AESTHETIC TRANSFORMATION OF BALINESE LONTAR PRASI: FROM EPIC NARRATIVE TO CONTEMPORARY REPRESENTATION

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Abstract
This study investigates the types of *LontarPrasi* and examines their transformation in the contemporary era. The research was conducted in the Sidemen Subdistrict of Karangasem, specifically in Sidemen Village and Talibeng Village, where a community of *LontarPrasi* craftsmen continues to produce this traditional art form. *LontarPrasi* refers to illustrated depictions, often of facial expressions or narrative scenes, engraved on lontar (palm) leaves. Historically, these works portrayed wayang stories such as the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, *Sutasoma*, and *Tantri* epics. In its development, however, thematic shifts toward contemporary life and modern visual interpretations have emerged, reflecting the artisans' response to global market influences and the need for creative innovation to sustain cultural relevance.Employing descriptive qualitative and interpretive methods, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The study draws on symbolic theory and aesthetic theory as its analytical framework. The findings outline the *LontarPrasi* production process, which spans approximately four months from palm leaf selection to completion. Preparation stages include drying, soaking, boiling, and clamping (*nepes*), with specialized tools such as the *rupak* (a traditional iron stylus) and *paser* (a hole-making implement). Black pigment is produced from roasted candlenuts. The results indicate that *LontarPrasi* has undergone significant transformation, not only in narrative content but also in its function as a cultural commodity. Once bound to traditional epics, it now encompasses flexible, market-oriented themes designed to appeal to both domestic and international audiences. This evolution illustrates the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity in sustaining intangible cultural heritage within the context of globalization.
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Keywords: Prasi, Traditional Values, Tourists, Manuscripts

1.1   Introduction

Literary works have long held an important place in human civilization, attracting attention from ancient times to the present. It is because they often portray real events and personal experiences of their authors. In some cases, a literary work also serves as a form of reflection or contemplation, later expressed as a story or narrative and recorded in a *lontar*(Yanti et al., 2024). The term *lontar* comes from *rontal*, meaning the leaf of the tal (palm) tree(Kurnia et al., 2017; Pramartha et al., 2021). In this context, *lontar* refers specifically to a literary work or text inscribed on palm leaves(Geria, 2017).

A literary work generally contains certain themes or motives, either expressed explicitly or implied subtly. These motives largely depend on the author's point of view or perspective. The same applies to *Prasi* literature, a unique form of work that combines and illustrates both images and text or script. These images and scripts are inscribed on palm leaves that have been shaped and designed according to the established conventions of *lontar* writing in Bali (Suwidja, 1979). Before the term *Prasi* became popular, this type of manuscript was known as *lontargegambaran*. One example is *GegambaranDampatiLelangon*, which contains visual depictions based on the text of the *kidungDampatiLelangon(Putra, 2021)*.

Thousands of prasilontars are documented in a state of neglect, with their structures and physical features showing signs of deterioration(Sudipa et al., 2022). However, in its time, the writing of *LontarPrasi* served functional purposes, particularly in religion, healing, and spiritual empowerment. A strategy is required to safeguard the cultural values embedded in

the lontar manuscripts inscribed in Balinese script(Darma&Sutramiani, 2019). In this context, illustrated *LontarPrasi* is an evolution of *rerajahan* writing and sacred script symbols, commonly known as *sastramodre* and *griguh*. Through the *LontarPrasi* form, these images and symbols could be transformed into more detailed expressions, revealing the values embedded within them. The values in *Prasi* literature also reflect the artists' embodiment of literary works of both prose and poetrythrough visual illustrations(Damono, 1979).

Prasi literature comes in various forms and styles, each shaped by its cultural environment. In this discussion, the focus will be on *Prasi* literature. It is an intangible heritage that contains both local wisdom and universal values. Its universal values allow *Prasi* to remain relevant in both religious contexts and literary arts. Even today, *Prasi* literature continues to survive, adapt, and even compete, filling artistic spaces in the era of globalization.

