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KIDUNG BHUWANA WINASA POEM: THE POET AND HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS OF BALI IN THE 20TH CENTURY

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the poem "*Kidung Bhuwana Winasa*," authored by the poet-priest Ida Pedanda Ngurah of Belayu in 1918, drawing from historical records. The poem is believed to hold significance for understanding Bali's history as it transitioned into the 20th century. Despite the numerous internal conflicts within Bali and external interventions, notably from Dutch troops, the poem suggests that Bali persevered without physical destruction, as implied by its title. However, doubts persist regarding the accuracy and reliability of the information presented. This research endeavors to provide a comprehensive examination of the poet-priest, exploring his background, daily activities, and artistic endeavors. Furthermore, it assesses the poem's potential as a reliable historical source for understanding Bali's modern history. Employing a qualitative research methodology and utilizing edited versions of the text alongside translations, this study uncovers insights into the author's literary proficiency and historical knowledge. It concludes that "*Kidung Bhuwana Winasa"* can serve as a valuable resource for understanding 20th-century Balinese history, provided that its contents are cross-checked with external sources to ensure accuracy. Notably, this study breaks new ground by analyzing the poem's historical content rather than focusing solely on its aesthetic elements. By examining a literary work from a historical perspective, the research highlights the potential for conveying vivid messages that leave a lasting impact on collective memory.
Keywords: poet, poem, *kidung, puputan*, war, history.

1. Introduction

Some literary works like poems, ballads, novels, drama, etc. contain some reliable information about past events but some of them are just fiction. Critical evaluation of the sources used is required for valid and reliable data. The event was written in an art form by the poet or artist using language as a medium of expression[1]. As this is an art form, the reliability and validity of data are often doubted by considering the span of time and perhaps no witness of the respected event can be asked for, hence, uncertainty overshadows the truth. A poet likes to immortalize an event through his/her literary work, sometimes in a metaphor or other implicit expressions. Why does not the author write explicitly and fairly? The beauty lies in the process of searching it out amongst words; there is a struggle to get the hidden meaning. This is used in stating the time dealing with composing, finalizing the work, an important event, etc. The beauty lies here as the challenge is faced by the reader to think of the true information.

Some works contain historical facts like *Kidung Pamancangah* (1862) (Agastia, 2016: iv) written by poet-sage Ida Pedanda Gede Rai of Gerya Cucukan informs valuable information related to the kingdoms in the Middle Bali period. *Geguritan Salampah Laku* (1938) composed by poet-sage Ida Pedanda Made Sidemen of Sanur is a poem contains his activity in the course of life; it is none but an autobiography in a poem form (Suamba, 2016:338). *Kakawin Nagarakrtagama* (1365) composed by poet Prapanca during the Majapahit Kingdom of East Java in the 15th century A.D. is used by historians to reconstruct the history of the Majapahit. Similarly, *Kidung Bhuwana Winasa* (1918) is perhaps the only written source we inherited in the form of artwork describing the background, cause, the wars, the scene of the wars, etc. with accurate information. 71 years later, after the Badung Puputan war, A.A. Alit Konta from Puri Kawi Denpasar

[1] This fact often happens in religious or spiritual discourse when an important figure or place is described, glorified in highest esteem and respect by the devotees; mixed up of real event with art form of expression. It is perhaps, by expressing in an art form, the message conveyed is considered more successful than in a prose form.

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published a *geguritan* literary work entitled *Geguritan Puputan Badung* (*Bandana Pralaya*) (1977). Alit Konta firmly stated that the aim of writing this *geguritan* was to immortalize the story of the heroism of the kings of the Badung Kingdom and the entire people of Badung (now Denpasar). The most interesting thing is that the wars between Dutch troops and the Klungkung Kingdom on 28th April 1908 and the Badung Kingdom army of Bali on 20th September 1906 was written by the loser. This war is called the Puputan Klungkung and Puputan Badung Badung respectively combating till the last drop of blood. Yasa states that this work has been identified with two *puputan* wars that happened in Bali. Even though that is the case, frankly speaking, *Kidung Bhuwana Winasa* elucidates the story of the destruction and fall of Balinese Kingdoms completely started with the falls of Gianyar, Mengwi, etc. till the invasion of the Dutch to kingdoms of Bali especially Klungkung and Badung at the beginning of 20th century. The last portion of this work also describes the fall of the Selaparang Kingdom on Lombok Island. Before the fall of Bali, there were cosmic signs, which not all understood (2018:55-56). With falls, Bali was completely under the control of the Dutch colony.

