

# Humor Narrative of Local Wisdom in Characters and Characterizations in Comic Adaptation Film: Sawung Kampret Movie

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## Abstract

World cinema is increasingly using comics as a source of adaptation material. However, such facts do not occur in the world of Indonesian cinema today. In fact, Indonesian comic adaptation films had their own heyday in the 1970s to 1980s. This is because Indonesia has legendary comic works. Therefore, it is important to conduct research on comic adaptation films, in order to regain the glory of comic adaptation films in Indonesia, and to raise the existence of Indonesian comic works. The movie *Sawung Kampret*, an adaptation of the comic *Legenda Sawung Kampret* released in 1996, is comic adaptation in the world of Indonesian cinema. Both the movie and the comic are the work of Dwi Koendoro. This film has its own charm, especially in the formation of humor aspects through its characters and characterizations. The purpose of this study is to identify how the relationship between the elements of character and characterization in forming a unity of humor narrative in *Sawung Kampret* film, as well as to understand how they relate to the value of Indonesian local wisdom. Through a structural approach that uses the syntagmatic-paradigmatic relation analysis method of Ferdinand de Saussure, it is found that the formation of characters in the film *Sawung Kampret* through the names of characters and characterizations is not only as the formation of humor elements, but as a meaning of morality that refers to the values of Indonesian local wisdom. In addition, through the names of the characters created, Dwi Koendoro's clever way of emphasizing the value of the diversity of ethnic groups and regional languages of the Indonesian people can be seen. As a result, it can be understood that the movie *Sawung Kampret* is a kind of speech power of Dwi Koendoro for his pride and love for his nation and country, Indonesia.

**Keywords:** film adaptation, figure, characterisation, humorous narrative, local wisdom

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## 1. Introduction

In the repertoire of world cinema, there are more and more film works with the genre of film adaptation. This is triggered by industrial developments in other fields that also influence the film industry. As said by Dudley Andrew (2000), adaptation film is a form of film work that is influenced by other media, and represents it in a different way into film. Adaptation film means a film that adopts stories from other media that are used as source text media. In film adaptation, the director retells the story from the source text in a different way, namely by actualising, concretising, simplifying, and strengthening and adding, making analogies, and giving criticism and appreciation. Thus, as Linda Seger (1992) said, in the end an adaptation film is able to appear as a “new original”, or in other terminology it can be called a “second original”, which is a film with a new existence that refers to the source text.

In connection with this phenomenon, one of the interesting things to mention is the phenomenon of comic book adaptation films. Comics are increasingly becoming an interesting source of text to be filmed, and world cinema is increasingly exploring the world of comics as a source of material for feature films. This is because the sequential concept of comic visuals has a lot in common with movies. Although film and comics are two different media with their own uniqueness and charm, both have similarities as visual narrative media. As Christiansen (2007) says, there is a close connection between movies and comics, compared to other visual arts. This can be seen in the storyboard design stage. As Dwi Koendoro (2007) says, movies and comics are close in the application of visual sequential concepts, where since the beginning of the 20th century, filmmaking has always used storyboard depictions, which are a kind of comic to guide shot making. Thus, such visualization parallels can lead to interesting aesthetic experiments in producing a film adaptation.

However, this fact does not occur in the world of Indonesian cinema today. In fact, Indonesian comic adaptation films had their own heyday in the 1970s to 1980s. This is in line with the golden era of Indonesian comics in the 1960s and 1970s. The heyday of Indonesian comic adaptation films was marked by the spread of various film adaptations of comic works of martial arts and super hero stories by famous Indonesian comic artists, such as Ganes TH, Jan Mintarga, Hans Jaladara, Hasmi and so on.

The first Indonesian comic adaptation film was *Si Buta dari Gua Hantu*, which was adapted from the comic of the same name, by Ganes TH. The film aired in 1970, and was a phenomenal film in its time. *Si Buta dari Gua Hantu* became an inspiration for the production of subsequent Indonesian comic adaptations, such as *Pandji Tengkorak* (1971), which was adapted from a comic by Hans Jaladara, *Jaka Sembung* (1981), which was adapted from a comic by Djair Warni, and so on. No doubt, Indonesian cinema at that time was enlivened by comic adaptations. But over time, the progress of Indonesian comic adaptation films has dimmed, it can even be said to be dead. Until 1996, there began to be an effort to revive the existence of Indonesian comic adaptation films through a screen film entitled *Sawung Kampret*. This film was adapted from the comic story *Legenda Sawung Kampret*, where the director was entrusted directly to the comic himself, namely Dwi Koendoro. As the comic is full of humorous aspects, this film is packaged in the form of a comedy film aimed at teenagers, and aired in the form of a television series on *Surya Citra Televisi Indonesia* (SCTV) TV Station. The film was a breath of fresh air for Indonesian comic adaptations, and is a unique comic adaptation with Dwi Koendoro's signature style of humor.

