

THE FORMULA AND MODIFICATIONS OF SASAKALA FOR CONTEMPORARY CHILDREN’S READERS

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Abstract

One of folktales in Sundanese culture is *sasakala* or legend. One documentation has been done by Sudaryat et.al (2009) that compiled 25 *sasakala* stories around West Java. In this context of research, the researchers only took 3 stories from Bandung Raya region to be analyzed. The theory of formulaic is taken as the grand theory for analyzing the pattern or formula of narrative structure in *sasakala* story of Bandung Raya. The second theory is children literature’s theory that focus in evaluating the content of children reading material, which specifically concern in values. Descriptive analytic method is implemented in this research. The steps are; first, find out the structure of narrative formula from *sasakala* story of Bandung Raya, then analyze the values based on the data that occurred in the formula of *sasakala* structure narrative. The result of this research is formula or a pattern of story *sasakala* from Bandung Raya. The pattern also portrays how the values hiding behind the structure form, and other information relates to believe that values describe how culture is holding an ideology that not in line with the spirit of the culture itself, especially instilling the values to the next generations in contemporary era. One proposed solution is to do a modification on the narrative structure of folktale, therefore the legacy will still stand with the positive impact for the society of their culture.

Keywords: *sasakala*, Sundanese, children’s literature, formula, values

Background

Folktales is one of the traditional literary works and the genre in children literature. Folktales could also find in entire culture across the globe, one to the other contain similarities and vice versa. The story inside the works portrays how the culture live and develop in certain area, also with their beliefs. The question about the reason of folktales long lasting is because it tries to spread the moral message in it. One of the targets in reading or listening the folktales itself is children and even adult.

Through folktales the readers have some experience from the event of the life which is happen in the folktales or fairy tales, and children will try to fill that one into their life, feeling, emotion which is useful for their life development (Danilewitz, 1991). Some of the folktales significances also described by Danandjaja (1997) and Dananjaja in Ninastiwi (2014) which revealed that fairy tales are very interesting to research because fairy tales are told not only for entertainment but also to depict truth, morals, or even satire. Fairy tales are also a picture of ancient life, and a means to bequeath cultural values believed by the past. Folktales can help the children how to handle a problem, build happy emotion, the common languages (culture literate and canon), the culture boundaries, how to teach a story (the action will occur, climax, and resolution), develop children imagination, give the parents to teach critical thinking, and lesson.

From the explanation above, it can be illustrated that folktales is one of the ways in telling and giving some experience what they will face in the future. One of the reasons the adult tells their children those stories because it's moral message. However, even though the moral message is concerning for children, some of the stories actually are not having the message that suitable for children. As Brown and Tomlinson (1998) have a line that adult have an attention in traditional literary works (folktales one of it) because it has some form of violence which is endangered or made children have a trauma when they read or hear it.

Some of oral traditional literary works have been transformed into written form so that everybody can get all over bookstore. *Sasakala* (Sundanese) or Legend is one of the traditional oral literary works that has been compiled in a book entitled "Toponimi Jawa Barat Berdasarkan Cerita Rakyat (2009)" written by Sudaryat, Gunardi, & Hadiansah (2009). This book consists of 25 stories which are taken from six different area. One of them is *sasakala* from Bandung Raya consists of 4 stories, *sasakala Gunung Tangkuban Perahu*, *sasakala Cigondewah*, *Sasakala Marongge*, and *sasakala Sumedang*. All of the stories have common in setting just like other folktales, that is kingdom. And in these stories also has similar characteristics in presenting character, a family who has a beautiful daughter. The appearance of a daughter who has a beautiful face make the story has a conflict. The conflict in those stories is getting bigger because it involved two or more kingdoms, and occurred some victims.

From the explanation in previous paragraph we can see that there is an effort in making a woman as a "special" character who has a task as a person who create a war between kingdoms. The special character for special task in women character in oral tradition has been live as long as the story alive in a culture, and it can see as an effort to perpetuity certain ideology. This is in line with O'Connor (1989) who says that there were certain motifs in folktales that he analyzes, and one of it is a concept of a women who has a negative stereotype. Certain stereotype in a folktale, indicates that children literature will not be separated from a certain value or even ideology. Therefore, this research is considered very important in order to find out how the concept of the female character in the *Sasakala* story is, especially the target of audience for this type of story is children.

