

## **MEMENJOR<sup>1</sup> TRADITION, THE CONTESTATION AND IMPLICATION TO HINDU'S COMMUNITY IN BALI**

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### **ABSTRAK**

*Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk menyajikan perkembangan penjor di era masyarakat pascamodern dan pasca industri yang cenderung mengarah pada ajang kontestasi. Penjor sebagai sarana upacara agama Hindu kini telah mengalami pergeseran, yakni menunjukkan kemewahan, bahkan hiperpakem. Berdasarkan penelusuran yang dilakukan di daerah Denpasar, Badung, dan Gianyar ditemukan bentuk penjor yang mewah, dipajang pada hari raya Galungan. Bentuk penjor mewah ini terkategori menjadi tiga jenis, yakni hiperpakem polos, hiperpakem dengan simbol binatang mitologi, dan hiperpakem dengan simbol dewa-dewi. Penjor hiperpakem ini difungsikan sebagai pemuasan hasrat manusia. Dalam hal ini para kapitalis di bidang industri budaya yang memproduksi kebudayaan masyarakat telah berhasil mengambil peluang atas fenomena masyarakat yang menjunjung tinggi agama pasar. Ketika penjor mewah tersebut sulit untuk dikerjakan sendiri maka masyarakat Bali akan memilih untuk membeli di tempat yang memproduksi penjor.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Galungan, Hindu, Industri Budaya, Kontestasi, Tradisi Memenjor*

### **ABSTRACT**

The objective of this paper is to discuss the development of penjor in the post-modern and post-industrial era of society which tends for the contestation purpose. As a means of Hindu religious ceremony penjor has changed, exhibiting luxurious, extraordinary, and magnificent conditions. Based on the survey in some areas of Bali (Denpasar regency, Badung regency, and Gianyar regency) it is found that extraordinary penjor is displayed during the Galungan Holiday. Extraordinary penjor is categorized into three types, namely (1) simple penjor, (2) penjor with symbols of mythologic animal, and (3) penjor with symbols of deities (gods and goddesses). Extraordinary penjor fulfills human desires. Following Adlin (2006:169), the capitalist cultural industry is rightful to take opportunity from the phenomenon in which the society appreciate the market religion (Atmadja, 2010: 73-89), i.e., in favor of buying extraordinary penjor as it is too hard to prepare it themselves.

**Keywords:** *Contestation, Cultural Industry, Galungan, Hindu, Memenjor Tradition*

### **INTRODUCTION**

*Penjor* is a work of art of Balinese Hindu Society. It is prepared as a tradition and dedicated to Sang Hyang Naga Basuki as a manifestation of devotion to Almighty God (Atmaja, 2007:9-11). Being one of the Balinese cultural symbols, *penjor* has its conditions based on the understanding of

the Hindu religion, as well as a work of art of the Balinese which exhibits beauty and unique creativity. As the results, *penjor* shows exciting quality to enjoy. According to Sumardjo (1999:55-56) a work of art is said to be successful if it offers qualified art objects through the qualified art medium. Cultural factors, in this case, determine

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one's perspective on art. Hence, art is actually contextual because the values it contains are, indeed, contextual in particular with regard to the practical needs and functions in life (Sumardjo, 1999:137).

Quoting the Dictionary of Balinese Atmaja (2007:9) describes *penjor* as an ornament made of bamboo pole decorated from the foot to the tip with young coconut leaves, and used in Hindu religious ceremony. *Penjor* is distinguished based on its function, namely *Penjor caru*, *Penjor Biyukukung*, *Penjor piodalan*, ornamental *Penjor* and *Penjor Galungan*. In addition, different groups of Hindus living in several other places in Indonesia give it function and meaning which is adapted to the local conditions and concepts (Atmaja, 2007: Watra, 2005).

