

NEWLY-PACKAGED BALI TOURIST PERFORMING ARTS IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF CULTURAL STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

This research is focused on the newly packaged tourist performing arts; they are a new concept and seem to be different from the general tourist performing arts. They are packaged from various components of Balinese arts and managed as large scale-tourist performing arts in terms of materials, space, and time of their performances. The researcher calls them new types of Bali tourist performing arts because how they are presented is new and different from the traditional tourist performing arts which are simply performed. In this research, the newly-packaged performing arts are analyzed in the perspective of cultural studies.

The research was carried out at three palaces in Bali; they are Mengwi Palace in Badung regency, Anyar Palace at Kerambitan, Tabanan regency, and Banyuning Palace at Bongkasa, Badung regency. There are three main problems to be discussed: firstly, how do the tourist performing arts emerge in all the palaces? Secondly, are they related to the tourist industry developed in the palaces?, thirdly, what is the impact and meaning of them for the sake of the palaces, society, and Balinese culture? The researcher uses a qualitative method and an interdisciplinary approach as characteristics of cultural studies. The theories used are hegemony, deconstruction, and structuration.

The result shows that the tourism development at all the palaces has made the local society become more critical. The money-oriented economy based on the spirit of getting benefit has made the emergence of commodification in all sectors of life. The emergence of tourist industry at the palaces has led to the idea of showing all of the useful art and cultural potentials which at the palaces and their surroundings. Theoretically, the palaces can be stated to have deconstructed the concept of presenting the Bali tourist performing arts into a new one, that is, “the newly packaged Bali tourist performing arts”.

It has been observed that all the palaces have developed t “Newly packaged Bali tourist Performing Arts” but they are different in themes. At Mengwi Palace the theme is ‘procession of religious rituals’, at Anyar Palace, Kerambitan, the theme is “ritual procession of welcoming the kingdom’s guests” and at Banyuning Palace, Bongkasa, the theme is “ritual procession of wedding”. The differences can be seen in the components presented in the performances.

Key word: performing arts, tourism, palace

INTRODUCTION

Among so many performing arts existing in Bali, a “new” phenomenon appears, that is, various components of Balinese traditional arts and ritual processions (those intentionally designed for the sake of tourism) are packaged into a large tourist performing art viewed from the form, space, duration of performance, which the researcher call “newly-packaged Bali tourist performing arts”, which are different from the Balinese traditional performing arts in general.

The Balinese traditional performing arts are generally packaged from one performing art, which are simply performed as the original ones. While the Newly-Packaged Bali Tourism Performing Arts are packaged from various types of performing arts and ritual processions (which are intentionally designed) into large scale ones which are presented from the beginning of the dinner program to the end. The research was conducted at the Palace of Mengwi, Badung Regency, the Palace of Anyar Kerambitan, Tabanan Regency, and the Palace of Banyuning Bongkasa, Badung Regency, where the performing arts have appeared and developed. In this study,

those performing arts are observed from the perspective of cultural studies.

This research has the following as its scope of discussion: (1) how have the newly-packaged Bali tourism performing arts appeared at the three palaces? (2) how have they developed in relation with the development of the tourist industry developing at the three palaces?, and (3) have they affected the existence of and what is their meaningfulness to the palaces, the society and the Balinese cultural treasury?

DISCUSSION

Mengwi Palace, Anyar Kerambitan Palace and Banyuning Palace have developed newly-packaged Bali tourism performing arts, but if observed further, they have presented different themes. The theme of the performance at Mengwi Palace is “procession of religious rituals”, the theme of the performance at Anyar Kerambitan Palace is “procession of welcoming the kingdom’s guests”, and that of the performance at Banyuning Bongkasa Palace is “procession of wedding ritual”.

The newly-packaged of Bali tourist performing arts are an art

creativity related to the context of societal development which cannot be separated from art tradition. Such an art is a cultural capital and a social one in the field of performing arts, especially in the newly-packaged of Bali tourism performing arts. As stated by Bourdieu, the cultural capital and the social one can be transformed into an economic one. The newly-packaged of Bali tourism performing arts in the three palaces are a concrete step of the local community in facing the development of tourist industry.

The emergence of the new concept is to fulfill the fact that the tourist industry needs tradition-based performing arts without making any conflict. As stated in the theory of structuration, that is, a “structural duality” from Giddens, a new structure in an existing structure does not only “limit” but also “enable”. It means that the structure of the newly-packaged of Bali tourism performing arts in the Balinese performing arts “enable” to fulfill the gap of the needs of the tourist industry without causing damaging the existing art and cultural structure.

Although the members of art *sekas* (groups) in the newly-packaged of Bali tourist performing arts have various

professions, the tolerance among them can make a mechanical solidarity. This causes them as well as the society to keep committed in facing seriously the development of the tourist industry and to anticipate and conserve the authentic culture in order to avoid the practice of selling it as a tourist commodity.

In terms of the relation they hold with the tourist industry, there is a variation among the palaces. Mengwi Palace which seems to keep the quality of performance holds cooperation with some art *sekas* from inside and outside the Mengwi village. The reason is that in creating quality performances which are in accordance with what is needed, Mengwi Palace very frequently conducts performances by inviting *sekas* from outside the village. While Anyar Kerambitan Palace conducts the performing arts with their own concept and only invites *sekas* from the village. The palace never invites *sekas* from outside the village. Banyuning Bongkasa Palace is passive. In creating the performing arts, the travel bureaus are made to be free to choose themselves the types of performances they want so that the performances can satisfy the tourists.

Economically, the palaces gain profits from renting places and selling foods for the travel bureaus. The art *sekas* can earn fee from the performances which is distributed every Galungan day, after a 10% donation for the *banjar*. Each palace generally involves the members of *banjar*, both male and female, as supporting forces in every performance. From what they support, they get a salary according to the role they play.

The findings in this study show that there has been a change in the concept of presenting the performing arts in the context of tourism, that is, the concept of “Bali Tourist Performing Arts” which simply presents only one performing art (structural) has changed into the concept of “newly-packaged Bali tourist performing arts” (poststructural) which packages various components of Balinese traditional arts such as various types of performing arts and ritual processions which are intentionally designed as a large scale tourist performing art viewed from the material, the space, and the duration of the performance, which is always attached to the dinner program and is continuously presented (poststructural) from the

beginning to the end of the program making the duration of the presentation really long and not constant based on the time when groups of tourists come for the dinner program.

CONCLUSION

The Newly-Packaged Bali Tourist Performing Arts refer to the concept of a new presentation of the Bali tourist performing arts which combine some components of Balinese culture such as various types of performing arts and ritual processions which are intentionally designed into one large scale tourist performing art viewed from the material, the space and the duration of the presentation. Although in the performance performed there are not any new components, the concept and the way in which it is presented is “new” and is different from the general ones. The researcher calls it “Newly-Packaged Bali Tourist Performing Art”.

The appearance of the Newly-Packaged Bali Tourist Performing Arts at the three palaces has resulted in the emergence of various forms of new creation or innovation of arts. This has been made to exist by the opportunities

resulting from the tourist industry in the villages where the palaces are located. The creation of the new model of performing arts has enriched the Balinese performing arts, making it possible to combine them with the wider interests of the community, such as cultural tourism, economics, and the palaces' prestige as the centers for the traditional arts, and to give meaningfulness to the existence of traditional elites of the palaces in a modern social intercourse.

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