Analysis of Levi-Strauss's Structuralism on the Myth of Princess Mandalika

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ABSTRACT

The myth of Princess Mandalika is a significant folktale within the culture of the Sasak people in West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. This myth illustrates the sacrifice of a princess for the sake of social harmony within her community, and it reflects profound cultural values. This study employs Claude Lévi-Strauss's structuralist approach to analyse the narrative structure and symbolic meanings within the myth of Princess Mandalika. Through this analysis, the research aims to understand how the various elements of the myth interact to form a more complex meaning and reflect the duality of values in Sasak culture. The primary focuses of this research are: 1) to analyse the narrative structure of the myth of Princess Mandalika, 2) to identify the symbolic meanings of the elements within the myth, and 3) to comprehend how this myth reflects the social values and cultural identity of the Sasak community. The analysis reveals that the myth embodies values of collectivism, sacrifice, and the relationship between humans and nature. The sea, as a symbol within the myth, represents uncertainty and the power of nature that must be respected. Furthermore, the sacrifice of Princess Mandalika illustrates a moral principle that emphasises the interests of the community over those of the individual. This study reveals that the myth of Princess Mandalika serves not only as a cultural narrative but also as a mirror of the social values that continue to shape the identity of the Sasak people to this day.

INTRODUCTION

The legend of Princess Mandalika is one of the most renowned and revered folktales in West Nusa Tenggara, particularly among the Sasak community. As an integral part of a rich cultural heritage, this myth holds significant importance in the traditions and social life of the community. The tale of Princess Mandalika narrates the story of a princess endowed with extraordinary beauty and immense sacrifice for the welfare of her people (Indonesia Kaya, n.d.). However, although this story is often perceived merely as a fable or moral tale, it also reflects social values, including the relationship between individuals and society, as well as collective sacrifice for the common good. In this context, the myth of Princess Mandalika serves not only as a component of local culture but also as a symbol representing the beliefs and values prevalent within the Sasak community.

As a cultural element passed down through generations, this myth remains relevant to the social life of the Sasak people. In many respects, it transcends mere entertainment or moral instruction, functioning instead as a medium to reinforce the cultural identity of the Sasak community. The values encapsulated within this myth—such as sacrifice, beauty, social harmony, and the relationship between humans and nature—are continually upheld and cherished in daily life. This indicates that the myth of Princess Mandalika possesses a more complex function than that of an ordinary folktale. It can be viewed as a tool for expressing and communicating broader social principles existing within the Sasak community.

To delve deeper into the meanings embedded within this myth, an analysis of its narrative structure and symbolism can be conducted through the theoretical lens developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss, a French anthropologist renowned for his structuralist theory. Lévi-Strauss posits that myths are forms of narratives that serve to organise and comprehend social realities (Rifa'i & Fadhilasari, 2022). In his view, myths are not merely stories for entertainment; rather, they represent a symbolic system reflecting how societies perceive and manage existing social contradictions (Afifa & Nugraha, 2023). Lévi-Strauss emphasises the importance of duality in myths, where conflicting or opposing elements interact to create deeper and more complex meanings. For instance, in the myth of Princess Mandalika, this duality is evident in the relationship between beauty and sacrifice, or between social harmony and the conflicts that must be resolved.

This structural approach provides an effective framework for analysing how the elements within the myth of Princess Mandalika are interconnected and interact to form a larger narrative, as well as how this narrative reflects the social and cultural values of the Sasak community (Taum, 2014). According to Lévi-Strauss, myths function as a means to address and understand the conflicts present within society, whether these conflicts arise between individuals and the community, between individuals themselves, or between humanity and nature. In this regard, the myth of Princess Mandalika illustrates a process of sacrifice undertaken by the princess to achieve a greater social harmony, reflecting the Sasak community's perspective on the primacy of collective interests over personal ones.

