

Actantial and Functional Model in *Perempuan Yang Menangis Kepada Bulan Hitam*: Greimas' Narratology

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Abstract

This study applies qualitative methods in the process of data collection and analysis. This study aims to analyze the story's structure in Dian Purnomo's novel, *Perempuan Yang Menangis Kepada Bulan Hitam*, using Greimas' narratological perspective. Greimas divides two structural models of narratology in his theory. The two models are the actantial model and the functional model. Two narratological models from Greimas aim to reveal the story's structure, showing the connection between women who are subject actants to get objects, so that the actors who become objects can show their strength as women. The study results show Magi Diela as an actant who becomes the Subject to fight for her freedom as a woman who becomes the Object. Magi Diela, as an actant charged with the task of being a subject, can show her power over her mind and body as a woman and leave the cultural discrimination she has received through Kawin Tangkap Culture. Although this is not an easy process, Magi Diela, as a subject, has to go through various situations that are exhausting both physically and psychologically. The results of the second model, namely the functional model, show three stages in which Magi must struggle as an actant burdened as a subject in the actantial model to get an object. The three stages of the functional structure model that Magie went through proved that she had managed to overcome her difficulties and misfortunes as a woman who lived in restraint and demonstrated the freedom she strived for.

1. Introduction

Literature is often a depiction of societal realities. As a structure heavily influenced by human life's complexities, literature represents social issues derived from everyday experiences. One of the frequently discussed concerns in literary works involves issues related to women. Accordingly, the themes raised often revolve around gender-based violence, including rape, murder, abuse, and other forms of crime that women commonly experience. These issues can be analyzed through various critical approaches, each aligned with the phenomena presented in the literary texts. Cultural phenomena that exist in society frequently become sources of inspiration for literary creation. In other words, literature represents an attempt to portray human life's social and cultural mechanisms (Ratna, 2003, p. 30). Human life is inherently inseparable from the process of cultural formation. In this context, patriarchy as a cultural system emphasizes the dominance and superiority of men in social structures. The ideology of male dominance—which positions men above women—has become widely accepted and normalized. Thus, discussions about women in social realities remain perpetually relevant and complex.

Women are often portrayed in society as weak beings, symbolized through the traditional roles of "*macak*" (to beautify), "*masak*" (to cook), and "*manak*" (to bear children). These stereotypes persist as common narratives in public discourse. Consequently, women must struggle to claim their rights and dismantle the societal labels imposed upon them. This struggle for equality and identity represents an effort to redefine women's position in broader societal perspectives.

The novel analyzed in this study was written by Dian Purnomo, a female Indonesian author born in Salatiga on July 19, 1976. Dian began writing in high school and has worked as a radio broadcaster at Prambors and Female Radio. Over her career, she has produced nine novels and several short story anthologies. Her literary process has been shaped by her study of criminology, particularly child and women protection, which led her to reflect more deeply on the themes she writes about. Her interest in women's issues has been nurtured through her involvement in prison and rehabilitation centers, her teaching experience at the University of Indonesia, and her engagement with various non-profit organizations focusing on gender, children, and migrant rights (Purnomo, 2012).

Some of her notable works include *Kita dan Rindu*, *Ketika Ibu Melupakanku*, *Rahasia Hati*, *Cerita Hati*, *Dua Sisi Bintang*, *Jangan Bilang Siapa-siapa*, *Angel of Mine*, and *Andini*. At one point, Dian took a creative hiatus. It took six years for her to realign her thematic focus. Eventually, she published *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam*, which marked a turning point in her writing as she concentrated more

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directly on women's issues. The novel was inspired by a six-week residency in Sumba funded by the Indonesian Writer Residency Grant in 2019.

In Sumba, she discovered the controversial tradition of *kawin tangkap* ("capture marriage"), which significantly disadvantages women. The novel highlights this practice as a form of cultural resistance. Traditionally, *kawin tangkap* is a marriage custom involving the symbolic "abduction" of a woman, supposedly with mutual agreement. However, according to Alfred Samani, such rituals must be consensual and approved by the woman's family (Marapu). If consent is not granted, the family signals rejection through specific cultural markers, ensuring that coercion is avoided (Tuasikal, 2020).

