THE MEANING OF BARIS KRARAS DANCE PERFORMANCE IN THE GLOBAL ERA: CASE STUDY IN MENGWI VILLAGE, BADUNG REGENCY, BALI PROVINCE

Ni Made Ruastiti  
Faculty of Performing Arts, Indonesian Art Institute Denpasar  
<maderuastiti@isi-dps.ac.id>

Abstract

Baris Kraras is a ceremonial dance performed by a male dancer dressed in a kraras costume made from dried banana leaf and accompanied by kidung religious chants during the Aci Tulak Tunggul ceremony at the Taman Ayun Temple in Mengwi Village, Badung Regency. This article presents results from a study about the meaning of the dance in the global era. It aimed to address the imbalance between the assumption that advanced and modern society will be happier and more enthusiastic to preserve dances if the choreography is a beautiful, easy, low-cost presentation and the reality that this is not the case. Based on a qualitative method data, collected through interviews with dancers, stakeholders, religious leaders, traditional leaders, elders of Puri Mengwi, and local communities and documents from journals and similar previous studies, was analyzed through the lens of aesthetic theory, religious theory, and the theory of knowledge power relation. Findings show that the Baris Kraras dance is performed by a male dancer in a form without a lakon storyline. The costume consists of an awiran or sesaputan made from kraras leaves and a headdress made from banana stem leaves containing rebasan, sate lilit, and kalung urutan of pork. The dance follows a pengawit, penguncab, and pakelem structure. Until now people in the village of Mengwi still preserve the Baris Kraras dance as it is considered to contain religious meaning and social and cultural significance and local belief is still strong in regard to the myth about the essence of life that underlies this ceremonial dance.

Key words: meaning, Baris Kraras dance, Aci Tulak Tunggul ceremony, Taman Ayun Temple, Mengwi Village, Badung Regency, Bali

INTRODUCTION

Baris Kraras Dance is a ceremonial dance performed by a male dancer dressed in kraras costume (a dried banana leaf). The performance is accompanied by the religious ritual chants (kidung) in ceremony of Aci Tulak Tunggul in Taman Ayun Temple, Mengwi, Badung. This article is compiled from the results of research that aims to know and capable to understand the meaning of Kraras Dance performance in Mengwi Village, Badung, Bali on the global era.

Mengwi Village is located about 16 Kilometers at the Northwest of Denpasar city, which is on the highway route connecting Denpasar with Singaraja. The road is in front of Taman Ayun Temple, it is connecting Tabanan regency with Gianyar regency. Baris Kraras Dance is usually performed in Taman Ayun Temple, it is located precisely in the middle of the crossing point of those four cities. The local community of Mengwi Village has the religion of Hindus as the majority. It has eleven Banjars, comprising: Banjar Batu, Banjar Gambang, Banjar Pande, Banjar Munggu, Banjar Pandeian, Banjar Serangan, Banjar Peregae, Banjar Pangkung Bees, Banjar Pengiasan, Banjar Alangkajeng and Banjar Delod Bale Agung. The borders of Mengwi village are Badung regency and Tabanan regency villages. At the northern, it shares border
with Werdi Bhuwana Village; at the eastern, with Gulingan Village; at the southern, with Mengwitani Village; at the western, with Abian Tuwung Village. Mengwi Village has a tourist attraction, namely Taman Ayun Temple which is visited by many foreign tourists.