In alignment with Lévi-Strauss's perspective, this research aims to explore the myth of Princess Mandalika in greater depth using a structural analysis approach. In this context, the study will focus on three primary research questions: (1) How can the narrative structure of the myth of Princess Mandalika be analysed through Lévi-Strauss's approach? (2) What is the symbolic meaning of the elements within the myth for the Sasak community? (3) How does the myth of Princess Mandalika reflect the social values and cultural identity of the people of West Nusa Tenggara? By examining these three research questions, it is hoped that deeper insights can be gained regarding the function of this myth in shaping and reinforcing the cultural identity of the Sasak community, as well as how it serves to understand and resolve the social conflicts that occur within it.

One aspect that will be analysed in this research is the narrative structure of the myth of Princess Mandalika. In a structural approach, narrative is considered a system comprising various elements that interact with one another. The narrative structure within this myth can be analysed by examining how elements such as characters, conflicts, and resolutions relate to one another to form the overall story. In this case, the main character, Princess Mandalika, plays a crucial role as a symbol of beauty, sacrifice, and resilience (Nahdi et al., 2024; Yoniartini, 2021). The conflicts that arise within this story, both internal and external, depict the social tensions occurring within the community. Ultimately, these conflicts are resolved through the sacrifice of the princess, who relinquishes herself for the welfare of her people. This reflects a fundamental principle within the Sasak community, namely that collective interests are often prioritised over individual ones (Arliani et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the symbolic elements within this myth will also be analysed in greater detail, particularly those related to nature and sacrifice. The sea, as one of the primary elements in this myth, serves as a symbol with dual meanings in the context of coastal communities such as the Sasak (Wahidah, 2019). The sea is not only regarded as a source of life and livelihood but also as a symbol of power and mystery that is difficult for humans to comprehend. The sacrifice of Princess Mandalika, performed in the sea, can be interpreted as a symbol of the relationship between humanity and nature, wherein humans must sacrifice for the sake of a greater ecological and social balance (Nahdi et al., 2024).

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a structural analysis framework to comprehend and elucidate the meanings embedded within the myth of Princess Mandalika. The qualitative approach was selected as it allows for an exploration of the richly symbolic and culturally significant phenomena of the myth (Creswell, 2018). Through this approach, the researcher focuses not only on measurable or quantitative data but also on the context and

meanings inherent in each element of the narrative (Sugiyono, 2010; Suryadmaja et al., 2015). This methodology enables the researcher to understand how the elements within the myth interact and construct a narrative structure that reflects the social and cultural values of the Sasak community.

The method employed in this research is structural analysis based on Claude Lévi-Strauss's theory regarding myths. According to Lévi-Strauss, myths possess a structure that can be deconstructed into interrelated fundamental elements that form meaning (Afifa & Nugraha, 2023). In this context, the analysis is conducted by mapping the significant elements within the myth of Princess Mandalika, such as characters, conflicts, and the symbolism present in the narrative. Each of these elements is analysed to identify emerging patterns, particularly concerning the dualities and contradictions that often characterise myths. Through this analysis, the researcher aims to reveal how this myth not only narrates a story but also serves as a medium for understanding the social conflicts present within the Sasak community.

The data utilised in this research were obtained through a literature review. The researcher collected various relevant sources pertaining to the myth of Princess Mandalika, including books, scholarly articles, and previous research that discusses this myth from literary, anthropological, and socio-cultural perspectives. By leveraging these sources, the researcher can explore various aspects related to the myth, such as the cultural background of the Sasak community, the symbolism embedded in the narrative, and the social values upheld within that narrative. This data collection was conducted systematically and analytically to ensure that the research results provide a comprehensive depiction of the role of the myth of Princess Mandalika within the society of West Nusa Tenggara.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research primarily aims to unveil the narrative structure and symbolism embedded within the myth, as well as how these elements interact and reflect the social, cultural, and identity values of the Sasak community. The discussion will consist of three main subsections: (1) analysis of the narrative structure of the myth of Princess Mandalika, (2) the symbolic meanings contained within the elements of the myth, and (3) reflections of social values and cultural identity that are mirrored in this myth.