On Galungan day Balinese Hindus prepare *penjor* to be displayed in some places or buildings, such as in front of the house, exactly on the right side of the main gate (Covarubias, 2012:315-316), in the temple, and at the border of every village area. The display will start from the day of *Penampahan Galungan* until the day of *Budha Kliwon Pahang* (35 days) as described by Sumadi (2011: 97-100):

*“Penampahan Galungan, which falls on Tuesday, is a busy occasion to survive against Sang Kala Tiga Amangkurat, the dark power which is trying to provoke the human spirit. On this day people are to slaughter pigs, make food offerings (sesaji). A penjor is then placed in front of the house.*

*Wednesday is a day of Buda Kliwon Pahang or Buda Kliwon Pegat Uwakan, the end of the Galungan celebrating series. It is a day when Balinese are busy with post Galungan and Kuningan waste material, including uprooting of penjor to restore a clean and orderly environment...”*

A long duration of display will make *Penjor* lose its colour and look ugly long before being uprooted. Not only will it wither but also turn brown; the bamboo pole will be covered with black spots due to natural decaying processes. The fading beauty inspires creative people, i.e., to replace young coconut leaf with palm leaf which

is more durable both in its colour and strength, so the beauty of *penjor* can be enjoyed longer or until the uprooting that marks the end of Galungan and Kuningan Holidays.

Nowadays the development of *penjor* is not limited to the requirement that it must be on display on certain days as a form of Hindu devotion. *Penjor* has turned into an arena of contestation, which is expected to represent a personal status and lifestyle. This can be seen through the *penjors* displayed in front of houses. This phenomenon is ordinary when viewed from the lifestyle of the people in the era of the 21st century who are competing for the nicest, the coolest, the richest, etc. so as to gain respect and admiration. This is in line with what is proposed by Chaney, 2009 in his book entitled *Lifestyle* “You Stylish So You There” which provides us with an insight that someone would be recognizable, outstanding, if he has a style, or at least a specific identity that is certainly appropriate with his time.

It is interesting to observe the phenomenon pertaining to *penjor* displayed on certain days, especially on Galungan and Kuningan holy days, as it is now emphasized more on the aesthetics, beauty, and luxury as a form of representation of social status. Accordingly, the businessmen engaged in the cultural industry try to gain benefits from the tradition of *menjor* knowing that *penjor* has now become a means to reveal one's social status in the society. Following Adlin (2006:169), it is appropriately right that the capitalist cultural industry takes chances on people's lifestyles that appreciate market religion (Atmadja, 2010:73-89), i.e., when it is hard to prepare an extraordinary *penjor* by themselves, people will prefer to buy the ready one. The conditions of the society eventually offer enchanting business opportunities to cultural industries. Thus, Suyanto (2013:23) is right when saying that in the era of advanced capitalism, the development of power of the cultural industry has really reached a level that is barely under control.

Based on the phenomenon of *penjor* development, there are two important things to study: the current forms of *penjor* and the reasons for preparing and displaying a luxurious *penjor*

which tends to be in hyper condition. The situation where society gives precedence to luxury in religious practices would support capitalist cultural industry that will, in turn, drive people to think pragmatically.

This paper is directed at people's lifestyles nowadays, in which image is considered important in many ways. It applies theories of consumption and lifestyle changes to identify the various forms of *penjor* and to reveal the reasons for preparing luxurious ones.

The hyper condition of *penjor* is inseparable from the process of social change. Martono (2011:16-24) explains that some factors which caused the social change among others are new discoveries, technological developments, and the ideology embraced by the community. Social change triggered by a discovery of something new, ultimately results in changes in culture --people's lifestyles in particular. Jatman (1997:84) argues that the current society has entered an era called "The Era of Imagology", which is a condition where the image becomes more important than empirical reality. In explaining the conditions of society which centers on self-image through one's lifestyle, Ritzer (Baudrillard 2009:xxxiv) proposes that consumption is not simply a desire to buy so many commodities, the function of pleasure, an individual function, the release of needs, self-fulfillment, wealth or consumption of objects. In this time, people consume something in order to show their status. In this context the Balinese Hindu community shows his/her lifestyle as well as social status through luxurious *penjor*, and the cost for it is, of course, expensive.

## **PENJOR WITH EXTRAORDINARY PERFORMANCE BEYOND THE HYPER CONDITION**

### **THE HYPER CONDITION OF SIMPLE PENJOR**

Human is homo religious. Balinese always uses different symbols to keep themselves in touch with Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa (Almighty God). Balinese Hindus give the Creator a number of

predicates, i.e., polytheism (belief in many gods) and pantheism (belief that God is everywhere) (Titib, 1996:86-87). They prepare and display *penjors* on Galungan, or on certain Hindu religious ceremonies. They use *penjors* as symbols to worship Ida Sang Hyang Wasa Widhi who is believed to be manifested in various forms and names.

