

Literary Tourism: Maintaining Balinese Identity in '*Host-Guest*' Interaction in Short Stories by Balinese Writers

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The development of tourism in Bali with strong socio-cultural influences has inspired Balinese writers to create literary works about the interaction between Balinese people (hosts) and tourists (guests), both in Indonesian and Balinese language. This study examines how Balinese authors maintain Balinese identity in *host-guest* interactions featured in short stories by Balinese writers. The main object of research is the anthology of Balinese short stories *Mekel Paris* (Madame Paris, 2012) by IBW Keniten because all short stories in this anthology contain stories of interactions between Balinese and foreigners. Data from the short stories and interviews with authors were analyzed qualitatively using a tourism literary approach, an approach that uses anthropological tourism theory of *host-guest* contact introduced by Valene Smith. The results showed that there are various forms of *host-guest* interaction expressed in the *Mekel Paris* anthology, namely harmonious, conflict, mutualistic, and transactional interactions. Although there are various forms of interaction, all of them have one goal, which is to convey the message so that the Balinese people are not carried away by foreign influences, but are firm in maintaining Balinese identity. In addition to enriching the discussion on how Balinese people maintain their identity, this article also contributes to the development of the study of tourism literature that is growing rapidly in Indonesia.

Keywords—tourism literature, host-guest interaction, Balinese literature, Balinese identity

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INTRODUCTION

In the last three years, namely since the publication of the book *Sastra Pariwisata (Literary Tourism)* (2020), the development of literary tourism studies in Indonesia has emerged rapidly. The rapid growth is marked by the emergence of literary tourism studies in the form of articles published in humanities journals that have a literary and tourism scope. In addition, there are also many seminars, undergraduate and master's theses, and dissertations that apply literary tourism approach ([Simanihuruk et al., 2022](#); [Sianturi, 2022](#); [Putra and Riska, 2022](#); [Artika, 2021](#); [Arini, Son, Bhaskara, 2021](#); [Artawan 2020](#)). Literary tourism have also emerged with a *storynomics* approach, ([Sari, 2020](#); [Sukmadewi & Dane, 2021](#)), or in studying the role of literary-based films tourism promotion ([Pracintya et al., 2022a](#); [Pracintya et al., 2022b](#)).

The book *Literary Tourism* ([Anoegrajekti, Surono, Putra \[Eds\], 2020](#)), was published as a realization of the ideas of the participants of the HISKI (Association of Literary Scholars) national meeting in Aceh in July 2019. The book contained nearly 30 articles written by literary researchers from all over Indonesia. Beside considering it as an important milestone in the development of new literary approach, the book also can be seen as a strong spur to the lively study of literary tourism in Indonesia. In addition, the significantly large in number researchers interested in literature and in tourism are a great potential that makes literary tourism will continue to be lively. Up until recently, research on literary tourism focus on various topics including literary places such as author houses promoted as tourist attractions ([Andiani et al. 2014](#)), the role of legends in promoting tourism attractions ([Anoegrajekti & Imawati, 2020](#); [Ardian, 2021](#); [Azizurrohman, 2022](#)), on tourist attraction based on literary place of literary works ([Endriani, 2015](#); [Diamond, 202](#); [Isnaini et al., 2022](#); [Kompas.com, 2008](#)), on legacy of literary figures or authors ([Putra, 2019a](#)), and on travel account across countries ([Eri Dia, 2013](#)).

The pioneering study of literary tourism emerged in the West in the transition of the 2000s, as can be seen from Melton's book *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism* (2000), and the emergence of two volumes edited by Watson *The Literary Tourist Readers and Places in Romantic & Victorian Britain* (2006) and *Literary Tourism and Nineteenth-Century Culture* (2009). These two books were followed by Jenkins & Lund's (eds.) entitled *Literary tourism: Theories, practice, and case studies* (2019). These books and other journal articles ([Herbert 1996; 200](#); [Hoppen et](#)

[al., 2014](#)) are quoted by Indonesian researchers suggested that the spirit of developing literary tourism studies in Indonesia has been inspired by these books.

The initial interest in the study of literary tourism in Indonesia only began in the early 2010s, as can be seen from Bahtiar's (2014) paper entitled "Literary Tourism: Introducing Indonesian Literature with Tourism to World Literature", included in the proceedings of the seminar "Language and Literature in the Age of Technology" held by IKIP University Mataram ([Nurmawati \(ed\), 2014](#)). Bahtiar proposed the need to promote the richness of Indonesian literature in three ways, namely translating Indonesian literary works into international languages, conducting literary festivals, and retracing places popularized by literary works. For the latter, he mentioned the success of the novel *Laskar Pelangi* ([Hirata, 2005](#)) which promoted the beauty of Belitung Island ([Liputan6.com. 2017](#)). Three years after the publication of the proceedings of IKIP Universitas Mataram, "The Role of Language, Literature, and Culture in Tourism Development" were published by the Diploma 3 English Language Study Program and S1 English Literature, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Diponegoro University in the form of proceeding ([Subiyanto, 2017](#)). This proceedings contain many papers on the study of tourism literature as an indication of growing interest in the object of study with this new approach.

