

Identity Change for Married Women: The Case of Balinese Women in *Rusmini's Earth Dance*

I Gusti Ayu Gde Sosiowati

Bachelor of English, Faculty of Humanities

Udayana University

Jl. P. Nias 13, Sanglah, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia

gag_sosiowati@unud.ac.id

Nissa Puspitaning Adni

Bachelor of English, Faculty of Humanities

Udayana University

Jl. P. Nias 13, Sanglah, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia

nissa_adni@unud.ac.id

Abstract

“*Earth Dance*” is a 2011’s novel by a Balinese woman, *Rukmini*. It tells a story about the discrimination against women caused by the Balinese caste system. This article aims to show how Balinese women can lead herself into miserable life once they get married to someone from different caste, either higher or lower. The Balinese caste system has the rule that when a *sudra* (the lowest caste) woman marries a *brahmana* (the highest caste), she will be given a new name indicating that she is no longer a commoner. When a *brahmana* woman marries a commoner, she will be a commoner and has no right on her *brahmana* title. In short, this system has made the Balinese women to have their identity changed. Meanwhile, men are given more freedom, no matter who they are and whom they marry with, they will keep the caste.

Keywords: *brahmana; caste; commoner; dominant; identity; sudra.*

Introduction

Balinese society has four castes, which are *brahmana*, *ksatria*, *wesia* and *sudra*.. Someone’s caste can be seen from the initial names. The title for male *brahmana* is *Ida Bagus* (*Bagus* = handsome) and for female is *Ida Ayu* (*ayu* = beautiful). *Sudra*, have no title as such; they are only marked based on their order in the family. *Wayan*, for the first child, *Made* for the second, *Nyoman* for the third and *Ketut* for the fourth child. Men and women are differentiated by *I* (pronounced: [i:], for male) or *Ni* (female). Those names are put in front of their names of birth order. For example: *I Wayan Danu* (male’s name) and *Ni Made Wati* (female’s name). Since the Balinese hold the patriarchal system, the castes of children follow the caste of their fathers and when a woman marries a man, she must follow the caste of her husband. In related to this article, it will focus on *brahmana* as the highest caste and *sudra* as the lowest caste and their inter caste marriage. A woman of the higher caste as much as possible must avoid marrying a man of lower caste. Their parents will not approve since this marriage will drag their daughter down into the caste of her husband. The man should be of the same caste. Approval of parents when a woman wants to marry someone also occurs in Bonjeruk village in Lombok island, Indonesia, where a woman who wants to get married must be with a man who is approved by their parents or at least have a knighthood (Nuriskandar, 2021). Because of that, a Balinese woman if marrying a man of different caste, either higher or lower will have to change her identity. When a *sudra* woman marries a *brahmana* man, she will not be really accepted as a real *brahmana*. She is marked by the title ‘*Jero*’ and another name given to her by the family of the man which is usually taken from the names of flowers, for example, the maiden name *Luh Sekar* becomes *Jero Kenanga* (*kenanga* = ylang). She cannot address her husband and her children as well as the members of her husband’s family without using an honorific address “*Ratu*” (Lord). She is not allowed to pay respect or pray in front the dead bodies of her biological parents like the Balinese children usually do, because she does not belong to *sudra* anymore. She has moved to the house of the *brahmana* family which is called *griya*. When she makes offerings consisting of fruits and cakes on her Balinese birthday, no one from her husband’s family will eat it since it is considered the remains of someone of the lower caste. In this situation the status of the woman is in the middle, meaning that she is neither a *brahmana* nor a *sudra*. However, when she marries someone of the lower caste, she will be treated as someone of exactly the same caste as her husband’s family. The sad thing is that she is not allowed to call her parents the way she used to. By the time she marries a *sudra*, she has to call her own family with the honorific address “*Ratu*”; she has to use honorific language to her own family otherwise she will be considered impolite. The worst thing is that she has to give up her caste and join her husband caste and become a commoner.

In short, we can say that, if a Balinese woman marries someone of the highest caste, she will have a “special” class, which is neither a *brahmana*, a *ksatria*, a *wesia*, nor a *sudra*. She has no caste. However, when a Balinese woman marries someone of the *sudra*, she really becomes a *sudra*.

That description above leads to the idea that women always get the disadvantages in terms of inter caste marriage in Balinese society. The inter-caste marriage in Balinese society have been talked about due to its interesting factual phenomena that brings disadvantages on the woman side. The discussion of the relation between gender and its relation to the society has been written by Nurdiani (2010:1-32) in “Dimensi Jender dalam Novel Tarian Bumi Karya Oka Rusmini: Tinjauan Sastra Feminis”. Meanwhile, the inequality against women in inter-caste marriage has been discussed by Windiyarti (2008:286-295) in her “Pemberontakan Perempuan Bali Terhadap Diskriminasi Kelas dan Gender: Kajian Feminis Novel Tarian Bumi Karya Oka Rusmini”. There are also some other studies by Mandrastuti (2010:1-75) in her “Novel Tarian Bumi Karya Oka Rusmini: Kajian Feminisme”, Putri (2016) in her “Ketidaksetaraan Gender dalam Novel Tarian Bumi Karya Oka Rusmini: Kajian Feminisme”, and Rejo (2011:1-3) in his “Diskriminasi Kelas dan Gender terhadap Perempuan Bali dalam Novel Tarian Bumi Karya Oka Rusmini”. Those articles show how heavy the burden carried by the Balinese women in selecting men for their husband. A lot of consequences they have to put into consideration. In relation to the unfairness experienced by women, the young generations, especially young women of the higher castes do not like their being in those castes. They think their high caste is a burden which limits them from having anyone they love to be their husband. Since caste system makes the Balinese women treated unfairly, it is frequently referred to as a form of feudalism and Bhadra (2020) mentions that women’s emancipation could not be achieved if a society is not free from feudal oppression.

