

## Symbolic Interaction of the Meaning of Triwangsa Women's Marriage in Balinese Hindu Culture

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**Abstract** - The existence of Hinduism and Balinese culture is an inseparable unity, both of which guide the lives of Balinese people. In Balinese Hindu culture there is a grouping of wangsa as a symbol of identity and social status. Differences in social status will cause differences in behavior in communicating with the audience. The grouping of social status affects the rules of marriage that require women to marry men who have equal social status. Women are not allowed to marry men who have low wangsa because if they do so, the women must go down the wangsa. When a woman has stepped down, there is a change in the way she interacts and communicates with family and society. Changes in the identity of Triwangsa women have a big impact on the doers as well as the family and the environment. This research aims to describe the symbolic interaction in the marriage of Triwangsa women towards the Balinese Hindu family and environment. The results showed that there are differences in interaction patterns between women who descend from the wangsa and women who still have a fixed wangsa.

**Keywords:** Symbolic Interaction; *Triwangsa* Marriage; Balinese Hindu Culture; Concept of *Warna*; Patterns of *Wangsa*.

### Introduction

Hindu culture in Bali is a binding customary law and often positioned as a guide of how Balinese people should behave. Hindu culture in Bali regulates various practices of community life, both public and private spheres. In the form of social reality, the culture must be obeyed by its adherents because if they do not obey it then they will face the consequences. However, the Hindu community in Bali preserves culture along with the times so that cultural values become norms that build good moral behavior. The implementation of cultural values is reflected in daily life that can be found in the environment of Hindu society in Bali.

Hindu culture in Bali divides social status based on “*warna*”, which is the classification of a person based on talent or occupation. But along with the development, the concept of “*warna*” has now changed into a caste system. Such social status is gained based on lineage which will be attached as an identity that makes a distinction between castes. The caste system divides the community into four parts, namely; Brahmins (religious experts), Kshatriyas (government experts), Vaisyas (trade experts), and Sudras (agricultural experts and laborers). Brahmins, Ksatria, and Vaisya constitute the *Triwangsa* group. The depiction of the social status of Hindu society in Bali can be seen from the use of titles that

reflect caste levels. The division of social status causes differences in how to interact and communicate in community life. In addition, it also provides social boundaries that should not be violated.

Balinese culture recognizes two ways of marriage, namely: (1) marriage by way of *memadik* (proposing) and (2) marriage by way of *ngerorod* (running away together). Meanwhile, the common forms of marriage are: (1) *ordinary* marriages and (2) *padagelahang* marriages, or marriages where the process is between an ordinary marriage and a *nyentana* marriage.

*Nyerod* marriage is a marriage by way of *ngerorod* which is performed when a woman from a higher *wangsa* marries a man from a lower *wangsa*. *Nyerod* marriage is included in the unwanted marriage because the social status of *Triwangsa* women will go down following the social status of the man so that the marriage will hurt the doer and their extended family. *Triwangsa* women who are involved in *nyerod* marriages will feel discarded and untied from the family and traditional environment because all their titles and noble rights are lost. Changes in the identity of *Triwangsa* women will cause changes in patterns of interaction and communication, both with the extended family and the environment.

The social impact caused by different *wangsa* marriages covers various aspects of life. Women who are practicing *nyerod* marriages are the most disadvantaged and suffer because it is not uncommon for these marriages to cause conflicts in the extended family. After the *nyerod* marriage, *Triwangsa* women are no longer part of the extended family, and sometimes they are often humiliated and treated as servants to serve the nuclear family and extended family. In religious activities, women who are involved in *nyerod* marriage are not allowed to make offerings at the place of worship in their house of origin. The new identity of *Triwangsa* women requires them to use a grammatical system (*sor singgih*) in communication, where lower *wangsa* use subtle language in communicating with higher *wangsa*. The complex impact of *nyerod* marriage makes it a marriage that is avoided as much as possible.

In this study, researchers tried to explore what is the meaning of *nyerod* marriage for *Triwangsa* women and what is its impact on the doer. By using the phenomenological method, researchers tried to examine the problems faced by *Triwangsa* women after performing *nyerod* marriage. This research mainly focuses on symbolic interaction and the meaning of marriage for *Triwangsa* women who do *nyerod* marriage.

### Theoretical Framework

This research uses communication theory regarding the relationship between interaction and symbols from George Herbert Mead. Mead interprets symbolic interaction as a form of communication whose message is in the form of a symbol or symbol that has been agreed upon by the person communicating. Mead also said that a person's behavior can be influenced by the symbols shown by other people (Mead, 2018). It can be said that the symbols shown by someone can represent that person's thoughts and feelings which are then interpreted by the person they are talking to as a signal.

