

# Levi-Strauss's Myth Structuralism in the Novel *Lontara* by Windy Joana

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## ABSTRACT

Myth can be defined as a story or culture of a community that contains religion and passes it on orally, which can influence people's lives. Morphology events relate to the origin of the universe, the first humans, gods, and other supernatural beings. This research discusses mythology as the study of mythical stories, which are often related to the lives of gods and spirits in people's cultures. One of the myths analyzed in this study is the myth of To Manurung in the novel *Lontara* by Windy Joana, which tells the story of a messenger of God for the Bugis Makassar community. This research aims to describe the myth structure in the novel *Lontara* through four levels proposed by Lévi-Strauss, namely geographical, economic, sociological, and cosmological levels. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. This research refers to Claude Lévi-Strauss' theory of myth structuralism, which identifies four levels in the myth structure, namely geographical, economic, sociological, and cosmological levels. The results of this study show that in the novel *Lontara* by Windy Joana, there are four levels of myth structure, namely: (1) Geographical Level, (2) Economic Level, (3) Sociological Level, and (4) Cosmological Level.

**Keywords :** Structuralism, Myth, Lévi-Strauss, *Lontara*, To Manurung

## INTRODUCTION

Mythology is a science that discusses mythical stories. The term emerged when mythical stories became interesting conversations and became a science related to the lives of gods and spirits in a culture. Myths are also stories that produce specific guidelines for life and direction for people who believe in them. The stories are told with expressions, and dances complement some during the performance (Rafiek, 2018). According to Barthes (in Susanto, 2019), mythology is a discourse that uses language. This means that myth is a message that is conveyed and only discussed. Mythology covers a broad and diverse range of issues widely discussed in anthropology, literature, and religion. Myth can also be defined as a story or culture of a community that contains religion and passes it on orally, which can influence people's lives. Events in myths relate to the origin of the universe, the first humans, gods, and other supernatural beings.

Humans live in a civilization that produces a culture. This culture influences humans to form patterns of thought, behavior, beliefs, customs, habits, traditions, values, and even myths in society. However, today, many new ideas are developing in the world, which more or less

affect the culture of society. This has led to ideological conflicts between traditional society and modern society. Thus, it certainly affects the development of literary works.

Writers create literary works not only to be read, but ideas, experiences, and what is conveyed in literary works can be input so that readers can wisely draw conclusions and apply them to help develop their lives. The life of society, with all its problems today, does not rule out the possibility of being poured into literary works so that they can be a reflection of society itself. This proves that literature can develop culture in society.

Literature contains educational values, morals, and cultural aspects in each work. This makes literature a place to preserve the nation's cultural traditions from generation to generation. In today's modern era, people preserve their cultural traditions as myths. Myths are often found in one particular region. Myth is a structured principle in literary works that gives the relationship a story and meaning (Ratna, 2017). Myths and mites have something in common: they are both part of a science called mythology. According to Levi-Strauss, myths exist in two times at once: time that can be reversed and time that cannot be reversed. This can be seen from the fact that myths always point to past events (Putra, 2016). As such, myths not only speak of the past but also relate it to the present and the future, making them a means of explaining phenomena that keep recurring in human life. Myths that always point to past events show that myths function as intermediaries between times, allowing people to understand the world through events that have already happened but have relevant meanings in every era.

The above assumptions attracted the researcher to conduct a study related to one of the myths belonging to the Bugis Makassar tribe, To Manurung, contained in the novel *Lontara* by Windy Joana. The novel *Lontara*, the object of this research study, tells the myth of To Manurung, whom the Bugis people believe to be a messenger of God to fix a chaotic and conflicted land. The story in this novel makes it have a broader relationship and, at the same time, explains some of the links with the myth structure according to Levi-Strauss structuralism, namely to find out the place, community interactions between individuals, activities that occur in society through myth structures and ancient beliefs in society, one of which is the belief in the existence of To Manurung or the figure of God's messenger. The Novel *Lontara* describes society through mythology and ancient beliefs in society in the historical setting of Bugis society in 15 AD. This research focuses on the structure of myth with four levels according to Levi-Strauss, namely, geographical, economic, sociological, and cosmological levels in the novel *Lontara* by Windy Joana as research material.