Marriage can lead to social conflict in which women are the victims. This conflict is portrayed by Rusmini in her novel *Earth Dance*. She presents the miserable marriage of two Balinese women. One of them is from *sudra* family marrying a *brahmana* man, and another one is a *brahmana* woman marrying a *sudra* man. This story writing is in line with Daiches idea (1963:33), saying that the composition of prose is not for communicating facts but telling a story. A story can be created on the bases of reality, fully imaginative, or a mixture between reality and imagination. He also says that plots should show (1) a good man must pass from misery to happiness; (2) a bad man does not go from misery to happiness. This is not really true in the story *Earth Dance* since the important characters *Sekar* and *Telaga*, who are considered good people; do not have happiness at the end of the story. *Sekar*, who is a social climber (she wants to be more prestigious by marrying a *brahmana* man) cannot get what she wanted. Instead she lived miserable life starting from the rejection of her mother-in-law and bad characters of her husband. *Telaga*, who wants to be happy, hurt her mother’s feeling (*Sekar*) by marrying a commoner, the marriage that makes her give up her caste. That situation makes this story unique. However, how the readers perceive the story depends on their experiences and values about what they read. In relation to this Culier (1997:63) says that the perception of the readers about the work they read depends on their horizon of expectation. In fact, whether the reader is male or female will affect their perception.

The purpose of presenting this article is to show how the caste system in Balinese society discriminates against women and how this discrimination brings unhappy life to the women characters in the novel “*Earth Dance*”. This article can be used as a starting point to change the idea that the dignity or the happiness of human beings is not determined by caste or wealth. The caste system should not bring disadvantages to women who happen to be born in the family of higher caste. This is important to share since the principle of any religion is that God creates man and woman the same in terms of dignity and the right to be happy. Nowadays, the more women are educated, the more they disagree with the idea of caste that discriminates women.

Theoretical Framework

The discussion of this article is based on the *Earth Dance* novel (by Rusmini, 2011). This novel presents one of two main concerns of feminism. Rapaport (2011:47) states that feminism has two main concerns, which are critique of patriarchy and transformation of regulation so that more female can be accepted in various aspects of social-economic life without any difference from male. This novel has shown how the patriarchal system brings misery to the Balinese women. Originally, in the Indonesian version, this novel is entitled ‘*Tarian Bumi*’ (2007). It was translated into English because the novel is considered to present local values including the position of women in the Balinese society. The reason for using this novel is that, it is considered successful as proved by the fact that *Tarian Bumi* has been translated into “*Earth Dance*” to be read by non Indonesian people. In making this story successful, the readers play a very important part. According to Eagleton (1996:64), there is a theory of hermeneutics in Germany called ‘reception aesthetics’ or ‘reception theory’ stating that a literary text will be considered as it is when the text is read, when the text has its readers. This novel has been read by many readers before achieving the state of being successful.

The reason of its success is because this novel is considered able to portray real social facts and cultural reality in Balinese society such as the conflict between social classes, or in this case is caste. The conflict can be between the rich and the poor (the lower class is usually presented by poverty), the rebellion of women against male domination, problems of tradition, disrespect about one's occupation to name a few. This novel is also educating the readers by implicitly presenting that actually both man and woman have dignity.

The discrimination against the Balinese women that can be found in the story is about the effects and the miserable life of the woman marrying a man of different caste. The discrimination is presented through the characters. Kenney (1966:24) states characters in fiction are expected to appear like people in life. In relation to that, each character should have physiological, psychological, and sociological dimensions just like a real human being. Physiological dimension is about the character's physical appearance, psychological dimension is the inner performance or the characteristics of a character, and sociological dimension is about the character's relationship to his/her environment. The discrimination which means inequality between male and female of higher and lower caste brings about conflict. Morner and Rausch (1998) say, conflict is the clash of two opposite power resulting in an action. In relation to the story, the main conflict takes place between the higher and lower caste. Kenney (1966:19) says that there are three kinds of conflict, they are (1) conflict within himself/herself, (2) conflict with the surrounding, and (3) conflict with nature. From those who have a conflict, it can be seen that in the story the kind of conflict is mainly between the characters and the surroundings. The conflict that occurs in this novel is conflict number (1) and (2).