The rapid growth of literary tourism studies is due to the undeniable fact of the close reciprocal relationship between literature and tourism. The reciprocal relationship can be seen in at least three forms (Putra, 2019). First, many literary works inspired by the attractiveness of tourist attraction or tourism destinations, such as the novel *Eat Pray Love* (2006) by Elizabeth Gilbert which was inspired by the natural beauty of Italy, India, and Bali ([Time.com. 2010](#)). There are many examples of Indonesian literature, including, Andrea Hirata's novel *Laskar Pelangi* (2008) inspired by the natural beauty of Belitung landscape and beaches which beauty gained great expose in the film under the same title ([Bahtiar, 2014](#)); Sunaryono Basuki's novel *Aku Cinta Lovina* (2018), which depicts a love story between Balinese people and British inspired by the beauty of Lovina Beach which used as its story setting ([Artawan 2020](#); [Arini et al., 2021](#); [Sunaryono 2017](#)). Another example is Gde Aryantha Soethama's novelette *Turis Amerika Dibunuh di Ubud* (*American Woman Murdered in Ubud*, 2002) by inspired by cultral and natural attraction of Bali especially Sanur and Ubud ([Putra, 2008](#); [2011](#)).

In line with the continuous growth of Bali tourism, the number of tourism-inspired literary works also continues to emerge, either in the form of short stories, poems, or novels / novelettes. Literary works of Balinese authors that take the theme of tourism appeared recurrently. In their works, readers are presented with interesting stories of interactions between Balinese and Westerners. In the study of tourism anthropology, the relationship between guest and host is termed host and guest interaction (Smith, 1989; Aramberri, 2001; Gillespie, 2006). *Host-guest* is one of the key concepts in the study of interactions between visitors and local people in a variety of contexts, such as culture, service, friendship, or business. Zheng & Zhang (2023) use the concept of *host-guest* as an analytical tool in AirBnB's accommodation service business and hospitality, while Zhang & Xu (2023) apply the concept in the context of ethnic tourism with the aim of evaluating whether it is true that in host and guest interactions, the impact will be felt more by the host as a host than by the guest.

This article focuses on the interaction between hosts and guests as depicted in literary works by Balinese writers. There are many literary works that portray the interaction between Balinese and Westerners, but for this study, it selected the anthology of short stories *Mekel Paris* (Madame Paris, 2012) by IBW Widiassa Keniten, as the main object of the study, with following reasons. First, all 12 short stories in this anthology uniquely and specifically depict the story of interactions between Balinese and Westerners or *host-guests*. Second, this short story anthology received the Rancage Literature Prize in 2012/2013 so it is interesting to explore its advantages. Third, the short stories in this anthology present stories about Balinese relationships with Westerners until they marry, as opposed to most others, especially those published before 2012 (Putra 2008; 2011).

Stories depicting the relationship between Balinese and Westerners have appeared for a long time in the literary works of Balinese authors that had been subject of studies by Putra (2008; 2011). At least such works were published in the late 1960s, when signs of mass tourism appeared in Bali (Vickers 2011; Picard 1996), as can be read from "Sahabatku Han Schmitter" (My Friend Han Schmitter 1969) by Nyoman Rasta Sindhu. In the years that followed, Balinese and Western themes continued to emerge repeatedly. Therefore, it is interesting to compare these stories with similar stories that describe the relationship between Balinese and Westerners or *host-guests* (Putra 2008; 2011). If there are differences and similarities, the reasons need to be

sought or interpreted. In addition to enriching the understanding of the discourse of the relationship between host and guest in the context of Bali tourism through literature, this research also contributes to enliven the growth of tourism literature.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative study focused on the study of tourism phenomena, especially the form and meaning of *host and guest* interactions as represented in literary works written in Balinese writers. As stated previously, the main data is the Balinese short story anthology *Mekel Paris* (2012) by IBW Widiassa Keniten, which contains short stories all of which individually depicts interactions between Balinese and Westerners, or *host-guests*.

