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The Representation of Themes and Moral Values in Banjar Fairy Tales

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the thematic structure and moral values in Banjar fables and their relationship with socio-cultural aspects and the natural landscape of Banjar society. Banjar fables not only serve as a means of entertainment but also as a tool for moral education that encourages critical thinking about social conditions. These fables implicitly teach values such as courage, honesty, and social responsibility through their stories and characters. This study also highlights the importance of utilizing Banjar fables in school learning to preserve cultural heritage and prevent the erosion of national culture by foreign influences. Additionally, the findings open opportunities for further research on other genres of old Banjar literature, such as myths, legends, and sagas. This study employs a qualitative approach with thematic analysis of available Banjar fables, though data limitations are a significant consideration. These findings are expected to serve as a learning resource and reference for the development of character education and cultural literacy in Indonesia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian society has a rich oral literary tradition. Oral literature is part of oral culture that grows and develops in tandem with the growth and development of society. Therefore, what is expressed in oral literature is the result of a long cultural process and contains a variety of issues. Thus, oral literature undoubtedly has some benefits for life.

Literature has a very broad function and plays a role in various aspects of life, including cultural, environmental, educational, and communicative contexts. One of the primary functions of literature is as an efficient medium for conveying moral and cultural messages, including those related to human relationships with the environment (Sapawuryandari, 2023). Meanwhile, Wellek & Warren (2003) state that literature has an educational function for society, conveying moral and ethical values that are important for communal life. Literature can teach readers about goodness, justice, and how to act appropriately in a social context. Furthermore, Bhabha (2007) asserts that literature plays a role in shaping and preserving a nation's cultural identity. Literature reflects cultural values, history, and ways of life, and introduces culture to the outside world.

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From the opinions of these experts, it is clear that literature has a very important function because it is rich in values that are extremely beneficial for moral education, ethics, cultural values, and the preservation of identity. This function becomes even more important when considered in relation to the increasingly globalized world, which is characterized by the rapid influx of foreign influences. Literature, as the crystallization of a nation's culture, can be used as a means to counteract the influence of foreign cultures. The moral, ethical, and cultural values contained within it are instruments that can be utilized to resist the influx of foreign cultures that are incompatible with the nation's culture.

The question now is whether our old literary heritage also has a function that is relevant to our lives as a modern society. A Western literary expert who has studied old Indonesian literature extensively, Teeuw (2003), argues that old Indonesian literature is very important for preserving and understanding the cultural identity of the nation. Old literature reflects the traditional values, way of life, and worldview of Indonesian society at that time. By studying old literature, modern humans can better understand their own cultural roots, which in turn helps preserve Indonesia's cultural heritage. Furthermore, it is said that old literature serves as a source of moral education that can be used as a model for modern life, helping individuals navigate moral and ethical dilemmas in an increasingly complex world.

Before Islam arrived in Indonesia, there were various beliefs. Some followed animism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and others. These beliefs influenced stories and aspects of society (Hartono et al., 2025). Although ancient literature is rich in moral, ethical, and cultural values, society tends to forget them. Parents and teachers in schools rarely tell stories anymore. As a result, children today are no longer familiar with animal folklore characters such as the Deer, the Turtle, the Crocodile, and others. Amidst this trend, folklore can no longer be said to be thriving. Although folklore is rich in messages that are highly beneficial for moral education, children today are less familiar with their own nation’s folklore heritage. It is said that children today are more familiar with foreign characters, such as Black Knight, Superman, and similar characters, than with characters like Kancil or Pilanduk, who were once known to most children across the archipelago.

Banjar fairy tales have several types, including fables (animal fairy tales). Basically, fables are literary works that present stories with animal characters that behave like humans. Fables not only convey moral messages but also serve to introduce various social phenomena through the symbolism found in the animal characters. In an educational context, fables serve as an effective tool for transmitting moral teachings through simple and easy-to-understand narratives. Research indicates that teaching using the fable genre enhances students' cognitive abilities and helps instill positive character traits and cultural values (Salsabila & Huda, 2023).

To date, Banjar fables have never been specifically studied. Banjar fables have been mentioned in several studies, including Banjar Oral Literature (Sunarti et al., 1978), Folklore of South Kalimantan (Ismail et al., 1984), and Cultural Values in Banjar Folklore (Effendi et al., 1992). However, in these studies, Banjar fables were not examined specifically. As a result, many Banjar fables remain undescribed, including their thematic aspects and the moral values they contain.

Studying the themes and moral values in Banjar fables is an important effort in preserving and understanding local culture. Banjar fables, as part of a rich cultural heritage, contain traditional values, norms, and wisdom that reflect the worldview of the Banjar people. Through this research, we can document and preserve these stories for future generations, while also making them into interesting and relevant teaching materials for schools to teach moral values and local culture. Furthermore, this research supports efforts to strengthen local cultural identity in the midst of globalization and can be a source of inspiration for writers. In an academic context, this research also opens opportunities for further exploration in related fields such as ethnolinguistics, ethnopedagogy, or others. Previous research has only briefly examined the representation of themes and moral values in Banjar fables in depth, as well as their relationship with socio-cultural aspects and the natural landscape of Banjar

society. Therefore, there is a need to describe these themes and moral values in detail and their relationship with the local socio-cultural context.

Fables are an important part of cultural heritage that not only entertain but also provide moral values and messages to readers, especially children. Schauf (2007) explains that fables are stories featuring animal characters with human traits, often used to illustrate various values or moral lessons. Fables generally serve as a medium to educate readers, especially children, about values such as honesty, cooperation, and wisdom. These stories often contain social satire or criticism of human behavior. Fables also serve to teach readers about ethics and morals. In their ideas (Sufitri & Setyowati, 2019), the main characteristics of fables include: (a) talking animal characters: in fables, animals do not only appear as living creatures, but also behave like humans, talking and thinking; (b) containing a moral message: fables aim to convey life lessons or moral values to readers, especially children; (c) easily understandable conflicts: stories in fables often involve simple conflicts between animals that depict social or personal problems; and (d) usually ending with a solution or lesson: Fables have a clear resolution that conveys a moral lesson to readers.

As a type of oral literature, fables have various types. Schauf (2007) identifies two types of fables with specific characteristics, namely naturalistic fables and anthropomorphic fables. Naturalistic fables depict the lives of animals that are closer to reality, although the animals are still given human characteristics. Naturalistic fables focus on the lives of animals in the wild and often convey messages about the harmony of nature or the need to preserve the environment. Meanwhile, in anthropomorphic fables, animals behave like humans with more distinct traits and characters. These fables are often used to convey moral lessons about human social behavior, such as wisdom, leadership, or betrayal.