Analysis

The analysis in this article is divided into three parts, which are the author's biography, the summary of the story and the analysis. The author's biography is very important to be presented here considering that sociologically, the author is a member of this society and grew up in that society in which there is still a conflict between social classes in inter-caste marriages. She is in the middle and directly affected by that condition since she was born in the *brahmana* family. It can be seen from the story how hard it is to be a member of a *brahmana* family like her. She is lucky that she fell in love with a non-Balinese so that she did not have that conflict when she got married. This story can be considered fiction but it presents the real social and cultural condition of Balinese society.

Author's Biography

Ida Ayu Oka Rusmini known as Oka Rusmini is a Balinese woman of a *brahmana* family, who was born in Jakarta on 11 July 1967 as the first child of two children. She was brought up within a strong culture, in which as a member of a high caste family. She was ordered to be able to make offerings and behave accordingly, polite and descent. She married a poet as well as an essayist who is not a Balinese. She wrote poems, novels and short stories. She got several awards for her work. Her works are characterized by the condition of women in patriarchal cultures in traditional societies. In these cultures, women have to experience violence and oppression as well as the shackles human beings put on women through the caste system. "Earth Dance" is the novel in which all the issues mentioned above can be found.

The Summary of the Novel "Earth Dance"

The story Earth Dance tells about Luh Sekar (Sekar) a *sudra* woman who has a desire to marry someone from a *brahmana* family. Her dream is that by marrying someone from *brahmana* family, she can get more prestige both for herself and for her family. Through marriage she wants to have a higher social status. She works very hard to make her dream come true, among others she learns how to dance and always prays to God so that she can become a famous dancer and have a *brahmana* man to be her husband. Finally, her dreams come true. She is appointed as a prominent dancer in her dancing group which opens the way for her to marry someone from a *brahmana* family whose name is Ida Bagus Ngurah Pidada (Pidada). That marriage grants her a new title and a new name taken from the name of flowers. Her new title is Jero and her new name is Kenanga (Kenanga = ylang). However, this marriage is not a happy one since her husband's mother whose name is Ida Ayu Sagra Pidada (Sagra) does not approve. She wants her son to marry someone of the same caste. To make it worse, Pidada is not a good man because he likes drinking, gambling in cockfighting and sleeping with prostitutes. Sagra blames Sekar for all these bad attitudes of her son. She keeps on swearing at her daughter-in-law and it is only after Pidada found dead in a brothel house that Sagra stops swearing at Kenanga. No longer after that, Sagra passed away. From her marriage with Pidada, Kenanga has a daughter who is as stubborn as she was. Her name is Ida Ayu Telaga Pidada (Telaga). Kenanga wants her daughter to marry a *brahmana* man to keep the caste and the wealth, but she falls in love with a *sudra* man with whom she elopes. His name is Wayan Sashmita (Wayan). This marriage is not approved by Wayan's mother, Luh Gumbreg (Gumbreg). The reason for her disapproval is the belief that there will be a disaster when a *brahmana* woman marries a *sudra* man. But both Wayan and Telaga ignore that belief. They get married and have a daughter whose name is Luh Sari (Sari).

Not long after Sari was born, when she was five years old, Wayan died in his studio leaving Telaga and Sari to live with Gumbreg. Following Gumbreg's suggestion, four years after Wayan died, Telaga does the ceremony called *Patiwangi* that is the ceremony in which a woman from a high caste changes her status to be a *sudra* woman. performing this ceremony, Telaga has destroyed her own identity to get a new identity as a commoner. This is the consequence that a Balinese woman of a high caste who marry a man of a lower caste has to pay.

Characters in "Earth Dance"

The presentation of characters from various dimension (psychology, physiology or sociology) is done with the purposes (1) to provide clearer idea as who are those who contribute to the flow of the plots and (2) to present how these characters contribute to the unfortunate fate of the women character in the novel. Those characters are Sekar, Pidada, Sagra, Telaga, Wayan, and Gumbreg.

Sekar/Kenanga

Sekar is a *sudra* woman from a poor family. She is obsessed with marrying a *brahmana* to become wealthy and more respected. Sekar is a dancer and she is beautiful. She is so obsessed with her dreams to raise her social status that she turns down all men who fall in love with her and finally marries Pidada even though she knows that he has very bad character. She does not even love him. Sekar whose name is then changed into Jero Kenanga has no idea that the marriage would cause a great change to her life. By holding the title Jero, everybody knows that she is a *sudra* woman who married a *brahmana* (or any man of higher caste). *Sudra* women are proud of this title because it makes them higher in social status than *sudra*. After her marriage, she has to change her attitude in front of people and even her mother treats her differently because she is no longer a Sekar, a commoner. Instead, she has become the member of a *griya*. She is no longer allowed to pray at her family temple called *sanggah* which seems that she abandons her own ancestors; she is not allowed to eat anything that has been offered to her family's ancestors. Theoretically, her caste has been upgraded but not high enough to reach the caste of *brahmana*. In the *griya*, she is still treated as if she was a lower caste woman. In her new home, she has to face her mother-in-law, a woman of high caste who acts like the head of the family and who feels unhappy when her son marries a *sudra* woman. She has a constant conflict with her mother-in-law. The conflict turns to be the conflict within herself since she cannot speak it out due to her position. The conflict of the character like the one in this story has been discussed in a more detailed way by Shinta (2007:1-74) and how a woman being subordinated struggle to survive has been discussed by Haryanti (2017: 32-44) in her *Jejak Kekerasan pada Novel Tarian Bumi Karya Oka Rusmini*. Another painful fact faced by Kenanga is that the child who is born from the mixed marriage is considered less pure than the one having birth from the marriage of the same caste of *brahmana*. From this marriage, Jero Kenanga has a daughter whose name is Ida Ayu Telaga. Jero Kenanga is always blamed when her husband behaves badly until one day, he is found dead in brothel house. Again, Jero Kenanga is blamed for not being able to take care of her husband. Actually, as a woman, moreover from the caste of *sudra*, she is not given the right to tell her husband what to do and what not to do.

