

The Myth of Forgiveness for Christians in the Gospel Johannes 19:29 and the Gospel John 19:30 (Roland Barthes Semiotic Frame)

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ABSTRACT

The importance of Jesus as a holy figure, as well as the anguish and controversy that surrounded his death, have motivated us to conduct an interdisciplinary investigation of the events surrounding his crucifixion. As a result, this study will look at the crucifixion and death of Jesus through the linguistic. This research is to examine many signs contained in the Gospel of John 19:29 and the Gospel of John 19:30. This research will look at sour grapes as a signifier and sponge as a signified. Aside from that, the researchers would like to look into the hidden meaning or myth in the words "it is finished" that Christ said. This research employs Roland Barthes' semiotics to deconstruct the meaning of John' gospel. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach. The approach used in this research is data reduction.

INTRODUCTION

Christianity has profoundly influenced the course of human history. It has also contributed to the modern world development. The primacy of Jesus as a historical figure as well as the suffering and controversy surrounding his death, have prompted us to conduct an interdisciplinary research into the circumstances surrounding his crucifixion. As a consequence, rather than a theological treatise, we intend to present a more medically and historically accurate account of a man named Jesus Christ's death. Christianity is one of the heavenly religions that have various religious symbols used in religious rituals. One symbol that has an important role in their religious rituals is the symbol of the cross. The symbol of the cross means a lot to the lives of Christians and can be said to be a symbol of identity for Christianity. But basically this cross symbol appeared centuries ago before the advent of Christianity. In general, the meaning contained in the cross symbol is that the cross symbol reminds of Jesus' sacrifice to be able to save them from sins to get their happiness.

In general, there is no human being wants his or her life to continue to suffer. Humans unquestionably want to be happy. But, of course, happiness is a very broad concept. People frequently understand that happiness can be obtained when humans are able to meet basic needs such as clothing, food, and shelter. People are less anxious and worried about their lives when their basic needs are met. The emphasis on feeling safe and secure is the main reference in the definition of happiness. This appears to be consistent with the definition of happiness given by the Big Indonesian Dictionary, which states that happiness is a state of being peaceful and happy. The current spirit of Christianity is one of developing a theology that liberates the oppressed, marginalized, unnoticed, and even all forms of suffering. This zeal can be viewed as a positive value in an effort to carry on the works of Jesus, who is always on the side of those in need. As a result, not a few well-known theologians attempt to offer some thought contributions in response to the problem of human suffering in the context in general.

The Christ's research will never be ended, indeed. The person, who this concept, he or she believes in Christ's impunity. By seeing this conception, we can see that each person has differently arguments. The impassible view holds that Allah is an independent being who does not rely on humans or other creatures. This viewpoint also emphasizes that God does not suffer or experience pain because His existence transcends human reality and suffering. Accepting the concept of impossibility is equivalent to rejecting the cross's suffering as a manifestation of God's love for humanity. However, if Jesus suffering is rejected, it implies that the cross is illegitimate.

This research is based on the observation that people commonly struggle to understand the contents of the Holy Scriptures because the contents and messages are frequently conveyed indirectly. As a result, the Holy Scriptures as a text or discourse must be studied from the standpoint of language. The goal is simple: to comprehend the discourse more comprehensively. In this research, the researchers intend to examine the seven statements of Jesus when he was crucified. However, we only focus on the hidden meaning (myth) of symbol of

sour grapes and Jesus' statement "it is finished:". This event is written in the letter of John (19: 29-30). In the Christian Bible, the person of God can be seen from every book in the Bible, one of which is the Book of John. John was originally oral and not solely for writing. John is prayed and sung first and then written. Most of the psalms were just written when they were collected. In this research, the author ventured to employ one of Bible's narrative texts to highlight the suffering of the cross in John 19:30. John is divided into 21 chapters. The Lord Jesus is described in this book as the Word who became flesh, the Son of God. The Gospel of John is one of the books found in the New Testament. According to David L. Bartlett (2003), the book included in this series of canonical gospels has a style and structure that distinguishes it from the other three gospels, which include the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke.

In terminology of John, according Samuel Benyamin Hakh (2010), this letter is intended for groups of readers who are alone. This group is a branch of an ancient people's fellowship whose tradition revolves all over Jesus and His disciples. So the reading group's language is Greek, the author translates several Jewish terms into Greek, such as Messiah, Rabbi, Rabbi, and more. Several parties clashed with this group of readers. First, there were the followers of John the Baptist, and then there were the Jews. Apart from that, Bambang Subandrijo (2010) suggests that John's writings were motivated by the philosophical thought of Gnosticism in order to counter the influence of this sect within the congregation. This is supported by the terminology used in John's writings, such as cosmos, death, and resurrection.

