



Princess *Mandalika* of Lombok: A Gender Equality Hero Defying Power Structures in Folklore

Khirjan Nahdi,¹ Hasan Basri,² Amrullah,² Muhammad Adi Junaidi,^{2*}

¹Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, Fakultas Bahasa Seni dan Humaniora, Universitas Hamzanwadi, Indonesia

²Program Studi Pariwisata, Fakultas Bahasa Seni dan Humaniora, Universitas Hamzanwadi, Indonesia

Email: khirjan.nw@gmail.com, hasanbasri@hamzanwadi.ac.id, amrullah@hamzanwadi.ac.id, adijunaidi@hamzanwadi.ac.id

*Correspondence: adijunaidi@hamzanwadi.ac.id

Article History: Received: 25-06-2024, Revised: 03-09-2024, Accepted: 04-09-2024, Published: 06-09-2024

Abstract

This study aims to reveal a new understanding of *Mandalika* folklore through Derrida's deconstruction. The goal is to demonstrate that Derrida's approach uncovers objective meanings and offers a theoretical alternative to traditional interpretations. By contextualizing new meanings through deconstruction, the study provides varied insights without relying solely on the author's intended meaning. The research employs Derrida's deconstruction through textual and in-depth analysis, exploring the concept of difference to identify binary contexts in the narrative structure. It includes case studies, comparisons of folkloric versions, interdisciplinary approaches for a comprehensive view, and critical analysis. The process begins with a synopsis representing the entire *Mandalika* folklore text. Findings indicate that *Mandalika* folklore's meanings extend beyond conventional understandings, emerging from dynamic interactions between textual and non-textual elements. These new meanings challenge previous interpretations shaped by authorial authority. The study highlights how *Mandalika* folklore reflects the patriarchal Sasak society, revealing tragic choices born from social disharmony. It emphasizes the need for the Sasak community to use the *Mandalika* narrative for reflection and reevaluation of gender relations. The folklore advocates for gender equality, depicting *Mandalika* as both a hero and a victim of patriarchal norms. This new understanding calls for a reassessment of gender roles and societal expectations.

Keywords:

deconstruction; gender; *Mandalika*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap pemahaman baru mengenai makna folklore *Mandalika* melalui perspektif dekonstruksi Derrida. Tujuannya adalah untuk menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan Derrida dapat mengungkap makna objektif dan menawarkan alternatif teoretis yang berbeda dari interpretasi tradisional. Dengan mengontekstualisasikan makna baru melalui dekonstruksi, penelitian ini memberikan wawasan yang beragam tanpa bergantung sepenuhnya pada makna yang dimaksudkan oleh pengarang folklore. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan dekonstruksi Derrida melalui analisis tekstual dan mendalam, mengeksplorasi konsep perbedaan untuk mengidentifikasi konteks biner dalam struktur naratif. Penelitian ini mencakup studi kasus, perbandingan versi folklore, pendekatan interdisipliner untuk pandangan yang komprehensif, dan analisis kritis. Proses ini dimulai dengan penyusunan sinopsis yang mewakili keseluruhan teks folklore *Mandalika*. Temuan

menunjukkan bahwa makna folklore Mandalika melampaui pemahaman konvensional, muncul dari interaksi dinamis antara elemen tekstual dan non-tekstual. Makna baru ini menantang interpretasi sebelumnya yang dipengaruhi oleh otoritas pengarang. Penelitian ini menggarisbawahi bagaimana folklore Mandalika mencerminkan masyarakat patriarkal Sasak, mengungkap pilihan tragis yang lahir dari ketidakharmonisan sosial. Penelitian ini menekankan perlunya masyarakat Sasak menggunakan narasi Mandalika untuk refleksi dan evaluasi kembali hubungan gender. Folklore ini mendukung kesetaraan gender, menggambarkan Mandalika sebagai pahlawan sekaligus korban norma patriarkal. Pemahaman baru ini menyerukan penilaian ulang terhadap peran gender dan ekspektasi sosial.