Symbolic Interactionism Theory can explain the process of symbols in interaction that form a shared perspective, where the framing of an action in giving meaning can be understood by the individual or subject who performs it (Elbadiansyah. 2014: 10). George Herbert Mead emphasizes understanding from the subject's point of view, in whose interactions they use symbols by indicating meaning as a result of interpretation. (Elbadiansyah. 2014).

Mulyana (2010) explains that interaction is the main form of social process, where humans carry out activities in the form of communication between each other to form a meaning that is conveyed in the form of not only verbal but also non-verbal messages, the interaction process that is formed involves symbols in the form of messages gestures, physical appearance and body language.

Mulyana (2005) also explains the functions of communication, one of which is a social function which suggests that communication plays a role in building a person's self-actualization and concept. This shows that each individual will show how he is in front of other individuals, so that the interactions that occur allow someone to show their self-concept.

### Material and Methodology

To further explore the social reality of the symbolic interaction of *Triwangsa* women's marriage, researchers used qualitative methodology. Mulyana explained that in qualitative research, theory is limited to the definition: a systematic statement relating to a set of propositions derived from data and empirically tested. Furthermore, Watt and Berg (1995) explained that the paradigms of symbolic

interaction theory, methodology, and phenomenology that develop qualitative methods for communication research can reveal reality construction.

This research uses two types of data, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained by conducting in-depth interviews with women who performed *nyerod* marriage, traditional leaders, academics, government, women's organizations and parents of women who performed *nyerod* marriage and unmarried parents who came from the Brahmin clan as the highest clan in the Balinese Hindu social strata. While the secondary data of this research includes the results of previous studies that explain the marriage of *Triwangsa* women in Balinese Hindu culture, articles that support the explanation behind the marriage of *Triwangsa* women, and supporting documentation sources from various sources about the marriage of *Triwangsa* women and social construction in Balinese Hindu culture.

The data in this study will be analyzed using data analysis techniques introduced by Strauss and Corbin (2014), by coding. Coding is essentially a process of data analysis, where data is broken down, conceptualized and put back together in a new way. This is the central process by which theories are formed from the data. Coding consists of three stages: open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

## Result and Discussion

### *Symbolic Interaction in Balinese Hindu Society*

The homogeneity of Balinese society in daily life, produces a distinctive and unique communication pattern that only exists in Balinese Hindu society. It is something that is reflected in Balinese religion and customs that are so embedded in the lives of its people. It is also something that only exists in Bali and is not found in other communities in Indonesia. It becomes the identity of the Balinese people and society itself. When religion and culture become one, they are entrenched in daily life and recognized as part of the collective identity. The identity of its community members is reflected in various verbal and non-verbal symbols. Mainly Hindu religious beliefs have become part of Balinese culture itself. It is something described by Lewis and Slade as "shared interpersonal communication between members of the same cultures".

Forms of symbolic interaction can be seen from names, religious ritual symbols and cultural symbols found in the private and public spheres. Non-verbal communication in the private sphere can be seen in the form of marriage, where marriage in Balinese Hindu society is not only a matter of two parties in love, the nuclear family and banjar (people who live in one area), but also is related to the ancestral spirits who reside in a family place of worship called *Merajan* or *Sanggah*, the creatures below humans called *Bhuta Kala*, and *Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*/God Almighty as can be interpreted from the concept of *Tri Upasaksi* (*manusa* witness, god witness and *bhuta* witness) in the validation of marriage in Balinese Hindu society.

Hindu society in Bali, adheres to a patrilineal family system and in Balinese society it is known as *kapurusa* or *purusa*. With the patrilineal system, the successor of generation or *purusa* in Balinese Hindu society is the son as a substitute for the father's position who will accept juridical and moral responsibilities both before and after marriage.

The patrilineal system makes the position of Balinese Hindu women, especially *Triwangsa* women very weak, because they do not have the right to choose and are in the *pradana* position, where after they get married as an adult woman, they are banished from their legal relationship with their family of origin (parents and siblings) or their rights and obligations are no longer taken into account in their family of origin but will begin to be taken into account in the family. That is why the value or degree of one's relationship with relatives from the male line/*purusa* is much more important than the relationship with relatives from the female side/*pradana*.

The pattern of personal non-verbal communication can also be felt in the giving of nicknames in the *Triwangsa* and *wangsa Jaba* circles. The *Triwangsa* group is in a higher position than the *jaba*, so that the inclusion of the name cannot be arbitrary, because it has been determined by the *awig-awig* of the traditional village. The title and name for *wangsa* Brahmana is *Ida Bagus* or *Ida Ayu*. The *Ksatrya* nation uses the title *Cokorda*, and *Anak Agung*, while the *Waisya* nation uses the title *Dewa* or *Dewayu*. *wangsa Sudra* uses the title "I" (title in the form of a name for male *Sudra*) and "Ni" (title in the form of a name for female *Sudra*).

