

Folklore's Inspiration in Character-Based Intellectual Property (IP) Construction 'RomOn' as an Effort to Create Local IP for Global Markets

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ABSTRACT

The Rogue Rubbish Monsters (abbreviated RomOn) is a character-based Intellectual Property (IP) inspired by Balinese and Japanese folklore. RomOn was created as an alternative preventive approach for children, so they don't litter. RomOn aimed to build awareness to recognize the types and impacts that waste could cause on a global and local scale. RomOn's IP construction also explained how folklore was transformed as the basis of the architecture of a character design. The character design that was created had been validated on a global scale, so that the message delivery about efforts to cultivate children's attitudes towards waste management could also be widespread. The method used in this study was the literature review in discussing folklore transformation into the basic narrative of RomOn's IP. This research produced IP that had a premise concept, logline, and global-scale character design with categories formed by archetypes and characterization approaches. The main premise of IP as a business core was Eco Awareness which included aspects of education, community, warrior, harmony, and nature.

Keywords: *RomOn, Folklore inspired, Local intellectual property, Global market*

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of waste in the Bali Province, Indonesia, has become a crucial issue that requires a lot of thought to overcome. Bali provincial government has issued regional regulation No. 5 of 2011 concerning 'Waste Management' and governor regulation No. 97 of 2018 concerning "Restrictions on Disposable Plastic Waste." As an internationally cultural tourism destination, waste is a threat to the tourism industry as well as Bali's nature and environment. *Tribun Bali Daily* edition Tuesday July 17th 2018 notes that the average volume of Bali waste pile is 10,849.10 m³ per day [1]. The data confirms that waste management is a crucial issue that must be solved. Various solutions have been carried out both by the Government through Legislation, Private through Community Empowerment Organisation and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or Direct Communities such as Waste Banks, Waste Collection Communities and various other non-profit or commercial organizations.

The issue of prevention and waste control has been very much discussed in the world. One that is quite complete is in the anthology book entitled "Waste

Management and Sustainable Consumption: Reflections on Consumer Waste" [2]. The approach expressed by contributors to the book's authors is also very diverse namely from the approach of community consumption patterns, socio-cultural perspectives, to prevention by applying the sustainability approach to consumer goods. However there are no writings that raise the aspect of education to form a behaviour that is sensitive to rubbish, especially those inspired by folklore.

One of the important things in dealing with waste hazards is the educational side to increase public awareness from an early age. Education about the dangers of waste can be done with various media and strategies. Grodzinska-Jurczak, M., Bartosiewicz, A., Twardowska, A. and Ballantyne, R., (2003) involve elementary school children aged 11-13 years in a four-month school education program on waste in the city of Krakow, Poland. In the results of his research, there is a growing awareness of participants in municipal waste. Increased knowledge correlates weakly with age, enjoyment of joining the program and learning whose results are reported independently. Three-quarters of students share the learning with their parents and a quarter of others try to improve the practice of preventing

the amount of garbage in their homes. The majority of parent report that the program is valuable and justifies family discussions which often lead to changes in household attitudes and waste management practices. The teacher also evaluates the program positively, recommending its implementation as an ideal solution for national waste problems [3]. Susilo, B.E., Avenzora, R. and Hermawan, R., (2018) see that the potential of folklore can be used as an ecotourism attraction, in the frame of the opening ceremony. The strategy is presented because of the growing development of Meetings, Incentive, Conference and Exhibition (MICE) [4].

A strategy that is rarely used is the creation of special characters that integrate the side of knowledge, games, storytelling and culture through folklore. The character, persona or special character has advantages, which can be applied to all educational media for the community. The character will ultimately have its own economic side.

To increase its economic value, a character must be protected as an Intellectual Property (IP) as a legal protection effort from creative world's activities. The author creates a character inspired by folklore to answer the issue of waste, while creating a locally based IP for the global market (meaning that can be marketed globally).

The IP market has a very high economic value in the era of borderless society today. Kamil Idris as Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) explained that:

“Intellectual property (IP) is the term that describes the ideas, inventions, technologies, artworks, music and literature, that are intangible when first created, but become valuable in tangible form as products [5]”.

