The Sacred Myths at *Gunung Bawakaraeng* Post Three: Roland Barthes' Semiotic Studies

Rahmat Sulo[1], Lukman[1], Ery Iswary[1]

[1] Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia
*Correspondence: Rahmatsulo91@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The aims of this research are (1) to describe the forms of sacred myths at Gunung Bawakaraeng post three (2) to describe the influence of sacred myths at three Bawakaraeng posts on the local community and climbers. The benefits of this research are (1) obtaining a description of the sacred myths at post three of Gunung Bawakaraeng and (2) the availability of forms of influence of sacred myths at post three of Gunung Bawakaraeng. This research used qualitative method. The results of this research indicate that (1) there are forms of sacred myths at post three of Gunung Bawakaraeng, such as: (a) the story of the Dutch lady (Noni) who roams around the big tree at post three, (b) the occult market or also commonly known as Pasar Anjaya, c) there are cases of climbers getting lost, (d) there is a pilgrimage ritual; and (2) there is the influence of sacred myths at post three of Gunung Bawakaraeng, such as: a group of people (climbers and the local community) built a belief about (a) the story of a Dutch lady who wanders around the big tree at post three, (b) a magical market or also commonly referred to as anjaya market, c) there is a case of climbers getting lost, (d) there is a pilgrimage ritual.

1. Introduction

Myth in Greek comes from the word "mathos", which literally means "a story or something someone said". Based on the religious experts, myths are stories related to belief and it is considered as truth because they contain imaginary stories and have existed since ancient times (ancestors) which are hereditary, even now a days people still believe in a form of belief which is irrational, in the form of primitive beliefs while in the sense of Barthes in his book entitled mythologies (1957).

Barthes said that myth is a system of communication or a message, unlike the traditional understanding which means mystical or occult. Myth is at the second level of marking in producing connotative meaning which then develops into denotation, in this change into denotation, it is called myth (Siregar, 2022; Wicaksono et al., 2021; Sahib et al., 2019). Barthes defines myth not as the object of the message but as a way of expressing the message. Barthes (1957) presents a new concept of myth. Myth is a message conveyed by myth makers and is not a concept, idea or object. It is a way to convey a message and it is the result of speech not from language. From the statement above, the researcher concludes that myth does not hide anything so that its effectiveness is certain. In order to reveal a myth, it is necessary to make a distortion. Message in myths does not need to be interpreted, elaborated, or omitted.

Gunung Bawakaraeng is in the territory of Gowa Regency, and it is the highest mount in South Sulawesi. On the slopes of this mountain there is an altitude area, the village of Lembanna Malino, a famous tourist spot in South Sulawesi. Ecologically this mountain has an important position because it is a source of water storage for Gowa Regency, Makassar City, Bantaeng Regency, Bulukumba Regency and Sinjai Regency. For the local people, the mountain, which has a peak of 2950 meters above sea level, and it is quite sacred. Even at the top of the mountain, local people often perform a number of rituals that have been passed down from generation to generation.

The administrative area of Gowa Regency consists of 18 sub-districts and 167 villages/wards with an approximately area is about 1,883.33 square kilometers or equal to 3.01 percent of the total area of South Sulawesi Province. Most of the Gowa Regency area is highlands, which is around 72.26 percent. There are 9 sub-districts which are highlands, namely Parangloe, Manuju, Tinggimoncong, Rompio Pao, Parigi, Bungaya, Bontolemngan, Tompobulu

and Biringbulu. Of the total area of Gowa Regency, 35.30 percent have land slopes above 40 degrees, namely in the sub-districts of Parangloe, Tinggimoncong, Bungaya and Tompobulu (Central Bureau of Statistics for Gowa Regency, Gowa Regency). *Gunung Bawakaraeng* is located in the Gowa Regency area of South Sulawesi. *Gunung Bawakaraeng* is about 70 Km from Makassar City, the capital of South Sulawesi Province. It is surrounded by three regencies, namely, Gowa, Takalar and Sinjai Regencies. The height of *Gunung Bawakaraen*g is around 2,705 meters above sea level. The people live around it believe in the sacredness of this mountain. They believe that this place is a meeting place for saints. The belief in the sacredness of the mountain has been passed down from generation to generation.

