



Beyond Binary Oppositions: Uncovering Plural Meanings in Inter-Caste Marriage Narratives in Bali

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Abstract: This article explores the phenomenon of inter-caste marriage in Bali through the lens of applied linguistics, with a focus on the traditional caste system of *Triwangsa* (Brahmin, Kshatriya, and Waisya) as the high caste and *Shudra* as the low caste. The analysis delves into literary texts published over the last 50 years, featuring prominent Balinese writers such as Rastha Sindhu, Putu Wijaya, and Oka Rusmini, which thematize caste differences. Guided by three research questions, this study examines (1) the textual contradictions and inconsistencies, (2) how deconstruction enables the construction of new meanings, and (3) how to analyze the explanatory text within the emancipatory and sociocultural context. The ultimate goal is to uncover a plurality of meanings. To achieve this, the study employs critical discourse analysis (CDA) as proposed by Fairclough and Derrida's deconstructive approach to binary oppositions. The findings reveal the dynamic tensions between opposing sides of the text's meaning, yet also highlight the multiple meanings that bridge these gaps, ultimately promoting more humanitarian and emancipatory inter-caste relations. This analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of caste in society. Moreover, it underscores the significance of applied linguistics in deconstructing and reinterpreting the complex dynamics of caste conflicts and social stratification.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Deconstruction, Emancipatory, Binary Opposition, Caste Conflict.

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1. Introduction

This article discusses the dynamics of marriage between inter-caste couples in literary works in Bali, Indonesia. There are two caste layers in the social stratification of society in Bali. The first layer is *brahmin, kshatriya, weysa (triwangsa)*. The second layer is *the Shudra* caste (Koentjaraningrat, 2005: 171; Sadnyini, 2010: 35). Society tends to legitimize feudalistic ideology. Giving space to the domination of

triwangsa power over the *shudras*. For *triwangsa*, the ideal marriage is for men and women of *triwangsa* descent to marry fellow *triwangsa*. Likewise for the *Shudra* descendants. The ideal is to marry a fellow *shudra* descendant. In fact, many marriages between *triwangsa* descendants and *shudra* descendants were rejected by the family. The opposition of the two sides of the meaning of *triwangsa* and *shudra* has become the focus of attention of writers

This issue is reminiscent of the polemic regarding the marriage laws of *asu pundung* and *alangkahing karang hulu* or inter-caste marriages in the Balinese Indonesian customary law. This law is a legacy of the royal era. After Indonesia's independence, the application of the customary law of marriage between *asu pundung* and *alangkahing karang hulu* was abolished (1951) and legally it was no longer a customary offense (Sadnyini, 2010). This phenomenon reflects the growing awareness of deconstructing the social order. A social order that is hegemonic and discriminatory leads to a more emancipatory social order, prioritizing the values of justice and equality. However, in reality, the crisis of hegemony is still occurring as expressed by writers through literary works.

First. *Triwangsa* and *Shudra* jointly influence each other. The domination and power of the *triwangsa* (brahmin, Kshatriya, and Weysa), is marked by *nyerod* (caste descent) for *triwangsa* women who marry men of *shudra* descent; and increased status for *shudra* women who marry *triwangsa* men. This dynamic appears to be more dominant in *nyerod* or *asu pundung* marriages (Sadnyini, 2010). This issue was formulated, among other things, through *The Earth Dance* novel (Rusmini, 2000). The main character Ida Ayu Telaga Pidada (Dayu Pidada) chooses *nyerod* (demotion). From the *brahmin* dynasty (high dynasty) down to the *Shudra* (low dynasty). Because she followed her husband who came from *shudra* descent (lower dynasty). Luh Sekar (*shudra*) rose in status because she married a brahmin, Dayu Pidada's father. Dayu Pidada married a man of *shudra* descent. Dayu Pidada returns to the same *shudra* origins as Luh Sekar, her biological mother. The conflict between the two sides of meaning (*brahmin* and *shudra*) is clearly illustrated in the rise and fall of status in the family due to birth and marriage.

