

## Superiority of Female Characters in the Novel *Kenanga* and *Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini

Frisca Nabila Alvionita<sup>1\*</sup>, Hartono<sup>2</sup>

Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta

**Corresponding Author:** Frisca Nabila Alvionita

[friscanabila.2021@student.uny.ac.id](mailto:friscanabila.2021@student.uny.ac.id)

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### ABSTRACT

This research describes the form of superiority of female characters and the contribution of superior characters to the women's movement in the Novel *Kenanga* and *Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini. Data was collected using reading techniques and note-taking techniques. Data were analyzed using psychoanalytic feminist literary criticism theory. As a result, the form of superiority of the female characters in the novel *Kenanga* with its character named *Kenanga* and the novel *Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini, namely *Bu Barla* and *Saring*, has the superiority of responsibility, hardworking, caring, intelligent, patient. The background to the emergence of superiority in the character *Kenanga* is found in the Novel *Kenanga*. The contribution for women is the desire of female writers to change perceptions in society which consider women as inferior human beings. The author wants there to be a change in perceptions in society so that the levels of women and men are considered the same.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Women certainly cannot be separated from their inherent traditions, including in Indonesia, generally women's roles are often considered beneath men. Even though women have an iconic image related to liberation where they are the nucleus and foundation of society (Hijazi, 2019). Superiority is reflected in the defense of the female character who is required to become a super female figure to survive because of oppression from the enemy (men). Burton and Kagan (in Sigh, 2022: 131) stated that the marginalization of women means that women are excluded from the work community in public spaces and their work at home is not appreciated. In line with Afeerakhanam (2017: 91) marginalization has many things that cannot be avoided. These are people who lose social and economic opportunities for their survival in the process of falling prey to the web of male chauvinistic and becoming victims of social, cultural, and political exclusion.

The position of women is always placed in second position or the second sex. Xu (2017) stated that from the perspective of sociology, psychology and physiology, it was revealed that men are the main factor in placing women in the number two position. Women's problems are generally associated with gender or the feminist movement. Gender does not only refer to differences between sexes. Gender is specifically defined as the differentiation of the roles and positions of women and men in society. (Munira et al., 2018).

According to Lorber (2012: 212) gender is something that is often discussed in everyday life. When a baby is wearing a basketball hat by its mother, people will assume that the baby is a boy. However, when the hat was opened, earrings were visible and it turned out that the baby was a girl. Often this is taken for granted. Departing from human relations, women are equal, but women are considered inferior, but this is not entirely proven. It can be seen for example that Cleopatra, Queen Sima, Bilqis are figures of superiority. If in the archipelago there are figures Cut Nyak Dien and Dewi Sartika, it shows that great women exist. Great women have existed since ancient times. From a modern perspective, there are characters in these characters. There is the fact that women are shown to be superior in various kinds of expressions, superiority as one of the inspirations for literary writing.

Literary works exist through the author's creative process in writing various experiences, knowledge, feelings and ideas combined with various thoughts he has. Authors as social creatures are part of life and society so that various things written in literary works are actually created through the author's interactions regarding their social life. Therefore, in literary works we can observe various realities of life that also occur in real life. One of the realities of life that can be observed in literary works is the superiority of women.

In the world of literature, most literary works are dominated by male authors, therefore the emergence of female authors in the literary realm is proof that female authors are able to compete with male authors. Several female authors whose works are currently being discussed by the public and are proof that the emergence of female authors has been accepted by the wider

community. The emergence of female authors has been very influential in the realm of literature. They are trying to change the mindset of readers, especially women, regarding female characters who are usually depicted in literary works or novels as submissive, meek and oppressed female characters (Wardani, 2020: 164).

Oka, who was a journalist, allowed him to meet many great women from various points of view. This meeting resulted in several of Oka's works with women's backgrounds. Oka Rusmini's works are *Monologue of Trees* (1997), *Earth Dance* (2000), *Sagra* (2001), *Kenanga* (2003), *Patiwangi* (2003), *Colors of Us* (2007), *Pandora* (2008), *Shell* (2010), *Akar Pule* (2012), *Saiban* (2014), *Men Cobleng* (2019), and *Koplak* (2019). In this research, two novels by Oka Rusmini will be used.