Dwi Koendoro is known as a comic artist and director who has a great sense of humor, and often puts forward local wisdom values in his work. However, due to limited costs, this film was only able to be produced for twelve episodes. *Sawung Kampret's* film also became the last Indonesian comic adaptation film, because until now no more Indonesian comic adaptation films have been produced. This fact is unfortunate, considering that Indonesia has many interesting comic works to be adapted into feature films. In addition, *Sawung Kampret's* movie can actually be used as a recommendation for the next comic adaptation films. Especially in the cultivation of comedy elements through the characters and characterizations. Therefore, this research raises the *Sawung Kampret* movie as the object of research.

As the source text, the comic *Legenda Sawung Kampret*, is full of comedy, Dwi Koendoro's *Sawung Kampret* film is also packaged in the form of a comedy film. The formation of comedy is formed from all elements of the film structure, ranging from narration, scenes, characters, characterisation, character naming, background music, to visual and sound effects used in the film. Thus, all of them are able to relate to each other to form a complete comedy unity.

This research focuses on the elements of character and characterisation. As Pratista (2006) states, character is an important aspect, as a force of its own in the narrative medium, which acts as an element of the story that motivates the narrative and is always in motion in performing an action. Without a compelling story, an interesting character can function just as powerfully in attracting the audience's attention. That's when the interesting character becomes the "story". Meanwhile, a plot without interesting characters cannot be a good story (Pratista, 2008: 80).

In a story, characters will be described in various ways, namely through a development process called characterisation. Aminudin (1995) in Rahmadi (2011:9) reveals that characterisation is the way the author describes the characters in the story, either directly or indirectly. In direct characterisation, the author directly states the personality of the character, while in indirect characterisation, a character's personality can be known through the actions the character takes, the character's name, appearance, costume, how he thinks, and how other characters say or think about the character.

This research analyses how the elements of character and characterisation in *Sawung Kampret* film relate to each other to form a unity of comedy elements in *Sawung Kampret* film. Through the analysis of the aspects of meaning, message and significance of these elements, a picture will be obtained of how the strategy used by director Dwi Koendoro in building the storytelling of a comedy film that is full of humour but also full of various moral messages.

The results of this research are expected to be useful knowledge input for the development of the Indonesian film world, especially comic adaptation films, as well as other related sectors. This is because the existence of a comic adaptation film, besides of course being able to enliven and enrich the world of cinema itself, is also able to revive the world of Indonesian comics, which has recently been increasingly affected by the presence of imported comics. In addition, the existence of comic adaptation films can have a positive impact on the film character franchise business field and other merchandise fields, so that all of this will lead to an increase in the

rate of economic growth in the Indonesian creative industry sector.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Film Adaptation Theory

Dudley Andrew (2000) emphasizes that, in essence, film adaptations are representations of other forms of work, and Linda Hutcheon (2006) describes them as autonomous works that can be treated and evaluated as adaptations. In this regard, Linda asserts that adaptations are adaptations. According to Walter Benjamin (1973), film adaptations have their own aura, their own existence in a particular space and time, as a unique entity in the place where it is realized.

A similar point was also made by Linda Seger. In her book “The Art of Adaptation: Turning Fact and Fiction into Film”, she presents the idea that film adaptations can be viewed and considered as a “new original” or, in other terms, a “second original.” That filmmakers may actually use the original source material only as a starting point for their leap, and then subjectively interpret the development of the remaining available narrative.

Meanwhile, based on the nature of films, Linda Hutcheon argues that film adaptations can be divided into two groups. The first group consists of films that adhere to the concept of fidelity, which is a pure adaptation that considers the source text as something that must be obeyed and used as the basis for the film's purpose. The second group consists of films that view adaptation as a process that always involves change.

In *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* (1996), Brian McFarlane defines fidelity as a single standard of truth for assessing the truth or success of a film in interpreting its source text. Filmmakers are considered good and successful if they adhere to this concept—by achieving an exact equivalence with the source text—and are deemed unsuccessful, even accused of committing a violation and destruction, if they do not adhere to it. McFarlane further explains that the fidelity approach in film adaptation will have an impact of ambiguity, because the result of the adaptation process will ultimately only refer to a range of highly subjective debates in reading and interpreting a text.

McFarlane attempts to list the differences between films that try to be “faithful to the letter” and films that try to be “faithful to the spirit,” meaning faithful to the spirit or essence of the original text and source material. McFarlane makes this distinction with terms he divides into “transferred elements” and “proper adaptation.” McFarlane's concept of transferred elements refers to parts or elements taken from the source text and incorporated into the adaptation. Transferred elements include what McFarlane calls cardinal features, which are elements or parts of the source text that are then transferred in their entirety into the film. Proper adaptation, on the other hand, refers to adaptations that are modified according to the parameters and constraints of the film medium, or completely altered by the filmmakers. Using McFarlane's terminology, it can be said that Dwi Koen sought to transfer the comic book *Legenda Sawung Kampret* from the page to the screen as much as possible in his television series.