Verbal communication patterns in the personal domain are a person's behavior in communication using words in the form of utterances or speech, while non-verbal communication uses limb movements,

such as; facial expressions, eye movements, head movements, hand movements, body movements, or a combination of movements of one limb with other limbs. Examples of limb movements as non-verbal communication that are often done in Bali, can be seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** A speaker holds up his index finger  
Source: I Nengah Suandi & Made Sri Indriani (2010).

Figure 1, where a speaker or *penutur* raises his index finger, is a non-verbal communication that uses one of the limbs. Looking at the hand gesture as shown in Figure 1, in such a situation it is not classified as non-verbal communication that does not respect its partners but as a gesture to complement, clarify, and emphasize the meaning of the communication that occurs.

In verbal communication in Balinese Hindu society in certain cases sor *singguh basa* (Balinese language levels) must be used in communication. Communication patterns have a very strong influence on rural communities and urban communities, especially when it comes to the application of the *wangsa* system because it must use sor *singguh basa* (language levels) in the *Triwangsa* system, must use sor *singguh basa* (language levels) namely *halus singguh*, *halus sor*, and *halus madia*, and *mider*. The use of sor *singguh basa* can be clearly seen in the communication carried out by *Triwangsa* women, who do *nyerod* marriage, namely when calling their parents they must begin with the word "Ratu" and they can no longer call them "Mom and Dad" and calling siblings must use full name with the title of *wangsanya* which may be between their siblings before marriage, each of them has a small name or baby name, and cannot call them brother or sister.

While non-verbal communication patterns in the public sphere of Balinese Hindus can be seen from the symbols of rituals of religious ceremonies, such as; *ngaben*, tooth cutting, marriage, and others. The symbols of non-verbal communication of religious ceremonies in the form of wedding ceremonies can be seen from the wedding clothes that have the characteristics and forms of existence of Balinese culture. Wedding fashion in Bali is an awareness of cultural identity wrapped in Balinese beliefs. It is something of sacred value bound by the rules of customs and Hinduism and is a form of behavior of the community that is aware of the traces of its past civilization which has the function of increasing community social solidarity, eliminating attention to individual interests, and strengthening religious life.

Wedding fashion in Hindu society in Bali recognizes levels known as *payas* (clothing), including *Payas Agung*, *Payas Madya* and *Payas Nista*. *Payas Agung* is the most important or highest level of *payas* in the social strata during the Badung kingdom. The use of this *payas* is very limited only for the royal family during the marriage procession among the royal family or the *Triwangsa* group. *Payas Madya* indicates an intermediate level, and is intended for marriage processions and lower social levels. As the lowest stratum, *Payas Nista* looks very simple and modest, and is commonly reserved for the general Balinese community such as farmers or fishermen. The wedding attire/*payas* can be seen in Figure 2 to Figure 5.



**Figure 2.** Triwangsa Group Wedding Dress (*Payas Agung*)  
Source: Personal Documentation



**Figure 3.** Triwangsa Group Wedding Dress (*Payas Agung*)  
Source: Personal Documentation



**Figure 4.** Triwangsa Group Wedding Dress (*Payas Agung*)  
Source: Personal Documentation

*Payas Agung* for the bride as a whole uses *prada*-patterned clothing, starting from *tapih* in the form of a long cloth hanging to the floor, women's cloth (worn after *tapih*), *kemben* shawl, and a golden color belt around the waist. Jewelry equipment uses *kana* bracelets at the base of the arm, *satru* dragon bracelets, *bebekeng* belts, *sesimping* covering the shoulders to the chest, and *badung* around the neck, and *subeng* in the ears. For *Payas Agung* the groom wears a dress that is one of the symbols of the majesty of the dynasty of the kings who inhabit the *Puri* (palace), because it is only used on official royal occasions. *Kamben*, *kampuh* and *umpal* are all patterned with golden *prada*. The headdress is a complete *gelungan* consisting of a golden *petitis* above the forehead, *tajung*, *bancangan* flower, *sandat* flower (*kenanga*), and *garuda mungkur*. The groom's jewelry also uses *kana* bracelets, *setru* bracelets, *sesimping*, *bodong* as worn by the bride, and is equipped with a *keris* studded with precious stones.



**Figure 5.** *Jaba/Sudra* noble class marriage fashion (*Payas Madya*)  
Source: Personal Documentation

The headdress which is not in the form of a cloth *destar* is a characteristic of the *madya payas* for the groom and (headdresses made of cloth are used for the *Payas Madya* strata) and the clothing/*payas* for the bride as a whole uses ordinary cloth patterned clothing, starting from *tapih* in the form of ankle-length cloth and the jewelry worn is not as luxurious as the grand *payas*.

