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Panji beyond Java: narrative transformation in the Andi-Andi oral art of South Kalimantan

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ABSTRACT

The Panji stories have spread widely from East Java to various parts of Southeast Asia, but their transformation in indigenous oral traditions outside the royal cultural centers remains understudied. This article examines the transformation of Panji narrative elements in the oral art of *Andi-andi* in the Dayak people of the Meratus Mountains and the Dayak Bakumpai around the Barito River. Using a qualitative approach through ethnographic documentation, narrative transcription, and comparative literary analysis of *Andi-andi* stories featuring characters such as Bungsu Kaling, Angkau Melayu, and Galuh Mendam Jinaman, this study integrates theoretical perspectives of cultural diffusion, narrative mobility, and performativity. The findings identify three main transformation processes: cosmological relocation from the Javanese royal sphere to the sacred landscape of the Meratus Mountains and the Barito River valley; character indigenization through the replacement of Panji and Candrakirana with local ancestral figures; and performative ritualization, where the narrative is embedded in local ritual practices and spiritual systems. Rather than preserving the Panji story textually, the *Andi-andi* tradition rearticulates its narrative ethos of wandering, separation, and reunion within local cosmologies and collective memory, illustrating how classical narratives are continually reinterpreted through the storytelling traditions of indigenous peoples in South Kalimantan.



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1. Introduction

The Panji Cycle is one of the most widely distributed narrative traditions in Southeast Asia. Originating in East Java during the Kediri and Majapahit kingdoms, the Panji stories chronicle the adventures of Prince Panji Asmarabangun and Princess Dewi Sekartaji (*Candrakirana*), who experience separation, wandering, disguise, and various trials before finally being reunited. This narrative structure of separation and reunion has become the basic pattern in various versions of the Panji stories [1]–[5]. Over time, these stories have spread widely and are present in various forms of cultural expression, such as court literature, performing arts, dance, theater, and various ritual practices throughout Southeast Asia.

The cultural significance of Panji was internationally recognized when the Panji manuscripts were included in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2017. This recognition confirms that the Panji tradition is not only important to Javanese cultural history, but also part of the shared cultural heritage of the peoples of Southeast Asia. Scholarly studies of the Panji narrative have focused primarily on the literary and performing arts traditions within the Javanese court. Numerous studies have examined Panji iconography in *Majapahit*-era temple reliefs, the spread

of the Panji narrative across Southeast Asia, and its transformation into performing arts such as *wayang gedog* and masked dance drama [1].

However, most of these studies place the Panji stories within the context of court culture. Studies on how the Panji narratives circulated, changed, and adapted within the oral traditions of communities outside the centers of royal culture are still relatively limited. This gap is particularly significant in regions like Kalimantan, where oral tradition has historically served as a primary mechanism for transmitting knowledge and cultural memory.

One such oral tradition is *Andi-andi*, a storytelling practice that developed among the Meratus Dayak people in the mountainous region and the Bakumpai Dayak people in the lowlands around the Barito River in South Kalimantan. *Andi-andi* is a form of narrative storytelling delivered with a specific melodic intonation or chant. This performance can be performed in various social situations, for example, while working in the fields during the day, or at night in domestic settings or within specific ritual contexts. Unlike court literature, which developed within the royal elite, *Andi-andi* is deeply rooted in the social life of the community.

This tradition serves not only as entertainment, but also as a means of transmitting moral values, cultural knowledge, and spiritual narratives related to local cosmology. In various versions of the *Andi-andi* story, mythological figures such as *Bungsu Kaling*, *Daradi Kaling*, *Diang Putri Cupu Amas*, *Angkau Melayu*, and *Galuh Mendam* appear, whose life journeys, conflicts, and marriage events display narrative patterns that bear similarities to motifs in the Panji story.

