

# The Legend of Si Pitung and its Cultural Adaptation to Movies and Comics: Comparison of Literature with its Character Design Representations

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## Abstract

The legend of Si Pitung has been a part of the Betawi community for decades. The presence of Si Pitung was a commotion for the Dutch who at that time occupied Batavia and until now the story that continues to reverberate is as an exemplary tale of heroism and generosity. Character design is an important part of the production of comics, animation and games. Character is a profile entity that will play a role in a certain context in conveying the ideological content that represents a group. Character design is an attempt to bring an imaginary character to life. The increasingly vibrant world of Intellectual Property (IP) will have an impact on the comic and animation industry and even begin to penetrate the world of computer games in Indonesia, in connection with this, it is often seen that new character designs are only limited to visual aspects, so that the characters appearing in comics or animation in Indonesia are apparently not well designed. Comics, animation and games are media that can be used to convey educational material both formal and informal. This research is about exploring character designs based on the visual, philosophical and ideological riches of Si Pitung and its adaptation.

**Keywords:** Character Design, Si Pitung, Betawi Culture

## Introduction

Character design is a visual expression of a concept that has a role to serve and fulfill a great story that is present and its scope. The characters that are present can be applied in various media, such as comics and animation, must be able to build an understanding with the audience so that messages, information, or whatever is the content can be conveyed more effectively. Character designs that are successful are those that are able to create closeness to the audience, their presence in comics or animation is not just an image, figure, or model, but is a representation of a character who has his own life story.

The legend of Si Pitung has become a part of the lives of Betawi residents, many stories have developed and as a story, it will require the form of characters needed to bridge the story and become part of the story. To tell a story that is widely recognized by the community, several

things become important when there is a question about how accurate the character design is to match the data that has been consumed by the community for generations.

Characters are created not only with rough sketches without in-depth study of things related to character development outside of the visual aspect.

The process of designing a character must cover various aspects as a whole, such as visual, psychological, language, ideology and so on. Attention to character design in local comics and animation must be increased so that at least there will be an alternative character design amid the hegemony of imported products that has a tremendous influence not only on the audience, but also on comic and animation creators in Indonesia.

The adaptation of character designs from legendary stories as one of Indonesia's cultural treasures has enormous potential to be developed and can become a stepping stone in the exploration of contemporary character design. Legend stories contain various kinds of characters who are close to the roots of Indonesian culture, so that the development of character designs from legend stories will be very relevant and can one day have identities that can be recognized as coming from Indonesia.

### **Literature Review**

This study aims to make a comparison of the visual, philosophical and ideological exploration of the Si Pitung character with sources in the form of literature so that it can be seen how far the adaptations have been made to present these figures to the community, especially Betawi.

Furthermore, it is hoped that it can become a reference and encourage further research on character design based on cultural wealth in Indonesia.

IP character design is a bridge which, when built firmly, will become a foundation that can support the ideas / ideas to be conveyed with comic or animation media. Character design is not just about pictures or models. But it always keeps messages, ideas, philosophies and even ideologies so that they can reflect the social conditions of the society in which the work was born. Characters in local comics and animation can also influence social psychological conditions towards improvement if they are used appropriately. This comparative research includes visual, philosophical and ideological

### **Method**

This study uses Visual Research Methodology, which is a practice-based approach, which evaluates the application of video-based learning principles. This research method has the following characteristics:

- Experiment / explore, collect, document information, and produce data / evidence.
- Reflect and evaluate information, selecting the most relevant information.
- Analyze, interpret, and create information.
- Synthesize and communicate research findings, planning new research.

As a simplification of the process, we divide it into three major activities :

- Define at this stage we determine what problems we will present in an effort to present a stage of the character visualization process.
- Research is a stage that will determine how close the resulting character design will be with the data obtained.
- The resulting prototype is the result of verbal data analysis which is then realized in visual form.

The crux of the problem that I want to find out is how all this time the character designers have tried to

- Perform the profile formation of the character to be created
- Collecting data about the character to be designed
- Visualize the data obtained

Some things that need to be added are that we must also remember that the characters discussed are not characters that stand alone but are characters that are part of a group in society that is known to transcend city boundaries. Some things that should also be considered:

- How is the relationship between the main character and other characters who side with him?
- Does the main character have very close supporters (brothers, friends, parents)?
- Does the main character have any special supporters?
- How is the relationship between the main character and other characters who are his opponents?
- Does the main character have a special opponent?

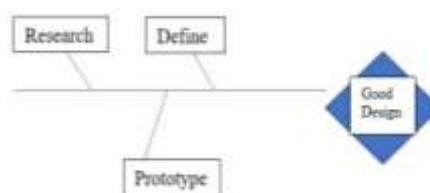


Figure 1. Design process (Source: personal)



Figure 2. Character diagram (Source: Google)

## Results and Discussion

The diagram above shows several quadrants that can be used as a reference in determining the profile of the characters we make. The embodiment of characters that are part of folklore, if the story is well-made and detailed is an easy thing, but this is not the case if the description of the characters in the story is not disclosed in detail. The thing that is an

important part of this writing is actually the ethos of designing based on available verbal data. Turning a verbal concept into a visual concept has several important stages if we want to produce a good character design product, this is not merely following the trend strictly but making it a bridge between an abstract and concrete image.

