



Linguistics

Unveiling Metaphorical Illocutionary Functions through a Pragmatic Stylistic Lens in Sindhunata's *Anak Bajang Menggiring Angin*

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SUBMISSION TRACK

Received: August 7, 2025

Final Revision: September 18, 2025

Accepted : October 9, 2025

Available Online: October 30, 2025

KEYWORD

water metaphors, pragmatic stylistics, literary analysis, linguistic representation

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a comprehensive pragmatic-stylistic analysis of water metaphors, investigating their multifaceted roles in expressing fundamental aspects of human experience across literary and cultural contexts. The research aims to systematically categorize the semantic and functional dimensions of aquatic imagery while establishing its significance as a conceptual tool for articulating complex psychological, spiritual, and existential states. By employing an integrative methodological framework that combines close textual analysis with theoretical perspectives from cognitive stylistics and linguistic pragmatics, the study examines how water metaphors operate as dynamic vehicles of meaning construction and emotional representation. The analysis reveals five principal functional categories of water metaphors: (1) expressions of emotional catharsis and psychological distress, (2) representations of purification and ontological transformation, (3) embodiments of tranquility and moral enlightenment, (4) manifestations of melancholic isolation and existential alienation, and (5) vehicles for humanistic personification that bridge natural phenomena with anthropomorphic qualities. These findings collectively demonstrate water's unique capacity to serve as a versatile semiotic resource that simultaneously reflects and shapes human understanding of affective, spiritual, and philosophical dimensions of existence. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative research design focused on rigorous textual interpretation, supported by theoretical triangulation that incorporates insights from literary stylistics, conceptual metaphor theory, and discourse analysis. The analytical process involves systematic identification, classification, and interpretation of water metaphors across a carefully selected corpus of literary texts and cultural artifacts, with particular attention to their pragmatic effects and stylistic manifestations. The research, though significant for metaphor studies and literary linguistics, has limitations in cultural representativeness and methodological scope. Future work should pursue expanded cross-cultural comparisons, multimodal discourse analysis, and experimental validation. The study's implications benefit cognitive linguistics, anthropological studies of symbolism, and interdisciplinary research on natural elements and human conceptual systems.

INTRODUCTION

Language in literature transcends its referential function; it operates as a dynamic medium for constructing imaginative worlds, articulating philosophical reflections, and encoding cultural values. Among the stylistic devices frequently employed in literary discourse, metaphor holds a particularly vital role, functioning not only as an aesthetic embellishment but also as a cognitive and communicative mechanism (Goddard, 2004; Steen, 2023). As such, metaphor enables authors to render abstract or complex ideas into relatable conceptual frames. In literary texts, this function is often amplified, allowing metaphor to operate simultaneously at semantic, symbolic, and pragmatic levels.

Contemporary metaphor research has been significantly shaped by the rise of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which highlights the pervasive nature of metaphor in everyday cognition. However, CMT tends to universalize metaphorical structures while downplaying their contextual and interactional

variability (Alex Silk, 2016; Shieber, 1985). In contrast, recent developments in metaphor theory emphasize the importance of contextualized meaning-making, drawing attention to how metaphors are used strategically in discourse to achieve communicative effects, signal stance, and align with audience expectations. This shift calls for a methodological approach that can capture both the stylistic texture of metaphor and its pragmatic force in discourse.

Within this trajectory, the field of pragmatic stylistics offers a particularly compelling framework. Pragmatic stylistics integrates the close textual analysis of stylistics with the contextual sensitivity of pragmatics, focusing on how language choices in literary texts function within specific communicative situations. It enables scholars to explore not just what literary language means, but how it means—by considering speaker intention, reader inference, genre conventions, and cultural frames of reference (Black, 2006; Gialabouki, 2011; Siobhan Chapman, 2014). In metaphor analysis, this perspective allows for an investigation of how figurative expressions contribute to interpersonal meaning-making, narrative progression, and ideological positioning.

This study adopts a pragmatic stylistic lens to examine metaphorical functions in *Anak Bajang Menggiring Angin*, a novel by Indonesian writer and cultural thinker Sindhunata. The novel is deeply rooted in Javanese cosmology, myth, and philosophy, embedding metaphorical language within a narrative structure that blends traditional wayang storytelling with modern existential inquiry (Maghfiroh, 2021; Rahman et al., 2019; Setyaningsih & Rahardi, 2021). Such a hybrid narrative demands an analytical model that can address the interplay between language form, discourse function, and cultural resonance—precisely the territory covered by pragmatic stylistics.

In *Anak Bajang Menggiring Angin*, metaphor is not merely a vehicle for figurative description; it serves as a discursive strategy through which Sindhunata engages with questions of identity, morality, and power. The metaphors used are context-sensitive and ideologically charged, functioning within the narrative to guide reader interpretation, frame philosophical positions, and express cultural values rooted in the Javanese worldview (Braten, 2001; Geertz, 1957). Through pragmatic stylistics, this study explores how these metaphorical expressions generate layered meanings that are co-constructed by the narrative context, cultural intertextuality, and readerly inference.

Moreover, pragmatic stylistics allows us to interrogate how authorial intention and reader response interact within the metaphorical fabric of the text. For example, metaphors relating to wind, gods, or shadow may appear poetic at first glance, but under a pragmatic lens they can be seen as communicative acts that perform speech functions such as warning, persuading, or challenging moral assumptions. Such analysis requires moving beyond purely semantic interpretation to examine illocutionary force, presupposition, implicature, and other pragmatic phenomena that shape the interpretation of metaphor in literary discourse (Rooij, 2004; Stalnaker & Gazdar, 2006).