For the surrounding community, this mountain has a very sacred meaning, *Bawa* means mouth and *Karaeng* is the king or God so that *Gunung Bawakaraeng* can also be said to be the mountain of the King's Mouth or God's Mouth Mountain because in ancient times this mountain was called a meeting place for saints in spreading Islam in South Sulawesi. This belief that has brought local people from various regions to ordain this mountain as a sacred mountain. Like the story that happens in almost every mountain in Indonesia, *Gunung Bawakaraeng* also often causes sadness because this mountain also often takes the lives of the *Gunung Bawakaraeng* climbers. It is uncountable how many victims have died on this mountain, disappeared and it has not been found.

The beginning of the emergence of mountain climbers dates back to the Dutch colonial period, a nature lover, explorer and scientist Frans Jhonhun who is a Russian-Germany, since 1830 they had climbed all the mountains on the island of Java and then his footsteps were followed by other European (Dutch) adventurers such as Wormser and also a European national climber who wrote the book A Guide to Climbing 30 Mountains on the island of Java in 1928 (Sastha, 2007). Gunung Bawakaraeng is often a favorite place for climbers, both climbers from the island of Sulawesi and climbers from outside the island of Sulawesi, almost all climbers who have visited this mountain received warnings or warnings to be careful when crossing the three Bawakaraeng mountain posts from the local community.

This mountain has a ghost legend known as the Noni ghost (she is known as a Dutch lady). For the local community, Noni is a nickname for a beautiful woman whose face resembles a Caucasian (Dutch woman). Based on the story, Noni was a woman who died by hanging herself from a tree at the three climbing posts. There are various versions of the story about Noni's death so that it continues to roam in post three. The most common story, Noni is told to be a female climber who regularly climbs in *Gunung Bawakaraeng* with her lover around the 1980s. It is said that Noni allegedly ended her life because she was hurt by her lover. The tree that is said to be the place where Noni hanged herself is still standing strong at post three. This tragic ending makes the story of Noni's ghost continue to be heard among climbers. Some climbers are said to have seen Noni's ghost firsthand. However, stories about Noni's ghost are still a myth among the people.

Based on the description above, this research is a study that describes the belief of the people in Lembanna Village, Malino, towards the sacred post of Tiga climbing *Gunung Bawakaraeng*, who are considered to believe in and even often tell about Noni ghosts as beautiful women ghosts. Based on the community's thinking above, it can be seen how thoughts about sacred things have emerged from generation to generation long ago. Furthermore, the researcher examined the extent to which the myth of the sacred post three of Mount Bawakaraeng and its influence on the community and climbers of Gunung Bawakaraeng.

Therefore the researcher aimed to describe the myths contained in the Tiga Bawakaraeng Post, and to describe the influence of the sacred myth of the Tiga Bawakaraeng Post on the community and climbers.

1.1. Semiotics

Two thousand years ago, in the era of Greek philosophy, the study of signs and their functions was already a subject of contemplation. The Middle Ages also hinted at the meanings and uses of signs. However, it wasn't until the 18th century that the term 'semiotics' was officially coined, and it was attributed to Lambert, a philosopher of German origin. In the 19th century, semiotics received comprehensive and systematic attention from influential figures such as Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Umberto Eco, Charles Sanders Pierce, and Ferdinand Saussure.

The birth of modern semiotics recognizes two prominent pioneers in the field: Charles Sanders Pierce and Ferdinand Saussure (Zakaria et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2019). Remarkably, these two scholars lived in the same era but were not acquainted. Pierce, with a background in logic, employed the term 'semiotics,' whereas Saussure, rooted in linguistics, favored 'semiology.' It's important to note that there is no essential distinction between these two terms; the difference lies in the preferences of the users.

'Semiotics' finds its origins in the English 'semiotic,' while the Greek 'semeion' translates to 'sign,' encapsulating the theory of signs. The study of signs seeks to uncover the underlying meanings they convey. According to Saussure (1959), semiotics, or semiology, delves into the study of signs in the context of social life. However, in this particular study, the focus is solely on Roland Barthes' semiotic theory."

This revised version aims to provide a more concise and coherent presentation of the historical development of semiotics and the distinctions between related terms.

