

## **MEPANTIGAN PERFORMING ARTS: A REPRESENTATION OF BALINESE TRADITIONAL WRESTLING**

I Wayan Gede Lamopia<sup>1</sup>, Riza Wulandari<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>STMIK STIKOM Bali, Indonesia

email: [1lamopia@gmail.com](mailto:1lamopia@gmail.com), [2rizawulandari@stikom-bali.ac.id](mailto:2rizawulandari@stikom-bali.ac.id).

### ABSTRACT

*Mepantigan* performing arts is a representation of cultural elements that lead to art by displaying wrestling performances. The purpose of this research is to know the tradition of *mepantigan* represented by Roland Barthes's wrestling culture. The research method used is a case study by taking data collection techniques consisting of observation, interview and visual documentation. The results of this study indicate that In *mepantigan*, the myth which is formed from the previous society in 1930 and maintained steadily generation to generation, which is called as a tradition, has the potential to maintain regional tourism, especially in Batubulan, Gianyar, Bali. Barthes's concept of wrestling culture begins with the myth used in highlighting the identity formed by individuals, groups, or communities. Cultural wrestling is interpreted with the art of performances by displaying dance arts, theater that has a certain role according to Barthes which can be associated with the *mepantigan* Bali performance art. Therefore, the tradition of *mepantigan* can be used as a form of representation of Barthes' wrestling culture.

Keywords: representation, wrestling culture, *mepantigan*.

### INTRODUCTION

Performing arts are not a new thing in Indonesia. As the times progressed, the performing arts in Indonesia grew even more, whether it is traditional performing arts or modern ones. The term "performance art" itself is adopted from the English language which is defined as the art that is shown to the audience whether it is the art of theater, music or dance (Sujarno, 2003). Umar Khayam said that Indonesian performing arts have special characteristics. He is a performing arts figure who is very flexible and kind. It is called so because the environment of society is always in a constantly changing condition. The state of Indonesia always follow the path taken by the government that control it (Kayam, 2000).

The impacts of one government are always different from those of other governments. This can be exemplified by taking the periodization of Hindu-Buddhist period, the colonial period, the democracy, the New Order, and the period of the

revolution. Sumardjo states that performing arts are activities outside of daily work activities. Art and work are separated. Art is an activity in leisure time which means activities outside of work hours earning a living. Art is a relaxing activity to relax the tension due to the hard work of earning a living. Talking about the performing arts especially traditional performing arts, there are various kinds of traditional performing arts that we have with various shapes and structures. Basically every region or society that exist in Indonesia has a distinctive art that is different from each other and developed in that area or community. If the arts are preserved, then the art can not be separated from that region or community, one of them is *mepantigan*.

*Mepantigan* is one of the art traditions in Bali Island. This tradition is located in Batubulan village, Gianyar. Representation of cultural elements of this one leads to art by displaying wrestling performances. Of the many performing arts which are developed in Batubulan Village, *mepantigan* art is one of the performances that is somewhat unique. *Mepantigan* art is a martial art that is made specifically as a tourist attraction (Arista, 2017). *Mepantigan* art is not derived from the tradition or sacred art like most tourist attractions which develop around Batubulan Village, but the art of *mepantigan* was deliberately created as tourism consumption, but not apart from the influence of Balinese art and culture.

One of the cultural features of the nation that is currently almost lost is a traditional sport. This form of sport is often played in traditional ceremonies, welcoming guests, and entertainment in primitive Indonesian societies and tribes that exist throughout Indonesia.

Various types of traditional sports that we have now are the products of many cultural diversity of the nation. They require a serious and continuous management and guidance in addition to being a sport, and can also be developed into tourism objects that will be able to lift the name of the nation in the world. Traditional sports become the attraction of tourism and entertainment which have become the peculiarities of a nation that needs to be preserved. Those distinctiveness becomes the elements of identity that distinguish Indonesia with other countries. *Mepantigan* is a traditional sport packed into performing arts. If associated with history, actually this *mepantigan* is actually a form of offering to Dewi Sri (goddess of motherland/goddess of mother) who in the Greek

culture is called the God of Venus) which initially was only performed at the Dewi Sri worship day which is adored by Hindus in Bali as a blessing giver. But over the times, *mepantigan* is then used as a martial art attraction as well as a means of entertainment for the people. Literacy on the *mepantigan* performing art is still very minimal, so the researchers will conduct a study by linking the concept of wrestling by Roland Barthes which is not only as a sport but also a performing arts.

