

## **Digitalization of Hadih Maja as an Effort to Preserve Acehnese Oral Tradition: A Structural and Aesthetic Analysis Based on Roland Barthes' Semiotics and Hans Robert Jauss' Reception Theory in Pedir Museum, Pidie Jaya**

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### **Abstract**

Acehnese oral tradition is a cultural heritage deeply rooted in the values of social life, religion, and customary law. Hadih Maja, a form of Acehnese oral literary expression, has gradually diminished in daily use due to modernization and digital disruption. This study aims to analyze the structure and aesthetics of Hadih Maja by applying Roland Barthes' semiotic theory and Hans Robert Jauss' reception theory. The research also explores the role of digitalization as a means to preserve and revitalize Hadih Maja for younger generations. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected from manuscripts in the Pedir Museum, Pidie Jaya, along with interviews and observations. The findings reveal that Hadih Maja is constructed through symbolic language conveying moral, social, and spiritual values. The digitalization of Hadih Maja is shown to be an innovative strategy to strengthen cultural identity and ensure sustainability in the modern era.

**Keywords:** Hadih Maja, oral literature, digitalization, Acehnese culture, semiotics.

## **Digitalisasi Hadih Maja sebagai Upaya Pelestarian Tradisi Lisan Aceh: Analisis Struktural dan Estetika Berdasarkan Semiotika Roland Barthes dan Teori Resepsi Hans Robert Jauss di Museum Pedir, Pidie Jaya**

### **Abstrak**

*Tradisi lisan Aceh merupakan warisan budaya yang berakar kuat pada nilai-nilai kehidupan sosial, agama, dan hukum adat. Hadih Maja, sebagai salah satu bentuk ekspresi sastra lisan Aceh, kini mengalami penurunan penggunaan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari akibat modernisasi dan disrupti digital. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis struktur dan estetika Hadih Maja dengan menerapkan teori semiotika Roland Barthes dan teori resepsi Hans Robert Jauss. Penelitian ini juga menelusuri peran digitalisasi sebagai sarana pelestarian dan revitalisasi Hadih Maja bagi generasi muda. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, data dikumpulkan dari naskah-naskah yang terdapat di Museum Pedir, Pidie Jaya, serta melalui wawancara dan observasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Hadih Maja dibangun melalui bahasa simbolik yang menyampaikan nilai-nilai moral, sosial, dan spiritual. Digitalisasi Hadih Maja terbukti menjadi strategi inovatif untuk memperkuat identitas budaya dan menjamin keberlanjutannya di era modern.*

**Kata Kunci:** Madih Maja, Sastra Lisan, Digitalisasi, Budaya Aceh, Semiotika.

### **Introduction**

Aceh is recognized for its cultural richness, particularly through oral traditions that reflect a strong interconnectedness between Islamic teachings, social norms, and

customary values. Among these traditions, Hadih Maja serves as one of the most influential forms of oral literature, conveying cultural wisdom and community ethics.

Throughout its history, *Hadih Maja* has functioned as a medium of education and social regulation, shaping moral conduct and guiding daily behavior among Acehnese society. Its concise, metaphorical expressions encapsulate philosophical views that are deeply rooted in Acehnese identity (Qanun, 2023).

However, rapid modernization has significantly shifted cultural practices, especially among younger generations. Global media influences, technological development, and changing lifestyles have led to a declining role of oral traditions in social interaction and learning processes. The transmission of *Hadih Maja*, once passed orally from elders to youth, is becoming increasingly limited. This situation needs serious attention, as the weakening of cultural transmission threatens the preservation of Acehnese values and historical continuity (Geertz, 1973).

Despite these challenges, digital technology presents new opportunities for revitalizing oral heritage. Through digitalization, *Hadih Maja* can be widely documented, preserved, and disseminated in accessible formats that appeal to modern audiences. This study examines the structural and aesthetic features of *Hadih Maja* using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory and Hans Robert Jauss' reception theory to uncover cultural meanings embedded within the text. It further emphasizes digitalization as an essential strategy for sustaining Acehnese intangible cultural heritage and strengthening its relevance in contemporary society.

