

ANALYZING THE ADAPTATION OF RAMAYANA WAYANG CHARACTERS IN CODE ATMA VIDEO GAME

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Received June. 21, 2023; Revised June. 28, 2023, Accepted June. 30, 2023.

Abstract: Promotion of Wayang is important for future generations to continue cherish the value, meaning and pure passion just like how it is intended to be. As a traditional culture surviving the modern era, a modern adaptation is one of the many ways to promote towards the younger generations alongside other modern pastimes. The game "Code Atma" developed by Agate in 2020 has attracted the younger generation due to its appealing character design, that is a modern rendition to what is familiar, traditional culture. To ensure focus of the research, the chosen Code Atma characters would be the ones from Ramayana story: Shinta, Rama, Rahwana, and Hanuman. This qualitative research uses the comparative analysis to group and breakdown further the elements of a character, namely visual aspect, personality, and skills of each Code Atma character to the original Ramayana Wayang Kulit characters. The essential elements of each character are presented by analyzing the similarities using the Jungian Archetypes by Carl Jung. There are limits in redesigning a Wayang character for a modern adaptation, because posture, proportion, and clothing are core elements that must remain to keep the character's identity recognizable.

Keywords: adaptation; archetype; character; game

Introduction

Whether looking from the visual aspects, story or play itself, Wayang is the timeless culture of Indonesia. The craft has simultaneously progressed from being ceremonial objects holding good and bad spirits, into a visual narrative media used to perform folklore and poetry. As a traditional culture surviving the modern era, it can be easy to introduce but rather complex to take hold of enthusiasm when

the audience has little experience relating to said culture because according to Malinowski (Functionalism – Anthropology, n.d.) people must relate to make function.

Various efforts were made to promote Wayang in an international scale, and although it was successfully inscribed as an intangible world heritage by UNESCO in 2003 in an article about Wayang Puppet Theatre - Intangible Heritage - Culture Sector - UNESCO, (n.d.) , in reality ac-

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According to Rahayu, (2010) most Indonesian teenagers are influenced by mass culture and would rather prefer modern over traditional entertainments like Wayang puppet theaters.

Media is not only perceived as entertainment (Setiawan, 2013) but also a product of culture, implicating the existence of interaction and even market control. Instead of turning back from this change, the great power of media should be taken advantage of to create new possibilities where modern adaptations collaborate in promoting the traditional. With a big number of Indonesian internet users (63.08 percent) (Direktorat Statistik Keuangan Teknologi Informasi dan Pariwisata, 2021), digital entertainment becomes a prospective market control.

Game is one of the most engaging interactive media that significantly influences their players with an immersive experience built from interaction. Within April 2022, Indonesia ranked second highest in the country with most video game players, comprising 95.4 percent of gamers ranging from 16 to 64 years old, as seen on the Digital 2022: April Global Statshot Report as can be seen below in Figure 1 (Kemp, 2022).

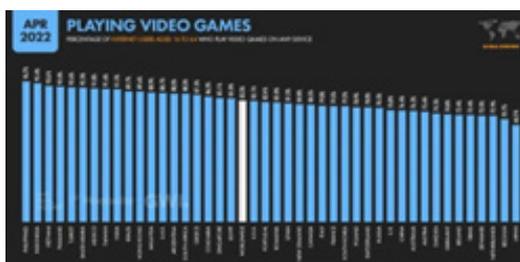


Figure 1. Percentage of video game players per country (Source: Digital 2022 April Global Statshot Report)

The success of the game industry brings a possibility to help engage cultural heritage (specifically Wayang) towards Indonesian teenagers. Research by Ahmad, Irfansyah, and Sulistyningtyas (2023);

Andre and Suliman (2021); Mandasari and Pudjoatmodjo (2019), proves that games can be the best approach to introduce wayang characters to the younger generation. “Code Atma” as can be seen in Figure 2, is a game developed by Agate, released on June 24, 2020 (however this research will focus on version 1.1.52 updated on September 29, 2022). “Code Atma” is a role-playing game set in a world of technology and supernatural, catering to people interested in character design representing Southeast Asian culture starting from traditional Wayang (puppet), supernatural stories, and children’s folklores.



