

PORTRAYAL OF BALINESE WOMEN IN OKA RUSMINI'S *EARTH DANCE*: A FEMINIST APPROACH

**Luh Eka Margarita
Setianingtyas**

Gunadarma University
jl. Margonda Raya 100
Depok, 16424
luhekamargarita@gmail.com

Rita Sutjiati Djohan
Gunadarma University
jl. Margonda Raya 100
Depok, 16424

Sugeng Trijanto
Gunadarma University
jl. Margonda Raya 100
Depok, 16424

ABSTRACT

This undergraduate thesis analyzed the Balinese women in *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini. The writer chose this novel because this novel describes the gender inequalities suffered by Balinese women and kinds of Balinese women resistance against gender inequalities by feminist approach, which in this undergraduate thesis the elaboration of the approach employed radical feminist that is radical feminist. The writer uses descriptive qualitative method. Collecting data in this research is done by reading some books, reading some journals, and searching information on the internet. The aims of the research are to describe the kinds of gender inequality against Balinese women and to describe the kinds of Balinese women resistance against gender inequalities in the novel *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini. The results of the research are; first, violence, unfaithful, stereotype, and double burden are the kinds of gender inequality experienced by the Balinese women; and second, celibacy, lesbian, and resist the custom are the kinds of Balinese women resistance against gender inequalities in *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini.

Keywords: Feminism, Radical Feminist, inequality, resistance, Balinese women, *Earth Dance*.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Bali is one of favorite destinations for foreign tourists, as a province and as an island in Indonesia which is interest to discuss, from the aspect of art, culture, tourism, spiritual, and customs. However, Bali is inseparable with internal conflict, a conflict that arises from Balinese itself. The most classic conflict is a conflict of caste, four divisions of Hindu society. Caste is one of the dominant themes in Indonesian literature from Bali, and issues to do with caste recur in all literary genres including poetry, prose and drama. During the New Order period, when the regime prohibited the use of the arts and literary works for social and political propaganda and

particularly for criticism of itself, Balinese writers returned to exploring local issues, especially the impact of the development of tourism and the conflict between modernity and local customs, such as the caste system (Putra, 2011). Many women writers have expressing their expression about women and especially reflected themselves as a representative of women's voice. Women with this various problems in men's view are needed to love and to be loved (Marianne in Culler, 1983:44). The Balinese caste system is a system of social organization similar to the Indian caste system, but India's caste system is far more complicated than Bali's. Indeed, in social life Balinese do not apply the caste system like Indian, but they are apply *Catur Warna*, four group of professions for Hinduism,

Warna determined by the *Guna* (aptitude) and *Karma* (function). However, there are Balinese who applies the caste system like the Indian. *Warna* has been describing in *Bhagavadgita* IV, 13, ancient Indian text that became an important work of Hindu tradition in terms of both literature and philosophy.

One of Balinese women who becomes a writer is Oka Rusmini, born in Jakarta on 11 July 1967, she writes poetry, novels and short stories. Oka received many awards, including the *Femina* magazine award for best short story of the year (1994) for *Putu Menolong Tuhan*, the *Femina* magazine award for best novelette of the year (1998) for *Sagra*, and the *Horison* literary magazine award for best short story of the period 1990-2000 for *Pemahat Abad*. In 2003 her novel *Earth Dance* earned her a place as one of the recipients of the literary achievement awards of the Center for Documentation of Language of the Indonesian Department of Education (*Earth Dance*, 2011). The themes of her novels which taken about feminism with the aim to equalize women with men. Through the novel *Earth Dance*, Oka Rusmini able to arouse Bali in a reality with identical exotic temples, Balinese dancers, tourism, cultural ceremonies and behavior of Balinese women who get the discrimination. Making use of Kate Millet's conceptualizations about radical feminism, the writer explores gender inequality and Balinese women through the literary work of Balinese author, Oka Rusmini, specifically in her novel *Earth Dance* (2011). This is a story of four generations of Balinese women in their resistance of patriarchal system.

The writer analysis *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini because this novel describes the gender inequalities that suffered Balinese women and describes that women are patience, stubborn, and dare to argue against gender inequalities which are affected them, also to find out the kinds of gender inequality and Balinese women resistance against inequalities. Customs and cultures that still upheld by Balinese are marginalize women increasingly in life. The resistance that Balinese women do is described in *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini. Another

reason the writer chooses this novel is because this novel can analyze by using feminist perspective.