When the history of modern Bali is to be reviewed, the heroic wars called Puputan Badung on 20th September 1906 and Puputan Klungkung 28th April 1908 are included as it is as the landmarks of Bali's political condition under the Dutch colony till the Independence of the Republic of Indonesia in 1945. As Ardhana states not only are there differences in views regarding the concept of puputan Badung by the West and local communities in the context of Balinese society at the local level, but on a national scale there are differences between the concept of independence obtained by Indonesia and the bloody struggle or revolution in concerning the "recognition" of sovereignty, and not to the "surrender" of sovereignty as once interpreted by the Dutch (2013:67). This fact shows that each party has a different conception of war (*puputan*) and consequently, each of them acts with a different motif and goal. Owing to this fact, the history of modern Bali which covers many wars called *puputan* will be more reliable when utilizing local sources like that one found in *Kidung Bhuwana Winasa.* When its history is to be written, this *kidung* in the form of *geguritan* presumably provides valuable information about it; and they are narrated well by the author. However, the validity and reliability of the data gathered are still doubted since it is an art form of expression. The history of the war was mainly written from Dutch sources which is perhaps not complete in itself considering both parties involved in a war. The perspective of the indigenous people --- who are always in a weaker position---needs to be considered to balance the information utilized in writing the history.

2. Method

The following is to discuss a poem called *Kidung Bhuwana Winasa* created by Ida Pedanda Ngurah (1918). With the qualitative approach in the methodology of research, it uses an edited version of the text along with the translation. The writer behaves as the main instrument in data collection either facing the manuscript or a person who is well-versed in the text. The data was gathered from paper version which belongs to Gerya Gede Balyu in Tabanan regency, the residence of the author as the main source, the transliteration and translation, and some academic writings dealing with the topic. After all necessary data are gathered, they are classified, checked, analyzed and interpreted to answer the research questions. The data are analyzed in a qualitative way to show the poet and his works, and historical accounts found in the work as the basis on which modern Bali history can be rewritten. Apart from this, the study also wants to reveal the historical values which may be taken into account in reading the text.

3. As a poet-priest and as his works

Ida Pedanda Ngurah from Gerya Gede Blayu of Marga district, Tabanan regency, and Bali province in Indonesia is known as a Brahmin poet-priest (*kawi-wiku*) used to performing worship (*puja*) but also as a palace priest (*bhagawanta*) for the warfare and well-being of all. He was born in the 1840s and passed away in his residence (named Gerya Gede Blayu) in the 1930s; there is no valid information available on the exact time of birth and pass away. Being a palace priest, this point becomes his main concern helping the king in governing the country. The king and the palace priest

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(known as *bhagawanta* or *purohito*) are duo figures who work together; and whose efforts are directed toward the well-being and prosperity of the people and nation.

Palguna (1998), a Kawi literature researcher calls him the "great Balinese author of the 19th century". This remark is based on the fact that he composed many works of various genres of high quality, and they were collected in many libraries either public like Gedong Kirtya in Singaraja and Pusdok in Denpasar or private. One of his works is *Kidung Bhuwana Winasa* (meaning 'Song of the Destruction of the World' / 'Song of the Destroyed World') which was completed in 1918 as stated in the colophon of this *geguritan*, ten years after the war. Meanwhile, Juliana (2022:47-48) stated that Ida Pedanda Ngurah from Griya Gede Belayu Marga Tabanan wrote and recorded at some length the story of the Puputan Badung war in *Kidung Bhuwana Winasa* around 12 years later. Apart from the story of the Puputan Badung War, in the *Kidung Bhuwana Winasa* (1918), other war stories in the Bali area are also written, such as in Gianyar, Tabanan, Klungkung and other areas. As the fact depicted in the text, he had acquired valid data about the background and the war itself from various sources prior he composing the work. Rather than writing in a prose form, a poem is more powerful in conveying a message to the reader. He tried to combine science and art (i.e. poem) stressing the aesthetic experience in the path of self-transformation. Even though this is basically a poem, it does not lose its scientific sides which can be evaluated to reach the truth. Nevertheless, this poem (*geguritan*) is a work that contains literary, religious, social, cultural, and historical accounts which are relevant to be explored when reviewing the historical heroic war in Bali known as Puputan Badung on September 20, 1906.