Second. The conflict between the two poles of meaning in inter-caste marriage is marked by the resistance of the *shudra* caste to the hegemony exercised by the *triwangsa* caste. According to Gramsci (in Simon, 2005), hegemony is a form of domination that is accepted consensually and voluntarily by society. Regarding the values, norms and power structures built by the dominant group (*triwangsa*). These crises can involve changes in social, political, and cultural structures. In addition, it allows for a shift in the legitimacy and support of society for the ruling group. This is revealed in the drama "When the Night Becomes Night" (Wijaya, 1971). In this drama the main character Gusti Biang (brahmin/*triwangsa*) has an affair with his servant Wayan (*Shudra*) and gives birth to Ratu Ngurah. The conflict between these two poles of meaning occurs on the part of Gusti Biang (*triwangsa*) and Wayan (*shudra*) who have a son, Ratu Ngurah (*shudra*).

Third. This conflict between two poles of meaning (*triwangsa x shudra*) is also seen in the short story "When Kentongan is Beaten in Bale Banjar" (Rasta Sindhu, 1968) and the novel *Luh* (Sugiarttha, 2019). The short story "When Kentongan was hit at Balai Banjar" tells of deconstructive ideas through the conflict between Gung Gede Lila (*triwangsa*) and Tu Aji, his father. Gung Gede Lila was cursed and presumed dead because he married Sulastri from the *shudra* caste, while Sulastri's family also maintained their pride as *shudra*'s.

Caste conflict - *triwangsa* (brahmana, ksatriya, and weysia) facing *shudra* (low caste, ordinary people) - is one of the dominant themes written by Balinese writers, both in Indonesian and Balinese (Putra, 2021, p. 36). The attention of Balinese writers to these themes dates back almost 100 years; since modern Indonesian literature emerged in Bali in the 1920s. This was proven by the birth of the drama "Women's Loyalty" (1927) which was published in the Surya Kanta Newspaper. This drama tells the story of Gusti Made Sekowati from *Triwangsa* who married a *shudra* man named Ketut Badung. Because of their love, Sekowati and Ketut Badung finally eloped (Putra, 2021, p. 17). Apart from that, "Mlancaran Ka Sasak" by I Gede Swarana tells about the obstacles of inter-caste courtship, between Dayu Priya and Made Sarati, "Noesa Penida" (1949) by Andjar Asmara is about a *triwangsa* child who is raised by a *Shudra* family.

Subsequently, another work was born, which highlighted caste conflicts, namely the novel *If the Night is More Night* (Wijaya, 1976) which was translated into a drama with the same title; *Earth Dance*

(2000), *Sagra* (2014), *Kenanga* (2014), three of Oka Rusmini's works; *Luh* (Sugiartha, 2019) which is about Luh who is firm in maintaining his dignity as a sudra; "Depart from Griya" in *The Short Story Collection Bunga Jepun*; "Lie" in the short story collection "Bathing in fire" (Soethama, 2006); Likewise, the short story "Leave Komang Here" (Pratiwi, 2019) tells how Gek Istri *nyerod* (elopes) and *nyerod* (descended caste) because she marries a *shudra* man.

The publication of literary works is also followed by various research. Research that criticizes the relationship between *triwangsa* (high caste) and *shudra* (low caste). Various methods, approaches and theoretical studies are used to study the relationship between *triwangsa* (high caste) and *shudra* (low caste). For example, gender inequality and feminism, the polemic of *nyerod* marriage (high caste descending to low), caste hegemony, social reconstruction, analysis of characterization and relationships between characters, language style and cultural values. However, currently no research has been found that criticizes texts based on the perspective of critical discourse analysis (CDA), with the deconstruction theory approach proposed by Derrida. *First*, what literary works are and the contradictory aspects and inconsistencies in the text. *Second*, how deconstruction of the text allows the creation of new meaning constructions; and *third*, explanatory analysis of the sociocultural context. These three questions will be answered based on five literary works: the novel *Tarian Bumi* (Rusmini, 2000) and the novel *Luh* (Sugiartha, 2019); the short story "When Kentongan is Beaten in Bale Banjar" (Rasta Sindu, 1968) and the short story "Leave Komang Here" (Pratiwi, 2019), as well as the drama "When the Night Gets Evener" (Wijaya, 1971, 2010). Other works will be used as necessary to support the analysis. The aim is to find a plurality of meanings and new meanings of *triwangsa* and *shudra* relations. Furthermore, it becomes a field of joint struggle so that *the triwangsa* and *shudra* caste conflicts can be resolved in an emancipatory manner.