Oka Rusmini in her novel tells the lives of characters against the background of the context of Indonesian society, especially in the Bali area. The two novels are *Novel Kenanga* and *Novel Tempurung*. These novels are interesting to research because they tell stories about the lives of women, especially in Bali. The two novels by Oka Rusmini that will be used in this research tell the stories of people's lives in the Bali area with various traditional conditions that include them. The first novel was entitled *Kenanga* which was published in 2003 and updated on March 29 2023. The second novel discussed was by Oka Rusmini entitled *Tempurung*. Novel published in 2010 and updated in April 2023.

With data and information from the two novels by Oka Rusmini, the problem of superiority in women can be formulated. Literary works in the form of novels are the right choice to voice the opinions and problems experienced by marginalized groups. It is important to know what actually happens regarding the issue of superiority in women, female characters, character personalities, conflicts, efforts, and forms of superiority of characters. The focus of this research is feminist studies which offer various analyzes regarding the causes and perpetrators of women's oppression. In a book entitled *Feminist Thought*, Rosemarie Putnam Tong (2006) argues that feminism is not a single thought, but rather has various variations whose emergence and development often mutually support, correct and refute previous feminist thought. According to Humm (2007: 157-158) feminism combines the doctrine of equal rights for women which is an organized movement to achieve women's human rights, with an ideology of social transformation which aims to create a world for women.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### ***Psychoanalytic Feminist Literary Criticism***

Barry P. (2002) points out what feminist critics need to do, namely determining the purpose of the text written by the author, assessing women's experiences, examining power relations contained in texts and life with the aim of finding out the extent of patriarchy. Added by Freud (via Tong, 2006: 196) masculinity and femininity are products of sexual maturation. If boys develop "normally," they will become adult men who retain the expected masculine traits and if girls develop "normally" they will become adult women who retain their

feminine traits. According to Freud, female inferiority occurs because girls lack a penis. Because they do not have to worry about castration, girls are not motivated, as boys should be, to be obedient rule followers, whose “head” can always control their “heart.”

“The feminine protest.” If there is such a thing as a masculine protest – the psychoanalytic concept taken over by the functionalists to describe women who envied men and wanted to be men and therefore denied that they were women and became more manly than any man – its counterpart could be seen today in a feminine protest, made by men and women alike, who deny what women really are and make more of “being a woman” than it could ever be. The feminine protest, at its most straightforward, is simply a means of protecting women from the dangers inherent in assuming true equality with men (Friedan, 2001: 149).

Friedan stated that women do not envy men or want to be a man, women just want to not just “be a woman” who usually can't do anything. Feminist protests are undertaken simply as a means to protect women from inherent dangers and assume true equality with men.

### ***Novel***

Literary works in the form of fiction or fantasy are usually called novels. Nurgiyantoro (2013: 11) explains that the meaning of novel comes from Italian, namely novella and in German novelle which literally means 'a new item'. It is said to be new because when compared to other types of literary works such as poetry, drama, etc., this type of literary work appeared later.

According to Esten (2013: 7), the novel is an expression of fragments of human life (in the longer term) where conflicts occur which ultimately lead to changes in the way of life between the perpetrators." Based on these limitations, a novel is a literary work that contains expressions of human life that contain conflict.

In a work, a novel is not only a means of entertainment but also a form of art that examines and studies all aspects of life and directs readers about noble character. So it can be concluded that the novel is the result of the author's creativity and imagination written in a series of stories that depict the lives of the characters in a certain plot.

### ***Personality***

Psychological studies that refer to the social images received by individuals from a group or society. The object of a personality study is human behavior, human behavior that discusses what, why and how behavior is called personality (Yusuf, 2007: 1). Personality is also interpreted in many ways and is associated with certain characteristics that stand out from an individual. Therefore, the definition of personality in everyday terms is focused on how individuals make an impression on other individuals.