## **METHODS**

This type of research is descriptive qualitative. Qualitative research methods produce words or writing based on the behavior of several people observed (Moleong, 2017). As for descriptive, it aims to systematically describe a particular field's facts or characteristics carefully and realistically. The qualitative descriptive method is a way to solve problems thoroughly by showing or describing the condition of the object or subject of research. The data collected in this research is from myths or mythology in the novel *Lontara* by Windy Joana with structuralism C. Levi-Strauss's structuralism approach. The data source used in this research is the novel *Lontara* by Windy Joana, published in 2023; this novel tells the

story of To Manurung, a mythological creature believed by the Bugis people. The entire history of the descent of To Manurung is recorded in the I La Galigo manuscript, a masterpiece of the Bugis tribe from South Sulawesi. After arriving at the data collection stage, the researcher then analyzes the data by grouping the results of the data obtained based on the problem that the researcher wants to study—organizing the data obtained by describing the data per the research objectives. Provide conclusions on the results of the data obtained based on the final results by studying the Levi-Strauss structuralism theory. Conclusions can be drawn from the data obtained through the Levi-Strauss structuralism theory. The mythical structure consists of geographical, economic, sociological, and cosmological levels, by those in the novel Lontara by Windy Joana.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Levi-Strauss, structural analysis has a relationship between myths that will be organized and arranged into a scheme. In the structural approach, the scheme or pattern generated from the messages or myths found will reflect the picture or pattern of the message (Putra, 2016). When all messages and myths are structurally organized and form a schema, the author's meaning and purpose in creating literary works will become very clear. The schema will help reveal hidden meanings in a literary work, whether in a geographical, economic, or cosmological context. According to Levi-Strauss, a story never gives its audience a specific, fixed meaning. A fairy tale, for example, only provides its audience with a grid. This grid can only be determined by the rules underlying its construction. For the people who support the myth, this grid, said Levi-Strauss, does not provide clues to the meaning of the myth itself but shows something else, namely views of the world, society, and history, which are more or less known by the people who own the myth (Putra, 2016). Then, in his analysis, Levi Strauss distinguishes four classifications in the formation of mythical structures: geography, economics, sociology, and cosmology (Putra, 2016). These four levels are still present in a story, which Levi-Strauss considers as a mythical structure. The four levels are:

### Geographical Level

According to (Levi-Strauss Putra, 2016) the geographical level is related to the places and areas of travel in a mythical story.

In the novel Lontara by Windy Joana, there is a description of the mythical structure related to the geographical level. The following are some excerpts from the novel containing the geographical level relating to where the mythological creature in Bugis belief, To Manurung, first appeared. The following are excerpts that describe the region:

- (1) *So the story of To Manurung that he read began when the gods in the sky agreed to populate this world by sending Batara Guru (from the sky) and Nyilotomo (from the underworld) to become rulers of the Earth. Their son was born Batara Lattu from their marriage, who later replaced his father to rule Luwu* (Joana, 2023). The quote above explains the story of To Manurung, which is described in the structure of the geographical level, with a sign of the difference in territory between the upper world and the lower world; the upper world is described as the sky, and the lower world is

described as a hidden place in the mythical story. Batara Guru comes from the sky, representing cosmic power and being the place of all supernatural beings. Nyilotomo comes from the underworld, often associated with the darker, hidden world. Then, the Earth becomes the starting place of the meeting between the two; the Earth becomes the point of meeting or where these two different worlds come together to create a new order.

Batara Guru and Nyilotomo, who were sent down to earth, lived like ordinary people; they had offspring from their marriage, as explained in the following quote: "From their second marriage was born their son named Batara Lattu, who later replaced his father to rule Luwu" (Joana, 2023). It is illustrated from this quote that Batara Lattu, who is their son, represents a figure who was born to inherit the power of several areas around the place where the two descended. The most important area is the land of Luwuq, an area on earth that marks the first place where the two messenger beings of God descended. The explanation of the land of Luwu being the beginning of its reign is reinforced through the following quote. Luwu, whose reign began from Batara Guru or the 1st Datu Luwu to the 35th Datu Luwu, underwent a period of approximately 10 to 12 centuries. The importance of the kingdom of Luwu was recognized by other kingdoms who considered that there was glory in Luwu. The glory refers to Luwu's role as a historical place and the beginning of the first power on earth. In the land of Luwu, To Manurung, a sacred being, descended to earth, symbolically emphasizing the high glory of Luwu itself.

(2) *Yes, the author of the longest epic sure La Galigo is the son of Sawerigading, the descendant of Batara Lattu and Batara Guru, To Manurung, who was first descended in the land of Bugis, which the Bugis tribe, especially the people of Luwu, believe to be their ancestor.* (Joana, 2023)

This quote explains that there is a descendant named La Galigo; he is the son of Sawerigading, descended from Batara Lattu, the grandson of Batara Guru. The land of Luwu is the first place where To Manurung descended. The land of Luwu became the beginning of the genealogy of To Manurung's descendants, which began with the descent of the celestial being to continue his lineage. The quote also explains that the first descent of To Manurung in Luwu land is believed by the Bugis tribe, especially the people of Luwu, as their ancestors.

