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THE UTILIZATION OF TERNATE ORAL TRADITION FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL DISASTERS

PEMANFAATAN TRADISI LISAN TERNATE UNTUK MENGIDENTIFIKASI POTENSI BENCANA

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ABSTRACT

Oral traditions, as an integral part of a society's belief system, not only serve as a guide for society in daily life, such as interactions between members of society and other people, and even with nature or the environment, but they also serve as recorders of history and culture, including natural events. This paper aims to describe the oral traditions of Ternate to identify potential natural disasters that hit Ternate City in particular and North Maluku in general. Therefore, the author uses the theory of myth function to embody the main research problem. The approach used in this paper is semiotics, especially in interpreting natural disasters that occurred in the past through codes contained in oral stories or legends. The research results show that the people of Ternate can only explain a few natural events in the past. Then, it is ontologically digested into myth to symbolise the cosmic-mystical realm of thought. Apart from that, the results of this reflection are related to cause-and-effect events, give rise to rules of behaviour, and become local intellectual ideals. However, records of natural phenomena or past events in myths or legends can, in theory, be linked to the truth and thus make cycles of disaster predictable. On the other hand, in a formal educational setting, this legend can be used to teach about mitigation. Legends about the mysterious origins of certain lakes are thought to include aspects of disaster or mitigation in Ternate.

Keywords: *disasters, mitigation, myth, oral tradition, Ternate*

ABSTRAK

Tradisi lisan, sebagai bagian integral dari sistem kepercayaan masyarakat, tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai pedoman masyarakat dalam kehidupan sehari-hari, seperti interaksi antara anggota masyarakat dengan orang lain, bahkan dengan alam atau lingkungan, tetapi juga berfungsi sebagai perekam sejarah dan budaya, termasuk peristiwa alam. Makalah ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan tradisi lisan Ternate sebagai salah satu upaya untuk mengidentifikasi potensi bencana alam yang melanda Kota Ternate secara khusus, dan Maluku Utara pada umumnya. Oleh karena itu, penulis menggunakan teori fungsi mitos untuk mengejawantahkan pokok persoalan penelitian. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam makalah ini adalah semiotika, terutama dalam upaya menginterpretasi bencana alam yang terjadi pada masa lampau melalui kode-kode yang terdapat dalam cerita lisan atau legenda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa masyarakat Ternate hanya bisa menjelaskan sedikit kejadian alam di masa lalu. Kemudian, dicerna secara ontologis menjadi mitos sebagai simbol lingkup pemikiran kosmis-mistis. Selain itu, hasil refleksi tersebut berkaitan dengan kejadian sebab-akibat, memunculkan kaidah perilaku, dan menjadi cita-cita intelektual lokal. Namun, rekam fenomena alam atau peristiwa masa lalu dalam mitos atau legenda, secara teori, dapat dikaitkan dengan kebenaran sehingga membuat siklus bencana dapat diprediksi. Di sisi lain, dalam lingkungan pendidikan formal, legenda ini dapat digunakan untuk mengajarkan tentang mitigasi. Legenda tentang misteri asal usul danau tertentu diduga mencakup aspek kebencanaan atau mitigasi di Ternate.

Kata kunci: bencana, mitigasi, mitos, Ternate, tradisi lisan.

PENDAHULUAN

In essence, oral tradition, including folklore, is a form of poetry that expresses meaningful signs related to one another and functions correlatively (Zalmansyah et al., 2024). There are so many research that has been conducted about the oral tradition associated with the myth function. Firstly, Tulius (2013) proved that the family stories relate to historical events and contemporary social issues occurred in the Mentawai Islands and affecting the Mentawai kin groups. The Mentawai family stories comprise significant elements defining different kin groups living on the Mentawai Islands. They are also an important source of information with regard to claims to ancestral land. The Mentawai family stories can furthermore be regarded as the kin groups' verbal form of identities. Therefore, to maintain the family stories is indispensable to Mentawai communities and the power of human memory plays an important part in supporting and transmitting the significance of these verbal identities of the communities. Secondly, Endraswara (on Latif A., 2017) states that oral literature consists of educational functions, solace, social protest, and projection of hidden desires. Thirdly, an explanation that is similar regarding myths as part of oral tradition was put forward by Hasanudin WS (on Ati, 2018), who said that one of the functions of myths is also to act as social control. Lastly, Bastian dan Mitchel

(Hasanah & Andari, 2020) found that the function of myths consists of primary functions and secondary functions. The primary function is related to social and cultural systems. Meanwhile, secondary functions relate to things outside of logic.