Kata Kunci:

dekonstruksi; gender; Mandalika



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Introduction

Folklore is a broad term encompassing various aspects of culture, referring to traditions, stories, myths, legends, and practices passed down through generations within a community. Folktales, myths, and legends not only serve as entertainment but also function as mediums for conveying values, norms, and cultural identities (Ardesya, 2021; Permata Sari, 2023; et al., 2023; Yelly, 2019). Folklore plays a significant role in the formation of collective identity and offers deep insights into a society's worldview. It has become a subject of interest for researchers in anthropology, literature, and cultural studies (Rahmawati, 2021), due to its ability to reflect social dynamics and cultural changes (Akaev et al., 2023; Saefudin et al., 2023; Sidik & Putraidi, 2018), including through the deconstructive approach pioneered by Derrida. Deconstruction, a theoretical approach introduced by French philosopher Jacques Derrida, offers a new way to understand and analyze texts. Derrida proposed that texts do not have fixed or final meanings but are always open to interpretation through endless reinterpretation. The main principle of deconstruction is that every text contains contradictions and ambiguities that can be revealed through critical analysis (Darliani et al., 2023). In the context of literary studies, deconstruction challenges traditional concepts of structure, meaning, and authorial authority (Sitorusa et al., 2024). This approach allows for the understanding that meaning is formed and altered through the play of language and context.

Viewing folklore as a text, the deconstructive approach can be applied to analyze the structure and meaning in both oral and written traditions (Wijanarti, 2021). Folklore, as a cultural construct, contains complex and often ambiguous elements (Abali, 2023; Abidin et al., 2023). Deconstruction helps uncover hidden layers of meaning and demonstrates how meanings in folklore are never stable or singular. For instance, a folktale can have various interpretations depending on the social and cultural contexts in which it is told and heard (Suisno, 2022; Wayan Sumitri, 2023). The deconstructive approach to folklore allows the boundaries between fact and fiction, tradition and innovation, which are often blurred and unclear, to be explored (Hilmiyatun et al., 2022; Anafiah & Sayuti, 2024). In deconstructive analysis, these boundaries are not viewed as fixed but as constructs

that can be deconstructed and questioned. In legends or myths, elements of fiction and reality often intermingle, creating rich and complex narratives that reflect societal values and beliefs (Al-Madia & Ichsan, 2022; Ramdhani et al., 2018; Zain, 2024). In deconstructive analysis, these boundaries are not viewed as fixed but as constructs that can be deconstructed and questioned. In legends or myths, elements of fiction and reality often intermingle, creating rich and complex narratives that reflect societal values and beliefs.

Through an understanding of the deconstructive approach, the folklore of *Mandalika* in Lombok can be traced to discover ambiguities and changes in meaning by involving contemporary cultural practices. Deconstruction reveals the boundaries between fact and fiction, tradition and innovation. The folklore of *Mandalika*, in its ongoing dynamics, offers a rich perspective on how cultural meanings and identities are produced and reproduced in Lombok society. On the other hand, deconstruction challenges the unity and narrative authority often considered fixed and singular in tradition. Therefore, this article aims to explore new understandings of *Mandalika* folklore through the lens of Derrida's deconstruction. The critical questions of this study are: 1) How can deconstruction be applied to analyze *Mandalika* folklore? 2) What are the implications of deconstructive analysis for our understanding of *Mandalika* folklore? 3) How does deconstruction change our understanding of the role and function of *Mandalika* folklore in Lombok society? By answering these questions, this study will provide new perspectives in understanding and valuing folklore, thus offering a dynamic understanding and value in society. This new perspective will aid flexibility in choosing theoretical references, allowing researchers and enthusiasts not to be fixated on the textual meaning as per the authorial authority.

Method

This study employs Derrida's deconstruction approach, utilizing six research methodologies: 1) an in-depth textual analysis to identify ambiguities and the instability of meaning, 2) the concept of *differance* to highlight how meaning is perpetually deferred in folklore narratives, 3) case studies and comparative analysis of different versions of folk tales to provide insights into interpretive variations, 4) the analysis of social and cultural contexts to understand how the values and cultural practices of the Lombok community influence the formation of narratives, 5) an interdisciplinary approach that integrates theories from cultural anthropology, comparative literature, and cultural studies for a broader understanding, and 6) a critical approach to narrative authority that challenges the notion that the *Mandalika* folklore has a stable meaning, emphasizing that interpretations of these narratives can always be questioned and revised. Through these methods, the research aims to offer profound insights into the complexity and dynamics of meaning within oral traditions, as well as the relevance of Derrida's deconstruction in cultural and literary studies.