However, the relationship between the *Andi-andi* and Panji traditions has rarely been discussed in depth in academic studies. Initial observations indicate that while some Panji narrative motifs remain recognizable, the form of the story undergoes a significant transformation when integrated into the cultural context of the Meratus people. The narrative space, which in the Panji story centers on the kingdoms of Kediri and Jenggala, transforms into sacred landscapes such as Mount Kaling or Madu Island, while the main characters are no longer depicted as royal nobles, but rather as ancestral figures or mythological figures related to local cosmology.

Based on this context, this article argues that the *Andi-andi* tradition does not merely reproduce the Panji story directly, but rather carries out a process of reinterpretation of its narrative structure through the framework of local cosmology, ritual practices, and the performative context of local community storytelling.

2. Method

This research uses a qualitative approach combining several methods: ethnographic documentation, narrative transcription, and comparative narrative analysis. This approach is used to understand how narrative motifs resembling the Panji story emerged and transformed within the *Andi-andi* oral tradition in South Kalimantan.

2.1. Data Sources

Andi-andi narratives documented by several speakers of the tradition in South Kalimantan. These speakers include Rusmiati, Singhi, and Sunyip from Desa Bancing, Kecamatan Paramasan Bawah, Kabupaten Banjar. Data were also obtained from Andin, an *Andi-andi* storyteller in Desa Datar Ajab, Kecamatan Hantakan, Kabupaten Hulu Sungai Tengah, and Bu Ratu, an *Andi-andi* storyteller from the Desa Sei Getas area, Kecamatan Bakumpai, Kabupaten Barito Kuala. These narratives were chosen because they represent variations of the *Andi-andi* story that developed in two different cultural areas, namely the Meratus mountain region and the lowland area around the Barito River.

2.2. Details of Data Collection Techniques

Research data were collected using several techniques, namely: (1) In-depth interviews: Interviews were conducted with *Andi-andi* speakers and tokoh adat (traditional leaders) in Desa Bancing, Datar Ajab, and Sei Getas. Interviews were also conducted with academics from Lambung Mangkurat University to obtain information regarding the social context, cultural function, and the storytelling process of the tradition; (2) Recording and transcription of oral narratives: The recording of oral narratives spoken by the speakers using a digital recorder was then written down word for word according to the original speech. The transcription results

were reconfirmed with the speakers by listening to the recording again to the speakers, asking for clarification of ambiguous parts of the story, and ensuring that the researcher's interpretation did not deviate from the intended meaning; (3) Documentation of the show: Documentation was conducted in the context of everyday storytelling and specific social situations. Researchers obtained documentation of the Andi-andi performance during a vow-fulfilling ritual performed by Bu Ratu in Desa Sei Getas.

2.3. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was carried out in three main stages: (1) narrative motif analysis, namely identifying story elements that have similarities with motifs in the Panji cycle; (2) a structural comparative analysis, namely comparing the narrative structure of Andi-andi with the narrative patterns commonly found in Panji stories; (3) cultural interpretation, namely interpreting the results of the analysis using the theoretical framework of cultural diffusion, narrative mobility, and performance studies to explain the process of narrative transformation in the context of local culture.

3. Results and Discussion

The name Panji is clearly known in South Kalimantan through the Panji masks found in several places, including Desa Banyuur Luar (Banjarmasin), Sei Lepas (Kabupaten Barito Kuala), and Desa Barikin (Kabupaten HST). Panji masks are featured in dances performed as part of a ritual *tolak bala* (ward off misfortune). The Dayak Deah tribe, a part of the Dayak Meratus community, in Kecamatan Upau, Kabupaten Tabalong, also has a manuping (mask-wearing) ritual. For healing rituals. Although the mask used in Upau is not identified as a Panji mask, its shape, dance movements, and accompanying *gamelan* music bear similarities to the manuping rituals in Barikin, Sei Lepas, and Banyuur Luar, which use Panji masks. Overall, mask dances in South Kalimantan are performed in traditional rituals.