Analysis of the narrative structure of the myth of Princess mandalika

The myth of Princess Mandalika is a folk tale deeply rooted in the traditions of the Sasak community in West Nusa Tenggara. In structural analysis according to Claude Lévi-Strauss, this myth can be examined by tracing the narrative elements that form the entirety of the story, as well as how these elements interact and convey deeper meanings. The narrative structure of the myth of Princess Mandalika consists of several main components, namely character, conflict, and resolution, all of which serve to illustrate the social dynamics within the Sasak community.

The central character in this myth is Princess Mandalika, a beautiful woman who becomes the focus of attention for many young men from various backgrounds. As the protagonist, Princess Mandalika is not merely a representation of a beautiful princess, but also a symbol of the social values inherent within the Sasak community. On one hand, Princess Mandalika's beauty symbolizes purity, elegance, and allure, which bring honour to the community she leads. However, on the other hand, this beauty also becomes a source of social tension, as numerous young men compete for her affection.

Princess Mandalika embodies a feminine concept that not only centres on physical beauty but also on her role as a leader within society (Yoniartini, 2021). In this context, she functions as a symbol of social harmony. As a princess, she occupies an important position that demands her to maintain a balance between personal interests and the collective interests of her community. Despite possessing extraordinary allure, Princess Mandalika is acutely aware of the social responsibilities she bears, ultimately choosing to sacrifice herself for the greater good. This illustrates that within the Sasak community, the value of collectivism is often emphasised over individual interests, even in deeply personal matters such as love and relationships (Masyur, 2019).

Furthermore, the character of Princess Mandalika can also be viewed as a symbol of courage and sacrifice. Her decision to leap into the sea as an act of sacrifice is not merely a heroic deed, but also a symbol of the bravery to confront fate in order to save her community. This character demonstrates that women in Sasak myths do not merely play the role of objects within a patriarchal social structure, but also as active subjects with the power to influence and transform social conditions through significant actions grounded in strong moral principles.

The conflict in the myth of Princess Mandalika arises from the princess's beauty, which attracts numerous young men across the kingdom. As many men wish to marry Princess Mandalika, they begin to compete for her attention, creating fierce rivalry. In many versions of this myth, this competition leads to escalating tensions, both among the young men themselves and between them and the community, which becomes divided by such tensions. This intensifying rivalry, marked by various forms of threats to social harmony, becomes the core of the primary conflict within the narrative.

This conflict reflects the struggle between individual desires and social welfare. In this myth, individuals (in this case, the young men) strive to fulfil their personal desires—namely, marrying Princess Mandalika, which in turn ignites jealousy, tension, and unhealthy competition within the community. Although this conflict appears to focus on matters of love and marriage, it actually mirrors a larger tension within the social structure, namely the tension between individual egoism and collective interests. Princess Mandalika, as a symbol of social balance and morality, faces the dilemma of whether to follow her own desires or to fulfil her responsibility to maintain peace within the community.

This conflict can be viewed as a symbol of the social imbalance that can occur within a community when individuals prioritise their personal interests too highly. In this context, the myth serves as a cautionary tale regarding the dangers of excessive competition and egoism, which can undermine the social harmony that has been preserved. The conflict fosters an atmosphere of tension that reflects the disparity between individual desires and the moral imperative to contribute to social welfare. Such tensions necessitate a resolution that can restore the threatened social harmony.

The resolution of the conflict in the myth of Princess Mandalika occurs through the princess's self-sacrifice. In a moment rich with meaning, Princess Mandalika chooses to leap into the sea, believing that her sacrifice will bring peace and prosperity to her community. In Lévi-Strauss's structural analysis, this act of sacrifice can be viewed as a resolution to the duality present in the conflict, namely between individual desires and collective needs. Through her sacrifice, Princess Mandalika alleviates the tension among the competing individuals and restores balance within the threatened community.

This act also possesses a symbolic dimension, as Princess Mandalika's sacrifice not only addresses the personal issues of the young men vying for her attention but also resolves the larger tensions within society. By sacrificing herself, Princess Mandalika teaches that to create social harmony, individuals sometimes must relinquish their rights and desires for the greater good. This reflects the collectivist principle upheld by the Sasak community.