2. Literature Review

Critical studies of literary works with the theme of caste conflict between *triwangsa* and *shudra* have been widely discussed. Among them is "The Polemic of Nyerod Marriage (Descended caste) in Literary Works with a Balinese Cultural Background" (Dwipayana, et al., 2021). This article discusses the novel *Earth Dance*, the short story "Get away from Grya", and the short story "Lie", highlighting the suffering of *nyerod* women, gender inequality in the context of the *triwangsa*, lying about *patiwangi* (a ritual for downgrading from *triwangsa* to sudra) offerings that were never carried out (Dwipayana, 2021, p. 256). The same thing is also expressed in "Caste Hegemony in Three Prose Works by Oka Rusmini" (Putra, 2017) explaining about feminism connected to caste hegemony, especially the hegemony exercised by people with brahmin (*triwangsa*) social status over *shudra* social status (Putra, 2017, p. 133), resulting in a patron-client relationship opposed by the *shudra* caste.

Likewise, there are various analyzes of "When the Night Becomes More Night" with a normative approach in the fields of text structure and literary sociology. For example, Arifin (2023) with his analysis of social and cultural values; Kartadireja (2022) with this stylistic study; Anasya (2021) with her analysis of themes and social status; Uma (2021) with her Language styles and relevance for learning in high school. Widodo (2021) with his literary anthropology; Mustolih (2020) with his social reconstruction; Yuliani (2019) with her characterization analysis; Sukmawati (2019) with her social context; Putra, et al (2019) with their feudalistic ideology; Dwiarno (2017) with his social inequality; Pahmi (2016) with her analysis of the depiction of caste conflict. A broader study with more varied literary text data was conducted by Dwipayana and Artajaya (2018) in their research entitled "Hegemony of Feudalistic Ideology in Literary Works with a Balinese Sociocultural Background", highlighting caste conflicts in patron-client relationships where hegemony is dominated by the higher caste (*triwangsa*) to the lower ones (*shudra*).

The patron-client relationship is narrated through the plot, conflict between characters, and the power of word choice. The power of word choice was revealed by Kartadireja (2022) using stylistic studies. Likewise, in the article written by Dewi, et al (2021) on "Polemic on Nyerod (low caste) marriages in literary works with the Balinese cultural background." A study that shows the meaning of one direction, namely hegemony in the form of dynasty domination over the *Shudras* with a structural approach and attempts to link it with a literary sociology approach. In the *Earth Dance*, we can see the existence of Telaga humbled both in Grya where he comes from and in the middle of Wayan Sasmita's family (Dewi, 2021, p. 262).

The issue of inter-caste marriage is still ongoing today. One of the research results explains that around 61.1% agree with the caste system. The percentage of dominant hope indicators in the less impactful category is 50%, the dominant indicator of grouping or social class in the agree category is 66.7%, the dominant traditional marriage system indicator in the less agree category is 55.6% (Darsana, et al. 2015). These figures explain how traditional marriages in Bali - with the issue of *asu pundung* - still apply. There is a single meaning of lowering caste for a woman from a higher caste if she marries a man from the sudra circle. What is challenged in literary works is the nature of humanity which is related to dignity and awareness of identity. Therefore, literary works are a way to voice the truth, fight stratification and the domination of the Triwangsa as a high caste over the sudra caste. This can also be seen in research regarding the short story collection *Mandi Api* (Artajaya, 2019) entitled "The Complexity of Traditional and Modern Values in Bali in the Anthology of Bathing in Fire Short Stories by Gde Aryantha Soethama". The article is entitled "Legitimacy of Balinese Customary Law in Cultural Literary Works" (Dwipayana and Adnyana, 2019). This research explains that customary law is one of the dominant tools of hegemony, complicating efforts to reduce caste dichotomy. The dichotomy of the ruler and ruled, the upper class and lower class has led to the entrenchment of feudalism as explained by Dwipayana (2018, p. 85 - 105).

Fanaticism towards the social stratification system limits the space for social mobility. This fanaticism is appreciated through critical discourse analysis (CDA). Throughout the investigations carried out, there has been no research on caste conflict specifically deconstructing literary texts and constructing them with the discovery of new meanings. CDA can be explained through text deconstruction. Efforts to criticize various basic assumptions that support thoughts and beliefs (Lubis, 2014, p. 3; Syartanti et al., 2023) in order to obtain a more harmonious, humanitarian and emancipatory client-patron relationship; as well as finding a new, more comprehensive and complementary meaning in the relationship between *triwangsa* and *shudra*.