Moral values are interpreted in various ways by experts. Morality is highlighted more in normative aspects that can be considered controversial, while civic education emphasizes empirical realities that can be observed in society (Bull, 2006). According to him, morality is a principle that underlies all actions taken on the basis of obligation, not based on the consequences of those actions. Meanwhile, Dewey (2016) argues that moral values are guidelines or principles that regulate individual actions in a social and cultural context. Moral values are closely related to the development of social awareness and responsibility towards others.

Thomas Lickona is an important figure in character education philosophy. He describes character as consisting of three main components: moral values, performance values, and virtues. His approach is based on the belief that character education is a deliberate process to help individuals understand, internalize, and defend core ethical values. This framework states that moral development is not merely an intellectual exercise, but also involves emotional and social dimensions, which strengthen an individual's capacity to regulate themselves ethically (Mortari & Valbusa, 2024; Davidson et al., 2010). Moral values are standards or principles that govern behavior that is considered good or bad in society. Moral values are guidelines that direct individuals to distinguish between right and wrong actions, such as honesty, justice, and respect for others, while character is a set of moral traits and behaviors formed through education and life experiences.

In fables, moral values are tied to themes that bind the events and behaviors of the characters. These themes become the source of events and behaviors that represent moral values. The question now is how themes and moral values are represented in the Banjar fable tradition. The purpose of this study is to describe various themes and representations of moral values in Banjar fables and their relationship with the socio-cultural landscape. The results of this study are not only important for the codification and preservation of culture, but the various themes and moral values can also be used as learning materials to build character that is in harmony with the national culture.

1. METHOD

The purpose of this study is to describe the themes and moral values of Banjar fables and the relationship between these themes and moral values with the socio-cultural aspects and natural

landscape of the Banjar community. To achieve this purpose, two methods were used in this study, namely the literature method and *content analysis.* The literature review method was used to collect information about Banjar fables. As mentioned in Chapter 1 of this study, Banjar fables have been mentioned in several previous studies. In addition to the results of the study, other information that has been documented, whether published or from personal collections, was collected using the literature review method. Content analysis was used to describe the themes and moral values in Banjar fables and how these themes and moral values are related to the socio-cultural aspects and natural landscape of the Banjar community.

A sample is a part of a population that is considered representative of the population (Sugiyono, 2018). To obtain a sample that is representative of the population, a sampling technique must be used. The use of sampling techniques is greatly influenced by the nature of the population. Therefore, before describing the sampling technique used in this study, the population problem will first be described. Each population has at least one characteristic. From this characteristic, differences between one population and another can be identified. The number of elements included in a population is not always known, so populations can be classified as finite or infinite.

Based on the above description, the population of this study is a finite population. This is because the population is limited to the themes and moral values in Banjar fables produced by the community in South Kalimantan. Therefore, the population of this study is relatively homogeneous. As previously explained, the population of this study is relatively homogeneous. This homogeneity is based on the type of literature and the community that produces it. Based on the type of literature, this study is limited to finding themes and moral values in one type of oral literature, namely fables. And in terms of the community, the fables studied are those produced by the Banjar community residing in South Kalimantan. Given these characteristics, the sample in this study was selected using *purposive random sampling*. With this technique, the fables studied were collected from the Banjar Hulu and Banjar Kuala regions.

The research data can be divided into three types, namely themes, moral values, and the relationship between themes and moral values with socio-cultural aspects and the natural landscape of the Banjar community. The al data was obtained from fables spread among the Banjar community, both those recorded in text documents and those obtained through interviews and recordings. The research data was obtained using research instruments. The primary instrument in this study was the researcher himself. Armed with a set of theories, the researcher conducted data analysis. The data on themes and moral values, as well as their relationship with the socio-cultural aspects and natural landscape of the Banjar community, were obtained through description and analysis of the fables. Thus, data collection in this study was carried out by describing and analyzing the fables themselves. The analysis results produced narrative patterns to conclude the themes and moral values revealed in the fable texts. from each fable

2. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Themes and Moral Values in the Fable *of the Squirrel and the Crocodile*

This fable tells the story of the friendship between a squirrel and a crocodile. Their friendship is based on sincerity, so they always help each other and feel each other's pain. This is evident when they are sick. The following excerpt proves this.

One night, the squirrel had a dream. In the dream, it was said that his illness would be cured if he ate a black chicken egg. The next day, when the crocodile visited him, the squirrel told him about his dream.

"Oh, Haruan, I beg you for your help," said Squirrel.

Haruan replied, "Tell me, my friend, and I will help you."

Upon hearing the request, Haruan felt a bit sad. What was requested in the dream was on land, making it difficult to find. If it had been in the water, it would have been easy to find. Nevertheless, for the sake of his friend's recovery, Haruan was determined to find the black chicken egg.

The quote above shows that Haruan was determined to help his friend find the black chicken egg, even though it was difficult for him to do so. As a fish, Haruan would naturally find it easier to search for something in the water. He would certainly encounter various difficulties in finding the black chicken egg because it was on land. However, for the sake of his friend's recovery, he remained determined to find it. And in the story, it is mentioned that thanks to his perseverance and determination, Haruan was finally able to present the black chicken egg.

In this fable, the act of helping one another is also shown by Tupai when Haruan was sick. After Tupai recovered, it was Haruan who fell ill. While sick, Haruan asked Squirrel to find him a crocodile's heart. For Squirrel, finding a crocodile's heart was certainly no easy task, as by nature he lived on land while crocodiles lived in rivers. However, for the sake of his friend's recovery, Squirrel was also determined to find it. The following quote will clarify this.

After Tupai recovered from his illness, they became even closer friends. However, their friendship was once again plagued by misfortune because this time it was Haruan who fell ill. Haruan's illness grew worse day by day. How sad Tupai was to see his friend in such a state.

When Squirrel visited him, Haruan said to Squirrel, "Hey Squirrel, how can I get some crocodile heart to eat?" Squirrel pondered for a long time after hearing Haruan's words. He remembered how Haruan had helped him find black chicken eggs when he was sick before. And he would be even sadder if his friend were to meet his end.

> *"Alright, my friend, even though your wish is hard to fulfill, I am determined to find it and present it to you," said the squirrel.*

From the two quotes above, it is clear that helping one another is a constant theme in the friendship between Squirrel and Haruan. Whenever one of them needs help, they always help each other, even if it is very difficult to do so. Thus, it can be concluded that the theme of this fable is that living in friendship requires helping one another.