From a structural perspective, Princess Mandalika's actions symbolise how sacrifice can resolve tensions in a society divided by social contradictions. In this regard, the myth of Princess Mandalika not only narrates a resolution to the conflict but also provides insights into the traditional ways in which the Sasak community addresses differences and maintains harmony. This resolution indicates that sacrifice is a social mechanism expected to restore balance and ease tensions within communal life.

The resolution within the myth suggests that in the life of the Sasak community, conflict resolution often involves moral and social sacrifice (Nasri, 2024). In many traditional myths, the sacrifice of a figure of high status often serves as a turning point in resolving broader social issues. Such sacrifice is not merely a physical ritual but also a moral act that reflects personal sacrifice for a wider cause. In this context, Princess Mandalika exemplifies that a good leader must be able to place the interests of the community above personal interests.

Through the analysis of the narrative structure, it becomes evident how the myth of Princess Mandalika presents a complex story with interrelated elements that form meaning. The character of Princess Mandalika embodies symbols of beauty, sacrifice, and courage, confronted with a greater social conflict related to individual competition and community

welfare. The conflicts arising in this narrative serve to reflect the social tensions occurring within the Sasak community, where individual interests often clash with collective interests. The resolution of the conflict, which occurs through the princess's sacrifice—her choice to leap into the sea—indicates that in the Sasak community, sacrifice serves as a means to alleviate tensions and restore social harmony. Through this narrative structure, the myth of Princess Mandalika not only reveals the social values present within the community but also illustrates how myths function as tools to preserve harmony and collective well-being within society.

Symbolic meaning in the myth of princess mandalika

Every element within this myth carries significance, reflecting various aspects of societal life in relation to individuals, communities, and nature (Fairiza & Widyatama, 2024). From a structuralist perspective, the symbolism within the myth of Princess Mandalika serves not only to enrich the narrative but also to shape a larger structure that depicts a complex social world. The three primary symbols that emerge in this myth are the sea, sacrifice, and love, each holding dual meanings that can be interpreted as metaphors for the relationships between humans, nature, and society.

The sea in the myth of Princess Mandalika is not merely a backdrop; it serves as a symbol imbued with dual meanings, reflecting the power of nature and the uncertainties inherent in human life (Taum, 2014). The sea is a crucial element in the lives of coastal communities, particularly for the Sasak people, who rely on marine resources for their survival. However, beyond its function as a source of life, the sea possesses a greater power that is unpredictable and mysterious. In this context, the sea symbolizes the natural forces that cannot be controlled by humans, a power that transcends individuals or groups.

For the Sasak community, the sea is often perceived as an element filled with mystery, both physical and spiritual. The sea is not merely a place that provides life through fish and other resources but also a site that harbours threats. In the myth of Princess Mandalika, the sea serves as a place of sacrifice, reflecting the uncertainties of life and death. When Princess Mandalika chooses to leap into the sea, it functions not only as the final setting of her tale but also as a symbol of the transition from life to death, from the human realm to a larger, unreachable world. The sea teaches that, within the Sasak community, the relationship between humans and nature must be viewed through a lens of respect and vigilance. The sea offers life but also serves as a reminder of human limitations and the uncertainty of fate.

The sea also reflects the duality present in this myth. On one hand, the sea is a symbol of eternity, often regarded as an inexhaustible source of life. On the other hand, it embodies the courage to confront uncertainty. Through the sacrifice of Princess Mandalika, who leaps into the sea with the conviction that her action will restore social harmony, we can observe how the sea acts as a mediator between humans and nature, while also functioning as a space that facilitates transformation. This process speaks not only to the end of an individual's life but also reflects broader social changes that occur within the community following that sacrifice.

Sacrifice is a central theme in the myth of Princess Mandalika and serves as a symbol of the collectivism highly valued in Sasak culture. The sacrifice made by Princess Mandalika not only resolves the conflict within this myth but also reflects a social moral principle. In Sasak society, sacrifice is not merely seen as an individual act but as a contribution to the collective well-being, prioritising communal interests above personal ones. The sacrifice of Princess Mandalika, who gives her life to end a rivalry threatening social peace, becomes a high moral act placing collective interests above self-interest.