Figure 2. Code Atma Promotional Event: Rangda's Blessing (Source: Code Atma Twitter)

Code Atma’s selling point is familiarity within the characters. For instance, characters of Ramayana in Code Atma were adapted differently (not in Wayang style) creating a different tone but are still recognizable to their original identities. Visual Adaptation of Wayang Character on modern media is regarded as a necessity to reach out younger audiences, it will bring uniqueness and added value for the media as stated by Budi and Wailanduw.

This research studies how the visual

adaptation of characters is done in Code Atma by comparing them to the traditional wayang characters.

Methodology

There are four characters of Code Atma that are analyzed, namely: Shinta, Rama, Rahwana, and Hanuman. As source of the comparison this research focuses on the Jogjakarta style of Wayang Kulit Purwa. According to Sunaryo (2020), Javanese Wayang Kulit Purwa has two styles, the Surakartan and Yogyakarta. Both of them are regarded as one of the old styles of wayang in Java that are based on Mahabarata and Ramayana stories.

There are two steps performed in this research. First, to classify each character whether from the original story or modern game, this qualitative research uses the Jungian Archetypes stated by Carl Jung (Tillman, 2012) as its basis. Jung describes archetypes as a figure, whether it be demon, man, or process, that repeats itself in the course of history wherever creative fantasy is fully manifested (Barros, 2021). Archetypes are a core element in character design, it is how characters are grouped based on their reoccurring experience regarding personality, traits, occupation and more (fiction and nonfiction). These selected archetypes will help dictate the role for each Ramayana characters from the original story and the modern game. Due to the differences in each backstory, some characters might have more than one archetype.

Secondly, a visual analysis is done to identify differences and similarities between the wayang characters of Ramayana and the wayang-inspired character in Code Atma.

Result

As the first step of the analysis, classification of characters in traditional Wayang Kulit and Code Atma is done. It is found that each character in traditional Wayang Kulit and Code Atma have slightly different archetypes. The Classification can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Classification of Character's Archetype in Wayang Kulit and Code Atma Shinta

Character's Name	Archetype in Wayang Kulit	Archetype in Code Atma
Shinta	Lover	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lover• Magician
Rama	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lover• Hero	Hero
Rahwana	Ruler	Ruler
Hanuman	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Caregiver• Hero	Hero

Due to the differences of the archetype, it is understood that each character in Code Atma would have a different depiction from its source in Wayang Kulit. The visual differences and similarities are identified in the second analysis as follows.

1. Shinta

Princess Shinta is known for her exceptional beauty, and as the reincarnation of Batari Sri Widawati (Wayang TV, 2021).

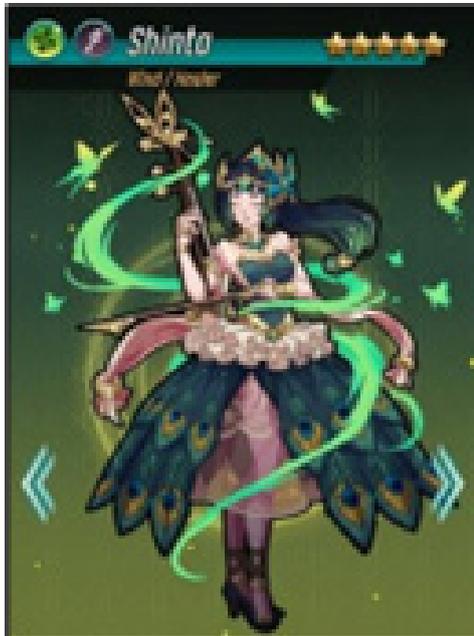


Figure 3. Code Atma Shinta Character
 (Source: Code Atma Personal Documentation)