The important thing in the field of children literature as Hunt (Hunt, 2004) explain that children literature as a member in the world literature and because of that children literature will not be separated from any purposes in spreading the values or ideology from certain groups. He then pointed out that books aimed at children cannot be separated from the ideological structure, therefore the history of reading stories for children is actually also constructed ideologically. The theory of children's literature will be a theory that underlies this research to be carried out.

Since the focus of this research is written oral works, like narrative fiction texts, the theory of narrative itself is also be used. The theory used is the narrative structure theory of the actant and functional schemes of A. J. Greimas which aims to describe the structure of the storytelling contained in the *sasakala* story of Bandung Raya region. The function of this theory is expected to be able to see how the actant functions and also to analyze how the initial changes in the story which originally had a balance in dealing with changes in the story, especially focused on how the character of a daughter figure. The research significances are 1) helping the parents or the person who often contact with the books for children in deciding what should read for their children's, 2) create a mapping pattern to modify the story to eliminate negative impressions or stereotypes to fulfill good values for children.

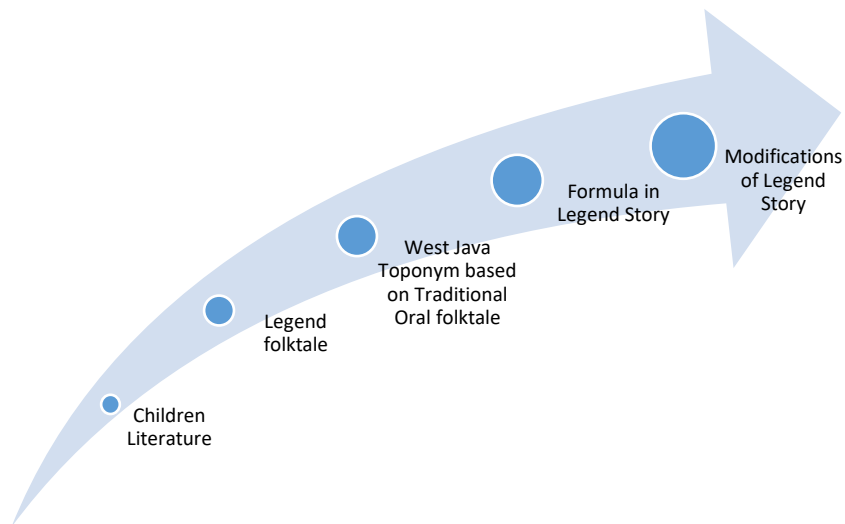


Figure 1 Research Background

Research Method

The method that applied in this research is qualitative method which implement descriptive-analytic to describe the findings. Document analysis is taken as research instrument that illustrate in the following steps: first, the writer read all of the stories several times and made some notes in the series of events related to the topic that wanted to be discussed. Notes and marks help the writer analyse the theory of Actantial and Function, especially in understanding each function of actants. The formulaic by Cawelti (1976) theory applies in addition, and it is instrumental in comprehending the consistency of all stories. Moreover, the final step is analysing the traits characters appear in all stories, especially the daughter's position in a family as a child.

Findings and Discussions

Findings

This section explains the narrative structure based on Greimas (1987) actant scheme and functional. There are three sasakala that taken as the object to be analysed: first story is *sasakala* Tangkuban Perahu, second is the legend of Cigondewah, and the last is the legend of Maronggeng.