The representation according to Stuart Hall contains two meanings, they are: First, mental representation, which is the concept of something that is in our respective heads or also called as conceptual map. This mental representation forms something abstract (Hall, 1997). Second, language representation. Language representation plays an important role in the construction of meaning. The abstract concept that exists in our heads must be translated in a common language, so that we can relate our ideas and concepts about a certain sign and symbols. The first process allows us to interpret the world by constructing a set of correspondence chains between something with our conceptual map system. In the second process, we construct a set of correspondence chains between conceptual maps and languages or symbols that serve to represent our concepts of things. The relation between something, the conceptual map, and the language/symbol is the heart of the production of meaning through language. The process of connecting these three elements together is called a representation. Thus representation is therefore the social process of representing, as well as the product of representing itself. Representation refers to the process as well as the product of the meaning of a sign. Representation is a concept used in social process of meaning through available sign systems, such as dialogue, performances, video, film, text, photography, and so on.

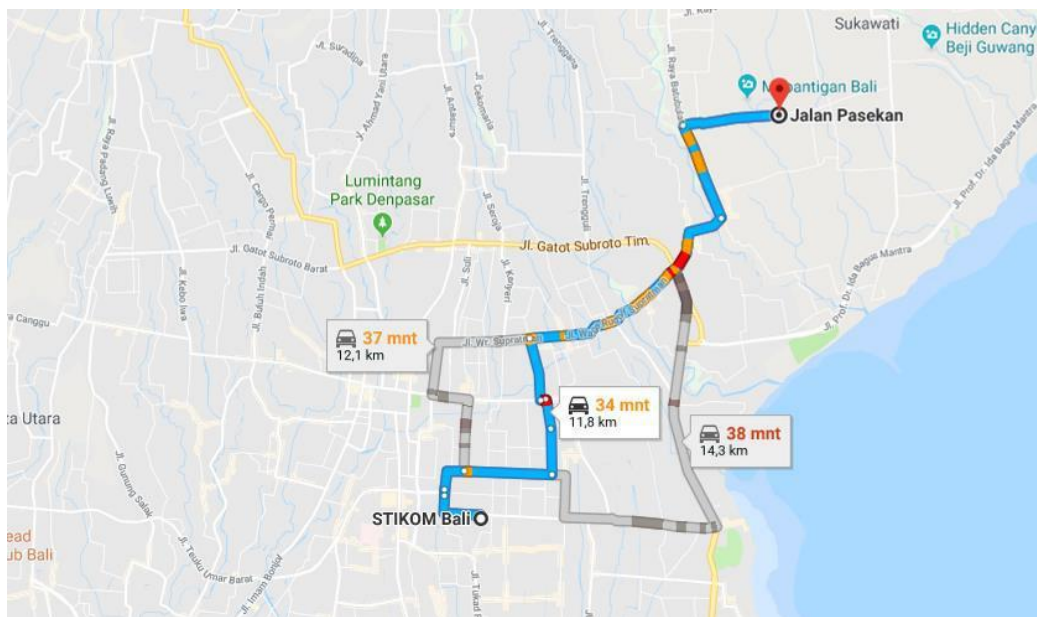
Barthes's perspective on wrestling is not about how wrestling demonstrates locking and various violent movements. Wrestling is also not a rough sport that really depends on violence. Wrestling, or it can be called the Wrestling World according to Barthes, does not fully interpret about the sport. Wrestling is a show that is focused as the entertainment for those that see it. Barthes argues that wrestling is a show of locking, punching and so on which is actually the basis of human life that is a fight between the good and the bad. The image given by wrestling is an excessive

masculinity in the arena. In Barthes's semiotic perspectives, it is a series of theaters with certain roles and certain stories are symbols of wrestling, presents dramas and tragedies which are taken from the life stories of the people. Wrestling is a representation of values that are actually quite human and common (Barthes, 2012). In Bali, especially in Batubulan, *mepantigan* becomes a tradition that is done continuously on every day basis. Many foreign and domestic tourists are eager to learn about this *mepantigan* wrestling tradition.