Results and Discussion

Synopsis

Narrated with dramatic flair, blending beauty and tragedy, the folklore of *Mandalika* from Lombok tells the tale of a lovely, wise, and much-loved princess named Princess *Mandalika*. In the Kingdom of Tunjung Biru, ruled

by the sagacious Raja Tonjang Beru, lived this admired princess. Princess *Mandalika* grew into a charming young woman with many virtues. Her beauty and kind heart were renowned far and wide, reaching other kingdoms. Numerous princes from various realms came to propose, bearing luxurious gifts and promising a life of splendor. Yet, *Mandalika* remained uninterested, for her love was dedicated to her people, and she wished for a peaceful life among them.

As the princes vied for her hand, their rivalry turned unhealthy, with some even contemplating war to win her. This escalating conflict created tension and instability within the kingdom. Raja Tonjang Beru, fearing for his realm's stability, decided to host a grand event at Seger Beach. He invited all the princes and his subjects, hoping to find a resolution to the growing conflict.

On the designated day, Seger Beach was crowded with people from across the kingdom. All eyes were on Princess *Mandalika*, who appeared resplendent in her traditional attire. Calmly, she ascended a small hill overlooking the beach, where everyone could see her clearly. In her speech, Princess *Mandalika* expressed gratitude to the princes who had proposed, but she also declared she could not choose any of them. She did not want to be the cause of discord and bloodshed among the princes and her people. With wisdom, Princess *Mandalika* explained her love for her people and her unwillingness to sacrifice them for her personal desires.

In the silence that followed, Princess *Mandalika* made a startling declaration. She announced she would give herself to the sea to live in eternal peace. Before anyone could stop her, Princess *Mandalika* leapt from the hill and vanished into the tumultuous waves. Her act stunned and heartbroken all who witnessed it. They realized her sacrifice was meant to save them from discord and bloodshed. Following this event, the people decided to hold an annual ceremony in her honor. This ceremony, known as "*Bau Nyale*," involves searching for sea worms believed to embody Princess *Mandalika*.

Bau Nyale has become an essential part of Lombok's tradition and culture. Every year, thousands gather at Seger Beach for this ceremony, seeking the nyale as a sign of respect and remembrance for Princess *Mandalika*. This tale has transcended a simple story of sacrifice and love, becoming a cultural heritage cherished by the people of Lombok. The folklore of *Mandalika* imparts significant values like sacrifice, wisdom, and love for others. Princess *Mandalika* remains an enduring symbol of heroism and grace, reminding everyone of the importance of peace and communal well-being. This tale continues to inspire the youth of Lombok to honor the noble values passed down by their ancestors. Thus, the story of Princess *Mandalika* is more than folklore; it is a source of inspiration and pride, with every element from her character to the *Bau Nyale* ceremony reflecting the rich culture and traditions that must be preserved and passed on for generations.

Analysis and Findings

Ambiguity and Instability of Meaning

One of the elements in the structure of literary works across various genres is the element of character. Character does not only refer to the ethical and moral behavior of the figures but also other psychological aspects, such as tendencies and

determinations towards the opposite sex. There is an instability of meaning when *Mandalika*, as a young woman, shows no interest in any prince who wants to propose to her. Consider the following excerpt.

Excerpt (1):

"...However, *Mandalika* never showed interest in them, because she loved her people and wanted to live in peace with them."

Although in another part of the story, it is narrated that *Mandalika's* love is solely for her people, as seen in the following excerpt.

Excerpt (2):

"...because she loved her people and wanted to live in peace with them."