This suggests that "Panji" plays a significant role. The Panji mask's presence in a number of rituals in South Kalimantan is displayed in dances that lack verbal narration. It's possible that the Panji story is narrated in the *Andi-andi* narrative art form. This is further strengthened by the presence of Andi-andi art in the Bakumpai Dayak community, where it also functions in rituals to ward off misfortune. However, Panji's name is not explicitly mentioned in Andi-andi; his spirit is simply taken from him. The *Andi-andi* storytelling art is known in two geographically distinct regions: the Meratus Mountains and the lower plains around the Barito River. *Andi-andi* in the mountains features stories set in mountainous landscapes, while *Andi-andi* in Sei Lepas, Barito Kuala Regency, features stories set in river landscapes.

One of the *Andi-andi* stories that developed in Lepas Village is about two kings who were still brothers, namely: King Tamanang & King Tambisu. Both of them traveled to a sacred place, namely Madu Dupa Island, to make a vow to have children. Their wives each became pregnant after they returned from Madu Island. Not long after that, two pairs of twins were born to King Tamanang and King Tambisu, namely: Galuh Mundam Kajinaman and Galuh Mundam Kasarian, and Angkau Melayu and Angkau Wijaya. They then made a vow to match their children. When these children were approaching adulthood, one of the mothers of these children became ill as a sign that they had to immediately fulfill the vow. So Angkau Melayu and Angkau Wijaya were married to Galuh Mundam Kajinaman and Galuh Mundam Kasarian. After the wedding ceremony was over, Angkau Melayu wanted to return to his country. He refused to take his wife, Galuh Mundam Kajinaman, home. However, Galuh Mundam Kajinaman still followed Angkau Melayu.

In the middle of the forest, Galuh Mundam Kajinaman was pushed until he fell and then left alone, but Galuh Mundam Kajinaman continued to follow Angkau Melayu. Angkau Melayu then transformed Galuh Mundam Kajinaman into a man named Si Mandu Hirang through a ritual of entering a well whose water was red and black. Si Mandu Hirang was allowed to follow Angkau Melayu home on the condition that he could not claim to be Galuh Mundam Kajinaman. He was asked to tell others that Galuh Mundam Kajinaman was dead. Angkau Melayu's order was not liked by Si Mandu Hirang. When he arrived at Angkau Melayu's house, when Angkau Melayu was asleep at night, Si Mandu Hirang took a bath, cleaned himself, then returned to his supernatural origin by climbing a sacred coconut tree and flying to heaven as "the son of Samar".

The next day, Angkau Melayu regretted his attitude towards Galuh Mundam Kajinaman. He searched for Galuh Mundam Kajinaman in the forest but never met him again. This story contains the Panji story pattern, namely: unification, wandering, disguise, and reunification. Even though the story ends with Angkau Melayu separating from Galuh Mundam Kajinaman, it is said that Angkau deeply regrets it and wants to reunite with Galuh Mundam Kajinaman.

The Panji story pattern in *Andi-andi* in the Meratus Mountains, among others, is found in the story of Bungsu Kaling and Intan Kumala Sari. Bungsu Kaling has an enemy named Bagalang Amas. The conflict escalates when Bungsu Kaling proposes to Intan Kumala Sari as his wife. Intan Kumala Sari is the younger sister of Galuh Rumbayang Bulan, Bagalang Amas's wife. Bagalang Amas does not agree to his sister-in-law becoming Bungsu Kaling's wife. He separates Intan Kumala Sari from Bungsu Kaling by kidnapping Intan Kumala Sari, taking her to the forest, and killing her.

Intan Kumala Sari's body is successfully found and brought back to life by Bungsu Kaling. Although in this story there is no disguise, it still contains the Panji story pattern, namely: unification, separation, and reunification. The disguise story is replaced by death. The disguise story appears in another different *Andi-andi* story, which is called Basarungan by the people of the Meratus Mountains. Basarungan is even believed to exist in real life, not just a story. People with certain knowledge or supernatural powers are believed to be able to disguise themselves or hide their true identities for specific purposes. A person performing Basarungan can appear physically ugly, even ugly. To perform or remove a *Sarungan*, one must perform a ritual and recite a specific mantra. In general, the Panji pattern in Java and South Kalimantan can be described in Table 1.