As a form of Balinese culture, *penjor* is classified into two general types, namely sacred *penjor* and ornamental *penjor* (Atmaja, 2007; Bali Post, October 12, 2009 about the meaning of *penjor*). The sacred *penjor* is prepared for the activities in religious ceremonies, giving emphasis more on the understanding of *penjor* conditions; while the ornamental *penjor* is the one which functions as an ornament or a decoration for certain activities, giving priority to the aesthetic element.

Atmaja (2008:152) and Manik (Indonesia Hindu Association website) discuss that all elements of *penjor* are symbols intended to worship gods namely: 1) a piece of white cloth as a symbol of power of Hyang Iswara, 2) bamboo pole as a symbol of power of Hyang Brahma, 3) coconut as a symbol of power of Hyang Rudra, 4) young coconut leaf as a symbol of power of Hyang Mahadeva, 5) various kinds of leaves as a symbol of power of Hyang Sangkara, 6) crops as a symbol of power of Hyang Wisnu, sugar cane as a symbol of power of Hyang Sambu, 7) *sanggah arda candra* (a kind of ceremony equipment made of bamboo for placing the offering) as a symbol of the power of Siwa, and 8) *upakara* (offering) as a symbol of power of Sada Siwa and Parama Siwa. All of these symbols are in accordance with the contents of palm leaf manuscript "Tutur Dewi Tapini" described by Ida Bagus Sudarsana in Indonesia Hindu Association website as cited by Manik as follows:

*"Ndah Ta Kita Sang Sujana Sujani, Sira Umara Yadnya, Wruha Kiteng Rumuhun, Rikedaden Dewa, Bhuta Umungguhi Ritekapi Yadnya, Dewa Mekabehan Menandya Saraning Jagat Apang Saking Dewa Mantuk Ring Widhi, Widhi Widana Ngaran Apan Sang Hyang Tri Purusa Meraga Sedaging*

*Jaat Rat, Bhuwana Kabeh, Hyang Siwa Meraga Candra, Hyang Sadha Siwa Meraga Windhune, Sang Hyang Parama Siwa Nadha, Sang Hyang Iswara Meraga Martha Upaboga, Hyang Wisnu Meraga Sarwapala, Hyang Brahma Meraga Sarwa Sesanganan, Hyang Rudra Meraga Kelapa, Hyang Mahadewa Meraga Ruaning Gading, Hyang Sangkara Meraga Phalem, Hyang Sri Dewi Meraga Pari, Hyang Sambu Meraga Isepan, Hyang Mahesora Meraga Biting”*

Meaning:

O thou dear people, you are *beryadnya* (to donate without hoping for rewards) be known by you first, the existence of god, where bhuta, when *beryadnya*, all devas turn into the essential world because something that comes from the devas it will be back to the devas. Therefore, a term of offerings is Sang Hyang Tri Purusa in which the whole content of the world is the god itself in the entire world, god of Shiva is the moon, god of Sadha is windu, Sang Hyang Parama Shiva is the tone, god of Iswara is the essence of food, god of Vishnu is fruits, Hyang Brahma is all snacks, Hyang Rudra is coconut, Hyang Mahadeva is the yellow leaf, Hyang Sangkara is palm, Hyang Dewi Sri is rice, Hyang Sambu is candy, Hyang Mahesora is peg (whose shape resembles a bamboo stick). (The translation is an interview with a priest Ida Rauh Wayahan Bun Sanur Griya Pejeng, August 18, 2013).

Both as a symbol used by the Hindu community in Bali and as a form of devotion to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi, *Penjor* is created with a sense of art that eventually creates culture. Culture, as a system of symbols has a very broad meaning. Any product of culture as long as it has meanings can be called a symbol. Therefore, culture and symbol are two sides of a coin (Hadi, 2006:26). Thus, the culture of *memenjor* is inseparable from symbol that is in the *penjor* itself, either related to religion or associated with social status. Geertz (1973), as cited in Hadi (2006:27), emphasizes that symbol functions as a process of social life, and what makes a symbol system is like a computer program that makes the computer able to operate. Symbol is a formulation which can be viewed from different angles, an abstraction of experience that has been

determined in an understandable form.