These two excerpts highlight the instability of meaning between the context of adolescence and the tendency and determination towards men. With a slight deviation, psychological logic might question, is *Mandalika* a woman who lacks a sense of romance towards the opposite sex? There is no further explanation regarding this context. The author only reaches the point of "not interested in any of the princes." Ideally, if *Mandalika*, as a young woman, normally possesses a sense of romance towards men, she might be attracted to one or more of them but remains confused due to a lack of deeper acquaintance.

On the one hand, as shown in excerpt (2), the reason for not choosing any of the princes who proposed to her is her love for her people. The logic in this context does not connect with *Mandalika's* status as the king's daughter, not as the king. In this folklore, *Mandalika* is the king's daughter, so the throne is her father's responsibility. In many centric cases, it is difficult to separate the context of the relationship between the king and the king's child with their people. However, there is no other explanation indicating future for *Mandalika* to replace her father, as there is no text in this folklore that discusses the continuation of King Tonjang Beru's reign in the Kingdom of Tunjung Biru.

The main theme of the *Mandalika* folklore, popular among the Sasak people in Lombok, is heroic behavior, namely the willingness to sacrifice for peace. Consider the following excerpt.

Excerpt (3):

"...She declared that she would give herself to the sea to live in eternal peace. Before anyone could prevent her, Princess *Mandalika* leaped from the hill and vanished into the fierce waves."

When this heroic context is considered in relation to the patriarchal structure of Sasak society, where women are often subordinated to men, the theme becomes ambiguous. Even today, the Sasak community does not easily accept equal roles for men and women in the public sphere. Despite the openness of information flow, the Sasak community, particularly the aristocracy, still adheres to strict patriarchal norms. In limited cases, it is uncommon to find men readily accepting female leadership.

As a narrative, this excerpt from the folklore lacks continuity with the preceding contextual logic. There is no narrative background explaining *Mandalika's* decision to sacrifice herself by plunging into the sea. Events of this nature are typically preceded by psychological conflict within the character, arising from reciprocal or mutual events. A person's disappointment or heartbreak is often caused by prior relational disappointments. If *Mandalika* had previously been romantically involved with one or two of the princes who proposed to her, and then

felt hurt or disappointed, it would be logical for her to feel despair and commit suicide. Since none of these contexts exist within this folklore's narrative, it indicates a discontinuity in the story. It even raises further questions about whether another deeply wounding event occurred, one not revealed by the author.

Narrative Structure and Deferred Meaning

The structural understanding of literary texts, including folklore, is often linked to the conclusion of the story. The conclusion is associated with the occurrence of conflict. In the *Mandalika* folklore, the ending is marked first by a tragic event where she throws herself into the sea. Her inner conflict revolves around choosing to plunge into the sea, but what is her motive? Second, why did the kingdom, including the king, not try to prevent this, even though *Mandalika* was adamant about her decision (refer to excerpt 3). Two critical points arise here: the narrative discontinuity resulting in the lack of revealed psychological motives for *Mandalika's* choice to dive into the sea. In contemporary terms, diving into the sea is equivalent to suicide, a drastic step usually taken by someone experiencing severe inner turmoil and despair. Binary logic suggests that despair is always connected to previous events in human relationships. If *Mandalika* had a romantic involvement with one or two princes and was hurt or disappointed, it would be logical for her to feel despair, leading to suicide. The absence of these contexts in the folklore narrative indicates a discontinuity. It also raises another question: could there have been a deeply wounding incident affecting *Mandalika* that the author did not reveal?

The second conflict is the kingdom's lack of effort, including the king, to prevent or save *Mandalika*. Consider excerpt 4 below.

Excerpt (4):

"...In the silence that followed, Princess *Mandalika* uttered a final statement that shocked everyone. She declared that she would give herself to the sea to live in eternal peace. Before anyone could prevent her, Princess *Mandalika* leaped from the hill and vanished into the fierce waves."

This context shows the unresolved nature of the first conflict, her diving into the sea. This narrative discontinuity leads to binary speculation that the motive for diving into the sea might be due to disappointment from a relational incident between *Mandalika* and one or several princes. Considering that this motive would damage the honor and reputation of *Mandalika*, the king, and the entire kingdom, the story limits itself to the narrative of diving into the sea, framed as an act of love for her people and a desire to avoid disharmony.