1. Actant Scheme of Tangkuban Parahu Legend

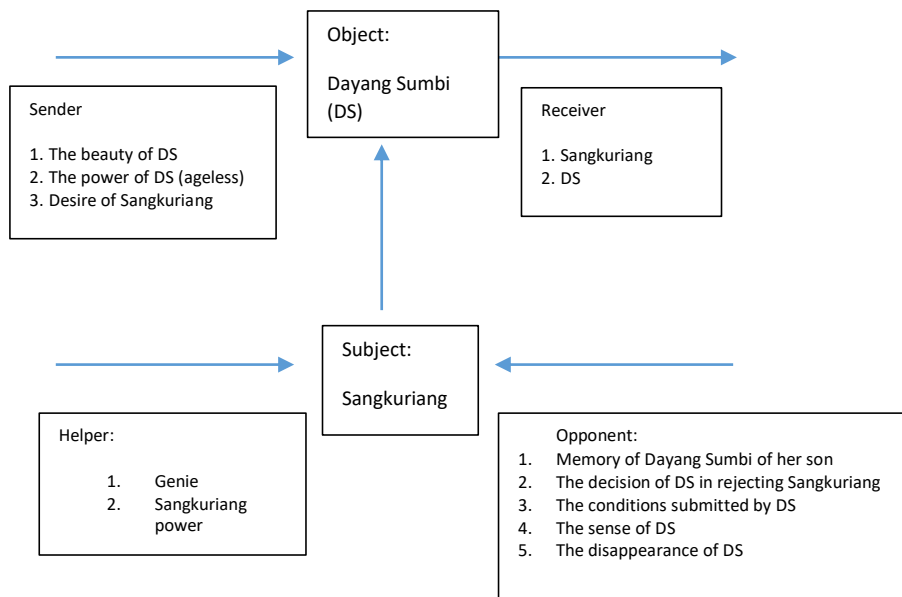


Figure 2 Actant Scheme of Gunung Tangkuban Parahu

As stated in the legend of Tangkuban Parahu's actant scheme, Dayang Sumbi's beauty and knowledge and the existence of Sangkuriang's passion is the sender of the subject trying to reach the object. The story reveals that Dayang Sumbi has the knowledge of wealth that keeps her looking young, beautiful and does not look old which makes Sangkuriang fell in love with her.

The subject is occupied by Sangkuriang while the object he wants to achieve is Dayang Sumbi. Sangkuriang wanted to marry Dayang Sumbi who was his own biological mother. Sangkuriang is assisted by genies and demons. The genie and the demon helped Sangkuriang build a lake and a boat which become requirements for Sangkuriang to marry Dayang Sumbi. Besides being assisted by genies and demons, Sangkuriang also has supernatural powers that made him almost succeed in fulfilling Dayang Sumbi's requirements.

The object of Sangkuriang's marriage to Dayang Sumbi was the memory of Dayang Sumbi when Sangkuriang lay on his lap and identify a wound on Sangkuriang's head. Dayang Sumbi remembers her child, whom she beat with a *sinduk* when she was little and then kicked him out. Dayang Sumbi remembered and realized that Sangkuriang was her son. Apart from these memories, another objector was Dayang Sumbi's decision to stop liking her son and reject Sangkuriang's proposal. However, because Sangkuriang still insisted she then put forward a condition. The conditions put forward were Dayang Sumbi asked to build a lake and a boat in one night.

Another opponent was Dayang Sumbi's reasoning to trick Sangkuriang. Dayang Sumbi waved a white cloth that emitted light. This makes the animals in the forest think it is morning. The presence of animal activity in the morning surprised Sangkuriang and felt he had failed to meet Dayang Sumbi's requirements.

The recipients in this scheme are Sangkuriang and Dayang Sumbi. Sangkuriang was angry. Dayang Sumbi disappeared while being chased by Sangkuriang.

2. Functional Model of Tangkuban Parahu Legend

The initial situation of this legend was that Prabu Sungging Perbangkara urinated in the forest while hunting. The urine contained in the leaves of the forest taro is drunk by a female wild boar named Wayungyang. Wayungyang later became pregnant and gave birth to a baby girl. The baby was handed over to the keratin, and by Prabu Sungging Perbangkara was given the name Dayang Sumbi.

The skill test stage in this legend is when Dayang Sumbi was ordered to hunt forest animals by Sangkuriang, and he killed Tumang. Sangkuriang was then expelled by Dayang Sumbi. The main stage is when an adult Sangkuriang meets Dayang Sumbi, and he falls in love with Dayang Sumbi. Dayang Sumbi's appearance, which was not ageing and even beautiful, made Sangkuriang not realize and admit that Dayang Sumbi was his mother.

The glorious stage was when Sangkuriang made a lake and a boat to fulfil Dayang Sumbi's requirements. Sangkuriang, who still wanted to marry Dayang Sumbi made Dayang Sumbi put forward some conditions to thwart Sangkuriang's efforts.