Balinese Hindus are very familiar with symbols. Following Suamba's ideas (2003:4) that symbols exist as expressions of religiosity, aesthetics, ethics, and philosophy, therefore, it is understandable that they use *penjor* as an expression of devotion to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa (God), and create it with a sense of art that exists in human soul. They put their understanding on art and always present it in any symbol to get in touch with the Creator; art as an element of Balinese culture has been perceived to give great contribution both physically and spiritually to the communities (Suamba, 2004:1). As a result, *penjor* is created through the burst of thought of art along with the understanding on the symbols.

**Picture 1**

***Penjor* with palm leaf and various accessories also made from palm leaf**

(Documentation: Widiastini, 2013)



The *penjor* in figure 1 indicates its luxurious appearance --not only an adaptation to the existing rules, but also an excessive use of palm to look grandiose and luxurious. Some spinning lights are sometimes used in its final touch to make it look beautiful at night. This *penjor* is attractive, not only for the local community but also for tourists. It is a

form of creativity that gives its owner satisfaction, and at the same time bring entertainment to the people who see it. Preparing a such *penjor* is expensive and not easy. It may cost up to Rp.450.000, for a single simple condition *penjor*.

### **HYPER CONDITION PENJOR WITH MYTHICAL ANIMAL AS SYMBOL**

Arts is a cultural element of Balinese people which supported by the environment of socio-cultural-religious as a habitat for living (Geriya, 2001:31). As a cultural product which is originally from a sense of the Balinese community's art spirit, finally *penjor* is always undergoing changes, especially in its form in accordance with the changing of times. A means of religious ritual, *penjor* is often used as a decoration for other activities that do not require detailed condition of a *penjor*. The decorative function of *penjor* began in 1925 when every village displayed it to welcome the General Governor of the Dutch East Indies who made a visit to Bali (Wijaya, 2012:150). Then in 1974 PATA used it as a promotional means for the PATA Conference held in Bali (Wijaya, 2012:152).

Due to the fact that *penjor* is now prepared or functioned for both a religious ritual and decoration, it is important to observe what is going on in the community where people is constantly trying to create something interesting. Today *penjor* for Galungan holy day is a blend of sacred and ornamental one, which is called *penjor lebay* –extraordinary *penjor* (Widana, 2011). An extraordinary *penjor* certainly costs a lot.

The Galungan *penjor* is displayed in open space for 36 days. Borrowing Gidden's ideas about space and time (Gidden, 2010), *penjor* should be prepared as beautiful as possible by considering durable materials that will keep the color and beauty of *penjor* until it is uprooted and burnt. The appearance of *penjor* which is made so beautifully that people can look at it longer, eventually it changes the position of young coconut leaves as its raw material into palm tree leaves which have a better quality of colors and durability.

*Penjor*, which symbolizes the worship of Naga Basuki, is made in simple condition, but completed with a mythological animal. The most frequently used mythological animals in *penjor* are dragons, which look similar to swan. Both dragon and swan are symbols of sacred animals in Hinduism. Dragon is interpreted as a symbol of the Naga Basuki who guards the earth, while swan is the vehicle of Goddess Saraswati which is a symbol of virtue. Titib (1996:86) explains that in the philosophy of divinity, appreciation of the Almighty God can also be found in the understanding of totemism (a belief in the existence of a highly respected sacred animal and a belief that the animal has supernatural powers).

#### **Picture 2**

#### **Hyper condition *Penjor* with dragon mythology animal symbol**

(Documentation, Widiastini, 2013)



### **HYPER CONDITION PENJOR WITH SYMBOLS OF DEITIES (GODS AND GODDESSES)**

The beautiful and imperishable *penjor* is part Balinese culture that everybody can enjoy. Displaying a beautiful *penjor* also means showing one's social status. The development of *penjor* over time eventually forms people's lifestyles. Piliang (2006) explains that lifestyle as a way of giving meaning to the world of human life requires medium and space to express the meaning such as languages and objects of an image which has a very central role. Piliang (2006) adds that an image as a category in the symbolic relation between

human being and object of the world requires the actualization of himself into the world of reality including the world of lifestyles. Therefore, the meaning of lifestyle described by Piliang gives us an understanding that lifestyle is inherent to the human being itself. There is a choice of lifestyle that people should follow to indicate his identity to other people around.