This theme contains a moral value of helping one another, especially with friends. Lightening the burden of suffering among fellow human beings or friends is an act that is encouraged. Especially if the help must come from ourselves, then striving to carry it out is highly recommended. This moral value is what can be taken from the theme of this fable.

The Theme and Moral Values in the Fable *of the Weasel and the Chicken*

This fable tells the story of the weasel's evil intentions towards the chicken. These evil intentions are disguised as good intentions, namely the desire to be friends. The intention to be friends is only a means to an end: to attack the chicken. The following excerpt proves this.

"There was a weasel who wanted to be friends with a chicken. However, the weasel only wanted to deceive the chicken so that it would be easy to catch and eat it. But the chicken already knew what was in the weasel's heart. Therefore, the chicken had been on guard for a long time to ward off all of the weasel's tricks.

To carry out his plan, the weasel visited the chicken's house. He even wanted to stay overnight at the chicken's house. However, while at the chicken's house, the weasel was disturbed by the chicks' constant noise. Nevertheless, for the sake of his plan, he remained patient and restrained himself.

In the excerpt above, it is also clear that the Chicken already knew about the Fox's evil intentions. Therefore, when he was about to sleep, he told his children to look for large stones. The stones were to trap the Fox. It turned out that the trap worked. Let's look at the following excerpt.

After the stones were gathered, he arranged them under his children's bed. After finishing his work, the rooster did not sleep either, his mouth constantly muttering various things. Meanwhile, the weasel lay down, daydreaming about how to make the rooster stop making noise and fall asleep quickly, so he could easily ambush him.

After some time, the area became quiet and still. The weasel thought the hen and her chicks were sound asleep. Therefore, it was the perfect time to pounce. Slowly, the weasel crept forward, peering around, and then approached the hen's nest. Suddenly, he pounced on the chicken. However, all he managed to catch were the stones the chicken had arranged earlier. The weasel was in pain, his teeth broken. With despair and enduring the pain, the weasel returned home.

Several excerpts from the fable above show that the weasel did not succeed in attacking the chicken. Instead of being the victim, it was the weasel who suffered. Although the evil intention was disguised as a friendly gesture, the chicken was already aware of it. As a result, the chicken had prepared itself in advance to defend against the weasel's evil intentions. From the story, it can be concluded that the theme of this fable is that evil deeds can harm oneself.

This central theme contains a moral value: do not commit evil deeds against others, for such deeds can harm oneself. This is proven by what happened to the weasel. It was not the chicken that suffered from the attack, but the weasel who met his fate.

The Theme and Moral Values in the Fable *of the Bangkanga Kingdom*

This fable tells the story of a Perkutut bird who was cursed by the King of Cendrawasih and his people for breaking an oath. At first, there was a Perkutut bird that had no feathers. This incident prompted the King of Cendrawasih and his people to help him grow feathers. This can be seen in the following excerpt.

It is said that a Perkutut bird suddenly appeared in the middle of a vast field. It no longer had any feathers on its body. It was completely bald. Its legs, eyes, head, and mouth were clearly visible.

"If the participants are willing to give their help sincerely and with love for others, that is very commendable," said the King of Cendrawasih. "We will determine that those who are wealthy will give generously, and those who are less fortunate will give according to their ability. Even a single feather from a villager's body will be of great significance to the lives of our people," said the King. "Especially now, when some of our people are desperately in need of assistance," added the King. After that, all the birds shed their feathers for the Perkutut's needs. Since the feathers received were of various types and colors, the Perkutut's feathers became truly beautiful and stunning.

After receiving the help, the Perkutut was told to swear that if another bird tribe ever needed help, he must repay the favor. The Perkutut accepted the oath and promised to fulfill it. However, in reality, the Perkutut never kept his promise. The following quote shows this.

One day, a sparrow was hit by an arrow. It fluttered on the ground. The Perkutut, who happened to be there, ignored the Pipit. So, at that moment, the Pipit said, "Help me, for I have been shot by a human and have fallen to the ground!" "Oh," said the Perkutut, "I am busy. Wait a moment, Pipit! I am flying, and I am too lazy to help you, especially since I have just taken off."

"Please help me. Who else can help me, Tut?" said the sparrow with a sympathetic heart. The dove said, "Enough, I don't want to, don't force me!" The sparrow said again, "Do you still remember when we helped you the other day when you didn't have any feathers? And now you can fly anywhere. Remember the help from the smallest to the greatest of the villagers!"

Then the Perkutut said, "Did I ask for those feathers? Who gave them to me? I didn't ask for them. What's clear is that I was given them and helped. The feathers were given sincerely by all the villagers, and I accepted them gratefully. And I truly needed them. Remember how I suffered back then."

The above quote shows that the Java sparrow had forgotten his oath to help other birds in need. And he did this repeatedly, as shown in the following quote.

One day, a Katupi bird was caught in a farmer's trap. The Katupi bird begged Perkutut to free him. "Why should I help someone else? I can't even take care of myself. So, I have to take care of myself first. Let all my people suffer because of their own actions," said Perkutut. According to the story, the third incident befell a Paragam bird. The Paragam fell to the ground after being hit by an arrow. Its wing was broken, and it limped toward the Perkutut, begging for help. The Perkutut paid no attention to the incident. Instead, it turned its head away.

All the deeds of the Perkutut eventually came to the attention of King Cenderawasih. The King was furious upon hearing all this. Finally, the King summoned the Perkutut to be scolded and cursed. The following quote illustrates this.

The king said, "You are too arrogant and proud. Do you remember your promise? I have heard reports from all the villagers that many of your friends have suffered misfortune. How could you not help them?" The king continued, "You are a heartless villager. You refuse to help your suffering friends." The king was furious, his face red with anger. Both the king and all the villagers cursed the Perkutut bird.

"You will receive karma. One day, all your descendants will be hunted and slaughtered, or perhaps imprisoned by humans for their entertainment. You have forgotten like a peanut that has forgotten its shell." From that day onward, the Perkutut bird was always chased by humans wherever it went.

From the story above, it can be concluded that the theme of this fable is that breaking an oath is a bad deed. Therefore, the moral lesson that can be learned from this theme is that one should never break an oath, especially if it concerns the fate of others. In this fable, it is observed that those who break their oaths end up harming themselves. This is what happened to the Perkutut. He was cursed until his grandchildren because he broke the oath he had made.

The Theme and Moral Values in the Fable *of the Duck and the Warik*

This fable tells the story of a monkey who likes to mock other animals, including ducks. The monkey feels that he is a superior creature, so he is very arrogant and enjoys insulting other animals. The following excerpt proves this.