Researchers will analyze this through language studies within the semiotic framework of Roland Barthes. The ideal language study should cover all aspects and components of language. Most studies of language are based on a grammatical approach only, even though the aspects of language such as discourse are the most important things to study. Language is defined in linguistic discourse as a system of meaningful and articulate sound symbols that are arbitrary and conventional in nature and are used as a means of communication by a group of people to generate feelings and thoughts. Language is a collection of words that have been arranged systematically in order to be used as a means of communication. The term language can be used in a literal and metaphorical sense. In a literal sense, the term language refers to ordinary, natural language used in everyday life. Sobur Alex. (2001) told meanwhile, in a metaphorical sense, the term language refers to various ways of communication or contact, such as gestures or other symbols. From these two terms it can be said that linguistics deals with ordinary language, which is natural, which is used in everyday life.

The word in the language is an essential component of the community group's signs. As a consequence, the word is symbolic. In semiotic frame, language is a system of vocal symbols used to communicate with humans, which implies that language is systematically regulated and symbolized based on social agreements. In Zaimar (2014, 25), Saussure argues that language is a manifestation of the most fundamental system for humans, who have certain concepts and use them to communicate with others. Roland Barthes is a

Saussurean who believes that a sign system reflects the assumptions of a specific society at a specific time. Semiotics, or semiology in the terms of Roland Barthes, seeks to investigate how humans interpret information contained in a text. Meaning implies that objects not only carry information, in which case they are to be communicated, but also form a structured system of signs. Barthes in Huppatz (2015) implies that the role of the reader is an important area that Barthes explores in his study of signs. Roland Barthes used the signifier and signified theory and came up with the theory of connotation. The main difference is that Barthes emphasizes his theory on myth and on specific cultural societies and not individuals.

Barthes argues that all things that are considered normal in a society are the result of a process of connotation. Another difference is in the context's emphasis on marking. Barthes uses the term expression for significant (signifier) and content signifié (signified). Theoretically language as a system is indeed static, for example a hand means a green table. This he called the language as the first order. However, language as a second order allows the word souvenir to carry the meaning. This second layer is called signified. This is also related to the statement from Lawton (2011) which states that If the denotation is a visible, closed explicit mark, the implication is open to new interpretations and thus can reveal a deeper meaning of the object of study. That is why the researchers used the semiotic analysis of Roland Barthes to express deep meaning.

Although it is the original nature sign, connotation requires the reader's participation in order to function. Signs, whether either intentionally or unintentionally, represent something in semiotics. "A sign can also be a symbol if the relationship between the sign and the representation is based on an agreement or convention, for example, if there is smoke there is fire," as according Hoed (2008, 5). Furthermore, Budiman (2005, 34) implies that the symbol is a sign related to the object and is determined by generally accepted regulations.

Barthes provides a concise overview of what he refers to as a second level system of meaning, which is built on previous systems. This second system is referred to as connotative by Barthes, who distinguishes it from denotative or first-level meaning systems in his *Mythologies*. Before discussing myth in Barthes' semiotic method, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of myth which is understood in the general public is different from the myth meant by Barthes. Myth in Barthes' view, as explained by Zaimar (2014) is language. From this view myth means a system of communication and a message. Myth in Barthes' semiotic method is a development of connotation. In short, the connotation that has been formed for a long time and becomes the view of society is a myth. For Barthes, myth is a semiological system in the form of a system of signs which are interpreted by humans.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theological Interpretations of John 19:29-30

Scholars generally interpret John 19:29-30 as the moment of Jesus' ultimate sacrifice, where he declares "It is finished" (*Tetelestai*). This phrase is often understood as the completion of God's salvific work, signifying that humanity's sins have been forgiven through Christ's atonement. Many theologians argue

that this moment represents the foundational belief in divine forgiveness, emphasizing grace and reconciliation (Morris, 1995; Wright, 2003).

However, some theological perspectives question the universality and immediacy of this forgiveness. The idea that forgiveness is granted unequivocally upon Jesus' crucifixion is contested by scholars who highlight the necessity of repentance, faith, and personal transformation (Strecker, 2000; Dunn, 2012). This debate forms the basis for re-examining the mythic construction of forgiveness.

Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis and Myth

Roland Barthes (1972) describes myth as a second-order semiotic system in which cultural signs are transformed into naturalized truths. In this framework, religious concepts such as forgiveness become mythic when they are assumed to be universal, unchallenged, and beyond historical scrutiny. Barthes' semiotic approach helps decode the ideological structures underlying religious narratives, revealing how forgiveness may function as a myth to sustain doctrinal authority and theological consistency.