Pidada

Pidada is a *brahmana* man, the son of Sagra. He is very spoiled and does a lot of bad things like drinking, gambling and sleeping with prostitutes. He will not listen to anybody because he is protected by his powerful mother. He does not love Sekar, he marries Sekar only to show that he is capable of marrying the most famous and beautiful dancer in the area; he just wants to show that he is the winner of the getting-Sekar-game. He makes her a miserable wife. Being the only son in the family who will carry the name of the rich family, he tends to behave as he is pleased. Pidada does not do his work as the breadwinner of the family because he is busy having fun for himself. According to Gonalons-Pon & Gang (2021) there is gender social stress mechanism in the relationship between Kenanga and Pidada. Pidada who does not do his role as the breadwinner should have faced social challenges. However, his background as a member of highly respected family has made people ignore that misfit condition. The conflict he has with his wife is never shown because his wife never speaks it out.

Sagra

Sagra is a rich *brahmana* woman, which means that she has both wealth and aristocracy. She marries a *brahmana* man named Ida Bagus Tugur (Tugur). So, she married someone of the same caste. Unlike the common thing in patriarchal culture in which a man proposes to a woman, Tugur is proposed by Sagra. This means switching role. Tugur is called *nyentana* because he is the one who moves to his wife's house. That concept of *nyentana* makes him play the role as a wife in the house and in Balinese tradition a wife is not a prominent figure in the family. The concept of *nyentana* has been discussed in a more detailed way by Turaeni (2015). In their household Sagra plays the role as the head of the family; she acts as a leader of the family that is usually held by a man. In their marriage, they have one son whose name is Ida Bagus Ngurah Pidada.

His mother is so busy to make her husband love her that she does not realize her son growing up to be a bad man who likes drinking, gambling and playing with prostitutes. Before getting married, Sagra proposes to Tugur because Tugur is smart and intelligent but from poor family and is still single while Sagra is in a need of a man to be her husband. Thus, at first, she did not love him and the marriage took place because she wanted to have a husband of the same caste. By doing this she can keep both her caste and wealth. Sagra did not treat Tugur properly and this became Tugur's motivation to work hard until his hard work made him a rich person. When Tugur turned out to be successful and wealthy, Sagra found out that she began to love him but her husband is no longer interested in her. She tries hard to make her husband love her but in vain. This made Sagra upset and put her anger on her daughter-in-law. Sagra is a wealthy aristocracy woman who creates conflict with her own daughter-in-law (who actually has no personal mistakes to her) which is caused by her unhappiness towards her husband and actually to his son for having chosen a commoner for his wife. Sagra cannot show her anger or disappointment to her husband and to her son, that is why she made Sekar who cannot speak up, her victim.

Telaga

Telaga is the daughter of Sekar and Pidada. She is beautiful and rich and also a good dancer. She chooses to marry a commoner, named Wayan, a painter and her dancing partner. Telaga is different from her mother. While her mother was a social climber, Telaga decides to live her own life by choosing someone she loves as her husband. The man is Wayan, a *sudra* man. She ignores her mother's will that she should marry a *brahmana*. By chance the *brahmana* man to whom she was introduced was not a good one. He was only after Telaga's beauty and wealth. She decided to elope with Wayan. Her decision creates severe conflict with her mother. This marriage costs her a lot because she has to lose everything including her wealth and her aristocracy. She is even asked to do the ceremony Patiwangi in which she has to give up her *brahmana* caste to be a *sudra*. Telaga strongly takes all the consequences since for her the freedom to live with someone she loves is more valuable than just worldly identity.

Wayan

Wayan, is a *sudra* man, a dancing partner of Telaga who marries her. Before marrying Telaga, Wayan had a conflict with his own heart. He realized that marrying a *brahmana* woman is forbidden. Later, after Telaga agreed to marry him, he had a conflict with his mother who strongly rejected the marriage. However, both of them eloped. His mother, Gumbreg, could do anything but allowed Telaga to live in her house. This creates awkward situation since Gumbreg does not know how to treat and address Telaga, a *brahmana* woman. Telaga does whatever she has to do in the house, trying to be a good wife for Wayan and daughter-in-law for Gumbreg. They live together for about six years, until Wayan was found dead in his studio where he spent most of his time, painting. His mother accused Telaga as the cause of his death. His mother believes that a *sudra* man should not marry a *brahmana* woman because it can turn into a catastrophe. She did not remember that Wayan had been having health problem since he was much younger.