Robert Stam also acknowledges the problem of adherence to the concept of fidelity in film adaptations. In *The Dialogs of Adaptation* (2000), Stam makes the important point that fidelity is impossible to achieve, because changes in the medium through which a story is conveyed will inevitably alter the delivery of the material that originated from the source text. Stam also says that fidelity is problematic because it always assumes that the essence of the source text can be easily extracted into another form of media in the form of aesthetic equivalence. Stam believes that this is not an easy thing to do; it certainly requires a unique aesthetic intelligence to be able to transform material from the source text into another form of media based on the characteristics of each medium. Meanwhile, in *Literature and Film* (2005), Stam states that there are aspects of intertextuality and dialogue in a film adaptation. A film adaptation is an intertextual reference that reveals traces of the original text, which can then become a kind of dialogue or critique in the form of a new work with its own validity. Robert Stam follows in McFarlane's footsteps by providing two alternative terms and interpretations. Stam uses the terms “translation” and “transformation.” Essentially, Stam merely duplicates McFarlane's argument, using ‘translation’ for transferred elements and “transformation” for proper adaptation.

Based on this understanding, the film *Sawung Kampret* should be viewed as a dialogue or critique in its own right, rather than as a measure of the success or failure of the film's adaptation of the source comic book.

## 2.2 Humor Theory

There are various theories that have attempted to understand and explain the phenomenon of humor, and in this article we will examine two theories, namely: the Superiority Theory and the Incongruity Theory. The Superiority Theory considers humor to be a manifestation of a sense of superiority over others or over one's previous situation. The views of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, and Hobbes align with this perspective. As Roger Scruton notes, people dislike being laughed at because it reduces them to an object. Scruton analyzes the feeling of amusement as “a thoughtful destruction” of someone or something related to someone. “If people dislike being laughed at,” says Scruton, “it is certainly because laughter diminishes the value of the object in the eyes of the subject” (in Morreall 1987, 168). Thus, the Superiority Theory emphasizes that the cause of laughter is a feeling of superiority,

Another theory is the Incongruity Theory. This theory states that laughter is the perception of something incongruous—something that violates our mental patterns and expectations. This approach was adopted by James Beattie, Immanuel Kant, Arthur Schopenhauer, Søren Kierkegaard, and many philosophers and psychologists after them. This theory is now the dominant theory of humor in philosophy and psychology. This type of humor emphasizes that humor is a way of enjoying or celebrating incongruity and contradiction.

Both theories are often used to criticize various social phenomena. The Superiority Theory, which emphasizes the manifestation of a sense of superiority, highlights phenomena that are considered silly or foolish, and these sillinesses are laughed at. For example, when someone searches for their glasses and eventually finds them stuck to their head, when a politician mispronounces a few words or sentences during a speech, and when most women bleach their skin because beauty product advertisements often claim that beautiful women are those with fair skin. From the perspective of Superiority Theory, such phenomena are deemed as absurdity or foolishness worthy of laughter.

Meanwhile, Incongruity Theory criticizes social phenomena from the aspect of incongruity and contradiction, for example, it is used to criticize government officials who dress luxuriously when visiting residents of slums. In this theory, the contradiction between the luxury of the officials and the squalor of the residents becomes an incongruity that deserves to be laughed at.

## 2.3 Indonesian Cinema Studies

Looking back at its history, film production in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) only began in the early 20th century (Said, 1991). This was pioneered by Heuvelsdorf, a Dutch national, and a German named Kruger. They started in Bandung and established the Java Film Company. The first film was produced in 1926 and was titled *Loetoeng Kasaroeng*. Then, in 1927, they also produced a film titled *Euis Atjih*. However, this film company was not heard of again until it was replaced by films produced by Chinese people.



Figure 1. Film *Loetoeng Kasaroeng*  
Resource: Puspitasari (2018)

The first film produced was a Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) bandit film titled *Si Tjonat*. The film was directed by Nelson Wong, produced by Wong and Jo Eng Sek, and released in 1929. Adapted from a novel by F.D.J. Pangemanan, the film tells the story of a native man who flees to Batavia (now Jakarta) after killing his friend and becomes a bandit. At the time, the story of *Si Tjonat* was no less exciting than cowboy or Wild West films, and the film was a commercial success. According to Sen (1994), this story was chosen because “the combination of traditional, well-known, well-loved fiction with the action and tricks of American cinema became a recipe for success” (Puspitasari, 2018). The success of adopting local aspects that represent various local wisdom values was then continued in the production of other films of the same genre. One example is *Si Pitoeng* (1931), which tells the story of a bandit from Batavia (now Jakarta). Pitoeng was a robber who only robbed people who collaborated with the Dutch colonial government, and he donated the proceeds to the poor.

In the development of Indonesian cinema in the modern era, the aspect of locality that represents local wisdom has also been increasingly applied in various other genres. As explained in the dissertation entitled “Chiaroscuro as the Third Light in Indonesian Cinema (A Case Study of Hanung Bramantyo's Films from a Cultural Studies Perspective)” (Puspitasari, 2018), the three religious-genre films directed by Hanung Bramantyo—*Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* (2009), *Sang Pencerah* (2010), ? (*Tanda Tanya*) (2011)—highlight Javanese local elements. This study explains how the aesthetic and thematic elements that form the narrative of these films have a significant relationship with the values of Javanese cultural traditions based on the noble values of local wisdom in the archipelago, such as tolerance, steadfastness, peace, nobility, and brotherhood. Particularly in terms of light, these three films position chiaroscuro in the context of Javanese philosophy, referred to as “Third Light” (Puspitasari, 2015).