Prasi is a type of literary work that uses *lontar* as its primary medium. *Lontar* became the preferred choice after earlier media such as stone (carved as inscriptions), animal skin, and copper plates. This shift marked a stage in technological development across different eras. *Lontar* became an alternative medium for literary writing in Java and Bali. Its use was also supported by the availability of *lontar* trees in the past, especially in areas with hilly topography and a relatively hot, dry climate. The development of *lontar* as a writing medium is known to have taken place during the reign of King DyahBalitung, around 820–832 Caka(Poerbatjaraka, 1957).

Palm leaves as a writing medium became increasingly common in the 16th century CE, until the introduction of paper in the 18th century CE marked the beginning of the modern era. During this period, epic works such as the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* were transcribed onto palm-leaf manuscripts. Over time, the use of *lontar* developed, producing various types of works, one of which was *Prasi* literature, which focuses more on visual expression while including script to reinforce the illustrations. Illustrated *lontar* with explanatory text in Kawi (Old Javanese) or Balinese is known as *Prasi*.

The *Prasi* art form still exists in several villages, including GeriyaUlah, Banjar Puniya, Sinduwati Village, GeriyaWana Sari, Banjar Wanasari, and Talibeng Village in Sidemen District, Karangasem Regency. These locations serve as research sites where the production of *Prasi* remains active, both as an art form and as souvenirs.

Originally, *Prasi* depicted various folktales, such as the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, as well as literary works like *lontarkekawin*, *parwa*, *lontarbabad*, *lontartutur*, and *lontargeguritan*. The creation of *Prasi* is no longer limited to wayang-themed works; in recent times, it has also included custom-made illustrations for tourists. This shift in function, from literary art to market-oriented products, particularly in the tourism industry which has made *Prasi* more commercial and popular. Such adaptation has allowed the art to survive and compete amid modernization, enabling it to serve both as a medium for preserving cultural heritage and as a driver of the creative economy.

Innovation has become essential in a world that is constantly changing, ensuring the preservation and continuity of *Prasi* art. However, its development faces challenges, particularly the tendency among younger generations to neglect this heritage due to its relatively low economic value. Even so, some artisans in Sidemen continue to produce and promote their works independently or with government support, aiming to participate in the global market. Especially in Bali as Indonesia's national tourism hub, such efforts are expected to help revive the *Prasi* tradition while also strengthening the creative economy.

1.2 Literature Review

Studies on *Prasi* literature have been conducted, producing several works in the form of books and journal articles. One such work is a book by Anak Agung Gde Alit Geria, *Bhomakawya (LontarPrasi, Texts, and Translations)*, which focuses on examining *Bhomakawya*, a text derived from the *kakawin Bhomantaka* (the Death of Bhoma)(Geria, 2017). His analysis shows that *Prasi* literature incorporates Hindu theological concepts, emphasizing the perspective of Hindu literary traditions.

In studying the *BhomakawyaLontarPrasi*, each leaf was identified along with descriptions of the characters and depictions of the scenes in the story. The analysis also explains theological concepts such as reincarnation, selfcontrol, and others. The concept of reincarnation reflects religious teachings that view life after death as a cycle of rebirth, beginning and ending with the Creator, God. The concept of self-control, meanwhile, emphasizes restraining desires and passions, as behavior is closely linked to one's ego-driven impulses. Thus, the mind must be disciplined so that excessive and negative desires can be suppressed.

The war scenes in the *LontarPrasi* of the *Kakawin Bhomantaka* illustrate the symbolic battle against the uncontrolled desire for power within oneself. Such lack of self-control leads to deviant behavior and disharmony, not only in the microcosm but also in the macrocosm.