This methodological approach also helps to foreground the cultural specificity of metaphor in non-Western literary texts. While much of metaphor theory has been grounded in English and Western literary traditions, Sindhunata's novel offers a site for engaging with metaphor within the Indonesian-Javanese cultural paradigm—where metaphors are often deeply tied to spiritual cosmologies, communal ethics, and mythological archetypes. Pragmatic stylistics, with its flexible and context-driven orientation, provides the necessary tools to capture these nuances and avoid the pitfalls of ethnocentric or decontextualized readings.

By situating metaphor analysis within a pragmatic stylistic framework, this study contributes to a broader effort in linguistic and literary scholarship to account for how meaning is actively negotiated between text, author, and reader. It bridges micro-level textual analysis with macro-level discourse functions, illuminating how figurative language in literary texts participates in larger acts of communication (Giora, 2002). This approach is particularly well aligned with the goals of journals such as the *Journal of Pragmatics*, which prioritize contextually grounded, interdisciplinary analyses of language use.

Ultimately, this paper positions metaphor not as a static linguistic feature but as a context-sensitive communicative act that unfolds within the stylistic texture of the text and the pragmatic space of cultural discourse. Through a pragmatic stylistic analysis of *Anak Bajang Menggiring Angin*, it aims to uncover

the performative dimensions of metaphor in literary narration—revealing how language, thought, and culture coalesce in metaphorical expressions that are at once aesthetic, philosophical, and ideological (Daviault, 2015; Siobhan Chapman, 2014).

Despite the growing interest in metaphor studies across disciplines, metaphorical analysis in Indonesian literary texts—especially from a pragmatic stylistic perspective—remains scarce. Most existing studies on *Anak Bajang Menggiring Angin* have focused on its thematic, philosophical, or mythological dimensions, often neglecting the linguistic mechanisms through which these themes are articulated. Similarly, metaphor analyses in Indonesian literature tend to rely on semantic or conceptual approaches, with limited attention to the interactional and performative roles of metaphor in specific socio-cultural and narrative contexts (R. K. Rahardi & Firdaus, 2023; van Compernelle & Williams, 2012). This absence underscores a critical research gap where metaphor is underexamined as a communicative act embedded in stylistic and pragmatic choices.

Moreover, while pragmatic stylistics has been effectively applied in English literary texts to reveal the interplay between language, context, and interpretation, its application to non-Western literary traditions remains underdeveloped. The richness of metaphor in *Anak Bajang Menggiring Angin*, situated within Javanese cultural logics and oral narrative conventions, presents a compelling opportunity to expand the scope of pragmatic stylistics and test its applicability in different literary ecologies. There is a clear need to examine how metaphor, as both a stylistic and pragmatic resource, functions in literary texts that draw from distinct cultural, philosophical, and spiritual traditions (Sutton, 2006).

In response to these gaps, this study seeks to answer the following research question: How do metaphorical expressions in Sindhunata's *Anak Bajang Menggiring Angin* function pragmatically and stylistically within the narrative to convey philosophical, cultural, and communicative meaning? The main objective of this research is to explore the metaphorical structures in the novel through the lens of pragmatic stylistics, focusing on how these metaphors operate in context—both narratively and culturally—to perform illocutionary functions, encode authorial stance, and engage the reader interpretively. In doing so, the study aims to contribute to the development of pragmatic stylistic methodologies in non-Western literary analysis and enrich the understanding of metaphor as a culturally embedded act of communication.

From a theoretical perspective, this study aims to advance the field of metaphor research by integrating pragmatic and stylistic insights within a culturally specific literary context. By applying a pragmatic stylistic approach to *Anak Bajang Menggiring Angin*, the research expands current understandings of metaphor beyond predominantly Western-centric frameworks, highlighting how metaphor functions as a communicative act shaped by cultural norms, narrative conventions, and pragmatic forces. This contributes to the ongoing theoretical dialogue on the interaction between language, cognition, and culture, enriching both metaphor theory and stylistics with a cross-cultural dimension.

On a practical level, the findings of this study are expected to benefit scholars of Indonesian literature, linguistics, and cultural studies by providing a rigorous methodological model for analyzing metaphor in literary texts that are deeply embedded in local traditions. Additionally, the research offers pedagogical implications for teaching literary analysis and pragmatic language use, particularly in multilingual and multicultural contexts where awareness of metaphor's communicative and cultural functions can enhance interpretation skills. Furthermore, this study may inform creative writers and translators by elucidating the pragmatic subtleties of metaphorical language in Indonesian literary heritage.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design with an interpretive paradigm, aiming to provide an in-depth exploration of metaphorical functions in Sindhunata's *Anak Bajang Menggiring Angin* through the lens of pragmatic stylistics. Qualitative research is most appropriate for this investigation as it allows for a nuanced and contextualized analysis of language use, foregrounding the complex interplay between textual features, authorial intention, and socio-cultural context (Johnson, 2001; Lee et al., 2015; Schilling, 2006). The study prioritizes meaning-making processes over quantification, aligning with

the theoretical framework that conceptualizes metaphor as a dynamic communicative act embedded in narrative discourse.

The primary object of analysis is the text of *Anak Bajang Menggiring Angin* itself, focusing on the identification and examination of metaphorical expressions within the novel. The study targets metaphor instances that are rhetorically and thematically significant—those that contribute to philosophical reflections, cultural signification, and interpersonal communication within the narrative. By narrowing the scope to metaphorically rich passages, the research seeks to unravel how these figurative elements function stylistically and pragmatically, creating multi-layered meanings that engage the reader cognitively and affectively (Giora, 2002).

Data collection involves a systematic textual analysis process. The data consists of direct excerpts from the novel, specifically metaphorical phrases and sentences identified through repeated close reading. The selection criteria emphasize metaphors that display cultural specificity, narrative importance, or pragmatic complexity. To complement the textual data, relevant secondary sources—such as critical essays, cultural commentaries, and theoretical literature on Javanese mythology and Indonesian literary traditions—are incorporated to contextualize the metaphors within their broader cultural and ideological frameworks. This triangulation of sources enriches the interpretive depth and credibility of the analysis.