Gumbreg

Gumbreg is Wayan's mother who was at first fond of Telaga. But her attitude changed after Telaga married Wayan. She was afraid that the marriage would cause Wayan a real problem. Marrying a woman from a higher caste is strictly forbidden. She was the one who suggested Telaga to do Patiwangi so that she can really treat Telaga as a commoner and as her daughter-in-law.

The characters above will be the main focus for this article's discussion. Those characters support Rusmini's theme of caste discrimination against women in the Balinese society. They provide the initial information why the women characters have those hard problems in their marriage (Halimah, 2012).

Discussion

This part presents the data in the form of utterances spoken by various characters to show how the Balinese women are discriminatively and badly treated in marriage; how they have to suffer because of the inter caste conflict in a marriage. Each of the data is presented in the form of utterances showing either the discrimination, underestimation, humiliation and bad accusation to certain characters followed by the explanation.

Data 1.

"Then, on top of this, Grandmother's son fell in love with my mother, a common woman named Luh Sekar. Grandmother felt that her honor had been demolished; all her dreams and ambitions were gone. She was crushed to find that her only child chose to marry a mere commoner instead of a brahmana woman like herself. She felt betrayed, and completely lost." (Rusmini, 2011:21)

The quotation in Data 1 is said by Telaga, the granddaughter of Sagra illustrating how painful it was for Sagra to have seen her only son marries to a commoner. She said that to express how a commoner woman (Kenanga) is very

worthless in front of a *brahmana* woman. Her dignity as the carrier of the family name has been crushed into pieces since the child of Kenanga and Pidada, due to mixed marriage cannot be considered a pure *brahmana*. This is a proof that a commoner who marries a *brahmana* is still considered someone of the lower caste.

Data 2.

Sagra: "You're never able to make my son happy!" (Rusmini, 2011:19)

Sagra, as the mother of Pidada, in her dislikeness to Kenanga, always blames her when there is something wrong with Pidada. The sentence in Data 2 is uttered by Sagra to Kenanga after she asks her daughter-in-law to tie up the leg of Pidada to stop him from running amok as the result of the *tuak* (alcoholic drink) he often consumes. Kenanga is only able to cry for being forced to do that to her own husband and being blamed by her mother-in-law. Instead of feeling sorry that her son has put Kenanga into misery, Sagra blames her. This is a typical character of an over protective mother who thinks that her son is the best so that he deserves to get all the best things in the world. Another example of Sagra's statement that is blaming Kenanga is shown in Data 3.

Data 3.

Sagra: "You don't take good care of my son" (Rusmini, 2011:19)

The sentence in Data 3 is uttered by Sagra to Kenanga. She ignores the fact that Kenanga will not be able to confront her husband, will not be able to tell him not to do the bad things, due to her status as a wife. To make things worse, she is a *sudra* woman, a daughter-in-law of a woman who spoils Pidada, and a junior member of the *griya*. As a woman, especially from the lower caste, Kenanga has lost her voice, her right to speak up what she feels. In her situation, a woman is not allowed to step forward expressing herself. The unfortunate condition of being a woman is presented to Kenanga through the sentence in Data 4

Data 4

Sagra: "It's hard to build a dynasty, Telaga, especially if you're a woman" (Rusmini, 2011:21)

Sagra's sentence to Telaga above implies that a woman cannot build a dynasty unless she has the power to propose to a man and bring him to her home like what she did. The patriarchal system makes only a man (or the woman having man status) can carry the family name. Sagra is able to carry the family name because she has her husband *nyentana*. The woman who can do it is only wealthy woman over a weak, poor man with mostly no dignity. Sagra utterance implies that as a woman she has worked very hard to make herself the carrier of the family name. Kenanga is nothing compared to her. For Kenanga, marrying a *brahmana* man is not actually a worthy achievement considering that she has to give up her past, the thing that has shaped her identity. She has to give up her name, her relationship with her own mother, the woman who gave her the chance to live, and to give up her ancestors. That bitter situation is reflected in Data 5.

Data 5

Kenanga's mother: "You are no longer Ni Luh Sekar. Your status is now higher than all sudra women, including me, the woman who gave birth to you." (Rusmini, 2011:51).

Kenanga's mother said the statement in Data 5 when Kenanga visited her. She said that Sekar should not come home to her maiden home too often and she even said that Sekar was dead and the replacement is a new person called Jero Kenanga. Indeed, there are so many things that Kenanga has to sacrifice just to fulfill her dream to marry a *brahmana*, including sacrificing her own name, her identity. The saddest thing is that she was not allowed to touch the dead body of her own mother, not allowed to join the ritual bathing. She has to sit in a higher place as a member of the *griya*. (Rusmini, 2011:55-56). The cruelty is too much when just because of a marriage; a woman should treat her own mother like a stranger. The utterance said by Kenanga's mother implicitly express her sadness or even disappointment for "losing" her own child. Kenanga who has experienced the bitterness of inter-caste marriage, does not want her daughter, Telaga, to experience problems causing by inter caste marriage. She tries to match Telaga with a *brahmana* man, Ida Bagus Adnyana, but Telaga strongly reject him.