### Oral Tradition: *Hadih Maja*

The term *Hadih Maja* originates from two words: *hadih*, derived from the Arabic word *hadis*, and *maja*, which refers to ancestors, known in Acehnese society as *indatu*. In simple terms, *Hadih Maja* means words of wisdom or advice inherited from the ancestors as a guide for the Acehnese way of life. More specifically, *Hadih Maja*

represents proverbs, teachings, or counsel from elders or ancestors that regulate all aspects of life interconnected between religious law, social norms, and customary traditions (Syahputera et al., 2024). However, as time progresses, the people of Aceh have begun to rarely use these proverbs in their daily lives, even though they were once highly prevalent and popular among the community. This is evident through the efforts of the Aceh government together with the Majelis Adat Aceh (MAA), which in recent years has collected and compiled *Hadih Maja* manuscripts and planned to include them in school curricula (HZ, 2021).

In 2020, MAA Banda Aceh published a book containing approximately 2,500–3,000 *Hadih Maja*, with the hope of strengthening the traditional customs and wisdom of the ancestors (*keuneubah para indatu*) (HZ, 2020). However, has this initiative been truly effective? Changes in lifestyle brought about by globalization and modernization have influenced the younger generation of Aceh, who are now more familiar with popular culture than local traditions. Easy access to information has also shifted mindsets, leading to a decline in young people's interest in preserving Indonesia's traditional arts (Nurhasanah et al., 2021).

As an essential part of Acehnese civilization and cultural heritage, this tradition must be properly documented and transmitted to future generations through appropriate means. Therefore, it is crucial to review and refine strategies for preserving this tradition in accordance with contemporary developments, to capture public interest especially that of younger generations as the heirs of this heritage (Kemendikbud, 2023). The influence of globalization and the rise of digital technology have brought forth a new phenomenon known as Digital Disruption, which replaces old habits with new approaches, changing the way people access information, interact, and communicate. The

researcher observes that this creates a duality: both a challenge and an opportunity for cultural preservation. On one hand, *Hadih Maja* faces the risk of being forgotten due to a lack of attention among younger generations immersed in technological sophistication. On the other hand, digital technology offers great potential to introduce and preserve this tradition in more accessible, engaging, and relevant ways for those raised in a digital environment.

This digitalization effort also aligns with the Aceh Qanun of 2023 on the advancement of Acehnese culture, particularly point 19, which states that the digitalization of Acehnese culture is an effort to utilize information and communication technology to enhance cultural productivity. In this context, the digitalization of *Hadih Maja* represents an innovative step toward preserving its continuity amidst modern progress. The process not only ensures that *Hadih Maja* remains part of Aceh's cultural heritage but also increases its potential to be recognized globally turning it into a symbol of Indonesia's rich cultural identity.

One of the unique features of *Hadih Maja* lies in its rhythm and intonation. Technology can help preserve these aesthetic elements through audiovisual media, ensuring that the rhythm and tone remain intact while allowing people from different generations to appreciate its cultural value. Digitalization serves not only as a means of documentation but also as a way to safeguard the aesthetic quality and cultural context inherent in this tradition. As stated in the National Conference on Literature and Culture, oral literature should not only be introduced in textual form; in the digital era, the recording and visualization of oral literature can serve as an engaging medium to attract the younger generation to learn and appreciate it (Likinasih et al., 2017).

## Result and Discussion

### General Overview of the Research Location

In this section, the researcher describes the general overview of the research location, which serves as the primary site for data collection during the research process. The study was conducted at Pedir Museum, located in Blang Glong Village, Bandar Baru Subdistrict, Pidie Jaya Regency, Aceh Province.

Pedir Museum is a museum situated in Blang Glong, Pidie Jaya, with a branch in Punge Blang Cut, Banda Aceh. The museum was founded by Masykur Syarifuddin on June 6, 2015. It houses various ancient artifacts from Aceh's civilization, such as manuscripts, coins, weapons, ceramics, and other archaeological objects. Currently, Pedir Museum has a collection of approximately 5,000 historical items.