Data collection techniques use in this studies are library or desk research and interviews. Desk research was conducted to find literary works of Balinese writers that portray the relationship between Balinese and Westerners, while interviews were conducted to obtain views, opinions, opinions from sources who have knowledge of the relationship between literature and tourism. The interview was conducted with the author of *Mekel Paris* short story anthology, IBW Widiassa Keniten. In interviews, information related to the creative process was explored, but did not include to ask question related to the purpose of his story because this is a space for interpretation from researchers. Data analyses by literary tourism approach, especially *host-guest* interaction. The result of analysis than compared to the study previously done to literary works had published previously (Putra, 2008; 2011).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section outlines three main points that are interrelated. First, the biography and creative process of IBW Widiassa Keniten, the author of the short story collection *Mekel Paris* (2012). This biography is useful as a background to understand the creativity and creative process of the author that is relevant to the object of the work studied. Second, the discussion of *host-guest* interaction forms in *Mekel Paris* short story anthology. Third, the meaning of *host-guest interaction* in the *Mekel Paris* short stories anthology is carried out by linking with short stories by other writers to gain cultural awareness of Balinese authors in general.

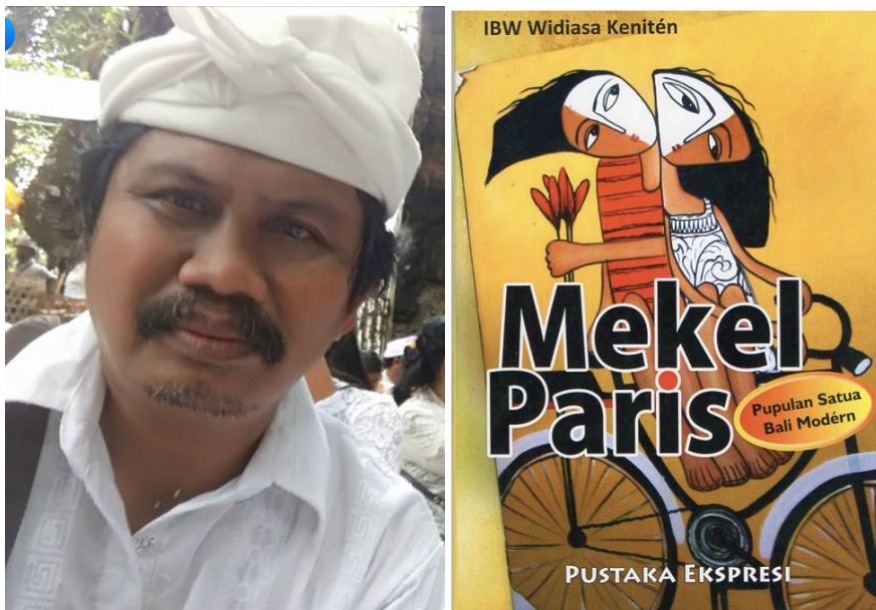
Literary tourism offers four fields of study, namely analysis of literary themes, literary figures and

places, literary festivals, and ecranisation or transformation of literary works like novel into film (Putra, 2019b; 2020). This study prioritizes the analysis of literary characters and literary themes, namely by examining the forms of interaction between the characters of the short story studied and providing meaning to the themes that color the interaction of story characters, namely *host and guest* interactions.

Short Story "Mekel Paris" and Author

Published in 2012, Widiassa Keniten's *Mekel Paris* contains 12 stories, 69 pages long. Short stories in

this anthology were written by the author before his visit to Paris in 2014, meaning that the idea of writing them was entirely from observing the interaction of tourists with the Balinese. In 2021, this anthology was selected in a translation project to Indonesian by Balai Bahasa Bali. Through the translation of the writer Oka Rusmini, *Mekel Paris's* short stories are now present in Indonesian, meaning that the potential of readers has become wider.



IBW Widiassa Keniten and the cover of his short story collection.

The characteristics of the 12 short stories in *Mekel Paris* can at least be distinguished into the following four points. First, all short stories tell the relationship between Balinese (hosts) and Westerners (guests). Second, the stories are depicted against the background of Bali tourism development. Third, the main characters of the story for the Balinese are almost all people with *brahmin* status, while from Westerners are tourists (tourists). Fourth, the story depicts conflict but in the end most of it ends with a *happy ending*, namely the harmony of relations between Balinese and Westerners. Conflict and prejudice do exist but only slightly compared to harmonious interactions. The stories in this anthology as the name implies are indeed very short, an average of five pages. This book is published by Pustaka Ekspresi, Tabanan, Bali. The short size of the story makes the story enjoyable to read quickly.

