

Oka Rusmini's Ambivalences towards Subaltern Women in *Tarian Bumi* on High School Students 'Reading

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Abstract

Oka Rusmini, one of the authors, has had an influence on the development of Indonesian literature. The *Tarian Bumi* novel was the first literary work she created. This novel is widely read by high school students in Bali. Through this novel, she has been labeled as a writer supporting the rights of subaltern women. However, in reality, the characters and the fate of the female characters that she has created in the novel are in a helpless state. This shows him as an ambivalent author. This research describes, interprets, and explains Oka Rusmini's ambivalence in creating the *Tarian Bumi* Novel. This research is a qualitative research. The data collection technique was done by using literature study and interview techniques. This study uses a critical discourse analysis technique of Norman Fairclough's Three Dimensions of Discourse. The results showed that Oka Rusmini had an ambivalent attitude towards subaltern women. This ambivalence shows his strength as an opponent of patriarchy and the strength of patriarchal culture that shackles him as a writer.

Keywords: Ambivalences, Oka Rusmini, *Tarian Bumi* Novel,

INTRODUCTION

Literary work as a text is created in a contestation. Contestation between authors and power. Authors who are defeated by power will create literary works that support the ruler. Author who defeats the authorities will support the rights of marginalized groups. In this context, literature is never neutral (McIntyre, et al, 2011: 2) from interests. Power bias is very strong. This can happen because the author has exercised control over his behavior, thoughts, and everything else as long as she/he creates the literary work (Fowler, 1989: 89). Likewise, Oka Rusmini and the *Tarian Bumi* Novel which she had created.

Oka Rusmini is an important author in Indonesian literature. She has created literary works that support women's voices from patriarchal rule. She has created several quality literary works, such as *Tarian Bumi*, *Kenanga*, *Tempurung*, *Sagra*, and others. In this literary work, she has been

able to support voice of the rights women's subaltern, except *Tarian Bumi*. She still shows ambivalences (Sunu Wasono, 2006:14-15).

The *Tarian Bumi* novel tells the life of a *brahmin* caste girl. The girl was named Ida Ayu Telaga. In her daily life, Ida Ayu Telaga is very devoted to her parents. However, she chose to marry a man without a caste. After marriage, the girl experienced many changes in fate. First, She releases the caste. Second, She became a widow because her husband died. Third, She was often berated by his in-laws. Fourth, She was seduced by his brother-in-law. Fifth, She had to undergo a *Patiwangi* ceremony by washing his head with water from his grandfather's feet.

This novel has been researched by many people, however, the theories used in their research are feminist theory, not Fairclough's theory of critical discourse analysis. Feminism theory in this context is not as critical as Fairclough's critical analysis of discourse. One of the researchers who has researched the *Tarian Bumi* Novel is Anwar (2009). Anwar researched the *Tarian Bumi* using the theory of feminism. The results of Anwar research show that the female characters created by Oka Rusmini are seen as symbols of Kartini. The female characters fought back. However, Anwar only looked at parts of the resistance text, even though the female characters that were mentioned at the end of their lives experienced a degradation of character / characterization (due to the interference of the author). The research findings are not in line with the thoughts of Sunu Wasono (2006: 14-15) which has been conveyed in the *Horizon* magazine (ISSN 0125-9016) and Pamela Allen which states that orientalism still dominates Balinese society. Although Sunu Wasono has such thoughts, he has not done so in a scientific study.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a critical approach. The object of this research study is analyzed critically based on the words, phrases, and sentences. The data source of this research is the literary works most read by high school students in Bali, namely the *Tarian Bumi* Novel. The technique of collecting documents in this research is document study technique. The researcher analyzed language texts, interpreted discourse praxis, and social praxis by activating deconstructive reading techniques. The data analysis technique uses the Fairclough critical discourse analysis technique. On the discourse analysis technique with Fairclough (2005), the researcher identifies interactional controls, modalities, politeness, ethos, transitivity, word meanings, wording, and metaphors in *Tarian Bumi*.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

The novel *Tarian Bumi* shows an ambivalent (ambivalent) attitude towards customary authority (domination) in Bali. On the one hand, the novel conveys resistance. On the other hand, the novel perpetuates the traditional domination. The ambivalent attitude of the author: Oka Rusmini, reflects that the power in Bali is very strong. Breakdowns carried out by the lower classes (who are oppressed) are still overshadowed by customary sanctions and customary powers as in Quote 2 below.