Data analysis is conducted through a pragmatic stylistic approach, which integrates tools from both pragmatics and stylistics (Dahl, 1991; Krippendorff, 2010). The analytical procedures involve: (1) identifying metaphorical expressions and their linguistic features; (2) interpreting the contextual conditions of their use, including narrative situation and cultural background; (3) analyzing pragmatic functions such as illocutionary acts, presuppositions, implicatures, and speech acts embedded in metaphor; and (4) examining how these metaphors contribute to the overall stylistic texture and thematic development of the text. This multi-layered analysis foregrounds the interaction between form and function, offering insight into metaphor as both a stylistic device and a pragmatic strategy.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, this study employs data triangulation by cross-referencing the textual analysis with cultural studies literature and previous scholarly interpretations. Triangulation is also achieved by applying multiple theoretical perspectives—combining conceptual metaphor theory, pragmatic theory, and stylistic analysis—to the same data set, thus reducing subjective bias and increasing analytical rigor (Driver, 2019; R. K. Rahardi, 2020, 2022). Furthermore, interpretive validity is enhanced through reflexive engagement, where the researcher continually reflects on the cultural assumptions and theoretical lenses influencing the analysis. This comprehensive methodological framework ensures that the study's conclusions about metaphorical functions are both robust and contextually grounded.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study elucidates the multifaceted functions of water metaphors through a pragmatic-stylistic lens, revealing five core dimensions: (1) *emotional catharsis*, manifesting as expressions of sadness, grief, and unhappiness (e.g., tears conceptualized as rivers, the motif of drowning in sorrow); (2) *purification and ontological transformation*, where water serves as a medium for cleansing, essence-altering rituals (e.g., baptismal symbolism, the metamorphosis from turbidity to clarity); (3) *tranquility and moral elevation*, encapsulating calmness, peace, and nobility (e.g., still waters as metaphors for wisdom); (4) *melancholic isolation*, conveying loneliness and sorrow through desolate aquatic imagery (e.g., solitary rains or stagnant streams); and (5) *humanistic personification*, wherein water embodies animistic qualities—rivers “whispering” or oceans “longing”—to evoke nature’s beauty and humanity’s yearning for connection. Collectively, these functions underscore water’s unique capacity to mirror the spectrum of human experience, bridging emotional, spiritual, and existential realms.

The Function of Water Metaphors as Expressions of Sadness, Grief, and Unhappiness

In literary discourse, water metaphors often serve as potent vehicles for conveying complex emotional states. Within *Anak Bajang Menggiring Angin*, water imagery emerges repeatedly as a symbolic medium through which feelings of sadness, grief, and unhappiness are articulated. This section explores how the

metaphors related to water function pragmatically and stylistically to express the characters' emotional experiences, highlighting the intricate interplay between language, emotion, and cultural symbolism.

By analyzing key passages where water metaphors appear, this study reveals their capacity to embody not only physical phenomena but also profound affective dimensions. These metaphors do more than illustrate emotional states—they enact the characters' internal struggles and the existential realities they face. Through a pragmatic stylistic lens, the analysis demonstrates how water metaphors encapsulate layered meanings, resonating with the reader on both cognitive and emotive levels.

The following examples exemplify the multifaceted role of water metaphors as markers of emotional turbulence and existential sorrow, providing insight into the narrative's deeper engagement with themes of loss and longing. Such linguistic choices reflect the novel's broader philosophical inquiry into human suffering and the quest for meaning amidst adversity.

Data 1:

Anjani tak dapat menahan diri lagi, perjalanannya yang berat membuat rasa dahaganya tak mau ditunda. Ketika ia mendekat, tiba-tiba sepercik air telaga bergerak menghampirinya seperti mau menyampaikan sebuah pesan, “Anjani, kedipkan matamu sejenak saja, dan kemudian kau akan melihat air telaga ini menjadi darah.” Sayang suara ini hanya ratapan kesedihan alam yang tidak bisa mengelakkan diri untuk berada dalam tuntutan yang Ilahi.

(Anjani could no longer restrain herself; the arduous journey had intensified her thirst beyond endurance. As she approached, a ripple on the surface of the lake moved toward her, as if attempting to convey a message: “Anjani, close your eyes for a moment, and then you will see this lake’s water turn into blood.” Alas, this voice was nothing but the lament of nature’s sorrow, unable to escape the inevitability of divine decree. (p. 51)

Context: This excerpt occurs during a pivotal moment in the narrative when Anjani is journeying alongside a mystical white golden deer, a symbolic companion often associated with purity, guidance, or spiritual awakening in Javanese mythology. Throughout this arduous journey, Anjani’s physical and emotional endurance is being tested, with her thirst gradually intensifying as a metaphor for deeper existential longing or spiritual craving. The presence of the deer accentuates the mystical dimension of her quest, suggesting a connection between the natural and supernatural realms. At this critical juncture, Anjani’s thirst becomes unbearable, symbolizing not only a physical need but also an inner struggle that demands immediate fulfillment. Her inability to restrain herself reflects the tension between human vulnerability and the larger cosmic or divine forces at play. The movement of the lake’s water as if sending a message—warning her of its transformation into blood—can be interpreted as a foreshadowing of impending sacrifice, suffering, or irreversible change. This metaphorical imagery heightens the emotional intensity of the scene, emphasizing the tragic interplay between human desire and divine inevitability that pervades the narrative.