The author Widiassa Keniten was born in Karangasem, 20 January 1967. After attending

elementary and junior high school in his home town, he continued to the State Teacher Training School (SPGN) in Klungkung Regency. After SPGN, he continued his D-3 education (graduated in 1989) and undergraduate (S-1) Study Program of Indonesian Language, Literature, and Regional Education at Undiksha Singaraja, graduating in 1997. His last higher education was postgraduate (S2) Linguistics Study Program, Udayana University Postgraduate Program, graduated with honors in 2012. Widiassa Keniten worked as a teacher, initially a teacher at SMPN 3 Abang, then in 1999 moved to SMAN 2 Amlapura, both in Karangasem.

He is one of the prolific authors of modern Balinese literature. Between the 2010s and 2020s, almost every year he published a storybook, mainly anthologies of short stories. He is an interesting figure because he pursues three types of literature, namely classical Balinese literature (Old Javanese), modern Balinese literature (Balinese), and

Indonesian literature. His interest in literature began at a young age, by first pursuing classical Balinese literature with several literary practitioners who were mostly close relatives who became *pedandas* (Hindu priests).

In 2006, Widiassa Keniten received the Rancage literary award from the Rancage Cultural Foundation, Bandung, led by writer Ajip Rosidi, with a collection of short stories *Buduh Nglawang* (A Made Man Dancing Around). His short story entitled *Lukisan Bali* (Balinese Painting) got the top five story book in Jakarta. The book *Jro Lalung Ngutah* (Jero Lalung Vomit, 2015) received the *Widya Pataka* award from the Bali Provincial Government.

Since the beginning of literary writing carrier, Widiassa Keniten has been interested in revealing stories containing Balinese local wisdom. For example, the family story "*Bekung*" (Barren) tells the story of a couple who cannot have children, but they are described as thinking that their child is actually *Tri Kaya Parisudha*, which is three good deeds according to Hinduism: thinking, saying, and doing good. This short story that expresses the values of trust in Balinese society won third place in the Balai Bahasa Bali short story competition in 1999.

As an author, Widiassa Keniten initially wrote in Indonesian, then in the Balinese language. This transition was based on a very deep love for the Balinese language. In the interview, Widiassa Keniten said that she loves Balinese very much. His love made him promise in his heart to be able to publish a collection of short stories in Balinese at least one title every year.

I can honestly say, I really love the Balinese language. In my heart, I promise to write literature in Balinese. I continue to write in Balinese because I take pride in the Balinese language. Despite this, I continue to write also in Indonesian (Interview, 5 July 2020).

Widiassa Keniten conveyed that the idea of writing short stories about foreigners, such as the relationships and experiences of foreigners when they were in Bali. There are so many interesting ideas were there because:

There were many foreigners in Bali. Many of them have contributed to Bali. Many Balinese have received outside influences. All this shows the existence of mutualism symbiosis between Balinese and foreigners. That's what

I observed in the field and wanted to put it in a short story (Interview, 5 July 2020).

In reality, many see the reciprocal relationship between Balinese and Westerners. Balinese people can accept and understand Western culture, as well as Westerners can accept and enter into Balinese culture. The influence can be seen from various forms of behavior and knowledge and culture.

Interestingly, all the stories depict the lives of foreigners, and more or less also allude to their native country. The short story 'Mekel Paris' is set in France, 'Jero Japan' is set in Japan and the short story 'Sara' is set in New Zealand, but the author has never been to the area at all. It was only in 2014, two years after *Mekel Paris* was published, that Widiassa Keniten had the opportunity to go to Europe following the Visit Program (*Benchmarking*) to Germany, then to Paris (France), Belgium, and Amsterdam (Netherlands). When writing the story before, Widiassa Keniten's knowledge only came from the books he read.

Forms of "Host-Guest" Interaction in the Anthology "Mekel Paris"

All the stories in *Mekel Paris* depict interactions between Balinese and Westerners, or in a host and guest pattern. According to Smith, since the first concept of host and guest was introduced, the concept has been widely used in case studies discussing the impact of the relationship between guest and host. Regarding its application in various case studies, the results are determined on which type of tourism the impact of the host and guest relationship is studied. Based on the type of leisure mobility carried out by tourists, Smith distinguishes five types of tourism, namely ethnic tourism, culture tourism, historical tourism, environment tourism, and recreational tourism ([Smith, 1989, pp. 5-6](#)). For example, a study of host guest relationships in ethnic tourism type will show minimal impact because the number of people who interested in this type of tourism is very small.

[Zhang & Xu \(2023\)](#) see that the power relationship between host and guest is not in the real sense but is symbolic related to two things, namely economy and culture. For him, hosts who are visited and become objects to enjoy do not always have lower power than guests who have economic advantages.