*Mepantigan* was founded by I Putu Witsen Widjaya. He is the elder of Padepokan "Mapantigan" located in Jalan Kepasekan Number 1, Pondok Batu Alam, Banjar Tubuh, Batubulan, Gianyar. *Mepantigan* was inspired by the persistence of Putu Witsen as a Balinese artist of martial arts who wants to have a distinctive Balinese martial arts. *Mepantigan* is a Balinese stage dance, worship and art of wrestling. An exciting and beautiful blend of acculturation of culture with the use of mud media (sometimes also on stage at the beach). According to Putu Witsen, *Mepantigan* is actually a form of offerings to Dewi Sri which was initially only staged at the worship day of Dewi Sri which was worshiped by Hindus in Bali as the giver of blessing. *Mepantigan* was originally inspired by a painter named Walter Spies. In 1930s, Walter Spies with I Wayan Limbak, a Balinese dance artist initiator of *kecak* dance, and I Putu Witsen, a martial artist, created a new martial art that took the movement of ancient Balinese pencak as its base. Traditional Balinese pencak in the form of Sitembak, Tujuh Harian, and Depok commonly referred to as Tengklung are combined with drama, Balinese dance and martial arts like taekwondo, capioera and others. From the merging of all these things, a new martial art school which is in Balinese called with the name of *Mepantigan*, which means slamming each other.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research location is located at Pasekan Street, Pondok Batu Alam No.1 Batubulan, Gianyar. That location can be reached at a distance of 12.1 km.



This research is a single case study, i.e. a research procedure focused on one characteristic. In this case it is viewed in terms of one target or location. Case studies are included in qualitative research. In qualitative research, it can be interpreted as one of the main approaches which is basically a name which has a general characteristic from a large clump of research methodology (Bungin, 2003: 19). The case study explores the problem of explanatory questions and the use of strategies from case study.

In this study researchers will use qualitative research where qualitative research is a type of research that describes a problem clearly in a study. According to Bodgan and Taylor (1975) that qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral words of people and behavior that can be observed. The report contains observations of the various events and conditions at the site of the study. The ultimate goal of qualitative research is to understand what is learned from the perspective itself from the point of view of the event itself. So in this case, qualitative research is the right choice to explain everything in depth and overall.

In this study the data is a crucial thing that must be owned by a researcher. In collecting data, some things that must be considered is to collect research data to be

processed with several techniques. The observation, depth interviews, documentation or photography are the methods chosen by the researcher to solve the problems. This research uses informan selection technique with purposive technique, this technique is done by choosing the subject in the best position to provide the required information (Silalahi, 2010: 272). The reason researchers choose purposive techniques is because researchers choose informants who are considered to know the information and problems in depth and can be trusted as a source of data. The research process also uses data triangulation as the validity of research data that has been obtained by comparing the results with different informants. Data analysis technique is used to analyze with interactive model (Interactive Mode of Analysis).

According to Miles and Huberman (1992), the stages in data analysis are data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. Primary data sources are obtained directly from informants, literature studies, author documents and existing visual data. Data reduction is the process of selection, focusing on simplification, abstraction, and transformation of coarse data arising from written records in the field. This process continues throughout the study. The process even is done before the data collection is conducted in the field. This means that data reduction has been ongoing since the researchers make decisions, conduct case selection, draft research questions, conceptual frameworks, and at the time of data collection. Data reduction persists continuously during qualitative research and is part of the analysis.

Data presentation is an organizational, information and description assembly in the form of a complete narrative to further enable the conclusion of the research to be done. This data presentation is prepared based on the topics contained in data reduction, and is presented using the sentence and language of the researcher which is in a logical and systematic arrangement of sentences, so that when it is read, it will be easy to understand. Data presentation is a narrative of things that happen or found in the field, so that researchers can do something on the analysis or other actions based on that understanding. This data presentation of the units should refer to the problem as a research question, so that the narrative presented is a description of the detailed and in-depth condition to narrate and answer any existing problems. Data in addition to narrative forms may also include matrices, drawings/schemes, network activity links, and

tables as narratives support. They are designed to assemble information on a regular basis to be easily seen and can be better understood in a more compact form (Moleong, 2002: 11).

From the beginning of the data collection, the researcher understands the meanings of things which are encountered by taking notes of the rules, patterns, statements, possible configurations, directions of cause and various propositions. Conclusions need to be verified to be sufficiently steady and truly accountable. Therefore, it is necessary to verify which is a repeating activity for making sure a fast data searching (Moleong, 2002).

## DISCUSSION

In recent decades, the tourism industry has shown growth in both income and tourist numbers, and has left broad economic, social, cultural and environmental footprints reaching almost every part of the world. The factors which underlie this growth including income and wealth growth, improvements in transportation, lifestyle changes and consumer values, increased leisure time, international openness and globalization, immigration, special events, education, information and communication technology, marketing and promotion, improvement of Public and Tourism infrastructure and so on (Matias, *et al*, 2007). The tourism sector becomes a hope for the host country and tourists from the same country. Various areas developing the tourism sector became one of the main motivations in economic improvement. Increased economic improvements can be obtained through foreign exchange earnings, revenue contribution of the government and the generation that is ready to open business opportunities in the tourism sector. If we talk about tourism, it is not only related to tourism products, but there are other things which are important factors for the successful development of the region to the tourist area.