This paper examines two examples of Ternate oral traditions to identify natural disasters on Ternate Island. These two stories about the lives of Ternate people in the past are full of meaning. The problem of this article is how both of Lake Tolire and Lake Laguna become the source of natural disasters mitigation in Ternate Island? The people of Ternate are familiar with several myths about several natural formation objects that are widely spread (Ajam et al., 2023). The people of Ternate know folklore through legends and myths, such as the formation of Lake Tolire and Lake Laguna.

METHOD

The data in this paper comes from the results of a literature study of previous research that has been carried out. Based on a qualitative description method of phenomena of community beliefs and values held in various oral traditions. This public belief was then re-verified theoretically and with empirical evidence regarding the disaster in North Maluku. Data collection was collected through observations of people's behavior in their belief systems, including beliefs in folklore and their interpretation of natural events or occurrences in the past. Apart from observation, interviews are also a support for obtaining primary data related to disasters. A semiotic approach is used to interpret the codes in Ternate myths or folklore.

RESULT

Topographic Conditions of Ternate

Varying height levels above sea level characterize the topographic conditions of the city of Ternate. However, they are grouped into three categories, namely the low category (0—499 M), the medium category (500—699 M), and the high category (more than 700 M). Based on the height level category above sea level, this area has 53 or 84% sub-districts in the low category, 6 or 10% in the medium category, and four sub-districts in the high category or 6%.

Viewed from a geological point of view, Ternate Island is one of a series of islands that have volcanoes from a line of active stratovolcanoes in the South Pacific that runs across East Asia to Southeast Asia, from north to south. One that is still active on the North Maluku islands is Mount Gamalama on Ternate Island, which has a height of 1,730 m.

The most intense eruptions of the Gamalama volcano occurred in 1608, 1635, 1653, 1763, 1840 and 1862. The greatest eruption recorded happened in the

mid-18th century, precisely on March 10, 1737, which coincided with 22 Dzulkaidah 1149 H, resulting in lava flows from the peak to reach the sea, which is now known as Batu Angus. In more than 400 years (1538—1980), there have been 64 larval eruptions. The eruption that caused panic and displacement of the people of modern Ternate was the first since 1962, on September 4 1980 (Majid, 2017).

From the data obtained, this incident was recorded as occurring on September 7, 1763. The lagoon lake was also formed in the same year, namely on September 6, 1763, the day before. Despite the legend of Laguna Lake, the two lakes were formed at almost the same time. Of course, it is not a coincidence. Similar data regarding the history of the tsunami in North Maluku was obtained from the Meteorology and Geophysics Agency. In September 1763, Ternate was the area affected by the largest tsunami.

Tolire Gam Jaha: The Lost Village

In ancient times, very lively people's parties were being held. In the middle of the party, things happen that are contrary to the customs or traditions that the ancestors have established. Some people party hard while drinking intoxicating alcoholic drinks. Not only young people but older people also consume alcohol. It causes them to lose consciousness and Do things that violate cultural norms. At the same time, a man lost consciousness because he drank too much alcohol. Unexpectedly, while he was drunk, he then did something indecent to his t daughter: have sex. They seemed to have lost their minds. This incident was known to the surrounding community. The father and daughter were reprimanded not to do this disgraceful act, but the warning did not respond. When dawn was almost here, there was the sound of a rooster crowing. However, the cock's crowing at that time was not as usual because it was accompanied by the phrase "*Kukuruyuk...tolire gam jaha*" (Ternate language). The people around the village already know the meaning of the cock's crowing, namely that the town will sink. Unfortunately, they did not pay attention. Life goes on as usual; nothing significant happens.