Data 6.

"Telaga couldn't understand what it was her mother wanted from Ida Bagus Adnyana, who owned a string of hotels and homestays in Kuta and Ubud. Why didn't she marry the guy herself? He had made Telaga's friend pregnant, too, and then refused to be responsible because the girl was a commoner" (Rusmini, 2011: 101)

When Telaga becomes a grown-up woman, Kenanga, her mother, begins to get worried because she can see that Telaga keeps on refusing every man who wants to start a relationship with her. In her desire to make her daughter happy and respected, Kenanga tries to be the match maker between her daughter and a *brahmana* called Ida Bagus Adnyana who is a rich person. Telaga wonders why her mother does it. She feels so upset. Whatever she feels about the man is presented by the narrator in Data 6. It seems that Kenanga has learned from her past. To some extent she was raised to a member of a *griya* when she married Pidada but she forgot the consequence of marrying someone without love.

Now, she is obsessed that Telaga should marry a *brahmana* to make her respected and wealthy. Kenanga never realizes that Ida Bagus Adnyana (Adnyana) is not as good as she thinks. From the quotation in Data 6, the narrator, presenting Telaga, shows that she knows what kind of person he is. He did not marry a woman whom he made pregnant just because that woman is a commoner, a *sudra*. Now, he is after Telaga. There are some possible reasons for what Adnyana is doing. First, he does not want to marry that woman because she is a commoner, who will give him a child who are not pure *brahmana*. He should have known this before he made her pregnant. What he did has caused disadvantage to the woman. Things might be different if she were a *brahmana*. Second, he wants to have Telaga as his wife because Telaga is both a *brahmana* and wealthy. Telaga feels that he does not love her but only wants what she possesses. This situation has proved that women will always be put in a disadvantageous position while men will have all the freedom to do what they want to. Ida Bagus Adnyana just wants her to give birth to his children so that the children will be the descendants of *brahmana*. She has only the role of maternity. This situation is similar to Irish women mentioned by Chang in her article entitled “The Body and Female Identity in Eithne Strong’s *Flesh: The Greatest Sin*” (2017:162) saying that Irish Woman’s body is just a tool for procreation. Telaga rejects her mother’s wish that she should marry Ida Bagus Adnyana because she wants to marry someone she loves. Telaga bravely rebels against her mother’s wish. She fights for her own life, for her own happiness. Telaga intends to marry Wayan, a *sudra* man. Wayan’s mother is very scared and her feeling is presented in Data 7

Data 7

“But the old woman did not dare to accept her as a daughter-in-law. A commoner must not take a noble woman for a wife. It would bring bad luck for Wayan himself if he married Telaga. Common women believed that brahmana women were surya, the sun itself; the sun that illuminated darkness. What would happen if the sun itself were stolen?” (Rusmini, 2011:113)

Data 7 presents what Wayan’s mother thinks when she knew that Wayan wanted to marry Telaga. She thinks about her commoner son marrying a *brahmana* woman. She was frightened for some reasons. She is afraid that the members of *griya* get angry at her. Her family owes Kenanga’s family a lot. They always help her with food. Her family has been devoted to the *griya* and the good relationship will be damaged by the marriage. People of the whole village will be gossiping about her and blame her for all the misfortunes that follow due to her son’s marriage with a *brahmana* woman. She does not know how to face Kenanga who has been very kind to her. Another thing related to people’s belief makes her afraid that her son will have bad luck because he is not supposed to marry someone considered *surya* (sun). Metaphorically *Brahmanas* are called the sun because people of this caste possess religious knowledge that can enlighten people. Then they are considered as teachers. This prohibition of a *sudra* man marrying a *brahmana* woman has been transmitted from generation to generation. Although the idea is fading due to modernization, there are still many families who hold that belief. That becomes the reality that is portrayed by Rusmini through her Earth Dance.

Telaga is actually the figure representing the rebellion of modern women. She takes the risk of being abandoned by her own family, of losing her identity that is very precious for the sake of marrying someone she loves. If she were a man, she would be free to marry anyone from any caste. But she is only a woman in a society that discriminates women. Things soon turn to be true after she gets married with Wayan because she is really treated like a commoner. She has to work in the kitchen and even her mother-in-law addresses her differently. Gumbreg, her mother-in-law used to call her with the honorific address term *Tugeg*, now she almost never calls her. *Tugeg* is the honorific Balinese address term for women of higher caste. It derives from two words: *Ratu* (princess) and *jegeg* (beautiful). The last syllables of those two words are combined to form the honorific address term *Tugeg*. Thus, *Ratu* is the marker for the honorific address term that can be used for man and woman, both young and old. Telaga never knows that Gumbreg has to face awkward situation when she has to address Telaga. Telaga tries to play her role as much as she can. She has to face the fact that both her mother-in-law and her sister-in-law do not like her. She only has Wayan. But this man, being a painter, is usually busy. For weeks he will work in his studio until one day when Sari, his daughter reaches the age of five, he got sick and passes away. He was found dead in his studio. Gumbreg, Wayan’s mother, cannot accept that her son died young. Her unacceptance is presented in Data 8.