Taman Ayun Temple is surrounded by a lake that is usually used by local people to fishing and irrigating rice fields. The architecture of Taman Ayun Temple is divided into three spaces, called Tri mandala or Three spatial concept and zoning. Tri mandala consists of Utama mandala or sacred space, Madia mandala or middle space, and Nista mandala or profane space. In the main area of the mandala (Utama Mandala), there are several sacred buildings namely pelinggih-pelinggih or the shrine as the representative of all temples throughout Bali such as Pura Batur, Pura Ulun Suwi and so forth. In the middle area of the mandala (Madia Mandala) there is a representative shrine of Pura Dalem Bekak, meanwhile in the area of Nista Mandala, there are Wantilan (Balinese Pavilion), Pelinggih Siluh Resi and Pura Luhur Purnama (with 6 buildings or sacred shrine). At the northeast area of Pura Taman Ayun, there is Gedong Sari Bhatara Tengah Segara, sambiangan and pepelik. However, outside the area of Taman Ayun Temple, there are pelinggih Batu Aya and Bedugul Krama Carik Banjar-Badung. At the southwestern, across the highway, there is a water dam that is usually used as a location for mecaru and ngaturang upakara pakelem accompanied with Baris Kraras Dance.

In Bali there are many types of Baris Dance for the purpose of ceremonial (Bandem and Frederik de Boer 1973; Vickers, 1989). This is because each of the major temples in Bali has its own distinctive ritual Dance whose name is often associated with weapons or property carried by the dancers. The word Baris is many interpreted by experts and artists such as Walter Spies and Beryl de Zoete (1938) as a line or composition of soldiers. A similar opinion was also expressed by Miguel Covarubias (1972) that the word Baris could mean in a row or military troops lining up. In Bali there are 30 types of Baris Dance, such as: Tari Baris Tumbak, Tari Baris Poleng, Tari Baris Ketekok, Jago, Tari Baris Kraras, Tari Baris Pendet, Tari Baris Cina, Tari Baris Gede, Tari Baris Bajra, Tari Baris Presi, Tari Baris Omang, Tari Baris Joyor, Tari Baris Tamiang, Tari Baris Goak, Tari Baris Nuri, Tari Baris Iregan, Tari Baris Derma, Tari Baris Lutung, Tari Baris Kelempe, Tari Baris Cendekan, Tari Baris Panah, Tari Baris Jangkang, Tari Baris Gayung, Tari Baris Taruna, Tari Baris Juntal, Tari Baris Cekuntil, Tari Baris Bedil, Tari Baris Kupu-kupu, Tari Baris Cerekuak, Tari Baris Topeng, dan Tari Baris Demang. Each Baris Dance has a unique and distinctive characteristics. Generally, Baris Dance is performed by four to sixty four male dancers. Unlike Baris Kraras Dance in Mengwi Village, Badung Regency which is performed by solo male dancer.

As a ceremonial dance, Baris Kraras Dance is still preserved by local community in Mengwi village. It is performed on every Aci Tulak Tunggul ceremony once a year, precisely on every Rahina Anggara Kliwon Wuku Medangsia. Baris Kraras Dance is performed at the Taman Ayun Temple dam. It is presented with a special concept and different theme than other Balinese ritual dances. Before dancing, the male dancer of Baris Kraras dance was decorated firstly in the form of an awiran or sesaputan made of kraras leaves, dried banana leaves using a headdress made of banana stem contains rebasan, sate lilit, necklace of pork. Baris Kraras Dance is full of Hindu symbols, it is established by a variety of nayog movements, slowly moving, presented in local traditional performances. Baris Kraras Dance is accompanied by ritual chants with the theme of heroism. It can be seen from the range of motion as well as property in the form of a keris as a weapon made of pork sate lilit.

Generally, Baris Dance is performed in pairs ending by a war scene. Unlike Baris Kraras Dance which is danced solo, the dancer carrying a small keris as a weapon, which is pork satay. At the end of the show, it is performed that there is a dancer scene incised his weapon to banten caru, taking off all the clothing used to be floated off the water dam at Taman Ayun Temple.

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This article is compiled from the research result which has aim to know and able to understand the meaning of Baris Kraras Dance performance on the global era, in Mengwi village, Badung, Bali. The phenomenon is really interesting to examine because of the imbalance between assumptions and reality. In general, advanced and modern society will be more pleased and enthusiastic to maintain the performances with beautiful choreography, as well as easy to perform and has low-cost performance. However, for this study case, it does not occur in line. Although Baris Kraras Dance is performed with a very simple choreography, as well as with clothing and make-up wearing dried banana leaf and pork, but people in Mengwi Village still maintains the dance. The question is: How is Baris Kraras dance performed?; what is the meaning of the show in this global era?