To their surprise, the ground collapsed, landslides and sank. The people in the village drowned, including the evil father. The girl had time to run and avoid this disaster; she continued to run as far as possible towards the beach. However, in the end, he drowned on the beach. The father and the village sank into a fairly large lake, approximately ten meters deep, to the west.

Meanwhile, where the princess drowned was a rather small and shallow lake. The lake is located to the east, not far from the large lake earlier. This small lake is named "Tolire Ici" or "Small Tolire". These two lakes are located in the northern part of Ternate. The larger and deeper lake is located on land near the foot of Mount Gamalama, and the other is located to the east, right on the coast.

This lake water will merge with seawater at high tide.

The Legend of Laguna Lake

Telaga Ngade, known as Lake Laguna, is located in Fitu Village, South Ternate City. Initially, Lake Laguna was a village led by a king. One night before dawn, when all the people were fast asleep, suddenly a servant of the king heard the sound of his pet cock crowing. However, the rooster's crowing was different from usual. The rooster was crowing, and it sounded like the village would drown. This servant immediately went to the king and told him what he had heard. Unfortunately, the king did not heed it. He immediately informed the people around him about this. People do not care about this news.

The servant still thought that what he had heard would happen. He believed in the crowing of his pet chicken. Not waiting any longer, he immediately prepared supplies and items he wanted to save. In his mind, even if the king or the people did not believe in him, he would still evacuate himself. The supplies he brought were tumang sago, a horse-horse (a type of machete that cuts grass), a tolu (a type of wide hat with a cone-shaped top made of bark) and a chicken. All the supplies are put into a "saloi" (a kind of backpack made from woven rattan or bamboo). After everything was finished, he walked out of the house. When the maid was about to leave her village, it turned out that fate had different plans. Before he had time to go far from his village, the town immediately sank. The maid also drowned along with her luggage.

The sago he brought as provisions later emerged on the surface of the water and grew into sago trees around the lake; his "Tolu" or hat emerged from the surface of the water to become a lotus flower, and his chicken turned into a Morowiri bird. Currently, sago trees, lotus flowers and Morowiri birds are often found in Ngade Lake.

DISCUSSION

Roland Barthes' concept of myth (Kartika et al., 2022) departs from the semiological thinking of Ferdinand de Saussure, known as the originator of semiotic theory or semiology from a linguistic perspective. Another semiotic study was introduced by the philosopher Charles S. Peirce, who put forward the triangular theory of meaning, sign or representation, object and interpretant. Peirce's semiotic studies are used as a basis in addition to Roland Barthes' theory of myth because the target of observation is the phenomenon of society's perspective on events and the results of natural formations in the past. Society's perspective tends to create new concepts. However, it is still on a mythic level. Peirce stated that the interpretant or sign user is the concept of thought of the person who uses the sign and reduces it to a certain meaning or meaning that exists in the object referred to by a sign. The concept of signs itself by Barthes

(Rauf, 2018b) is divided into three basic types, namely iconic, motivational and arbitrary.

The two legendary stories from the land of the Ternate sultanate that were mentioned previously are still believed by the public to be legendary stories that occurred because of bad human actions. Belief in this mythical story leads to steadfastness in faith and moral values. In this case, oral literature functions as social control. The value system formed in society emerges from society's interpretation of certain events. This interpretation then developed by word of mouth and was finally accepted collectively.

Myths have a dual function (Yusanti, 2019). It relates to the secondary function of myth in the connotative realm, symbolic, symbolic, figure of speech, and special and subjective meaning, often interpreted by the listener or reader. Semiotics is used to analyze certain codes in the two folktales above as a science of signs. There are similarities between the two myths, including 1) the unusual sound of a chicken crowing. These two folk tales illustrate that the beginning of the event was marked by the distinctive sound of a rooster crowing; 2) the time of the incident in both stories is also shortly before dawn; 3) illustrates the sinking village as a climax; and 4) after the disaster, an object was formed namely a lake. The climax of these two folk tales always ends with the lake's appearance. The four aspects of the story equation are representations of codes (Andi-Atjo, 2001; Ati, 2018).