1.2. Roland Barthes Semiotics

Roland Barthes, born on November 12, 1915, in Cherbourg, Normandy, France, stands as a pivotal figure in the evolution of semiotics. He is widely acknowledged as a successor to Ferdinand de Saussure, the structuralist luminary in the field of semiotics (Rahayu, 2020). Barthes' rich body of work encompasses influential texts such as 'Elementary Of Semiology,' 'S/Z,' 'Mythologies,' 'Camera Lucida,' and notable essays like 'The Death of the Author.' His significant contributions continued to shape the landscape of semiotics until his passing on March 26, 1980.

At its core, semiotics is concerned with the study of signs and their functions in communication. This concept finds its roots in Ferdinand de Saussure's dichotomy of the sign, comprising the 'signifier' and the 'signified,' forming an atomistic binary system. According to Saussure, meaning emerges through the associative relationship between the signified and the signifier.

Barthes, however, expanded this foundation by delving into the intricacies of reading and cultural interactions, considering their profound impact on meaning. He introduced the concepts of 'denotation' and 'connotation' in his semiotic theory (Barthes, 2011). 'Denotation' focuses on the explicit, spontaneous meaning arising from the relationship between the signifier and the signified, reflecting their connection to reality. In contrast, 'connotation' explores implicit meanings tied to diverse contexts, encompassing personal and cultural experiences. These two levels of signification, denotation and connotation, collectively form the order of signification.

Barthes didn't stop there; he introduced another layer in the form of 'myth.' In his context, 'myth' diverges from the conventional mystical or occult interpretation. Instead, he defines 'myth' as a communication system or message (Barthes, 2010). It occupies the second level in producing connotative meanings, which eventually transform into denotation, a process termed 'myth.' Notably, Barthes perceives 'myth' not as the object of the message but as the very means of expressing it. This evolution in Barthes' semiotic theory reveals his conviction that signs extend beyond mere denotations; they harbor connotative meanings that, in turn, give rise to 'myths.' These 'myths' are entwined with cultural and ideological contexts that influence their interpretation and significance."

Signifier	Signified
Denotative Sign	
Connotative Signifier	Connotative Signified
Connotative Sign	

Figure 1. Barthes Sign Map Table

The description of Barthes' sign map can be understood that the meaning of denotation is bound to the existence of markers and signifieds. Likewise the meaning of connotation, depending on the sign of denotation. The consonant sign denotes the next sign. Meaning does not stop at one point, but it will continue to make signs.

To capture a meaning is not enough with the correlation between expression and content, not only found through the code but also a complicated interpretive-contextual "reading". Barthes stated that to interpret a text is not to give it a meaning. On the contrary, appreciating the plurality of what builds it.

The myth of Barthes' Semiotics explains that denotative signs consist of markers and signified, but at the same time, the denotative sign is also a connotative marker. Basically, there is a difference between denotation and connotation in the general sense and denotation and connotation by Barthes. In the semiology of Barthes and his followers, denotation is the first level of signification system, while connotation is the second level. Within Barthes's framework, connotation is synonymous with ideological operations, which it calls "myths" functions to express and provide justification for the dominant values prevailing in a certain period. In myth there are also three-dimensional patterns of signifiers, signifieds, and signs. Myth is an odd system because it is formed from a semiological chain that existed before three-dimensional patterns: signifier, signified and sign. Myth is a second-order semiological system. Myth is a communication system, that myth is a message. Maybe myth is not understood as an object, concept or idea; myth is a mode of signification, a form. Mythical signifiers present themselves ambiguously: it is meanings and forms, full on one side and empty on the other. What Barthes dismantles is not only the relation and level of signification but the concept of ideology itself. Meaning at the second level in tracing the meaning behind the sign is closely related to the cultural context. Ideology referred to as the second level of signification is a system, idea, idea or belief that becomes an established convention in a society that articulates itself in a system of representation or sign system.

2. Methodology

The research method is a procedure used in an effort to obtain data or information in order to obtain answers the problems in the earlier. The determination and techniques used must be able to reflect the relevance of the research phenomena that have been described in the research context.