#### *The Meaning of Triwangsa Women's Marriage in Balinese Hindu Culture*

Marriage or *wiwaha* in Hinduism is a *yadnya* and *dharma* act because God has said in *Manava Dharmasastra* IX. 96 as follows:

*“Prnja nartha striyah srstah samtarnartham ca manawah. Tasmad sadahrano dharmah crutam patnya sahaditah”* (Translation: For motherhood, the woman was created and for fatherhood, the man was created. Religious ceremonies are therefore prescribed in the Vedas to be performed by the husband with his wife).

In general, Balinese women view marriage as the purpose of carrying out *dharma* and religion and marriage to be lived as Marriage in *Manawa Dharmasastra* IX.45, there is a statement explaining that the wife is single with her husband. This means that the position of women and men is equal and very important in the view of Hinduism. Therefore, in the *Rgveda* men and women who have become husband and wife are referred to by one term, namely *dempet* or inseparable.

Based on the views of the informants, marriage is carrying out *dharma* which includes all religious activities and obligations. As said by Ter Haar, marriage involves matters of kin, family, society, dignity, personal and religious matters. By getting married, the husband and wife have the obligation to obtain offspring who become the successor to the lineage of parents and relatives. In fact, it is not only related to those who are still alive but also to their ancestors who have passed away.

However, the demands of custom and culture make the position of Balinese women in the dualism between the world of religion and the world of reality. In the religious perspective, Balinese Hindu women are symbolized as *pradana* who are feminine (gentle and loving) and must become perfect *pradana* by becoming a wife, a mother, and a mother who gives birth to sons.

If a woman who has entered into marriage is only able to give birth to girls and has no sons, then she is also called an imperfect woman. For this reason, Balinese Hindu women who choose not to get married, do not have offspring and do not have sons then classically, these women will become scorned and without honor in the family and even in social life.

The intervention of patrilineal philosophy/ideology or *purusa* (*kapurusa*) goes too far in the personal realm of women's lives in Bali which works through very deep social pressure if women are not able to become perfect *pradana*, first because they are female which often weakens themselves, then they experience family pressure and social pressure because they are considered recipients of decisions, and finally domestic violence from their own husbands because *purusa* understanding becomes macho-ism (rough, brutal) as a demonstration of strength over territory and inheritance.

In the concept of *purusa* and *pradana* in the level of symbolic discourse in Bali, the concept is actually placed *fairlyuhung* as the nature of life balance. Indeed, the concept of *purusa* and *pradana* is commensurate with the concept of yin and yang, heaven and earth, male and female, which are dualities to complement and complement each other to achieve harmony in life. However, in Balinese society, in discourse, the concept of *purusa* has been distorted, that the privilege of the male child is transferred as a result of his dominant responsibility in carrying out the customs of the family, and their community, even though this is not entirely true because women also do the same thing in social practice.

It can almost be said that Balinese Hinduism is a very feminist religion and Balinese customary law actually has a dynamic and flexible nature in addition to its traditional nature but its presence is able to balance the division of roles for men and women. All parties have their respective roles. The role of Balinese women is very large not only as wives, but also in running the wheels of religion, maintaining Balinese customs from the family level to social relations is very large.

Religious practices and rituals are worked out by involving the devotion of Balinese women. It is not uncommon for the financial aspect of organizing traditional rituals to also come from women's pockets. Looking at the reality in the field, the concept of *purusa* is actually made to exist solely as a demonstration of the power of territorial struggle and absolute inheritance rights for men without an explanation of the responsibilities they receive.

But in the reality of custom, Balinese Hindu women do not have freedom to determine their lives, especially those who are in the *Triwangsa* circle. Sometimes *adat* treats the marriage rights of the female Hindu *triwangsa* in Bali as a symbolic exchange. The existence and rights of *Triwangsa* women are obscured or hidden through the discourse of practices in the name of *adat*. Women's existence is marginalized in the game of family political interests in the context of marriage, decision-making, and justice in the distribution of life rights for Hindu *triwangsa* women in Bali, all of this happens because the materialism-based system that penetrates people's thinking has made the battle of words turn to the expansion of power and maintaining their class as a noble class so that in traditional reality, Balinese Hindu women do not have freedom to determine their lives, especially those who are in the *triwangsa* circle.

According to Ida Bagus Rudy, as an informant from the *Brahmin* class who has unmarried children, said:

"...for me, the position of a daughter is that the count will definitely disappear whether she marries a fellow *wangsa* or not, it will still disappear. *Nyerod* marriage in Balinese culture is a disgrace, but for some people today it is normal as long as they still remember their parents, although the disgrace will not fade...." "...for me it's not the *nyerod* marriage that is problematic, the problem is that after marriage then suddenly divorced, that's what's hard. Already not recognised by the family, returned to the parents, the extended family has not accepted. Maybe the biological parents can accept it because they can't bear it, but the extended family will not recognise and accept it..." (interview, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024).

