

The Myth Of The Sea For The Bajo People In The Novel *Mata Dan Manusia Laut* By Okky Madasari

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Abstract

The novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* by Okky Madasari is a literary work as a form of culture that describes the life of the Bajo people, especially the Sama village. The people still hold fast and believe in the myths that exist in the sea they live. Based on this statement, this study aimed to find the myths that are built in the plot, characters, and setting of the story. This study used an objective approach with Levi-Strauss' semiotic structuralism theory. The data of this research was a text that contained elements of plot, characters, and setting of the story. The data source of this research was the novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* by Okky Madasari. The results showed that the novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* by Okky Madasari contained a sea myth that was built on elements of plot, character, and story setting. (1) The storyline of the novel was divided into five episodes and there were 18 mythemes from each episode. (2) The myth was built into several characters, those were the characters of Bambulo, Lummu, the Masalembo Residents (Sam, Ship Captain, Aldio, Mama Lia), and RORO. These characters were related to each other regarding the existence of a sea myth in the novel. (3) The setting of the story described the Atoll and Masalembo which had a mystery.

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INTRODUCTION

The life of a society can't be separated from various events or phenomena that occur intentionally or unintentionally by a group of people. Soelaeman (2015: 122) argued that society is a human being who lives and interacts based on certain customary systems that are sustainable and bound by a sense of shared identity. Society can also be said as a social unit that has a close bond of affection. In addition, society has a certain pattern of behavior that makes the existence of a social reality.

One of the social realities that occur in society is about the existence of myths that are believed by the local community. Myths are social events that live in the context of humans and real places involved in social interaction (Kumari, 2020: 269). The myth is an assumption inherent in society. Basically humans cannot live in a world that only contains rough facts and immediate needs, but humans also live in dreams, emotions, imagination, illusions, anxiety, and fantasies. These are the formation of the existence of myth, art, and language that are related to each other. Myth is the root of tradition passed down from ancestors and continues in humans (Hudaya, 2015: 377). Thus, myth becomes a system of thinking and is even used as a guideline by the community to do something or in terms of speech.

The existence of myths has become a part of people's lives, so that these myths will continue to grow and become guidelines for the community. This is unique and interesting to serve as a description of the community of an area. One of them can be used as a depiction of life or a replica in a literary work. Literary works reflect a society's life with a certain order and behavior that can create literary works (Muawanah and Supriyanto, 2016). In addition, Arumndani (2022: 21) stated that literature is a reflection or social portrait. On the other hand, literary works can be a picture of the life of a society. As expressed by Herdiawati, et al. (2020: 476), through literary works we can see a picture of life that occurs in society. Including a picture of people's lives who believe in myths.

One of the literary works that raises this reality is novel. Novel has a foundation that is part of the elements that can't be separated from the characters, the language used in conveying a story, and can support the overall meaning (Yulianti, et al., 2021: 47). Thus, the novel is one of the literary genres that is built by several elements that build structure, namely extrinsic and intrinsic elements. These elements are closely related to build a unity of meaning. However, in this case the focus is only on intrinsic elements in the form of plot, character, and setting elements.

Myths can be presented in novel stories that can be built through plots, characters, and setting of the story. In mystical stories, there are always characters who have supernatural powers to save people from evil (Kasmi, 2016). The elements that build the story have a relationship with each other in conveying the messages of the story. Myths are used as guidelines by the community in behaving. As stated by Andari, et al. (2016), the community still preserves and organizes activities related to myths. Thus, the myths have role as the guide for the community. In line with Masri (2021), novel stories describe human and community characters, situations and social processes. The author presents the reality that occurs in real life in her novel. The storytelling in the novel is adjusted through the characters or setting, even the plot that makes the mythical story conveyed well.

This social phenomenon that occurs in society is illustrated in the novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* by Okky Madasari which appears in certain community groups. The novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* focuses on social life and the environment or culture. The author wants to make the imaginative characters in *Mata dan Manusia Laut* come alive, so the author relates them to the existing reality to convince the readers that the motives and actions of the characters seem real. In line with that, it is clear that the position of the novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* in this case is as a medium in expressing the ideas that the author wants to convey. The novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* is a form of fictional literary work that functions as a

medium that is considered to reflect people's lives through imaginative characters and poured into ethical language.