Reflecting this motive in contemporary dynamics, there is no other understanding among the Sasak people in Lombok that *Mandalika* is a hero. The title of hero is not an independent attribute. A person is called a hero when they are physically and mentally involved in fighting for the truth. The battlefield of such a struggle is not speculative, unlike the speculation of chaos by the princes who failed to marry *Mandalika*. There is an anomaly in the contemporary context if we persist with the understanding of *Mandalika's* heroic stance. Nowadays, Sasak women have more balanced roles in male-female relationships. However, there is still discrimination due to the patriarchal culture of the Sasak community in marriage institutions, music, public rights, and other areas. This means that *Mandalika's* heroism as an inspiration is debatable.

Examining the conflict in excerpt 3, *Mandalika's* act of diving into the sea and the lack of resolution by those around her indicates the strong authority of the author in this folklore. The narrated event appears almost perfect as a context without causality. An effect occurs, but without a cause. It cannot be simply assumed that the speculation of future bloodshed is the cause of *Mandalika's* tragic event. Every event *Mandalika* experiences is a human event, never devoid of relationships with other people around her. Human events also possess causal rationality. When this tragic event occurs, the initial question imagined by everyone is what actions were taken by the other characters in the story. The narrative, however, does not depict this. Thus, *Mandalika's* motive and resolution are passive, existing solely within the author's authority. The most interesting aspect of the storytelling is the author's strong influence on the thoughts and emotions of the audience to this day. The impression of *Mandalika* as a heroic woman remains unmatched.

Intertextual of *Mandalika* in The Comparative Perspectives

Most heroic stories involve tragedy as an event and the tragic as a narrative. However, not all tragedies can be labeled heroic. There is ambiguity in the tragic and heroic tales of Indonesian folklore. Take, for instance, Sangkuriang, who is considered a hero for his relentless pursuit of his love for Dayang Sumbi, only to later discover that Dayang Sumbi is his biological mother. Simple logic questions, where is the heroism? Whose fate is being defended and fought for, other than his own romantic desires? The woman he romantically loves turns out to be his own mother. While he can be seen as a fighter for love, he cannot be regarded as a hero. Another folklore figure is Ken Dedes in the Pararaton (Book of Kings), depicted as an extraordinarily beautiful woman. Her heroism is not prominent other than being the wife of Tunggal Ametung, and later Ken Arok, whose story begins with murder. Ken Dedes even indirectly caused the death of Mpu Gandring and several others. The tales of Sangkuriang and Ken Dedes are almost on par with *Mandalika*. All are narrated with the author's authority without human and psychological relations with other characters.

In contrast, the folklore of Banyuwangi tells of a faithful wife who is suspected of infidelity by her husband. To prove her loyalty, she jumps into the water, praying and swearing beforehand. If the water turns fragrant, it proves her faithfulness. The water indeed turns fragrant, and hence the place is called Banyuwangi. Clearly, there is a noble value being fought for—loyalty to her husband. If her loyalty is denied, she is willing to sacrifice herself (die) to uphold that loyalty. Other folklore, such as Beowulf and King Arthur (England), Sigfried (Germany), are all heroic tales, as each experiences a tragic story while fighting for truth amidst chaos and injustice. Naturally, chaos and injustice are combated through physical battles, leading to their demise as heroes.

Folklore almost always revolves around themes of love, beauty, wisdom or cruelty, bravery, and takes place in royal settings. However, in the stories of *Mandalika*, Sangkuriang, and Ken Dedes, the themes of love are one-sided motives, both from the actor and their love victims. *Mandalika's* tragic story would make sense if it involved a prior romantic relationship with one of the princes. Sangkuriang's story would be highly inspirational if his sacrifices were for his lover, not his mother. Similarly, Ken Dedes' beauty would be inspiring if it brought

salvation to others. In these contexts, the authors deliberately narrated these folktales against the grain of centrist stories. The common theme among *Mandalika*, Dayang Sumbi, and Ken Dedes is beauty. In contrast, the themes in Banyuwangi, Beowulf, King Arthur, and Sigfried are almost perfectly narrated as centrist stories with a sense of virtue, making them heroic tales. When battling, the physical enemies are clear. When struggling with love, the human relationships are evident.

