

# The Function of Water in Sundanese Tales

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**Abstract**—This research aimed to describe the comparison of the function of water within Sundanese tales and the hypnogram of Sundanese tales which mentions water elements. The method used in this research was an analysis descriptive method with the structural and intertextual approach. This study was literature-based research which includes 17 Sundanese tales mentioning water elements. From the analysis, the functions of water in the tales are as a cure for diseases, as the origin of a place name, as a borderline mark, as the causes of a disaster, as daily necessities, and as a forbidden item. The tales that were analyzed had a complete structure and functions of water in each tale containing differences and similarities. The hypnogram of water elements within the tales originates from religious books, customs and culture of the people, and the preceding tales.

**Keywords:** *comparative literature, function of water, Sundanese tales*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Literature works are representatives of people's daily life. Reeves (as cited in Koswara, 2013, p. 7) explains the essence of literature as a fact of life. This statement was based on the existence of literary works that began from the thoughts of an author in daily life that happens within a specific period of time. Daily life events depicted in the literature works could be about nature or character, culture, customs, tradition, or other problems experienced by the people.

One of the literary works which is closely related to the people is the tale. Tale is one of the forms of old literature which derived and spread verbally between people. According to Iskandarwassid (2017, p. 48), tales is an old literature in the form of prose. Sometimes there is a part of it that being sung (*dikawihkan*) and generally they are short. Tales are also considered as folktales in the form of old prose which considered never really happened.

Tales are never considered really happened as it contains illogical elements, such as animals that could speak like human, boats that turns into a mount, objects with magical power, and many more. Even though it is not considered logical, basically tales contains moral values and messages to teach people how to live their life.

Beside aforementioned points, tales also tell stories about nature and environments around people, such as tales about water, mountains, forest, et cetera as people from old times give high respects toward their surrounding nature. Those people considered natural elements such as water, mountain, and forest as something that deserve to be respected, or even sacred. It happened because those people believe that nature is a gift from the Deities which must be safely guarded and wisely used. They believe if anyone destroys the nature, it will cause such detrimental disasters.

One of natural elements which become important element within daily life is water. The element of water mentioned within tales have various functions, based on its importance of daily life. For example, for basic necessities (drinking, bathing, etc.), or to set as the origin of a place's name. The example for the latter is depicted in a tale titled Ngaran Cijengkol, where water functioned as the background as to why a place is named as Cijengkol.

Element of water within tales is also depicted as having magical power, such as in a tale titled Sasakala Maribaya. In the tale, the water used by the character to bath could cure sickness. Even in daily life, people often use water as a healing media by *dijampe* (praying at a portion of water before drinking it or washing it on the ailing body part) or by bathing in a sacred place. It implicitly proves that water is one of elements that bring blessings.

Besides curing, the existence of water could also be the cause of detrimental disaster. In tales, existence of water that became disaster usually as the form of retaliation for dishonorable behavior of a character. It became the base of belief between people that if they do not keep the environment safe, there will be a disaster as reprisal.

This research is aimed to compare the function of water within Sundanese tales before finding its hypogram. According to Endraswara (2014, p. 128) comparative literature is a branch of literature study which discusses relationship between one literature work with the other. Comparative literature analyzes changes, substitutions, developments, and differences between two or more literature works which includes aspects of influences, references, creative process, and basic theme. Jost Damono (as cited by Ruhaliah, 2016 p.10) categorizes studies in comparative literature to four groups: influence and analogy, movement, genre, and motives. Comparative literature not

only compares literature with another literature, but also literature with other fields.

Hutomo (in Ruhaliah, 2018 p. 324) explains the center of literature studies as follows.

1. Comparing two literary works from two countries which speaks completely different languages.
2. Comparing works from two different countries which speaks the same language, whether in the same situation or in dialect.
3. Comparing the early works of an author in their origin country with their works after they changed their citizenship.
4. Comparing the works of an author who had become the citizen of a specific country with the work of another author from another country.
5. Comparing the works of an Indonesian author in regional language and in Indonesian.
6. Comparing two literary works from two authors with Indonesian citizenship who writes in different foreign languages.
7. Comparing the literary works of an author who is a foreigner in a country with the works of an author from the country that they left.
8. The previous studies related to comparative literature has been conducted by many researchers. The difference with this research is that the object was analyzed first before the element water function is compared.