The definition of lifestyle proposed by Chaney (2009) implies that lifestyle is something very relevant to the life of every human being. He assumes that a lifestyle as characteristic of a modern world or commonly referred to as modernity:

“...anyone who lives in modern society will use the notion of lifestyle to describe his own actions or others. Lifestyles are patterns of action that differentiates one person to another“

The physical culture that a person is wearing as attributes of lifestyle would have symbolic meaning or a sign that others can read. In this case, when one makes an extraordinary *penjor* that is able to generate a sense of art covered with luxury, it will be predicted that he is a person who has a well-established economy. Without saying “I am a wealthy person”, other people has already form an opinion that such a nice, magnificent, and luxurious *penjor* belongs to well-established person.

As a work of art and also a means in a ritual ceremony *penjor* has two functions, namely the social function and the ritual function. Art as social function provides space for art creators and art lovers to perform a variety of communications. While the function of art as a ritual has something to do with a variety of beliefs embraced by the people in order to relate himself to the power of God’s will (Hadi, 2006:291-298). The combination of these two functions is able to create a beautiful, extraordinary *penjor* and, of course, it was born from an artistic talent as well as a representation of a person’s social status in the society.

To show himself as a religious creature, man do prayers, gives charity, and uses various symbols indicating the identity of their religion and lifestyle. In this case the Hindus in Bali use, or display symbols of deities at home in the form of statues,

or wear medallion in the form of deities, as well as use *penjor* with symbols of deities. They may display *penjor* with symbols of deities in front of a building or in an open public space to indicate themselves as individuals who adhere to Hinduism.

**Picture 3**

**Hyper condition *penjor* with the symbol of God Ganesha**

(Documentation, Widiastini, 2013)



**Picture 4**

**Hyper condition *penjor* with symbol of Goddess Saraswati**

(Documentation, Widiastini, 2013)



God Ganesha and Goddess Saraswati are both the symbols of knowledge, which are believed to deliver good, true, and wise knowledge. Besides as god of knowledge, God Ganesha is also as god of protection because the followers believe He has the power to keep the world safe and peaceful. While the Goddess Saraswati is depicted as the symbol of

beautiful, interesting, and thoughtful knowledge. Hinduism itself adopts polytheism which has a belief in the existence of Gods (Titib, 1996:86). In the book of purana, Goddess Saraswati is depicted as a beautiful woman with light skin colour, clean and gentle behavior that would describe the beauty of knowledge (Titib, 1996:98).

**PENJORS WHICH INDICATE SIGNS OF LUXURY EVEN BEYOND THE CONDITIONS OF A STANDARD USAGE WILL BECOME BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BUSINESSMEN OF CULTURAL INDUSTRIES.**

**PENJOR AS CONSUMER CULTURAL SATISFACTION**

Creating a beautiful, luxurious, and magnificent *penjor* can create a society who thinks pragmatically. When *penjor* is made extraordinary, it would require considerable amount of time and money. The cultural industry players who see business opportunities behind this condition work fast to provide anything related to religious rituals, to fulfill the religious needs of the community through the so-called religious market (Atmadja, 2010:73-89). Religious market can grow enormously in the era of capitalism, because in this era cultures can be produced indefinitely. This condition happens due to the development of industrial techniques production and massive technology of information which lead, at some point, to a process of culture commercialization (Strinati 2007 via Suyanto, 2013:117). Religious market has several characteristics, one of which is explained by (Atmadja, 2010:75) as follows:

“At the shrine humans as homo socio-economic consumer do the shopping rites. By the time they pass ritual shop to choose the items according to the taste, color, brand, and fashion, along with bargaining, the price in the traditional market is extremely cheap. They can also use the impersonal system to get the definite price which they can get in the mall or supermarket. The purchased items are not only considered from their function but also their symbolic value (Atmadja, 2010:75)“

