customs that have developed over a long period of time and have been passed down from generation to generation by ancestors (Margahana et al., 2019). Tradition is understood as customs or practices that have developed within community life and are passed down across generations (Komang & Adnyani, 2017). Thus, the *Batu Macan* legend can be understood as part of a cultural tradition that plays a role in preserving values, customs, and social norms within community life.

These findings indicate that folktales are not merely viewed as a form of entertainment but also have a strong connection to the formation of cultural practices and the value systems that govern human life. The values embedded in these stories can be passed down across generations and serve as a guide for understanding the norms, customs, and social rules that apply within a community. Customary law is a set of rules that lives and evolves within a community because it is shaped by the values that emerge from the community's own social life (Firma et al., 2019). Thus, the *Batu Macan* legend is an important part of the cultural heritage that plays a role in safeguarding and preserving values, norms, and social rules in the life of the local community.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the *Batu Macan* legend in Lahat Regency, it can be concluded that the legend contains moral and cultural values closely related to the lives of the local community. The moral values identified include obedience to advice, the prohibition against deviant behavior, and the existence of consequences or punishments for any actions that violate social norms. The three moral values identified in this study share structural similarities with the four moral values identified by Siahaan et al. in the legends of Danau Lau Kawar and

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Pawang Ternalem, although with different emphases. The cultural values revealed include three elements, belief in supernatural figures, belief in curses, and the practices of basoh rumeh and basoh marge. The three cultural values in this study complement the cultural value map previously compiled by Handayani et al. based on the Legend of Siti Payung, offering a new contribution in the form of the ritual cleansing practices (basoh rumeh and basoh marge), which constitute a cultural heritage of South Sumatra.

The findings of this study demonstrate that legends play a crucial role in reinforcing social norms and preserving community cultural practices. Practically speaking, the *Batu Macan* legend can serve as a resource for character education in elementary schools in Lahat Regency, particularly in the dimensions of obedience, responsibility, and respect for traditional authority. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the development of oral literature studies, particularly regarding the relationship between folktales and the sociocultural life of communities.

This study has limitations regarding the scope of online sources, which do not yet represent all narrative variants, as well as the lack of analysis of pure oral variants narrated directly by community storytellers. Future research is recommended to conduct ethnographic field studies over a longer period and to compare these findings with legends from other regions in South Sumatra, focusing on similarities in moral and cultural values, in order to establish a comprehensive typology of Sumatran legends.

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