Another relevant work is *MengenalPrasi* by I KetutSuwidja, which explains the origins of *Prasi* and defines it as a palmleaf manuscript that illustrates wayang stories through images drawn on palm leaves. Suwidjo also conducted a comparative study between *Prasi* in India and Bali, noting differences in size: Balinese *LontarPrasi* typically measure only 50 cm in length, while South Indian *Prasi* can reach up to 70 cm. His book provides a general description of *Prasi*, including the patterns used in classical wayang and *wayangparwa* illustrations as sources for *LontarPrasi* narratives(Suwidja, 1979). The work also highlights the artistic values rooted in Hindu tradition, drawing on episodes from the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*.

Both Geria (2017) and Suwidjo (1979) explain the theological concepts within *Prasi* literature. However, these works do not address the contemporary development of *Prasi* as a tradition whose production is increasingly rare and whose continuity is under threat. It is in this gap that the present study seeks to contribute, by examining and tracing the existence of *Prasi* literature amid the challenges of modernization and the pressures of globalization.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

The theories used to examine and analyze this study are symbolic theory and aesthetic theory. These two approaches are considered effective in interpreting field data from *LontarPrasi*. As a high form of literature, *LontarPrasi* is rich in symbolic illustrations drawn from wayang narratives(Suardana, 2022). The wayang characters depicted in *Prasi* convey traits and personalities that represent the figures in the stories(Mudra et al., 2021). Through these symbols, both explicit and implicit meanings can be found in the artistic and literary expressions of *Prasi*.

The symbols in *LontarPrasi* are present not only in the images but also in the accompanying script, which complements the illustrated narratives. From the perspective of aesthetic theory, *LontarPrasi* is viewed as a visual story composed within a limited space, where the content and characters (whether from wayang or other themes) are positioned and represented within a precise and harmonious frame. Artists skillfully elaborate on the limited palm-leaf surface, adding textual descriptions in script.

LontarPrasi demonstrates a unique drawing art, executed using *krupak*(Siahaan et al., 2022). The illustrations on the palm leaves are created with specialized techniques, carefully

considering the balance of composition and framing so that the artwork appears artistic and visuallyappealing.

1.4 Research Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive-interpretative method. Data are organized and then interpreted to uncover the values contained within them (Geertz, 1992; Mufid et al., 2023). The *LontarPrasi* texts are arranged and analyzed according to the significance of the values embedded in them.

The data collection techniques used in this research include observation, interviews, and literature study. The observation technique involves systematically watching and recording the object of study(Abduh et al., 2023; Nawawi, 1995; Vredenbregt, 1978), which in this case is the process of creating *LontarPrasi*. Direct observation allows the researcher to experience the actual conditions and stages involved in making *Prasi*.

The interview technique applies a semi-structured interview guide. This approach enables focused information gathering while also allowing open-ended questions, making the conversation more dynamic and fostering a closer rapport with informants, which in turn facilitates data collection.

A literature study is also essential in this research to strengthen findings based on statements and testimonies. As Singarimbun (1980) notes, a literature study allows for the systematic, critical, and efficient exploration of ideas. It involves collecting data through the examination of texts related to the subject of *LontarPrasi*. Sources include *kakawin* such as the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, *babad* texts, and other relevant manuscripts, as well as secondary documents in the form of preserved manuscripts.

2.1   The Process of Making LontarPrasi

2.1.1   The Process of Selecting Lontar Leaves

The creation of *Prasi* literature is closely linked to its primary material: the *lontar* leaf. The *lontar* used for *Prasi* is usually prepared through a natural process to produce high-quality palm leaves. Selecting the right *lontar* leaf is an important step because it affects the durability and longevity of the manuscript. The process begins with making a *blanko*, a stage where suitable leaves are carefully chosen and sorted. Properly processed *lontar* leaves have a longer lifespan and remain well-preserved over time.

In Bali, there are generally three types of *lontar*: *lontartaluh* (egg), *lontarbelulang*, and *lontarkedis* (bird).

- Lontartaluh (egg *lontar*) has long, wide, and flexible leaves with fine fibers. When dried under the sun, the leaves take on a pale color resembling an eggshell (*taluh*). This type is most used for making *blankolontar*.