Based on close and *heuristic* reading, the 12 stories in *Mekel Paris* can be seen as ethnic tourism and cultural tourism. In both types of tourism, host and guest interactions are marked by their interests in culture and economic dimensions. There are five

forms of *host-guest* interaction that can be identified, namely: (1) conflict vs. harmony, (2) dominant vs. dominated, (3) social/friendly vs. economic, (4) mutualistic vs. individualistic, and (5) protection and exploitation. These five patterns of forms were used to analyze the form of interaction of story characters in *Mekel Paris* anthology

forms of interaction are fewer than harmonious and mutualistic relationships. However, the harmonious and mutualistic interaction described by the author as temporary because some stories describe the harmony ending in turmoil. In conflict-ridden interactions, the author describes that disharmony was caused by foreigners. The forms of interaction of each short story are mapped out in

Of the five forms of interaction, harmonious and mutualistic forms of interaction is the most often arise. Conflict, exploitative, one-sided, economic

Table 1.

Table 1. Host-Guest Interaction Forms Mekel Paris's Short Story

No	Heading	Story	Forms of Interaction
1.	Mekel Paris	A meeting between a Balinese man and a Parisian woman ended in marriage and live in Bali.	Harmonious, mutualistic,
2.	Jack Kris	The story of an American tourist married a Balinese woman who was working at a hotel. They lived in Bali owning a business called PT Jackris.	Harmonious, mutualistic internally, but conflict externally.
3.	Polèng	A Balinese man named Ida Bagus Polèng, worked as a painter, married an American tourist, Nancy, but divorced due to incompatibility about feelings and materials.	Material conflict
4.	Jro Japan	An interaction between a Balinese man and a Japanese tourist that ended in marriage, first settled in Japan, then in Bali. The Japanese character became Balinese.	Harmonious, mutualistic
5.	Made Smith	An Australian man who studied Balinese customs and culture at <i>a griya</i> and married the widow of the house. The big family disagreed, but Ida Pedanda agreed with the consideration that otherwise, their relationship was like an animal.	Conflict vs harmony
6.	Takamura	The story of a Japanese soldier who was described as cruel and forced to take control of a Balinese woman, who was also used as intelligence to capture Balinese fighters.	Dominant, exploitation
7.	John	Foreign tourists who settle in Bali, built houses, but like small children, paedophilia. At the end of the story, John was arrested by the police.	Exploitation
8.	Jro Mangku van Leiden	Dutch people who loved Balinese customs and culture then followed the initiation process into <i>jero mangku</i> . As an expert on Balinese customs and culture, he was also able to complete his doctoral education with a dissertation that praised the Balinese people's obedience in maintaining customs and culture. He was surprised when he went to Bali he saw many physical changes in Balinese architecture.	Harmony, paradox

9.	Sarah	The story of a New Zealand tourist, named Sara, who studied Balinese language and culture, then invited his teacher a Peranda Gde Angkasa to be a guest lecturer to New Zealand.	Harmony, mutualistic
10.	Van Boch	The story of a Dutch man who showed a helping attitude by establishing the Bali Sruti Foundation. At the end of the story, Dutch and Balinese characters wanted to marry Luh Sruti, whose name used as the name of their foundation.	Economical, one-sided because happy Westerners. Helping turned out to be show-off.
11.	Van Bukit	Dutch people who was on holiday in Bali and bought land in the hills to build villas and made the originally quiet village atmosphere become noisy because of guests there.	Exploitative, conflict because Westerners behave arbitrary
12.	Janet	The story of a woman from Darwin, Australia, who studied Balinese culture, wanted to become a <i>balian</i> (shaman).	Harmonious, but in a strange context that is the introduction of <i>black magic</i> .

The forms of harmonious and mutualistic interaction in the above short stories are depicted in various settings, plots, and endings. Two of the 12 stories depict the harmonious relationship between *host-guest* through marriage. However, none of these mutualistic harmonious relationships are lasting, because there are other interests that are not fulfilled in these relationships, such as the marriage of Balinese characters with Westerners who never give them offspring. In the Balinese belief system, the situation of a married couple who do not have children is considered a '*panes*' (hot) couple, which occurs because of inter-caste marriages, or different religions, or different ethnicities.

The short story "Mekel Paris" which is the title of this anthology and the short story "Jro Jepun" both depict Balinese characters with foreigners getting married. The Balinese characters were men from families with a background with *brahmin* status (the highest status in the caste level system in Bali), while the foreign figures were French and Japanese tourists respectively. These two stories were very similar in *opening*, plot, and ending, specifically this can be seen in the ending of the story of the foreign characters who both become Balinese, as was clear from the name: Mekel Paris and Jro Japan. The pronunciation of her new name after marrying a Balinese indicates that they had have a Balinese identity.