Character design using the diagrammatic guidelines above will give dimensions to the design so that the presence of the character we design does not appear as a character who is separated from the circle of influence from the presence of the individuals around him. Of course, the influence of culture and environmental conditions such as nature and daily life also has an influence in shaping these characters but of course requires another discussion. In this discussion, we focus first on the character diagram as shown in Figure 2.

Si Pitung is a figure who influences each other with individuals who are part of his life journey. Some of the people who had a relationship with him were divided into two groups: supporters and enemies. The support group consisted of several individuals such as Haji Naipin, Si Pitung's teacher in religion and martial arts, and his friends in robbery such as Dji-ih, Rais and Jebul. The group that was against him was the Dutch police, led by A.W.V. Hinne who dedicates her time to hunting down and ending Si Pitung's life.

The influence of the interaction that occurs between these individuals presents the logical side of the changes that occur in the nature, behavior, way of thinking and so on. An example is the change that occurred in Si Pitung's personality from being an ordinary young man into a fierce robber and even capable of murder. This condition is of course also something that needs to be considered as an effort to visually present the figure of Si Pitung.

In the visual design of a character, it should be done based on verbal concepts that arise from reference sources because as stated earlier that the presence of these verbal concepts will give dimensions to the character we design.

In character designing, it should be done by referring to the verbal concept because characters are part of the story and have the duty to serve the story. This paper wants to show that there is still neglect when character designing is carried out. It looks trivial but can be used as an indicator of how deep you care when doing the design. The following is the basic data obtained

Tabel 1

*Character Base Data*

Data		Information
Name	Salihoen/ Si Pitung	What / what is our character's name?
Age	Small to adulthood	How old was it when the story happened?
Height	165	How tall is he?
Weight	-	How much weight?
Facial Shape	Rounded	
Gender	Man	Man or woman
Ethnic	Malay	Humans, monsters, dwarves etc.

Tabel 2

*Additional Information*

<b>Character Specifics</b>	
Clothes	How are our characters dressed? Neat, messy, relaxed, professional.
Behavior	How the behavior of leaders we have different with the character of the other?
Habit	What habits do you have, are they bad or good? Reading, chewing a pencil, scratching your nose, etc.
Health	What is the health condition of our character?
Hobby	What hobbies does our character have? Sports, video games, burning trash etc.
Special words	Any appeals or words that are typical (if there is).
Sound	What kind of voice does our character have? Heavy, soft, rough etc.
How to walk	How does he walk? Upright, anxious, etc.
Weakness	What weaknesses are owned figure we have?
Bad Value	What matter worst that there is the figure that we designed this?
Quality of kindness	This is what makes this character great and respected.
<b>Social Character</b>	
Origin.	Where do our characters come from?
Place of residence	Where now the characters must stay?
Profession	What is the job?
Expertise	What skills and abilities do you have that are useful in the story?
Family conditions	Do you have a family, brother?
Status	What is his status in the story? farmers, warriors, trader and so on.
<b>Emotional Character</b>	
Introvert or extrovert	How does this character deal with everyday life?
Motivation	What that makes figure we eagerly start his day?
Fright	What are feared by the leaders of this?
Excitement	Any course that made him happy?
Relationships with other humans	In social, emotional? etc

If we read the description of Si Pitung, there will be some data that does not materialize in some of the characters of Pitung that are presented as a design product. The form of Si Pitung is present in several media as follows

- Movies
- Comics

Before we start, let's try to complete some of the things below.

Tabel 3

*Design approaches*

Character Specifics	
Clothes	Daily clothes that are usually worn by the public in the period 1888-1924
Behavior	fierce
Habit	Martial arts training
Health	Helathy
Hobby	-
Special words	-
Sound	Soft
How to walk	-
Weakness	Golden bullet
Bad Value	A rogue that is ferocious and can kill
Quality of kindness	Caring for the welfare of the poor
Social Character	
Origin.	Rawa belong
Place of residence	pengumben
Profession	robber
Expertise	Pencak silat and magic
Family conditions	Four brothers
Status	robber
Emotional Character	
Introvert or extrovert	Extrovert
Motivation	Defending the poor
Fright	-
Excitement	Distributing wealth to the poor
Relationships with other humans	hero

The picture that can be collected during this research is as we can see above, there are some details which are then the result of analytical logic. As an illustration of how a character can be created. Not always the data we get can be directly described directly. There are times when the data is information that is indirect. Some data is required but not explicitly described in the description. An example is how the clothes worn by Si Pitung. Because this is not described directly, we can take the data from the visualization of trends in the period or period of Si Pitung.