### ***The Role of Women and Men in Society***

Naturally, women are different from men both physically and psychologically. Physically, the difference is very clear. Women can give birth,

and psychologically, men are usually more active, aggressive and more rational. Therefore, it is natural that many people think that women should live in their family environment. This task is a task given by nature to women because they have to give birth and raise their children in a family environment so that their household is more peaceful, peaceful, happy and prosperous. Likewise, the sexual division of labor has actually been carried out since ancient times. Men have the task of earning a living and working for their families, while women are more like managers and organizers in the house (Khayati, 2008: 27).

### *Women in Social Society in Bali*

Marriages between two different castes, especially marriages between women of a higher caste than the caste of their future husbands, are believed to bring tension because they cause shame to the woman's family and bring down the prestige of the entire caste of the girl. (Amalia, 2023: 106).

Amalia explained that in Balinese culture, a marriage between a woman from a high caste and her future husband from a low caste would cause shame for the woman's family and reduce her honor and dignity. These marriages are called *nyerod* (mixed marriages with lower castes).

Balinese women are actually very gentle, obedient and tend to submit, not daring to say no, all of this is the result of maintaining the unlimited superiority and arbitrariness of men. (Vicker, 1994:270). In 1930, Balinese women realized that their obligations in the household and society were very heavy and were neglected by custom (Putra, 2007:20).



**Figure 1. Framework of thinking**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research is qualitative descriptive research. (Ratna, 2012: 46). This means that the research results are in the form of a description or depiction of

the focus of the research. Therefore, qualitative research is mostly conveyed in the form of words, rather than in the form of numbers. The data source was obtained from two novels by Oka Rusmini, namely the Novel *Kenanga* and *Tempurung*. Data collection was carried out using reading and note-taking techniques. Data analysis uses psychoanalytic feminist literary criticism theory.

The literary research method used is literary criticism with feminist theory. Literary criticism is a branch of literary studies that is directly related to literary works through interpretation, analysis (decomposition) and assessment (evaluation) as explained by Wiyatmi (2012: 3). Feminist theory is used to approach research targets aimed at women.

## **RESULTS**

This research aims to describe the personality of female characters, describe the form of superiority of female characters and describe the efforts of female characters to achieve superiority in the novel *Kenanga* and *Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini. Based on these three objectives, the results of this research are presented in three main issues, namely: (1) the form of superiority of female characters (2) the background to the emergence of superior figures in the novel *Kenanga* and *Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini and (3) the contribution of superior figures to the women's movement in the novel *Kenanga* and *Tempurung*. Apart from the character *Kenanga*, the author also creates other super female characters, namely Mrs. Barla and Saring in the novel *Tempurung*. The female characters *Kenanga* and Saring are described as intelligent female characters. *Kenanga* has broad insight, critical thinking and strong intuition. The female characters Bu Barla and Saring also appear as characters who are confident, hardworking and responsible. These data will be explained in more detail in the research limitations.

**Table 1. The Form of Women's Superiority in the Novel *Kenanga* and *Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini**

No.	The Form of Superiority	Novel Title	Data Number	Freq.
1.	Responsibility	<i>Kenanga</i>	1, 4, 6, 19, 25, 37, 40, 42, 44, 47, 52, 54, 55	13
		<i>Tempurung</i>	68, 69, 81, 89, 90, 94, 100, 116, 118, 121, 124, 125	12
2.	Hardworking	<i>Kenanga</i>	2, 8, 9, 23, 24, 26, 38, 46, 62, 63, 64	11
		<i>Tempurung</i>	67, 71, 74, 86, 87, 110, 111, 113, 114, 115, 120,	11
3.	Caring	<i>Kenanga</i>	3, 5, 7, 14, 15, 16, 30, 31, 50, 51, 56, 58, 61, 65, 66	15
		<i>Tempurung</i>	75, 78, 79, 80, 84, 85, 93, 101, 108, 119, 123, 127	12
4.	Intelligent	<i>Kenanga</i>	10, 13, 17, 20, 21, 32, 33,	12

			34, 35, 39, 41, 53	
		Tempurung	70, 77, 91, 95, 103, 105, 106, 107, 117	9
5.	Patient	Kenanga	11, 12, 18, 22, 27, 28, 29, 36, 43, 45, 48, 49, 57, 59, 60	15
		Tempurung	72, 73, 76, 82, 83, 88, 92, 96, 97, 98, 99, 102, 104, 109, 112, 122, 126, 128, 129	19
	Total data			129