Jovanovic (2016) states that tourism infrastructure is the basis of tourism development, as well as the basis for the utilization of the tourism resource. The importance of tourism infrastructure is reflected in the fact that it can contribute to improving the efficiency of the production and distribution of tourism services, and, in some cases, such as remote destinations, even improving the provision of tourism

services. Tourism infrastructure is the basis of tourism development, and also as a basis for the utilization of resource objectives. The importance of tourism infrastructure is reflected in the fact that it can contribute to improving the efficiency of the production and distribution of tourism services, and, in some cases, such as remote destinations, even improving the provision of tourism services. For tourists to be able to reach several tourism destinations, there must be a developed transport infrastructure, which is a prerequisite to enjoy other tourism services from the destination itself (Jovanovic, 2016).

There are various ways in which tourism products can be classified into natural tourism products by utilizing natural resources such as area, climate and setting, scenery and natural environment. Their examples are such as rural area (village), climate temperature, rain, snow, sunlight, beautiful natural landscape, hills, rocks, canyons, plains, water lakes, ponds, rivers, waterfalls, springs, flora and fauna, wildlife, beaches, islands, and scenery attractions. The second tourism product classification is the artificial tourism product which is created by humans for leisure, holiday or business such as culture (interesting archaeological sites and areas, historic buildings and Important historical monuments places, museums and art galleries, politics and education institutions, religious festivals, and traditions such as pilgrimages, fairs, festivals, art performance and crafts, dance, music, folklore. And then there is entertainment such as recreational and amusement parks, zoos and oceanariums, cinemas and theaters, nightlife, cuisine.

Bali is one of the tourist attractions that have become one of the preferred tourist destination for domestic and foreign tourists. The type of tourism in Bali is very complex, the tourists can choose any object that will be visited as a tourist attraction. One of the unique and interesting tourist attraction and frequented by foreign tourists is the art performance of *Mepantigan*. Bali Mepantigan Tour is located in Batubulan, Gianyar.

The beginning of the creation of *mepantigan* was actually initiated by a painter named Walter Spies and I Wayan Limbak, and I Putu Winset Widjaya who is a Balinese dancer. *Mepantigan* is taken from the word “mebanting” which means slamming each other. The concept of *mepantigan* performing arts is blended with martial arts movements of ancient Balinese martial arts as the base. In the past, traditional Balinese



*pencak* such as Sitembak, Depok, Tengklung, and Tujuh Harian were Balinese martial arts which combined drama with Balinese dance and is also combined with other martial arts such as capoeira, taekwondo, muay thai etc. The merger of those martial arts was eventually made as a different martial art form by incorporating elements of dance art which eventually is named *mepantigan*. The idea began in the 1930s and finally survived until now.

In the 1930s era, *mepantigan* is called Bali Ngakak which is another word of the concept of *menyama braya* which means mutual cooperation. In contextual term, *menyama braya* can be integrated with Balinese art. This art is packed interestingly and is closed with *kecak* dance. In those days, the followers of *mepantigan* were given the doctrine that the existence of mercy that was able to cultivate respect for other human beings. The ritual that took place at the time was done at night, but it evolved with a touch of innovation that now it can be done at day.



Figure 1  
Bali *Mepantigan* Art Group.



Figure 2  
Bali *Mepantigan* Wrestling Art Performance.



Figure 3  
Wrestling in a Pond of Mud.

## CLOSING: BARTHES' WRESTLING CULTURE REPRESENTATION

The definition of art is a topic that will never experience a climax in aesthetics or philosophy of art. Aesthetics which depicting art in the context of emotions and feelings are called expressiveness. Related to representation, art is the context of artificial reality and the formal school that defines art in the context of artwork structure (Sunarto, 2009). Representation is a practice in producing a culture. Culture is a very broad concept, involving the experience and interpretation of language togetherness, and other cultural codes. Representation is not just about the physical appearance or look that is visible from the outside, but it also reveals the true meaning behind it. *Mepantigan* is a mimicry of reality that depicts traditional Balinese crafts such as sitembak, tujuh harian, depok which is commonly referred to as tengklung combined with drama, Balinese dance and martial arts like taekwondo, capoeira, etc. According to Barthes, the culture of wrestling is a show with a locking style, hitting which is actually the basic concept of human life where there is a fight between good and evil. The image displayed in the wrestling culture is a picture of excessive masculinity in one arena. Wrestling can be represented through the performing arts with certain roles.