Figure 3. Fashion model (Source: [www.selatan.jakarta.go.id](http://www.selatan.jakarta.go.id))



The picture above is the clothes commonly worn by the Betawi people in the period 1888-1924, the models used are then visualized differently and are more directed to the Betawi tradition wearing models that look more modern. Basically the shape or model of clothing worn is known as pangsi clothes. This model then shifted to a more modern clothing model by adding belts and caps. This effort is actually a data simplification which in fact will further obscure the actual figure of the character that will be designed and presented visually. It is possible that decisions are made based on logical assumptions, but it is better if the design is carried out by taking data collection as carefully as possible. Some of the things that become arguments are when a character is visually attached to people's minds whether it is the result of designing in the right way.



Figure 4. Character shape (Source: [www.tambahpinter.com](http://www.tambahpinter.com))

The visual data above is data that can be used in realizing the shape of the character that we will design, the level of accuracy that can be proven really only depends on the analysis based on that logic. The visualizations that then appeared were mostly in favor of visualizing images in the form of pangsi-style clothes complete with belts and caps, although it was said that these clothes were referred to as traditional clothes, not everyday clothes worn by the people at that time.

Regarding character design, our focus of attention is the design result in comic form. The following examples are a visualization that tries to present Si Pitung in its form as a concrete character.



Figure 5. Character 1 (Source: [bintangasik.com](http://bintangasik.com))



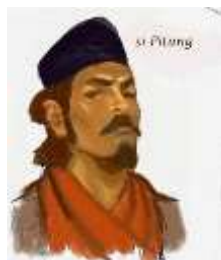
Figure 6. Character 2 (Source: [oriflameid.com](http://oriflameid.com))



Figure 7. Character 3 (Source: [tirto.com](http://tirto.com))



Figure 8. Character 4 (Source: [oriflameid.com](http://oriflameid.com))



**Figure 9.** Character 5  
(Source: nusagate.com)

If we look at it, there are different design approaches.

**Tabel 3**

*Design approaches*

NNo	Design	Figure
11	Mustache and beard	Figure. 7
22	Mustache without beard	Figure. 6 & Figure. 9
23	Beard without mustache	Figure. 8
44	Without a mustache and beard	Figure. 5

If we think more deeply, the question arises of how the same figure can be depicted in different forms. Of course, if the designers dig up data that can describe the figure of Si Pitung, it will be certain that the characteristics that appear in the embodiment of Si Pitung will be the same in every design that appears. Then the question will also arise about the lack of data that can be obtained about the figure of Si Pitung who is a widely known figure by the public. What might be the reason is that at that time the limitations of documentation equipment such as photographic equipment could not be widely used in the general community. However, as a popular figure, there should be an accurate record or description of Si Pitung.

Filmmakers in the 70s tried to embody the figure of Si Pitung, starring famous actors at that time. The selection of these actors may be the result of the surrounding boundaries which, as we know, are affected by various things and it is very possible to override authentic data regarding the true figure of Si Pitung. As an illustration, the actor's height is 178 cm, while the data states that Si Pitung's height is 165 cm. This large enough difference will certainly affect many things. We just focus on the depiction of the face of Si Pitung based on the designs as previously presented. For picture 3. we see the mustache and beard on Si Pitung's face while in picture 7 there is no mustache and beard. From here we can see how a big gap can occur in the visual design of the same character. Because visually this difference will suggest a different opinion on the character that appears in front of the target audience or audience who will then appreciate it differently. Not to mention if we will then juxtapose it with other characters involved in the story.

The features on the face are an immediately recognizable aspect, so from the design of these characters we can see the different approaches from one design to another. Judge that there are designers who do not respect the references they have or do not even have any references at all. This means that among the works above, there are characters that are not well designed.



**Conclusions**

Character design that is non-fictional or documentary has a difference with character design in the form of imaginary or fictional. In realizing a character that is really real requires more complete data than designing a fictional character, addfsafasfasfa this is very important because a story based on real life, even though sometimes often embellished with dramatization, still requires Character design that is non-fictional or documentary has a difference with character design in the form of imaginary or fictional. In realizing a character that is really real requires more complete data than designing a fictional character, this is very important because a story based on real life, even though sometimes often embellished with dramatization, still requires characters to carry out the task at hand. quite heavy in supporting the story as a whole.

To fulfill this, it is very important to determine the position of the character we will create. From the example above, we see a very wide diversity that causes the perception that Si Pitung is a fictional character to be legitimate. In other words, the verbal concept of Si Pitung is freely translated according to the designer's perception. This is not appropriate if we still think that Si Pitung really exists.

One character in a story will definitely interact with the environment, culture and existing norms. So we need a tool to position the character's position as part of the interaction that occurs. The characters present in the story will influence each other. The task of a designer is to produce a visualization of the character with all his readiness to answer questions that confirm that his design is the most possible solution.

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