The metaphorical use of water in *Anak Bajang Menggiring Angin* operates as a pragmatic-stylistic tool that embodies and communicates profound emotional states such as sadness, grief, and unhappiness. For instance, the phrase “*air telaga ini menjadi darah*” (“this lake’s water turn into blood”) evokes not only a vivid visual transformation but also a pragmatic illocutionary act signaling impending tragedy and emotional rupture. This metaphor transcends its literal referent by pragmatically encoding the characters’ internal suffering, simultaneously inviting the reader to infer a cosmic or divine reckoning. The stylistic choice to depict water—a symbol typically associated with life and purity—as blood underscores the paradoxical nature of grief, where life itself becomes marked by pain and loss.

In another passage, “*kudipkan matamu sejenak*” (“close your eyes for a moment”) followed by the vision of the lake turning to blood illustrates a pragmatic strategy of eliciting suspension and heightened awareness. This stylistic pause compels the reader, alongside Anjani, to engage in a moment of reflective anticipation, heightening the metaphor’s emotive impact. The metaphor here functions as a performative utterance within the narrative, where language enactment parallels the unfolding of emotional reality. Through such pragmatic deployment, water metaphors facilitate not only emotional expression but also a dialogic interaction between text and reader.

The phrase “*air kehidupan permata mengandung itu pun sudi bercampur dengan darah duniawi*” (“the life-giving gem water willingly mingles with worldly blood”) further exemplifies the integration of pragmatic and stylistic layers. This metaphor implies a negotiation between purity and impurity, spiritual and earthly realms, expressed through water as a symbol of life that is inevitably intertwined with human suffering. Pragmatically, this serves as a presupposition that perfection is attained only through the coexistence of sacred and profane elements, challenging simplistic interpretations of emotional states.

The stylistic richness of the metaphor lies in its capacity to encapsulate this dialectical tension within a single evocative image.

Moreover, the repetition of water-related imagery such as “*ketenangan arus air Telaga Sumala*” (“the calm flow of Telaga Sumala’s waters”) and “*air suci itu telah bercampur dengan air duniawi*” (“that sacred water has already blended with worldly water”) functions pragmatically to mark shifts in emotional tone—from turmoil to tentative peace. These metaphors stylistically depict an oscillation between despair and hope, using water’s mutable properties to mirror the fluidity of human emotions. The pragmatic effect is to guide readers through the emotional landscape of the characters, signaling moments of transformation and ambivalence that are crucial to narrative progression.

The metaphor “*air telaga yang menjadi darah*” and its related expressions also operate within a culturally embedded pragmatic framework, drawing on Javanese cosmology where water symbolizes both life and the cycle of purification and suffering. This cultural context enriches the stylistic metaphor by invoking shared cultural implicatures that deepen its emotional resonance. Pragmatic stylistics here reveals how metaphorical language mediates between individual emotional experience and collective cultural meanings, facilitating a layered interpretive engagement that transcends mere literary ornamentation.

In sum, water metaphors in *Anak Bajang Menggiring Angin* are not static decorative elements but dynamic pragmatic-stylistic devices that enact emotional realities and philosophical inquiries (Gialabouki, 2011; Siobhan Chapman, 2014). Through phrases like “*air telaga menjadi darah*”, “*air kehidupan permata bercampur dengan darah duniawi*”, and “*ketenangan arus air Telaga Sumala*”, the text constructs a rich semiotic field where sadness, grief, and unhappiness are both expressed and performed. This intricate interplay between linguistic form, pragmatic function, and cultural symbolism underscores the metaphors’ centrality in conveying the narrative’s emotional and existential depth.

The Function of Water Metaphors as a Medium of Purification, Transformation of Essence, and the Creation of Clarity from Turbidity—From Beast to Human

In *Anak Bajang Menggiring Angin*, water metaphors are not only employed to express emotional states, but also to signify profound spiritual and ontological transformations. This section explores how water functions metaphorically as a symbolic medium through which characters undergo purification, experience a shift in existential status, and transition from chaos to clarity—both in identity and moral consciousness.

Through a pragmatic stylistic lens, water becomes a performative symbol of change: it does not merely describe the transformation of beings but actively enacts it within the narrative discourse. The movement from murky to clear water (*Sumala* to *Nirmala*) represents the journey from moral and spiritual impurity to enlightenment and perfection. Such metaphors are deeply rooted in Javanese cosmological and spiritual beliefs, where purification often precedes rebirth or elevation in existential rank.

Particularly notable is how these water metaphors mark the passage from animalistic nature to fully human identity, as seen in figures like Anjani, Subali, and Sugriwa. Their symbolic ‘bathing’ or immersion in sacred water signifies not only physical cleansing but also a transformation of essence—a shedding of instinctual being in favor of spiritual humanity. The analysis that follows examines key passages where these transformations occur, demonstrating how water metaphors pragmatically and stylistically encode the novel’s deeper metaphysical messages.

Data 2

Kerinduan itulah hakikat seekor kera yang ingin menjadi manusia. Dan ingatlah pula, air kehidupan permata mengandung itupun sudi bercampur dengan darah duniawi, Supaya Telaga Sumala (air keruh) menjadi Nirmala (air suci). Kau telah mandi dengan air suci itu telah bercampur dengan air duniawi, yang belum sempurna. That longing is the very essence of a monkey aspiring to become human. And remember, the life-giving gem water willingly mingles with worldly blood so that Telaga Sumala (the murky lake) may become Nirmala (the pure water). You have bathed in that sacred water, which has already blended with worldly water, but remains imperfect. (p. 54)

Context: This excerpt appears at a critical point in the narrative when Guwarsa, Guwarsi, and Anjani undergo a symbolic transformation into monkeys, marking a liminal stage between their animalistic origins and their aspirations toward humanity. This metamorphosis is laden with metaphorical significance, reflecting their existential struggle and intense yearning for justice within the cosmic order. Their transformation can be read as a representation of the transitional phase in the quest for self-realization and moral awakening. In this state, they confront their father, Resi Gotama, with profound questions regarding the apparent absence of cosmic justice. Their interrogation reveals a deep dissatisfaction with the perceived imbalance and suffering in the universe, expressing a universal human concern about fairness and the moral structure governing existence. The dialogue underscores a thematic tension between the ideal of justice and the harsh realities of worldly life, encapsulated in the metaphor of their liminal, imperfect condition. This scene thus highlights the narrative's engagement with philosophical inquiries about fate, morality, and the struggle for spiritual transcendence amid worldly imperfection.