Applying Barthes' framework, the phrase "It is finished" can be seen as a signifier within a broader Christian mythos. The myth of forgiveness, as perpetuated in religious discourse, often masks the complexities of justice, repentance, and moral responsibility. While traditional Christian theology presents forgiveness as a divine act achieved through Jesus' sacrifice, Barthesian analysis suggests that this notion may serve institutional and ideological purposes, shaping believers' perceptions and behaviors.

Deconstructing the Myth of Forgiveness

Several critical scholars, influenced by Barthes' semiotics, argue that the Christian narrative of forgiveness may obscure the ethical and existential challenges associated with genuine reconciliation (Girard, 1986; Žižek, 2003). For instance, the unconditional nature of divine forgiveness could be interpreted as undermining human agency in moral accountability and restorative justice.

Furthermore, the symbolic act of Jesus' crucifixion, when analyzed through Barthes' framework, may function as a myth that reinforces Christian dogma rather than addressing the complexities of human transgression. The repeated invocation of Christ's sacrifice as an all-encompassing remedy for sin might contribute to passive acceptance rather than active moral engagement in ethical dilemmas (Eagleton, 2014).

Contemporary Implications and Critiques

Modern theological and philosophical debates continue to interrogate the role of forgiveness in religious and secular contexts. Critics argue that forgiveness, when framed as a divine mandate, can be weaponized to enforce submission and compliance within religious communities (Volf, 2006; Caputo, 2015). Others propose alternative readings of John 19:29-30 that emphasize not only divine grace but also the human responsibility to seek justice and truth in the process of reconciliation.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of this discussion, the author uses literacy studies using descriptive methods to explain the understanding, thoughts, and opinions of Christians about the hidden meaning of sour grapes and the word *It Has Finished*, which was said by Jesus. According to Kirk and Miller in Moleong (2013), qualitative research is a unique tradition in the social sciences, relying fundamentally on human observation in both its discipline and terminology. As mentioned earlier, qualitative research is interpretive research that uses a variety of interpretations and involves many methods.

The data analysis technique used in this research is a two-level interpretation of symbols from the aforementioned Roland Barthes semiotic method. Additionally, researchers used data reduction techniques. Data reduction is a delicate thought process that requires broad and deep insight from researchers. This is because there is so much data coming from the field, so complex and complex data that researchers need to summarize, select the most important, focus on what is important, look for themes and patterns, Discard data deemed unnecessary.

RESEARCH RESULT

This research would like to take Johannes's gospel words from bible. The Gospel of Johannes is one of the New Testament books. This work, which is part of the canonical Gospels series, has a style and structure that distinguishes it from the other three Gospels. Nonetheless, this Gospel provides the same insight into events as the other three Gospels. The divinity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is emphasized in the Gospel of John. Merrill C. Tenney (1995, 231) contends that no other Gospel stresses both His humanity and divinity as solidly and plainly as the Gospel of John. The writing is thought to have taken place between 40 and 140 AD. It is not obvious who is who in the book extract.

For Christians, the sign of the cross has a profound meaning. This symbol reminds us to always rely on the Lord Jesus in our lives, while also remembering our humanity. We believe that the cross connects us to God both vertically and horizontally. By making the sign of the cross on our bodies, we are allowing God to bless our bodies. As a direct consequence, the cross-signed body is a holy body. It is wrong for people to make the cross sign and then do something bad. As a result, the cross is made both before and after the good work. This article's purpose is based on John (19: 29-30), which states:

19: 29 "There was a bottle of sour wine¹. So, they placed a sponge dipped in sour wine on a hyssop stick and held it up to Jesus' mouth".

19:30 "It is finished," Jesus said after drinking the sour wine". According to the preceding sentence, Jesus was unable to carry His cross due to his cruel treatment and scourging. He then fell while carrying a 50 kg piece of wood on His back and was unable to sustain the fall because his outstretched arms were tied to the pabulum. As resulted, in blunt chest trauma and bruising to his heart. The heart's workload is greatly increased on the cross due to a variety of factors, particularly the increased effort required to breathe.

This caused a rupture in the heart wall, causing Jesus to cry out and die suddenly. The cause of death was determined for us by a spear thrust to the side of the chest.