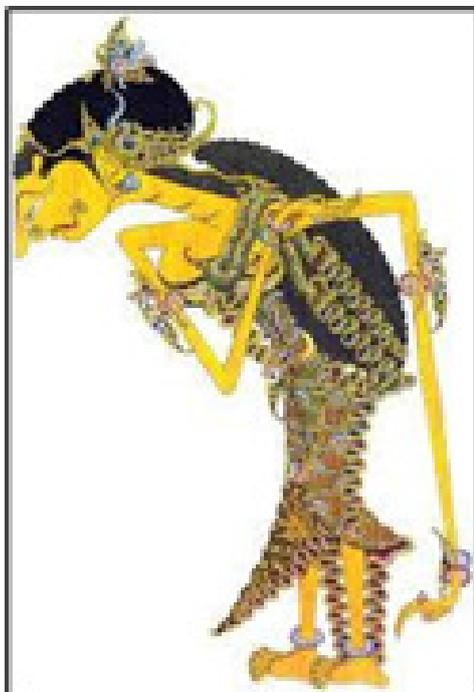
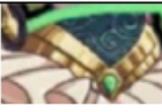


Figure 4. Ramayana Shinta Character Design
 (Source: Wayang Kulit Gaya Yogyakarta: Bentuk dan
 Ceritanya)

Table 2. Visual Analysis on Ramayana Shinta and
 Code Atma Shinta

Form	Shinta (Code Atma)	Shinta (Wayang)
Headpiece (1)		
Hair (2)		
Accessories (3)		
Clothing (4)		
Belt (5)		
Accessories (3)		

The posture and body language in Atma Shinta (see Table.1) suggests that of a composed attitude, with her left arm bent closely below her chest, holding the tip of the bow, and her right arm lightly holding the instrument's neck. Her fingers form a very gentle grip, and her legs are standing with crossed legs. Atma Shinta conveys a gentle expression with both eyes closed, eyebrows positioned upwards, and mouth slightly opened.

Posture of Wayang Shinta also implies a graceful attitude, she is slightly bowing to the front (implying obedience and respect), along with her right arm bent

closely to her chest, and her left arm kept straight in the side as can be seen in Figure 4. The facial features of Wayang Shinta are similar, as both eyes are nearly closed, and her eyebrows are positioned upwards as well.

Although designed to very different tastes, there are many visual similarities found between Ramayana Shinta and Code Atma Shinta as can be seen in Figure 3. As seen on Table. 1, there are five components that are present in both designs, the first being her long luscious black hair (in number 2) that is described in her backstory. Both are wearing a big headpiece (number 1) that might correlate with her high social status of being a princess, or wife of Rama. Her nobility is also portrayed from the amount of complex accessories present in number 3 comprising golden accessories (possibly rings and bracelets) with traditional patterns that are worn on both fingers, hands, arms, and legs. Her body is wrapped in fabric that starts from the chest (number 4) all the way to her ankles, and another golden accessory (of what seems to be a belt, in number 5) is worn on top of said clothing.

2. Rama

Prince Rama is the husband of Shinta. He rules the Kosala Kingdom in Ayodhya (Wayang TV, 2021).



Figure 5. Code Atma Rama Character
(Source: Code Atma Personal Documentation)

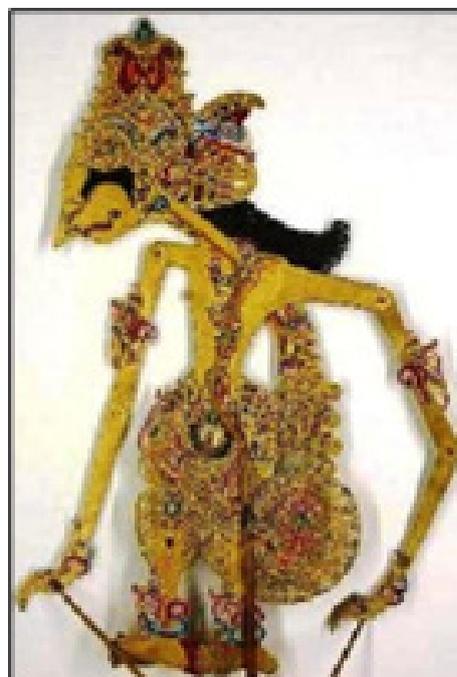


Figure 6. Ramayana Rama Character Design
(Source: Wayang Kulit Gaya Yogyakarta: Bentuk dan Ceritanya)

Table 3. Visual Analysis on Ramayana Rama and Code Atma Rama

Form	Rama (Code Atma)	Rama (Wayang)
Headpiece (1)		
Armor/ Accessories (2)		
Hair (3)		
Accessories (4)		
Clothing (5)		
Accessories (6)		

Code Atma Rama's posture as can be seen in Figure 6, suggests a fighting stance with both arms bending outwards and legs standing wide open. His bravery is shown by both hands that firmly grip the weapon (possibly a gun) upwards. The facial features of Atma Rama convey a determined expression from the slightly squinted eyes, eyebrows positioned near the eyes, and a slight smirk.