"...akan banyak Ida Ayu yang kawin dengan kaki-laki sudra"
(Rusmini, 2004:215)

.....it will cause problems if many Ida Ayu marries Shudras"

The perpetuation of caste construction during the colonial period can be seen in the Novel *Tarian Bumi*. The author chooses the procession of the caste demotion or the so-called *Patiwangi* ceremony, as one of the events that the *Telaga* must undergo.

"Sebelum perempuan tua itu menginjak ubun-ubun, *Telaga* ingin ibunya yang melakukannya. Sejak lahir, perempuan itu tepat menghormatinya sebagai bangsawan" (Rusmini, 2004:219).

Before the old woman stepped on her head, *Telaga* wanted her mother to do it. Since childhood, that girl rightly respects him as a noble"

As the Dutch colonial desires during the colonial period, the structuring of Balinese society in caste is an effort to strengthen its power in Bali. This strength is obtained thanks to the politics of *Divide of Impera* each other. The *Tarian Bumi*, published in 2000, reflected the perpetuation of this caste structuring.

The ambivalence of *Tarian Bumi* can be seen in the position of the author who presents his ideology through female characters, such as *Telaga*, *Luh Dalem*, *Luh Kambren*, *Luh Kenten*. In the *Telaga* character, the author lowered the caste of *Ida Ayu Telaga* by creating a male *sudra* character named I Wayan Sasmitha. Through the figure of I Wayan Sasmitha, the customary construction that brahman women must marry brahmin men is opposed. *Ida Ayu Telaga* is married to I Wayan Sasmitha. *Ida Ayu Telaga* passed down a caste with a new social identity, namely *Telaga* (without *Ida Ayu's* identity). However, *Telaga's* life has been depicted as sad since she married a *sudra* man: I Wayan Sasmitha. The figure of *Telaga* becomes a widow because the author killed the character Wayan Sasmitha. In addition, *Telaga* is depicted as living a miserable and miserable life with his in-laws.

These events show women experiencing a decline in caste: brahmins become sudras. The events (grammatical or social) chosen by

the author (Oka Rusmini) can legitimize the "sacredness" of inter-caste marriages. In the view of van Leeuwun (2008: 20), text does not only represent social praxis, but text is also used to explain/explain and legitimize these social praxis. The praxis social legitimacy (practices of perpetuating caste and the prohibition of marriage between castes in Bali), was emphasized by Oksa Rusmini through the farewell event of *Telaga* as a brahman descent as in Quote 2.

The statement of *Telaga* in quote 2 emphasizes the regrets of getting married down caste and not wanting to have her behavior imitated by other Brahmin women. In the view of readers of *Tarian Bumi* literature, the behavior of the *Telaga* character, which is none other than the voice of the author, affirms or legitimates the fate of women who marry of different caste. Oka Rusmini's views as manifested through the character she created, *Telaga*, are also an influence on the situation and conditions of society in Bali in relation to these inter-caste marriages. In this case, the events of the *Tarian Bumi* are homologous to the events of inter-caste marriages and conflicts that occurred in Bali. Based on the results of interviews with several communities in Bali from various districts, inter-caste marriages caused several conflicts, such as not being recognized as family members (being banished), being treated differently within the family environment, and being subject to customary sanctions.

The ambivalence in the *Tarian Bumi* can also be seen in the female characters created by the author. Some of these female figures are *Luh Dalem*, *Luh Kambren*, *Luh Dampar*, and *Telaga*. In the *Tarian Bumi*, these female characters initially have a passion against the domination and hegemony of patriarchy in Bali. *Luh Dalem* is told as a mother who wants to make her child an ideal woman, but she is given the role by the author as the wife of a man labeled the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). *Luh Dalem's* husband was killed because of PKI stigmatization. *Luh Dalem* was raped by more than one man until she became pregnant and became blind as a result of the incident. When *Luh Dalem* died, his body was placed on the side of the road because it was rejected by the indigenous people because the day of *Luh Dalem's* death was not good