The idea of religious market (Atmadja, 2010:75) implies that there has been a change in

human behavior from homo religious to homo consumer which finally also changes the human nature from homo faber to homo ludens. Then the way people worshipping the Creator and offer their devotion will also change. Previously people fulfill their spiritual needs by doing it by themselves or in groups based on the togetherness, but nowadays people prefer to get all the ritual needs by going and buying their needs to traditional markets or supermarkets. The meaning of worship to God, which in Hindu religion is called *Yadnya*, is something sacred, sincere, and carried by each individuals with all his ability as written in the *Yajurveda* as follows:

“Svar yanto napeksanta  
a dyam rohanti rodasi  
yajnam ye vi vatodharam  
suvidvamso vitenire

the meaning:

The famous scholar who performs sacrifices, reaching heaven (heaven) without the help of any sort. They make their entrance easily to heaven (heaven), who crossed the earth and the middle region (*Yajurveda* XVII, 68 in Titib, 1996:238-239). “

The content of *Yajurveda* XVII, 68 is that to worship *Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa* sincerely and by ourselves will give meaning and good way of life to each individual of the Hindus. Therefore, buying the ritual needs as a form of ritual worship to the holy God causes dependence on others (who make the offerings), and at the same time degrading the understanding of ritual, particularly the offerings.

The current phenomenon, that is, the creation of a religious markets by the capitalist is motivated by the capitalist's thought to take chances behind the economic condition of the people. Furthermore, the emergence of *Ajeg Bali* (everlasting Bali) discourse which was launched at the inauguration of Bali TV in May 2002 by the Governor of Bali, I Dewa Made Beratha encourages viewers to immortalize Balinese customs and culture (Nordholt, 2010:69), has given space for the business of cultural industry to keep studying the needs of the Balinese people in particular related to

the ritual needs.

Atmadja's opinion (2010:2-3) could be a good consideration to understand the literal meaning of *Ajeg Bali* and meaning that comes along with taking the opportunity of *Ajeg Bali* discourse. Atmadja (2010:3) explains that *Ajeg Bali* discourse has been around in Balinese society both among traditional and organic intellectuals, where they transmit the movement of *Ajeg Bali* to the bottom layer to be a massive cultural movement. *Ajeg Bali* as a movement to maintain Balinese cultural identity needs to be understood well, because the movement of *Ajeg Bali* cannot be separated from the modernization and globalization which can lead the Balinese to experience great and complex cultural social change (Atmadja, 2010:3).

The real conditions in the era of globalization can be seen in Widana (2011:37). He explains that in the case of *yajna* ritual, Hindu followers are on one hand so devout to carry out *yajna* ritual as the primary obligation to be implemented, but on the other hand they also hold market ideology, an ideology that is deeply rooted in the style of western capitalism that makes the market as the center of all desires and needs. It means, everything that is desirable and assembled with the *Yajna* ritual can be purchased in the market. The markets including the traditional markets, supermarkets and even *geriya* are now providing maximum service about offerings to their customers. Furthermore, the spiritual condition of the Balinese Hindu community residing in the duality of life (Artadi, 2011:144) can be exploited as a business opportunity for those who are engaged in the field of cultural industries that sell a variety of ritual needs.

### **PENJOR AS SOCIAL STATUS**

Humans act towards things based on their meaning, in which the meaning of the symbols is the result of social interaction within the community (Wirawan, 2012:118). It can be understood that the purpose of Balinese for preparing extraordinary and even beyond the hyper conditions *penjor* is to represent their social status in society. The status that they want to show is, in fact, not only the

social-economic status, but also the religious status, i.e., being religious people who understand the Hindu religious tradition well.

Human beings as homo religious, always perform themselves through a variety of attributes that are able to identify themselves as religious individuals. The interaction of human beings in the community use not only verbal skills to communicate but also use symbols, so that they have the so-called symbolic interaction. This is relevant with the opinion of Blummer as cited in (Wirawan, 2012:128-129) that one of the symbolic interactionism is humans' acts towards something based on the existence of meanings possesses so that it is meaningful for them.

Apart from its function as a means of Hindu religious ceremony, *penjor* can also be used as a symbol to indicate their social status in society. A *penjor* indicates three things, namely: (1) that the person is a Hindu, obliged to display *penjor* on Hindu holy days, in particular Galungan; (2) that the person knows Balinese culture and its conditions, preparing the contents of *penjor* in accordance with the rules; (3) that the person has top-class economic status, able to display luxurious, beautiful, magnificent, and certainly expensive *penjor*. Wirawan (2012:112) emphasizes that the symbols given by the human interaction has a certain specific meanings, so that it could lead to communication. The development of *penjor* at this time serves not only as a means of Hindu religious ceremonies, but also a means of communicating about the 'who' with an extraordinary display or hyper condition *penjor*. One could show that he is a person of a particular social status without having to say it.