1.2 Previous Research

1.2.1 Evi Eliyanah (2012)

In her research entitled "Fantasy, Desire and Identity Framing The Identity Construction of Luh Sekar", which is a research paper conducted in Universitas Negeri Malang explained the roles of fantasy and desire in the process of identity construction as experienced by Luh Sekar, one of the characters in Oka Rusmini's most notable work of fiction, *Earth Dance*, employed Stuart Hall's postulated on identity construction.

1.2.2 Gratia Dwi Harta Utami (2012)

In her research entitled "Woman Rebellion of Mukhtar Mai in The Name of Honor Novel (A Feminist Approach)" which is a research paper conducted in Gunadarma University explained the ideal image of Pakistani women make Mukhtar Mai has decision to rebel against the ideal and also describes the rebellion of herself in relation to marriage and education.

1.3 Position of the Research

After the writer read the previous research, it has inspired the writer to do the research using feminist approach in a novel which is *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini with feminist approach. They both conducted research in the field of literature. While the writer focuses in analyzing manifestations of gender inequality.

1.4 Scope of the Research

This research is limited discussing manifestations of gender inequality against Balinese women and the kinds of Balinese women resistance against gender inequality in Feminism perspective.

1.5 Problems of the Research

- What manifestations does gender inequality takes place against Balinese women in the novel of *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini?

- What are the kinds of Balinese women resistance against gender inequality in the novel *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini?

1.6 Objectives of the Research

- To describe manifestations of gender inequality against Balinese women in the novel *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini.
- To describe the kinds of Balinese women resistance against gender inequality in the novel *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini.

1.7 Significance of the Research

Theoretically, this research is very useful for developer of literature theory about feminism. Practically, this research will helps the students who learn about gender inequality and women resistance in Feminism perspective and to increase the concept about feminism.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

To analyze the novel that the writer chooses, *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini, the writer needs theories to support the analysis.

2.1.1 Definition of Feminism

Feminism is theory that men and women should be equal politically, economically and socially. This is the core of all feminism theories. Notice that this theory does not subscribe to differences between men and women or similarities between men and women, nor does it refer to excluding men or only furthering women's causes. It is broadly acknowledged that feminism is one of the theories used in social and cultural science. For a scope of perception, feminism can be defined more than a theory; it is a way of life, a politics, a struggle, and an idea. It is not easy to define what feminism is. The definition could be changeable in certain condition and certain time. In the west, feminism is translated as the situation conditioned which surrounds it, so as in the east. This definition is based upon cultural reality and the truth of history, in a level of

consciousness, perception and action in each person who has been through it (Bhasin, 1999: 4). The term feminism in 17th century when the first time to word used, is not the same as used in 1980's. The different perception, action and consciousness are applied in one type of feminism but in different person.

The aim of feminism is to equate the position of women. Feminism fight for humanity of women, women demanding their full rights as human beings. In principle, it is rooted in the position of women in the world (philosophy, political, economic, cultural, social) change-oriented and patriarchal patterns of power relations (Arimbi h. and r. Valentina, 2004: 7).

2.1.2 Types of Feminism

In this part, the writer does not give all the definition of the types of feminism. The writer only gives definition which the most relevant with this research, because this research uses Radical Feminism.

2.1.2.1 Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism was most popular in the 1950's and 1960's when many civil rights movements were taking place. The main view of liberal feminists are that all people are created equal by God and deserve equal rights. These types of feminists believe that oppression exists because of the way in which men and women are socialized, which supports patriarchy and keeps men in power positions. Liberal feminists believe that women have the same mental capacity as their male counterparts and should be given the same opportunities in political, economic and social spheres. Women should have the right to choose, not have their life chosen for them because of their sex (Friedan, 1976).

Essentially, women must be like men. Liberal Feminism that dominantly influences the theory, means that women are not given the same opportunities as men to pursue their individual interests. It is because women as a group are blocked by informal and formal discrimination and ideology which people learn through socialization that views women very differently than men (Sapiro, 1986:442). But the basic assumption of this type is freedom and equality has

its root in rationality. So the basic struggle of liberal feminist is to demand same possibility and rights for every person including women.