Based on the research results, there are several forms of personality in the female characters in the novel *Kenanga* and *Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini. The forms of personality are responsibility, there are 25 data, hardworking, 22 data, caring, 27 data, intelligent, 21 data, and patient, there are 34 data. The first form of personality is responsibility, appearing as a female character who has a high level of responsibility, having responsibility for herself and for others. In the novel *Kenanga*, there is a responsible character, namely Kenanga. He is very responsible for the lives of himself and Intan. The novel *Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini also has a responsibility, namely the character Saring.

**Table 2. Background to the Emergence of Female Superiority Figures in the Novel *Kenanga* and *Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini**

No.	Background	Figure	Frequency
1.	Caste factor	Kenanga	6
		Bu Barla	2
		Sipleg	4
2.	Cultural factors	Kenanga	5
		Bu Barla	2
		Saring	5
3.	Social Environmental Factors	Kenanga	3
		Bu Barla	3
		Saring	5
	Total data		34

The caste factors found in the character Kenanga in the novel *Kenanga* by Oka Rusmini produced three data. This evidence can be seen when Kenanga faces Intan who is a wong jero while Kenanga's character is from the Brahmin caste. These caste differences influence the existence of superiority in the lives of Kenanga characters. Apart from that, in the novel *Tempurung* there are caste factors shown by eight data that influence the characters Bu Barla and Saring

who choose men from the Sudra caste, while Saring and Sipleg belong to the Brahmin caste.

Balinese women are actually very gentle, obedient and tend to submit, not daring to say no, all of this is the result of maintaining the unlimited superiority and arbitrariness of men. (Vicker, 1994:270). In 1930, Balinese women realized that their obligations in the household and society were very heavy and were neglected by custom (Putra, 2007:20). Therefore, Oka Rusmini tries to depict a superior female character with a background of Balinese customs, culture and social environment. As in the novels *Kenanga* and *Tempurung*, there are differences between the Brahmin and Shudra castes which can influence life and can become a background for superiority. Apart from that, there is also evidence in the novel *Kenanga* and *Tempurung* that several characters still compete in customs related to pregnant twins being something that can lead to superiority.

**Table 3. The contribution of superiority figures to the women's movement in the novel *Kenanga* and *Tempurung***

No.	Aspects of Women Leaders' Contributions	Figure	Frequency
1.	Doesn't see caste differences	Kenanga	5
		Bu Barla	3
		Saring	5
2.	A woman who is responsible for her family	Kenanga	6
		Bu Barla	3
		Saring	4
3.	Have good interaction with the environment	Kenanga	5
		Bu Barla	3
		Saring	4
	Total data		38

A superior personality is a personality that leads to a perfect person, while an inferior personality cannot be called a person who hinders perfection, but rather a person who is at a lower level towards superiority. From the research table above, it shows that the female character *Kenanga* in the novel *Kenanga* has a superior personality through *Kenanga*'s attitude in responding to problems, 16 data were obtained. One piece of evidence that the character

*Kenanga* does not want to see caste differences is when the character *Kenanga*, who is of the Brahmin caste, is confronted by the character *Intan*, who is just a poor person. For *Kenanga*, there is nothing to care about about the existence of this caste. *Kenanga* really wants to take care of *Intan* and give her the best education.

In Novel *Tempurung*, as evidenced by the influence of Mrs. Barla's attitude towards the women in the house complex, there are 9 data. Apart from that, there is a female character named *Saring* who has a superior personality as



well as an inferior personality. 13 data were obtained. Mrs. Barla and Saring show their contribution as superior figures because Mrs. Barla and Saring are women who are fully responsible for themselves and for others. It can contribute to making women not give up easily and not be weak, even if their husband leaves them or their husband does not provide support. The following is a discussion of the forms of superiority, the background to the formation of superiority, and the contribution of superior characters in the novel *Kenanga and Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini.