**II. METHOD**

This research used qualitative method which aimed to understand the whole event that happened on subject explained through sentences and language as well as utilizing various scientific methods (Moleong, 2015).

The method used is descriptive analysis which aimed to systematically, actually, and factually describe the facts and relationship between events in the research objects. Descriptive analysis method used to analyze Sundanese tale structure which mentions the element of water as well as the comparison of the function of the element.

Literature review is the approach used in this research. Literature works in the form of tale was used as the object. The data source for this research includes 17 titles of tales which mentions the element of water; those are “Sasakala Maribaya” (The Tale of Maribaya) (SM), “Sasakala Pangguyangan Badak Putih” (The Tale of White Rhinos) (SPBP), “Sasakala Walungan Citarum” (The Tale of Citarum River) (SWC), “Ngaran Cijengkol” (The Origin of Cijengkol) (NC), “Ngaran Cibadak-Bungur Sarang” (The Origin of Cibadak-Bungur Sarang) (NC-BS), “Ngaran Pawenang” (The Origin of Pawenang) (NP), “Cigunung Geulis” (The Beautiful of Cigunung) (CG), “Mama Lurah Sakti Ngubaran nu Kateluh” (Mama Lurah Sakti Cured the Ill) (MLS), “Putri Tangkal Jengkol” (The Princess of Jengkol Tree) (PTJ), “Monyet Ki Mandahong” (Ki Mandahong’s Monkey) (MKM), “Sasakala Situ Bagendit” (The Tale of

Bagendit Lake) (SSB), “Sasakala Kalapagenep” (The Tale of Kalapagenep) (SK), “Sasakala Leuwironggeng” (The Tale of Leuwironggeng) (SL), “Maung Kajajaden” (Magic Tiger) (MK), “Nyi Roro Kidul” (NYK), “Munding jeung Oray Totog” (The Buffalo and the Snake) (MOT), and the tale of “Bebentet” (Cricket) (B).

**III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

*A. Comparison of the Function of Water in Tales*

From 17 tales that was analyzed, some of them has the similarities in the function of water as stated in Table I.

TABLE I. ANALYSIS OF THE FUNCTION OF WATER IN SUNDANESE TALE

No	Tale Title	Function of Water in the Tale
1.	<i>Sasakala Maribaya</i>	To cure itchiness
2.	<i>Sasakala Pangguyangan Badak Putih</i>	Utilized by the people, name of a region
3.	<i>Sasakala Walungan Citarum</i>	Borderline mark, daily necessities (bathing, washing, drinking)
4.	<i>Ngaran Cijengkol</i>	The origin of the name of a region
5.	<i>Ngaran Cibadak</i>	The origin of the name of a region
6.	<i>Ngaran Pawenang</i>	The origin of the name of a region
7.	<i>Cigunung Geulis</i>	Bathing place
8.	<i>Mama Lurah Sakti Ngubaran nu Kateluh</i>	To cure witchcraft
9.	<i>Putri Tangkal Jengkol</i>	To cure stomachache
10.	<i>Monyet Ki Mandahong</i>	Bathing place
11.	<i>Sasakala Situ Bagendit</i>	Disaster/flash flood
12.	<i>Sasakala Kalapagenep</i>	Disaster/flash flood
13.	<i>Sasakala Leuwironggeng</i>	Disaster/flash flood
14.	<i>Maung Kajajaden</i>	Prohibited thing, disaster, causes human beings to turn into animals
15.	<i>Nyi Roro Kidul</i>	To cure skin disease
16.	<i>Munding jeung Oray Totog</i>	Prohibited thing, disaster, causes human beings to turn into animals
17.	<i>Bebentet</i>	Prohibited thing

From the Table I above, the element of water mentioned in a tale could be classified based on its function as explained further below.