- Lontarbelulang (animal skin *lontar*) has thick, stiff leaves with slightly coarse fibers. The surface is harder to carve, making it rarely used for writing. Instead, it was traditionally used to make long hats, knee-length sunshades for duck herders, and roofing for temporary shelters.

- Lontarkedis (bird *lontar*) has smaller and shorter leaves than the first two types, with fine fibers similar to *lontartaluh*. Due to its small size, it is rarely chosen for making *blankolontar*. In Bali, it is more often used for ceremonial purposes and as a raw material for handicrafts and woven items such as bags, hats, food covers, mats, and other items(Sukersa, 2016).

The selection process for *lontar* leaves is highly selective, using only those that meet certain criteria in fiber quality, leaf width, flexibility, and maturity. Suitable leaves are neither too

young nor too old, referred to locally as *daunpenyaya*. These typically measure 2–3 cm in width and have a blackish color with a slight yellow hue. Artisans often describe this type as resembling a swallow's tail (*meikutsesapi*).

2.1.2   Drying the Lontar Leaves

Before processing, the selected *lontar* leaves of qualified quality are dried under relatively hot temperatures. This drying process strengthens the leaves and extends their durability. The drying period typically lasts up to four days to ensure the *lontar* leaves are completely dry. It can be observed when the veins of the leaves change color from green to white, and the dried leaves become brittle and easy to break. Once dried, the *lontar* leaves are cut into specific sizes for use. An important step in preparing the material is removing the central rib of the leaf, a process commonly known as *ngesit*.

2.1.3   *Ngekum*Lontar (Soaking the *lontar* in fresh water)

Ngekum is the process of soaking *lontar* leaves in fresh water. This treatment strengthens the leaves, protects them from insects, and makes them more durable. The soaking process is carried out by placing the *lontar* leaves in a water container or earthen jar for three weeks. The water is replaced weekly during the soaking period. After three weeks, the *lontar* leaves are removed and cleaned by washing them with soap. Once cleaned, the leaves are dried again and hung in a relatively shaded place for four days.

2.1.4   Boiling the *lontar*

Boiling *lontar* leaves is a method of preservation that also protects them from termite damage. Boiling removes chlorophyll and starch from the leaves, both of which can cause the *lontar* to become brittle. In addition, the boiling process makes the leaves more flexible and less likely to break (Sukersa, 2016). In preparing *lontar* for *Prasi* art, artisans mix natural spices into the boiling water for preservation purposes. These typically include sambiroto, kantawali, pepper, nutmeg, cloves, black pepper, and areca nut. All the spices are pounded together before being added to the boiling pot. The boiling can be done using a pan or other suitable container, depending on the number of leaves being processed. The heat of the stove must be kept at a moderate level to avoid scorching the leaves. The boiling process takes three hours, during which the water level in the pot must be monitored and replenished as needed. Once boiled, the *lontar* leaves are left to cool naturally for one full day, allowing the preservation agents to fully penetrate the leaves. After cooling, the leaves are cleaned to remove any remaining spices, then dried again for one day. When completely dry, the *lontar* leaves are tied, neatly arranged, and stored in a safe place at moderate temperature for two to three months. At this stage, the preparation of *lontar* leaves is considered complete for this phase of the process.

2.1.5   Process of Smoothing the Lontar by Pressing

After the *lontar* leaves have gone through the boiling and drying stages, the next step is smoothing them through a pressing process. Pressing is usually done by gathering leaves of the same size. When *lontar* leaves have been stored for four to five months, pressing becomes especially important to straighten them. During this process, the *lontar* leaves are also slightly thinned and made more flexible. The wooden press is fitted with pegs, and every four or five days the artisan taps it to produce high-quality *lontar* blanks.

The pressing process begins with classifying and grouping leaves of similar size. Typically, hundreds of sheets are gathered and placed into the press, known in Bali as a *blagbg*. The *blagbag* functions to hold and press the leaves so they become flat and even.