The reveal of this phenomenon owns theoretical and practical urgency. Theoretically, the research result is expected to give advantage in developing the development of knowledge, specifically in term of performing art through deep analysis about Baris Kraras Dance. Practically, the research result is expected to utilized optimally as an information regarding the preservation of performing art, especially in Bali or the other regions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research utilized qualitative methods. The primary data source of this research is Baris Kraras Dance performance, the related informants selected by purposive sampling technique. Selected informants comprises dancers of Baris Kraras, the priest or pemangku, ceremonial leaders, the prominent figures, custom elders, elders of Puri Mengwi, village officials, and local communities. The addition of informants to support the data is done by using snowball sampling technique.

This study also utilizes secondary data obtained through literature studies by tracing the results of similar research that have been conducted by previous researchers. All the data that have been collected by observation, interview and literature study were analyzed using aesthetic theory, religious theory and knowledge power relation theory.

THE FORM OF BARIS KRARAS DANCE PERFORMANCE

The shaping of performing arts cannot be separated from human adaptation to the environment (Hall, 1997). The certain social and demographic values of the region plays a role in influencing the performing arts (Bandem & Frederik de Boer, 1973). Sanderson (1993) argues that the behavior of the society influenced by the ideological superstructure also affects the art form of the society. This is because superstructures like value systems, belief systems and customs are the foundations and mindset of society in practicing art (Spradley, 1972). Geertz (2004) emphasized that social culture, demography and superstructure are artistic ideologies for a society. As the formation of Baris Kraras Dance performance at Taman Ayun Temple has the nuance of Hindu at Mengwi, it reflects the natural environment, religious, social and cultural life of the community in Mengwi Village.

According to the pemangku, the ceremonial Hindu priest at Taman Ayun Temple once when the dam was built, it always experienced obstacles. Once each dam was done, the dike always collapsed. It happened repeatedly. Until then, at one time, pemangku got guidance so that the subak community make the ritual ceremony of Aci Tulak Tunggul at Taman Ayun Temple dam which is held simultaneously with piodalan jelih, a great ceremony at Taman Ayun Temple.

The ritual ceremony of Aci Tulak Tunggul is a ceremony of pakelem which uses the means of banten pemayasan Baris Kraras in the form of peras daksina, banten pengeleb terdiri dari banten
pakeling asoroh, peras daksina gede sarwa kutus meruntutan segehan agung, pengeleb bebek selem lan ayam metumpeng pitu, pala bungkah pala gantung, padi ketan, injin, jinah bolong sepa satus, pengeleb bebek selem and chicken, caru siap selem accompanied by the Baris Kraras Dance. Pakellem offerings is led by the pemangku of the Khayangan Tiga Temple and Mangku Taman Ayun kesaksian by Penglingsir Puri Mengwi was devoted to the authority of the dam at Taman Ayun Temple, Mengwi. Until now, local community of Subak in Mengwi Village performs ritual ceremony Aci Tulak Tunggul. They hope that with the implementation of the ritual, it could diminish the bad luck and they will get prosperous harvest in their agribusiness.

Baris Kraras Dance performance at Taman Ayun Mengwi Temple, Badung is presented in the form of without a play or story. It can be seen from the choreography, way of presentation, clothing and makeup and musical accompaniment of the performance. The choreography of Baris Kraras Dance performance is constructed from a variety of Bebarisan dance or Putra Gagahan dance performed conventionally by carrying the principle of balance between right and left, frontward and backward accompanied by ritual chants by local people. Baris Kraras Dancer wears a dress of awiran or sesaputan made of kraras leaves, dried banana leaves using a headdress made of banana stem contains rebasan, sate lilit, necklace of pork.