## DISCUSSION

*Forms of Superiority of Female Characters in the Novel Kenanga and Tempurung by Oka Rusmini*

This part allows you to elaborate on your results findings academically. You must not put numbers related to your statistical tests here; instead, you have to explain that numbers here. You have to compile your discussion with academic supports to your study and a good explanation according to the specific area you are investigating.

Kenanga telah merawat Intan sejak masih berusia empat tahun. Kehadiran Intan menuntunnya kepada suatu kekuatan yang mengikat mereka berdua. Sorot mata Intan penuh tantangan, begitu hidup, amat memikat dan menimbulkan gairah aneh pada dirinya. (Rusmini, 2023a: 3)

As explained by Musjtari (2016: 2), as a woman there is a role for society or the surrounding environment. Tumbage (2017: 2) added that a mother's obligations are not only to shop, cook, wash, dress up, manage finances, give birth and care for children, but a mother has a more dominant role in the life of a family compared to the role of her husband. In the novel *Kenanga*, the character *Kenanga* is described as having an attitude of responsibility, one of which is responsibility for Intan. Intan, who is only a dirty person, can get responsibility from *Kenanga*. Queen Aji and Queen Ibu also love Intan. Taking care of Irene as her family.

Kenanga, ayah, dan ibunya, mereka semua mencintainya. Menganggap anak itu sebagai keluarga sendiri, bukan sekadar orang lain yang menumpang hidup. (Rusmini, 2023a: 5)

The characteristics of the metaneeds theory are an attitude of trust, wisdom and goodness, beauty, unity, energetic and optimism, certainty, completeness, fairness and altruism, courage, simplicity, responsibility, full of meaning (Yusuf, 2007: 161). *Kenanga* also shows an attitude of responsibility through the description of the character *Kenanga* who states that he will take care of Intan's expenses. Intan's responsibility is only to study. *Kenanga* still thinks about having a sense of responsibility for Intan, who is only six years old and must learn to understand everything about life.

“Itu urusan tiang. Luh hanya bertanggung jawab untuk rajin belajar,” kata Kenanga serius. Sungguh dia berharap agar bocah itu mengerti betapa pedulinya dia. Namun, Intan kembali menundukkan kepala.” (Rusmini, 2023a: 7)

Kenanga's sense of responsibility is applied to Intan. As Ida Ayu, Kenanga has a sense of responsibility. Even though in the Queen Mother's eyes, Intan is just a dirty person, Kenanga is responsible to Intan. Kenanga is responsible for Intan's education and social affairs. Kenanga wants Intan to get a decent education and good company.

Apart from Intan, Kenanga also has a responsible attitude towards his younger brother, Kencana. As a woman, your attitude of responsibility can be illustrated by your sibling relationship. This attitude is also depicted in the novel Kenanga. Even though Kencana covered up Kencana's problem, Kenanga tried to find out and give Kencana a solution. Kenanga saw sadness on Kencana's face. Still the same, Kencana continued to cover up her sadness.

“Mbok pasti bisa membantu,” Kencana mulai merajuk.

“Tiang?”

“Ya.”

“Bisa membantu atau tidak urusan belakang. Tapi, masalahnya tu apa?”  
(Rusmini, 2023a: 14)

### *Background to the Emergence of Female Superiority Figures in the Novel Kenanga and Tempurung by Oka Rusmini*

Humans begin life with innate fighting power and physical limitations, both of which produce feelings of helplessness or inferiority. There is a very strong view that norms or values regarding women in society grow from within society itself and are passed down from generation to generation and are used as role models for every society (Ratna, 1997: 192). In the novel Kenanga and Tempurung there are factors of caste, culture and social environment.

The background to the emergence of superiority in the character Kenanga is found in the Novel Kenanga. This background emerged because of the customs and crocodiles inherent in their lives. Likewise, there are customs in the Tempurung Novel. The following is a quote from the novel Kenanga.