Table 1. Panji story pattern

Panji Pattern	
<i>The Panji story pattern in Java</i>	<i>Andi-andi's story pattern</i>
Panji leaves the palace	The character leaves heaven or his native land
Panji wanders looking for Candrakirana	The character goes on a spiritual journey
Panji takes on a disguise, changes form	Characters face danger, sometimes changing form
Panji shows supernatural powers	The character shows supernatural powers or the help of ancestral spirits or supernatural powers
Panji's identity is revealed	The community recognizes the figure's supernatural powers
The unification of Panji and Candrakirana	Marriage or fulfillment of vows

Some examples of the differences between the Panji story in Java and the *Andi-andi* narrative art in the Meratus mountains and in the lowlands around the Barito River and the Panji story in Java can be described in the following Table 2.

Table 2. Distinguishing elements

Marker elements	Differences in the Panji story in each region		
	<i>Panji in Java</i>	<i>Panji in Andi-andi Sei Lepas</i>	<i>Panji in Andi-andi Meratus</i>
Name of male character	Panji Inu Kertapati, Panji Asmarabangun	Angkau Malayu, Angkau Wijaya	Bungsu Kaling
Name of female character	Dewi Sekartaji, Galuh Candrakirana	Galuh Mundam Kajinaman, Galuh Mundam Kasarian	Intan Kumala Sari
Place of Origin	Kingdom	Kingdom	Mount Kaling, heaven
Wandering area	Rural	River	mountains, forests
Pseudonym	Enthit, Andhe-andhe Lumut, Ragil Kuning, Kleting Kuning	Si Mandu Hirang	no name

The differences between the Panji stories in Java, Sei Getas, and the Meratus Mountains. There are a number of transformations of the Panji narrative motif in the *Andi - andi* narrative art in South Kalimantan.

3.1. Narrative Transformation in the Art of Andi-andi Oratory

1) *Cosmological Relocation: From the Royal World to the Sacred Landscape*

In the Javanese Panji tradition, the narrative structure generally centers on the royal court, particularly Kediri and Jenggala. The story's conflict typically involves the separation of Panji Asmarabangun and Dewi Candrakirana, the prince's wanderings, the disguise of his identity, and the reunion that culminates in their marriage. In the *Andi-andi* tradition, this structure undergoes a fundamental transformation. The realm of the kingdom is almost no longer the center of the story. Instead, the narrative space shifts to a broader cosmological landscape, such as sacred mountains, forests, the sky, and supernatural realms.

For example, in the story of Bungsu Kaling, the narrative space encompasses Mount Kaling, Tanjung Laut, and the celestial realm where the figure of *Bhatara Gangga* descends to solemnize the marriage. This shift in narrative space demonstrates that the structure of the Panji story, initially rooted in the political context of the kingdom, has relocated to a cosmological dimension more closely aligned with the worldview of the Meratus people. In the cosmology of the Meratus people, mountains, forests, and natural spaces are not merely geographical settings, but are understood as sacred spaces inhabited by ancestral spirits and spiritual powers. Therefore, the relocation of narrative space in *Andi-andi* reflects the process of adapting the Panji story to the local cosmology of the community.

2) *Indigenization of Characters: From Royal Figures to Ancestral Figures*

The narrative transformation is also evident in the changes in the story's main characters. In the Panji tradition, the central characters are the noble couple Panji Asmarabangun and Dewi Candrakirana, who represent the ideals of leadership and loyalty in Javanese culture. In *Andi-andi*, these characters are replaced by local mythological figures, such as Bungsu Kaling, Angkau Melayu, and Galuh Mundam Kajinaman. Bungsu Kaling, for example, is depicted as a powerful figure with supernatural abilities and a direct connection to the supernatural world. He not only plays the role of a wandering hero, but also a cosmological figure who can move between realms, confront supernatural beings, and interact with spiritual forces.