This *kidung* is considered an important source in reconstructing modern Balinese history entering the 20th century. Sidemen (2009) firmly states that *Kidung Bhuwana Winasa* can be used as a historical source because it meets several scientific criteria that can be found in the manuscript. One of them is that this *kidung* can present lucid information of the background of the war with respective time, event, place, and person involved in it. Ardhana states that Ngurah's work written from 7th October 1918 to 11th December 1918 is considered important because it can tell the story of the death of King Badung named Cokorda Ngurah Alit II (1890-1901) and was replaced by Cokorda Ngurah Made Pamacutan, known as Cokorda Mantuk Ring Rana on September 20th, 1906. Apart from that, this work is able to tell the role of the "Javanese" (outsiders and Javanese themselves) who were considered Dutch soldiers who attacked Bali (2013: 71). Another researcher, Palguna (1998:23) also states this work as a source for Balinese history, although this researcher does not provide detailed information supporting his statement. Yasa states that this *kidung* has been used as a source by those who are interested in history both domestic and foreign. He further states that the focus of the researchers on *Kidung Bhuwana Winasa* on historical aspects sounds reasonable (2018:53).

Ida Pedanda Ngurah is believed to have composed a number of works: *Kakawin Surantaka* (1895), *Gegurian Yadnyeng Ukir* (1899), *Kakawin Gunung Kawi* (also known as *Kusuma Wicitra)* (1918), and *Kidung Bhuwana Winasa* (1918). While there are works like *Wretmareng Ukir, Singgala, Rundah Pulina, Jayeng Ukir,* and *Gunung Guwa*, still not certain whether he wrote them (Palguna, 1989: 1). These are his works waiting for further research to confirm them. Other work is *Pengawi Karangasem Muwah Pemales.*

Kidung Bhuwana Winasa is believed to have been composed/created by Ida Pedanda Ngurah from Belayu village, and completed in 1918[2], ten years after the war. So, he lived at the time of the war, and he was well-informed about the background of it. This can be one reason or motivation why he wrote it in the form of a poem. This was confirmed by a number of researchers and the family itself. In addition to it, there is no information about how long it took to finish it, how was the progress and the process of finalizing it. Nevertheless, one nuance of it is heroic and revenge combating in a war. This is at least shown by the kinds of meter/melody used by the author, e.g. *durma*. This *kidung* in the form of

[2] This time is just after Bali suffered from a big earthquake (known as *Gejer Bali*) in 1917 causing many people dead, serious damage of buildings and infra structure. [see, https://bbmkg3.bmkg.go.id/sejarah-gempa-merusak]

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geguritan uses the Balinese-Kawi language, and some Malay words. *'Kidung*[3]*'* here simply means 'song'. However, this work used a high level of language a mix of Old Javanese, Balinese, and a few Malay words. This *geguritan* is relatively long, built from beginning to end by many meter or melody (*pupuh-pupuh*), from the beginning are as follows: Durma (1b-3b), Sinom (3b-5b), Durma (5b-10b), Pangkur (11a-14b), Sinom (15a-23a) , Pangkur (23a-25b), Durma (25b-34b), Sinom (34b-37a), Durma (37a-39b), Dangdang (39b-40b), Pangkur (40b-42a), Durma (42a-45b), and Sinom (45b-46b). From this information, Durma's pupuh is dominant (5), followed by Sinom (4), Pangkur (3), and Dangdang (1) // (Sidemen: 2009).

This *kidung* has attracted many researchers. L.C. Heyting, a Dutch officer worked in the Singaraja office who came to Blayu and asked Ida Pedanda Ngurah to rewrite the *kidung* in two scripts namely Balinese and Latin on paper (1919). It was perhaps easier to read it. This manuscript is according to Palguna the *kidung* was stored in the library at Leiden University in the Netherlands. This statement was used as an attachment to support the writing of the book *Sejarah Klungkung* written by Sidemen*, et.al*. (2001: 164-171). This work has also been studied and used as a reference by Sidemen (2006) when discussing *Historiografi Traditional Bali*, where the *Kidung Bhuwana Winasa* manuscript was used as the main source with scientific considerations. Other researchers like Helen Creese, Darma Putra, and Henk Schulte Nordholt, ed. (2006: 125-164) used as an important source; and the relevant part is an appendix in the book *Seabad Puputan Badung: Perspektif Belanda dan Bali* specifically relating to the events of the Puputan Badung War. Agastia, Sancaya, Suamba, Guna Yasa, Juliana and others read and cited some portions of it in discussing the heroic nature and the local history of Bali.