As the title, *Mata dan Manusia Laut*, this novel tells about the life of the people in the Sulawesi region, precisely in the village of Sama, the Bajo tribe. In the novel, the Bajo people are described about their lives on the sea and depend on the sea for their lives, such as having a livelihood as fishermen and they call themselves sea people. For the Bajo people, the sea has a power that makes them dependent on the sea. The people think that education is not important because they do not need a diploma to earn money at sea.

Several scientific studies that raised the novel of *Mata dan Manusia Laut* as the object of research were carried out by Kharisma (2019) that entitled *Nilai Karakter Cinta Lingkungan pada Novel Mata dan Manusia Laut Karya Okky Madasari* (The Character Value of Environmental Love in the Novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* by Okky Madasari. Kharisma (2019) in the research suggested that the novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* had several environmental-loving characters which were reflected in the lives of the residents of Sama village. The character value of the love for the environment was known through the geographical conditions of the Sama village, Kaledupa mainland, the rule of the sea, and natural disasters. Then, research conducted by Annisa (2022) the research discussed the mythical representation of the Bajo tribe which contained the representation of mythical forms consisting of belief myths, supernatural myths, and birth myths. In addition, it was also explained that there was a representation of mythical functions consisting of educational functions, social functions, and environmental functions. Although both studies are about myths, this research is different from previous research that is analyzing sea myths using the Levi-Strauss theory. This indicates that exploring the social reality in the novel needs to be done to find out how the social conditions in the Bajo tribe, especially the Sama village, are

about the existence of sea myths represented in literary works.

This study analyzed the novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* using the structuralism theory of Levi-Strauss which placed myth in linear parts, cut into several episodes, each of which contained an explanation regarding a particular idea. Levi Strauss (in Ahimsa-Putra, 2012: 94) established the basis for a structural analysis of myth. First, if myth was seen as something meaningful, then it did not exist in its independent elements, which was separate from one another. Second, although myth was included in the category of language, myth was not just a language. Third, we can find these characteristics not at the language level itself but above it. Levi Strauss's structuralism becomes the theoretical basis for studying the novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut*. Through the Levi-Strauss structuralism approach, it can be seen that Okky Madasari's work described the myth of the sea for the Bajo people. Thus, the purpose of this research was to find out the myths that were built in the plot, characters, and setting of the novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* by Okky Madasari.

METHODOLOGY

The focus of the study was the myth of the sea for the Bajo people in the novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* by Okky Madasari. The approach used in this study was an objective approach to the Levi-Strauss semiotic structural theory. This objective approach responded to literary works based on understanding the text of the literary work itself. In line with the explanation of Supriyanto (2021: 54), that the objective approach emphasized the object of a literary work which was an autonomous language event. Therefore, in understanding the meaning of a literary work, it could be analyzed based on its structure.

The data of this research was a text that contained elements of plot, characters, and setting of the story. The source of the research data was the novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* by Okky Madasari. The data collection technique

in this study was carried out by means of heuristic reading and using the Levi-Strauss concept, namely looking for myths by determining episodes and arranging those myths, so that it could found a relationship.

The data analysis technique used in finding sea myths was the semiotic model through hermeneutic reading. The step used in analyzing the novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* by Okky Madasari based on Levi Strauss' theory was finding meaning in the text related to the myths that are built up in the plot, characters, and setting of the story.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted to reveal the myth of the sea for the Bajo people in the novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* by Okky Madasari. In revealing the myth of the sea, Levi-Strauss' theory of structuralism was used. The novel told about the beliefs of the Bajo people, especially the Sama village towards the sea and its various myths.

The Myths were Built in the Plot

It began with a depiction of the Sama village community who were so attached to the sea. Their lives could not be separated from the sea and its marine activities. Each house had a boat for fishing, such as canoes, bodies, and katingting. The Sama people depended on the sea for their lives. They would look for as many fish as possible to sell or exchange for needed goods. The sea for the Sama people was a place to live, a place of life that had privileges and strengths, so they were very concerned about preserving the sea. They were holding fast to the belief not to go to sea on a full night because it would disturb the sea animals that were laying eggs. They believed that at that time the sea was preparing fish for the Sama people in order to sell it for their survival. People believed that the prohibition came from the God of the Sea who must continue to be guarded and told to their descendants.