This transformation demonstrates that Panji's character, originally a royal figure, underwent a process of indigenization, namely the adaptation of the character to ancestral figures or sacred heroes within local belief systems. Although the character's identity changes, his narrative role retains a similar basic structure, namely that of a wandering figure who faces various trials before achieving reunification or cosmic balance.

3) *Transformation of the Wandering Motif*

The motif of wanderlust is a central element in the Panji stories. In the classic Panji narrative, the prince embarks on a journey to find Dewi Candrakirana after the two are separated. This motif remains present in *Andi-andi*, but its meaning has undergone a transformation. The journey is no longer understood solely as a romantic journey, but rather as a cosmological one related to the main character's test of supernatural powers and spiritual destiny.

For example, in the story of *Bungsu Kaling*, the journey begins after the character invokes supernatural signs through the basangin ritual. Natural signs, such as the sounds of certain birds, are interpreted as good or bad omens for the upcoming journey. This demonstrates that the journey in *Andi-andi* is not only physical but also has a spiritual dimension related to communication with the supernatural world. Thus, Panji's wandering motif underwent a transformation into a spiritual journey connected to local cosmology.

4) *Transformation of Marriage Motives*

In Panji's story, the marriage of Panji and Candrakirana is a narrative climax that marks the end of the conflict and the restoration of harmony in the kingdom. In *Andi-andi*, the motif of marriage remains present, but it is often linked to a previously made cosmological promise or vow. For example, in the stories of Angkau Melayu and Galuh Mundam Kajinaman, marriage occurs as part of a promise made by their parents when begging for children.

Marriage in the story is not only a romantic event, but also involves ritual elements, traditional festivities, and the intervention of supernatural beings. Thus, the marriage motif undergoes a transformation from a symbol of the kingdom's political unity to a cosmological mechanism related to the balance of the world and the fulfillment of spiritual promises.

5) *Transformation of the Motive of Trials and Supernatural Powers*

The Panji stories do contain elements of heroism, but the main emphasis often lies on the values of loyalty, ingenuity, and leadership. In *Andi-andi*, the element of supernatural powers is a very dominant one. The characters in the story are often depicted as possessing supernatural abilities, such as traveling through the ether, transforming into shapes, or surviving punishments that would otherwise be fatal. For example, in the Malay Angkau story, the character is depicted as surviving despite experiencing various forms of extreme torture. This indicates the existence of a cosmic force protecting him. This emphasis on supernatural powers suggests that the narrative structure of *Andi-andi* is closer to the patterns of mythology and oral epic than to the royal romances such as in the classical Panji stories.

6) *Transformation of the Social Function of Stories*

Transformation occurs not only in the narrative structure, but also in the social function of the story. In the Javanese context, the Panji stories often functioned as court entertainment or as part of the performing arts that developed in elite cultural circles. On the other hand, in the *Andi-andi* tradition, stories have a much broader social function, including as entertainment in a family environment, a means of moral education, a medium for transmitting history and ancestral knowledge, and part of ritual practices such as vows or *hajat*. In some communities, *Andi-andi* may only be recited at certain times, such as at night, and in connection with specific ritual practices. This suggests that narratives similar to the Panji story have been transformed into part of the local knowledge and spiritual systems.

3.2. Ritualization of Narrative

Unlike Panji performances in theater or court performance art, *Andi-andi* storytelling is often linked to ritual practices. The narratives can appear in specific ceremonial contexts, such as vows or healing rituals. This integration shows that stories not only function as entertainment, but also as a medium of symbolic communication with the spiritual world.