Mead in Wirawan (2012:112) adds that the new pure communication occurs when each people give meaning to their own behavior, and comprehend the meaning given by the other people. *Penjor* as a means of identifying social status will work well when the cognition and the interests of each individual are in line. This is relevant with Wirawan's explanation (2012:131) on symbolic interaction by Blumer who indicates the specific



characteristic of human interaction as humans are interdependent, mutually defining and translating actions, which in this case the interaction between individuals is also bridged by the use of symbols, interpretation, or mutual effort to understand the intent of each action.

### **PENJOR AS A LIFESTYLE**

Lifestyle as a way to give meaning to the life certainly requires a medium and space to express the meaning, that is, the language of space and the objects in which the image has the central role (Pilliang, 2006:71). *Penjor* is chosen by the Hindus as a medium to represent one as an individual who understands religion as well as catches up with the changing times. *Penjor* which has been developing over time, will inevitably be followed by those wanting to express themselves as individuals who are not behind the times and understand the development of art.

Seeing people's lifestyles that tend to do the reading of religion deconstructively (Adlin, 2006:161) in which it is defined by Adlin as the way of reading to separate the text from its communicative context and to make a new endlessly tagging in order to have cultural difference and games only, this condition has given opportunities to the capitalists as follows:

“When the Shaker sect, a puritanical Christian religious movement, established a set of simple furniture that reflects asceticism, capitalism is seen as an opportunity to then mass produce and market it, and the result is furniture that sells well (Adlin, 2006:169)”

The phenomenon happening to Shaker sect is not different from the development of the function of *penjor* in Bali. When Balinese society performs *penjor* as a means of indicating a person's lifestyle, it becomes a business opportunity for cultural industries that produce *penjor*. Suyanto (2013:23), states that in the era of advanced capitalism, the development of the cultural industry has really reached a level that is barely under control. Ritzer (cited in Suyanto, 2013:23) noted that post-modernism society damages consumers, especially

with regard to cultural products. Ritzer (Suyanto, 2013:23-24) explains that cultural products are produced, introduced, offered, sold through a variety of ways for the purpose of economic benefit that is for profit. This can clearly be read on the news content in the Bali Promotion dated from 29 March to 4 April 2013 which includes “Lucky Season Before Galungan” which explains that the sale of *penjor* as cultural products are identical with Galungan holy day. The sales of *Penjor* reached the amount between 5 to 10 million rupiahs per day and increased dramatically one day before Galungan. I Made Mangku Budiarta got a fantastic number of order for Galungan *penjor*, even he finally refused some orders from his customers. (Business Bali, Friday, March 22, 2013).

When preparing beautiful and extraordinary *penjor*, Balinese people often have some difficulties either in finding the materials or preparing it. Finally they prefer to buy products of culture than to make it for some reasons: 1) they need more time to complete things for the ritual needs unless they turn to the cultural industries, 2) they do not have to bother learning the conditions of the tradition of Hindu religion as many people have been available to sell ritual needs, 3) excellent service provided by the cultural industrial business which make the Hindu community in Bali feel comfortable. These reasons bring a prosperous space for the capitalists to engage in cultural industries. Suyanto (2013:114-115) supports the Frankfurt School in believing that in the era of industrial society which is dominated by the power of capitalism, people consume cultural products because they are generally driven by not only necessity, but also the construction and logic of desire formed by the popular cultural interest.