Instead, The Gospel of John is one of the New Testament books. This work, which is part of the canonical Gospels series, has a style and structure that distinguishes it from the other three Gospels. Nonetheless, this Gospel provides the same insight into events as the other three Gospels. The divinity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is emphasized in the Gospel of John. Merrill C. Tenney (1995, 231) contends that no other Gospel stresses both His humanity and divinity as solidly and plainly as the Gospel of John. The writing is thought to have taken place between 40 and 140 AD. It is not obvious who is who in the book extract.

If we presume about grapes, we will recall the small fruit and sweet taste. Grapes are mentioned in the Bible more than any other plant or herb. This plant has been cultivated in Asia and Europe's borderlands since around 6,000 BC. It is believed that fermentation into alcoholic beverages began around this time. Wine fermentation has been documented in Georgia for at least 9,000 years. Grapes are already well known in Egypt, Rome, Greece, and the Middle East region, not far from their cultivation in Turkey and the Caucasian regions. There are numerous stories about wine in the earliest accounts of Genesis.

The grape, scientifically known as *Vitis vinifera*, is a plant that spreads by tendrils on the ground or climbs on supporting sticks. Grapes are usually taken from the fruit to be eaten directly, extracted from its juice without fermentation, fermented into an alcoholic drink, made into sweets and pickles, or made into a delicacy such as raisin cakes in the Hebrew tradition. Vine leaves are also used as a cooking spice. Furthermore, wine is sometimes mixed with hard water so that it can be consumed.

There are, however, a few wines that taste sour. In the New Testament, wine is a symbol of the blood of Jesus, which was shed when He died to save people from their sins (Mark 14:23-25). The wine symbolizes God's great love for mankind, so that he was willing to give His only begotten Son to be the ransom for sins. According to the Bible, sour wine is the drink of the poor. When Jesus was on the cross, He personally prefers this wine over wine mixed with myrrh, which could relieve His pain. This is demonstrated in MUR Mark 15:23, where it is written, "Then they gave Him wine mixed with myrrh, but He refused it."

On the other hand, the word sponge in the New Translation of the Indonesian Bible is recorded in Matthew 27:48; Mark 15:36; John 19:29 and Mark 15:36. Basically, sponges are soft sea things. Sponges were long previously thought of as plants, but are now considered by researchers to be part of the animal world. Sponges are animals with a very simple arrangement, attached to rocks or other objects in the sea or in fresh water. Sponge fishermen dive from boats, with or without diving equipment, and pick up sponges from the rocks with their hands. Sponges were left to die and decompose in the air and then washed so that nothing was left but skeletons. Sponge can absorb liquid, tough and elastic. Because it can absorb and excrete fluids, sponges became an important commodity in ancient times. The use of sponges is related to their selling price, which has existed since ancient times. Although there seems to be

no mention of it in the Old Testament, it is possible that sponges were already in use by the ancient Hebrews, who could easily obtain them from the Mediterranean Sea.

In this case, sour wine is regarded as a signifier. The sign represents Jesus' suffering. The drink, which is given to Jesus never was given out of compassion, but rather to add to His suffering. Meanwhile, the sponge considers itself to be symbolized. The flower is used because Jesus could not drink from a bowl or glass at the time. Aside from that, sponges were simply poured into Jesus' mouth, exacerbating the pain in his wounds. This analyzes can be seen in the chart below:

Table 1. analyzes chart

Sour Grapes	Sponge
Cheap Bavarange	poured out
Exacerbating the pain in Jesus wounds	

From the chart above, we can see that the soldiers were going to torture Jesus, so they prepared the sour grape. Instead, the sour grape was not treating the wounds, but it tormented. In this passage, the myth of deepening the pain of Jesus' wounds is related to the representation of Jesus' blood cleansing the conscience of man's worthless actions. It is so that we can worship God. The researchers would next attempt to locate the myth in the phrase "It is completed," which Jesus spoke. The reason is because many people still regard Christ' death as a defeat, researchers are urged to investigate the myth or hidden meaning of this phrase. This is because the events of the Lord Jesus' death and resurrection do not make sense, while seen through the lens of human understanding (logic). Especially for those who lived during the time of the Lord Jesus. Many people believe the incident is impossible to occur and may perhaps be a human construct or myth. This, however, is not debatable because it is God's design. In this case, the sour grape remains the signifier and the sentence "it's finished" becomes the signified. Then, the explanation of the myths in this case can be seen in the chart below:

Table 2. Explanation of the Myths

Sour Grapes	The wods: "it's finished"
Jesus' suffering	The Grace
By turning against himself and becoming the	

Redeemer of man's sins,
Jesus took the place of
those who were supposed
to bear God's wrath.