The museum was established independently in mid 2015 after a year of effort by Masykur to collect historical artifacts. Masykur initially began searching for manuscripts in 2014 by purchasing them from local residents and antique traders. His motivation stemmed from concern over the large number of Acehnese artifacts being sold abroad. The museum's name itself refers to the historical Kingdom of Pedir, which was located in the Pidie region (Museum Pedir, 2015).

To date, Pedir Museum holds around 2,870 collections, including 462 manuscript texts. Its collection of ancient coins from the 12th to the 19th centuries totals around 1,000 pieces. In addition, the museum also preserves jewelry, weapons, royal archives, fabrics and textiles, ethnographic and archaeological objects, as well as fossil discoveries. The oldest item in the museum's collection is a coin belonging to Caliph Al-Ma'mun from the Abbasid Dynasty, dated 202 Hijri, along with two other coins from Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, dating back to the 12th century AD.

Pedir Museum is frequently visited by researchers and students who study ancient Acehnese manuscripts. The museum also organizes learning activities focused on reading and understanding old manuscripts (Syarifuddin, 2025).

### ***Hadih Maja in the Manuscript “Kumpulan Teks”***

Pedir Museum serves as a manuscript collection center that houses 462 manuscripts, all of which have been carefully organized into a systematic catalog. This collection stands as tangible evidence of Aceh's rich intellectual and cultural heritage from the past. Each manuscript preserved in this museum holds significant historical, philological, and cultural value, as they contain various aspects of Acehnese life, including religion, customary law, literature, and moral teachings. Based on the research conducted, among the 462 manuscripts, approximately 40 manuscripts were found to contain Hadih Maja, traditional Acehnese expressions rich with wisdom and moral values. This finding indicates that Hadih Maja holds an important position in the literary tradition of Acehnese society. Furthermore, the presence of Hadih Maja in several manuscripts demonstrates that local values had long been immortalized through written texts, not solely passed down orally.

However, among the 40 manuscripts found, only one manuscript contains a complete and intact collection of Hadih Maja. This manuscript is a highly valuable discovery, as it preserves the original form of Hadih Maja without any textual additions. Meanwhile, in the other manuscripts, Hadih Maja appears only as supplementary content accompanying primary texts, such as religious writings, epic tales (hikayat), or broader moral teachings. This indicates that the function of Hadih Maja in most manuscripts is not as the main subject, but rather as a reinforcement or illustration of ethical values within the text. Nevertheless, its presence remains crucial as it reflects

how the Acehnese people in the past embedded local wisdom through the integration of literature and cultural values. Thus, Pedir Museum is not merely a repository of ancient manuscripts but also a space for preserving Aceh's cultural values manifested through written heritage.

The aforementioned manuscript serves as the main object of this research, as it is considered the most representative in depicting the structure and content of Hadih Maja comprehensively. This manuscript is the primary source for understanding the structure, function, and aesthetic values contained within Hadih Maja. According to the Pedir Museum catalog, this manuscript titled “Kumpulan Teks” (Collection of Texts) is categorized as a unique manuscript, as no other copies with identical content or form have been found. Its uniqueness lies not only in its rarity but also in its profound moral and philosophical values, which are integral to Acehnese culture.

Interestingly, this manuscript does not include a clear title, unlike other manuscripts that usually have an identifying marker at the beginning or end of the text. Therefore, Pedir Museum assigned the temporary title “Kumpulan Teks” for cataloging and research purposes (Syarifuddin, 2025). This naming serves to facilitate the identification and accessibility of the manuscript, even though its original title from the author remains unknown. Consequently, this Hadih Maja manuscript functions not only as an academic research source but also as concrete evidence of the importance of preserving Acehnese literary heritage in the form of ancient texts that encapsulate the noble values of past societies.

Within the manuscript titled “Kumpulan Teks”, the researcher identified a significant number of Hadih Maja that are systematically and neatly arranged. After conducting reading, transliteration, and content identification, it was found that the manuscript contains eighty Hadih Maja. Each

*Hadih Maja* possesses distinct characteristics in terms of linguistic structure, meaning, and social context. The considerable number of *Hadih Maja* within this manuscript signifies its importance as a medium for documenting the local wisdom of Acehnese society. Thus, the manuscript serves not only as a philological artifact but also as a representation of cultural wisdom passed down through generations in the form of traditional literature (Baried, Siti Baroroh, 1994).

