



Spiritual Commodification Discourse of Kanda Pat in Bali Healing Tourism

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Abstract

The phenomenon of Kanda Pat's spiritual commodification in Bali tourism healing is an interesting thing to look at. On the one hand, Kanda Pat in Balinese society is still a local belief, but there is also a brand that is used as a modern spiritual healing brand. The purpose of this study is to reveal the occurrence of commodification, the form of commodification, and its implications. The approach used in this study is the study of culture with a theoretical foundation based on a critical paradigm. This study reveals the causal phenomena of spiritual commodification, namely commodification requires changes in merchandise of commodities through the packaging of spiritual elements with high image values. The form of spiritual commodification includes all forms of spiritual means and practices that are packaged in such a way as to be of economic value, and in particular in this study, the spiritual Kanda Pat. The implication of Kanda Pat's spiritual commodification is the strengthening of Kanda Pat's spiritual existence, spiritual healing service competition, reproduction of local spiritual discourse, and the trend of spirituality in Bali as an international tourist destination.

Keywords: *Commodification; Spiritual; Kanda Pat; Bali Healing Tourism*

Introduction

Commodification is related to how the process of transformation of goods and services and their use value into a commodity that has an exchange rate on the market. In this case, the spiritual of *Kanda Pat*, which is part of Balinese religious activities, is a brand or product that can be exchanged and has economic value. The existence of a local response or adaptation to the globalization uniformity project in cultural tourism, the response makes the spiritual *Kanda Pat* glocalization, as a local scientific genius that began to globalize. The modernity of Balinese society began to show the social and cultural order of the people, which moved without control in all directions and seemed to destroy all its obstacles (Giddens, in Ritzer and Goodman, 2005: 552). This phenomenon is not only related to the movement of ideology, popular culture, and lifestyle but also other movements (Ritzer, 2012: 591).

According to Corrigan (1998), in the era of the capitalist world as it is today, everything in the form of goods and services has a commodity value so it must be packaged as best as possible so that it is of high value. The emergence of popular culture that emphasizes aspects of commercialization and commodification changes religious values into products that can be sold in the market. Commodification is not intended to produce new religious or spiritual forms and movements that are contrary to previous religious beliefs and practices, but commodification will position religion as an item through which the spiritual function of religion becomes a commodity worthy of consumption in society (Kitiarsa, 2008; Fealy & White, 2008). The phenomenon of spiritual healing in tourism in Bali is one form of the commodification of religious values that are packaged in a spiritual brand by practitioners like *Balian* or other clergy. The purpose and objective of this research is to uncover the fact of the commodification, the form of commodification, and the implications of the spiritual healing commodification of *Kanda Pat*. Spiritual healing with the *Kanda Pat* method has many advantages, apart from being a local culture it has become a spiritual trend in Bali tourism, some of them see the phenomenon of *Kanda Pat's* spiritual healing practices in Denpasar and Ubud as business opportunities. Based on data in the field there are various spiritual healing in Bali, one of which uses the *Kanda Pat* method. This phenomenon shows that functional maintenance of spiritual culture in Balinese society in the midst of global currents still exists because it is functional. If a cultural element is no longer functional for its supporters, then it will disappear by itself (Malinowski, in Turner and Maryanski, 2010). In this case, what is meant is the practice of Balinese spiritual culture in the form of religious awareness transforming the contestation of values and symbols of diversity manifested and actualized in the public domain (Ibrahim, 2011: 162).

The phenomenon of the spiritual commodification of *Kanda Pat* in healing tours in Bali especially in the tourist areas is seen as interesting as a theme of cultural studies. In addition, the data shows that the interest and enthusiasm of tourists to pursue *Kanda Pat's* spiritual practice. The focus of this study is to understand and explain the practice of *Kanda Pat's* spiritual commodification and its implications in the cities of Denpasar and Ubud. The results of this study are also expected to arouse the spirit of indigenous culture as a local identity towards modernity, and increase social awareness to face the future of the world of civilization.

Concept and Theory

In this study, there are three concepts that are operationalized, namely Spiritual Commodification, *Kanda Pat*, and Bali Healing Tourism. Spiritual Commodification consists of 'Commodification' and 'Spiritual'. In the view of Vincent Mosco (2009: 30) what is meant by commodification is the process of transforming use values into exchange rates. In this case, Vincent holds that commodities are no longer determined based on needs but rather are emphasized on what aspects can be sold in the market. Meanwhile, spiritual can be explained in many ways and can be distinguished from religiosity. Sinnott, 1998 in Cartwright, 2001, states religiosity more reflects the practice of individual obedience to orders from outside and is closely related to certain faith traditions, while spiritual is more than inner experience, its relationship with the Almighty and the Creator, depending on the beliefs or beliefs held by individual. In this study, the commodification of spirituality is the transformation of spiritual use values as a way of life and a source of normative values based on divine beliefs into exchange rates, using these functions are adapted to human needs for religion.

Kanda Pat comes from the word *kanda* which means brother, speech, advice, story, behavior, supernatural powers, and propriety, while the word *pat* has a meaning of four. *Kanda Pat* in the context of the Balinese belief system can be interpreted as a gentle brother who always accompanies humans when born into the world. In this case, it is the power of *Hyang Widhi* who always accompanies human spirits from the form of an embryo to birth and death. The existence of *Kanda Pat* in Bali can be stated as an ideological form of "valuable" cultural knowledge. That is why the Balinese really want a balance

between the human body (*Bhuana Alit*) and the universe (*Bhuana Agung*) in order to create harmony (Kanduk, 2018: 12) in this understanding, that the human body is formed from *Panca Mahabhuta* which is taken entirely from nature by the creator. Thus, according to Geertz (1973: 112), culture is not merely a collection of ideas, systems, languages, social organizations, arts, or artifacts and its truth is believed by a group of people or a particular society.