In the short story "Mekel Paris", marriage took place between a Parisian woman named Christian and a Balinese man named Ida Bagus Rai. It does not clear where exactly the two first met, at the beginning of the story it is mentioned that Ida Bagus Rai became a tour guide and often in Kuta. It can be assumed that their meeting took place in Kuta. Most parts of the

narrative tell Christina or Mekel Paris' loyalty to Balinese culture. He not only learned Balinese language to communicate, but also learned on how to make offerings. The following excerpt demonstrates that:

Mekel Paris further improved her skills, learned to speak Balinese, learned to make offerings. Talking about offerings. All of those understood the matters were not doubt to Mekel Paris' loyalty (to Bali) (2012, p.5).

Mekel Paris' pride in Balinese culture made her accepted by her family and society as a part of the family member or as a Balinese. The more closer she was accepted, the more diligently she learned everything about Bali, for example learning to sing traditional Balinese song *wargasari* and Balinese script. However, the process she had constructed her Balinese identity did not always giving her equal happiness because after three years of marriage, Mekel Paris had not pregnant yet. There was no sign of giving offspring to the coveted *grya* family that made she so sad. . According to one shaman, Mekel Paris' failure to become pregnant occurred because she performed inter-caste marriage. Her husband, Ida Bagus Rai was not suitable to marry out-caste person (ordinary person) like her. Another reason that Mekel Paris failed to had pregnancy was because during the wedding ritual there were people who harmed her spiritually (2012, p.6).

It becomes serious source of worry for Ida Bagus Rai's parent because they have no grandchildren who could continue the existence of their noble house. Ida Bagus Rai's father and mother, called him and Mekel Paris, and suggested him to marry Dayu Sastra, a brahmin woman who believed to become

an ideal couple in the context of caste system in Bali. This seems to be part of the politics of same-caste marriage. Whether Ida Bagus Rai wants to marry Dayu Sastra, was unclear, because the story ends with an open phrase reflecting the response of Ida Bagus Rai and Mekel Paris to their parent and parent in law's marriage proposal: "Ida Bagus Rai looked down. Christina was shocked"). It was difficult to capture the thoughts of both of them because neither of them said anything, the author was in a hurry to finish the story and let the story hang and allow the reader to interpret its meaning. What it seems clear here is that the depiction of harmonious relationship between host and guest overshadowed by the cloud of disharmonious.

Two things can be learned in this story, namely: (1) the author describes that foreigners love Balinese culture and if they have decided to marry they show that they act like the Balinese, such as making offerings; (2) Mixed marriages give happiness in one respect, but give sadness in another, that they cannot have children. Thus, although the idea of mixed marriages accepted in the beginning, in the end it is un acceptable because it fails to guarantee the sustainability of the brahmin family. It is not the idea of mixed marriage it is rejected but the failure of providing offspring.

In the story "Jro Japan" the harmonious and mutualistic interaction begins and lasts until the end of the story. The Japanese character not only changed his name to Jro Japan, a typical Balinese name, but agreed to become a priest, a must for a spouse to do so. Her husband's family had agreed to courtship the intermarried couple as priests in a *madiksa ceremony*, the initiation of rebirth into saints. The aim is that the Brahmin *grya* still has a priest. The ceremony itself is not depicted as taking place in the story, but the decision of the Brahmin elder to initiate his son and daughter-in-law shows the harmonious interaction between Balinese and foreigners, which was originally a host and guest relationship.

The Meaning of Host-Guest Interaction in "Mekel Paris" and Other Works

Many works of Balinese literature present stories of interaction between Balinese people and tourists. Tourists can mean Westerners who are also often referred to as *bulè*, such as with Germans, British, Americans, French, Australians, and New Zealanders; it can also mean Asians such as Japanese and Indian. For Asians, there are stories that with Japanese characters, there are no other story with Asian characters apart from this. This is likely to happen because in the world of tourism

industry, Japanese tourists visit Bali a lot, compared to tourists from other Asian countries. In the last five years, many Chinese or Chinese tourists began to come to Bali, even becoming the highest number of tourists visiting Bali during the pre-pandemic covid-19. However, in reality intermarriage between Chinese tourists and Balinese is not commoner has not become a special phenomenon, compared to intermarriage between Bali and *bulè*, commonly depicted with coffee-milk couples because of the black-and-white skin contrast.