As a symbol, sacrifice in this myth has two interconnected dimensions: self-sacrifice for the community and sacrifice to create social balance. Princess Mandalika chooses to sacrifice herself to resolve the conflict arising from the competition among young men vying for her attention, ultimately threatening social harmony. Her actions not only reflect personal sincerity but also serve as a reminder of the importance of collective well-being. In Sasak culture, sacrifice is often regarded as a form of social altruism, where an individual is willing to relinquish personal interests for the common good (Di et al., 2021; Zuhdi, 2018). In this regard, Princess Mandalika is not merely a figure who sacrifices herself as an individual but also a symbol of social values teaching that sometimes the sustainability of communal life is more important than individual interests (Fazalani, 2018).

This symbol of sacrifice also indicates a strong bond between the individual and the community. In a society that emphasises collective well-being, every individual is considered responsible for the sustainability and harmony of the community. The sacrifice of Princess Mandalika becomes a symbol that every individual, especially those in significant positions within society, must be prepared to relinquish personal rights for a greater cause. This sacrifice not only serves to end the conflict within the myth but also teaches the importance of willingness to sacrifice for the achievement of greater social peace. Overall, this symbol of sacrifice illustrates that, in Sasak culture, broader social interests often must be prioritised over individual ones.

Love in the myth of Princess Mandalika is not merely a romantic theme involving feelings between two individuals; rather, it functions as a symbol of the social tensions present within the community. The love possessed by Princess Mandalika becomes the centre of a larger conflict, namely the rivalry among young men seeking to marry her. Love in this context demonstrates the tension between individual desires and collective interests, leading to increasingly fragmented social situations. The young men competing for Princess Mandalika's attention illustrate how individuals often prioritise their personal interests without considering the consequences for the community's well-being.

However, love in this myth also possesses a more complex dimension, as it is not solely related to conflict but also to personal transformation. Princess Mandalika's decision to choose sacrifice as the final resolution to her fractured love reflects that love in Sasak society is not only viewed from the perspective of feelings or relationships between individuals but also as a means to achieve social transformation. In this sense, love does not confine itself to personal relationships but expands into a social process that can alter the very structure of society. The love contested by the young men becomes a symbol of personal ambition that must be relinquished to achieve greater peace within the community.

Here, love also functions as a symbol of the tension between tradition and modernity, where the sacrifice of Princess Mandalika teaches that sometimes love and personal relationships must be subordinated to a greater cause, namely social harmony. By choosing to sacrifice herself for the community, Princess Mandalika demonstrates that love in the context of Sasak culture is not merely a personal relationship between two individuals but also part of a social obligation that must be respected and maintained to preserve balance in communal life. This tension-filled love ultimately transforms into a symbol of the willingness to let go for the broader social good.

The symbolism in the myth of Princess Mandalika not only enriches the narrative but also reveals layers regarding how the Sasak community perceives the relationships between individuals, communities, and nature. The sea, sacrifice, and love, which are the primary elements in this myth, function not only as interconnected narrative components but also reflect the social, cultural, and spiritual values present within the Sasak society. Through this symbolism, the myth of Princess Mandalika teaches the importance of collectivism, social harmony, and sacrifice as foundations for building a better life for the community.

Reflection of social values and cultural identity of the sasak community

The myth of Princess Mandalika is not merely a narrative recounting a tale of love and sacrifice; it also serves as a social reflection tool that illustrates the values held in high regard by the Sasak community. Through this myth, the community can observe how social norms, collective culture, and the identity of the Sasak people are manifested in the symbolism contained within the story. The values present in this myth serve as a foundation for understanding how the Sasak community manages relationships among individuals, groups, and nature. In this context, the myth of Princess Mandalika is more than just a folktale; it is a medium reflecting the social structure and beliefs that govern their daily lives.