Furthermore, the people of Sama village had a Duata tradition or ceremony led by a

Sanro (shaman). In the novel, it described that Duata was done when someone was sick. At that time, Bambulo's niece was sick and a Duata event was held in the middle of the sea, they prayed to the God of the Sea. Their belief in the sea made the doctors gave up on duty in the Sama village. Even though in the end the life of Bambulo's niece named Nabila (a baby) could not be saved. In addition, Duata was carried out during the tsunami disaster due to Bambulo's negligence who violated the God's rules that was going to the Atoll and catching fish on a full moon night. Duata was done with the aim of praying and asking for safety to the God of the Sea.

The myth of the sea in the novel had episodes (plots). The episodes of the sea myth in the novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* contained some mythemes, as follows:

1. In Sama village there was a prohibition and belief
2. The prohibition of going to sea on a full night
3. The people of Sama village did not use poison or bombs to catch fish
4. The people believed they had twins at sea who came from the umbilical cord
5. Violating the rules or prohibition of going to sea on a full moon
6. The fish laid eggs on a full night
7. The event of dangerous ocean waves
8. The ocean waves drowned Bambulo and Matara
9. Bambulo and Matara drifted to the bottom of the sea
10. Matara was caught by a giant octopus
11. The seawater destroyed buildings and objects on land
12. Sanro performed the Duata ceremony
13. Bambulo met the residents of Masalembo
14. The residents of Masalembo were the people who drowned in Masalembo
15. Masalembo residents helped Bambulo save Matara
16. Roro woke up causing the sea to shake again
17. Masalembo residents put Roro to sleep

18. The residents of Masalembo apologized and prayed to the God of the Sea

The Myths were Built in the Characters

The following were the names of the characters in which there was a mythical structure in the story. (1) Bambulo, (2) Lummu (dolphin), (3) Sam (Ocean/Masalembo resident), (4) Ship Captain (Masalembo resident), (5) Aldio (Masalembo resident), (6) Mama Lia (Masalembo resident), (7) Roro (the Sea God's favorite sea resident).

These characters had their respective roles that support each other in the event. Regarding with the character Bambulo who was nicknamed as the fish man, he was the main character who often appeared in the story. The Bambulo character was a child from the village of Sama whose daily life was playing in sea water. Bambulo also often went with his parents to catch fish. Bambulo had the ability to dive in the depths of the sea. He would catch fish immediately when he was in the water. It was the reason why Bambulo was nicknamed as the fish man. He was able to hold his breath longer in the water.

The Sama people, including Bambulo, had a relationship with the lummu (dolphin) character. When babies were born, their umbilical cord would be thrown into the sea and carried by the lummu to the middle of the sea and the umbilical cord would become new lummu. The umbilical cord was considered to be the owner's twin brother. The lummu were depicted as sacred creatures incarnated by the God of the Sea who would protect the Sama people. As it was said that the lummu would inform the Sama people when there was a good thing or even disaster would come. It was also said that when the character of Bambulo was in the middle of the sea, he would go to the Atoll with Matara on a full moon night. Bambulo was reminded by lummu not to continue the journey because there would be danger. However, Bambulo continued his journey and with his request to the lummu, finally Bambulo was delivered by the lummu. The mythical structure

of the Bambulo character was illustrated in the following quotes.

- (1) *"Dia masih hidup. Dia anak lummu," kata Si Sanro.
Orangtua Bambulo menarik napas panjang. Mereka lega. Mereka selalu percaya apa yang dikatakan Sanro (Madasari, 2019: 127).*
- (2) *Sementara di satu rumah, seorang bayi laki-laki terlahir ke dunia, bersamaan dengan kedatangan para lumba-lumba itu. Bapak bayi laki-laki itu segera melempar tali pusar si bayi ke laut. Tanpa ia tahu, lummu-lummu itu langsung mengambilnya, membawa tali pusar itu ke tengah lautan, membiarkannya tumbuh bersama mereka, menjadi salah satu lummu baru yang hidup di tengah lautan (Madasari, 2019: 39)*

Translated:

- (1) *"He is still alive. He is lummu's son," said the Sanro.
Bambulo's parents took a deep breath. They were relieved. They always believed what Sanro says (Madasari, 2019: 127).*
- (2) *Meanwhile in one house, a baby boy was born into the world, along with the arrival of the dolphins. The baby boy's father immediately threw the baby's umbilical cord into the sea. Without him knowing, the lummu immediately took it, carried the umbilical cord into the middle of the ocean, let it grow with them, became one of the new lummu that lived in the middle of the ocean (Madasari, 2019: 39)*

The data excerpt provided an answer to who exactly Bambulo was. It was explained that Bambulo was the son of lummu. This was the reason why Bambulo was different from other children in his village. The quote from the data explained that when a baby boy was born, a dolphin came (lummu). Those lummu carried the baby's umbilical cord into the middle of the ocean and the umbilical cord would grow into a new lummu. The Sama people had a belief that the umbilical cord thrown into the sea would become the owner's twin brother. The baby was Bambulo. That was why Bambulo was called the son of lummu or had a privilege.

Furthermore, there were characters who were described as residents of Masalembo, those were Sam, the Ship Captain, Aldio, and Mama Lia. These figures came from various regions. They drowned because the ship they were on had an accident. Like the Ship Captain and Mama Lia who drowned while sailing and passing through the Masalembo area. There was also a character Aldio who was a diver and loved the beauty of the sea. They were all characters who helped Bambulo and Matara when they drifted to Masalembo and were chased by a giant octopus. These Masalembo residents had lived hundreds of years since the accident that drowned them. They lived like on land with ships as their homes.

At the end of the story, there was a character named RORO who was said to be the favorite sea dweller of the God of the Sea. It was described as being like a snake through its features which had a long coiled body, green eyes, and thick scales all over its body. It was said that the RORO character were sleeping on the seabed with his body as large as a hill and circular in a quarter of the earth. At that time there was a great shock in the sea that caused Bambulo and Matara to drift to Masalembo. Likewise, a tsunami occurred on land. That was because there was a prohibition that was violated by the Bambulo character which caused blood to spill in the sea which finally made the RORO character wake up because she smelled blood. RORO writhed and caused the sea to shake and the peace of the sea dwellers to be disturbed.

The Myths were Built in the Setting of the Story

The atoll was described as a place that had a very abundant variety of fish. The Sama people would go to sea to the Atoll and bring fish to sell. However, the Atoll had a myth that was believed by the people of Sama village, it was the prohibition of going to sea on a full night. When this prohibition was violated, a disaster would occur. As depicted by the character of Bambulo, who at that time went to the Atoll at full moon and finally disaster came.

The atoll was a reef that was used as a source of income for the Sama people. There was a prohibition on going to sea during the full night in order to maintain the calm of the sea because that was when the fish were laying eggs as shown in the following quote.

- (3) *Itu karena orang Sama punya cara untuk selalu membuat ikan-ikan tetap tersedia. Mereka tahu kapan ikan-ikan itu boleh ditangkap. Mereka melihat bulan sebagai waktu kapan ikan bisa ditangkap. Jangan menangkap ikan saat bulan terang. Begitu salah satu pelajaran pertama yang sudah dibagikan turun-temurun. Anak usia Bambulo pun sudah tahu tentang aturan itu. Bagi orang Sama, itu adalah larangan langsung dari penguasa semesta yang tak boleh dilanggar. Tapi sesungguhnya, itu adalah kunci kenapa ikan bisa tetap banyak di perairan ini. Sebab, setiap kali bulan terang, ikan-ikan akan bertelur. Telur-telur itu yang akan menjadi ikan-ikan besar ditangkap manusia. Begitu seterusnya (Madasari, 2019: 33).*

Translated:

- (3) *That was because the Sama people had a way of always keeping the fish available. They knew when the fish could be caught. They saw the moon as the time when fish could be caught. Don't catch fish when the moon is bright. That was one of the first lesson that had been passed down from generation to generation. Even children in Bambulo's age already knew about the rules. For Sama people, it was a direct prohibition from the ruler of the universe that should have not be violated. But actually, that was the key to why fish could stay a lot in these waters. Because every time the moon was bright, the fish would lay eggs. The eggs that would become big fish caught by humans. And so on (Madasari, 2019: 33).*

The data quote illustrated a myth about the prohibition of going to sea on a full moon night. The Sama people believed in this and always told it to their children from an early age so they knew that it should have not be done. The ban on fishing was believed to come from the rulers of nature, so people tried not to violate

it. On the other hand, the prohibition was also due to maintain the ecosystem and the breeding of sea animals. On a full moon night, sea animals such as fish would lay eggs, so humans should have not disturb them. This was because the sea providing fish to be caught by humans for their survival.