In the analysis above, researchers address the myth of Barthesian semiotics, which focuses first on understanding texts – how to understand them correctly. The meaning, the goal of search in this myth, is the meaning desired by the author of the text. Second, the main problem with this myth is the inability to understand the text correctly and objectively. However, the main problem is, understanding the text itself. As a result, the interpretation of Jesus Christ's remark is "it has finished" which means that Jesus acts as a mediator or relational bridge so that people might be reconnected with God. Besides from that, the phrase "it is finished" can also apply to the concept of eradicating human fear. It appears to be a holy utterance from Jesus declaring that the curse is ended and the future has begun. The sad past has departed, and we now welcome a new day. These appeared to be soothing remarks from Jesus to people who felt despair. This theory is based on the reality that humans have numerous phobias, including the dread of being impoverished, which drives people to be slaves. The second is the fear of failure, which causes humans to learn from his or her mistakes or sins. Humans are likewise terrified of losing, therefore they take precautions. Last but not least is the human fear of death.

This analysis is related to the myth theory of Roland Barthes. Myth in Barthes' view, as explained by Zaimar (2014), is language. From this view myth means a system of communication and a message. Myth in Barthes' semiotic method is a development of connotation. In short, the connotation that has been formed for a long time and becomes the view of society is a myth. For Barthes (2004), myth is a second-order semiological system. A sign in the first system becomes a signifier in the second system. According to Barthes, sign is the first system, or language, as an object language, and myth as a metalanguage (in this case Jesus sacrificed as the redeemer of sins). Mythical signification removes the sign narrative (sour wine and the sentence "it has finished") and fills the empty space with new meaning.

DISCUSSION

The researchers will conduct more analysis based on the signifier and signified that were discovered in the preceding investigation. The soured grape sign and the words "it is done" are two unique items offered by Jesus in the final moments of His crucifixion. This is a victory speech or proclamation displayed at the conclusion of his consecration to God on the cross. Seeing Christ's suffering on the cross, there are various things that should be the fate of a sinful man if he is not redeemed by God. Man's fate is attachment to sin and becoming a slave to the devil, death, and bearing God's wrath for sin. All these punishments were carried out by Jesus in different ways, thanks to his mercy on his people. First, Jesus became the atoning sacrifice for mankind. The second approach is

reconciliation. Atonement is Jesus' technique of replacing those who should endure God's wrath by "offending" themselves. This shows God's loving and just disposition. After the coming reconciliation, Jesus mediates relationships so that mankind can be reconciled to God. The last way is the way of salvation. This can be seen as the sacrifice of Christ, which serves as redemption for the captive and sin-succumbing humanity. Death is God's way for turning people from unrighteous slaves to slaves of Christ.

By reading the chart above, there is another parallelism between the signifier and the signified in the Gospel of John that generates a myth. The signifier is not dualistic; it does not distinguish between the profane and the holy, the physical and the spiritual. Theologically, the incarnation is viewed as a kind of God's sanctification of the material world as raw material for God's revelation. The Incarnate Word is a clear representation of God's presence in the world. God's prototype emblem is Jesus. This fundamental sign provides the character and inspiration for all subsequent sorts of symbols.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

By using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory of cognition, the researchers succeeds to unearth myths that reveal the meaning behind sour grapes, sponges and the declaration that Christ is "done". In this conclusion, the researchers draw inferences from misconceptions about Christ's agony and death on the cross. Jesus' goal was to proclaim God's redemption for humans' sins. The second conclusion of this research is the signifier and signified in John 19:29 and John 19:30 with biblical imagery that are raised via contemplation on the living Word of God, giving rise to the myth of the active movement of human reason and will to represent the richness of God's Word through the event of Christ's crucifixion. The term "it's completed" then signifies that someone (Jesus) has reached the ultimate objective and achieved perfection in carrying out his obligations as a savior.

In the sentence "it has finished" signified works at a subjective level whose presence is not realized. As a denotation fact, the reader has the ease of reading the signified. This is what makes one of the goals of semiotic analysis is to provide a method of analysis and a framework for overcoming misreading. In the second order of significance related to content, signs work through myths.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

By applying Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, this research reveals how John 19:29-30 constructs myths that shape the theological meaning of Christ's final moments. The phrase "It is finished" functions not only as a statement of completion but also as a mythological sign reinforcing salvation as an absolute truth. While denotatively marking the end of Jesus' mission, it operates on a second-order level as an ideological construct internalized within Christian consciousness. This myth sustains belief in redemption while shaping human reason as an instrument for interpreting the divine. Barthesian semiotics thus exposes how biblical signs can both obscure and redefine theological meaning over time.

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