*1. Function of Water to Cure*

In the tales of SM, MLS, and NRK, water was used to cure through bathing. The difference from the three tales was the type of water. SM used water from a lake, meanwhile in NRK the water came from the ocean. In the tale of MLS the origin of water was not described; it is only mentioned that someone had prayed to the water before. Beside to bathe, water in MLS also watered down onto black taro leaves to be used to cure the sick ones.

In the tale of PTJ, the element of water used was clear water (drinking water). Similar with MLS, water in PTJ also

have been prayed to before. The comparison of the function of water to cure in the tales is presented on TABLE II.

TABLE II. COMPARISON OF FUNCTION OF WATER TO CURE

Tale Title	Curing Water Element			
	Type	How to Use	Place/Origin	Disease
<i>Sasakala Maribaya</i>	Hot water	Bathe	Lake	Skin disease
<i>Putri Tangkal Jéngkol</i>	Drinking water	Drink	Glass/cup	Stomachache
<i>Nyi Roro Kidul</i>	Ocean water	Bathe	Ocean	Skin disease
<i>Mama Lurah Sakti Ngubaran nu Kateluh</i>	Bathing water/prayed water	Washed/bathe	Container	Penyakit kulit

## 2. Function of Water as the Origin or the Name of a Region

Element of water that become the origin of the name of region exists in the tales of SPBP, NC, NC-BS, and NP. The usage of element of water as the name of a place highly related with the function of water with the people of Sundanese. Sobarna (as cited in Maulana, 2018) explained that the term of 'water' highly related with the element of nature or events happened in a certain region.

The word 'water' then is combined with the natural element or the said event. There almost always a place using the element of water as its name throughout West Java. Beside water that become the prefix of region name, other element of water such as *rawa*, *leuwi*, *ranca*, and *balong* also used as the name of a region. As shown in Table III.

TABLE III. COMPARISON OF WATER FUNCTION AS THE ORIGIN OF REGION NAME

Tale Title	Element of Water as the Origin of Region Name		
	Type	Location	Color
<i>Sasakala Pangguyangan Badak Putih</i>	River water/water springs	Cianjur	-
<i>Ngaran Cijéngkol</i>	River water	Sukabumi	-
<i>Ngaran Cibadak-Bungur Sarang</i>	River water	Sukabumi	-
<i>Ngaran Pawenang</i>	Air Sungai	Sukabumi	-

## 3. Function of Water as the Origin or the Name of a Region

Element of water as a borderline mark exist in the tale of SWC. The type of water used originated from Citarum river. Citarum river itself functions as the borderline marker of several regions, divides a region into seven districts and two cities. Those regions include District of Bandung, District of Sumedang, District of Cianjur, District of Bogor, District of Purwakarta, District of Karawang, and District of Bekasi as well as two cities; those are City of Bandung and City of Cimahi (Kurniasih, 2002).

The usage of element of water as borderline marker had been done by people from the old times and it is still practice up until today. Such practice based on how human lives develop and grow in regions close with the source of water (Wardiani & Gunawan, 2017, p. 39). People from old times started to build settlements on the area along the river until the civilization developed to what it is today.

## 4. Function of Water which Causes Disaster

Function of water which causes disaster exists in the tales of SSB, SK, SL, MK, and MOT. The comparison of the function explained further on the following Table IV.

TABLE IV. COMPARISON OF ELEMENT OF WATER WHICH CAUSES DISASTER

Tale Title	Element of Water which Causes Disaster			
	Types	Location	Causes	Types of Disaster
<i>Sasakala Situ Bagendit</i>	River water	Garut	Reciprocation of reprehensiveness	Flood
<i>Sasakala Kalapagenep</i>	River Water	Sumedang	Natural circumstances	Flood
<i>Sasakala Leuwironggeng</i>	River water	Karawang	Natural circumstances	Flood
<i>Maung Kajajaden</i>	Lake water/lake	Panumbangan	Reciprocation of rules violation	Transformed into animal
<i>Munding jeung Oray Totog</i>	River water and <i>pancuran</i> water	-	Reciprocation of rules violation	Transformed into animal
<i>Sasakala Walungan Citarum</i>	River water	Cianjur/Citarum river	Reciprocation of rules violation	Transformed into animal

### 5. Function of Water as Daily Necessities

Function of water as daily necessities exists in the tales of SPBP, SWC, CG, and MKM. The comparison of the function is elaborated on the following Table V.