The sea was like the house of the Sama people. They named themselves as sea people, not land people. They could not live on land like fish that would die when brought ashore. The sea, for the Sama people, had power and was believed to always guard, protect, and become life for them. Thus, they depended on the sea for their life. In the Sama community, no one had graduated from school or had a diploma. They didn't need it because they thought that only on the sea would they return. Finding fish, selling fish and earning money. They survived in the sea and because of the sea. However, behind it all the sea had a myth that made its people believed and continued to preserve that belief.

The Mata dan Manusia Laut novel also told a myth about Masalembo, the water area of the Bermuda Triangle of Indonesia. The myth was that Masalembo would swallow ships or anyone who passed through the place as described in the story through the characters Bambulo and Matara who drifted to Masalembo. Bambulo met people who had drowned there and became residents of the place. It was said that the people who lived in Masalembo were the chosen people of the God of the Sea who were saved when a disaster or accident occurred. So, not everyone who drowned would become the resident of Masalembo. Only people who had a love for the sea would be saved by the God of the Sea. Including Bambulo who was saved by the God of the Sea until finally he was able to return to land with Matara. This was illustrated in the following quoted data.

- (4) *Tapi kamu tahu Masalembo?" Sam kembali bertanya.*
Bambulo mengangguk. Ia sudah lama mendengar Masalembo. Cerita yang selalu diulang-ulang oleh bapaknya dan semua orang di kampung Sama. Bahwa ada satu wilayah

laut yang tak boleh dilewati saat berlayar. Sebuah wilayah berbentuk segitiga yang akan menelan semua kapal saat melewatinya (Madasari, 2019: 139).

Translated:

- (4) *"But you know Masalembo?" Sam asked again. Bamboo nodded. He had long heard of Masalembo. The story that his father and everyone in Sama village repeated over and over again. That there was one sea area that should not be passed while sailing. A triangular-shaped area that would swallow all ships when passing through it (Madasari, 2019: 139).*

The data quote explained that there was a myth about Masalembo. The place was prohibited for anyone to pass through it. The triangle would swallow anything including ships that passed through the area. This was a mystery that was trusted by the community, so that a prohibition was created to avoid unwanted bad things. It was described in the novel, Masalembo had inhabitants of people who were brought by the God of the Sea when they drowned. In addition, the base of Masalembo was similar to a village with neatly lined ships as the homes of Masalembo residents.

CONCLUSION

The research entitled "The Myth of the Sea for the Bajo People in the Novel Mata dan Manusia Laut by Okky Madasari" was studied using the Levi-Strauss paradigm. The myth that was built in the plot was obtained by dividing the myth story into five episodes and 18 mythemes were found from those episodes. There were several characters included in the storytelling of myths, they were the characters of Bambulo, Lummu, the Masalembo Residents (Sam, Ship Captain, Aldio, Mama Lia), and Roro. These characters had their respective roles that were interconnected in forming a myth. Likewise with the setting that told of the myths that occurred in the Atoll and the myths about Masalembo.

Based on these three main points, it could be concluded that the myths of the sea contained in the novel *Mata dan Manusia Laut* by Okky Madasari consisted of there was a prohibition on going to sea on a full moon night for the Bajo people, especially the Sama village; Sama people also never bombed fish because it was also a prohibition from the God of the Sea; then there was the belief in the lummu (dolphin) which was considered the incarnation of the God of the Sea as a creature who would give good or bad news; there was an assumption that the people of Sama could not live on land like fish that would die if brought ashore; then there was a myth about Masalembo that could swallow ships sailing in the area.

It could be seen from the perspective of the community as told in the novel, the sea myth was trusted, believed, and practiced by the community because the sea was the home of the Bajo tribe. They lived and settled in the sea, so all activities were carried out in the sea and they considered themselves to be sea people. They believed in the God of the Sea who would always protect and give them life with abundant fish. Therefore, it was illustrated that people still believed in the myth and used it as a guideline, so they did not dare to violate it.

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