The excerpt—*"That longing is the very essence of a monkey aspiring to become human..."*—functions as a richly layered metaphor that encapsulates not only the psychological state of the characters but also the broader philosophical concerns of the narrative. From a pragmatic stylistic perspective, the utterance operates at both textual and contextual levels, performing an illocutionary act of moral revelation. The speaker, a divine figure, articulates the metaphor as a means of interpreting and validating the characters' existential anguish, while simultaneously guiding the reader toward deeper thematic understanding.

The phrase *"longing is the very essence of a monkey aspiring to become human"* is stylistically evocative and pragmatically performative (Biria & Mohammadi, 2012; Kartika et al., 2023; R. K. Rahardi et al., 2023). It redefines the condition of the characters—who have been transformed into monkeys—not as a punishment or degradation, but as an embodied metaphor for spiritual striving. The use of "longing" as an ontological core reframes their simian form as a symbol of incomplete humanity, foregrounding a processual view of moral and spiritual development. Pragmatically, this metaphor invites inference: the condition of being "a monkey" is not fixed, but transitional—contingent upon inner transformation and ethical purification.

The subsequent metaphor—*"the life-giving gem water willingly mingles with worldly blood so that Telaga Sumala may become Nirmala"*—further deepens this trajectory. In stylistic terms, the imagery fuses natural and sacred elements: "gem water" (a metonym for divine essence or cosmic purity) is juxtaposed with "worldly blood" (symbolizing suffering, human imperfection, and material entanglement). This metaphor functions pragmatically as an implicature: transformation is only possible through the painful intermingling of the divine and the profane. The mention of *Telaga Sumala* (murky lake) becoming *Nirmala* (pure water) enacts a metaphor of purification that is not sudden or absolute, but gradual and conditional, thereby inviting the reader to recognize the complexity of moral elevation.

Moreover, the line *"you have bathed in that sacred water... but remains imperfect"* introduces a pragmatic presupposition of insufficiency. Although a ritual act (bathing) has occurred, its transformative effect is incomplete—pointing to the distinction between surface action and inner transformation. Stylistically, the contrast between sacred and worldly water dramatizes the tension between spiritual aspiration and human limitation. This utterance can also be viewed as a directive speech act cloaked in declarative form: it implicitly urges further moral purification while acknowledging the intermediate stage in which the characters dwell.

The cumulative pragmatic effect of these metaphors is to construct a liminal narrative space—a transitional zone between animality and humanity, darkness and enlightenment, chaos and cosmic order. This liminality is not only spatial or ontological but also discursive: the language used by the divine figure becomes an instrument of revelation and transformation. Through pragmatic stylistics, it becomes evident that the metaphors are not ornamental but constitutive of the characters' psychological and ethical evolution.

Ultimately, the metaphors of water and blood, purity and murkiness, do not merely describe transformation; they perform it within the narrative. By embedding philosophical reflection within metaphorical speech, the text employs stylistic form to fulfill pragmatic functions: affirming agency in the midst of suffering, enabling moral reorientation, and sustaining the hope of eventual transcendence. Thus, through the lens of pragmatic stylistics, this passage reveals metaphor as a dynamic act of meaning-making that bridges narrative structure, character development, and cultural metaphysics.

The Function of the Water Metaphor in Conveying the Meaning of Calmness, Peace, Gratitude, and Nobility

The water metaphor plays a critical role in articulating themes of calmness, peace, gratitude, and nobility within the narrative. Through the vivid portrayal of Telaga Sumala's tranquil waters, the text evokes a sense of serene stability and spiritual harmony. Additionally, the waxing moon imagery complements this symbolism, reflecting purity and divine observation. Together, these elements underscore water's function as a literary device that conveys profound emotional and metaphysical states.

Data 3

Alam bergembira, menyaksikan Anjani mengandung karena cinta dari yang Ilahi. Ketika Anjani mengandung tua, ia merasakan ketenangan arus air Telaga Sumala bagaikan keheningan nafas alam yang sedang tertidur. Bulan pada waktu paro putih menjadi mata alam yang menyaksikan kesucian Retna Anjani. Nature rejoices, witnessing Anjani conceive through love bestowed by the Divine. As Anjani's pregnancy reaches full term, she feels the calm flow of Telaga Sumala's waters—like the silent breath of a slumbering universe. During the waxing moon, the white crescent becomes the eye of nature, observing the purity of Retna Anjani. (p. 56)

Context: This excerpt occurs at a significant moment when Batara Guru, the supreme deity in Javanese mythology, observes Anjani with profound compassion. Moved by her plight and spiritual journey, he bestows upon her the Ron Jati Malela—the sacred leaf of the Jati Malela tree—symbolizing divine blessing and transformation. This gift represents a pivotal intervention intended to enable Anjani to conceive a child and ultimately become a perfected human being. The act of granting the Ron Jati Malela encapsulates themes of divine grace, fertility, and spiritual elevation. It signifies the convergence of the sacred and the mortal realms, where divine forces actively participate in human destiny. Within the broader narrative, this moment marks the transition from potentiality to realization, underscoring the role of supernatural agency in the pursuit of wholeness and transcendence. Batara Guru's compassion thus highlights the interplay between divine will and human aspiration, reinforcing the philosophical motifs of justice, mercy, and metamorphosis central to the novel.