TABLE V. COMPARISON OF WATER FUNCTION AS DAILY NECESSITIES

Tale title	Element of Water as Daily Necessities		
	Types	Location	Utilization
<i>Sasakala Pangguyangan Badak Putih</i>	River water	Cianjur	Shared necessities
<i>Sasakala Walungan Citarum</i>	River water	Cianjur	To bath, to wash, to drink
<i>Cigunung Geulis</i>	River water	Sukabumi	To bath
<i>Monyet Ki Mandahong</i>	River water	Sordog, Sukabumi	To bath

### 6. Function of Water as Prohibition

Function of water as a prohibited item exists in the tales of MK, MOT and B. Prohibition in the said tales includes the prohibition for the characters to approach the

water source. The comparison of the function of water as prohibition explained further on the following Table VI.

TABLE VI. COMPARISON OF WATER FUNCTION AS PROHIBITION

Tale Title	Element of Water as Prohibition		
	Types	Prohibition	Consequences
<i>Maung Kajajaden</i>	<i>Kulah</i> /fish pool water	Bathe	Transformed into animal
<i>Munding jeung Oray Totog</i>	River water, <i>pancuran</i>	Bathe and drink	Transformed into animal
<i>Bebentet</i>	River water	Play and come in evening time	Followed by <i>jurig cai</i>

#### B. Hypogram

To research in the field of comparison, one must understand hypogram (Hutomo as cited in Rizqina, 2016, p. 171). Ratna (as cited in Rizqina, 2016, p. 171) also cited that the most important concept in intertext is hypogram. Hypogram could be in the form of expansion, convention, modification, or excerpt. Modification could be in the form of manipulation of words and sentences as well as literature elements, while excerpts are the essence of a story developed by other author.

One of the characteristics of tales is anonymous and spread orally. Hence, researching the function of water in tales' hypogram is unpredictable, due to its anonymity and oral spread. The following are hypothesis of certain stories that could be the origin of the appearance of certain elements in a tale.

- a. *Al-Qur'an chapter Shad [38]:42, Al-Anbiya [21]:76), dan Al-A'raf [7]:19.*

Function of water which hypogram originated from Al-Quran is water as a cure which told through the story of the Prophet of Ayub AS, water as disaster through the story of Prophet of Noah AS, and water as prohibition from the concept of prohibited object in the story of Prophet of Adam AS.

- b. *Exposition in the Book of Genesis, Genesis 6:14-9:29, Great Deluge: 125.*

Function of water which hypogram originated from Bible is the function of water as disaster from the story of Noah.

- c. *Philosophy of community life*

In some communities, there is a phrase that says "water is the source of life" which became the hypogram of the function of water as daily necessities. People are very depended on water for daily needs that they considered water as the source of life.

- d. *Previous Tales*

The relationships of region naming in tales have existed since the age of Greek myth, such as the naming of the passage of Hellespont (now Dardanellen, Turk). The origin of Hellespont name is from a woman named Hellen who drown when she tried to cross the passage. According to *Universal Historical Dictionary* (Crabb, 1825), Hellespont/Hellespontus origins from the word which means narrow Pontus or entrance to Pontus. Pontus is the ancient name of the regions around The Black Sea, or regions around the sea in general. Even though it is yet to be ensured, but from the explanation above element of water that used as the naming of a place has existed since the age of Greek with the origin of Hellespont name.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

From 17 analyzed tales, it can be seen that there is function of water to cure, function of water as the origin of region name, function of water as borderline marker, function

of water as the cause of disaster, function of water as daily necessities, and function of water as prohibition.

The existence of the function of water as a cure shows in the story of the Prophet of Ayyub AS told in the Al-Qur'an. The function of water as borderline marker and the origin of region name shows in Greek tales. Function of water as the cause of disaster and prohibition shown on the story of Prophet Noah AS and Prophet Adam AS. Hence, the existence of stories about the function of water originated from the stories of prophet in religious books, from the customs and culture of the society, and from the preceding tales.

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