From the total of eighty *Hadih Maja*, the researcher conducted a selection and classification process based on thematic similarity and semantic relevance. This stage aimed to focus the research object, allowing for deeper and more targeted analysis aligned with the study's objectives. Through this selection process, twenty *Hadih Maja* were chosen as the primary focus of the study. The selection was based on the philosophical depth and the representativeness of their themes in depicting the Acehnese philosophy of life.

The philosophy of life theme was chosen as the focus of this study because it is considered to reflect the core values contained in *Hadih Maja*. *Hadih Maja* is not merely a collection of proverbs or traditional expressions but rather a reflection of the Acehnese worldview encompassing moral, social, and spiritual dimensions. Through *Hadih Maja*, the Acehnese people have long embedded principles of ethics, wisdom, and social responsibility into their daily lives. Therefore, studying *Hadih Maja* with the theme of the philosophy of life is expected to reveal the value system that underlies the behavior and worldview of the Acehnese people throughout generations. This study also provides insights into how local wisdom manifests through oral literary expressions that were later transcribed into written form.

The establishment of the philosophy of life theme in this study was based on direct field observations conducted by the

researcher. The observations aimed to assess the extent to which the values of *Hadih Maja* are still internalized and practiced in contemporary society. The findings indicate that the people of Aceh particularly in Pidie Jaya Regency continue to regard *Hadih Maja* as a moral guide in daily life. Its presence remains visible in various social and cultural events, demonstrating that the philosophical values it contains have not undergone significant shifts in meaning. Thus, the philosophy of life theme is deemed the most appropriate to represent the continuity between textual tradition and social practice.

In addition to observation, the researcher also conducted in-depth interviews with several traditional leaders in Blang Glong Village, Bandar Baru Subdistrict, Pidie Jaya Regency (Tuha Peut, 2025). The interviews aimed to obtain firsthand information about the function and role of *Hadih Maja* in the social and customary life of the community. The results reveal that *Hadih Maja* is still frequently used in various traditional ceremonies, such as weddings, dispute resolutions, and customary deliberations. The traditional leaders stated that *Hadih Maja* serves as a medium for conveying moral, ethical, and social values that are highly regarded in Acehnese society. This reinforces the view that *Hadih Maja* continues to hold a vital position as a moral compass in communal life.

The results of these interviews and observations strengthen the theoretical foundation of this study, affirming that *Hadih Maja* reflects the philosophy of life of the Acehnese people, which remains relevant today. Through the empirical data obtained in the field, the researcher was able to connect the written text within the manuscript to the social realities that persist within society. Consequently, the analysis of the selected twenty *Hadih Maja* focuses not only on textual aspects but also on the surrounding sociocultural context. This

approach enables a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between literary heritage and living cultural practices (Sugiyono, 2011).

By focusing on twenty *Hadih Maja* centered around the philosophy of life, this study aims to make a significant contribution to the preservation of Acehnese literature. The research not only serves to document the text but also to interpret the values within it, ensuring their continued relevance in modern life. Moreover, this study enriches academic discussions on *Hadih Maja*, particularly in the context of preserving oral literature that has been transformed into written form. Ultimately, this research stands as evidence that the philosophical values embedded in *Hadih Maja* constitute an intellectual legacy of the Acehnese people one that deserves to be preserved and developed as a cornerstone of Acehnese cultural identity (Moleong, 2007).

### **Structural and Aesthetic Analysis of *Hadih Maja***

In this section, the researcher will analyze the *Hadih Maja* found in the manuscript "Kumpulan Teks", focusing on the main theme the philosophy of life of the Acehnese people. This analysis aims to uncover the values of wisdom and life perspectives contained in each *Hadih Maja*. The theme of life philosophy was chosen because it best represents the moral and ethical character of the Acehnese community, as reflected through these traditional expressions. Thus, this study not only seeks to interpret the meaning of the texts but also to understand the socio-cultural context behind them.