Data 8.

Gumbreg: “How many times did I tell him marrying a noblewoman would only bring bad luck? And now he’s dead. Wayan never wanted to understand, but it wasn’t some old wife’s tale; it was the truth! What more can I say now? I told you not to get close to my son. I told you not to marry him, but you insisted” (Rusmini, 2011:126)

Gumbreg is very angry with Telaga, accusing her of being the cause of Wayan’s death. She does not listen to her granddaughter, Sari, who tells her that her father died because he was sick, not because of her mother. Gumbreg is so busy accusing Telaga that she forgot that actually Wayan has a weak heart since he was a child. She keeps on holding the belief that Telaga brought bad luck and she has to be blamed.

This is another proof that an unwise mother usually thinks that her son is the best. She ignores all signs and information telling her that her son is not who she thinks of. Telaga does not say anything against her mother-in-law. She accepts it as her own fate but she will face it with dignity, with all of her strength. During the ceremony, some people from *griya* come including her grandfather who has been always on her side. She wants to tell him that she has had a happy marriage even though she married a commoner. But she realizes that she cannot just approached that old man and tell him whatever she wants to because she has different status now. She is no longer a *brahmana*. (Rusmini: 2011:127).

Some years after the death of her husband, Telaga is asked by her mother-in-law to do the ceremony of Patiwangi. This is a very hard thing to do because she has to go back to *griya*, to ask for a proper leave from her ancestors and then do the Patiwangi, the ceremony that will make her abandon her previous caste to be a real *sudra*. In the process of the ceremony, Telaga has to go to the *griya*. She takes Sari along and tells her to call everybody she meets there *Ratu*. Telaga asks Sari not to ask questions about it. The first thing done by Telaga is trying to meet Kenanga, her mother. The following is what Kenanga says to Telaga.

Data 9.

Kenanga in raged and hostile voice: "What kind of devil brought you here. I don't have a daughter anymore and I haven't had one for a long time. My daughter is dead! My daughter is dead. She can't come back. It's impossible" (Rusmini, 2011:138)

Data 9 is what Kenanga said to Telaga, not face to face but from behind the closed door of her room. This shows the anger and disappointment of a mother to a daughter who is considered to have brought shame to the family. Telaga has made the dreams of her mother break into pieces. Only her grandfather, the one who was gossiped to have a special relationship to her mother, still stands up for her. Kenanga thinks that Telaga betrayed her but she never knows that even for only six years with Wayan, her only daughter has found out what it is meant by happiness, the happiness she has never felt.

For a Balinese woman, it does not matter whether she marries a higher or a lower caste man, as long as it is inter-caste marriage, the consequence will always be the same. She cannot have the same treatment from her mother. What social system can be crueler than this? It is true that Kenanga is the victim of the social system and this idea is in line with Foucault's idea (in Culier 1997:5) saying that sex is a complete idea produced by the range of social practices, investigations, talks and writing.

Thus, it can be concluded that Balinese women will have problems unless she marries men of the same caste. Marrying a man of a higher caste does not mean a Balinese woman really belong to her husband's caste. She will be considered different by her own family and from the family of her husband. If a Balinese woman of the higher caste marries a man of the lower caste, she right away follows her husband's caste. She will have to change the way she addresses her own family; she has to use high variety of Balinese language when speaking to her own family including to her parents.

In this story there are three *brahmana* women who face problems in their marriage. The problems are always because of the social class called caste. The first one is Sagra. She takes the role of a man; she is responsible to carry the family name and hold the control of the household. She is also very protective to her son. She thinks that caste and wealth are the most important things in her life. The second one is Kenanga. She thinks that marrying a *brahmana* man will bring her more respect. She expected better social life through her marriage. She did not realize that love plays a very important role in keeping happy marriage. Her marriage caused sadness not only for herself but for her mother as well. The third one is Telaga, who bravely fights to be free in deciding her future. She chooses to marry a *sudra* and bravely takes the consequences. She has proved that caste and wealth are not the key elements to have happy marriage. However, it cannot be denied that she has to pay for it dearly, by losing her mother, family, caste, and wealth.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis and discussion above proved that there are a lot of disadvantages experienced by Balinese women in their marriage due to the caste system. Balinese women are considered to have a lower status than men. Even though there have been changes on how Balinese people perceive that caste system due to modernization, as long the old generation is still there, the old caste system is also still applicable as reflected in the story "Earth Dance". The story presents the phenomena in Balinese society completely. It presents the inter caste marriage; women who obey and disobey the customs. The story also reflects the rebellion performed by the woman character in the story for the sake of happiness. The rebel performed by the Balinese women might be easier (since they do not have to fight against the state constitution) compared to the Irish women. In Ireland, the Constitution has decided that women should only take care of the family (Chang, 2017: 162). It means that if they are against the regulation, they are facing the state. The "rebellion" (performed by the Balinese women) can be used as the starting point to eliminate discrimination against Balinese women. In fact, the writer of "Earth Dance" has shown three examples of marriage that are very "costly".