Shackled by the power of the *Triwangsa*, they have very limited choices so that *Triwangsa* women accept arranged marriage (Balinese: *kejangkepang*) or forced marriage (*kaejuk/captured*), but the two types of choosing a partner are no longer the era and have been abandoned by *Triwangsa* women

as individuals who have the same rights as men in choosing a partner in accordance with article 16 paragraph (1) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women which has been ratified by the Government of Indonesia through Law Number 7 of 1984 dated July 24, 1984.

For *Triwangsa* women, the meaning of marriage is the purpose of life and the stage of entering *Grehasta*, which is the most important stage as an adult woman to enter married life which is legalized in the form of marriage. Marriage for *Triwangsa* women is a holy and sacred stage that is expected to happen only once in their lives. Therefore, marriage for *Triwangsa* women in Bali is not only the business of *Triwangsa* women who are in love, but also a matter of family, custom, community, *wangsa*, and a political agenda to maintain the high status of their *Triwangsa* nobility. As a result, many royal and noble families who have *Triwangsa* nobility will marry a large number of members of their family, sometimes to maintain their *Triwangsa* title, and thus, polygamy is the most ideal choice for women and it is an absolute necessity to maintain their group community as *Triwangsa* nobility.

According to the view of Drs. I Gusti Made Sugiharta, S.Ag, as *prajuru* and traditional rulers, stated:

"Like an egg, religion is the yolk, while *adat* is the white and culture is the shell. Religion is based on the Vedas and their supporting scriptures such as *Itihasa*, *Purana*, *Smrti* and *Sruti*. *Sruti* is the teaching of *upanisad*. *Smrti* such as *Manawadharmasastra* and *Sarasamuccaya*. Religious theology is packaged in puppet stories such as *Itihasa* and *Purana*. *Adat* is the embodiment of religious teachings. *Adat* is accepted in the community to be the norms of behaviour that develop in the community."

"...*adat* is made to harmonise the relationship between humans and God, humans and humans and humans with nature or commonly referred to as *Tri Hita Karana*. The caste does not exist in religious teachings, there is only *Catur Warna*. Along with the development of people's minds, there is a transition from caste to colour that has been very pronounced" (interview, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024).

Since the 19th century polygamous marriage is no longer the only choice of *Triwangsa* women who have noble blood, although at that time, the situation was not very supportive and even led to a very difficult and unavoidable situation not to choose a polygamous life because there were not enough high *wangsa* noble class men to become life partners for the daughters of kings and daughters of nobles in Bali. As a result of the many daughters of kings and nobles called *Triwangsa* who could not marry to fulfill their wishes due to the unbalanced growth of women and *Triwangsa* men to become their life partners, there was a small rebellion of *Triwangsa* women not to choose a polygamous life just to get marital status. Another option that is quite brave from *wangsa* women is to marry men who have lower *wangsa*.

One of the demands of *Triwangsa* women in the rebellion against polygamous marriage is that they chose *nyerod* marriage no matter the risk. In the life of Hindu society in Bali before the enactment of the Marriage Law, there was no *awig-awig* (customary rules) that allowed a *Triwangsa* man to have more than one wife (polygamy). Even there was no provision restricting the number of women that *Triwangsa* man could marry. However, after the enactment of the Marriage Law, Article 9 states that "a person who is still married to another person cannot marry again". The provision in the article is seen as a prohibition of polygamy and is able to curb polygamous behavior still favored by most Balinese people although sometimes the conditions in the field speak otherwise.

The basis of marriage assessment for *Triwangsa* women is a relationship that provides a sense of security, happiness, and love. Therefore, the position of *wangsa* does not make it a principle to choose a life partner in the current era. To marry men from lower *wangsa* will be the main choice if there is a sense of security, happiness, and love. As a result, *nyerod* marriage is not a barrier for them, After all, they are aware that *nyerod* marriage is not desired because it entails social punishment from the surrounding community and brings shame on the women themselves, the nuclear family, and even their extended family because it is considered to be their parents' failure in educating their daughters so that they are unable to maintain their lineage, *wangsa* or skin as an honorable *Triwangsa* woman.

According to Ida Ayu Made Suartini, a female parent of a *nyerod* marriage offender from the *Brahmin* clan, said:



".....for me, *wangsa* is a priority that is considered in making decisions when going to marry because the impact of marrying a different *wangsa* is to be banished from the extended family environment and the privileges brought from birth as a noble class will be lost...."