3. Methods and Theoretical Framework

This analysis uses the texts of the five novels *Earth Dance* (2000), *Luh* (2017); the short story "When Kentongan is Beaten in Bale Banjar" (1969), "Leave Komang Here" (2019) and the drama text "When the Night Becomes More Night". Analysis is carried out in order to find a plurality of meanings, uncover hidden meanings through deconstruction studies. Deconstruction studies are carried out in the verbal stage, textual stage and linguistic stage (Barry 2010 via Lubis, 2014, pp. 47 - 48). The verbal stage is the critical reading stage with the search for paradoxes and contradictions in the text. This is carried out through a reading process and an analysis process allowing the discovery of new meanings. The textual stage is the stage of looking for a deeper meaning in the entire text. In prose texts, deeper meaning is explored from the series of a conflicts in each event, the character of the characters and the relationships between characters, as well as the socio-cultural background where the events, conflicts and relationships between characters originate. The linguistic stage is related to the appropriateness of the language of the text used. In the process, feasibility is explored through the narrative and through dialogue.

The third stage in deconstruction studies is closely related to critical discourse analysis (CDA) according to Fairclough (Haryatmoko, 2022) which outlines three main dimensions in the text, namely the text (micro level, description) and text analysis; discursive practices (text analysis, meso level) interpretation of texts; and socio-cultural praxis (macro explanation, macro level), namely explanatory analysis of the sociocultural context behind the emergence of a discourse (Fairclough in Haryatmoko, 2022, pp. 20 - 22; Li, 2020; Latupeirissa, et al., 2019; Nalenan et al., 2023;).

The critical work steps above are used as a basis for answering the problem formulation: deconstructing the conflict of meaning between the triwangsa and shudra castes in marital relations; as well as uncovering hidden meanings (other meanings that have not been revealed) in order to explain the construction of new meanings, which are open and emancipatory.

1. Analyzing the text, themes, and centers of tension of the text. This section explains "identifying and characterizing discourses: a) identifying the main parts of the world (including areas of local social life) represented - the main themes (Fairclough, 2003: 129). Identifying local social life based on the main theme as the center of tension in the text; and b) identifying the particular perspective or angle or point of view from which they are represented (Fairclough,

2003, p. 129). Identifying the perspective or point of view of the text on the theme of caste conflict in marriage which cannot be separated from the socio-cultural context.

2. Interpreting and extracting the meaning of the text is carried out using the CDA work method to explain: a) deconstruction and construction of the text; b) socio-cultural studies are carried out based on the results of deconstruction and text construction work. In this section the analysis focuses on interpreting the meaning of literary works and socio-cultural analysis. The analysis steps use a deconstruction approach proposed by Derrida, because there are principles of how critical discourse analysis (CDA) works similar to Derrida's way of deconstruction (Haryatmoko, 2022). These two points are carried out, among other things, to find plurality of meaning through binary logic or binary opposition in the text. CDA pays attention to the main aspiration of deconstruction, namely uncovering meanings that are marginalized, ignored or hidden (Haryatmoko, 2022, pp. 213-214). with an effort to examine "Inconsistencies, Contradictions and Logical Inaccuracies" (abbreviated to ICLI) revealed through the five texts used as the basis for the analysis.
3. Socio-cultural analysis is carried out after deconstruction and construction by looking at the ICLI as explained in the 2nd work point above. The analysis focuses on traditional and socio-cultural traditions occurring in society in relation to caste conflicts. In this section, the analysis steps require the support of a literary sociology approach. How local communities deal with traditions and how to deal with the complexity of understanding traditions that have been going on for generations.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Theme and Center of Tension of the Text

Based on the work steps of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and text analysis at the micro level, it is analyzed based on plot and characterization, complexity of relationships between characters, and story setting. The themes and tensions of the texts can be explained based on the inciting moments contained in the themes and tensions of the five texts used as objects of analysis in the following table.