2.1. Types and Research Approaches

This type of research is a type of qualitative research and the research approach is Roland Barthes' semiotics. Qualitative research is characterized by the purpose of researchers trying to understand the symptoms in such a way that does not require quantification, or because these symptoms are not possible to measure precisely (Garna, 1999, p. 32). Qualitative research must focus on subjective meanings, definitions, allusions, symbols and descriptions of certain cases, so as to be able to capture the social aspects (Neuman, 1997, p. 329). Qualitative research in communication science is a subjective perspective. The assumptions and approaches and research techniques used in this study are very relevant to the characteristics of research with a subjective perspective such as:

The nature of reality that is multiple, complicated, pseudo, b) the actor (subject) is active, creative and it has free will, thus communication behavior is internally controlled by the individual, c) The nature of the relationship in and about reality, d) the nature of the relationship in and regarding reality, e) research objectives related to special matters, f) Descriptive research methods, g) authenticity is a subjective research quality criterion, and h) values, ethics, and moral research choices are inherent in the research process (Mulyana et al., 2007).

Qualitative research is research that is set in a natural place and time. This paradigm also allows for a qualitative interpretation of the research data that has been obtained. In addition, this type of research provides great opportunities for alternative interpretations to be made (Littlejohn, 2002).

2.2. Data collection technique

According to Sugiyono (2009, p. 224).Data collection techniques is the most important step in reviewing research from its main purpose to obtain data. Without knowing data collection techniques, researchers will not get data that meets the established data standards.

This data collection was carried out for three months, in three ways, namely; 1) collect based on references, 2) collect data through interviews, and 3) collect myths or stories that develop in society.

2.3. Data analysis technique

According to (Sugiyono, 2009, p. 244), data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and compiling data obtained from interviews, field notes, and other materials, so that it can be easily understood, and the findings can be informed to others. There are several stages in data analysis which are commonly carried out in qualitative research.

The researcher collects important information related to the research problem, and then classifies the data based on the topic of the problem. The data that has been collected and grouped is arranged systematically so that the researcher can find and examine the important components of the data presentation. Next, the researcher interprets the

data based on the context of the problem and research objectives. From the interpretation carried out conclusions will be obtained in answering the research problem.

After obtaining the data, the next thing the researcher collect sequences that would become the object of research. To analyze the data based on the original purpose, the researcher used Roland Barthes's semiotic theory analysis.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Forms of Sacred Myths at the Gunung Bawakaraeng Post Three

Gunung Bawakaraeng is a mountain located in the village of Lembanna. Entering the peak tourist Malino area, Gowa Regency, Bawakaraeng consists of hills that line up majestically. The highest hill has about 2700 meters above sea level. To climb to the top, it has to follow two hills and 10 hiking trail posts.

Almost all mountainous regions in Indonesia have their own mystical stories that are legendary. Including *Gunung Bawakaraeng* in South Sulawesi, it has many mystical stories. To climb to the top, it has to follow two hills and 10 hiking trail posts. The three Bawakaraeng Mountains post has its own sacred value for the people who are at the foot of Gunung Bawakaraeng compared to other climbing posts. Mystical stories in this area are commonly told among climbers throughout South Sulawesi. Starting from the myth of the existence of a ghost market which local residents call *Anjaya* Market, to other mystical stories. Including the legendary story about the ghost of a beautiful woman named Noni. For the local community, Noni is a nickname for a beautiful woman whose face is like a Dutch woman. Based on the story, she was a woman who died by hanging herself from a tree at post 3 climbing. It is not clear where she came from, but one of the figures in the Lembanna valley said that around the 1970s or 1980s and it was told that woman used to be when this mountain was still quiet from climbing activities that awake at that time.

Almost every weekend, Noni and her lover climb to this moutain just to enjoy the beautiful natural scenery. In fact, the people who live in Lembanna are very familiar with them so often. Therefore, one day she came down from the *Gunung Bawakaraeng* area alone and headed for a residential area. Her face was pale and only occasionally glared and then fell silent, it made the residents surprised to see her attitude, who was previously known as cheerful and friendly lady when she met the local society. When she was seen, it was discovered that it was actually her ghost who was wandering around. It was discovered that a few days later, residents who were looking for wood in the mountain forest area found Noni's body hanging from a large tree branch, at Post Three Gunung Bawakaraeng to be precise.

Since her death, mystical stories have begun to circulate outside, not only in the surrounding community but also among climbers. It is said that she died suddenly and it was suspected of committing suicide because of a hurt heart. Noni's ghost sightings is often seen. The tree where Noni committed suicide is still standing today. In this post three also in 2001 found a climber who was cold and died in this post three mountains. The community and climbers also associate this incident with the story of the noni ghost who committed suicide around the location where the body was found. If it is viewed from the semiotics of Roland Barthes side who explained that denotation is the first level of signification system, while connotation is the second level.