The final situation of this legend is that Sangkuriang feels like a failure because he thinks his time is up. He was angry and kicked the boat he was making to be called Tangkuban Parahu mountain. The tree stump that is the material for making boats is called the Bukit stumps mountain. The collected tree branches are called Mount Burangrang. Dayang Sumbi disappeared while being chased by Sangkuriang was called Putri Mountain. Sangkuriang's ngahyang place is called Ujung Berung. The blockage of the dam is called Manglayang. The former dam is known as Sanghyang Tikoro. The lake that recedes is called Bandung.

3. Actant Scheme of Cigondewah Legend

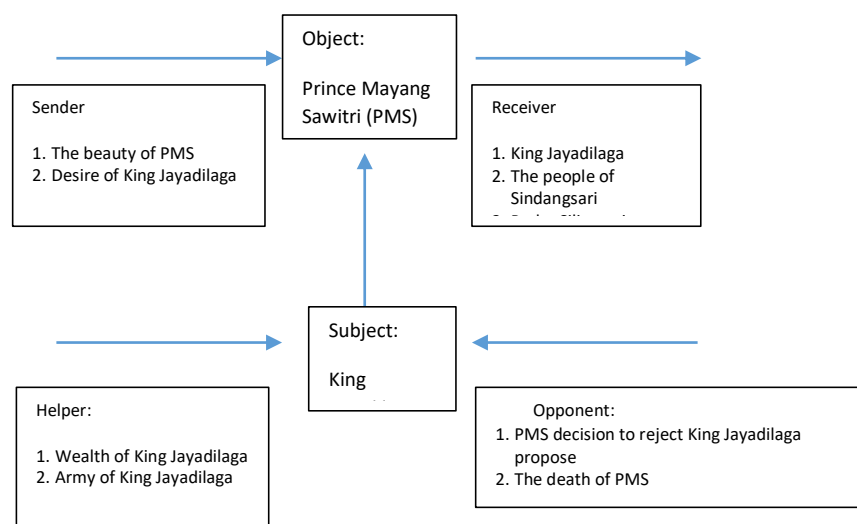


Figure 3 Actant Scheme of Cigondewah

The sender in this actan scheme is the beauty of Putri Mayang Sawitri and the lust of King Jayadilaga to poses Putri Mayang Sawitri. The beauty of Princess Mayang Sawitri made King Jayadilaga want to marry her. The subject in this legend is Raja Jayadilaga, while the object is Princess Mayang Sawitri. King Jayadilaga tried to have

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Princess Mayang Sawitri. Supporters of the subject in reaching the object are the power, wealth, and troops of Raja Jayadilaga. King Jayadilaga came with his troops to propose by bringing various jewellery and products from the kingdom of Margaasih.

The opponent was Princess Mayang Sawitri's decision to want to be alone and refused King Jayadilaga's proposal. Another opponent was the death of Putri Mayang Sawitri. Putri Mayang Sawitri decided to commit suicide instead of marrying Raja Jayadilaga, who had killed her father. The receiver were King Jayadilaga, residents of Sindangsari and Margaasih, and Prabu Siliwangi. Raja Jayadilaga succeeded in expanding his territory by uniting the territory of the Margaasih kingdom with Sindangsari. The Margaasih Kingdom continues to grow and every year gives tribute to King Siliwangi.

4. Functional Model of Cigondewah Legend

The initial situation of this legend is the existence of the Lion King Mandala, who has a beautiful daughter named Putri Mayang Sawitri. The beauty of the Princess spread everywhere, and many kings and knights from other kingdoms intended to propose to her.

The skill test stage in this legend was when King Jayadilaga proposed to Princess Mayang Sawitri. Meanwhile, the glorious stage occurred when Princess Mayang Sawitri rejected King Jayadilaga's application. At that time, King Jayadilaga stood up and left without permission but said, "Wait for the arrival of my troops!". The glorious stage was when King Jayadilaga attacked the Sindangsari kingdom, and King Singa Mandala was killed.

The final situation was that Putri Mayang Sawitri committed suicide by sticking a keris into her stomach. He did not want to marry King Jayadilaga, especially since he had attacked his kingdom and killed his father. In a state of mourning, the people of the Sindangsari kingdom were united with the Margaasih kingdom by King Jayadilaga. The name Sindangsari was changed to Cigondewah.