Table 1 Theme and Centre of Text Tension

No.	Title	Theme and Centre of Text Tension
1.	Earth Dance	Inter-caste marriage in two generations. The status of the mother (Luh Sekar) from <i>the shudra</i> caste rose to a higher status because she married a man from a triwangsa family (Ida Bagus). Their daughter (Dayu Pidada) <i>nyerod</i> (decreased in status) because she married a shudra. This means that he (Dayu Pidada) has returned to being a shudra like his mother (Luh Sekar).
2.	Luh	Luh, a career woman, refused to marry a man coming from a triwangsa family. In fact, her biological mother agreed as her social status would rise and she would stay at what is called Puri (a residence where <i>triwangsa</i> families live). Luh firmly refused and maintained her status as a <i>shudra</i> .
3.	"When Kentongan is Beaten in Bale Banjar"	Gung De Lila coming from a triwangsa family was cursed and ceremonially executed resulting from <i>ngerorod</i> (eloping); he married Sulastri, a <i>shudra</i> descent. He did not want to go home when his father was sick and died. However, Sulastri did go to Puri with her child when the cremation ceremony was performed.
4.	"Leave Komang Here"	Geg Istri coming from a <i>triwangsa</i> family <i>nyerod</i> (descended caste) as she married Made Arya. However, her husband liked prostitutes and betrayed her marriage. Made's genitals were cut

		off by Gung Istri. Made was only able to cry looking for the severed genitals.
5.	When the Night Becomes More Night	Gusti Biang maintained her self-esteem as a woman coming from a <i>triwangsa</i> family. However, she was having an affair with Wayan, a man coming from a <i>shudra</i> family, causing her to give birth to a son named Ratu Ngurah. Gusti Biang refused the love relationship between Ratu Ngurah and Ni Nyoman Niti. Finally, Gusti Biang was aware and admitted her relationship with Wayan. Then, she finally admitted the love relationship between Ratu Ngurah and Ni Nyoman Niti, who came from a <i>shudra</i> family.

The five texts in the table above reveal evocative moments in the themes and tensions of the texts: 1) *nyerod* (downgrading from *triwangsa* caste to *shudra*); 2) *ngerorod* (elopement because of a couple's relationship that is not approved by parents and family); 3) differences in human social degrees/status based on birth; 4) verbal violence and physical violence, betrayal and infidelity; and 5) loyalty and efforts to maintain one's identity which can be explained below.

1) Verbal violence and physical violence occur as a result of *nyerod* (demotion) in the novel *Earth Dance*. Initially, Luh Sekar was promoted to Jro Kenanga after marrying Ida Bagus Ngurah Pidada from *triwangsa* descent. Ida Ayu Telaga Pidada (Dayu Telaga) was born. Dayu Telaga *nyerod* (descended from caste) became a *shudra* because she married Nyoman Sasmita of *shudra* descent. Apart from that, Luh's attitude is also expressed in Luh's novel. "I'm very worried about the differences in social status between us, especially if it has to be linked to caste. In the past it might have been a matter of pride" (Luh, p. 93). Even though customary law recognizes that *shudra* women may become *triwangsa* (brahmin, kshatriya, weysa) wives (Sadnyini, 2020: 35), this has not passed for Luh. Luh still maintains his identity as a *shudra*.

2) Degradation and humiliation can be seen in the differences in social degrees/status of humans, the descendants of the *triwangsa* (brahmin, kshatriya, and weysa) and the descendants of the common people, *shudra*. This is revealed in the five texts above. In the *Earth Dance*, Dayu Pidada is insulted. Her in-laws and local people believe that Wayan Sasmita (Dayu Pidada's husband) died because he married Dayu Pidada. "I have said many times that marrying an Ida Ayu woman will definitely bring bad luck. Now my son is dead. Wayan doesn't want to understand... you haven't done the *patiwangi* ceremony either. I want you to do all that. For the sake of this family" (*Earth Dance*, pp.152, 164). The *patiwangi* ritual is in accordance with tradition which ensures that the wife is higher than her husband's caste, which is a violation of customary law (Sadnyini, 2010, p. 35).

3) The five texts above also show verbal violence and physical violence; opposition and threats; as well as condemnation and banishment. The story characters deconstruct *triwangsa* domination. They dare to face conflict and take firm decisions, reconstructing them in a way that maintains and shows their identity. This is related to efforts to determine or not determine continuity between the past and the future both of the individual himself and of his community (Ericson, 2001, p. 21).

In fact, social stratification, *triwangsa* and *shudra* relations in Bali are still a topic of debate between maintaining or eliminating them. This is proven by the existence of inter-caste marriages that still exist; the suggestion that marriages be carried out between the same caste; socio-culturally and religiously there are restrictions for people who enter into inter-caste marriages (Dewi, et al. 2021, p. 1). However, the inciting moment as well as the themes and tensions of the text depicted in the five literary works above also explain the opposition of two sides of meaning. *Triwangsa* and *shudra* have the awareness of maintaining their identities as *shudras* and as *triwangsa*.