4. Aspects of Historiography

Historians in their work reconstructing history rely heavily on what are called primary sources before examining secondary sources. This type of source is the main one and has a high level of reliability. However, when the historian does not have access to see or experience the events or due to limitations of time and places, the validity of data is doubted, and consequently, secondary data is utilized. Under these conditions, historical see inscriptions, notes, travel notes, archaeological objects of historical value, documents, and so on become important sources. From these objects, information on historical accounts can be obtained. Comparing and analyzing these materials is important so that history reveals the truth; and avoids mistakes in writing history. With this condition, a historian is guided to be able to read primary sources written in ancient script or other scripts and be able to translate their meaning. In the context of *geguritan* or ballads using the Kawi-Bali language, historians are required to be able to understand the background and context of the era when the event occurred. Considering how historical truth can be revealed to look at the future, primary sources are very necessary in writing history. Sidemen (2006: 340) notes that the primary weight of written sources is not only determined because (1) the source contains events that can be trusted, but also because the source, (2) contains clear personal identity such as containing the date, month and year. incident, (3) contain the names of actors and names of places either clearly or covertly. Several other characteristics can be used to determine the primary quality and accuracy of written sources, such as (4) the name of the author who wrote the source, whether stated clearly or covertly, (5) the authenticity of the writing and the materials used which are measured according to the era. , (6) the author's authenticity with the writing style and spirit of his era, (7) the presence of signs of validation of the document (such as a seal or stamp), and others of the same nature.

A literary work in the form of *geguritan* (poem) can be grouped into historical sources, according to Sidemen (2006: 344-5); it must have the following characteristics (1st-4th):

First, the *kidung* generally clearly states the days of events that are considered important by the poet (*rakawi*) and which actually occurred. The inclusion of the day, month, and year fulfils the requirements as a source that has reliable

[3] It is often the Balinese literature classified into three sections: *sekar alit/sekar rare* (or *maca pat*), *sekar madhya* (*kidung*) and *sekar ageng* (*kakawin*). Even though this work is called *kidung,* but formally this belongs to *geguritan*.

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historical content. However, not everything can have historical value. This type of *kidung* can still be included in historical sources, but it must be compared with other sources.

Second, in a number of *geguritan/kidung,* there are those which include the author's name either explicitly, such as *Kidung Bhuwana Winasa*, or implicitly which requires special skills to peel it off so that the real name can be found. However, there are also *geguritan/kidung* which does not include the author's name, they are anonymous, such as in *Kidung Uwug Gianyar*. This type of criticism reduces its historiographic weight.

Third, the names of actors, the names of places, and the chronology of the story told by the author are almost stated very realistically. After testing and comparing with other sources through field research, almost everything is actual. The historical weight of this kind of *kidung* makes contemporary historians tend to concentrate on this *kidung* as a historical source.

Fourth, there are many types of imagery or themes presented by the author using *kidung*. It can be from *wayang* stories, myths, legends, romances and stories, mere imagination, to stories about events that actually happened. So that historians are not misled, the *kidung* must be read in its entirety to understand its contents properly and correctly.

The above criteria can be added to the qualifications of the writer/author, personal integrity and perseverance in the field in which they are involved. Moreover, for a priest like a *pedanda* who writes literature, these qualifications must be secured, and hence the level of accuracy and validity of the data conveyed is trusted and revealed the truth.

5. As a Historical Source

Kidung Bhuwana Winasa contains a number of historical aspects, including (1) the process of events in the sequence of time and place, (2) the process of one event occurring in fairly chronological order even though the author has to deal with (3) requirements which become stumbling blocks that make it is difficult to explain; Wipra Nguraha (4) includes the day-month-year of historical events that are considered important, which are recorded using the Saka year calendar system. This skill adds even more weight to this *kidung* as a historical source. (6) The names of actors and places of events which are written in full and (7) the process of causes and causes of events which are described poetically in the law of natural signs as signs of the times, after internal criticism and comparison through field research, it turns out that almost all actual. This condition adds further weight to the historical context of this source (Sidemen, 2006: 347).