5. Actant Scheme of Maronggeng Legend

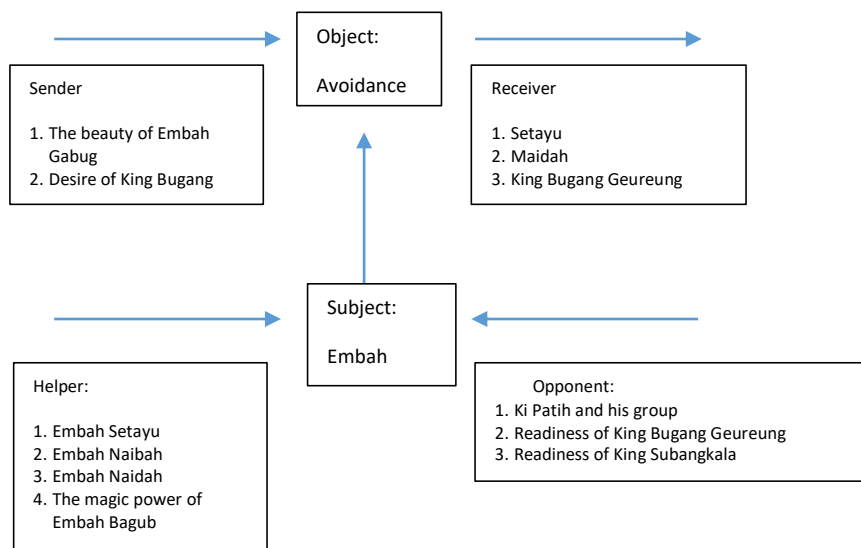


Figure 3 Actant Scheme of Maronggeng

The sender in the Marongge legend actan scheme is the beauty of Embah Gabug and the lust of King Subangkala and King Bugang Geureung to have Embah Gabug. One by one, the king proposed to Grandmother Gabug. The subject in this legend is Grandmother Gabug, who tries to avoid marriage. He always refuses proposals that come to him.

Helper in this scheme are the supernatural powers of Embah Gabug. He always gave conditions to anyone who would propose to him. However, Embah Gabug's magic always manages to thwart people who try to fulfil his requirements. Grandmother Gabug was also supported by Grandmother Setayu, Grandmother Naibah, and Grandmother Naidah, her brothers. Embah Setayu helped throw the cuckoo when Raja Bugang Geureung tried to qualify to apply for Embah Gabug.

The opponents of Embah Gabug were Ki Patih and his entourage. Ki Patih and his entourage came from the kingdom of Subang whom King Subangkala sent to propose to Grandmother Gabug. Ki Patih brought an order to force and kidnap Grandfather Gabug to Subang if he refused his proposal. Another objector was the willingness of King Subangkala and Raja Bugang Geurang to accept the terms proposed by Embah Gabug. The two kings were willing to return the cuckoo thrown and carried by the river to Grandmother Gabug.

The receiver in this scheme are King Subangkala, King Bugang Geurang, Grandmother Setayu, Grandmother Naibah, and Grandmother Naidah. King Subangkala felt ashamed because a woman defeated his magic. King Bugang Geurang did the same. As for Grandmother Setayu, Grandmother Naibah, and Grandmother Naidah were shocked by the disappearance of Grandmother Gabug.

6. Functional Model of Maronggeng Legend

The initial situation in this legend is that there are four beautiful and powerful daughters in Babakan village named Embah Gabug, Grandmother Setayu, Grandmother Naibah, and Grandmother Naidah. This beauty attracted many kings and knights to propose to her.

The proficiency test stage was that King Subangkala and King Bugang Geureung proposed Embah Gabug. The main stage was that Embah Gabug succeeded in rejecting the proposal from King Subangkala and King Bugang Geureung with the failure of the kings to fulfil what was required by Embah Gabug. As for the glorious stage, Grandmother Merged was buried in a hole at the top of Mount Hade. The final situation is that from the hole where Grandpa Gabug is buried, a shining light (merong) appears like a flash of gold. Grandma joined disappeared (ngahyang).

Discussions

There are similarities in the three-story of *sasakala* that we can see based on three actants scheme in the previous sub-chapter. In this case, the similarity as a formula, like Cawelti, (1969), noted that a formula is a conventional system for structuring cultural products. It can be distinguished from the form and invented a system of organization. Furthermore, he says that the formula in myths has its basic and universal nature in many different manifestations. It also has a closed connection to a particular culture and period and tends to have a much more limited repertory of plots, characters, and settings. From the statement above, we can draw the same line in reading the traditional story, especially when it also has the same cultural background as the writer conducted in this research that tries to find similarity in three legends stories with the same cultural background. To find the similarity in this research, also use the

theory from (Greimas 1987) that discusses structural narrative, especially in scheme actant and functional. The following paragraphs will be discussed what the writer found in the findings.