(3) (3) *Land of Luwu 15 AD*

*There is a land where To Manurung is revered. It is said that the first To Manurung descended on this land. Sawerigading was his name, and it was here that he bred offspring, eventually leading region after region* (Joana, (Joana, 2023).

This quote also confirms that the land of Luwu is where To Manurung is honored. This is also where the celestial being first descended, as seen in the following quote: "Sawerigading was his name, and here too he multiplied, producing descendants who eventually led region after region" . Sawerigading is a descendant of Batara Lattu and gave birth to generations who later led the regions in Luwu land, one of whose descendants is La Galigo. To Manurung himself is a mythological figure whose arrival is recorded in Sureq I La Galigo, a masterpiece of Bugis literature from South Sulawesi, written by his descendant, La Galigo, the son of Sawerigading.

The two quotations above show the geographical level of the Luwu region, which has significance in the history and beliefs of the Bugis people, especially the Luwu people, as the first place where To Manurung, a mythological figure who is respected and believed to be their ancestor, descended. Manurung is believed to be a being from the sky who descended to start a lineage, which began with the birth of Sawerigading, the son of Batara Lattu and grandson of Batara Guru. Sawerigading, the main character in this lineage, then gave birth to descendants who led various regions in Tanah Luwu.

### **Economic Level**

The structure of myths that are understood in the context of economic activities and ways of fulfilling material needs in the myth-holding community is at the economic level. According to Levi-Strauss (Putra, 2016) the economic level pays attention to the myth's elements that tell the characters' experience, namely their economic activities.

The economic level in the novel *Lontara* by Windy Joana can be seen in the following quote:

Tataran ekonomi dalam novel *Lontara* karya Windy Joana terlihat pada kutipan berikut:

(1) *The kingdom by the big lake was not always crowded on weekdays, with only a few children playing, the women tending the plants in the garden with their husbands, or doing housework. The men were divided; some were fishing in the lake, some in the garden, and some out of the village to trade* (Joana, 2023).

In the text excerpt above, it is clear that people in the Kingdom of Wajo land have a variety of daily activities related to their economic activities. The people of Wajo land do various activities such as gardening, fishing, and trading, which are part of their livelihood. The community utilizes Lake Ri Lampulung for fishing activities, which stretches widely and extends along the Wajo land area. The lake is the primary source of livelihood for the local community in fisheries, where they catch fish as a source of food and for sale. In addition to fishing, some people develop gardening activities. They utilize the fertile soil in the Wajo land area to grow various types of plants.

(2) *This land will be famous for its beautiful weaving. Instantly, the thought slipped away, and Mabello was sure it was from the Gods because the sky-holder loves beauty* (Joana, 2023).

This quote explains the economic level through the intermediary made by To Manurung. So, the beginning of weaving came from the thought of To Manurung, the celestial being, who predicted that the land would be famous because the weaving was so beautiful. The myth of To Manurung and the beauty of weaving that the Gods highly favor illustrate how the local economy, namely weaving, is considered not only an activity that describes the community's economy but also as a sacred thing that the Gods have arranged through his messenger To Manurung. In this case, Manurung predicted and inspired the Wajo people's proficiency in weaving; he saw the beauty of the woven cloth and felt that God would highly favor this beauty.

### **Sociological Level**

According to Levi-Strauss (Putra, 2016), this level of sociology concerns the characters' social status. In this case, it looks at myths about social structures and relationships between individuals in society, including social roles, norms, and rules in the community.

Tataran sosiologi dalam novel *Lontara* karya Windy Joana terlihat pada kutipan berikut:

- (1) *Small disputes began to occur and were slowly exaggerated until a wise man whose name was unknown came along. He was known to be strong, knew the signs of nature and good farming practices, and was so wise that his words were always heard, inviting them to tudang sipulung (sit together to find a solution)* (Joana, 2023).

In the quoted sentence above, the sociological level includes a mythical element that reflects social order through the figure of a nameless but symbolically powerful sage who is able to understand the signs of nature and master important skills such as farming. This figure is a structural element that resolves social conflict, inviting those in conflict to “tudang sipulung.” Tudang sprung reflects the values of gotong royong, togetherness, and wisdom in Bugis and Makassarese society. This deliberation emphasizes social harmony and emphasizes the importance of the voice of every layer of society without exception; this deliberation is led by someone who can become an arbiter so that later, every voice of the people will be heard; from the deliberation, it is expected to find a solution and a way out. This process clearly illustrates the sociological level of how social conflicts can be resolved through deliberation between the people.

In the excerpt below, the people are seen rebuilding a kingdom destroyed by the civil war. The trust of the people to revive their land illustrates the firm stance and loyalty to the community reflected in the quote below:

- (2) *“The kingdom rose again, and the remnants of the civil war united and slowly revived the land by the lake. Those who survived had lived far away but returned to build on the land of Riampulung”* (Joana, 2023).