The metaphor of water in the narrative plays a pivotal role in articulating abstract concepts such as calmness, peace, gratitude, and nobility, transcending its literal meaning to evoke complex emotional and spiritual states. The phrase “Telaga Sumala's tranquil waters” is strategically employed to conjure an image of serenity and inner stability, leveraging the conventional cultural association of water with life, purity, and renewal. Stylistically, this phrase invokes a sensory experience of stillness and quietude, which primes the reader to interpret the ensuing narrative in a meditative and harmonious frame of mind.

From a pragmatic viewpoint, the term “tranquil” functions as a deliberate lexical choice that signals more than mere physical stillness. It implicates a psychological condition of peace and calm within the character Anjani, reflecting an internalized state of spiritual equilibrium. This implicature extends the surface meaning, allowing the text to perform an illocutionary act of conveying the protagonist's emotional landscape, which readers must infer rather than being explicitly told. Thus, the water metaphor bridges the textual and experiential realms, inviting empathetic engagement.

Complementing this, the description of the “calm flow of Telaga Sumala's waters—like the silent breath of a slumbering universe” enriches the metaphor by introducing cosmic imagery, elevating the water from a mere physical element to a symbol of universal stillness and spiritual vastness. The simile “like the silent breath of a slumbering universe” stylistically amplifies the peaceful aura, situating Anjani's experience within a grand, almost mystical context. Pragmatically, this serves as a scalar intensifier, deepening the reader's appreciation of the tranquility as an expansive, all-encompassing phenomenon.

The narrative's reference to the “waxing moon” introduces another layer of symbolic meaning that interacts synergistically with the water metaphor. The phrase “the white crescent becomes the eye of nature” personifies the moon, endowing it with agency and surveillance capabilities. This stylistic choice not only imbues the natural world with sacredness but pragmatically implies divine observation and approval, reinforcing the themes of purity and moral elevation embedded within the text.

The metaphorical construct of the moon as the “eye of nature” serves as a visual anchor for interpreting the protagonist's purity, as highlighted in “observing the purity of Retna Anjani.” The pragmatic function here is to suggest that Anjani's purity is not only personal but cosmically recognized, thereby elevating her spiritual stature. This implicature invites readers to perceive the character's journey as aligned with

transcendent, universal principles rather than merely individual experience.

Taken together, the water and lunar metaphors function cohesively to generate a complex semiotic network that operates both stylistically and pragmatically. Stylistically, these natural images enrich the text's texture, employing vivid and culturally resonant symbols to evoke mood and atmosphere. Pragmatically, they carry layered implicatures that communicate values of calmness, peace, gratitude, and nobility, which are central to the narrative's emotional and spiritual thrust (Eggs, 2012; Metzger & Flanagan, 2013).

Furthermore, this dual functionality underscores the text's ability to act as a site of cultural transmission, where metaphors encapsulate shared spiritual and ethical codes. By encoding profound emotional and metaphysical states into the imagery of water and moonlight, the narrative invites readers to participate in a culturally informed interpretive act, bridging the subjective interiority of the protagonist with the communal values of the broader cultural milieu.

In conclusion, the water metaphor, augmented by the waxing moon imagery, operates on multiple levels to articulate an intricate tapestry of emotional serenity and spiritual nobility. Through carefully selected lexical and figurative devices such as "tranquil waters," "silent breath of a slumbering universe," and "eye of nature," the narrative achieves a synthesis of stylistic richness and pragmatic depth. This synthesis effectively conveys the protagonist's inner peace and exalted status, illustrating how literary metaphors serve as potent vehicles for communicating nuanced affective and metaphysical dimensions within culturally specific contexts.

The Function of the Water Metaphor in Expressing Sadness, Loneliness, Sorrow, and Melancholy

The water metaphor serves as a powerful literary device to convey profound emotions such as sadness, loneliness, and melancholy. In the quoted passage, Batara Guru describes Subali and Sugriwa's hearts as 'quiet and solitary,' likening their sorrow to a 'wandering cloud' that longs to transform into 'tears upon the eyelids of the human heart.' This imagery not only reflects their inner desolation but also underscores water's symbolic role in expressing unspoken grief—where fluidity mirrors emotional vulnerability, and tears become the silent language of sorrow

Data 4

"Anakku, kulihat dalam dirimu hati yang hening dan sunyi, berteriak dalam Kesia-siaan menyatakan rahasianya kepada jagad raya. Kulihat pula hatimu kesepian seperti awan yang mengembara, ingin mengubah dirinya menjadi air mata yang jatuh dipeluk mata hati manusia," kata Batara Guru, menyapa Subali dan Sugriwa. Subali dan Sugriwa segera melakukan sembah. "My child, I see within you a heart that is quiet and solitary, crying out in futility to reveal its secret to the cosmos. I also see your heart's loneliness like a wandering cloud, yearning to transform itself into tears that fall upon the eyelids of the human heart," said Batara Guru, addressing Subali and Sugriwa. Subali and Sugriwa immediately performed their respects. (p. 81)

Context: This excerpt occurs during a poignant moment when Batara Guru, the supreme deity in Javanese cosmology, descends to the mortal realm overwhelmed by sorrow for the state of the world. Witnessing widespread suffering and moral decline, Batara Guru embarks on a quest to find beings embodying humility and spiritual potential amidst the chaos. His journey leads him to Subali and Sugriwa, two figures distinguished not only by their humility but also by their profound aspiration to attain perfect humanity. The dialogue captures Batara Guru's empathetic reflection on the inner emotional landscape of Subali and Sugriwa, revealing their isolated yet resilient hearts yearning for transformation and meaning. Their characterization as humble yet hopeful beings situates them as ideal recipients of divine grace and agents of moral restoration. This scene encapsulates the thematic exploration of spiritual yearning, divine compassion, and the possibility of redemption through self-awareness and humility, which are central motifs in the narrative's broader philosophical discourse.