"....I was very shocked when my son chose a partner from a lower rank. I wanted my son to prioritise his nation and maintain his noble honour rather than choosing love. I had given enough understanding that nobility is very important. I felt like a failure for not being able to guide and lead my son to maintain the honour of his nobility that he was born with...." (interview, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024).

According to Prof. Dr I Nengah Duija, M.Si., an academic and cultural figure,

" Not all customs originate from the *Vedas*, they originate more from local cultural traditions. There are also many traditions that contradict the *Vedas*, meaning certain traditions, including *nyerod* marriage. Actually, in the Vedic teachings, God does not distinguish humans from the degree of their birth, but what is distinguished is the degree of *karma* or the degree of their virtue" (interview, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024).

The noble goal of a marriage to realize a safe, happy, and loving household life is the dream of every woman, but the classification in life makes not all women have many choices in choosing their life partners, as experienced by the *Triwangsa* women group in choosing their life partners because the lives of *Triwangsa* women are full of nationality rules.

This phenomenon illustrates that *nyerod* marriage is a special case that they try to avoid, and not many of them want it. This different *wangsa* marriage will certainly have an impact on the doer themselves, the nuclear family, as well as the extended family and even the local community where they live. The impact can be seen from the different socio-cultural and religious life of *Triwangsa* women who choose *nyerod* marriage. The magnitude of the impact of *nyerod* marriage on *Triwangsa* women who choose life partners whose *wangsa* is lower than theirs is the reason for *Triwangsa* women to avoid it.

According to Anak Agung Putu Erawati, personally what is the meaning of a *sangsa*, *Triwangsa* is just an attribute when born. Anak Agung Putu Erawati is very aware that the life of a person who has blue blood is not easy, the lives of men in her neighborhood are very deviant, how could they not, with the high caste/nation they have they can impose their love on the girls in their neighborhood, sometimes a man has more than one wife. Which woman does not want to be married, that's why Anak Agung Putu Erawati chose *nyerod* marriage with I Wayan Sudiarsa rather than a man from her *wangsa* because I Wayan Sudiarsa is a hardworking man, humble, and very respectful of women, so with I Wayan Sudiarsa, she will feel safe and protected.

Based on the experience delivered through non-formal interviews with Ida Ayu Kade Dwi Astuti, a Balinese Hindu woman who comes from the highest dynasty, the *Brahmin* class, and has an extended family and an environment that holds tightly the traditions of the dynasty and caste which is still very strong, she chose a life partner, who is a man from the ordinary/*sudra* circles. Their marriage is now in its fifth year and they said that marriage has become their life choice. Kade thinks that entering the world of marriage is her personal business, for her happiness and choosing a life partner is the same as choosing a long-term friend to organize the future, so the right is entirely in her hands, not a matter of extended family let alone customary affairs.

Kade chose her life partner based on her rights and did not go through a long thought process, never thinking about the impact of the *nyerod* marriage she chose. Kade was aware of the consequences she would face in her family when she chose to marry someone who was not of the same *wangsa*, but she never thought that the impact would be this severe. Kade was banished from her extended family, as well as the neighborhood where her parents lived. All her noble rights were removed and there was a change in communication patterns. Kade had to use the most subtle level of language (*sor singgih*, Balinese language) within the family by calling her parents with the addition of "*Ratu*" in front of her nickname, while in the community, Kade had to accept being positioned with the *sudra* group in a very clear communication pattern that was only mentioned by name without her title of nobility.

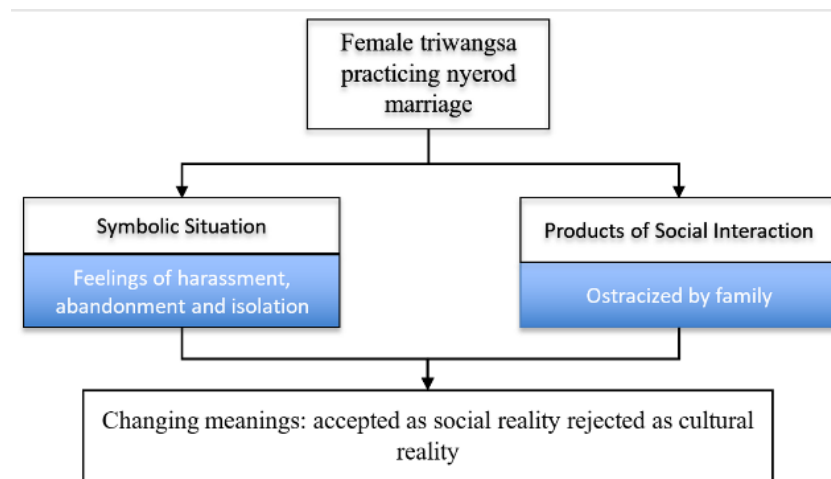
According to Bintang Puspa Yoga's view, the phenomenon of *nyerod* marriage has occurred a lot and has become an inevitable social reality in Balinese Hindu society. However, the main problem is the mental and psychological readiness of the *nyerod* actors, including adapting to their own

environment. Especially when they choose to live in Bali with the consequences where the space of custom and culture as well as caste and religion is so inherent. Bintang Puspa Yoga, as an informant has a view on *Triwangsa* marriage, which states:

"..... *nyerod* marriages in the current era have occurred a lot, even in general the mindset of Balinese people has begun to open up to these conditions. However, this *nyerod* marriage leaves the problem of the ability of each individual to adapt to a new environment that is very different. Therefore, to be able to *nyerod*, Balinese women must prepare themselves as early as possible in an effort to adapt to their new family. So that it will not leave psychological problems in the family concerned, and not prevent the person or family from reaching their best potential in life..." (interview, 27th April 2024).

A number of informants who had experience of *nyerod* marriages have also generally stated that the social consequences behind the *nyerod* marriages they perform are generally very painful for women. They are ostracized and feel outcast from their social environment so far, both by the family and the community at large.

The feeling of being harassed, outcast from the family is a psychological picture of someone who went through *nyerod* marriage, something George Herbert Mead described as a 'symbolic situation'. The symbolic reality experienced by the self internally can be described in the following simplified illustration:



**Figure 6.** Construction of *Triwangsa* Women's Identity based on George Herbert Mead

Based on the description of the identity construction of someone who does *Nyerod* above, the identity phenomenon behind the *nyerod* marriage that occurs in Balinese Hindu society can be explained. First, in the symbolic reality, basically a woman who has done *nyerod* marriage experiences psychological pressure on herself. This pressure is present and formed by the product of social interaction in society where they will be ostracized from their families. Outcast is seen as having violated their cultural identity as part of the *Triwangsa* social caste.

This condition consciously makes Balinese Hindu women who practice *nyerod* marriage feel themselves outcast from their social community and the community environment that has been part of their cultural identity. Second, being a product of *Triwangsa* family culture by the dominant cultural currents, they are forced to follow the growing social construction and tend not to be able to do much when there are family members in their social reality who had done of *nyerod* marriage.

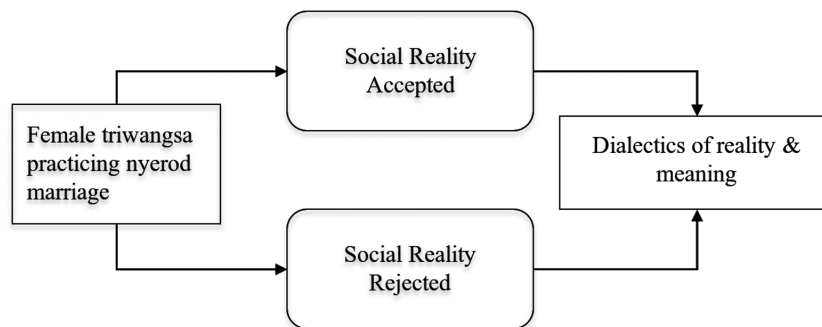
These two processes actually describe the same pressure on both the individual and the family of who had done *nyerod* marriage itself. When symbolically they experience a feeling of rejection by their environment, as well as being seen as having left the social construction of their own religion and culture. However, as George Herbert Mead himself believed, basically the construction of identity is not permanent but continues to experience renewal of meaning. When identity is symbolic, it always undergoes renewal in the realm of reality.

This picture causes *nyerod* marriage in social meaning to be basically accepted by Balinese Hindu society as a social reality, when interactions between communities are increasingly open, it is inevitable that there will be contact between individuals with one another.

Intersections not only occur in the context of customs, culture and interaction, but also reach a very private space, namely marriage. Balinese people must be prepared for the consequences, when their interaction web must experience mixing with other identities, including the matter of marriage itself. However, in general, there is not enough explanation on the courage to accept *nyerod* marriage as a cultural reality where *nyerod* marriage is part of cultural reality. It is something that is deliberately hidden in the social reality.

This consequence causes those who had done *nyerod* marriage in cultural reality and kinship networks to experience rejection and psychological pressure, something that becomes a consequence when deviating from the roots of their own cultural reality. Moreover, culturally, when a *Triwangsa* woman descends *wangsa* they will perform the *Patiwangi* ritual which has a symbolic meaning to lower the *wangsa*/caste of the woman who has *nyerod* marriage so that she becomes equal to her husband's caste.

These various cultural consequences usually cause the construction of *wangsa* to be maintained and Balinese Hindus not to dare to get out of the cultural *pakem* including doing *nyerod*. It is something that is inherent and becomes a consequence that must be accepted in Balinese Hindu society collectively.