### **PENJOR AS MIMESIS CULTURE**

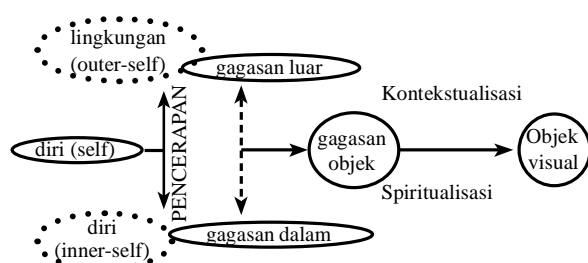
Evers (cited in Atmadja, 2010:74) explains that the trust of market power towards human life is the result of globalization that has become a part of world culture. Globalization which has united Bali with the states of capitalism provides space and time for the religious market to move freely and rapidly into the socio-cultural system of the

people of Bali (Atmadja, 2010:74). As one of the Balinese artifacts, *penjor* should be preserved and this has to go through various processes to become an extraordinary *penjor* and accepted by the society. In order to create religious markets, the capitalists would have to understand the literal meaning in *penjor* before they create and sell one that is relevant to the market needs for the people of Hindu.

The process of creating visual objects can be illustrated in a general and simple way as follows (Darmawan (2007:146).

**Diagram 1**

Darmawan (2007:146)



The diagram (Darmawan, 2007:146) shows that the process of creating visual objects starts when someone is trying to perceive the environment and themselves (process of internalization). The results of the perceiving activities is to identify the ideas such as outside ideas for the result in the identification of environmental and inside ideas for self-identification results (process of externalization). Both of these notions affect and depend on each other to obtain an agreement between the outside and inside ideas. The creation of beautiful and extraordinary Galungan *penjor* is an optimization as a result of examining the ornamental *penjors* which are often used for certain activities and even competition, and the inside ideas that a *penjor* creator has artistic talent and the understanding of Hinduism *tatwa*.

The presence of beautiful and luxurious Galungan *penjor* is initiated by local communities in South Bali which ultimately affected *penjors* in other areas in Bali. In creating an extraordinary *penjor*, creativities come not only from themselves

but also from imitating a culture process which is called mimetic culture. Richard Dawkins (Wijayanto, 2012:9) explains that the meme is a cultural unit that can be transferred, communicated, copied, and inherited. Human nature as social being is an opportunity to establish culture of mimetic. Meme as a unit of cultural transmission starts from a replication or imitation of ideas and thoughts, which means to replicate or move what is in one head to another's in a series of socialization. Meme is a form of copying from one individual to another (Wijayanto, 2012:18-19).

**Picture 5**

***Penjor* contestation  
at Pura Desa Pengrobongan, Denpasar**  
(Documentation: Widiastini, 2013)



**Picture 6**

***Penjor* competition at Gianyar Regency held  
by Dupa Kaori**  
(Documentation: Widiastini, 2013)



*Penjor* contestation and competition can also be regarded as a form of advertising invasion on the cultural product (Borgias, 2013:82). Borgias states that both the process and the product of advertisement are now the leading commodity in the economy and business. Therefore, human creativity of creating a product changes to advertising their products in order to make people consume their products. In the current developments, the meaning of consumption is understood not only as the consumption of the function of values but also as consumption of signs (Karl Marx as cited in Borgias M, 2013:82).

## CONCLUSION

The everlasting Bali (*Ajeng Bali*) discourse presented by the previous Governor of Bali, I Dewa Made Beratha, in May 2002 encouraged people to immortalize customs and culture (Nordholt, 2010:69). However, the discourse should be well understood as the movement cannot be separated from the influence of modernization and globalization which can lead Balinese to a great and complex change of social and culture, completed with its accompanying social illnesses (Atmadja, 2010:3). In its development, the movement and discourse of everlasting Bali can provide larger free space for the capitalists who are engaged in cultural industries in order to create, produce, and sell a variety of products to fulfill the needs of Balinese culture in the tradition of *memenor*.

People in the postmodern era use something not merely for the function of value, but also for showing their lifestyle and social status in the society. In this case the lifestyle and social status become very important as is the characteristic or typicality of postmodern in which human love is towards the surface (O'Donnell, 2009), and the result is the performance of *penjor* with its hyper condition.

Adian (2005:63-78) explains that in postmodernism, capitalism no longer emphasizes production but consumption. Then the capitalists carefully study the culture of consumption and

lifestyle of the people, in order what is produced and sold is acceptable by the market. In this case, people both consume various performance of extraordinary *penjor* which even lead to hyper condition and perform a variety of imitation (mimetic culture).

## Notes:

1. *Memenor* is an activity to make and display *penjor*, a tall bamboo pole decorated with coconut leaf, agricultural crops, and a piece of yellow-white color cloth

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