The important note of the inciting moment opens up space for other meanings for *triwangsa* and *shudra*, namely: honesty and loyalty; belief in maintaining self-respect as a dynasty or *shudra*. The inciting moment underscores the two-sided meaning and various meanings of caste conflict. The higher caste believes itself to be superior (Gupta, 2022) on the one hand, while on the other hand the lower caste also

shows its identity. The opposition of these two sides of meaning actually opens up space for various similar meanings regarding human dignity.

4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis of Caste Conflict in Literary Works

4.2.1 Deconstruction and Text Construction

The meaning of caste conflict (*triwangsa* and *sudra*) is not a single meaning or the only meaning claim that must be believed. Through the deconstruction approach there are many new meanings, meanings that are 'postponed'. This allows a text to be open to various interpretations. Derrida calls this concept the concept of difference to explain differences and expansion of meaning; and the concept of binary logic (binary opposition) in the text as a way to reveal plurality of meaning. These two concepts are explained based on Inconsistencies, Contradictions and Logical Inaccuracies (abbreviated to ICLI) (Lubis, 2014) contained in literary works.

The first ICLI is verbal violence and physical violence compared to calm, firmness and patience. This is shown, among other things, in the stubbornness of Dayu Pidada, from *triwangsa* descent, accepting the fact that she is married to Wayan Sasmita, from *shudra* descent. Likewise, Gung Lila's stubbornness from *triwangsa* descent still loves Sulastri from *shudra* descent, even though her father and family cursed her.

The second ICLI, humiliation and humiliation are confronted with the stubbornness of maintaining self-respect. In the *Earth Dance*, insults occur from the mother-in-law and the surrounding community, but are faced with humility and confidence in self-worth by Dayu Pidada; Gung Lila maintains her pride as a dynasty just as Sulastri also maintains her pride as a *shudra*.

The third ICLI is conflict and threats faced with calm and patience. The mother-in-law threatened Dayu Pidada to immediately carry out *the patiwangi ritual* (a ritual for downgrading from *triwangsa* to *shudra*) because Dayu Pidada from *triwangsa* married Nyoman Samista from *shudra*). Luh remains calm and patient in her belief in her identity as a *shudra*. Gung Lila and Sulastri, who are loyal to each other, undergo a marriage between *the triwangsa* and *the shudra*.

The fourth ICLL namely curse and expulsion, deals with the strength of the heart and belief in one's dignity. Dayu Telaga's marriage was considered a curse by her husband's family and the surrounding community. The curse does not happen to Luh in the novel *Luh* because of her humility and pride as a *shudra*.

The fifth ICLL is arrogance and deception facing humility and honesty. The arrogance of Made Arya (*shudra*) who cheated with various women. Betraying his wife (*triwangsa*); Gusti Biang's (*triwangsa*) arrogance worships her husband as a hero. However, she is having an affair with Wayan, her assistant

The five ICLI clearly show binary opposition and the expansion of new meanings as opposing elements. The first side faces the second side. The opposition of these two sides of meaning complement each other, as revealed in the following table.

Table 2: Binary Opposition

Binary Opposition		
No.	The First Pole	The Second Pole
1.	Verbal Violence and Physical Violence	Modesty
2.	Cunning, condenscension, and insult	Patience and upholding self-respect
3.	Contradiction	Faithfulness/love
4.	Threat	Love
5.	Condemnation	Strength of heart
6.	Impolite	Confidence
7.	Expulsion	Reception
8.	Contradiction	Determination
9.	Dishonesty	Honesty

ICLI which confronts the characters and conflicts between characters in the five literary texts, shows that the binary opposition between the first side and the second side is the key to uncovering the ideology of the text (Haryatmoko, 2022, p. 35). The opposition of these two sides of meaning actually enriches the plurality of meanings. The plurality of meanings for all sides can place the ideology of feudalism in the context of social roles, not in the origins of descent. This shows that the ideology of feudalism and hegemony of power has limitations while opening up new spaces for meaning. The form of ICLI above shows arrogance, betrayal, verbal violence, deception and manipulation in the inciting moment as the center of tension in the text in the story setting in Bali, dealing with humility, loyalty, filled with love, honesty and determination. A form of ICLI that deconstructs the system of meaning of texts as well as the system of power and truth dominated by *triwangsa* as a higher caste.