Published by PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama on January 13, 2021, the novel spans 324 pages. The protagonist, Magi Diela, is a non-civil servant employee at the Agriculture Department in Sumba. The story begins with her abduction while on duty. A man approaches her while she rides a motorbike, and suddenly, a pickup truck ambushes her. She is forcibly dragged into the vehicle; caught in a cultural trap she had hoped to avoid. She becomes a victim of the *kawin tangkap* tradition—where women are abducted and raped by men seeking marriage without consent. This incident symbolizes how cultural practices can be distorted and weaponized against women. The tradition, designed initially with mutual respect, has lost its essence and now reflects patriarchal violence. The story demonstrates how women's safety and autonomy continue to be threatened by misappropriated traditions that fail to protect them.

To uncover the unjust treatment experienced by the protagonist in the narrative, this study adopts Greimas's narrative theory as an analytical framework. Greimas's narratology prioritizes action over character, conceptualizing the "subject" not as a fixed individual, but as a semiotic construct developed through a sequence of actions—what he refers to as an actant. In this model, narrative meaning emerges through the dynamic interactions among actants (Ratna, 2004, p. 138). Greimas's structuralist perspective provides a systematic framework in which the roles and relationships of characters shape the reader's understanding of the text (Ratna, 2009, pp. 128, 138).

According to Greimas (1988), an actant does not need to be a human entity; it can be an object, concept, or abstract idea. Toska (2011) supports this view, arguing that actants can be either anthropomorphic or non-anthropomorphic, ranging from inanimate objects to intangible values such as courage, freedom, or hope. This perspective is further supported by Hawkes (1997) and Hobyane (2015), who emphasize that characters are not limited to a single actantial role and may shift between roles throughout the narrative. Ontologically, actants may include (1) anthropomorphic entities such as humans, animals, or personified objects; (2) tangible or inanimate objects like swords or vessels; and (3) abstract concepts or emotions, including justice, fear, or love. Actants may also function individually or collectively. For instance, society can act as a singular narrative agent.

Greimas's narratology introduces two principal analytical models: the actantial and functional models. Both are concerned with mapping the roles and transformations of characters within a narrative. These models are foundational for analyzing how characters function as agents who drive the plot forward and construct meaning within the narrative structure (Suwondo, 2011, p. 83). That is why the use of Greimas's narrative framework in this research is crucial, not only to reveal the story's critique of misleading customs and oppressive traditions but also to illuminate how the protagonist resists and ultimately liberates herself from a culture that threatens her autonomy, enabling her to stand as a free and self-determined woman.

2. Method

This research uses a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research focuses on interpretive analysis rather than quantitative methods, which typically produce numerical or statistical data. According to Kirk and Miller, as cited in Moleong (2007), qualitative research is an investigative approach that concerns individuals and their interactions. Within the framework of qualitative methodology, the research process tends to emphasize descriptive-analytical inquiry, whereas process and meaning (from the Subject's perspective) are central to qualitative investigations (Rahmadi, 2011; Rifa'i, 2021; Surakhmat, 1986). Therefore, it can be concluded that qualitative research prioritizes data description rather than numerical representation.

The data were obtained through a close reading of a novel as a primary source. The text analyzed, *Perempuan Yang Menangis Kepada Bulan Hitam*, was written by Dian Purnomo. Bungin (2008, p. 68) asserts that case study research aims to describe and summarize various conditions, situations, or social phenomena observed within a particular society, to bring these realities to the surface as distinctive features, characteristics, models, symbols, or representations of specific circumstances or phenomena. Related to Bungin's opinion, data on this research were collected by systematically recording the outcomes of close readings and subsequently categorizing them based on the formulated research problems.

The research problem in this study centers on how the protagonist, Magi, navigates the complex reality of kawin tangkap (bride abduction), which entraps her as a victim of sexual violence perpetrated by her husband. This inquiry critically examines Magi's position as both a cultural subject and a victim, focusing on the gendered violence embedded within traditional practices. Through applying Greimas's actantial model, the study seeks to uncover the stages of Magi's struggle and analyze how her resistance unfolds. Ultimately, the research aims to address how Magi's journey represents a fight for bodily autonomy and dignity as a woman, thereby challenging oppressive cultural norms that legitimize gender-based violence under the guise of custom.

3. Result and Discussion

The analysis of the novel *Perempuan Yang Menangis Kepada Bulan Hitam* revealed several findings based on Greimas's narrative theory. These findings are categorized into two main components. The first pertains to Greimas's functional model, which is divided into three stages. The table presents and discusses these stages, and the accompanying explanation is below. The second component involves the actantial model, which consists of six elements, as outlined in Table 2. This section also includes a detailed description of how the novel portrays the protagonist Magi's journey, as she resists the discriminatory customs and traditions imposed upon her as a woman. Through this framework, the novel's narrative structure is examined to highlight the protagonist's struggle against cultural oppression.