Receptive Text of *Mandalika* and the Dynamic Context of Sasak Society

Three contexts within the history, social system, anthropology, and religion of the dynamic Sasak society are the patriarchal kinship system, strong religious traditions, and the high regard for the values inherited from their ancestors. As a patriarchal society, the position of women in relation to men is subordinative. Women are under the control of men, especially in public access. Strategic roles in Sasak society are predominantly male domains. Although some historical documents acknowledge female leaders, such as Dewi Rinjani and Dewi Rengganis, these instances did not reflect equal opportunities but rather historical legacies within a centrist context. The awareness of equal opportunities between men and women began in the early 19th century with the modernization of Islamic education by *Tuan Guru Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid* through the establishment of *Nahdaltul Banat Diniyah Islamiyah (NBDI)*, the only educational institution for women before Indonesia's independence (Nahdi, 2012). Through this educational institution, Sasak women gained the opportunity to pursue formal education. Despite this, discriminatory attitudes towards women still persist in certain areas, especially in public access to governance and bureaucracy. Consequently, women's opportunities to participate and express themselves remain limited, not due to their weakness but due to unequal access.

In addition to being patriarchal, the Sasak society is highly religious, with the majority adhering to Islam. It is not an exaggeration to label Lombok, predominantly inhabited by the Sasak people, as the "Island of a Thousand Mosques," with grand and sturdy mosques in almost every village. However, under the guise of Islamic teachings, Sasak women do not have the same opportunities as men in certain public spheres. The Sasak Muslim community understands that men and women are equal, but the stereotypical views towards women are a justification for the patriarchal kinship system. The Sasak society holds Islamic teachings in high regard, making it easy to use Islamic references to reinforce these kinship norms. The underlying motive for this stance is the status quo, ensuring that men remain more dominant than women. Stigmas that weaken women, such as social disgrace, inability to bear public responsibility, and failure to represent the majority group, are arguments used by men to maintain this status quo.

Patriarchal views and strong Islamic traditions, along with an imbalanced understanding, are reinforced by the belief in the good traditions of their ancestors. Grand stories from the past are still practiced through customary processes within the Sasak society, including the *Bau Nyale* celebration, which continues the noble values of the *Mandalika* folklore. Consider excerpt 5 below.

Excerpt (5):

“After that event, the people decided to hold an annual ceremony to commemorate Princess *Mandalika* and her sacrifice. This ceremony is known

as "*Bau Nyale*," where they search for sea worms believed to be the incarnation of Princess *Mandalika*."

Indeed, ancestral traditions like *Bau Nyale* are among the many celebrated by the Sasak community to this day. In excerpt 5, the narrative of "sacrifice" is highlighted. This word and narrative of sacrifice are the links between the heroic tale of Princess *Mandalika* and the community's understanding until now, at least until other perspectives are revealed through further analysis.

The three contexts that shape the general views of the Sasak people become anomalies in the common understanding of the heroism and heroic actions of Princess *Mandalika*. The limited opportunities due to these contexts result in restricted chances for women to take on strategic roles in the public sphere. In the current modern dynamics, the Sasak community still struggles to move away from stereotypical views towards women. Sociocultural evidence through local music and traditional events still places women behind men. In the context of modern politics, women's positions are not yet recognized as equal by men. There remains a lack of trust and even reluctance among men to accept women as political leaders and technocrats at the local level. Thus, the variables of heroism, Princess *Mandalika*'s heroic actions, and the context of the Sasak society through historical dynamics until now remain irrational. The events in the narrative do not connect in an intertextual relationship, leaving the rational meaning that *Mandalika* is truly a hero in doubt. Psychologically and sociologically, the general understanding still leaves questions.