3.3. Main Transformation Patterns

Based on the analysis above, the transformation of the Panji motif in the *Andi-andi* tradition can be summarized in the following main patterns presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Panji Transformation	
Panji Transformation	
Motifs in the Panji Narrative	Transformation in Andi-andi
The world of kingdoms	Cosmological landscape (mountains, sky, supernatural world)
Prince and princess of the kingdom	Ancestral figures or sacred figures
Romantic adventure	Spiritual journey
Royal marriage	Fulfillment of cosmological vows
Palace show	Ritual narrative art tradition

3.4. Discussion

1) *The Narrative of Panji's Transformation in the Andi-andi Tradition of South Kalimantan*

The transformation of the Panji narrative in the Andi-andi storytelling tradition of South Kalimantan illustrates how classical literary narratives are reconfigured when they enter the oral cultural environment of indigenous communities. Rather than reproducing the Panji story in its original textual form derived from Javanese court literature, the *Andi-andi* tradition reinterprets the narrative framework through the cosmological worldview, ritual practices, and socio-cultural experiences of the Dayak Meratus and Dayak Bakumpai communities. This transformation demonstrates that narratives circulating across cultural boundaries do not function as fixed textual entities, but rather as adaptable narrative structures that are continually reinterpreted within local storytelling practices [6], [7].

From the perspective of cultural memory studies, narrative traditions serve as symbolic frameworks through which societies interpret historical experiences and maintain collective identities. Cultural memory not only transmits historical information but also organizes meaning through narratives that reflect social values, cosmology, and identity formation [8]–[10]. From this perspective, the Panji narrative functions as a flexible narrative matrix capable of generating new meanings when integrated into different cultural contexts.

Consequently, the presence of the Panji motif in the *Andi-andi* story should not be interpreted as a derivative adaptation of Javanese literature, but rather as a process of vernacular reinterpretation in which transregional narratives are embedded within the indigenous symbolic systems of the Meratus people. The spread of the Panji narrative to South Kalimantan did not result in a direct textual replication of the classical Javanese narrative. Instead, the story underwent a complex process of narrative transformation shaped by cultural diffusion, narrative mobility, symbolic localization, performative reinterpretation, and ritual integration within the oral tradition.

Although many narrative elements have changed significantly, several structural motifs remain recognizable, including the hero's journey, a series of trials, supernatural assistance, and a final resolution through reunion or fulfillment. The resilience of these structural motifs suggests that the Panji narrative continues to function as an underlying narrative framework despite the transformation of its symbolic content.

2) Structural Continuity and Narrative Morphology

Structural narratology provides an important theoretical framework for understanding how narratives can change while maintaining their structural coherence. Roland Barthes argued that the meaning of narratives lies not in isolated events, but in the relational structures that connect narrative elements within a broader narrative system [11]. This perspective helps explain how the Panji narrative can undergo significant symbolic transformations within the *Andi-andi* tradition without losing its basic narrative structure.

The structural continuity of the Panji motif in the *Andi-andi* narrative is in good agreement with Vladimir Propp's morphological analysis of folklore. Propp identified recurring narrative functions such as departure, transgression of prohibitions, trials, magical aid, confession, and reunion as fundamental structural components of folklore [12]. Some of these narrative functions remain evident in the *Andi-andi* narrative, although their symbolic meanings have been reinterpreted within the cosmological framework of the Meratus community.

In classical Panji literature, the hero's journey to the villages is usually motivated by the search for Dewi Candrakirana after the separation of a royal couple. However, in the *Andi-andi* narrative tradition, this journey motif is transformed into a spiritual quest in which the protagonist leaves the sacred realm of heaven to undertake a cosmological journey across mountains, forests, and rivers. Similarly, narrative trials that originally involved political conflict or battles in the royal court are reinterpreted as encounters with supernatural forces, spiritual challenges, or cosmological obstacles.

These transformations demonstrate that although the narrative structure remains relatively stable, the symbolic meanings attached to the narrative function are reconfigured according to local cultural beliefs. This structural continuity also aligns with Joseph Campbell's concept of the "hero's journey," which posits that many narrative traditions share a universal archetypal pattern of departure, initiation, and return [13]. Panji's transformation in *Andi-andi* can be interpreted as a local reinterpretation of a broader archetypal narrative structure.