"On a tree beside the lake, a monkey was peeking and wanted to disturb the duck that was bathing so that it would leave the lake. Before he could carry out his plan, the duck saw the monkey perched on the tree. 'Hey, ... you there, monkey, I happen to be alone. Let's play together in this cool lake. You must enjoy playing here," the duck said politely, trying to entice the monkey to play together. But what did the monkey reply? "What, play with you, duck? Heh, ... who would want to play with you. Your beak is like a spoon, your eyes are like lice, your wings are like a two-sided roof, your tail is like a fan, you walk like a duck, and your legs are like a rice paddle." The act of insulting others eventually led to the insulter being insulted as well. This is what happened to the monkey. He was mocked by the duck with the following words.

Seeing this, the monkey was happy because there was another game. The monkey began to shout insults. "Hey, there's an ugly duck playing in the lake, with wings like a two-sided roof, a tail like a rotten fan, legs like a rice paddle, and a swaying gait." The monkey hoped that his insults would make the duck cry. To the monkey's surprise, the duck responded to the taunts by singing.

"Quack, ... quack, ... There's an ugly monkey up in the tree claiming to have a good face, but his head is like a jackfruit, his tail like a ghost's flute, he walks awkwardly, and at night his eyes twinkle as he stares at the moon," the duck mocked calmly.

In addition to being mocked as above, the monkey also suffered misfortune because, in the end, his mouth was filled with sparrow droppings. The mouth that often mocked others was punished with droppings. The following quote clarifies this.

On a pauh tree, the monkey spotted a sparrow's nest. Inside the nest were a mother sparrow and her young, which were just learning to fly. With a single leap, the monkey could have caught them. But before he could reach them, the mother sparrow quickly flew away. But unfortunately, the chick couldn't fly in time. The monkey caught the sparrow chick and immediately put it into its mouth to swallow whole. Before it could be swallowed, the sparrow chick suddenly spoke and sang. However, its words were inaudible because they were too small, so the monkey found the sparrow chick's voice very funny.

Without realizing it, the monkey burst into laughter, opening its mouth wide. The sparrow chick immediately flew out of the monkey's mouth. Apparently, while still inside the monkey's mouth, the sparrow chick had defecated out of fear. The monkey was curious because its prey had escaped. Out of anger, the monkey said, "Even its feces taste good..." and swallowed it whole.

The above excerpts show that the monkey, who enjoyed mocking his peers, eventually received an unpleasant response. Therefore, it can be concluded that the theme of this fable is that mocking others is an unworthy deed.

This theme contains the moral value of not insulting others because such actions are disgraceful. The monkey's habit of always mocking his friends eventually led to something bad happening to him. In addition to being mocked, the monkey ended up having to swallow his own feces.

The Theme and Moral Values in the Fable *of Si Budir and Warik*

This fable tells the story of the death of an arrogant and conceited monkey. He was indeed a powerful animal, but because of his arrogance, he died because of his arrogance. The monkey's arrogance can be seen in the following excerpt.

"Then, the monkey went straight to the kitchen to take the knife. In no time, the knife was in his hand. With arrogance, the monkey held his genitals and, without a hint of fear, slit the knife across his genitals. Budir witnessed the scene with a mix of anger and fear. He dared not confront the monkey because it was so large. However, it turned out that the knife was very dull because it had not been sharpened for a long time. When the monkey sliced the knife into his genitals, he was not injured at all. Because of this, the monkey became even more arrogant and said, 'This knife, Budir? Tell your mother to throw away this useless knife!' The next day, the monkey came back to Budir's house. The monkey took the knife again and cut his genitals with it. Once again, there was no result. The monkey was not injured at all. Budir was puzzled by this incident. After all, the knife had been sharpened very well. Now he knew that this monkey was not just any monkey, but a powerful one.

Before leaving, the monkey threatened to kill Budir and his mother if he still couldn't injure its genitals on the third attempt. It walked away from Budir's house laughing heartily.

The monkey's arrogance grew even more after demonstrating its supernatural power twice. However, on the third attempt, it died because of its arrogance. This is evident in the following excerpt.

The next day, the monkey returned to their house. Laughing loudly, the monkey shouted, "Budir, where is the knife?" Budir and his mother calmly handed him a very sharp knife. The monkey quickly slit his genitals with the knife. The ancestral knife proved to be quite effective. In an instant, the monkey's genitals were severed. Finally, the monkey screamed and died in a pool of blood."

The quote above shows that it was the monkey's own arrogance that led to its death. Therefore, this study contains the theme: arrogant and conceited attitudes can be detrimental to oneself.

The moral value that can be taken from this theme is that one should not be arrogant and conceited because both attitudes can harm oneself. In the fable, it is clearly shown that the monkey died because of its own arrogance and conceit.

The Theme and Moral Values in the Fable of *Warik vs. Kukura*

The theme of this fable is that betraying friendship is a bad deed. This is evident in the fable, where the turtle betrays his close friend. He intends to kill the monkey to cure his wife. According to his neighbor, his wife will

recover from her illness if she ate the monkey's heart. Based on this, the turtle climbs a fig tree with the intention of killing his close friend, the monkey, in a cunning manner. However, in the end, he fails to kill his friend, and instead, he is the one who is deceived. This theme is illustrated in the following excerpt.

Meanwhile, the turtle forgot about his wife and child. Because he had been away for so long, his wife grew worried and confided in her neighbor, "I'm worried," she said. "Perhaps some danger has befallen my husband, that's why he hasn't returned." "Your husband is safe," replied the neighbor. "He is living by the seaside, befriending a monkey. That is why he has forgotten you. In my opinion, he won't care about you anymore. Therefore, if possible, the monkey should be killed!" "How can I kill the monkey?" "It's not difficult. When your husband returns, pretend to be sick. If he asks about your illness, tell him that according to the doctor, your illness will be cured if you eat the monkey's heart!"

One day, the Turtle remembered his wife and returned home. Upon arriving, he found his wife ill. "Why do you look so sad?" asked the Turtle.

"Your wife is sick," replied the neighbor. "Her illness is very dangerous, and the doctor said there is no cure except for monkey liver." Hearing this, the turtle's heart grew heavy.

"Where can we obtain such a thing?" he said. "We live in the water, and the monkey lives on land." He pondered for a long time. Suddenly, he remembered his friend, the monkey king. At that moment, he decided to deceive his friend so that he could kill him and take his heart.

"Why didn't you tell me that earlier when we were at home so I could bring my heart with me? For us monkeys, it is a custom that when someone visits a friend's house, they leave their heart there so that nothing disturbs their thoughts while they are at their friend's house."