### 3. Case Study: The Sawung Kampret Film

#### 3.1 *Sawung Kampret* as Film Adaptation

*Sawung Kampret* is a film that adapts the story from the comic *Legenda Sawung Kampret*. The film produced twelve episodes, and has been circulated in VCD form. The object of this research is the *SawungKampret* film with the episode Marietje van der Bloemkool - part 1, which is adapted from the comic *Legenda Sawung Kampret* with the same episode title.

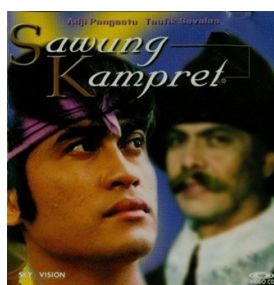


Figure 2. *Sawung Kampret* film  
Resource: *Sawung Kampret* Vol.5 VCD (1997)

The story in this episode is presented against the backdrop of the 17th century VOC era around the time when Governor General Jan Pieters Coen was in power. The story is told that the Dutch nobleman Fritz van der Bloemkool and his daughter Marietje van der Bloemkool came to Batavia. J.P Coen immediately ordered his soldiers to organise Batavia and look for the most beautiful flowers to present to Marietje. This was because Marietje was known as a lover of flowers. To get the flowers, the VOC soldiers stole orchids from Bang A'um's plantation. The beautiful orchids were the result of ten years of experiments by Bang A'um and Doktor van Klompen. Sawung and Na'ip tried to reclaim the orchids, and they disguised themselves as barbers who were applying to be J.P. Coen's personal barber.

In another story, there was a gang of criminals led by Van Baskom who had a grudge against J.P. Coen. They organised a plan to kidnap Marietje for a very high ransom. When Frits van der Bloemkool's entourage arrived in Batavia, Marietje was kidnapped. Seeing this, Sawung joined in the pursuit of the gang, as she wanted to reclaim the orchid that Marietje had been carrying. Sawung's intention to take back the orchid flower was to free Marietje from the kidnappers. However, now it is Sawung who is considered to have kidnapped Marietje, and he becomes a fugitive from the VOC soldiers. In this situation, Sawung and Marietje continue to flee together to avoid the pursuit of VOC troops. During their time together, Marietje felt safe being close to Sawung, because Sawung had the same character as her late brother: Fijderik van der Bloemkool. Marietje was reminded of her late brother, who was quiet, somewhat indifferent, stubborn, yet loving and often helpful when Marietje was young.

This was the opposite of what Sawung felt. When she saw Marietje, she was immediately shocked and felt like she had met a ghost. This was because her grandmother often told her that ghosts have pale skin, blue eyes, yellow hair, pointed noses, and when they come, they smell of roses. These characteristics were all present in Marietje, and at that time Marietje was carrying flowers. Sawung therefore believed that Marietje was a ghost as told by her grandmother.

Next, Na'ip, Sawung's best friend, joined Sawung and Marietje. The three of them continued to evade the pursuit



of VOC soldiers while trying to return the orchids to the Bang A'um Plantation. However, none of them realised that Mei Ling, their adopted sister, was always faithfully observing and guarding them from afar to protect them from the VOC soldiers and Van Baskom's gang of criminals.

### 3.2 Characters in *Sawung Kampret* Film

*Sawung Kampret* is a film that focuses its universe on the main character, Sawung, who is always accompanied by his hilarious friend, Na'ip Bin Jalil. Other main and supporting characters such as Marietje van der Bloemkool, Mei Ling, Van Baskom, Doktor van Klompen, Fritz van der Bloemkool, Jan Pieterszoon Coen, and complementary characters such as Meneer Marutoklopo, Bang A'um, Nek Isah, Kaptein van Tabock, Lieutenant Markapoetz are also presented.



Figure 3. Sawung Kampret figure

Resource: *Sawung Kampret* Vol.5 VCD (1997)

The main character Sawung Kampret is played by Adji Pangestu. Sawung Kampret is portrayed as a warrior character who is also a young farmer who loves to eat petai, and has a petai plant in Rawabelong village. This character is shown to have heroic traits: brave, strong spirit of justice, with a dashing appearance. As a complement, he also has martial arts skills that he uses to confront his enemies.

Dwi Koendoro describes it as follows:

"A swordsman who doesn't consider himself a swordsman. A pete maniac, with blood from Aceh, Bugis, Padang, Batak, Madura, Ponorogo and who knows what else. But because he was born in the Ujunggaluh area (now called Surabaya), when he speaks, he looks like a *ludruk*. He was a bit quiet, but when he fought, he was able to tangle his opponent. His *silat* moves are hard to guess, because he prefers to use tangled moves. Having mastered and understood several dialects and a number of foreign languages, if he had lived in the 20th century, he would at least have become a travelling ambassador, or a Telenovela dubbing expert."

In this story, Sawung does not actively fight to defend her colonised people like Zorro. However, his interests and groups that are often disturbed by the VOC make him often confront them. From her *petai* plantation, to her oppressed neighbours, to the ideology of indigenous freedom in a colonised land, she fights for everything.