Once the *lontar* leaves hLave undergone several preparation stages, they are ready to be crafted into *Prasi* artworks. The materials for making *Prasi* consist of five inseparable components:

- Rontal leaves – leaves that have been processed, boiled, and preserved, used as sheets for writing texts and drawing illustrations.
- Bamboo – used as the cover for the illustrated and inscribed *lontar* sheets. Lontar manuscripts from Bali sometimes have beautifully decorated protective covers. They are usually inspired by traditional Balinese iconography(Van Der Meij, 2017, p. 164)
- Candlenut – roasted until charred, used as black ink to make the text and illustrations clear and legibleas some librarians use traditional techniques to clean and restore the pliability of palm leaves (Rachman, 2018).
- Thread – used to bind the *lontar* sheets together, making them easier to assemble and cover.

2.1.6 Tools Used in the Making of LontarPrasi

In general, *Prasi* artists write on *lontar* leaves using a writing tool called a *pengutik* (also known as *pangrupak*)(Sila, 2019). This tool is a type of small knife used for piercing, scratching, and cutting, functioning similarly to other blades but on a smaller scale. For writing on *lontar* leaves, the *pengutik* has a triangular shape with a sharp tip. A *pangrupak* used for writing is typically about 1.5 cm wide and up to 15 cm long, depending on the user's preference. Meanwhile, a *pangrupak* for drawing is narrower, measuring 0.5–1 cm in width, but with the same length as the one used for writing(Suwidja, 1979).

2.2 The Development of Prasi Literary Art

Prasi is a literary art form that developed in the 19th century. *Prasi* artists often drew inspiration from classical *wayang* (shadow puppet) art, depicting its characters on *lontar* leaves. In earlier times, the artistic focus was largely on *wayang* stories and figures. Artists referred to classical *wayang* illustrations, which were known for their uniqueness and high artistic value.

Looking at the past, both the writings and illustrations on *lontar* leaves evolved over time, with noticeable changes in style, meaning, and function. In earlier works, the inscriptions and drawings carried deeper philosophical values compared to later ones. The Balinese describe older *lontar* works as having more *taksu*, a term that can be translated as "having greater authority" or "charisma."

In the past, Balinese artists tended to begin any creative work with a ritual or ceremony (Carma Citrawati&Arsa Putra, 2024, p. 2), aiming to produce something more sacred. The craft of *lontar* was no exception, it followed a process imbued with sacredness, as artists of that era sought to avoid careless results. Before beginning, they would perform rituals and prayers to ensure that the final work was of higher quality and carried more *taksu*.

Classical literary artists infused their *prasi* works with noble values, often wrapped in *pituturayu* (wise counsel) that also took the form of entertaining yet educational songs. These works served to educate both the singers who performed them and the public who listened. The values often embedded in *prasi* literature included etiquette and proper conduct in facing the realities of life.

Prasi reflects the life of Balinese society. Since the mid-19th century, Balinese artists have shown a high degree of cultural unity. *Prasi* craftsmen continued their work with *lontar* leaves, which at the time were easy to obtain. Many elderly artisans and younger generations were willing to inherit this craft. However, by the 2000s, the practice had noticeably declined.

The main reason was the dwindling number of young people willing to continue this cultural legacy.

Tourism development in Bali has significantly influenced the growth of various artistic products, including *prasi*. Modern artisans have adapted to current trends and the rhythms of the tourism market, working closely with art shops. As a result, *prasi* products today are tailored to meet the demands of the tourism industry.

The rapid growth of tourism has increased market demand for traditional crafts such as *lontar*. However, this demand cannot be fully met because fewer young people are interested in becoming *lontar* artisans today. This situation has consequences for the philosophical values inherent in *lontar* craftsmanship, as well as for other aspects such as the quality of the materials, which has begun to shift. From this, we can see a change in function when comparing the past to the present. In the past, the main purpose of *prasi* artisans was documentation which is preserving cultural heritage for future generations based on a spirit of devotion. Their work process was slower and fully manual, with a strong focus on quality. The results, whether in the form of illustrations or writings, carried greater *taksu* (spiritual charisma) because they were treated with a degree of sacredness by their owners. Stories carved into *lontar* leaves served as educational knowledge, often rooted in Hindu theological teachings on etiquette, sacred literature and folklore, all of which conveyed moral education. Today, there is a tendency for *prasi* artisans to focus mainly on commercialization, driven by economic needs. This shift toward market-oriented production often affects the quality of the craft, not only in terms of workmanship but also in the quality of materials and other aspects.