2.1.2.2 Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminism which developed from Marxist thought, criticizes the liberal followers which stated that women have the same opportunities as men within given social institutions, but we have to look more deeply at the structure and relationship of those social institution themselves (Sapiro, 1986: 443). Socialist feminists believe that there is a direct link between class structure and the oppression of women. Western society rewards working men because they produce tangible, tradable goods. On the other hand, women's work in the domestic sphere is not valued by western society because women do not produce a tangible, tradable good. This gives men power and control over women. Socialist feminists reject the idea that biology predetermines ones gender. Social roles are not inherent and women's status must change in both the public and private spheres.

Socialist feminists like to challenge the ideologies of capitalism and patriarchy. Much like the views of radical feminists, socialist feminists believe that although women are divided by class, race, ethnicity and religion, they all experience the same oppression simply for being a woman. Socialist feminist believe that the way to end this oppression is to put an end to class and gender. Women must work side by side men in the political sphere. In order to get anything accomplished, women must work with men, as opposed to ostracizing them. There must be a coalition between the two and they must see each other as equals in all spheres of life. In contrast to ideals of liberal feminism, which tend to focus on the individual woman, the socialist feminist theory focuses on the broader context of social relations in the community and includes aspects of race, ethnicity and other differences. For the socialist feminists, woman oppressions are found in every class (Jaggar, 1983).

2.1.2.3 Radical Feminism

Radical feminism stated that sexual relations and sexuality are the center of their feminist framework. They defined that men are the problem and women are the solution. Societies in which currently arranged are patriarchal. They are organized and defined by men for their own benefit (Sapiro, 1986, 445). Patriarchal system in the society is considered as a universal problem and a cause of all the discriminations toward women. The term 'patriarchy' is often used to describe this systematic and universal oppression. For many radical feminists, patriarchal relations underlie all other forms of oppression.

Women must struggle to overthrow patriarchy and oppression in women-only groups. The ultimate aim is to change gender relations fundamentally-sometimes expressed as eliminating male power, sometimes as eliminating male values in favor of female values. For the radical feminists, person is political, so then each revolution happens in every women who experience an action to change their lifestyle, experiences and human relation (Millet in Tong, 1989). Radical feminists have proposed several ways to enable women to escape from the sexual domination of men similarly. These have ranged from transforming the institution of heterosexuality so that neither men nor women play dominant role to rejecting heterosexuality in favor of celibacy or lesbianism. Although much of what they have had to say about sex and gender has also been said by non-radical feminists, radical feminists should be credited with detailing the ways in which men, rather than society or conditions have forced women into oppressive gender roles and sexual behavior (Tong, 1989).

2.1.3 Definition of Gender

The existence of violence against women that occurs due to the society, especially a lay society, it is difficult to distinguish between the concepts of sex and gender (Susanto, 2005). Whereas, it needs an understanding of the differences between them in analyzing to understand the

social discrimination inequalities issues that suffered by women. It is more due to the existence of connections between gender differences and gender inequalities and the relation of gender inequality and equality of society structure.

Therefore, to understand a clear distinction between the concepts of sex and gender are required in discussing social injustice (Fakih in Simon, 2012). This is due to the relation between gender issues with the issue of violence against women. The root of the difference between men and women can be represented by two concepts that is sex and gender. Sex refers to biological differences; chromosomes, hormonal profiles, internal and external sex organs, and divides into male and female, while gender is the socio-cultural construction and describes the characteristics that a society or culture delineates as masculine and feminine. (Simon, 2012).

2.1.4 Gender Inequality

Gender inequality has been extraordinarily diverse and wide spread. Gender inequality is a system and a structure that enables men and women to become a victim of the system. The difference of gender is the cause of gender inequalities, especially for women. Gender inequality manifests itself in various forms of inequality, such as violence, subordinated, stereotypes or negative labeling, and double burden (Fakih, 2008).

2.1.5 Definition of Patriarchy

The word 'patriarchy' literally means the rule of the father or the 'patriarch', and originally it was used to describe a specific type of 'male-dominated family' - the large household of the patriarch which included women, junior men, children, slaves and domestic servants all under the rule of this dominant male. Now it is used more generally "to refer to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways" (Bhasin2006:3).