One of the most prominent social values in the myth of Princess Mandalika is collectivism, which reflects the importance of community welfare over individual interests. In Sasak culture, collective interests are often considered more significant than personal ambitions or desires. This is clearly evident in Princess Mandalika's decision to sacrifice herself to resolve the conflict arising from the rivalry among young men (Zuhdi, 2018). This decision involves not only personal sacrifice but also reflects the social responsibility expected of an

individual in a significant position within the community. Princess Mandalika, who initially becomes the centre of attention for many young men, realises that her actions have far-reaching implications beyond mere personal relationships.

The conflict arising in the myth, namely the rivalry among young men vying for the princess's affection, reflects the contradiction between personal interests and collective interests. The young men competing selfishly for the princess's attention risk disrupting the social harmony that exists within the community. Princess Mandalika's decision to end this rivalry through her sacrifice suggests that, in Sasak culture, social peace and community stability are valued more than the fulfilment of personal ambitions. In this context, the sacrifice of Princess Mandalika becomes a symbol of a collective moral principle emphasising that individuals must be capable of placing community interests above self-interest.

This myth also illustrates how the sacrifice of a figure within the community, particularly a respected figure such as a princess, can resolve social conflicts. In Sasak society, sacrifice is regarded as a noble act that brings peace, both in personal and social realms. The sacrifice of Princess Mandalika is not only meant to resolve personal issues among the young men but also to maintain a broader peace within the community. Thus, this myth teaches that lasting social peace can only be achieved when every individual prioritises collective interests above their personal egos.

The cultural identity of the Sasak community is inseparable from their relationship with nature, particularly with the sea, which serves as their source of life. The sea in the myth of Princess Mandalika functions not only as a setting but also as a symbol reflecting the intimate relationship between humans and nature (Nugeraha, 2024). The sea in this myth is a transitional arena—where life and death converge, a place of sacrifice, and a site where greater social values are at stake. In Sasak culture, the sea is often viewed as an element filled with natural power, both as a source of life and as a challenge that must be respected (Wahyudin, 2018).

The symbolism of the sea reflects how nature plays a role in the cultural identity of the Sasak community. The sea is not only a source of livelihood but also serves as a mirror of the imbalances and tensions occurring in social life. Princess Mandalika's decision to leap into the sea as a sacrifice symbolises the recognition that nature—in this case, the sea—holds a power greater than that of individuals or groups. The sea becomes a medium connecting the human world with a larger, unreachable realm (Sirnopati, 2021; Sudarwo et al., 2023; Zuhdi, 2012). In this regard, this myth reflects how nature and humans interact within a mutually dependent social order.

Furthermore, the sea also depicts the duality present in social life. On one hand, the sea is a place that provides life; on the other, it can also be a terrifying and destructive force. In this context, the sea serves as a symbol of uncertainty and unpredictability in human life. Within this myth, the sea becomes a symbol of sacrifice—a place where one must be ready to relinquish something profoundly valuable for the greater good. This illustrates the worldview of the Sasak community, which sees nature as an entity that not only gives life but also demands sacrifice as part of a greater balance.

In Sasak society, courage and sacrifice are values that are cherished and accepted as part of social identity. The myth of Princess Mandalika not only reflects the tension between individuals and society but also depicts an individual's courage to act for the collective good, even at the cost of self-sacrifice. Princess Mandalika's bravery in sacrificing herself is not merely to end a conflict threatening social peace but also demonstrates that a community leader must possess the ability to confront and bear the heavy social burdens for the common good.

This value of courage is also seen as a reflection of social identity that prioritises moral strength and bravery in facing significant challenges. In the myth, Princess Mandalika chooses to sacrifice herself not only as a personal act but also as a moral action leading to the restoration and unification of society. In Sasak culture, courage is not only measured by an individual's ability to survive but also by their capacity to perform significant actions that yield broad social impact. Courage, in this context, is a moral bravery that transcends mere physical battles; it is the courage to make difficult choices for the collective welfare.