Ritual chant is presented with the performance structure such as (a) pengawit, is the beginning of the show marked by the performance of locomotive movement in the form of nayog, the slow movement; (b) penguncab, it is a locomotive movement of nayog in a faster tempo with stronger power and stronger quality of movement; (c) pakelem, is the dancer takes off the clothing which wear kraras leaf, headdress, which then washed away in empelan water at Taman Ayun Temple.

THE MEANING OF BARIS KRARAS DANCE PERFORMANCE
Meaning is part of semantics and speech (Ruastiti, 2010). Meanings can be interpreted
diverse, it is always integral to the sentence and speech of its citizens collectively. It means that the meaning as a part of life is made of the experience, tradition, history and relations of its social relations connection. The meaning is intangible, which in the social perspective, it gives more value to the society behavior. Local people in Mengwi Village is interpreting Baris Kraras Dance as part of the tradition of Aci Tulak Tunggul ceremony at Taman Ayun Temple, it has mediated the art talent of the society collectively. In deconstructivity, dance performances are an aesthetic practice mobilized by the collective beliefs of local communities (Coast, 2004; Coldiron, 2004). Baris Kraras Dance is now still preserved by the local community in Mengwi Village because they interpret the dance as a ritual dance of Aci Tulak Tunggul. Through the order of ceremonies which is involving the power relations, they rearrange their social structure for the sake of the collective purpose. That construction process has an impact towards the formation of a collective positive image of the local community in Mengwi Village to enforce the harmony and social control in the village. Religious activity can foster the respect and discipline of society in creating harmony for a sense of unity (de Boer, 1996).

Baris Kraras Dance performance embodies aesthetic meaning. The aesthetics of Baris Kraras Dance performance can be understood through symbols expressed by the perpetrators either through the range of motion, the clothing and makeup or the properties worn. The aesthetic meaning of a performance can be realized if between motion and its accompaniment is balanced and proportional (Tenzer, 1991). The aesthetic meaning of Baris Kraras Dance can also be seen from the make-up and clothing with dominantly in brown. The brown color contains natural meanings of nature (Geertz, 1994). The aesthetic meaning of Baris Kraras Dance can also be seen from the clothings, which are awiran or sesaputan made of kraras leaves, dried banana leaves. It can also be seen from the headdress, which is a stem of banana formed in cecandian containing satay and pork urutan. Everything was arranged to resemble a gelungan, the common headdress of Baris Dance.

Baris Kraras Dance performances includes the balance value, harmony expressed through the various motion, the floor pattern which is presented in a balanced composition between right and left. Harmonization between motion and hymn songs as the music accompaniment can create a peaceful atmosphere (Gold, 2004; Herbst, 1997). While the beauty of dance filled with religious symbols can be interpreted as a sacred truth (Dibia, 1985). Baris Kraras dance performance that contains motion nayog, walking slowly that can be interpreted as a form of majesty, the sanctity of the sacred offerings to God the creator of the universe.

Baris Kraras Dance Show at Taman Ayun Temple, Mengwi contains religious meaning. By observing Baris Kraras Dance performance which used awiran or sesaputan kraras leaves, old banana leaves and headdress from the banana stem can be understood that the Baris Kraras Dance is very full of religious meaning. Especially if observed from the variety of motions and musical accompaniment performances in the form of ritual chats, it boldly symbolizes the religious nuances of Hinduism. According to the elders of the village custom, it is said that the Baris Kraras Dance performed by an adult male dancer is a symbol, an interpretation the form of the ruler of the dam, Bhuta Kala being offered the offerings such as banten pakelem and caru.