Healing Tourism consists of two words, namely tourism and healing, tourism is a travel activity carried out by individuals or groups visiting a place and aiming for recreation, personal development, or to study the uniqueness of a tourist attraction that is visited in a temporary time. While healing is a therapeutic design that combines natural, sensory and psychological elements. The natural element synergizes with the human senses to enjoy the beauty of the universe, as part of wellness tourism (Sutarya, 2016).

This study uses three theoretical foundations, eclectically, namely: ideological theory, social practice, and the relation of knowledge power. Ideology theory in the context of this research focuses on ritual consumers as part of a group of people who negotiate their ideology with the 'market' (dominant) ideology created by spiritual practitioners. As Marx in (Storey, 2001) explains that the reality of reality or false consciousness. It is not consciousness that determines the human condition, but social conditions which determine human consciousness. Ideology deals with major themes, such as word views and belief systems that apply in society. The theory of social practice put forward by Bourdieu (2010; Harker, et al., 1999) in the generative formula "(Habitus x Capital) + field = Practice". The theory of the relationship between power and knowledge according to Foucault (in Carette, (ed.), 1999; Barker, 2005; Ritzer and Goodman, 2005), that every knowledge implies the power within it is channeled through discourse. Visible phenomena or reality which is a community activity in the procession of making ritual become a popular culture, which is associated with the tourism sector.

Research Methods

This research uses a paradigm of cultural studies of the ethnographic approach, namely entering the activities of Balinese clergy individually and in groups in several spiritual places under study, especially in Denpasar and Ubud. Data was collected by observation, in-depth interviews, and document studies. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and verification phases, which were presented in descriptive narrative.

Results and Discussion

Commodification of *Kanda Pat* as a spiritual healing becomes a kind of new tourism package in Bali tourism. In this case, the *Kanda Pat* commodification is a process of changing commodities that were originally valued as spiritual and religious values into commodities with other values. The occurrence of commodification is generally motivated by a variety of living motives, these motives include social, political, and economic motives. Facts on the ground are related to the practice of spiritual commodification based on ideology which is also a motive for life, such as social motives, and economic motives. Commodification generally occurs because of the process of capitalism that rules the world as we know it with globalization. Global influence factors in the form of tourism in Bali are the background of the occurrence of several spiritual commodification in Bali, one of which is the spiritual commodification of *Kanda Pat*. This can be seen where tourism as part of capitalism has entered and spread and dominates various aspects of Balinese life. The process of commodification, transformed the spiritual value of *Kanda Pat* into a brand of spiritual tourism offered to tourists in Balinese cultural tourism.

Kanda Pat's spiritual commodification offered to tourists in the form of spiritual practices are: 1) *Bayuh Oton* as one's personal routine spiritual service; 2) *Ruwatan* as self-cleaning; 3) Predictions of birth and future signs, and 4) therapeutic process consisting / healing in the form of channeling inner energy to provide energy in the form of spiritual spirit, prescribing herbal medicines and the like according to the patient's condition. Common herbal ingredients given are betel leaves, *moringa* leaves. Receive the last is to make a prayer guide to restart one's spiritual immunity. In this procession a ceremony is required in the form of offerings. Means of rites as completeness in the procession of the practice being carried out are adjusted to the level of practice of the *Kanda Pat*. In adjusting between practices with certain facilities related to spiritual values called *Taksu* as the value of power in the implementation of Balinese spiritual practices. In addition, in terms of economics it also has a value in the form of a different income value for each practice. The formalization of spiritual healing practices using the *Kanda Pat* method has been packaged in such a way as to be a spiritual brand in accordance with the provisions verified by the tourism management. In addition, the construction of the discourse on legalization and formalization of spiritual healing practice methods has become part of a trending new tourism package in the development of modern tourism lately.

The spiritual commodification of *Kanda Pat* in Bali, has the following implications; 1) Strengthening the identity of *Kanda Pat*, 2) The emergence of competition between spiritual service providers, 3) spiritual uplifting especially *Kanda Pat*, whose existence as a local culture became global. 4) Become a spiritual trend in the world of tourism, as a new tourist attraction. Thus the teachings of *Kanda Pat* as a Balinese local cultural wisdom through the reproduction of spiritual healing ideology and discourse, have been transformed into new commodities in Bali tourism to reap economic benefits.

Conclusion

First, the spiritual teachings of *Kanda Pat* are spiritual teachings and traditional medical systems which are commodified into increasingly trendy local wisdom-based tourism products. This condition then pushes a traditional spiritual and medical practitioner to enter the modern power structure, which is based on bureaucratic rationality and structural differentiation. Second, cultural and tourism practitioners make *Kanda Pat's* Spiritual a spiritual healing brand in tourism in Bali. Third, Balinese spirituality as an image inherent in the lives of spiritual practitioners has been mobilized, made an instrument and negotiated for material interests. Thus, the code of ethics has turned into an asset in tourism. *Kanda Pat's* commodification has implications to strengthen *Kanda Pat's* spiritual identity as local knowledge develops into the global realm, where *balian* or clerics have positioned themselves as professionals in spiritual health services.

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