

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the dialectical relations between the Western tourists and Balinese in appropriating religious Hindu traditions. This current exchange between the West and Balinese local Hindu culture is a great example of an intercultural dialogue. When Westerners travel to Bali, they have a strong preconception for what they want: exotic, authentic, spiritual world, out of modernity, corporate world, and technological comfort. This is negotiated between Orientalism and Self-Orientalism today. Moreover, Westerners are ignoring damaging the postcolonial influence and globalization process. This results in an exotic and spiritual world being formed and taken advantage of by the Westerner. In retaliation, the Eastern world adjusts to this situation and learns how to make profit of tourists and international travelers. This eventually commodifies Bali's Hindu tradition, culture, and national symbols.

By conducting a one-month field observation in Bali, I was able to observe the current adjustments made between the West and Southeast Asia – with a particular focus on Bali. Data was collected from research literature which focuses on the main Theories of Orientalism and Self-Orientalism. Data was also collected on different examples of 'cultural appropriation' – such as borrowing Ayurveda and having Yoga and Meditation traditions by Westerners in Southeast Asia. I collected these data points by enrolling in a 200-hour Bali Meditation Teacher Training and interviewing ten locals and Westerners, respectively. Interview questions stemmed from understanding the cultural appropriation of sacred Hindu Balinese places. Westerners perspective believed in developing images and practices to better understand Bali traditions, cultures and religion. While the Balinese Hindu perspective believed in adapting to all the western expectations to accommodate Westerners and do an orientalist adjustment. I learned how local Balinese people were trading this cultural knowledge and belief systems for monetary value. In return this dilutes the authentic experience of the Balinese Hindu religious experience for all.

In more global context the thesis is focused on the negotiation and transformation of cultural appropriation from Westerners learning Eastern spirituality in the globalized and modernized world. This is including, and not limiting to mediation tourism and/or pilgrimage experiences. This research may contribute to the global religion phenomenon.

**Key Words:** Intercultural Dialogue, Spirituality, Cultural Appropriation, Hinduism, Bali