Meaning and Motive according to Interdisciplinary Studies

Three crucial studies guide the deconstructive understanding of the *Mandalika* folklore text in today's context: psychology, linguistics, and anthropology. Psychologically, *Mandalika*'s attitudes and actions can be understood through Freud's three personality structures: id, ego, and superego. As an individual, *Mandalika* has instinctive and biological basic needs like any normal human. However, due to her contextual condition as a princess, some of these basic needs could not be met for various royal protocol reasons according to the traditions of that time. Therefore, the mechanism of adjusting or fulfilling these id-driven needs through the ego was not realized. As an individual, *Mandalika* had a personal inclination to relate her love to one of the princes who sought her hand in marriage. Naturally, *Mandalika*'s ego emerged as a response to the social context surrounding her. Simultaneously, *Mandalika* faced a moral and ethical demand, feeling guilty due to a perceived violation of moral and ethical standards in her social contact with the princes who wished to marry her. However, the form of the moral violation is not evident in this folklore narrative, as the text's narrative is an element that is not continuous and is under the author's authority. Consider excerpts 6 and 7 below:

Excerpt (6):

"...Many princes from various kingdoms came to propose to her. They came bringing luxurious gifts and promising a life of opulence for Princess *Mandalika*."

Excerpt (7):

"...Before anyone could prevent her, Princess *Mandalika* leaped from the hill and vanished into the fierce waves. This action of Princess *Mandalika* shocked and broke the hearts of all who were present."

The meaning or message in excerpts 6 and 7 does not form a connected text in terms of meaning. From a structural perspective, these texts should represent a psychological causality relationship, indicating that diving into the sea can be seen as an act of suicide. A suicide event is not a singular tragedy but has a psychological background in social relationships. Subversively, the causal meaning present before this tragic event suggests that *Mandalika* experienced inappropriate social treatment and felt morally responsible for the event. However, anthropologically, women did not have the courage or openness to convey such events due to various social and anthropological reasons. If such events were conveyed, it would be turned back on her as a disgrace that would harm the honor of the king, the kingdom, and the people. Consciously or not, this context represents a form of discrimination against women, constructed in their relationship with men. Simultaneously, this construction is a product of male stereotypes about women. Thus, the three studies—psychology, linguistics, and anthropology—strengthen the speculation that *Mandalika* was treated inappropriately and felt unjustly treated. Structurally, the text about this unjust treatment is not visible, and it seems to jump to her tragic event. In this context, a deconstructive perception appears when the text does not emerge in a linear structure describing *Mandalika's* psychological events.

Critical Analysis and Findings

The events in the *Mandalika* folklore represent complex and profound psychological and socio-anthropological phenomena, as discovered in this study. Psychologically, why did *Mandalika* make such a tragic decision? What is the socio-anthropological background? The psychological event experienced by *Mandalika* is an application of psychological deconstruction that does not follow a linear path within Freud's psychological framework. The tragic event is seen as a form of psychological instability, where the superego is realized through the tragic act of diving into the sea. On the other hand, the socio-anthropological context of the Sasak society, being patriarchal, does not provide an open and fair space to dialogue about this psychological event.

If we speculate that *Mandalika* chose one of the princes as her partner, it was not the conflict among the unchosen princes, as narrated in the folklore, that troubled her mind. *Mandalika* was well aware that her society adhered to a patriarchal social system that did not easily grant her the opportunity to become a ruler. Even though she was the king's daughter, this opportunity was difficult to obtain because she was a woman. If she chose to become a queen consort, her status would remain as such, not as a king. She would remain subordinate among men in the gender hierarchy. Thus, *Mandalika's* act as a hero is a hero for the struggle of women within the patriarchal power structure of the Sasak society, not for the sake of social harmony.

Deconstructive ideas that can be revealed through this discussion relate to psychological contradictions due to socio-anthropological constructions, evidenced by the discontinuity of the folklore text's narrative within the non-linear linguistic structure. The first contradiction is that *Mandalika* experienced psychological barriers in relating the id to the ego, leading the superego to make a tragic choice. If

her psychological state were linear, with the id having an open and normal channel, the ego would naturally choose to marry one of the princes. Due to issues in the realization of the ego, stemming from unethical and immoral treatment, *Mandalika's* superego made an asymmetrical choice in love, the realization of love, and social choices as the continuity of id and ego. A linear approach in deconstructive imagery could be *Mandalika's* educational action towards the princes to compete fairly and accept the final outcome sportively. This could become the superego if the social context supported ethical and moral standards. The abnormality of ethical and moral contexts led to this choice not happening.