This passage exemplifies a rich convergence of stylistic and pragmatic strategies, particularly through Batara Guru's address to Subali and Sugriwa. From a stylistic-pragmatic perspective, the speech operates not merely as poetic description but as a performative act that frames divine empathy and establishes a relational dynamic. The metaphor-laden discourse—"a heart that is quiet and solitary, crying out in futility"—discloses not just what is said but what is *meant*, inviting inferential processing that links spiritual interiority with cosmological resonance. This indirectness aligns with *implicature theory* in pragmatics, where deeper meaning arises not from explicit statements but from inferred emotional and metaphysical associations.

The use of metaphor and personification—“a heart like a wandering cloud,” “tears on the eyelids of the human heart”—functions as more than ornamentation. From a stylistic angle, these metaphors enact emotional projection, while pragmatically, they serve as expressive speech acts that reveal the speaker’s internal state and solicit empathetic engagement. The metaphors universalize the characters’ suffering, transforming it into a shared semiotic field between divine and human interlocutors. This bridges the ontological gap between Batara Guru and the mortals, fostering intimacy through stylized emotional resonance.

Batara Guru’s utterance also performs a relational function, establishing alignment and solidarity with the addressees. In pragmatic terms, this aligns with *positive politeness strategies*, where recognition of inner suffering is a form of face-enhancing behavior. The choice to address Subali and Sugriwa with the intimate “anakku” (my child) contextualizes the utterance as nurturing and inclusive, subverting hierarchical distance. Stylistically, this vocative term is loaded with both emotional warmth and cultural significance, reinforcing the paternalistic yet compassionate ethos central to Javanese moral cosmology.

The structural progression of the speech—beginning with observation, moving through metaphor, and ending in silent response—mirrors a stylistic pattern of revelation and response. Pragmatically, this reflects a dialogic structure where meaning is not completed until the listener responds with embodied reverence (*sembah*). The speech’s poetic structure invites a performative reading: language is not used merely to inform, but to transform. Through stylized indirectness, the utterance becomes an *illocutionary act*—a means by which Batara Guru bestows recognition and initiates moral awakening in the hearers.

Moreover, the use of semantic indeterminacy (“crying out in futility,” “wanting to become tears”) foregrounds *affective ambiguity*, a stylistic device that aligns with a pragmatic emphasis on hearer inference. These indeterminate expressions compel the listener to co-construct meaning, situating them as active participants in the interpretive process. This dialogism is fundamental to Javanese oral traditions, where indirect speech, layered symbolism, and emotional subtlety are privileged modes of spiritual pedagogy.

By integrating affective metaphors with strategic ambiguity, the text invites an empathetic alignment not only between characters but also between narrator and reader (R. K. Rahardi, 2019, 2022; Salehuddin et al., 2011). The stylistic modulation of emotional tone—shifting from cosmic lament to intimate address—illustrates how form is inseparable from function. Pragmatically, this tonal shift cues a change in interpersonal stance: from divine observation to emotional communion. It also exemplifies a cultural preference for *rasa* (emotional attunement) over propositional clarity, central to both Javanese ethics and literary style.

Subali and Sugriwa’s non-verbal response—*sembah*—functions as a pragmatic uptake of Batara Guru’s speech act. Their silence is not passive but pregnant with acknowledgment, conforming to the Javanese aesthetic of expressive restraint. From a stylistic-pragmatic view, this silence is a responsive move that completes the communicative loop, reaffirming shared values of humility, reverence, and emotional introspection. It exemplifies *meaning through gesture*, a mode where the unsaid holds equal, if not greater, semiotic weight than the spoken.

Ultimately, the passage exemplifies how stylistic choices (metaphor, tone, address) and pragmatic functions (facework, indirectness, implicature) converge to articulate a vision of redemption grounded in emotional depth and communicative subtlety. Rather than foregrounding moral instruction through direct speech, the narrative relies on stylistic and pragmatic intricacy to model a form of spiritual discourse that is affectively resonant, culturally situated, and ethically transformative. This integration affirms that in Javanese sacred narratives, the path to transcendence is often mediated less through declarative truths than through stylistically embedded, pragmatically rich expressions of shared human-divine experience.

The Function of the Water Metaphor as a Vehicle for Humanistic Personification, Evoking the Beauty of Nature, and Implying a Deep Thirst for the Warmth of Humanity

The metaphor of water in the passage serves as a compelling stylistic device that humanizes elements of nature by attributing them with emotional and spiritual qualities. This personification transforms water—from a mere physical substance—into a symbol of the characters’ inner states, reflecting their

solitude, longing, and vulnerability. By doing so, the narrative not only captures the beauty and transience of the natural world but also reveals its intimate connection to human emotional experience.

Moreover, the water metaphor implies a deeper existential thirst for warmth and compassion within the human condition. It evokes an emotional resonance that transcends individual suffering, symbolizing a universal desire for empathy and connection amidst isolation. This dual function—highlighting natural beauty while simultaneously expressing humanistic yearning—illustrates how the text integrates stylistic elegance with pragmatic depth, making the metaphor a vital conduit for the narrative’s spiritual and ethical themes.