3) Cultural Diffusion and Narrative Mobility

The spread of the Panji narratives across Southeast Asia reflects broader processes of intercultural exchange and transregional connectivity. Cultural diffusion theory explains how cultural elements spread between societies through migration, trade networks, and intercultural interactions [14]. The maritime networks of the Indonesian archipelago have historically facilitated extensive cultural exchange, allowing narrative traditions such as the Panji cycle to circulate across regions. However, diffusion does not always result in identical cultural replication. Instead, cultural elements entering a new social environment are usually modified through interaction with local symbolic systems. The transformation of Panji's narrative in the *Andi-andi* story reflects this process of adaptive reinterpretation. Stephen Greenblatt's concept of narrative mobility further clarifies this dynamic.

According to Greenblatt, cultural texts move across geographical and social spaces and acquire new meanings when interacting with different cultural environments [15]. In the case of the *Andi-andi* story, narrative mobility produces a hybrid narrative form in which the structural framework of the Panji story intersects with the cosmological worldview of the Meratus people. The resulting narrative configuration is neither a direct continuation of the

Javanese Panji tradition nor a wholly independent mythological system, but rather a hybrid cultural form that emerges from intercultural interaction. This hybridization process aligns with theories of cultural hybridity and glocalization, which emphasize that elements of global culture are reinterpreted within local cultural contexts [16]–[18]. Similarly, Bhabha's concept of "third space" suggests that new cultural meanings emerge in the space of negotiation between different cultural traditions [19].

4) *Localization of Narrative Space and Cosmological Transformation*

One of the most significant transformations in *Andi-andi*'s adaptation of the Panji narrative concerns the reconfiguration of narrative space. In classical Panji literature, the narrative world centers around royal courts such as Kediri or Jenggala, reflecting the socio-political environment of East Javanese court culture, where conflicts revolved around dynastic alliances and royal romances. In contrast, *Andi-andi* storytelling shifts narrative space to cosmological landscapes such as sacred mountains, forests, heavenly realms, and supernatural realms. This spatial transformation reflects the cosmological worldview of the Meratus community, where the natural landscape is understood not simply as a physical environment but as a sacred territory inhabited by ancestral spirits.

Anthropological structuralism provides an important framework for interpreting this transformation. Claude Lévi-Strauss argued that myths are structured through symbolic oppositions such as nature versus culture, human versus supernatural, and upper world versus underworld [20]–[22]. The transformation of narrative space in *Andi-andi* represents a reorganization of the Panji narrative according to symbolic oppositions that correspond to the cosmology of the Meratus Mountains and the Barito River. Mircea Eliade's theory of myth further clarifies this process. Eliade argued that myths function as sacred narratives that explain cosmological order and legitimize cultural practices [23]. In the *Andi-andi* tradition, the Panji narrative undergoes a process of re-sacralization as it is integrated into the spiritual cosmology of the Meratus community.

5) *Mainstreaming Local Cultural Character and Identity*

Another important transformation occurs in the representation of narrative characters. In classical Panji literature, the protagonists Panji Asmarabangun and Dewi Candrakirana symbolize the ideals of royal leadership, aristocratic virtue, and court romance. However, in the *Andi-andi* narrative, these characters are replaced by local figures such as Bungsu Kaling, Angkau Melayu, and Galuh Mendam Kajinaman. This transformation reflects the processes of epistemic localization and indigenization of knowledge. According to Alatas, indigenization occurs when external cultural concepts are reinterpreted within a local epistemological framework [24].

Rather than passively adopting foreign cultural material, communities actively transform it to align with their own cultural experiences and worldviews. In *Andi-andi* storytelling, this indigenization extends beyond renaming characters. Their symbolic roles are also redefined. While Panji figures represent the royal elite in the classical tradition, *Andi-andi* protagonists often emerge as mythical heroes or ancestral figures connected to the spiritual realm. Through this process, Panji narratives become embedded in local identity formation and cultural memory.