"Where is your heart now?" asked the Turtle.

"I left it on the fig tree, and if you truly need it, let us return to retrieve it." The Turtle was deeply moved by his friend's words. Then he swam back.

When they got close to the shore, the monkey jumped onto the land and climbed up a fig tree. After waiting for a while, the monkey still hadn't come down, so the turtle shouted, "Hey, my friend, where is your promise to take my heart?" Then the monkey said, "I know you want to trick me, so I have no choice but to trick you too. Actually, my heart is still inside my body; I didn't leave it at home. Only you are foolish and stupid."

The quote above clearly shows that betraying friendship is a bad deed. Therefore, the moral value contained in the theme is: do not betray a friendship because it is a bad deed. This moral value is clearly seen in the failure of the turtle's intention because he was deceived by the monkey.

The Theme and Moral Values of the Fable *"The Banana Tree"*

This fable tells the story of the Monkey's deceit towards his friend, the Turtle, which ultimately became a disaster for himself. The Monkey cheated when helping his friend to harvest bananas. The following excerpt shows this.

"However, it was unfortunate for the Turtle because after the Monkey climbed the banana tree and picked the fruit, he did not give any of it to the Turtle. He continued to eat the bananas without paying any attention to the Turtle. The Turtle kept begging the Monkey to drop the bananas for him. If not the fruit, then at least the peel. The monkey replied that even the peel was delicious! Thus, all the bananas belonging to the turtle were gone. Finally, the turtle vowed in his heart to take revenge on the monkey for his treatment.

That deceitful act caused resentment in the turtle's heart, so that one day he took revenge by burning the monkey. This can be seen in the following excerpt.

One day, the turtle told the monkey about a rambutan tree with abundant fruit. The monkey was very interested in the story, so he invited the turtle to visit the tree. The turtle agreed, but asked the monkey to carry him because he was too weak to walk far. The monkey readily agreed. When they arrived at the tree, the monkey climbed up without paying any attention to the turtle and began eating the rambutan fruit. He had no intention of giving any rambutan fruit to the turtle. This made the turtle very angry. Out of anger, the turtle lit a fire under the rambutan tree. The fire grew bigger and the monkey was burned along with the tree.

The content of the two quotations above shows that the theme of this fable is that dishonest actions can bring disaster upon oneself. Therefore, the moral value contained in this theme is that one should not act dishonestly, as such actions can bring disaster or danger upon oneself. This fact is proven by the monkey's death due to his deceit. Deceit causes resentment in others, which in turn can take one's life.

The Theme and Moral Value of the Fable *Warik Tuha vs. Buhaya*

This fable tells the story of an old monkey who was killed by a snake. Causally, the old monkey's death was due to his deceiving the crocodile. In the fable, it is told that the old monkey lived in isolation from his peers because of his arrogant and greedy nature. After being isolated for too long, he grew

bored and wanted to join his peers. However, he could not do so because he could not swim. Therefore, he deceived the Crocodile King and his people. The Crocodile King and his people were told to line up across the river because he wanted to count whether there were exactly one hundred or not. Upon reaching the other side, he was instead killed by a snake. With this plot, it can be concluded that the theme of this fable is that deceit can harm oneself.

This theme contains a moral value that we should not be cunning toward anyone because such actions can harm oneself. This moral value is proven by the fact that the monkey perished as a result of his own cunning.

The Theme and Moral Values in the Fable *of Koncong and Budir*

This fable tells the story of the death of the monkey king named Koncong and his followers. They died because they were careless and not careful. Koncong died while fighting with Budir, while his followers died while eating musk fruit.

Si Koncong acted carelessly and carelessly when fighting with Si Budir. He thought that the knife used to stab him was not sharp because it looked rusty and dull. However, the knife was actually very sharp because it had just been sharpened. However, to make the knife look dull, Budir smeared it with banana tree sap so it appeared rusty. When stabbed, the knife was indeed very sharp. The following quote proves this.

> *Not long after, an old monkey named Koncong came with the intention of meeting Budir's mother. Seeing his mother's companion had arrived, Budir immediately approached him, while the knife he had prepared was tightly gripped in his hand. Seeing Budir holding the knife that looked rusty, the monkey said, "That knife won't work on me.*
>
> *"Try it if you dare!" Budir replied.*
>
> *Then, the old monkey puffed out his chest, and at that moment, Koncong's chest was stabbed with the knife. It turned out that the knife could pierce the monkey's skin and chest. Instantly, he exhaled his last breath.*

If Koncong had not been careless and had been more careful, that disaster would not have befallen him. Without paying close attention, he dared to boast. As a result, he died by the knife.

Carelessness and lack of attention were also the cause of the death of the monkey's men. After he died, his men found out that it was Budir who had killed their king (the monkey). Therefore, they were very angry and eventually captured Budir. After being captured, Budir was tied to a tree. At that moment, Budir was able to deceive a group of monkeys by saying that he remembered a nutmeg tree with very abundant fruit. Enticed by the story, the group of monkeys released Budir and told him to lead them to the nutmeg tree. Upon arriving at the location, the group of monkeys was very tempted by the abundance of kesturi fruit. Ignoring Budir, they immediately climbed the tree and devoured the fruit. As a result, Budir was free and able to burn the kesturi tree. This can be seen in the following excerpt.

> *"It wasn't long before the group arrived at the kesturi tree. When the monkeys saw the ripe kesturi fruit, they could no longer control their emotions. One by one, they climbed the tree. At the top, they fought over the kesturi fruit, eating it greedily.*
>
> *Meanwhile, under the kesturi tree, Budir freely gathered as much dry wood as he could. He piled the wood under the tree. Once he felt there was enough, Budir immediately set the wood on fire. The flames grew large, and the smoke reached the tree where the monkeys were enjoying the kesturi fruit. Due to the thick smoke and the intense heat, the monkeys on the tree eventually fell one by one to the ground and were consumed by the flames.*

From the excerpts above, it is clear that the theme of the fable of Si Koncong and Si Budir is that carelessness and lack of attention can lead to disaster. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that Si Koncong (the monkey king) and his men died because of their carelessness and lack of attention.

The moral value contained in this theme is that one should not act carelessly and without attention to detail, as this can lead to disaster. Si Koncong and his followers died because of their carelessness and lack of attention to detail.