Moreover, this myth illustrates how personal sacrifice plays a role in shaping social identity within the Sasak community. The sacrifice of Princess Mandalika exemplifies a moral sacrifice that often becomes part of the character formation of society. In Sasak culture, a figure who courageously sacrifices for the community's interests will be honoured and remembered throughout history. This sacrifice is not merely for individual or familial interests but for the greater social good. Therefore, the myth of Princess Mandalika serves as a mirror for the Sasak community regarding how social values such as courage, sacrifice, and morality are constructed and maintained in their social lives.

The myth of Princess Mandalika also reflects how the Sasak community preserves social harmony and cultural identity through the sacrifices made by respected individuals within the community. In this myth, Princess Mandalika functions not only as a symbol of beauty and personal sacrifice but also as a symbol of the sacrifices necessary to maintain social order. Harmony within the Sasak community is seen as the result of moral actions performed by individuals who possess the courage to act for the community's interests, even when it requires them to sacrifice themselves.

This myth demonstrates that, within Sasak society, cultural identity is not only shaped by existing norms but also by the tangible actions taken to preserve social harmony (Ningsih et al., 2023). The values contained in this myth, such as collectivism, courage, and sacrifice, become part of the collective character formation of the Sasak community, which continues to be valued and preserved from generation to generation. The cultural identity of the Sasak people, as reflected in the myth of Princess Mandalika, is the result of social and cultural processes that prioritise balance and harmony in communal life.

The values reflected in the myth of Princess Mandalika, such as sacrifice, collectivism, and courage, can still be found in the daily lives of the Sasak people. The modern Sasak community, despite facing new challenges, continues to uphold the fundamental principles passed down through folktales such as this myth. Therefore, the myth of Princess Mandalika not only serves as a historical narrative or moral tale but also as a living reflection of how these values remain relevant in maintaining social harmony and cultural identity amidst the changing times.

CONCLUSION

The myth of Princess Mandalika, through structural and symbolic analysis, reveals the social and cultural values present within the Sasak community. Within the framework of Claude Lévi-Strauss's structuralist approach, this myth illustrates how narrative elements interact to form a greater meaning, not only for the individual but also for the broader social welfare. The narrative structure of this myth, centred on conflict and resolution through sacrifice, reflects the principle of collectivism highly valued in Sasak society. The sacrifice of Princess Mandalika, as the focal point of the tale, serves not only as a resolution to a protracted love story but also as a symbol of greater social sacrifice for the harmony of the community.

The symbolism within this myth plays a crucial role in conveying deeper meanings. The sea, as a symbol of the untouchable forces of nature, becomes the meeting point of life and death, reflecting the human relationship with nature, characterised by both reverence and uncertainty. The sea teaches the importance of sacrifice in the relationship between humans and the natural world, which reflects the reciprocal relationship between humans and their surroundings. Similarly, the symbol of sacrifice itself indicates that in Sasak culture, individual actions that involve self-sacrifice for the common good represent the highest form of social morality.

Furthermore, the myth of Princess Mandalika reflects various social values that underpin the cultural identity of the Sasak community. The collectivist values embedded in this story emphasise the importance of communal welfare over individual interests. The sacrifice of Princess Mandalika teaches that to create peace and harmony within society, individuals must be willing to relinquish their personal interests. This myth also illustrates how courage and sacrifice serve as foundations for sustaining harmonious social life. In this regard, the myth acts as a medium for teaching and reinforcing the social principles integral to the Sasak community.

Overall, the myth of Princess Mandalika is more than merely a folktale; it is a reflection of the social structure and cultural values that shape the identity of the Sasak people. Through themes of sacrifice, courage, and the relationship with nature, this myth conveys a relevant message regarding the importance of social balance, morality, and respect for the natural world. The values encapsulated in this myth remain highly pertinent in the lives of the Sasak community to this day, illustrating how myths are not only part of tradition but also serve as a mirror of the evolving social life. Thus, an analysis of the myth of Princess Mandalika aids in understanding how traditional narratives can function as a medium that connects the past with the present in strengthening the cultural identity of a community.

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