**Figure 7.** Social Construct Model of Female *Triwangsa* practicing *nyerod* marriage

The description of the social construction of *Triwangsa* women who perform *nyerod* marriage above shows the social reality of *nyerod* marriage in Balinese Hindu society. Basically, *Triwangsa* women who do *nyerod* marriage experience a dealectic process both internally within themselves and in social reality.

According to Prof. Dr Wayan P. Windia, S.H., M.Si., as a Balinese Hindu academic and cultural figure,

“Nowadays, young couples from ordinary circles want to marry normally by *mapadik* (proposing) to be more respectable, but their parents suggest *ngerorod* (elopement) which is considered easier, cheaper, although less friendly. The two choices confuse and separate the two groups” (interview, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024).

In social reality, *nyerod* marriage is no longer a taboo in Balinese Hindu society. There have been many *Triwangsa* women who perform their *nyerod* marriages come from various *Triwangsa* groups themselves with various economic and social class backgrounds.

However, in cultural reality, *nyerod* marriage itself is something that is avoided because of the various consequences and consequences that occur behind the event of *nyerod* marriage, one of which is the *Patiwangi* ceremony which is held as a consequence of lowering the caste of women who perform *nyerod* marriage.

This condition sometimes becomes a consequence that is difficult for families whose daughters do *nyerod* marriage to accept it. It is something that is seen as part of a family disgrace that makes women who commit *nyerod* marriages tend to be outcasts from their family roots.

This cultural reality continues to put psychological pressure on those who commit *nyerod*. It creates a feeling of exclusion and outcast from their family network and causes psychological shocks in the long run for both individual *Triwangsa* women who do *nyerod* and their lineage.

However, often with the conditions of the times and modernization as well as the interactions that occur the delectics of *nyerod* marriage will continue to occur. When meanings continue to be exchanged with the presence of progress in the community, especially interactions that continue to expand, *nyerod* marriage that has been accepted in social reality will experience changes in meaning.

Modernization of ways of thinking and educational progress in the long run, will change the perspective of those who view *nyerod* marriage as something that will change over time, especially in the Balinese Hindu community, which culturally still views *nyerod* marriage as something that is against tradition.

Over time, the acceptance of differences and the social reality of *nyerod* marriage as a consequence of a society that interacts with each other for a long time will make Balinese Hindu society finally accept *nyerod* marriage as a reality that cannot be denied.

It is believed that education and efforts to build an equality movement that began to grow in Balinese Hindu society will slowly serve as a means of eliminating the *wangsa* system and layers of social stratification that have been built in the cultural reality of Balinese Hindu society.

Old norms about cultural identity must always be maintained, but on the other hand, modernization efforts and efforts to build a dialectic of awareness and new meanings of existing cultural layers will build new ways of thinking in the cultural reality of Balinese Hindu society which in the long run will continue to experience shifts and new meanings.

## Conclusions

Communication patterns of Balinese Hindus are reflected in verbal and non-verbal interactions. The use of non-verbal symbols can be found in the social and religious life of Balinese Hindus. In the social sphere, the product of symbolic interaction is reflected in the use of a grammar system that serves to differentiate ways of communication according to one's social status. In addition, to show social status, Balinese Hindus use titles of nobility embedded in their names. Hinduism and Balinese culture are inseparable and form a culture that regulates the life of Balinese Hindus and becomes a customary law that must be obeyed. The customary law becomes the basis for behavior in the realm of public to private life. Entrenched culture produces unwritten laws that bind its adherents. When a rule is violated, the person must accept the consequences that come from the customary environment. The consequences that must be faced are mostly words of scorn, insults, and humiliation by the community.

In social reality, marriage should be based on mutual love, regardless of one's background. Marriage should be done without coercion and prohibition, and should not be contested. However, in the cultural reality of Balinese Hindu society, marriage must be performed by people who have the same *wangsa*. If a woman enters into a *nyerod* marriage, then she will experience psychological pressure. This pressure is formed by the product of social interaction where they will be discarded and ostracized by the family and traditional environment.

The women who do *nyerod* marriages are seen as harassing their cultural identity because they give up the title of *Triwangsa* nobility. The emergence of cultural products has forced the *Triwangsa* family to accept the consequences of custom when a family member performs a *nyerod* marriage. Along with the times, *nyerod* marriage is no longer a taboo in Balinese Hindu society. Currently, there are many *Triwangsa* women who openly perform *nyerod* marriages. Symbolic identity continues to experience renewal of meaning in terms of social reality, where a person's social identity is seen as less influential. The role of education and modernization is also very important to change people's views on culture, where they are more concerned with their own choices without being bound by customary rules. However, in terms of culture, *nyerod* marriage remains a marriage that is avoided as much as possible due to the severity of the consequences that must be borne.

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