Baris Kraras dance that is interpreted as a manifest of bhuta kala used a headdress with the shape of cecandian, a triangle like headdress of Baris Tunggal Dance which contains rebasan, satay lilil, necklace of pork and carrying a satay weapon. In the meantime, the kraras leaf is interpreted as a dirty and creepy shape of Bhuta Kala. Baris Kraras Dance displays the aesthetic elements of religious nuance, it is performed harmoniously in the range of motion with the accompaniment of musical performances. The aesthetics of Hinduism displayed by Baris Kraras dance is expressed harmoniously with the musical accompaniment. The aesthetics of Baris Kraras Dance has a distinctive, Balinese cultural identity.
People in Mengwi Village, Badung decided Pura Khayangan Tiga as the state power, central to religious power. Natural environment as palemahan (region) for Mengwi villagers, Badung is believed to have supernatural powers to free itself from anxiety in its life. On the other hand, by performing Baris Kraras Dance, they believe that the natural environment will be in harmony. Nature is believed to have power in giving grace and disaster. Grace or disaster in the world is believed inseparable from the laws of nature. The laws of nature work in managing the cycle of the universe.

Each phase of the natural cycle is believed to be determined by the Almighty Ida Sang Hyang Widhi. The natural energy controlled by the gods is believed to have the effect of supernatural powers towards the salvation and fortune of human life. The miracle of the natural energy that makes mankind amazed. Just like the people of Mengwi Village, Badung, who until now worshiped his presence through the ceremonial symbols that accompanied by the performance of Baris Kraras Dance. The religious practice which could not be separated from supernatural powers continues peacefully because it has been interpreted sacred since that time of its ancestors.

Baris Kraras Dance performance in Taman Ayun Mengwi Temple, Badung until now has been capable to increase the understanding of the people with the existence of Ida Sang Hyang Widhi. The local people believe that the religious practice as a source of happiness and supernatural powers. God is believed to have a high value associated with the essence of life (Dibia and Ballinger, 2004). Baris Kraras dance performance performed regularly and continuously is believed to bring happiness, the inner comfort of the local community in Mengwi Village. It means that supernatural powers can be achieved through religious devotion. On religious perspective, the moment of the ceremony for the local community plays a role to re-intensify the dependence between humans with Ida Sang Hyang Widhi. In that context, every citizen in Mengwi Village can maintain the unity of their kinship through the Baris Kraras Dance performance at Taman Ayun Temple.

The essence of traditional community life is obedient towards its belief (Nasikun, 2000). Theoretically, ritual is a very difficult expression of religious faith in society (Covarubias 1972). Since the religious significance is very strong, Baris Kraras Dance is imprinted on the community, thus Baris Kraras dance is still alive in the synergy of the local community. It is reflected in the expression of the related parties who are always serious, full of joy to inherit the cultural tradition. The strength of religious meaning is reflected in the expression and attitude of the community in sustaining its tradition (Slattum & Schraub, 2003).

The meaning of Baris Kraras Dance at Taman Ayun Mengwi Temple can be social. It can be observed from the activities of the community at the performance of the ritual ceremony of Aci Tulak Tunggul. Aci Tulak Tunggul is always equipped with the performance of Baris Kraras Dance at Taman Ayun Temple dam. The local community always cultivate the aspect of togetherness. They feel lighter and easier to perform the ceremony if they work together. All the religious mechanisms underlying the ceremony are done in a mutual way. They work hand in hand from starting up to performing the rituals in order to maintain the balance of the natural environment where they live. The empowerment of the society that has been represented in the people’s interest to perform Baris Kraras dance in a serious way. It has an impact on the appearance of order, the beauty of the ceremony. It shows the religious social spirit that underlies the performance of Baris Kraras Dance.

The meaning of social solidarity seems very strong in the performance of Baris Kraras Dance. It can be seen from the involvement of intercitizen relations in maintaining harmony in togetherness. It is necessary to solve their increasingly complex life problems. Therefore, people often use the performing arts as a medium of strengthening the bond of social
relations (Ruastiti, 2005, Hobart, 2007). The meaning of solidarity means that all citizens are
together and supporting each other in dedicating Baris Kraras Dance. This is done by all local community in Mengwi village to do voluntary social activities, namely ngayah to prepare everything associated with the ceremony. The ngayah activities are still relevant in fostering the integration, communication, and unity of understanding in order to reduce the collective burden and village security. Through arts, people can preserve their traditions and culture (Fischer & Cooper, 1998; Hitchcock and Norris, 1995).