The people of Ternate refer to these two lakes as moral symbols always associated with human behaviour or actions that must always be protected. This symbol was formed based on their interpretation of the events that formed the two lakes. However, as Barthes pointed out, there are levels of connotation and denotation in the meaning of myth; it could be that interpretants or signifiers in semiological terms need to be reinterpreted empirically by referring to disaster records in Ternate in particular or North Maluku in general. In this way, a new meaning (denotative) will emerge that can change the old myth into a new myth based on empirical evidence.

Until now, most people still believe that Tolire Lake is a symbol of disaster that occurred as a result of human violations against the Creator. It means that the educational function of myths or oral traditions can be seen. Apart from the educational function, the social control function is also present because it can also be said that this lake is a human moral icon. So, for decades, there have always been prohibitions on certain behaviors among members of society. Even in the belief system, people still believe in supernatural powers around them, so efforts to maintain the balance of nature are still being carried out with certain types of rituals. However, the implementation mechanism is more in Islamic ways. Apart from all these things, the myth about the lake, both as a symbol and an icon, has been conceptualized in people's minds. This concept was, of course, helped by

the community's interpretation of the existence of the two lakes, which conventionally has been transformed into folklore from generation to generation.

Regarding the functions of myth, Roland Barthes (2007) stated that a myth is a message that the mythmaker wants to convey and is not a concept, idea or object. Furthermore, myths are said to be a communication tool to convey a message (Rauf et al., 2024). About the myths in Ternate folklore regarding the formation of Tolire and Laguna lakes, it can be assumed that the substance in these two myths is that there are messages that must be understood. These messages are enclosed in code packages. Indirectly, in oral traditions or oral literature, there are codes (signs) that need to be interpreted. Whatever the form of oral tradition, poetry, myths and legends. Eco (Attas, 2019) explains that the function of a birthmark is an expression associated with content. These two interrelated elements become the link. A sign is a meeting place for independent aspects of expression and content that meet based on a coding relationship (Rasiah et al., 2024). A sign does not only represent something else or refer to the meaning in the dictionary but must be interpreted (Rauf, 2018a). The results of the interpretation of this sign will lead to cultural meaning. If we examine the codes and signs in oral literature, we will find meaningful messages representing the values.

Not much different from Eco's opinion, Roland Barthes (2007) also states that myth is a type of speech. Myth is not random talk or talk; language requires special codes to become a myth (Rauf et al., 2020). The codes that are understood then become a value system. The values adhered to by society then inherently slowly shape society's identity (Rauf & Amalia Masri, 2019). Furthermore, Barthes (Rauf, 2017) also saw another aspect of signification, namely the "myth" that marks a society. Myth, according to Barthes (Rauf et al., 2023), is located at the second level of signification, so after a sign-signifier-signified system is formed, the sign will become a new signifier, which then has a second signified and forms a new sign (Rauf & Ulya, 2021). So, when a sign that has a connotation meaning then develops into a denotation meaning, then the denotation meaning will become a myth. Myths have a historical basis because they were chosen by history to be included in the science of semiology (Laxmi et al., 2020).

So, oral traditions such as poetry, folklore, legends, myths, and fables have certain meanings or messages and serve as guidelines for society in living their daily lives and interactions between fellow members of society, other people, and the environment. Oral traditions can even be a record of history and culture as well as events such as natural disasters. It indicates that the meaning or value of oral traditions should be explored or studied in order to find messages that are full of various meanings for human life**.**

CONCLUSION

Based on the previous explanation, it can be concluded that myths, legends and oral traditions are often present as characteristics of people's thinking, which is still cosmos-mystical due to the inability to understand natural events that occur and tend to conclude that they are causal events. It means that certain forms of violation of norms result in wrath or punishment from the Creator. However, whatever the belief, there is always certain information or knowledge in various forms of oral tradition. It refers to the characteristics and functions of oral tradition, including education, because it contains elements of pedagogy and social control; it becomes a motivation and measure of norms that apply in society.

The folklore of Lake Tolire and Lake Laguna are two examples of the oral traditions of the Ternate people, which can be used as the main source of disaster mitigation on Ternate Island. Both stories contain codes or symbols that can guide humans' daily lives. For example, people must maintain polite manners to avoid natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions and landslides.

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