1. Greimas' Functional Model

Table 1. Greimas's Functional Model

First Stage	Second Stage Transformation			Third Stage
The abduction of Magi Diela by Leba Ali to make her his wife	In an attempt to resist a forced marriage arranged with Leba Ali, Magi chose to flee from her home.	Magi akhirnya menikah dengan Leba Ali karena adat	Despite her initial resistance, Magi eventually entered into marriage with Leba Ali due to prevailing customary traditions.	As a result of Magi Diela's formal complaint regarding acts of violence and abuse, Leba Ali was sentenced, and Magi regained her freedom and returned home, liberated from customary constraints.

The first part illustrates the initial situation and the introduction of the central conflict experienced by the protagonist in *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam*. This is revealed through the abduction of Magi.

"Magi meronta, mencoba melepaskan diri, memukul ke segala arah, menendang, berteriak, menggigit apapun yang bisa dijangkau oleh mulutnya. Namun, nihil. Tenaga seorang perempuan mungil yang sedang dalam keadaan terkejut karena diberhentikan dalam perjalanan tidak sebanding dengan lima laki-laki muda yang berbekal parang di pinggang kiri mereka. Namun, Magi tidak berhenti meronta, sampai dia direbahkan secara paksa di lantai pickup dengan semua laki-laki memegangnya, lalu pintu belakang bak itu ditutup dan pickup melaju" (41)

"Magi struggled, tried to break free, punched in all directions, kicked, screamed, and bit anything within her reach. But it was in vain. The strength of a petite woman, startled by the sudden halt in her journey, was no match for five young men armed with machetes. But Magi did not stop resisting until she was forcibly laid down on the truck bed, all the men holding her down, then the back door was shut, and the pickup drove off." (p. 41)

This passage portrays the kidnapping of Magi Diela, the novel's main character. Living in Sumba, Magi never imagined she would become a victim of violence and abuse under the pretext of love enforced through the "Kawin Tangkap" custom. The planned abduction shows how culture can be manipulated for coercion. The "Kawin Tangkap" tradition in Sumba traditionally involves the symbolic 'capture' of a bride, but this act is supposed to involve mutual consent. In Magi's case, it was pure violence masked by tradition, transforming her into an object of male desire—a role Greimas emphasizes in his depiction of the initial narrative stage.

"Tidak ada yang berpikir kalau hari itu Magi akan kabur dari rumah. Hari ini adalah seminggu persis sebelum rencana pernikahannya dilaksanakan. Magi merasa bahwa jika tidak pergi

sekarang, maka waktunya sudah benar-benar habis. Menunda pergi berarti menyerah masuk ke kandang macan" (117-118)

"No one suspected Magi would run away from home that day. It was exactly one week before the planned wedding. Magi felt that if she didn't leave now, her time would be up. To delay meant surrendering to the lion's den." (pp. 117–118)

This excerpt represents the beginning of the transformation stage in Greimas' model. After suffering violence and rape, Magi is pressured by her community and even her own family to marry her abuser. The initial stage of transformation here indicates when the Subject (Magi) is presented with a painful dilemma. Choosing to flee with the help of friends, she defies societal and familial expectations. Her flight is not merely an escape but a declaration of resistance to the oppressive norms disguised as custom. This decision becomes the foundation for further conflict and transformation in the narrative.

"Setelah serah terima selesai pengantin laki-laki diizinkan memasuki kamar perempuan dan menjemput pengantinnya. Di dalam kamar, Magi yang sepanjang jalannya adat mendengarkan dari dalam dengan gusar, berusaha bersikap tenang. Tara dan Ina Rade yang menemani Magi ikut merasakan kegusarannya tetapi tak tahu harus berkata apa. Magi memakai kemeja hitam dan sarung yang seragam dengan kain yang dipakai Leba Ali, tenun merah tua bermotif rumah Sumba untuk kain, dan motif mamuli untuk sarung dan selendang. Setelah menarik napas dengan panjang, dia keluar dari kamar bersama Leba Ali dengan senyuman palsu terbaiknya" (265-266)
"After the handover ceremony, the groom was permitted to enter the bride's room and retrieve her. Inside, Magi sat anxiously with Tara and Ina Rade. Though they tried to remain composed, all of them were visibly uneasy. Magi wore a matching outfit with Leba Ali—a red woven sarong with traditional Sumba motifs. Taking a deep breath, she exited the room with the best fake smile she could muster." (pp. 265–266)