1. The domination and arrogance of the dynasty shows the inconsistency of the role of the dynasty itself. This contradiction shows the logical inaccuracy of maintaining identity as a family but having arrogant, rude and cunning behavior.

2. Dayu Pidada's loyalty and love for Wayan Sasmita, Geg Istri for Made Arya, Wayan for Gusti Biang and Ni Nyoman Rai's mutual loyalty towards Ratu Ngurah underscore three meanings related to human dignity; a) humility, loyalty, and determination; b) honesty; and c) love. These meanings show a logical inconsistency in the opposition of two sides of meaning, between showing arrogance and dominance vis-à-vis loyalty, love, and responsibility in the struggle to maintain one's self-respect and dignity.

3. The opposition of two different poles of meaning in terms of a) power, b) knowledge and c) truth owned by the *triwangsa* is basically also owned by *the shudra*. These three meanings show logical inconsistencies regarding the power of knowledge and truth which is self-assured through the egoism of the characters from *the triwangsa* in the novel *Earth Dance*, the short story "When Kentongan is Beaten in Bale Banjar" and the short story "Leave Komang Here". Opposition that explains the contradiction between responsibility for truth and decisions taken is important to all parties.

All the ICLI's and explanations above underline the expansion and plurality of meanings built into the text. This raises the ideological awareness of the figures in accepting the reality that dignity is not measured by the origin of the family by birth (heredity) or socially (social role). However, it is measured based on attitudes and behavior that are honest, open, and acknowledge the existence of other people.

4.2.2 Socio-Cultural Studies

The cultural background expressed through the five literary texts, specifically about *nyerod* (demotion) for marrying a man of *shudra* descent; *shudra* caste resistance to higher castes in an effort to maintain their self-respect as shudras. Caste differences are determined by social roles in society. However, it is understood as descent which ultimately creates a clear dividing line between *triwangsa* and *shudra* in marriage.

This is what Fairclough calls "social irregularities": a) the domination of *triwangsa* who are arrogant because they occupy their position as members of high caste society, b) "condescending behavior towards other people" especially *shudra* citizens who are not caste; and c) verbal violence, expulsion, false accusations, and humiliation of dignity, threats of curses and plagues, expulsion, and efforts to convince spouses to respect each other. In CDA, this is explained through text deconstruction. The aim is that the oppressive and unfair dimensions, ambiguities, logical ambiguities and inconsistencies that exist in the text can be exposed (Derrida in Lubis, 2014, p. 62) for the sake of constructing new meaning. Thus social stratification, caste conflict is understood based on social roles in society, not on birth origins. Furthermore, the reproduction of meaning from the first side to the second side can be explained as follows.

First, tradition and reality. Caste conflict in Bali positions traditional strategies and reality. The tradition of caste conflict that has grown from generation to generation and how writers attempt to deal with it through deconstructive ideas through literary works (Shoham, 2011). The continuation of this cultural tradition is part of an effort to answer and understand the various dynamics of two sides of meaning. The aim is to find a new, common meaning for *triwangsa* and *shudra*.

Second, reproduction and exchange. In responding to tradition and reality, Bourdieu puts forward two strategy models, namely reproductive strategies which are designed to move dynamics in social space (Lubis, 2014, p. 111) in opposition to two sides of meaning which give rise to new meanings in shared life.

In these five texts, strategies of reproduction and exchange collaborate with elements of maintaining tradition. Maintaining traditions loses its role due to various social irregularities and obstacles to overcoming them (Haryatmoko, 2022, p. 35). There are inconsistencies in society stated in the storyline. For example, *triwangsa* domination of *shudra* descendants. This is contradictory to the true role of the *triwangsa*. *Triwangsa* is obliged to appear as a defender of justice and truth. *Triwangsa* must be accompanied by verbal and non-verbal behavior reflecting one's nationality.

Third, the reasons about tradition and reality, reproduction and exchange strategies, can basically be restored in the objectivity of literary texts. There are other meanings or a plurality of meanings in the text. This plurality of meanings enables deconstruction and construction of texts to improve critical thinking skills in uncovering marginalized meanings (Haryatmoko, 2022, p. 215). In this way, the construction of new meanings (plurality of meanings) can enrich the understanding of cultural traditions and their sustainability (Kirchschlaeger, 2020) benefitting all parties.