Stories of Balinese interaction with *bulè* have begun to be written by Balinese writers since the late 1960s, as seen in the short story work of Nyoman Rasta Sindhu who wrote the short story "Sahabatku Hans Schmitter" ("My Best Friend Hans Schmitter") published by the leading and influential literary magazine *Horison* (1969). This short story features a male character from Germany, a tourist who fulfils the characteristics of a so-called *hippies*. In this story, *host-guest* interaction takes place between Balinese man and *bulè* man. Rasta Sindhu wrote several other stories, such as the short story "Aku bukan Pembunuhnya" ("I am not the Killer") published in the *Kompas* daily in 1972. While in the first story depicts a character of a typical of *hippies*, the second story portray the character is a rich person, a banker, as it told by the narrator. But, the character who claimed to be a banker, in fact turns out to be a bank robber back in their own country ([Putra, 2011, pp. 228-230](#)). The *host-guest* interaction in these two Rasta Sindhu short stories are beyond romance, there is no courtship, and because it is same-sex, of course the potential for marriage does not occur.

The story of the interaction of characters of different types, began to appear in the short story "Sanur Tetap Ramai" (Sanur Remains Busy) by Faisal Baraas published in the popular-entertainment magazine *Varia* in 1970, republished in the short story anthology *Leak* ([1983](#)) by Faisal Baraas. In the short story "Sanur Tetap Ramai" depicted a harmonious and romantic interaction between a Balinese man and a young woman from America, her name is Joice. Balinese man Nyoman Sumerta, a tour guide falls in love with Joice, and they travel and vacation in Ubud. When staying in Ubud they have sex. At that time it was revealed that Joice was a lesbian, but became normal again after getting the satisfaction of having sex with Wayan. In this story, Bali is not only a beautiful place to vacation, but also a place where Westerners can regain their normal lives. Wayan and Joice agree to meet again and get married, but none of that happens, because the promise is unrealistic. In short, harmonious and

romantic interactions between host and guest do not continue at marriage, they are separated, each back to their own respective life.

The romantic-based model of love and the intention to marry but not come true, appears repeatedly in subsequent stories, not only in short stories as discussed above, but also in novelettes and novels. The novelette "Suzan" (1988/2002) by Gde Aryantha Soethama is one such example. The novelette was originally serialized in *Sarinah* women magazine (1988), then published with a change of title after publication as the book *American Wanita Amerika Dibunuh di Ubud* (*Woman murdered in Ubud*, 2002). In this novelette, a Balinese man, named Bram, meets Suzan, a tourist from America, in a *ngaben* cremation ceremony. Suzan was interested in the *ngaben* tradition, and Bram who met her at that time, explained the meaning of *ngaben* in sober English. From there they fell in love and had sex at an accommodation in Ubud. They also wanted to get married, but it did not happen, after Suzan was shot dead by a rival syndicate pursuing her from America. Suzan turns out to be a syndicate selling weapons who fled to Bali as a tourist. Suzan leaves a will for her family and asked herself to be cremated in the Balinese way. At the end, Bram helped her family to perform a cremation for Suzan, an interesting storyline because the scene of Suzan watching the *ngaben* event at the beginning of the story becomes another scene at the end of the story.

Various meanings can be expressed in Suzan's story when viewed from the tendency of the theme of Bali-*bulè* interaction. First, the Balinese are always open and face no obstacles in interacting with Westerners. With limited English, they can quickly get intimate and make love. Second, although the Balinese-Western interaction was intimate, they were never able to continue that interaction into the bonds of marriage. There are authors' reasons for making that not happen, such as killing Western figures. Third, Westerners are described as interested in Balinese culture. They not only want to know but even want to be part of Balinese customs and culture, like Suzan who left a will for her body to be cremated in Balinese Hinduism.

While the story above is written in Indonesian, it is interesting to read the Balinese novel entitled *Depang Tiang Bajang Kayang-kayang* (Let Me Be Alone Forever) (2007) by Nyoman Manda. The novel tells the story of *host-guest* interaction, between a Balinese woman named Sari and an Australian man named George Pike. In addition to different languages, this novel also features different

story characters, where the stories above are male characters from Bali, while female story characters are foreigners; in this novel the character from Bali is female, while the foreign story character is male. Long story short, the two fell in love, and agreed to get married. The wedding day was set, and friends and family from Australia had arrived in Bali to attend the wedding, but disaster struck. That night, a few days before the wedding, George, who lives in Ubud, picked up his friends to Kuta. That night they stopped by the Sari Club just as terrorists attacked the Sari Club. George Pike and his friends died in a bomb blast at the Sari Club. Eventually, Sari and George's marriage did not take place. The author stops the interaction between the two by killing Western figures. The author does not want the marriage between Balinese and Western figures to take place.