“Tiang percaya. Tapi ini Bali, Kenanga. Ada adat yang menentukan hidup kita. Apalagi kita bangsawan, dari kasta tertinggi. Tempat kita di griya.” (Rusmini, 2023a: 82)

Apart from the background of superiority characters in the novel Kenanga, there is a background of superiority in the novel Tempurung, namely cultural factors. The author, as a member of society who is sensitive to the various socio-cultural changes that are occurring, will not miss this event. They generally write about socio-cultural events, such as cremation (cremation), caste differences, kasepekang (excommunication), pencaruan (cleaning), salah pati (suicide), cuntaka (dirty), tajen (cockfighting), kerauhan (trance), and customary

land conflicts. The following is evidence of the background of the superiority character in the novel *Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini, seen from cultural factors.

“Peraturan tidak bisa ditentang. Bahkan Sipleg pun diwajibkan mengemis tiga hari di tiga desa bersama Payuk. Sipleg tidak ikhlas. Dia tahu, aturan adat ini bisa mengancam nyawa bayi kecilnya. Baru satu hari berjalan mengemis, bayi laki-laki Sipleg mati. Besoknya bayi perempuannya mati. Ketika Sipleg dan Payuk kembali ke rumah, dua mayat ditemukan. Sipleg tidak menangis. Dia sudah menyiapkan diri. Mengumpulkan serpihan dendam di jantung dan aliran darahnya.” (Rusmini, 2023b: 126)

The social environment greatly influences a person's ability to take action. Either positive or negative actions. The influence of the social environment on women is found in the novel *Tempurung*. In the novel *Tempurung*, patient attitudes are supported by social factors. He ignored the ridicule from Saring's friends. He remained patient and let it go without any reply.

Seorang teman di sekolah bahkan pernah menggodaku, “Pantas ibumu memberimu nama Saring, habis rambutmu keriting seperti Saringan.” Aku hanya diam. (Rusmini, 2023b: 22)

### *Contribution of Superiority Figures to the Women's Movement in the Novels Kenanga and Tempurung*

Currently, women play a big role, both as individuals, wives, mothers and citizens who are obliged to educate the next generation. Indonesian women must also be able to take part in improving the welfare of Indonesian society. This is in the novel *Kenanga* and *Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini. Like the following quote.

“Galuh?”

*Kenanga* memandang tidak mengerti. Bukankah Intan selalu menangis bila berkumpul dengan Galuh? Bocah itu hanya tiga tahun lebih tua dari Intan, tapi wataknya sudah penuh dengki. Mulutnya nyinyir. *Kenanga* tahu, Galuh iri pada kepandaian Intan. (Rusmini, 2023a: 6)

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and validity of research in the Novel *Kenanga* and *Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini. This personality is responsible, hardworking, caring, intelligent and patient. The first form of personality is responsibility. In the novel *Kenanga*, the character *Kenanga* is present as having responsibility, having responsibility for himself and for others. Women's superiority in the form of responsibility is also found in the novel *Tempurung*. In the novel *Kenanga*, there is a caring character, namely *Kenanga*. He really cares about Intan's life. The novel *Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini also cares about the character *Saring*.

The background of superiority is found in the novels *Kenanga* and *Tempurung*, there are differences between the Brahmin and Sudra castes which

can influence life and can be a background for superiority. Apart from that, there is also evidence in the novels *Kenanga* and *Tempurung* that several characters still compete in customs related to pregnant twins, which can be a background for women's superiority in everyday life.

The contribution for women is the desire of female writers to change perceptions in society which have long considered women to be inferior human figures, so that they are creatures who should be protected and loved because of their weaknesses. In the novel *Kenanga* and *Tempurung*, there is a contribution from the character *Kenanga* which influences the life of his family. The *Tempurung* novel is proven by the influence of Mrs. Barla's attitude towards the people in the house complex so that Mrs. Barla is not looked down upon. The author wants there to be a change in perception in society, so that the levels of women and men are considered the same, because basically everyone has a superior personality or an inferior personality.

#### **FURTHER STUDY**

Research is limited to a feminist literary criticism approach to the novel *Kenanga* and *Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini. Therefore, it is hoped that this research can be studied and developed using the perspective of other literature reviews. It is also recommended for other researchers to study the novel *Kenanga* and the novel *Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini using literary psychological analysis to perfect this research on the psychological conditions experienced by female characters.

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