Within Barthes's framework, connotation is synonymous with ideological operations, which it calls "myths" and it functions to express and provide justification for the dominant values prevailing in a certain period. The author examines the change in connotation meaning by residents and climbers when they hear about the Tiga Gunung Bawakaraeng Post, although this mountain is not the only place where the bodies of climbers who died have been found, the community associates such incidents with the ghost of Noni who hangs around at the *Tiga Bawakaraeng* Post so that form the denotation meaning that the three *Gunung Bawakaraeng* posts is declared sacred. So that it developed into a myth for residents and climbers.

As explained in the previous discussion, the myth of the sacred post three of *Gunung Bawakaraeng* has not only developed in the foothills and climbers but has also developed in other areas, both in Sulawesi and outside, even the myth of the *Bawakaraeng* motto is often discussed in local and national media. Although at present the post three of *Gunung Bawakaraeng* has been moved from where all the hegemony of the community and climbers regarding the meanings of the post three of this mountain have not decreased in the hierarchy of meaning, the meaning of the sacredness of the three mountains post has become a denotative meaning and it has become a myth and then it developed into ideology. In this case, the ideology referred to as the second level of signification is a system, idea and belief that becomes an established convention in a society that articulates itself in a system of representation or sign

system. The sacred post three of *Gunung Bawakaraeng* has indirectly become a convention and part of the culture of the local people

3.2. The Influence of Sacred Myths at the Gunung Bawakaraeng Post Three on Local Communities and Climbers

Situated within the historical tapestry of *Gunung Bawakaraeng* Post Three, this region stands as a realm where myths and beliefs intertwine with daily life. The significance of this site, both geographically and culturally, cannot be overstated. It is within this context that the local community's adherence to myths has flourished, yielding both positive and negative consequences.

The community's steadfast belief in the lore surrounding *Gunung Bawakaraeng* Post Three goes beyond superstition; it's a shared narrative that unites generations. These myths have fostered a sense of belonging and pride, providing a cultural glue that holds the community together. Through stories and rituals, the tales of spirits and specters have kindled a deep connection between individuals and their environment.

Drawing from Roland Barthes' conception of myth as a mode of communication, this phenomenon finds resonance. Barthes' theory illuminates the dual nature of myths, serving as both conveyors of meaning and structural forms that shape our worldview. The myths etched into the fabric of Gunung Bawakaraeng Post Three demonstrate this intricate dance between substance and form, giving life to an intricate web of signification.

However, beyond the positive outcomes, the community's overwhelming embrace of these beliefs has inadvertently introduced challenges. The hegemony emerging from the myth's dominance has led to a dilution of adherence to the foundational tenets of the Islamic religion, which has historically anchored the local residents' moral compass. In essence, the myths and beliefs at *Gunung Bawakaraeng* Post Three mirror a profound interplay between tradition and evolution, shaping not only the community's actions but also its spiritual landscape

4. Conclusion

This begins with the story of Noni, who is a female climber who regularly climbs in *Gunung Bawakaraeng* with her lover around the 1970s or 1980s. The charm of Bawakaraeng's natural beauty made her interest, and become her favourite place. It is said that Noni allegedly ended her life because she was hurt by her lover. The tree that is said to be the place where Noni hanged herself is still standing strong at post 3. This tragic ending has made the story of Noni's ghost continue to be heard among climbers. Some climbers are said to have seen Noni's ghost firsthand. However, the stories about Noni's ghost are still a myth among the people.

Furthermore, The myth that develops in the community is that they really believe that the story of G*unung Bawakaraeng* post three, with many incidents that have occurred on this mountain, the community always urges newcomers or climbers to appreciate this post three of *Gunung Bawakaraeng*, for example, the climbers are advised to be more careful. when passing the hiking trail of post three of Mount Bawakaraeng. This myth has developed in various regions both in Sulawesi and outside, and even the myths of this mountain is often discussed in local and national media, even though currently the three *Gunung Bawakaraeng* post has been moved from its original position due to the hegemony of the community and climbers regarding the meaning. Thus, this confirms that myth is a system of communication.

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