Posture of Wayang Rama is straight, with legs standing straight, and arms that are unbent (compared to Shinta, Rahwana, and Hanuman). His facial expression is quite tender and does not show signs of aggression, as seen from the eyes, mouth,

and eyebrows that are not exaggerated.

Overall, Rama has the average height and body proportion. There are 6 similarities found within the two characters in Table 2, firstly being the big headpiece (number 1) that consists of a circular accessory on top of his head, and the accessory that is stretched to the back of his head, like a wing. The headpiece is engraved with complex patterns of gold. Number 2 shows an accessory like a piece of armor between his neck and shoulders. Different from the original, Atma Rama's hair is colored teal, but both hairs are shoulder-length (number 3). Both are wearing accessories on the arms and legs (number 4 and 6), as his original design wears separate pieces of hand, arm, and leg bracelets, while the new design wears a gauntlet and armored shoes. There are multiple layers to his clothing (number 5) that makes it look heavy.

3. Rahwana

Rahwana is a powerful leader from the Alengka Kingdom with power and bad intentions to kidnap Shinta from her husband, Rama.

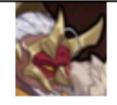
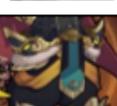


Figure 7. Code Atma Rahwana Character
 (Source: Code Atma Personal Documentation)



Figure 8. Ramayana Rahwana Character Design
(Source: Wayang Kulit Gaya Yogyakarta: Bentuk dan Ceritanya)

Table 4. Visual Analysis on Ramayana Rahwana and Code Atma Rahwana

Form	Rahwana (Code Atma)	Rahwana (Wayang)
Headpiece (1)		
Mask (2)		
Beard (3)		
Earring (4)		
Armor/ Accessories (5)		
Clothing (6)		

Rahwana in Code Atma as can be seen in Figure 7, conveys a mighty figure due to his gigantic proportions compared to the other characters. A very daring attitude is displayed from his broad shoulders, muscular arms, and left arm bent upwards. Although Rahwana in Wayang design as can be seen in Figure 8 has no exaggerated muscle, he owns the biggest body proportion compared to the other characters.

There are 6 similarities between both designs (see Table 3), as seen on number 1, Rahwana is wearing a gold headpiece with an ornament that looks like a face. His true facial expression is covered by a red mask (number 2) with an aggressive expression that is monstrous (eyes squinting, presence of fangs), implying the corrupted creature he is. Although they have different hair colors, both Rahwana have sideburns and a beard (number 3). He is wearing earrings and accessories on his shoulder, possibly part of his armor (number 4 and 5). Unlike Rama, the shape of Rahwana's armor looks menacing as it contains many sharp ornaments. Rahwana appears to be heavy due to the multiple layers of bottom clothing (number 6).

4. Hanuman

Hanuman is also known as "Wanara" or half-human half-monkey creature that serves as a companion figure to Rama on his journey to find and fight for Shinta as written in Hanuman – A Great Warrior Who Played a Crucial Role in The Ramayana, (n.d.).

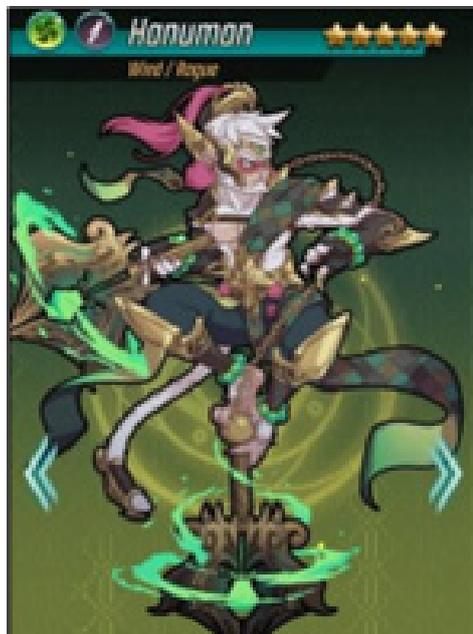


Figure 9. Code Atma Hanuman Character
 (Source: Code Atma Personal Documentation)