The Theme and Moral Values of the Fable *of Kukura the Gentle Creature*

This fable tells the story of the death of a deer by a group of crocodiles. At first, there were a number of animals that wanted to move from their original place, which was very arid, to a place that was very fertile and covered with trees and grass. However, they could not cross the river that separated their place from their destination. At that moment, a crocodile appeared and offered to help the animals cross the river. They were naturally very interested in the offer, which was exactly what they wanted.

Before many animals were carried across, a small turtle appeared and warned them to reject the crocodile's offer. The crocodile's good intentions were merely a trick, and he ultimately intended to devour all the animals. Almost all the animals heeded the turtle's advice. Only one animal ignored it—the deer. The deer refused the turtle's advice and insisted on crossing by riding on the crocodile's back. He refused the turtle's advice because turtles are smaller and stupider animals. As a result, he was devoured by the crocodiles. The following quote illustrates this.

> *When the deer reached the middle of the river, it suddenly disappeared, torn apart by the crocodiles. Soon after, the river turned red with the deer's blood.*

From the above description, it can be concluded that the theme of this fable is that something true must be acknowledged as true, regardless of its source. In this fable, the deer ignored the correct advice because the one giving the advice was a small turtle, which he considered to be a small and foolish animal ( ). As a result, the deer was killed by a group of crocodiles because he did not heed the turtle's advice.

The moral value that can be taken from this theme is that we should not judge truth based on who conveys it. Instead, we should look at the content of the truth. Even if the truth is conveyed by someone weaker or lower than us, we must acknowledge its truth if it is indeed true. In this fable, it is clearly shown that if the deer had not looked down on the turtle, he would have been safe. However, because he disregarded the turtle, its advice was ignored. As a result, disaster struck him.

The Theme and Moral Values of the Fable of the *Porcupine's Quills*

This fable tells the story of an animal kingdom in the forests of Kalimantan that is gripped by fear. At first, the kingdom, led by a bear, was very peaceful and tranquil. However, this peace and tranquility were disrupted when an animal messenger from the king of Sumatra arrived. The messenger brought a message from his king demanding that all the animal kingdoms in the forests of Kalimantan submit to him.

Amidst the anxiety and fear of the Bear King and his people, a Hedgehog arrived and offered a strategy to resolve the issue. The strategy he proposed was for the king to send animals to bring back the Hedgehog's quills. The Bear King followed the Hedgehog's strategy. It turned out that the issue was resolved through the strategy proposed by the Hedgehog. The following quote illustrates this.

> *"Upon arriving in Sumatra, the Bear King's messenger immediately approached the Elephant King and conveyed the Bear King's message that he and his people refused to submit to the Elephant King. Then, the messenger presented samples of Kalimantan animal fur, namely porcupine fur. The Elephant King was astonished and amazed to see the porcupine fur. He thought it was the Bear King's body fur. The Elephant King's heart grew fearful, for if the fur was so formidable, how much more so would his body be. Ultimately, the Elephant King announced to all his people that the attack on the Kalimantan jungle was canceled."*

This quote shows that the porcupine's proposed strategy for resolving the problem was very effective. In the end, they were freed from their fear. From this, we can conclude that the theme of this fable is that a problem can be overcome with the right method or strategy. Without the right strategy, the problem faced by the Bear King and his people might have dragged on and never been resolved.

The moral value that can be taken from this theme is that a problem should be solved in the right way. A problem cannot be faced with panic and fear. A problem needs to be solved, and the solution must be carried out with the right method or strategy. In this fable, it is clearly shown that the problem faced by the Bear King and his people can be solved by sending an animal with a sample of porcupine

quills. By doing this, the Elephant King became frightened and, in turn, abandoned his plan to attack the animal kingdom in the Kalimantan jungle.

The Theme and Moral Values of the Fable of *the Darakuku Bird vs. the Lamatan Mouse*

This fable tells the story of the suffering and misfortune experienced by the Mouse. All of this suffering and misfortune was actually caused by the irritation of other animals toward the Mouse.

The first suffering experienced by the mouse was when he demanded rice from Darakuku. The mouse demanded the rice in a rude manner, which hurt Darakuku's feelings. As a result, Darakuku retaliated by hurting the mouse. The following excerpt proves this.

> *"From then on, the mouse collected the debt every day; if not by himself, then by sending his children. However, Darakuku was unable to pay*, because the rice that was to be paid to was not available. *One day, the mouse came again, and this time he seemed angry with Darakuku. "You are a liar," accused the mouse. "Where is the rice you promised? If you dare to borrow, you must dare to pay it back," the mouse continued angrily.*
>
> *Meanwhile, Darakuku dropped his comb under the house. The mouse continued to scold Darakuku. "Alright, I will pay my debt today," said Darakuku. "But first, please help me pick up my comb that fell under my house!" Darakuku added.*
>
> *"Alright," replied the mouse, "as long as you pay your debt." The mouse immediately went under the house to retrieve the comb. However, when the mouse was under the house, Darakuku poured hot water on him. As a result, his entire body turned red because all his fur fell out. Immediately after that, the mouse ran back to his house.*

The next disaster befell Tikus and his friends because they had angered a number of animals who had been invited to recite the Koran at his house. The recitation continued until late at night, but Tikus had not yet served any food. This angered the guests. As a result, the Katatupih bird and the Dog intended to harm Tikus and his friends. The following excerpt shows this.

> *"The recitation ceremony began immediately after all the guests arrived. The voices were very loud. Each one spoke in turn.*
>
> *By midnight, the mouse still hadn't served the meal. Then, the Katatupih bird whispered to the others, saying, 'If I say this, immediately extinguish the lamps!'*
>
> *The Dog immediately whispered, 'When I shout, close all the doors and windows!' Everyone agreed.*
>
> *After the mice were engrossed in their songs, suddenly the Katatupih gave the signal, and the dog shouted as loudly as he could. The lights were extinguished, and the windows and doors were locked tightly. Soon after, all the guests rushed to catch the mice. The mice became the guests' meal.*

The theme of this fable is reflected in the two quotations above. The content of the excerpt shows that the theme of this fable is that annoying others can harm oneself. The suffering and disaster experienced by the mice were caused by other animals feeling annoyed by the mice's actions. It was because of this annoyance that the other animals did evil things that caused suffering and disaster to the mice themselves.

The moral value contained in this theme is that one should not do anything that annoys others because it can cause suffering and disaster to oneself. The mice would not have suffered and been destroyed if they had not annoyed the other animals.

The Theme and Moral Values of the Fable *of Bingkarungan*

This fable tells the story of an animal, a lizard who was not grateful for what he had. The lizard had three wives, namely Shrimp, Gondang, and Frog. Even so, he was not happy at home. The devotion and loyalty of his wives were always wasted. He continued to seek pleasure outside. As a result, all three of his wives committed suicide. The following quote illustrates this.