The performance of Baris Kraras Dance has cultural meaning. This means that Mengwi Local Community who always carry out the ritual ceremony of Aci Tulak Tunggul that are equipped with Baris Kraras Dance performed at the dam of Taman Ayun Mengwi indirectly has implications for the preservation of culture. Culture can be preserved through the process of internalization, socialization and enculturation (Saderson, 1993). People in Mengwi Village inherits the cultural values through Baris Kraras Dance. Their togetherness in continuing the values of adi luhung is within the concept of Baris Kraras Dance performance. It is an important cultural element that can give identity, characteristic and sense of pride as Mengwi local people. They assume that it is the act of art which is the most relevant to preserve as well as maintain the social unity in society.

The selected people as dancers of Baris Kraras Dance or involved in ceremonial rituals were proud of being rated as distinguished citizens. The dancer of Baris Kraras Dance feels to be a preferred citizen because they got trust appointed as a seat of bhuta kala which is the ruler of the dam at Taman Ayun Temple. Anyone would be proud if given the opportunity to present his abilities in front of the audience (Hobart, 1987; Hobart, 2002; Ruastiti, 2005). The continuation of cultural values through Baris Kraras Dance performance, not only performed by local community, but also by the dance as the performance actor. Various cultural components contained in Baris Kraras Dance performance is indirectly sustainable because it is continuously continued by local people. Cultural traditions that are deemed to have a noble value will always be used by the community to organize their lives (Savarese, 2001; Coldiron, 2004; Coast, 2004).

Observing the cultural activities taught to the dancers, it seems that during that process, they received ethical education in the form of courtesy in the community. It is very supportive towards the cultural life in Mengwi Village. Every element of culture has a certain meaning that is very influential for the values and norms in the certain community. Whilst they were involved in Baris Kraras Dance performance, the dancers especially indirectly obtained an informal education about religion, art and culture. The continuity of Baris Kraras Dance which is performed in the context of the ritual ceremony of Aci Tulak Tunggul in Taman Ayun Temple is indirectly becoming a strategy of forwarding cultural values.

Through the performance, a noble cultural tradition will always be used by the community in organizing their lives (Hobart, 2007, Picard, 1996; Ruastiti, 2005). The local community in Mengwi Village toward Baris Kraras dance is considered very beneficial for the fulfillment of their comfort life. By maintaining Baris Kraras dance, all citizens have participated in continuing local cultural values sustainably to their future generations. Cultural values are the giver of the community’s identity (Bandem and de Boer, 1995. Vickers, 1989). Thus the dance performances of Baris Kraras dance performed by local villagers are very meaningful in the enculturation of culture in Mengwi Village.

CONCLUSION

According to the description previously, it can be concluded that Baris Kraras dance is a
ceremonial dance presented in the form of without a play by a male dancer accompanied by ritual chants of subak residents in Mengwi village. It can be observed from the choreography, way of presentation, clothing, makeup and musical accompaniment performances. Choreography of Baris Kraras dance performance is constructed from a variety of traditional Balinese dance bebarisan or Putra Gagahan dance performed conventionally. Baris Kraras Dancer performed by a male dancer wearing a dress of awiran or sesaputan made of kraras leaves, dried banana leaves using a headdress made of banana stem contains rebasan, sate lilit, necklace of pork. Baris Kraras Dance accompanied by ritual chant is presented with the performance structure such as: pengawit, penguncab, pakelem, the dancer takes off the clothing which wear kraras leaf, headdress, which then washed away in empelan water.

Until now, local people in Mengwi Village, Badung, Bali still maintain the Baris Kraras Dance because it is considered owning the meaning of religious, social, and culture for the local community. Since the local belief is strong towards the myths about the essence of life that underlies that ceremonial dance, therefore until now, They still preserve Baris Kraras Dance.

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