In analyzing the structure of *Hadih Maja*, the researcher employs Roland Barthes' semiotic theory as the primary theoretical framework. This theory is used to reveal the hidden layers of meaning behind the linguistic signs that construct *Hadih Maja*. Through the semiotic approach, each word, phrase, and symbol in *Hadih Maja* is

interpreted as a system of signs that contains both denotative and connotative meanings (Sobur, 2013). This analysis is expected to explain how the linguistic structure of *Hadih Maja* functions to convey the philosophical values of Acehnese life.

Furthermore, in the analysis of aesthetic elements, the researcher applies Hans Robert Jauss' reception theory. This theory focuses on how texts are received, interpreted, and understood by readers or communities in different temporal contexts. This approach allows the researcher to view *Hadih Maja* not only as a traditional literary text but also as a living work within the aesthetic experience of society. Therefore, the reception theory is employed to understand how beauty, moral values, and cultural messages in *Hadih Maja* are appreciated by the Acehnese people across generations.

The combination of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory and Hans Robert Jauss' reception theory is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the *Hadih Maja* texts. Semiotic analysis offers deep insight into the structure and sign system within the text, while reception theory helps interpret the meaning and aesthetic values that emerge through the interaction between text and reader (Alegra, 2023). With this dual approach, the study can reveal not only how *Hadih Maja* is constructed as a literary work but also how it functions as a medium for shaping the cultural consciousness of the Acehnese people.

The following section presents an analysis of the *Hadih Maja* collected by the researcher based on the theme of life philosophy. This analysis focuses on understanding the meanings, structures, and values embedded in each *Hadih Maja* that reflects the worldview of the Acehnese people. The theme of life philosophy was chosen because it encompasses moral, social, and spiritual principles that serve as guidance for community life. Each *Hadih Maja* is understood not merely as a

traditional saying but also as a cultural reflection that demonstrates the wisdom and worldview of the Acehnese toward life.

In the process of analysis, the researcher traces how philosophical messages are conveyed through linguistic structures and symbolic expressions, while also examining the aesthetic and reception aspects to see how these values are received and appreciated by society over time (Jauss, H. R., & Benzinger, 1970). Thus, this analysis is expected to reveal the depth of meaning and the continuing relevance of *Hadih Maja* as an oral literary heritage embodying the life philosophy of the Acehnese people to this day.

### **The Role of *Hadih Maja* Literary Digitalization in Supporting the Sustainability and Promotion of Acehnese Culture Among the Younger Generation and the Global Community**

As one of the traditional literary forms rich in meaning, *Hadih Maja* embodies moral, social, and spiritual values that have served as a guide for the Acehnese people for centuries. However, along with the passage of time, the transmission of these values faces challenges due to lifestyle changes and the declining interest of the younger generation in local culture. Through digitalization, *Hadih Maja* can be revitalized in more accessible and engaging formats, such as e-books, social media, and online educational platforms. This transformation not only preserves the literary text but also makes it relevant to the needs of the modern digital era.

The digitalization process of *Hadih Maja* also offers great opportunities for Acehnese youth to reconnect with their cultural roots. By presenting *Hadih Maja* in digital formats such as audio, video, or infographics, young people can learn about Acehnese philosophical values through interactive and contextual approaches. This makes *Hadih Maja* not merely a historical relic but a source of inspiration and

character formation that can be applied in contemporary life. Moreover, digitalization fosters intergenerational dialogue between the elders and the youth in reinterpreting the wisdom contained within. Thus, *Hadih Maja* is not only preserved but also revitalized as a dynamic cultural heritage that adapts to the times.

Furthermore, the digitalization of *Hadih Maja* contributes to introducing Acehnese culture to the global stage as part of Indonesia's rich cultural heritage with universal values. Through translation into various languages and dissemination via international digital platforms, the philosophical messages within *Hadih Maja* can be appreciated by global audiences. This effort has the potential to strengthen Aceh's image as a region of deep civilization, religiosity, and humanity (Admin, 2024). Additionally, digitalization enables cross cultural collaboration among researchers, academics, and global communities in the fields of literature and cultural studies. Hence, *Hadih Maja* becomes a cultural bridge that enriches intercultural dialogue and broadens understanding of Indonesian local wisdom worldwide.