From the excerpt in Windy Joana's *Lontara* novel above explaining the sociology level, it can be seen from the people who rose again and united to rebuild their destroyed land. It illustrates how people still want to defend the land they live in even though it was destroyed by the civil war that occurred. The survivors' return and the land's rebuilding reflects the belief that the glory days can be restored by building each other up and working together, strengthening community identity and fostering a sense of social solidarity within the community. The revival of the kingdom after the civil war illustrates the community's efforts to return to a stable social order after a period of chaos. The sociological level of the sentence fragment above illustrates how myths are seen as stories and play a role in shaping and strengthening the social structure of the affected community. In addition, myths also explain how communities cope with the conflicts of the civil war and bring back harmony by building areas that they consider sacred or symbolically important.

### **Cosmological Level**

The cosmological level explains the community's belief system that underlies the myth. According to Levi-Strauss (Putra, 2016), the cosmological level has nothing to do with

reality. This includes concepts about the universe, goddesses, supernatural beings, and cosmic rules that affect other human lives.

The cosmological level in Windy Joana's *Lontara* is seen in the following quote:

(1) *Those sent by Dewata UsewaE' (God Almighty) are called To Manurung, which means people who are sent down (from the sky), who have no origin of birth, no relatives, and no one knows their arrival and disappearance. They are said to be heavenly people, very beautiful in appearance and behavior, full of wisdom and intelligence; where they are sent down, there will be peace. (Joana, 2023).*

The above quote shows the cosmological level. To Manurung is described as a creature from the supernatural world, namely the sky. To Manurung does not come from the birth of ordinary humans, so they have no connection to the concept of human origins, such as descent and family. This reinforces the idea that these To Manurung exist in different worlds, namely the upper world (sky) and the lower world (earth). Some Bugis people believe that their ancestors are local people who have been visited by human "To" spirits from above (heaven) who descend "Manurung" who then appear "tempo," bringing norms and rules that cause the welfare of the community (Wahyuni, 2019). So, the presence of To Manurung in the community symbolizes human efforts to connect these two worlds, creating peace through a figure that transcends social and cosmic boundaries.

(2) *being visited by celestial beings is a great fortune. The sky has long been symbolized as the highest, most magical place where the gods are said to come from. The sky is sacred, as are the beings who descend from it, such as the To Manurung (Joana, 2023).*

Based on this quote, beings descending from the sky, such as To Manurung, are seen as intermediaries between the human world and the sky and are related to cosmic powers. The arrival of this figure brings excellent luck. The sky has long been symbolized as the highest, most magical place where the gods are said to come from (Joana, 2023). In this case, the sky symbolizes the sacred world, the origin of supernatural powers. In specific mythological contexts, the sky is often symbolized as a high, pure, sacred place where divine powers or entities reside. To Manurung, mystical figures or beings believed to descend from the sky are intermediaries between the human world and the upper world. They are considered sacred because they come from the sky, the origin of cosmic or supernatural forces believed to bring messages and great fortune to humans.

(3) *Celestial being—that is how people label Mabello as a human being who is true or descended from the sky, where the sky symbolizes something untouchable, high, and holy. Of course, humans who come from there are also similar in nature. Mabello is the same, but he has been told that when his feet tread the ground, he will also become part of the land without forgetting his heavenly origin (Joana, 2023).*

As a symbol of elevation and purity, the sky reflects between the limited world of humans and the perfect world above. Mabello, who is in the story To Manurung, is considered a being who descends from the sky. However, even though Mabello sets his feet on the ground, he still retains the awareness of his origin from the sky. This shows that there is a difference between the real and unreal worlds, as according to Levi Strauss' opinion that the cosmological level is something that has nothing to do with reality (Putra, 2016), the meaning

of having nothing to do with reality is the power of the sky referred to in the text quoted above.

## CONCLUSION

From the discussion, it is concluded that this novel has four levels in forming myth structures according to Levi-Strauss' structuralism theory. The four levels include geography, economy, sociology, and cosmology. The geographical level is characterized by several areas of travel from the beginning of To Manurung's descent to earth to leading the Luwu land area. The economic level includes the economic activities carried out by the myth-holding community in the story of Windy Joana's Lontara novel. The community at that time carried out several activities such as fishing, gardening, weaving, and then selling the results by trading. The level of sociology looks at the community's social structure, such as its social relationships. The cosmological level can be seen from signs that are not real. Namely, To Manurung is described as a creature from the sky, a cosmic celestial power. This myth is important in maintaining and reorganizing social structures, connecting past and present, and creating a balance between humans and nature in their cosmological view. These four levels illustrate the complex interactions between society, economy, territory, and spiritual beliefs interwoven in the mythic structure.

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