The main conflict intensifies when Magi returns home after learning her father is seriously ill. Her father refuses medical care unless Magi agrees to marry, and public pressure mounts around her. Thus begins the primary test (tahap ujian utama) in Greimas' model. Although Magi initially resisted the idea of marrying her abuser, she is cornered by emotional and cultural obligations. She agrees to marry Leba Ali, not from love, but as a strategic move to expose him. During the marriage, she resists sexual advances, fakes menstruation, and patiently plans her revenge. Her abuse escalates to physical violence, but she uses the bruises and wounds as concrete evidence to report him. This stage reflects how Magi embodies the Subject who actively fights to reach her goal (Object): freedom and justice.

"Butuh waktu berbulan-bulan, sampai akhirnya hakim menjatuhkan Leba Ali hukuman penjara tujuh tahun empat bulan, dengan denda Rp 500.000.000 atau subsider tiga bulan. Magi tidak terlalu puas dengan hasilnya karena jauh di bawah tuntutan jaksa. Meski begitu, Leba Ali masuk penjara lebih baik dibandingkan membiarkannya bebas begitu saja..." (304)

"It took months before the judge sentenced Leba Ali to seven years and four months in prison, plus a fine of 500 million rupiah or a three-month substitute sentence. Magi weren't fully satisfied—it was far less than the prosecutor demanded. Still, seeing him imprisoned was better than seeing him walk free..." (p. 304)

This quote marks the stage of triumph or achievement in Greimas's narrative model. Magi, now a battered but unbroken woman, wins her battle. After enduring years of suffering, she finally sees justice. Her pain becomes evidence, and her strategy becomes empowerment. This section of the narrative highlights how functional narrative stages help structure critical moments of transformation in literature, especially regarding gender oppression.

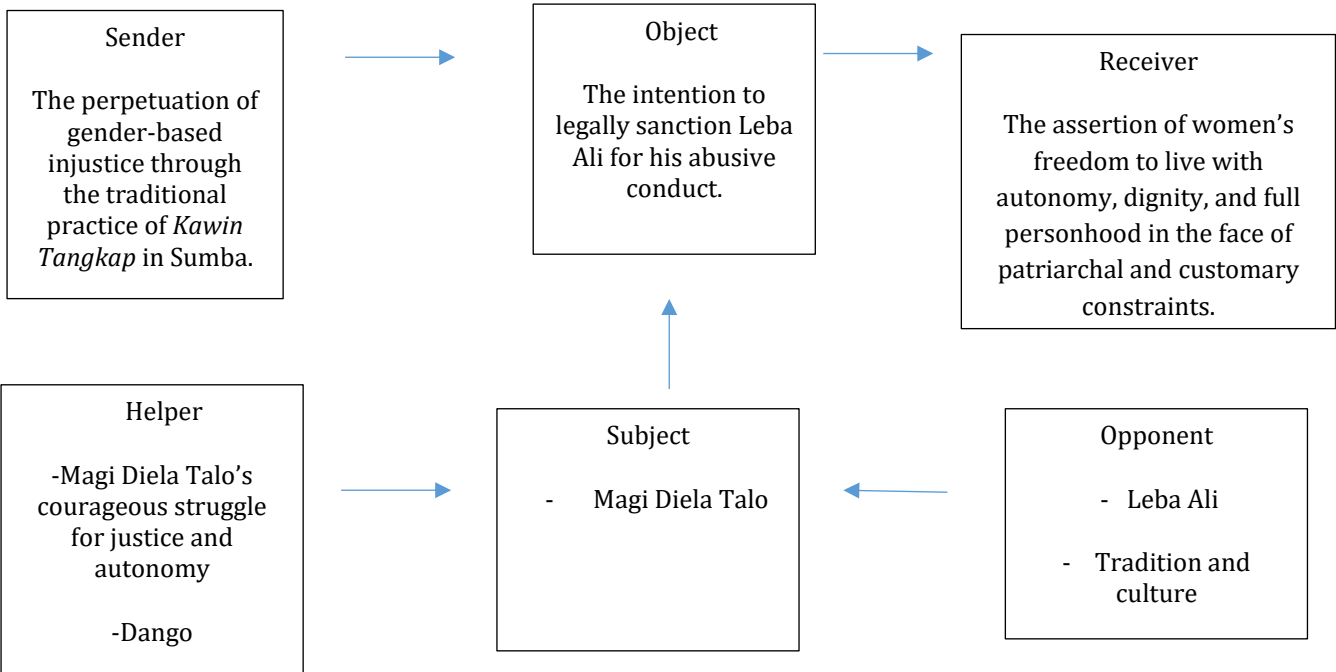
"Magi memilih tidak mendengarkan, dia tahu jalur yang dipilihnya akan sepi. Mungkin beberapa bertepuk tangan dan berterima kasih, tapi semua itu akan dilakukan dalam diam. Saat ini mendapati Leba Ali meringkuk di dalam penjara saja sudah cukup buatnya. Ini adalah pesan yang ingin Magi sampaikan kepada setiap orang yang ingin merampas hak orang lain" (308-309)