Figure 10. Ramayana Hanuman Character Design
 (Source: Wayang Kulit Gaya Yogyakarta: Bentuk dan
 Ceritanya)

Table 5. Visual Analysis on Ramayana Hanuman and
 Code Atma Hanuman

Form	Hanuman (Code Atma)	Hanuman (Wayang)
Headpiece (1)		
Ear (2)		
Beard (3)		
Accessories (4)		
Fabric (5)		
Checkered pattern (6)		
Tail (7)		

The posture of Hanuman in Code Atma as can be seen in Figure 9, displays a swift character with a good sense of reflexes as he positioned himself with balance on top of a small pole. It is accurate to the Ramayana Hanuman that is told to have swift movements, especially when he uses stealth ability while shapeshifting into a small monkey to enter the Alengka Kingdom. He displays a determined face with squinted eyes, tight eyebrows, and lips tightened. Hanuman's appearance

shows great strength despite his slightly shorter proportions.

Wayang Hanuman, as can be seen in Figure 10, resembles an anthropomorphic monkey with a brave posture (arms bent, legs opened wide) as if ready for battle. His facial expression is full of joy with mouth wide open and big eyes.

There are 7 visual similarities found between the two designs as seen in Table 4. Both Hanuman wears a headpiece (number 1 and 2) consisting of an ear accessory and a head accessory that is stretched to the back, resembling a tail. He has white fur all over his body, and a short beard (number 3). As a half-monkey creature, he possesses a long, white monkey tail (number 7). He wears accessories on hands, arms, and tail (number 4). Emphasizing an animal body, his upper body is shirtless, while his lower parts are covered in pants (number 5). His clothing consists of a long fabric (number 6) with a similar checkered pattern.

Discussion

Despite the many changes on the modern adaptation such as adding ruffles and layers of pleated skirt, side bangs, earrings, shoes, and ornaments, the core concept of Shinta remained the same through her clothing, facial expression, proportions, and posture.

Dressed as a noble with long natural black hair (described as one of her beautiful features), her visual suggests that of a princess who is obedient and respectful to her partner, consistently keeping both Wayang Shinta and Atma Shinta as the lover archetype. However, the changes are necessary to add a second archetype that is magician to the Shinta character.

As for the character Rama, many elements were added to the Atma design, but the essence of his royal and heroic figure

seems to remain. He resembles a person with power and kindness (from his tender facial expression), making him a savior, therefore fits into the hero archetype. The addition also removes the lover characteristic from Rama character in Code Atma.

The massive proportion of Rahwana is important to emphasize his great physical strength. Although Rahwana in Code Atma may not be an antagonist, he still has a threatening visual, making him a ruler archetype with controlling personality. A ruler archetype is not necessarily evil, but it is accurate to both Rahwana characters, who are menacing figures with power.

Code Atma Hanuman's posture shows off the balance that animals naturally possess, displaying a state of freedom. With the free-spirit state and determined facial expression, Code Atma Hanuman is classified as the hero archetype. While, in Wayang Kulit Hanuman has a joyful expression, implying a playful and reassuring personality towards people around him, thus making him the caregiver archetype.

Conclusion

There are limits in redesigning Wayang characters for modern adaptation, because several aspects in visual and story might be modified to fit in the modern trend, but core elements must remain the same as it reflects the character's identity. Since proportion, posture, and clothing are the essential elements of a character in archetype classification, it is allowed to create visual changes, as long as the character's identity remains recognizable. Analyzing a character's abilities (strengths and weaknesses) help bring out ideas to better understand its limits.

By properly adapting and designing characters accurate to the original archetypes, characters could pique the audi-

ences' interest and serve as a selling point, eventually the modern media and its original source has a potential to broaden its promotion to the younger generation. Aside from introduction, familiarity will occur both from the origins and the modern adapted archetypes through the presence of modern adaptations of traditional culture. This article is just one of the many guides on adapting Wayang characters, or any traditional characters.

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