> *"Because of the lizard's treatment, one day the frog said, 'You're right, Julak. You rarely come home. Look at the rice being wasted. We have no children. So there's no one to eat it. If only we could be sure that you*

wouldn't ask us to prepare food, then it wouldn't be wasted like this. We wouldn't have to prepare anything anymore.'"

…

Let's leave this house or ask the Lizard for a divorce.

"Oh, that's impossible because he'll definitely come looking for us wherever we go," said the other.

"No!" said Udang. "Let's jump into the vegetable pot. We'll get into the pot, and that'll be the end of it."

"Alright, I agree," said the Gondang.

"I'll follow what my brother says," said the Frog. "If that's the case, I'll go first," said the Shrimp again.

After saying that, the shrimp jumped into the boiling pot of vegetables. Then the frog followed, and lastly the toad jumped into the pot.

By jumping into the pot filled with boiling vegetables, the three wives of the Lizard died. Thus, the Lizard, who once had many wives, ended up with none. All his wives committed suicide because they were never given any attention. From this story, we can conclude that the theme of this fable is that something we possess can be ruined, even destroyed, if it is not maintained or given attention. In this story, it is shown that the deaths (suicides) of the three wives of the lizard were because they were neglected. The wives, who were all loyal, eventually had to leave the lizard forever.

The moral lesson that can be drawn from this theme is to take care of or pay attention to everything we have so that it remains good and does not disappear from our lives. If not, everything we have can become damaged, which in turn will inevitably lead to its destruction.

The Theme and Moral Values of the Fable of *the Red Comb*

This fable tells the origin of the red crest on the rooster's head. At first, the red crest on the rooster's head was a flower stolen from a tree or a red flower. This was known by the god. Eventually, the god ordered the rooster to return the flower on his head and ask for forgiveness from the red flower tree. At the end of the story, it is depicted that the Rooster realized his mistake, returned the flower, and asked for forgiveness from the red flower tree. Based on his realization, the God finally gave the red crest to the Rooster.

From the story, we can conclude that the theme of this fable is that God will forgive any mistake as long as we repent. Therefore, the moral value that can be taken from this theme is that if we sin, we should repent, because by repenting, God will forgive all our sins or mistakes. In this fable, it is clearly shown that the Rooster received a reward (in this case, forgiveness) in the form of a red crest because he had repented for all his mistakes.

The Theme and Moral Values of the Fable of *the Cat and the Mouse*

This fable tells the story of a peace agreement made by a Cat and a Mouse who had been at odds for a long time. To resolve their disagreement, the two animals wrote a treaty and buried it under a tree. One day, the mouse was searching for food by digging in the ground where the agreement was buried. As a result, the agreement was bitten and torn. The cat discovered this and became very angry, attacking the mouse. From the story, it can be concluded that the theme of this fable is that breaking an agreement made together can harm oneself. The moral value that can be taken from this theme is that we should not break agreements we make, as this will cause harm to ourselves. In the fable, it is shown that the peace made by the Cat and the Mouse was destroyed by the Mouse itself because the agreement made together was broken by the Mouse.

Theme and Moral Values of the Fable *of Urang Sugih and the Crocodile*

This fable tells of a series of misfortunes that befall a married couple. Wherever they go, they are always struck by misfortune. The following excerpt illustrates this.

"The crocodile had finished setting his traps in their respective places. When the traps were ready, the couple arrived. They looked very tired. Therefore, they hurried to rest. However, misfortune began to befall them. As they were climbing the stairs, suddenly they were bitten by a snake. This terrified them, so they quickly

*tried to enter the house. When they opened the door, they were immediately stung by a bee. As they were about to boil water, a rotten egg exploded and hit their eyes. As a result, their eyes became painfully inflamed. They then wanted to lie down. However, as they were about to lie down on the bed, they were immediately stung by a scorpion. Feeling the pain, they ran frantically to the living room. They wanted to save themselves, but ended up stepping on feces. Finally, the couple went to the river to clean themselves. However, before their bodies were clean, they were attacked by a crocod*ile.

The quote above shows that the theme of this fable is that misfortune can happen anywhere. This is demonstrated by the misfortune that always befalls the couple wherever they go. The moral value that can be taken from this theme is that wherever we are, we must always be careful and alert because misfortune can happen anywhere.

The Theme and Moral Values of the Fable of *the Clever Pilanduk*

This fable tells the story of a Pilanduk who repeatedly manages to avoid dangers that threaten his safety. All these dangers are avoided thanks to his cleverness.

There are three dangers: the first when he enters the tiger's territory, the second when he about to be attacked by a bear, and third, when the tiger and bear became angry because they both felt they had been tricked. However, thanks to his wit and cleverness, all threats were avoided. Thus, it can be concluded that the theme of this fable is that wit and cleverness are essential for overcoming problems or threats. This theme is reflected in the following excerpt.

He was very panicked when faced with the tiger's threat. Tigers are animals with sharp claws and are very skilled at pouncing. However, in the midst of his panic, Pilanduk came up with a plan. Finally, he said, "Hey, king of the forest. Do you know why I dare to come before you?" said Pilanduk. "I have been sent here by the Bear to deliver a message." "What is the message?" asked the tiger.

Pilanduk whispered, "The Bear is challenging you to a fight because he feels he is the ruler of this forest. And if you dare not accept this challenge, I will not let you eat me."

Upon hearing the whisper, the tiger became furious and ordered Pilanduk to leave. Pilanduk thought to himself, "How foolish the king of the jungle is, that toothless tiger."

After that, the squirrel quickly went back to its nest. However, to its surprise, there stood a bear ready to pounce on it. At that moment, the squirrel said, "Wait, bear, don't eat me yet. If you eat me, I won't be able to deliver the tiger's message."

After hearing those words, the bear became curious to know the tiger's message. Finally, Pilanduk said, "You have been challenged by the tiger to fight." After that, the bear and the tiger searched for each other.

At a certain place, they finally found Pilanduk. He was eating grass with a goat. The arrival of the Bear and the Tiger had been noticed by him. At that moment, coincidentally, the goat beside him was coughing because it had eaten thorny grass. Seeing this, Pilanduk, the " ," said loudly, "Hey, Goat, eating grass like that and coughing. You know, even though my body is small, I can swallow the big Tiger and Bear. If they were in front of me now, I would have eaten them already." After hearing Pilanduk's words, the Tiger and Bear ran away in fear. Finally, Pilanduk smiled again because he had escaped danger once more.