"Magi chose not to listen. She knew the path she had chosen would be lonely. Perhaps a few would clap or thank her, but all in silence. For now, just seeing Leba Ali curled up in a prison cell was enough. This was the message she wanted to send to anyone thinking of stealing someone else's rights." (pp. 308–309)

Greimas' final functional stage, the ending situation, is represented here. The narrative closes with Magi regaining autonomy. She may face social backlash and alienation in her traditional community, but that no longer matters. In her words, she had "died" twice once during the abduction and once on her wedding night. Now, by holding her abuser accountable, she resurrects as a new woman, a free subject. Her journey illustrates that no one has the right to take away a woman's freedom, body, or voice. Through Magi, the novel powerfully demonstrates that women, too, hold strength and sovereignty equal to men.

2. The Actantial Model of Greimas

Table 2. Greimas's Actantial Model



In the actantial model schema, six actants are interconnected throughout the development of a narrative. In the novel *Perempuan yang Menangis Kepada Bulan Hitam* by Dian Purnomo, the Sender (actant) is not represented by a person or a living being, but rather by a condition; specifically, the injustice experienced by women as a consequence of the customary practice of kawin tangkap (forced marriage through abduction) in Sumba, as experienced by the protagonist, Magi Diela Talo. This injustice becomes the driving force that compels Magi to seek justice, no longer wishing to be discriminated against. It is this motivation that underlies her determination to imprison Leba Ali, the man responsible for her suffering.

Having undergone the three phases of the functional model proposed by Greimas, Magi stands as the Subject, whose tragic past becomes the reason behind her pursuit of a goal. The Object she seeks is freedom and sovereignty over her own life, freedom from the trauma of abduction and sexual violence, and from being forced into marriage under oppressive customary norms. Her desire to punish the perpetrator is the goal she must obtain as a Subject.

The arrest and imprisonment of Leba Ali can thus be seen as the Object of Magi's quest, as her motivation is to hold him accountable after four years of tirelessly building networks with NGOs and police officers who support women's rights. However, the path was far from easy; Leba Ali held connections with influential individuals capable of obstructing Magi's police reports. He walked free despite evidence of abduction and rape committed under the guise of cultural tradition.

Thus, the Opponent in this actantial model is the cultural and patriarchal system that obstructs the Subject (Magi) from attaining the Object. This Opponent is personified by Leba Ali and the systems that protect him. Meanwhile, the Helper is Magi's determination, perseverance, and unwavering commitment to justice even amidst institutional resistance. Her inner strength, her alliances with activists, and her willingness to face societal stigma all support her in completing her mission.

In this actantial structure, Leba Ali is the Opponent, and the Receiver is the liberated life that Magi wishes to reclaim, a life free from fear, shame, and cultural oppression. Through this framework, the novel presents six key actants that together construct the storyline, illustrating the systemic subordination of women under patriarchal ideologies that deem men to be superior to women.

4. Conclusion

The structure of a story is shaped by its most fundamental elements—the interrelation of actants within the narrative. The interaction between these actants drives the development of the plot. Hence, the

stages of this interaction, from introduction and conflict to resolution, are essential to the flow of a literary work.

In this study, the actantial and functional models proposed by A.J. Greimas demonstrate how women are portrayed in society, specifically highlighting their subordinate status and restrictions. The relationships among actants reveal a social structure where women are subjected to marginalization, leading to abuse and violence.

The functional model presents the journey of the Subject in the novel *Perempuan Yang Menangis Kepada Bulan Hitam*, who overcomes numerous challenges to achieve her goal. The narrative underscores that men and women are equal beings, each entitled to live with dignity and autonomy.

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