ICLL and binary opposition are the keys to uncovering the ideology of the text (Haryatmoko, 2022, p. 35). The opposing meanings in the five literary texts complement each other. The ideology of feudalism in the form of caste differences has limitations and at the same time opens up new spaces of meaning. The pair of binary oppositions in the literary text is a form of metaphysical hierarchy according to Bourdieu, where the first side is seen as better than the second side (Haryatmoko, 2022, p. 47). Literary works with a background of caste conflict in Bali, also explain a number of local wisdom values regarding human relations, human dignity.

Expanding the meaning of the first pole is important for the continuity of tradition. Traditions that work well will strengthen ethnicity (Liliweri, 2018, p. 27). The single meaning of *triwangsa* domination becomes a plurality of meanings explaining that *triwangsa* domination is not the only meaning. There are a number of other meanings as new meaning constructions. This legal support has already occurred (Sadnyini, 2010). Long before this, the pros and cons between castes had emerged since the 1930s, as shown by the newspapers Surya Kanta and Bali Adnyana. Furthermore, the Djatajoe Newspaper tried to break it up so that different caste groups could unite (Putra, 2021, p. 22). This phenomenon reflects the growing awareness of deconstructing hegemonic and discriminatory social orders towards a more emancipatory social order by prioritizing the values of justice and equality. In fact, since the birth of Indonesian literary works in Bali, the Djatajoe newspaper has even published a poem entitled Poetry Calling "Djatajoe" which contains a call for *the triwangsa* (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Wesya) and *shudra* to unite (Putra, 2021). In this way, the two-sided opposition that occurs can prioritize a plurality of meanings benefitting for all parties.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the tensions arising from caste conflicts and social stratification can be deconstructed and reinterpreted through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). By doing so, socio-cultural relations in society can be reenvisioned and re-presented with a fresh perspective, informed by new meanings that are relevant to contemporary developments. It is crucial to emphasize this point, as it is a challenging task to eradicate deeply ingrained cultural traditions. Therefore, it is essential to foster a new discourse that emerges from a novel perspective of meaning, thereby promoting a more nuanced understanding of these complex issues.

Caste conflict was not only caused by resistance from the lower classes who devoted their lives as servants of the dynasty's family. Resistance to this societal structure which is considered unfair also comes from within *the triwangsa* family itself. This dynamic shows that there is something serious about the belief in maintaining one's self-respect and maintaining one's identity as a *shudra* or *triwangsa* identity.

The dynamics of caste conflict also determine the character as *triwangsa* and character as *shudra*. This character is shown through plot, conflict between characters, and local Balinese settings in literary works. In the flow of the literary text, it is known that freedom of marriage in *nyerod* (caste descent for

women) is still problematic. Disposal from the family for triwangsa men who married shudra women also still existed. Likewise, *shudra* women's efforts to maintain their self-esteem are opposed by their families through literary works, the author conveys that every human being has rights and authority over himself. Every human being has the same level as other humans.

Conflicts in marriage occur when the social structure of Balinese society places the *triwangsa* caste higher than the *shudra* caste. There are different values for the two castes. This is contrary to human rights. The results of the analysis of the five literary texts show that caste differences are not the only meaning. This meaning is deconstructed to find a new meaning (another meaning) and determine the construction of a new meaning. New meanings such as humility, patience, self-respect, loyalty/love, heart strength, self-confidence, self-acceptance, and honesty. The meaning of social class differences between castes (*triwangsa* and *shudra*) can be read in a new way. The new meaning shows that the *triwangsa* and *shudra* relationship can be positioned as more harmonious and emancipatory.

Ultimately, this study underscores the significance of applied linguistics in deconstructing and reinterpreting the complex dynamics of caste conflicts and social stratification. By examining the intersections of language, culture, and power through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis, we can uncover new meanings and perspectives that challenge dominant ideologies and promote more inclusive and equitable social relations. The findings of this study demonstrate that the applied linguistics philosophy of deconstruction and reconstruction can be a powerful tool for social change, enabling us to reimagine and rearticulate the relationships between language, culture, and identity in ways that are more just, equitable, and emancipatory. As such, this research contributes to the ongoing conversation in applied linguistics about the role of language in shaping and reflecting social realities, and highlights the importance of critically examining the ways in which language is used to construct and maintain social hierarchies.

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