Luh Kambren is told as a woman who had a passion as a Balinese dancer, but when she died it was unknown. In this context, marginalized women remain alienated. Another female dancer is *Luh Kenten*. *Luh Kenten* is told as a dancer. She married a man (painter) of German nationality. In this context, *Luh Kenten* is a symbol of women who have advanced and modern minds. However, *Luh Kenten* is described as a victim of sexual and bodily exploitation by her husband. Finally, *Luh Kendran* was told of committing suicide (hanging himself). The ambivalence of the female body constructs is shown in Table 1

Table 1. The ambivalence of the construction of the female body in the *Tarian Bumi*

Figure	Early Characteristics	End Characterizations
<i>Luh Dalem</i>	Perempuan semangat tinggi A woman who has high spirits	Husbands were killed, raped, blind eyes, corpses were not accepted by indigenous peoples
<i>Luh Kambren</i>	An accomplished dancer	Poor, died without anyone knowing
<i>Luh Kenten</i>	dancer, beautiful, married to foreign men	Victim of sexual exploitation, suicide
<i>Telaaga</i>	Nobility, beauty, cleverness	Poor, husband died, not accepted by in-laws and in-laws

The construction of female dancers in the *Tarian Bumi* shows that the author takes an ambivalent attitude or position in responding to the construction of marginalized women. The author describes women's bodies ambivalently, namely (1) women's bodies are fierce and (2) women's bodies are subtle and obedient. The ambivalence of this author's attitude cannot be separated from the habitus (Balinese custom) which still glorifies patriarchy (masculinity). Balinese women have not fully dared to fight against custom (Bali). One of the reasons for this incomplete resistance is due to the orientation of the past colonization of Belanda (Pamela Allen in Oka Rusmini, 2004). In summary, Oka Rusmini's ambivalence can be illustrated in Figure 1.

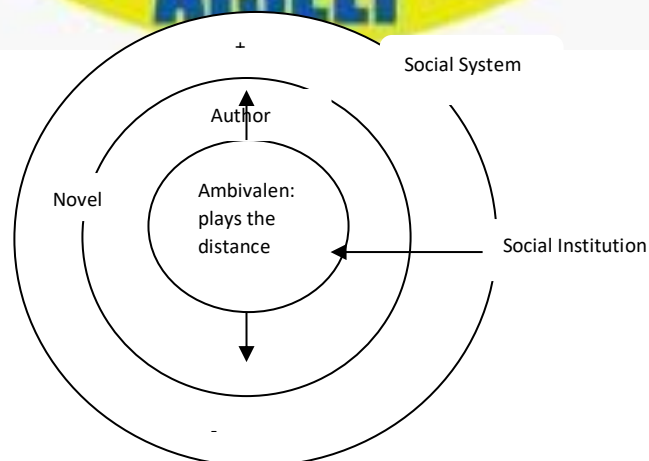


Figure 1. The Ambivalence of Oka Rusmini Authorship on *Tarian Bumi* Novel

Figure 1 depicts Oka Rusmini's position as a writer who plays the distance between himself and power (-). She also plays the distance between himself and the marginalized group (+). Therefore, Oka Rusmini exists between two cultures, namely the culture of the marginalized and the culture of the rulers so that he becomes ambivalent. The power of the dominant culture is very influential on its authorship when creating the *Tarian Bumi* because it is in the middle of the custom of power.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Oka Rusmini shows an ambivalent attitude towards subaltern women in *Tarian Bumi*. The ambivalence of Oka Rusmini's attitude can be seen in the character giving of each subaltern female character in the *Tarian Bumi*. At the beginning of the life of the subaltern female characters that were created, Oka Rusmini created subaltern female characters that were strong, beautiful, and smart. However, all subaltern female characters at the end of life (fate) are unhappy, sad, and die. Oka Rusmini in the *Tarian Bumi* plays with (played around) by the patriarchal power in Bali and her interest as a writer with a desire to support the voices of subaltern women.

Other researchers are expected to be able to explore Oka Rusmini's works. Research on literary works can use a critical approach, such as Fairclough's, Ruth Wodak's, and van Leeuwen's Critical Discourse Analysis. By using a critical approach, the author's attitude towards subaltern groups can be described, interpreted and explained more critically.

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