In the process of making *prasi*, artisans tend to adapt to the needs of their customers. For example, if the order is for school practice purposes, they will select *lontar* leaves of very low quality, since the product will only serve a temporary function and may be discarded after use. However, when a customer orders a complete *takeplontar* (containing a full story), the artisan will produce *prasi* of higher quality. In this way, artisans already know which products should be made with lower quality for certain buyers, and which should be of higher quality for others. Prices are also set and classified accordingly, from cheaper to more expensive.

Philosophically, *prasi* craftsmanship in the past held greater value and *taksu* compared to today's products. Modern *prasi* is more oriented toward quick production, driven by customer deadlines. Artisans now also aim to sell as much as possible. In the past, especially during the classical art period, artisans never imagined their work targeting the tourism market for financial gain. Their main intention was simply to create beautiful works that could be appreciated by readers. The manual process took more time, but the results were of very high quality. Both the materials and the storytelling carried deep philosophical meaning, reflecting life and the human experience.

Today's artisans place less emphasis on these deeper values, focusing instead on commercial appeal, which causes other aspects to be somewhat neglected. Furthermore, the sacred and magical elements in *prasi* have diminished, as they are now primarily made for sale and mass distribution. Sacred art has been modified or imitated to resemble decorative souvenirs in art shops, similar to how *tapelrangda* (masks) or *barong* masks sold for tourists are vastly different from those found in holy temples. The *taksu* and aura of a *tapelrangda* in a temple are far more profound than those of masks sold in shops. The same contrast in value can be felt between *prasi* art of the past and that of the present.

In the evolution of design and composition, there have also been noticeable changes in the motifs used in *prasi* from the past to the present. In earlier times, *prasi* artists predominantly used *wayang* or shadow puppet motifs. These motifs served as the foundation for conveying meaning, often presented in the form of stories that carried educational value for readers,

especially in relation to human life. Classical *prasi* featured motifs that were then arranged or adapted by artists into *geguritan*, poetic compositions sung during traditional or religious ceremonies.

As heirs to this cultural legacy, we can see distinctions between the works of the past and those of today. In the past, the emphasis tended to be on *tuturayu* (often in the form of advice). These works were widely spread across Bali, and although different regions had their own variations, the essence remained the same. Whether in written *prasi*, scholarly studies, or narratives, past works displayed higher quality in terms of human values.

The development of *prasi* craftsmanship over time has seen gradual shifts in each phase, influenced by the changing eras. The extent of these shifts varied. For instance, the transition from the pre-primitivist to the primitivist art phase involved minimal change; so subtle that it was hardly noticeable, as the patterns and values in *prasi* remained largely the same. However, from the primitivist phase to the next, around the 1930s to the mid-19th century, some change began to be felt, especially among artisans. During this time, they started introducing a few variations in motifs, though the dominant approach still followed earlier traditions.

A more notable change occurred around the 1980s–1990s, when *artshops* began to emerge and tourist visits to Bali increased annually. To keep pace with the rapid growth of international tourism, artisans expanded their creative range, producing new products as souvenirs, including *prasi* with newly developed motifs. This led to a slight decline in the overall quality of art products, as production often prioritized affordability for tourists. Consequently, the function of *prasi* shifted from being primarily an educational medium for readers to becoming a commercial commodity aimed at generating income.