Under these conditions, *Kidung Bhuwana Winasa* can be put as a historical source. However, the question immediately arises regarding the status of this *kidung*: is it used as a primary source considering the requirements for writing history? Regarding this question, we have to look at the figure of the author as a storyteller or one who narrates these events, whether he experienced them, saw them directly or just based on information from other people or his predecessors. Or have there been written sources such as chronicles that have been read so that we have knowledge of the past regarding conflicts between kingdoms in Bali? With a fairly long period, war events between small kingdoms in Bali, such as Gianyar, Klungkung, Badung, Mengwi, Payangan and so on, it seems that this author did not all happen during his lifetime, except for the Den Bukit/Buleleng wars. (1846), Jagaraga War (1848-1849), Banjar War (1868), Kusamba War (1849), Puputan Bandung (1906), and Puputan Klungkung (1908) (Sidemen, 2006: 348). However, the credibility of the author as a literary person, of course, information obtained from various sources is filtered or cross-checked so that the truth of events can be maintained. Sidemen (2009) stated that Ida Pedanda Ngurah only wrote about what happened during his lifetime. However, this is also not quite right, because he also told about the wars that occurred between several kingdoms in Bali.

If we look at the title of this *Kidung Bhuwana Winasa* ('the song of the destruction of the world'), Sidemen (2009: 348) considers that this *kidung* does not reflect the existing reality. This means that the war depicted in this work does not yet reflect the destroyed universe (of Bali). This is based on the fact that not all wars were told by the author, such as the Den Bukit War, the Payangan War, the Kusamba War, the Banjar War and so on. Regarding this statement, it can be

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understood that the author may have thought about this, it is impossible to tell everything, especially in a literary work which is limited by literary rules. The destruction of the world (of Bali), meaning that the sovereignty of the Balinese people was completely lost/destroyed when they were totally conquered and controlled by the Dutch from the North to the South. Small wars between kingdoms in Bali can be used as signs of times that are doomed. The fall of the Badung Kingdom (1906) meant that Bali was completely controlled by the Dutch. At the same time, there were major changes in the political, social, economic, and cultural systems in Bali. However, being defeated in wars, especially in the *puputan* war, does not mean that Balinese self-esteem and dignity are destroyed. The spirit of dignity and culture as Balinese still illuminates despite the fact Bali is under the rule of the Dutch. Whatsoever the bitterness the Balinese had experienced; the Dutch did not easily control Bali; there were resistances everywhere without rejecting the fact that some of the Balinese had helped the Dutch to exercise the power. Various political undertakings and strategies were used to control Bali after many parts of the archipelago were defeated.

Many things can be learned from this *kidung*. One of the interesting things is that Bali's past was marked by conflict between kingdoms with a background of expanding power. Small kingdoms wanted to expand their power. The trigger could be small things that can actually be resolved with dialogue so that the earth remains safe and peaceful. However, the reality of the war between certain kingdoms colored Bali's past. This condition may also exist in other areas when their struggles are still local, there is no thought of forming a state with a national perspective. From these facts in the past, one can learn that in history two different sides always come together and the beauty is how to manage both for the betterment of life. One cannot exclude the other because it exists as it is; the only thing that can be done is to manage and give each role and function according the capacity.

By understanding past events which are not always easy to remember, we can learn lessons so that historical wisdom can be learned in every historical event, especially puputan wars: Puputan Badung (1906) and Puputan Klungkung (1908). The wisdom is the essence of any events either good or bad. Since these two opposing powers (*rwa bhineda*) are always present, humans can take up the wisdom from the permutation of both.

6. Sum-up

Ida Pedanda Ngurah as poet-priest (*kawi-wiku*), the author of *Kidung Bhuwana Winasa*, has a strong sastric tradition in Brahmin and king families. Being a palace priest (*bhagawanta*) of Belayu Kingdom, he felt obliged to immortalize important events in the history of Bali in an art form, i.e. *kidung /geguritan,* which is composed of various melodies (*pupuh*). In other words, he has an awareness of Bali's history that needs to be told to the next generation.

Kidung Bhuwana Winasa has an important place in the world of Balinese literature and the history of the 20th century modern Bali as it contains historical accounts related to the pre- and post-war conditions. Many events are detail described with reference to date/time, places, parties involved, the message of the events, etc. Therefore, this art form, i.e. *kidung* can be used as one source in writing the history of the modern 20th century of Bali, even then, it needs to be cross-checked with other sources to satisfy the scientific paradigm to reveal the truth. Some values of historical in nature may be taken into account for the betterment of future life.

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