Figure 4. Na'ip figure

Resource: *Sawung Kampret* Vol.5 VCD (1997)

The character Na'ip Bin Jali, played by Taufik Savalas, is described as a character who is always side by side with Sawung Kampret. Although they often quarrel, the two can be said to be inseparable. Na'ip is someone with a hilarious personality, originally Betawi mixed with Sunda, Banten, Palembang and Banjarmasin. Together with Sawung Kampret, he created his own *silat* moves that confused his teachers, his enemies, and even confused themselves. His language skills are the same as Sawung Kampret's, although with a few differences.

Dwi Koendoro describes this character as follows, "Na'ip's language skills are the same as Sawung, the difference is that they are often mixed up. So it often makes confused who is spoken to. Na'ip is highly respected

by his opponents, because of his agility in slipping the enemy's trousers."

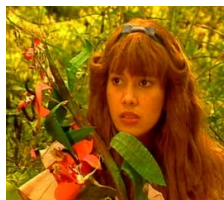


Figure 5. Figure Marietje van der  
Resource: *Sawung Kampret* Vol.5 VCD (1997)

Marietje van der Bloemkool, played by Intan Savilla, is the only daughter of Dutch nobleman Fritz van der Bloemkool. Marietje is very fond of flowers, and she considers Sawung Kampret as her older brother and her baby.

Dwi Koendoro describes it as follows, "This pretty girl is gentle, but when she gets annoyed, she can slap or even pinch. It depends on which is available, the cheek or the forehead. For Sawung, Marietje was not beautiful, because according to Sawung's grandmother, the ghost had pale skin, blue eyes, yellow hair and a pointed nose. When she came, she was preceded by the fragrance of roses. Marietje loved roses. Sawung called her 'Dul', not a favourite nickname at all, but Sawung's habit of changing people's names at will."

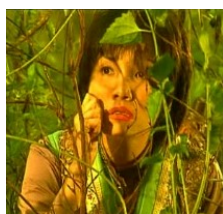


Figure 6. Mei 's figure  
Resource: *Sawung Kampret* Vol.5 VCD (1997)

Mei Ling, played by Kanaya Tabhita, is described as a Chinese girl who is good at martial arts and admires Cinderella. She is the adopted granddaughter of Doktor van Klompen, and feels that Sawung Kampret and Na'ip are like her own siblings. In some sessions of *Sawung Kampret's* film, the character Mei Ling is placed as a narrator who tells some parts of the storyline in the film, which is shown either through a series of photographic images or through a combination with some illustrative images.



Figure 7. Van Basin Figure  
Resource: *Sawung Kampret* Vol.5 VCD (1997)

The character Van Baskom, played by Joko Nugroho, in this film is presented as an antagonist, as a former VOC official who has a grudge against J.P Coen for being fired for trading without VOC approval. As an attempt at revenge to bring J.P Coen down in the eyes of the Dutch East Indies government, he plans to kidnap Marietje

who will come to Batavia.

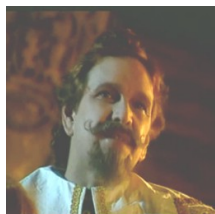


Figure 8. Figure of Fritz van der Bloemkool  
Resource: *Sawung Kampret* Vol.5 VCD (1997)

Fritz van der Bloemkool, played by Afat Gustav, is portrayed as a Dutch nobleman, Marietje's father, and a former student of Doktor van Klompen. He was a representative of the Dutch government in the East Indies and Malacca who was highly respected by J.P Coen. Fritz van der Bloemkool opposed J.P Coen's attitude of patronising the natives.



Figure 9. Van Klompen's Figure  
Resource: *Sawung Kampret* Vol.5 VCD (1997)

Doktor van Klompen, played by Fritz G. Schadt, is a Dutch scientist from Leiden. He loved nature and the culture of the indigenous people. Therefore, he often contradicts the VOC, even to the point of making sacrifices in order to defend and defend the interests of the natives. He becomes the adopted grandfather and teacher for Sawung Kampret, Na'ip, Mei Ling and the adopted brother for Bang A'um.

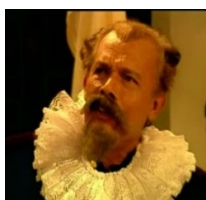


Figure 10. Figure of Jan Peterszoon Coen  
Resource: *Sawung Kampret* Vol.5 VCD (1997)

The character of Jan Peterszoon Coen, played by Gino Makasutji. This character was the Governor-General of the VOC, the founder of Batavia, who had a very high national spirit, and he positioned Europeans as the highest class of society in Batavia, and put the natives at the bottom of the social class ladder. By Dwi Koendoro, this figure is portrayed as a ruthless figure who always takes care of his hair. He is often anxious about his dandruff problem, and is always worried that his personal barber will run away and not take care of his hair anymore.