There are some similarities and differences between *host-guest* interactions patterns in literary works by the authors mentioned above and those that can be seen in the short stories in *Mekel Paris'* anthology. First, the stories above and those published in *Mekel Paris'* both describe the interaction of Balinese-Westerners against the background of the development of Balinese tourism. This shows that tourism activities are an important and sustainable source in the creation of literary works by Balinese authors. Of course there are other sources of inspiration such as caste conflicts, but the works of Widiassa Keniten and other authors studied clearly point to tourism as the main source of inspiration. The author Widiassa Keniten, in the introduction to his *Mekel Paris'* short story (e-book version, no introduction in print edition) also says this. He wrote:

There are many types of tourists who come to Bali, some come for vacation only, there are also researchers, some are eager to know Balinese culture. There are also tourists who bring trouble like in the short story "John"(2012, p. i).

Second, in describing the interaction between host and guest, Widiassa Keniten and other Balinese authors describe the outgoing or confident of Balinese characters in getting along with Westerners, even with limited language skills, they have no difficulty in interacting. In cases where the interaction progresses to intimacy, their opposite-sex relationship escalates to sexual intercourse and promises to marry.

Third, in describing *host-guest* interactions, Widiassa Keniten and other Balinese authors tend to portray Western characters interested in Balinese art and

culture, and even want to be part of Balinese customs and culture, such as the story character who asked to be Hindu cremated in the story *American Wanita Amerika Dibunuh di Ubud* by Gde Aryantha Soethama. In Widiassa Keniten's work, Westerners' interest in Balinese culture is evident in their decision to learn Balinese language, Balinese offerings, and other Balinese cultural arts works..

Second, in IBW Widiassa Keniten's *Mekel Paris* short stories anthology, the attraction of foreigners to Bali is depicted more vividly and intensely by learning Balinese art and culture, marrying a Balinese, and using new names after the wedding, such as Mekel Paris and Jro Jepun.

[Zhang & Xu \(2023\)](#) in their study "The power dynamics in local–tourist interactions" conclude that local people are not necessarily at a disadvantage and passive in their interactions with guests; but they often take the initiative and direct shifts in social roles by changing definitions or situations to show their relative power. That's what story characters do in the literary works of Balinese authors.

In the short stories studied, it appears that foreign characters are depicted as not only interested but totally Balinese and proud of Balinese identity. This difference can be used as a shift in the literary narrative of Balinese authors in describing the interaction between host and guest from the absence of marriage to the occurrence of marriage in the story. *Mekel Paris'* short stories present as works that do not prevent marriage in the story, thus these works reflect the reality in society. In society, the marriage of Balinese and foreigners in the context of tourism is very common.

Through his works, Widiassa Keniten took a different position from the previous author who prevented the marriage between host and guest in the story. It should also be noted, in the anthology *Mekel Paris*, IBW Widiassa Keniten also created stories about other *host-guests*, who had nothing to do with marriage, for example stories about tourists involved in paedophilia cases and cases of tourists who lived in villages in Bali but caused more problems than giving blessings. The presence of these short stories does not undo the shift shown in presenting *host-guest* interactions assimilated through marriage.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the *host-guest* relationship in *Mekel Paris'* short stories is characterized by more mutualistic harmony than prejudiced and *one-*

sided relationships. The author depicts Balinese characters with the West to the level of marriage, which marks a form of harmonious and mutualistic interaction. Compared to literary works, especially short stories of Balinese writers published earlier (from 1960s to 2000s) in Indonesian, there are similarities in terms of harmonious and mutualistic relationships, but the difference is very prominent in terms of the absence of marriage between Balinese and Westerners even though they are eager to do so.

The reasons used by the author to prevent the marriage were to kill one of the characters in various tragic accidents and disasters, especially Western figures, thus preventing assimilation between host and guest or between Bali-*bulè*. Behind the harmonious interaction or conflict-interaction, laid a strong message from Balinese literary writers that in interacting with outsiders, Balinese people are always open but still able to maintain their Balinese identity. Although the marriage is described as taking place in several short stories of Widiassa Keniten such as the short stories "Mekel Paris" and "Jro Jepun", it does not mean that the Balinese are drifting away assimilating with Westerners or Asians, but rather the guests who are described want to become Balinese. It is not the Balinese identity that is lost or eroded by foreign culture, but foreign figures (guests) who marry Balinese figures (hosts) who merge themselves into Balinese. In other words, while respecting the outside culture, Balinese authors always try to maintain and emphasize how important it is for Balinese to maintain Balinese identity.

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