Data 5

Hutan yang dahsyat dan ganas menjadi nafas yang tenang dalam keheningan budinya. Di sungai yang bening, airnya berderai menyibak akar-akar pohon yang menjulur di dalamnya. Gemerciknya bagai suara anak-anak burung yang minta kehangatan sayap ibunya. The fierce and wild forest becomes a calm breath within the stillness of his mind. In the clear river, the water cascades, parting the roots of the trees that extend beneath its surface. Its murmuring sounds like the voices of baby birds seeking the warmth of their mother’s wings. (p. 131)

Context: This excerpt appears as Rama and Sinta traverse the dense wilderness, experiencing the forest anew with a fresh sense of awe and reverence. Their journey through the untamed landscape symbolizes a renewed awareness and acceptance of nature’s profound beauty and inherent cycles. The vivid imagery of cascading water and the delicate sounds of fledgling birds evokes a serene harmony that mirrors their inner state of surrender and spiritual openness. In this moment, the wildness of the forest transforms from something intimidating into a source of tranquility and reflection, highlighting the characters’ evolving relationship with the natural world. The portrayal of nature’s gentle yet dynamic presence underscores themes of renewal, humility, and the interconnectedness between human consciousness and the environment. This scene thus deepens the narrative’s exploration of acceptance and spiritual attunement within the broader mythological and philosophical framework.

This excerpt offers fertile ground for a pragmatic-stylistic investigation, as it intricately weaves linguistic form and communicative function to convey layered meanings. From a pragmatic standpoint, the transformation of the forest from a “fierce and wild” entity into a “calm breath within the stillness of his mind” operates as a deliberate speech act of recontextualization. This utterance invites the audience to engage in a process of inferencing, whereby the initially threatening natural environment is pragmatically recast as a symbol of inner peace and spiritual equilibrium. Such pragmatic maneuvering underscores how the text enacts meaning beyond literal description, emphasizing the interpretive role of context, presupposition, and implicature in shaping reader response.

Stylistically, this shift is realized through metaphor and personification—key devices that serve a dual pragmatic function. First, they aestheticize the text, creating vivid imagery that captures attention and evokes emotional resonance. Second, they function as pragmatic cues that signal a speaker’s attitude and guide the hearer’s interpretive stance. For instance, the personification of the forest as “a calm breath” attributes intentionality and gentleness to the natural world, thus softening its threatening image and fostering a relational dynamic between the protagonist and environment. This stylistic-pragmatic interplay foregrounds a dialogic process where the text not only describes but also invites empathetic alignment.

The detailed depiction of the river and its cascading water further illustrates the convergence of stylistic and pragmatic features. The auditory imagery—“water cascades, parting the roots”—operates stylistically through phonetic and semantic richness, creating a multisensory experience. Pragmatically, this depiction functions as an illocutionary act that conveys renewal and cleansing, inviting the audience to interpret the natural phenomenon as emblematic of the characters’ internal purification and transformation (Rahardi, 2020). The descriptive choices thus simultaneously fulfill aesthetic and communicative purposes, demonstrating the inseparability of style and pragmatic intent.

The simile comparing the water’s sound to “voices of baby birds seeking the warmth of their mother’s wings” exemplifies a strategic pragmatic use of figurative language to evoke affective responses. Stylistically, it softens the natural imagery with tenderness and vulnerability. Pragmatically, it performs a face-enhancing speech act by invoking universal themes of protection and nurture, thereby eliciting empathy and emotional engagement from the reader. This layered communicative function highlights how figurative language in the text not only decorates meaning but actively constructs interpersonal

relationships between speaker, listener, and represented nature.

Moreover, the passage's use of sound imagery can be analyzed through the lens of pragmatic implicature and stylistic foregrounding. The subtle contrasts between "fierce and wild" and "murmuring" invite the reader to infer a harmonious coexistence of power and gentleness within nature. Stylistically, the acoustic imagery foregrounds the text's aesthetic dimension, while pragmatically, it communicates nuanced attitudes toward the natural world that encourage reflection and spiritual receptivity. This multifaceted layering exemplifies how pragmatic principles operate within stylistic choices to produce complex meaning.

In conclusion, this passage exemplifies the productive synergy between pragmatics and stylistics, revealing how linguistic devices function simultaneously as aesthetic strategies and communicative acts. The pragmatic-stylistic lens foregrounds the text's capacity to shape reader interpretation through metaphor, personification, simile, and sensory imagery, all of which guide inferencing, elicit emotional alignment, and frame spiritual themes. This integrated approach not only enriches literary analysis but also contributes to understanding how language mediates human experience and ethical engagement with the natural world (Özkula, 2020; Wolfgramm et al., 2015).

CONCLUSION

This study has systematically examined the multifaceted roles of water metaphors through a pragmatic-stylistic framework, revealing their profound capacity to articulate fundamental aspects of human experience. Five primary functions emerged from our analysis: (1) emotional catharsis through expressions of grief and sorrow, (2) purification and ontological transformation, (3) representations of tranquility and moral elevation, (4) expressions of melancholic isolation, and (5) humanistic personification that bridges nature and human emotion. These findings collectively demonstrate how water metaphors serve as a powerful linguistic and conceptual tool for expressing complex psychological, spiritual, and existential dimensions across cultural and literary contexts. Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study primarily focused on textual analysis, potentially overlooking non-verbal or visual representations of water metaphors. Second, the corpus was limited to certain literary traditions, which may not fully capture the diversity of water symbolism across global cultures. Third, the pragmatic-stylistic approach, while insightful, might benefit from complementary methodologies like cognitive linguistics or corpus analysis to provide more empirical validation. Building on these findings, future studies could: (1) expand the cultural scope to include non-Western literary traditions, (2) incorporate multimodal analysis of water metaphors in visual and digital media, (3) employ quantitative methods to examine frequency patterns and conceptual mappings, and (4) explore the neurocognitive processes involved in interpreting water metaphors. Such investigations would further illuminate the universal and culture-specific aspects of water symbolism in human communication and thought.

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