The moral value contained in this fable is that to overcome all the problems we face, we need reason. Because with reason, we can determine the appropriate solution. In this fable, it has been shown that Pilanduk was able to avoid all the dangers that threatened him because he used his reason. If he hadn't, it's possible that he would have been killed by the tiger.

The Theme and Moral Values of *Pilanduk Becoming King*

This fable tells the story of the selection of a king for the animal kingdom. The selection was carried out democratically. The king was not chosen arbitrarily, but had to be selected based on his ability to find and bring the Wolf to the meeting place, as well as his ability to answer riddles.

After going through the selection process, it was Pilanduk who was able to meet the requirements. Therefore, he was appointed as the king of the animal kingdom. Thus, the theme of this fable is that a king or leader is chosen from among those who have abilities. The moral value implied is that one

should not choose a leader based solely on personal preference, as this does not guarantee that the leader will be able to perform their duties well.

The Theme and Moral Values of the Fable of *Pilanduk vs. Kalimbuai*

This fable tells the story of Pilanduk, who lost a race against a snail. Usually, Pilanduk always wins when there is a race or a riddle contest. This made Pilanduk always arrogant about his abilities. However, in this race, Pilanduk lost because he was tricked by a group of snails. Usually, with its cleverness, the squirrel would be the one to trick other animals. This time, however, it was the squirrel that was tricked. Thus, the theme of this fable is that no matter how clever a creature or person is, they still have limitations. No creature in the world is always "super" in everything.

The moral lesson that can be drawn from this theme is not to be arrogant or proud because of one's advantages, as all advantages have their limits. In this fable, the hedgehog acts arrogant or proud when he is about to race with the snails. He acts this way because he thinks he is great. He is always clever in every competition. However, this time he has met his match. He does not realize that he has been tricked by the snails.

The Theme and Moral Values of the Fable "*Balamu Balamudang Malam"*

This fable tells the story of the defeat of the squirrel by the dragonfly. The two animals planned to hold a nighttime race. To prepare for the race, the squirrel cheated. Before the race began, the squirrel slept all day without the dragonfly knowing. With this plan, the squirrel was certain he would win the race. However, in reality, after the competition took place, it was the pilanduk who lost. The pilanduk wanted to deceive the dragonfly, but it was actually himself who lost out. The pilanduk thought the dragonfly was not sleeping because its eyes were still open. He did not know that that was the shape of the dragonfly's eyes. Even when sleeping, its eyes never appear closed.

This reality shows that the theme of this fable is that cheating is a bad deed. The theme contains the moral value of not cheating in anything, including in a race, because it is an unpraiseworthy act. In the fable, the turtle's cheating was punished by his own foolishness. He misjudged the dragonfly's eyes. In the end, he lost the all-night race.

The theme and moral values represented in the Banjar fable collection address various aspects of life. This demonstrates that fables indeed serve specific functions for their society, aligning with the community in addressing life's challenges and issues. Thus, the structure of themes and moral values in fables is inseparable from the social-cultural aspects and natural landscape of the supporting community (Musriana et al., 2024).

If you look closely, the themes and moral values in Banjar fables revolve around issues of life that arise from interactions between humans and animals, with their surroundings, or with the Creator. In fables, the interacting characters are animals. However, these are merely symbols of human beings. Therefore, the structure of the themes and moral values contained within them remain closely connected to the human society that created the stories (Amelia et al., 2025).

This phenomenon is also clearly evident in Banjar animal fables. The structure of their themes and moral values is inseparable from the socio-cultural aspects and natural landscape of their society. There are a number of Banjar fables whose thematic structure and moral values are the same as those found in other regions. Fables featuring the character Kancil (pilanduk) have the same thematic structure and moral values as pilanduk fables in other regions. Such fables are usually borrowed or influenced by other regions. Even so, their thematic structure and moral values remain related to the socio-cultural aspects and natural landscape of the Banjar community (Putro et al., 2024).

The findings of this study are in line with the assumptions and opinions of experts such as Zipes (2006), who states that the moral function in fables is not only to shape individual behavior but also to

encourage critical thinking about social conditions. Furthermore, **Piatti-Farnell** (2017) states that the moral function in fables is often related to the teaching of important social and ethical values. Piatti-Farnell argues that fables not only explicitly teach moral values but also teach how to recognize conflicts and how to resolve them in a wise and moral manner. Fables serve as tools to help individuals understand values such as courage, honesty, and a sense of responsibility toward others.

In the Banjar fable tradition, these functions are inseparable from the function of fables to respond to the challenges of the times and the socio-cultural landscape of the Banjar people. Related to this, Sapawuryandari (2023) argues that literature plays a significant role in shaping and disseminating social, cultural, and ecological values in society. One of the primary functions of literature is as an effective means of communication to convey important messages, particularly regarding the relationship between humans and the natural environment. Through literary works, various groups within society can express their views, whether dominant or marginalized. For Bakhtin, literature is a space where social and cultural ideas meet and interact (Ihsan et al., 2024).

3. CONCLUSION

The Banjar community has a diverse oral literary tradition, one of which is fables. Fables are a type of oral literature that differs from other types of oral literature. Fables are a type of oral literature whose content is considered to be completely untrue by those who tell the story, and fables are not bound by time or place. Typically, fables are told primarily for entertainment, although they often depict truths, contain moral lessons, or may even contain satire (Amanda et al., 2024).

In this study, diverse themes and moral values were found in Banjar fables. This aligns with the function of these fables for their community in addressing various life issues. Therefore, the themes and moral values contained in these fables revolve around problems arising from interactions between humans or animals with one another, with their environment, or with the Creator. The themes and moral values described in this study are the Banjar community's responses to the problems and dynamics of their lives, such as betrayal, dishonesty, continuous misfortune, arrogance, treachery, carelessness, sin, or others. From a socio-cultural and natural landscape perspective, the themes and moral values found in these fables are closely related to the socio-cultural aspects and natural landscape of the Banjar community. This study also has limitations regarding the availability of fables. Considering that fables in Banjar are still difficult to separate and have not been compiled into books.

The research findings are worthy of further action by utilizing them to develop textbooks for schools. Language, social studies, or related subjects can utilize these findings as learning resources in schools. In addition to serving as a means of preserving old literary heritage, their use in education can prevent the erosion of the culture of future generations from the onslaught of foreign cultures that often damage national culture. Furthermore, the research findings should be further explored through studies on the representation of themes and moral values in other genres of traditional literature, such as myths, legends, or Banjar sagas, which have not yet received significant attention for analysis.

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