Since the year 2000, *prasi* artisans have increasingly focused on the commercial side of tourism compared to previous phases. Today, many artisans actively seek opportunities to attract as many customers as possible, including schoolchildren, as a source of income. They carefully consider their target consumers in advance, allowing them to decide which customers will receive *prasi* made from high-quality materials and which will be given lower-grade products.In this system, the *prasi* blanks sold to consumers are classified according to the quality of the *lontar* leaves, with prices set accordingly. This indicates that the *lontar* leaves traded as part of the business are priced in direct proportion to their quality.

In today's globalized era, artisans are largely profit-oriented, though many still maintain traditional standards of inscribing on *lontar* leaves, following the methods of earlier times. However, the influence of the era is undeniable in shaping shifts within artistic products of great cultural value. In the case of *prasi*, the motifs have evolved significantly. What was once predominantly based on *wayang* or shadow puppet designs has now expanded into custom motifs based on consumer requests. It means that artisans today create motifs according to what buyers want, reflecting the fact that *prasi* is no longer produced solely for documentation or cultural preservation, but predominantly for commercial purposes.

2.3 Types of Classical Literary Texts as Sources of Prasi Illustrations

The early development of *lontarprasi* production was largely inspired by literary works, particularly those related to *wayang* or shadow puppetry. It is believed that *prasi* artists drew upon classical literary sources such as prose and poetry(Agastia, 1982). Several examples of these literary works that were illustrated onto *lontarprasi* include:

a.Prasi Based on *Kakawin*

As a form of literary art, *prasi* is closely connected to the tradition of Old Javanese literature. Old Javanese literature consists of two main forms, poetry and prose. The poetic

tradition includes works such as *kakawin* and *geguritan*. *Kakawin* refers to a literary genre composed according to specific metrical rules known as *guru laghu*, which serve as the formal meter guidelines in Old Javanese *kakawin*.

In the creation or illustration of *prasi*, the artists or authors typically select and adapt portions of the narrative that are suitable for depiction while strictly adhering to established conventions (common context). It means avoiding any additions or omissions that fall outside the original context of the source text. The primary aim is to present the *kakawin* in a complete and engaging manner for the reader. Common *kakawin* texts used as illustrative sources in *lontarprasi* include *Kakawin Bharatayuddha*, *Kakawin Arjunawiwaha*, *Kakawin Sutasoma*, and others.

b. Prasi Based on *Parwa*

Prasi derived from *parwa* literature, narrative prose, most often draws illustrations from episodes in the *Mahabarata*. *Parwa* texts are traditionally recited in rhythmic intonation. Examples of *prasi* works inspired by *parwa* literature include:

1.   Adiparwa – Consists of two main parts: first, the story of a sacrificial ritual commanded by King Janamejaya as a magical means to annihilate the serpent race; second, the genealogy of the Pandawa and Korawa princes, their births, youth, and culminating in Arjuna's marriage to Subhadra.

2.   Sabhaparwa – Narrates the royal assembly between the Kaurava and Pandawa heirs, the defeat of Yudistira in a dice game, and the exile of the Pandawa to the forest.

3.   Wanaparwa – Depicts the Pandawa's wanderings in the Kamyaka Forest.

4.   Wirataparwa – Describes the Pandawa's life in the palace of King Wirata after losing a gambling match to the Kaurava.

5.   Udyogaparwa – Relates preparations for war by both the Pandawa and Kaurava, including diplomatic missions: Duryodana representing the Kaurava and Arjuna representing the Pandawa, both approaching Krishna for support.

6.   Bhismaparwa – Depicts the selection of battle formations and the agreement on the rules of war. Vyasa visits Dhrtarastra, advising him to surrender to fate regarding his sons.

7.   Dronaparwa – Chronicles various battles and military strategies employed by the Kaurava forces against the Pandawa.

8.   Karnaparwa – Tells of the Kurukshetra War when Karna serves as commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army until his death at the hands of Arjuna.

9.   Salyaparwa – Describes Salya's command of the Kaurava army and the wounding of Duryodana in battle.

10.   Sauptikaparwa – Recounts a nocturnal raid by Kaurava warriors to burn the Pandawa camp.

11.   Striparwa – Relates the mourning of widows from both sides, alongside Queen Gandhari and King Dhrtarastra, grieving the loss of their kin.