Ultimately, the digitalization of *Hadih Maja* literature is not merely a preservation effort but also a cultural transformation strategy to ensure the continuity of Acehnese noble values in the era of globalization. Through digital technology, *Hadih Maja* can serve as a relevant tool for character education among young people and as a source of cultural knowledge for the wider public. The involvement of various stakeholders such as educational institutions, local governments, and cultural communities is key to the success of this endeavor. With continuous support and collaboration, the digitalization of *Hadih Maja* can strengthen Aceh's cultural identity while promoting it as a proud intellectual heritage of the nation. Thus, the wisdom contained in *Hadih Maja* will continue to live, be known, and be appreciated by current

and future generations both locally and globally.

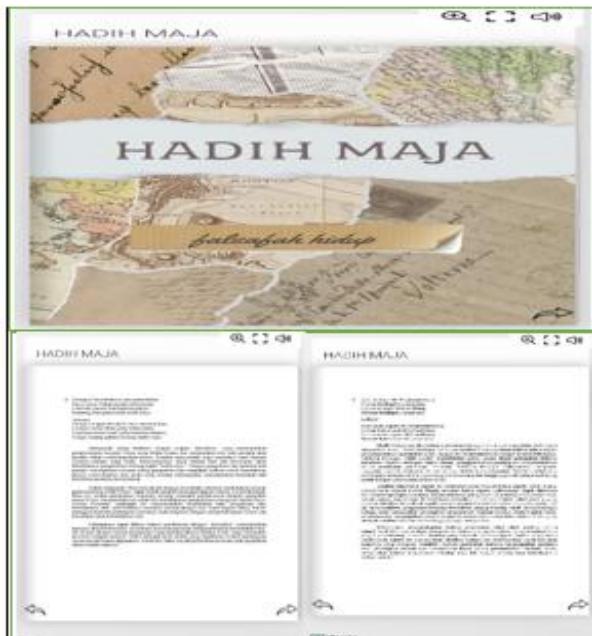


Figure 1. Digitalization of *Hadih Maja*

Finally, after completing the entire series of research particularly regarding the role of *Hadih Maja* digitalization in supporting the sustainability and promotion of Acehnese culture among younger generations and the global community it can be concluded that technological innovation plays a significant role in preserving this oral tradition. Through the use of digital media, *Hadih Maja* literature becomes more accessible, learnable, and appreciable by various audiences without the limitations of space and time. Therefore, as a tangible implementation of this research, the researcher has carried out the digitalization process in the form of a flipbook-based e-book: <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/f24f13c20d.html>, which is expected to serve as an effective and sustainable medium for cultural education and preservation.

## Conclusion

Based on the research conducted on the *Hadih Maja* manuscript within the "Kumpulan Teks" at Pedir Museum, it can be concluded that *Hadih Maja* is a form of

traditional Acehnese literature that holds profound philosophical values encompassing moral, social, spiritual, and cultural aspects. From the 462 manuscripts catalogued in Pedir Museum, one manuscript was identified as containing *Hadih Maja* in its entirety and became the main focus of this study. The manuscript comprises 80 *Hadih Maja*, of which 20 were selected as the primary objects of analysis based on philosophical themes that reflect the worldview of the Acehnese people.

Structurally, *Hadih Maja* was analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to explore the denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings embedded within the texts. The analysis revealed that each expression of *Hadih Maja* functions as a sign system illustrating ethical, theological, and social values integrated into the life of the Acehnese community. From an aesthetic perspective, Hans Robert Jauss' reception theory was employed to interpret how *Hadih Maja* has been received and appreciated by society across generations. The findings show that *Hadih Maja* is not only valuable as literature but also serves as a medium for moral education and cultural value transmission.

Additionally, this study affirms that *Hadih Maja* retains strong relevance in contemporary Acehnese society. Values such as religiosity, justice, diligence, prudence, and humility continue to be upheld as essential life principles. In the modern context, the digitalization of *Hadih Maja* plays a crucial role in ensuring the continuity and global recognition of Acehnese culture, especially among younger generations. Digital preservation efforts make *Hadih Maja* more accessible, learnable, and appreciable as a rich intellectual heritage.

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