2.1.6 Women Resistance Against Gender Inequalities

Putra (2007) said that Balinese women are not passive women, they fight for their fate in social life, they also criticized the gender inequalities that afflicts them, and also push themselves to learn to increase their intelligence in social life and suppressed by patriarchal system. Because the women always emphasized as subordinated, women are better to work as a mother, work in the kitchen and so on which makes the women powerless than the men. It is because women's access controlled, regulated, blocked and turned off by the patriarchal system and it makes men assume that women are waitresses who always give in to their man and a place to do sexual desire every time their man needs.

2.1.7 Balinese Culture

Culture is an heritage that need to be preserved as well as Balinese that still upholding the culture of their heritage. Bali is famous for its caste system in choosing a life partner. Marriage can occur if they are of the same caste. Type of marriage customs in Bali is endogamy that is people who has the equivalent position of customs, religion and caste. According to the Hindu religious beliefs, a couple's marriage will not be acknowledged in the society if it is carried out without a traditional sacred ceremony. In addition, the couple will be excommunicated from their village.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This research used a qualitative method especially descriptive analytical study by using feminist approach in order to answer the problem formulation which discussed in this research about kinds of gender inequality against Balinese women and kinds of Balinese women resistance against gender inequality in *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini.

This research can be categorized as qualitative research, because it does not use statistical measurement procedures as in quantitative research. Qualitative research involves the

studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' live. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

3.2 Source of Data

The primary source that the writer used as the data in this research is the story in *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini which defines into twenty chapters. The secondary source that the writer used in this research are read some books and journals which related with the problem. Primary source is the main source that gives major part to the data collector directly, while the secondary source is the source that gives the data to the data collector indirectly as supporting data (Sugiyono, 2009).

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Research Results

Earth Dance by Oka Rusmini is a fictional novel. This novel mostly told us about Balinese women. Research results are present in the form of discussion through analysis in appropriate with the theory which is used in this research. In the novel *Earth Dance* described manifestations of gender inequality are violence, such as verbal violence, psychological violence and sexual violence, unfaithful committed by men, stereotype, and double burden, and kinds of resistance shown by Balinese women are celibacy, intercaste marriage, and reject a marriage.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Manifestations of Gender Inequality Against Balinese Women in the Novel *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini

In second chapter the writer delivered the theories of gender inequality manifestations. As a result, the writer finds out manifestations of gender inequality against Balinese women in the

novel *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini, that is violence which includes verbal violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, unfaithful committed by men, stereotype, and double burden.

4.2.2 Kinds of Balinese Women Resistance Against Gender Inequality in the Novel *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini

Balinese women are not turn over their life. Balinese women are not passive women, they fight for their fate in social life, they also criticized the gender inequalities that afflicts them, and also push themselves to learn to increase their intelligence in social life and suppressed by patriarchal system. However, if someone says that Balinese women are passive, without a fight in social life it must have been mistaken. Balinese women also criticize or protest against gender injustice that happened to them (Son, 2007: 3-4). Kinds of Balinese woman resistance shown by Balinese women in the novel *Earth Dance* is celibacy, intercaste marriage, and reject a marriage.

5. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1 Conclusion

The writer analyzed the kinds of gender inequality against Balinese women and kinds of Balinese women resistance against gender inequalities in *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini used feminism approach. The writer concludes that: first, the dominant manifestations of gender inequality in *Earth Dance* novel by Oka Rusmini is violence. Women as objects of violence by men because they feel that they are have more power than women. All kinds of gender inequality found in the novel *Earth Dance* shows that the dominance of patriarchy into its own reasons to inequality that afflicts women characters. Second, resistance against inequalities which is dominant in the novel *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini is shown by the characters who become a celibate, which means woman did not rely of man. The Balinese women resistance that described in *Earth Dance* novel by Oka Rusmini can be associated with Radical Feminism theory.

5.2 Future Research

This research focussing gender inequalities against Balinese women used feminist approach. Therefore, this research is expected to be reviewed and developed using another perspective. Also recommended for other researchers, in order to assess the novel *Earth Dance* by Oka Rusmini by using psychological approach to complete this research about psychological condition experienced by Balinese women characters because of patrilineal kinship system embraced by Balinese in general.

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