12.   Santiparwa – Contains Bhisma's moral and political counsel to Yudistira, intended to restore the warriors' peace of mind after their kingdom's destruction.

13.   Anusasanaparwa – A continuation of Bhisma's advice to Yudistira before Bhisma's ascension to the heavenly realm.

14.   Aswamedhikaparwa – Narrates the *Aswamedha* horse sacrifice ceremony and Yudistira's conferment of the title *Maharaja Diraja*.

15.   Asramawasaparwa – Tells of Dhrtarastra's solitary retreat to Yudistira's palace after the death of all his sons in battle.

16.   Mausalaparwa – Relates the destruction of the Yadu clan following a curse on Samba, Krishna's son, who was deceived into wearing women's clothing and mocked the sages.

17.   Mahaprasthanikaparwa – Depicts the demise of the Yadu clan and the Pandawa brothers' decision, led by Yudistira, to leave the capital for the forest, including the rites for the deceased.

18.   Swargarohanaparwa – Describes Yudistira's arrival in heaven, where he sees Duryodana and other Kaurava warriors radiant with divine light, but initially cannot find the Pandawa, as all divisions and hostilities are dissolved in the celestial realm.

Parwa (prose) literature has been a major source of inspiration and illustration in *prasi*. Each *parwa* depicted contains layers of meaning, rich philosophical values, and timeless moral lessons that continue to resonate with *prasi* artists and audiences alike.

c.LontarPrasi Inspired by *Kidung* and *Tantri*

Prasi artists have also created and illustrated works from *kidung* and folk tales that are part of the community's daily cultural life. Several manuscripts of *kidung* have been identified as sources for *lontarprasi*, such as *KidungJayendria* and *KidungDampatiLangon*. These manuscripts are part of the Lontar Library collection at Udayana University. Other examples include *KidungBramarasangupati* and *KidungTantri*. *KidungTantri* became an illustrated subject because it tells the story of King Aiswaryadala and Dyah Tanti. Popular folktales or *satwa* often illustrated in *lontarprasi* include *TuwungKuning*, *CupakGrantang*, *Bawang-Kesuna*, and the story of *Pan BalangTambak*. Humorous *lontarprasi* works like these are especially favored by tourists, particularly international visitors.

2.3 Closing

Prasi is a cultural heritage with high artistic and cultural value. It illustrates classical literature derived from epic tales such as *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, as well as prose (*Parwa*), which serve as sources for its literary art. Prasi illustrations are also inspired by *kidung* like *KidungTantri* and various folktales. They often contain moral advice and ethical teachings meant to guide human behavior.

Prasi is not merely static illustrations or literary art appreciated only by certain communities through Hindu theological messages. Over time, it has evolved to depict a wide range of themes that are universally understood, crossing ideological boundaries and inspiring many. The writing and illustration of prasi often incorporate moral lessons from the *Mahabharata*, *Kakawin Sutasoma*, and *kidung* like *Tantri*. The narratives from these epics and poems remain relevant today as moral and ethical references for life.

In the present day, prasi has developed beyond being purely an art form. It has become part of the global market. Many prasi artisans market their works in art shops, while others exhibit them as fine art pieces. The influence of globalization and market demands has encouraged prasi artists to be more innovative and willing to break away from strict traditional conventions. Some artisans now create custom illustrations based on client requests. This adaptation has helped prasi remain competitive in the global market.

However, the main challenge facing prasi artisans is regeneration; ensuring that future generations continue the craft. The primary reason is that prasi has not yet proven to be a sustainable source of income for families, leading younger generations to choose other professions. Nevertheless, in certain areas such as Sidemen District, Karangasem, some still produce *lontarprasi* as a supplementary income. Despite these challenges, prasi artisans

remain committed to developing, preserving, and protecting this valuable heritage as *prasi*literary art.

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