Acknowledgment

My gratitude goes to my friends in my department for their strong support in completing this article. I would like to extend my gratitude to my institution the Faculty of Humanities, and Udayana University that have provided the opportunity to write this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

References

- Bhadra Paramita (2020). "Renu Chakraborty and the Women's Movement in India: A Journey for Equality and Empowerment of Women". *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol. 10 No. 3 pp. 52 – 58
- Chang, Hawk (2017). The Body and Female Identity in Eithne Strong's *Flesh: The Greatest Sin*. *3L: The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies – Vol 23(4): 157 – 169* <http://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2017-2304-12>.
- Culier, Jonathan (1997). *Literary Theory A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Daiches, David (1963). *Critical Approaches to Literature*. London: Longmans, Green and Co Ltd.
- Eagleton, Terry (1996). *Literary Theory*. Great Britain: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Foucault, Michel (1997). In Culier's *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gonalons-Pons, Pilar & Markus Gang (2021). "Marriage and Masculinity: Male-Breadwinner Culture, Unemployment, and Separation Risk in 29 Countries". *American Sociological Review* Volume 86 Issue 3, pp. 465–502 June 2021.
- Halimah (2012). Fungsi Pelaku dan Karakter Tokoh Novel Tarian Bumi Karya Oka Rusmini. *Artikulasi; Jurnal Kajian Bahasa dan sastra Indonesia* Vol. 11(2). <http://jurnal.upi.edu/artikulasi/view/2374/fungsi-pelaku-dan-karakter-tokoh-novel-tarian-bumi-karya-oka-rusmini-.html>
- Haryanti, Novi Diah (2017). Jejak kekerasan pada Novel Tarian Bumi Karya Oka Rusmini. *Indonesian Language Education* Vol3(1) pp. 32-44. www.syekhnurjati.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/jeill/article/view/1379
- Kenney, William (1966). *How to Analyze Fiction*. USA: Monarch Press.
- Mandrastuti, Rany (2010). Novel Tarian Bumi Karya Oka Rusmini: Kajian Feminisme. Surakarta: Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Sebelas Maret. <https://eprints.uns.ac.id/7246/>
- Morner, K. & Ralph R. (1998). *NTC's Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Chicago: NTC Publishing Group.
- Nurdiani, Anita (2010). Dimensi Jender dalam Novel Tarian Bumi karya Oka Rusmini. Surakarta: Universitas Muhammadiyah pp. 1-32. <http://eprints.ums.ac.id/7088/>
- Nuriskandar, Lalu Hendri (2021). "Freedom of Marriage for Women Who She Want, Clashes Between Culture And Human Right Law. Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. Indonesia". *Jatiswara* Vol 36 No 1. Pp. 11 - 23
- Putri, Erica Prasetya (2016). Ketidaksetaraan Gender dalam Novel Tarian Bumi Karya Oka Rusmini. Malang: Universitas Negeri malang. <http://karya-ilmiah.um.ac.id/index.php/sastra-indonesia/article/view/52992>
- Rapaport, Herman (2011). *The Literary Theory Toolkit: A Compendium of Concepts and Methods*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Rejo, Uman (2011). Diskriminasi Kelas dan Gender terhadap Perempuan Bali dalam Novel tarian Bumi Karya Oka Rusmini. *Lingua* Vol. 6(3) pp. 1-3. 103.17.76.13/index.php/humbud/article/download/1465/2566
- Rusmini, Oka (2011). *Earth Dance*. Jakarta: The Lontar Foundation.
- Shinta, K. Emerita (2007). Konflik Batin Tokoh dalam Novel Tarian Bumi Karya Oka Rusmini: Pendekatan Psikologi Sastra. Surakarta: Universitas Sebelas maret. <https://digilib.uns.ac.id/.../Konflik-batin-tokoh-dalam-novel-tarian-bumi-karya-Oka-R>.
- Turaeni. Ni Nyoman Tanjung (2015). "Nyentana" Sistem Perkawinan dalam Novel Tarian Bumi Karya Oka Rusmini. *Kembara Jurnal Keilmuan Bahasa, sastra dan Pengajarannya* Vol 1(2) pp.233-238 Malang:Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia Universitas Muhammadiyah. ejournal.umm.ac.id/index.php/kembara/article/view/2619
- Windiyarti, Dara (2008). Pemberontakan Perempuan Bali Terhadap Diskriminasi Kelas dan Gender: Kajian Feminis Novel Tarian Bumi Karya Oka Rusmini. *Humaniora*, UGM Vol. 20(3) pp. 286-294. <https://media.neliti.com/.../11796-ID-pemberontakan-perempuan-bali-terhadap-diskrimi>