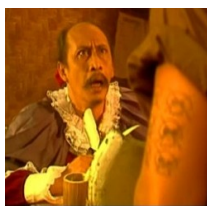


Figure 11. Meneer Marutoklopo character  
Resource: *Sawung Kampret* Vol.5 VCD (1997)

The character Meneer Marutoklopo, played by Yoyok Aryo, is a native nobleman who sides with the VOC. He became a tool of the VOC's divide et empera politics. His desire is to become an accomplice of the VOC in expanding its territory in Batavia by any means. All this he did in order to get gold pieces in return from the VOC. The purpose of his life was none other than to enrich himself.

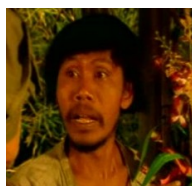


Figure 12. Bang A'um character  
Resource: *Sawung Kampret* Vol.5 VCD (1997)

The character Bang A'um, played by Salim Bungsu, is described as a farmer from Rawabelong village, a hamlet far to the southwest of Batavia. He considers sawung Kampret and Na'ip as his own younger siblings, and Doktor van Klompen as his brother. He owns a house and plantation that he shares with Doktor van Klompen, which is also used as his small laboratory.



Figure 13. Nek Isah's character  
Resource: *Sawung Kampret* Vol.5 VCD (1997)

Nek Isah, played by Roldiah Matulesy, is the grandmother of Bang A'um who is also the adoptive grandmother of Sawung Kampret and Na'ip. Nek Isah has cared for Sawung Kampret and Na'ip since they were children. She loves her two adopted grandchildren very much. Although her two grandchildren have grown up, she still sees and considers them as children.

#### 4. Objectives

The purpose of this research was to 1. Identify the relationship between elements of character names, and characterisation in forming a unified narrative plot of *Sawung Kampret* film 2. Know and understand the meaning of characterisation and character names in *Sawung Kampret* film that relates to the value of Indonesian local wisdom as the context of its creation.

## 5. Research Methodology

This research uses a structural approach, an approach that sees various problems as a network of structures or systems. In a network of structures, relationships become important (Saidi, 2008). Through this approach, the film adaptation as the object of research will be studied by looking at the relationship between its structural elements.

The narrative structure of *Sawung Kampret's* film, which is formed from the relationship between character elements, character naming, and characterisation, is analysed based on Saussure's syntagmatic and paradigmatic dichotomous concepts. In the syntagmatic analysis, denotative meaning is identified, as a relation that is in prasentia. While in the paradigmatic analysis, the in absentia relation, which is associative, is identified.

In such a framework, the components of character, characterisation, and character names in the structure of *Sawung Kampret's* film have certain relationships with elements and entities outside the structure in an associative manner. The meaning associations formed are then associated with the cultural and historical context behind them.

In this framework, the syntagmatic analysis will focus on the literal, denotative meaning of a character's name like 'Van Baskom' as it functions within the film's narrative. The paradigmatic analysis will then explore the associative, connotative meanings ('in absentia') that the Indonesian word 'baskom' (a large, unrefined bowl) evokes, connecting it to cultural ideas of greed and crudeness.

## 6. Result and discussion

Through analysing the relationship between the narrative and the characters, we find that the narrative is interesting in its own right. In the narrative, characters are presented with hilarious names, with word associations that mean funny. The names used come from a variety of languages, some of which use Indonesian, Dutch, Chinese, and several regional languages such as Javanese, Betawi, and Sundanese. In addition, there are also some names that are a combination of two language words that form a funny meaning, examples can be seen in names such as Van Baskom, Van Tabock, and Van Sablon.

In Table. 1 below can be seen the analysis of the meaning and association of several character names in the film *Sawung Kampret*.

Table.1 Meaning and Associations of *Sawung Kampret* Film Characters' Names

Character Name	Meaning	Association
Sawung Kampret	<p>"<i>Sawung</i>": 1) in Javanese: rooster, fighting rooster .2) a sheath, or pouch for storing a knife, or some kind of machete, or sword. 3) in Sundanese: nest</p> <p>"<i>Kampret</i>": 1)bat. 2) in Sundanese: men's loose-fitting trousers.</p> <p>"<i>Sawung Kampret</i>" connotes humor as a nest of male vital organs.</p>	<p>"<i>Sawung</i>" has associations of strength, protection.</p> <p>"<i>Kampret</i>" gives the association of being agile and nimble, while the meaning of male vital organ nest gives the association of masculinity of a warrior.</p> <p>This association is in accordance with the characterisation of Sawung Kampret, who is portrayed as a warrior who is good at fighting and skilled with all his hilarious and undefeatable moves.</p> <p>But Sawung Kampret actually doesn't like fighting. He has a noble heart, loves farming, protecting nature, and is always ready to defend and protect others without distinction.</p> <p>Associative meaning: strength accompanied by conscience can actually manifest as a qualified protector.</p>
Marietje van der Bloemkool	<p>"Marietje" : one of the names commonly given to Dutch women.</p> <p>"Bloemkool" : cauliflower vegetables,</p>	<p>"bloemkool" has associations of beauty, softness, and resilience.</p> <p>This is in line with Marietje's characterisation as beautiful</p>