The first thing that we can see is in the actants of the sender, where we can find the motif in moving the story because of the beauty of a woman and the desire of a king male. In this case, the beauty of a woman is not because of the will of her person. As in these stories, there are no events that talk about the background where they have their beauty. Meanwhile, the desire of the king male is also involved in creating the moment in progressing the story well. The male king who has the power makes him a subject in this scheme and wants to fulfil the mission in reaching the object, which is the desire fulfilment, but the subject cannot fulfil it because all of the women reject the subject's proposal. With their traits, all women try to deny the king male proposal.

When we move to another helper actant, we can see three things that support the subject to reach the object: magical power, wealth, and power. Magical power seems like every day if we read a story related to traditional literature. In this case, supernatural power is owned by a character who has power and is also the wealthiest. Three things are just like unity in these stories.

The last actants are opponents that are consist of two things. The first is the decision of women who rejected the king male proposal. And the second is the death of women who want to propose by king male. In this story, all of the women reject all the proposals, but it's weird also because all of the women at the end of the story are gone or dead.

Same as actant scheme, model of functional also has a similarity between these stories. In the initial situation, these three legends have something in common, namely the emergence of a female character who has a beautiful face. This beautiful face moves the story with the emergence of a male character who is a king who wants to propose to her. The desire to propose to women is considered a desire from men who have power.

Another similarity also occurs in the transformation stage, where all the male characters experience rejection from women. This refusal has different motives. In the final situation stage, the three stories have something in common. The female characters in each story have the same ending, die or disappear. Moreover, when the story returns to balance, the story will describe the naming of the places related to events that occurred in the glorious stage.

From the explanation above, the effort to modify these three stories according to the scheme of the act is in the act of the sender. This actan can modify by eliminating the impression that male characters who have power seem to want to conquer women who are considered by many to be beautiful. In this act, it appears that there is a kind of desire to be fulfilled by a male character who has power.

The second thing that can be modified is in the opposing actan section. This section is filled with the death or disappearance of female characters. It seems to be a sign that women cannot fight the power possessed by men who have power. However, this is different in the Marongge legend, where the female character is the subject.

While the stories can be modified based on the functional model at the proficiency test and primary stages, in the Tangkuban Perahu story, the main stage is when Sangkuriang falls in love and wants to marry Dayang Sumbi. Meanwhile, in the story of Cigondewah and Merongge, there is a skill test stage when the male character wants to fulfil his desire by marrying a beautiful woman. All of the steps that need to be modified is related to a symbol of a powerful man and powerless women. it also shows the same thing as what is in the actan scheme, namely the application made by men is only limited to fulfilling desires.

Another functional model that can be changed is in the final situation stage when all the female characters from the three stories die or disappear for no reason. The female characters should not die or disappear without losing their connection with the origin of the place's naming.

Conclusion

Traditional children's literature is a legacy from our ancestors. Legend is a type of children's literature that lives in the environment of a particular culture. Many want this type of children's literature to continue to live in society because it contains a moral message. This message that is considered suitable needs to be reviewed because after reading it, it turns out that there are elements that are considered not good, especially for children.

After re-reading by outlining the narrative structure using the structural theory of Greimas, it was found that several actant functions and functional stages contained elements that were not good. One of the findings is that men in power can use their power to fulfil their desires. Fulfilling this desire is what makes the male character a character thirsty for the fulfilment of his lust, especially towards women who are considered beautiful by most people.

Therefore, this research proposes an attempt to erode the negative impression of a particular character. The trick is to modify the story based on the findings obtained from the analysis of the actan schema and functional models. The result is that there is an option to modify the story. In the schematic, modifications can be made to the sender actor. This act contains things about fulfilling the desires of a male character who has power. The second is the opposing actan, where the female character dies or disappears. While in the functional model, there are initial trials and main trials, where these two stages contain not good elements. With this modification, it is hoped that the legends that exist in Indonesia, especially in West Java, can survive and have a moral message that is per the times.

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