6) *Performative Reinterpretation in the Tradition of Oral Arts*

The transformation of the Panji narrative is also shaped by the performative nature of the oral storytelling tradition. Unlike written literature, oral narratives exist primarily as performative events rather than fixed textual artifacts. Storytelling involves vocal performance, rhythm, gesture, and interaction between narrator and listener. Performance theory emphasizes that cultural meaning is produced through repeated social acts, not through the transmission of static texts [25]–[27].

In oral traditions, storytellers typically maintain a general narrative framework while improvising narrative details during performance [28]–[30]. Therefore, each *Andi-andi* performance becomes an interpretive event in which the inherited narrative structure is creatively reconfigured according to the social context, ritual environment, and audience expectations. This improvisational flexibility allows the Panji narrative to remain dynamic and responsive to changing cultural conditions.

7) *Ritualization and the Social Function of Narrative*

The transformation of the Panji narrative into the Andi-andi storytelling is further strengthened by its integration into ritual practices. Anthropological studies show that narrative and ritual often function as interconnected symbolic systems through which societies articulate cosmological knowledge [31]–[33]. In the *Andi-andi* tradition, storytelling often occurs during ritual events such as vow ceremonies or healing rituals. In this context, narrative performance becomes a symbolic medium through which communication with the spiritual world is realized. Therefore, narratives acquire ritual significance that goes beyond their literary function.

This ritual integration marks a significant shift from the classical Panji tradition, which historically served primarily as a form of court entertainment within an aristocratic cultural context. In *Andi-andi* storytelling, the narrative serves broader social functions, including moral education, the transmission of ancestral knowledge, ritual participation, and communal entertainment. From a sociolinguistic perspective, narrative performances function as social practices through which communities construct collective identities and negotiate shared meanings [34]–[36].

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the transformation of the Panji narrative within the *Andi-andi* storytelling tradition represents a multidimensional cultural process shaped by structural continuity, cultural diffusion, localization, performative reinterpretation, and ritual integration. Although the narrative undergoes substantial symbolic transformation, its basic structural motifs such as the hero's journey, narrative trials, and final resolution remain recognizable. The presence of Panji elements in South Kalimantan reflects broader processes of cultural diffusion and narrative mobility within Southeast Asian historical networks, in which transregional narratives circulate and interact with local cultural systems [37]. In the Meratus and Barito River valley communities, these interactions result in a process of cosmological localization and character indigenization, in which classical Panji figures and courtly settings are reconfigured into local mythological characters and cosmological landscapes associated with sacred mountains, forests, and supernatural realms. At the same time, the performative nature of oral storytelling allows narratives to remain flexible and constantly reinterpreted through improvised performances, while the integration of storytelling within ritual contexts embeds narratives in the spiritual and social life of communities as a medium for moral education, the transmission of ancestral knowledge, and symbolic communication with the spiritual world. Consequently, the *Andi-andi* tradition illustrates how classical court narratives originating from the Panji cycle evolved into a living narrative tradition through a process of narrative hybridization that integrates the Panji heritage with local mythology, the cosmology of the Meratus Mountains and the Barito River, and ritual practices. These findings contribute to narratology and cultural anthropology by demonstrating that the mobility of narratives across cultural regions does not result in identical reproduction, but rather a structural reconstruction in which core narrative motifs are retained while symbolic elements such as characters, narrative space, and narrative meaning are reconfigured according to the cosmological system of the receiving community. Study broadens understanding of the spread of the Panji tradition outside Java and confirms that the oral tradition serves as a dynamic cultural arena in which communities actively reinterpret narratives across cultures to construct local identities, cosmological knowledge, and collective cultural memory, while future comparative research across Southeast Asia can further elucidate the patterns of narrative mobility, cosmological variation, and cultural adaptation that shape the diversity of the Panji tradition in the region.

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