	which resemble flowers and have a firm texture.	and gentle, yet hard and brave Associated meaning: a woman is not a weak and helpless creature. Behind her beauty and gentleness, women have resilience and courage.
Van Baskom	"Van": a Dutch name for the beginning of a person's name. "Baskom" : a large bowl, generally visually poor in shape.	A bad and large basin associates evil disposition and greed Associated meaning: someone who is evil and greedy will always be a bad human being.
Van Tabock	"Van" : the initial of a Dutch name. "Tabock" : comes from the Betawi word "tabok", which means: punch.	"Punch" has violent associations. This is consistent with Van Tabock's characterisation as an accomplice to J.P.Coen's arbitrariness. Associative meaning: an accomplice to a criminal, capable only of violent behaviour without the ability to think.
Van Markapoetz	"Van": a Dutch name for the beginning of a person's name. "Markapoetz" comes from the Javanese word "semapun", which means: a very confused mind.	The "semapun" in the word "Markapoetz" has the association of <i>chaos</i> Association of meaning: the mind and conscience of a criminal accomplice is <i>chaotic</i> by the desire for arbitrariness.
Van Sablon	"Van": a Dutch name for the beginning of a person's name. "Sablon" : printing, a technique of printing or duplicating.	"print" has the association of duplicate. This is consistent with Van Sablon's characterisation as a VOC soldier who is a duplication of J.P.Coen's arbitrariness. Association meaning: an accomplice is just a duplication of his superior, lacking his own ideas and thinking ability.
Marutoklopo	It comes from two Javanese words, "marut", and "kelopo". "Marut": to erode, to destroy. "Kelopo": coconut fruit. Marutoklopo means: grating/grinding coconut fruit	"coconut" has similarities to the word "head" "grating a coconut" has the association of crushing the head Association meaning: that the contents of the head of a traitor like Marutoklopo is like being shredded, until thought and conscience are shattered by all factors of interest.
Dokter Van Klompen	"Van": a Dutch name for the beginning of a person's name. "Klompen": means shoe in Dutch.	Shoes have an association as a protector of human feet when walking. This is in accordance with the characterisation of Dokter Van Klompen as a Dutch scientist who loves and always protects the nature of the country and the Dutch East Indies. Association of meaning: like shoes that always protect human feet when walking, the nature of protecting nature and caring for others must always be put forward. In addition, knowledge must always be demanded without stopping, just like shoes that are always used to keep walking.

Based on the analysis results in the table above, it can be seen that the names of the characters are not just humorous diction, but more as conveyors of messages and moral meanings, as well as satire delivered in Dwi Koendoro's signature joking style.

This can be seen in the names of J.P. Coen's three henchmen: Van Tabock, Van Markapoetz, and Van Sablon. In the story, these three soldiers are always portrayed together, as an inseparable trio who carry out various foolish acts, violence, and crimes ordered by J.P. Coen. As shown in Table 1, "Tabock" is associated with violence, leading to an association with the inability to think and crude actions.

“Markapoetz” is associated with chaos, leading to an association with the destruction of reason and conscience by the desire for tyranny. Meanwhile, “Sablon” has an association of duplication, leading to an association of meaning with the absence of ideas and the ability to think.

Thus, when the three of them are always together in the film, it creates an association between their three names, which are linked together. This creates a relationship that constructs a unified message and meaning that describes the character of a henchman, namely: a henchman is a stupid person without ideas, only capable of following orders, committing violence and crimes, without reason or conscience.

In terms of characterisation, there are also various interesting features that can build messages, meanings and local Indonesian moral values. An example can be seen in the characterisation of Sawung Kampret as the protagonist in the film. Sawung is presented as a typical Indonesian superhero. In contrast to Western superheroes who are generally presented as figures full of superiority, Sawung is presented by Dwi Koendoro as an unpretentious warrior who has a strong character as an Indonesian human being. This is as stated by Dwi Koendoro, that Sawung is a warrior with unmatched martial arts skills, intelligent, yet innocent and humble. He never considered himself a great warrior. Sawung was born with mixed ancestry from various Indonesian ethnic groups such as Aceh, Bugis, Padang, Batak, Madura, Ponorogo, and others. Through his intelligence, he mastered several dialects and a number of foreign languages. However, his character was rather quiet, and his speaking style was unique and humorous, reminiscent of a ludruk performer—a traditional Javanese folk theater performance featuring dramas about everyday life, accompanied by gamelan music and comedy. Dwi Koen said that if Sawung had lived in the 20th century, he would have become an ambassador traveling the world, or a language expert in telenovela dramas.

Based on this description, it appears that Dwi Koendoro has emphasised the comedic element with the value of modesty and Indonesian identity in the warrior Sawung. From the perspective of Superiority Theory, Dwi Koen highlights Sawung's naivety as a humorous narrative in itself. This can be seen from Sawung's unique style of speech, which is similar to that of a ludruk performer, as well as his surprise when he first saw Marietje. Instead of admiring her beauty, Sawung was afraid, feeling as if he had encountered a ghost. This is because, to him, Marietje resembles the characteristics of a ghost as described by his grandmother: pale skin, blue eyes, blonde hair, a pointed nose, and the scent of roses when she arrives. Beyond the humorous aspect, the diversity of Indonesia's ethnic groups—such as Acehnese, Bugis, Padang, Batak, and Ponorogo—is also woven into the narrative.