The meaning applied to the performing arts of Mepatigan is a tribute to Dewi Sri (Goddess of Prosperity of the Farmers) or can be called as the Goddess of Rice which is a form of gratitude for the blessing that has been experienced by the farmers. The application of the Balinese art of *mepantigan* itself was initiated as a cultural performances by incorporating Balinese dance and wrestling elements. When the performance art of *mepantigan* has been performed, it is considered as harmonization between man and mother nature which is manifested by having fun in mud. The meaning and specific symbols in the performing arts of *mepantigan* such as the first Mantigang (slamming each other) which contain the meaning of the symbols of two different forces that are opposite to each other. Secondly, Destar or Udeng with Tridatu colors are symbols of a headband with red, white, black (Brahma, Vishnu, Siva). This tri murti represents the three gods namely Lord Brahma as the creator, Lord Vishnu as the creator and the last Lord Shiva as the destroyer. The use of this cloth is also used for the alignment of Skale (the visible world) and Niskale (the invisible world). Thirdly, the puddles of rice fields which has a meaning as the place of Dewi Sri existence.

In accordance with the concept of Barthes about the culture of wrestling which is considered as a semiotic study, wrestling is a means of entertainment to the public. The connotation of the show if it has been understood by society will be a myth/mite. The depiction of social phenomena in mythology based on semiotic theory is re-adopted by de Saussure. Semiotics proofing by the presence of signifier and signified as a unified sign in linguistics. Semiotics can also be a sign of human life especially in social and culture. Mite is considered as a whole system of image and belief formed by the community in maintaining its identity (Kridalaksana, 2005).

The reflection of balinese wrestling in *mepantigan* which is a myth of the offering ceremony through the art of dance and wrestling for Dewi Sri is finally understood and done continuously to every society, visitors, tourists which eventually is made as a tradition. Players of *mepantigan* has a role played in performing arts, this is in line with the concept of wrestling in the perspective of Barthes' semiotic that in carrying out wrestling there is a series of theater elements involved with certain roles.

Tourism actualization in an area can be done by playing the existence of myths and traditions. In *mepantigan*, a myth was formed from a previous society in 1930 and preserved steadily from generation to generation which is called tradition has the potential to sustain regional tourism especially in Batubulan Gianyar. Barthes's concept of wrestling culture begins with the myth/myth used in highlighting the identity formed by individuals, groups, or communities. Cultural wrestling which is interpreted with the art of performances by displaying dance, theater that has a certain role according to Barthes can be associated with the *mepantigan* performance art. From that exposure, it can be concluded that the tradition of *mepantigan* can be used as a form of representation of Barthes' wrestling culture.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arista, Olieq *et al.* 2017. "Pengelolaan Seni *Mepantigan* Sebagai Atraksi Wisata di Desa Batubulan Kabupaten Gianyar". *Jurnal Penelitian Agama Hindu Institut Hindu Dharma Negeri Denpasar*.
- Barthes, Roland. 2012. *Elemen-elemen Semiologi*. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.
- Bungin, Burhan. 2003. *Analisis Data Penelitian Kualitatif*. Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada.

- Hall, Stuart. 1997. *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage Publications.
- Jovanovic, Sonja. 2016. "Infrastructure as Important Determinant of Tourism Development in the Countries of Southeast Europe". *Ecoforum Journal*, Vol. 5, No.1.
- Kayam, Umar. 2000. "Seni Pertunjukan Kita", *Global/Lokal Jurnal Seni Pertunjukan Indonesia*. Bandung: MSPI.
- Kridalaksana, Harimurti. 2005. *Mongin-Ferdinand de Saussure*. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia.
- Matias, A; Nijkamp, P; Neto, P (eds). 2007. *Advances in Modern Tourism Research: Economic Perspectives*. Heidleberg: Physica-Verlag.
- Miles, Matthew B; Huberman, Michael A. 1992. *Analisis Data Kualitatif*. Jakarta: UII Press.
- Moleong, Lexy J. 2002. *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Silalahi, Ulber. 2010. *Metode Penelitian Sosial*. Bandung: Refika Aditama: Araska.
- Sujarno, *et al*, 2003. *Seni Pertunjukan Tradisional, Nilai, Fungsi dan Tantangannya*. Yogyakarta: Kementerian Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata.
- Sunarto. 2009. *Televisi, Kekerasan, dan Perempuan*. Jakarta: Kompas.