Anthropologically, *Mandalika* was fully aware that her chances of becoming a ruler were very slim, not only due to psychological issues but also because the social context did not support it. The unjust social context in gender relations between men and women made her pessimistic about being accepted as a ruler. One reason is that *Mandalika* was female. Her status as the king's daughter did not automatically position her as her father's successor in leading the Tunjung Biru Kingdom. If *Mandalika* chose to become a queen consort, her status would be that of the king's wife from her husband's kingdom. A wife, regardless of her title, in a patriarchal society is subordinate because she is a woman. Therefore, diving into the sea as a tragic choice was not for social harmony but a result of social disharmony in the form of gender injustice. In deconstructive terms, this action is a social protest against the patriarchal power structure that positions women as subordinate to men.

Discussion

Two findings of this study reveal, from a deconstructive perspective, that *Mandalika's* tragic decision to throw herself into the sea was not a choice aimed at creating harmony, but rather a tragic choice stemming from a psychological conflict between the id's basic physical and psychological needs, particularly love. When her love did not have a normal channel, the ego could not transform normally due to the id's interference within a discriminatory gender relationship. Consequently, *Mandalika* chose a conflicting superego. *Mandalika's* tragic choice is a manifestation of the non-linear relationship between the id, ego, and superego, reflecting social disharmony caused by prior social disharmony. Therefore, the perception of heroism is a one-sided view imposed by the folklore's audience, influenced by the singular authoritative meaning presented by the author. Simultaneously, the patriarchal mindset of the Sasak society did not provide an open space for *Mandalika* to pursue leadership, as her status would always remain subordinate in her relationship with men, regardless of her choices. This indicates that *Mandalika's* tragic choice was a form of resistance against the patriarchal power structure of the Sasak society, which is discriminatory in gender relations between men and women.

This study offers a different perspective from previous textual analyses, particularly in exploring the meaning within the textual field of folklore. Prior studies have tended to be linear in their structural linguistic narratives, aligning meaning within the autonomous text. Derrida's deconstructive analysis offers a different form and perception by positioning the text's narrative as something free from the author's singular authority over meaning. By situating the folklore text within the social, psychological, and anthropological context of the characters, with their varied dynamics, supported by other study instruments beyond the structural study of literary works within the tradition of deconstruction, folklore will present a "different face" as an enrichment of interpretive meaning, as seen in the folklore of *Mandalika*.

Conclusion

Through Derrida's deconstructive analysis, the meaning perceived by the folklore's audience becomes oppositional in the findings of this study. Assisted by various studies, the meaning of the *Mandalika* folklore is not merely what has been understood so far but emerges with new meanings as a result of the interplay of variables within the folklore context. These new meanings appear not merely as a reversed thought from the mainstream understanding influenced by the author's authority but as a creative interpretation within the dynamic relationship between textual and non-textual elements in the *Mandalika* folklore. The findings of this study imply the emergence of a new awareness in the patriarchal Sasak society, recognizing that *Mandalika's* heroism is not speculative harmony, but rather her tragic actions were born out of social disharmony and protest against the existing social disharmony. Therefore, it is crucial for the Sasak society to view *Mandalika's* heroic event as a context for evaluation, reflection, and repositioning in gender relations between men and women, avoiding the development of stereotypical stigmas against women. For any reason, men and women are equal within the boundaries that do not contradict their fate as women. *Mandalika* is a hero in the struggle for gender status balance. *Mandalika* stands as a silent witness among many to male discrimination in the socio-anthropological context of the Sasak society. *Mandalika* is a hero against the status quo of the Sasak society's patriarchal view, creating an illusory meaning within the narrative of her heroism.

Ucapan Terimakasih

Thank you to Hamzanwadi University through the Center for Research, Community Service, and Publication for the recommendations and facilities for carrying out the study until the publication of this study article.

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