In addition to these two aspects, it is evident how Dwi Koen brings the film's story, which is set in the past—in the 17th century—into the context of the present—namely, the time when the film was made. This is evident in the sequence depicting the VOC troops' raid on Bang A'um's plantation. In this scene, Dwi Koen depicts the raid on Bang A'um's plantation as an act of plunder by the ruling class and powerful economic groups against the common people. This serves as both a depiction and a satire by Dwi Koen, suggesting that such crimes continue to this day.

Apart from the protagonists, comedic touches are also found in the antagonists. For example, it can be seen in the characterisation of J.P. Coen. The character of J.P. Coen, who is a real figure in history, however, in the film, he is portrayed as someone who is always concerned about his hair. He has a personal barber whom he orders to always be near him. This is solely so that his hair can be kept in good condition. Although he is known to be cruel and ruthless, what J.P. Coen fears most is dandruff and being abandoned by his barber.

Based on this description, it appears that the characterisation is full of comedic elements, which also raises the issue of dandruff. If related to the present situation, the characterisation contains a message and meaning of satire on the appropriateness of history, and the problems of urban society. In history, Governor-General J.P. Coen is remembered as the founder of Batavia, but in Dwi Koendoro's eyes, J.P. Coen is both the founder and destroyer of the environment and indigenous people in Batavia. The issue of dandruff was raised to illustrate the problems that plague urban communities in Indonesia, which are often commercialised by the media.

Meanwhile, J.P. Coen, who always maintains his appearance and fears being abandoned by his barber, can be interpreted as a satire on urban society's obsession with appearance, which often leads to anxiety and insecurity. The fear of losing one's barber can also be interpreted as a reflection of urban society's dependence and consumerist behavior. To maintain their appearance, urban society becomes heavily reliant on the services and persuasive tactics of beauty salons, and is willing to spend large sums of money on them. Essentially, through the character of J.P. Coen, Dwi Koen is addressing the issue of capitalist hegemony in urban society. From the perspective of Incongruity Theory, it is evident how Dwi Koen constructs a humorous narrative through the contradiction between the superiority of a Governor-General—who is notoriously arrogant, cruel, and greatly feared—and his fear of dandruff and losing his personal barber. From the perspective of Superiority Theory, these fears become absurdities and foolishness that reinforce the humorous narrative surrounding the figure of J.P. Coen.

The comedic touch of the antagonist can also be seen in the characterisation of Van Baskom. He plans the kidnapping of Marietje, as a form of revenge against J.P. Coen. In addition to being portrayed as cruel, greedy and belligerent, Van Baskom is described as having a penchant for shooting, but with shots that always miss. Through jokes like this, Dwi Koendoro basically gives a message and meaning that greed, malice, and revenge will only make life unfocused, just like Van Baskom's shots that always miss. From the perspective of Superiority Theory, it is evident how Van Baskom's chaotic shooting ability is highlighted as an aspect of absurdity that reinforces the humorous narrative of Van Baskom's character. Additionally, from the perspective of Incongruity Theory, the aspect of incongruity highlighted by Dwi Koen here is evident, namely the discrepancy between Van Baskom's position as an elite “VOC official” and the poor-quality kitchenware “baskom,” which is typically used by the poor. This incongruity serves as a contradiction that reinforces the humorous narrative surrounding Van Baskom.

## 7. Conclusion

The *Sawung Kampret* film is a *new original* that adopts the story from the *Legenda Sawung Kampret* comic, by strengthening the character elements through characterisation, character naming, and the action of the cast. The storytelling is presented in the form of a parody silat story of Sawung and Na'ip's adventures in facing the arbitrariness of the VOC troops against the indigenous people. Although the whole story is fictitious, historical elements are inserted in the story *setting*, namely by presenting the figure of Governor General J.P. Coen who ruled during the Dutch colonial period in the 17th century. Through *Sawung Kampret's* film narrative, this history is presented in the form of a comedy story. One of them is by presenting the figure of J.P. Coen as the founder and environmental destroyer of the city of Batavia who is always bothered by dandruff and the appearance of his hair. In addition to humour, this can actually be interpreted as a form of mockery and Dwi Koendoro's own criticism of the historical record.

On the other hand, this form of comedy is also supported by the characterisation and naming of the characters. Based on the analysis, it appears that Dwi Koendoro's characterisation and the names of the characters are not limited to the creation of humor, but as a moral interpretation that refers to the values of Indonesian local wisdom. In addition, through the names of the characters created, it appears that Dwi Koendoro's clever way of promoting the value of ethnic and regional language diversity of the Indonesian nation. As a result, it can be understood that *Sawung Kampret's* film is a representation of Dwi Koendoro's pride and love for his nation and country, Indonesia.

This study of *Sawung Kampret* provides a valuable framework for understanding how local wisdom can be encoded in popular media. Future research could apply a similar semiotic analysis to contemporary adaptations like “Gundala” or “Wiro Sableng” to explore whether this tradition of embedding cultural critique and national identity within the superhero genre continues in the 21st century. This is important, because such studies can improve the quality of Indonesian comic adaptation films, especially in terms of implementing the richness of local wisdom values into them.

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