Idris's statement emphasizes that the notion of IP is initially intangible which is then packaged into tangible through product formations. On the other hand, folklore is also something that is intangible with an education that is based on local wisdom.

2. METHOD

The method used in this study was the literature review in discussing folklore transformation into the basic narrative of RomOn's IP. Next was a SWOT analysis of RomOn's IP construction and character design methods in the creation of fictional-based character IP inspired by Folklore. Folklore about waste which was used as inspiration came from two different cultures, namely Bali and Japan. Both had knowledge of the waste impact transformed into a character-based IP, which was subsequently developed into a character-based IP for the Global market.

This paper is a presentation on local folklore construction business as the basis for the construction of Local IP for the Global market. The method used in this study was the literature review in discussing folklore transformation into the basic narrative of RomOn's IP. Next was a SWOT analysis of RomOn IP construction

and character design methods in the creation of fictional character-based IP inspired by Folklore.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Character-based IP protected by law as stated in Law No. 24 of 2014 Republic of Indonesia, can be divided into Literature and Graphic Fiction Characters. In this paper we focused on graphic fiction characters. Graphic fiction characters must have the power of individuality that is distinctive [6].

This uniqueness can be obtained because of its unique and different nature (inherent distinctiveness) or by using secondary meaning doctrine. Secondary meaning doctrine states that a sign that does not have enough distinguishing power can be a differentiator if the use of marks by producers has been recognized by the general public. Thus, the fictional character that fulfills the second element (distinguishing power) is only a graphic fiction character who has been given a sufficient description. As a result, the character will be visualized differently from other characters, so that it can be known by the community as belonging to a particular producer and only refers to one source.

In graphic fiction characters, images can have a higher level of fixation than writing, such as eye color, body posture, gender, and other characteristics of these characters will be easier to fixated. Bouty stresses that in order to get legal protection, a character-based IP must have a unique or originality in order to distinguish it from other characters. Originality as suggested by Tillman (2011) is:

“All “originality” means is that you have taken something that already exists and added your own super-awesome twist to it” [7].

Bouty (2015) explains that the originality concept of a work in copyright cannot be compared to the concept of "freshness" or novelty in a patent [6]. The concept of originality here refers more to the relationship between the owner and his creation—the source of the work must be the creator; there is something uniquely owned from the creator. This concept is different from the concept of freshness or novelty in patents that requires the creation of something new and never existed before. To create a graphic character-based IP must prioritize the right character design process, to produce an IP work that has originality. An understanding of character design proposed by Nieminen (2017), namely: At its core, character design is a process where an original, new character is created for the purpose of book, film, television, animation, video game, comic book or other media [8]. Stories are perceived through the characters as they act as a window for the audience to experience countless worlds and events. In other words, characters need to have a connection with the audience, in order to evoke emotion and investment in the story. An unpleasing character can be alienating to the audience.

To truly create stories that will stick with the audience, a writer or designer must have the knowledge to design believable and pleasing characters. This is why

good character design is essential in both written and visual media [9]. Before the construction of an IP based graphic character, the story telling process will be built first, which was developed from a large narrative about garbage and related philosophical concepts of folklore.

The transformation of local folklore into IP based graphic character requires several approaches to bridge two different things, such as:

3.1. Cultural Approach

Folklore about waste in Bali in particular and Indonesia in general is explicitly not found in traditional speech culture, this is due to differences in the concept of waste in a modern context. But implicitly, the concept of environmental preservation as a grand narrative of story about rubbish, is commonly found in folklore in Bali and Indonesia. The message of environmental concern is packaged in storytelling, providing an understanding to increase human awareness of the correlation of the era between humans and their environment As Schmonsky (2012) states that:

“The environmental messages delivered by folklores either explicitly or implicitly show the importance of treating nature appropriately or maintain balanced relationship. Folklore which contains the beliefs system can help human to have decent attitudes to the environment that can play an important role in conservation practice [10]”.

Schmonsky's statement (2012) is corroborated by Adams' (2011) emphasis on disasters caused by imbalances in human and natural correlations. "Disaster happens because of two things. Firstly, it happens because of a change in natural phenomenon (natural disaster), and secondly because it makes a result of human negligence (man-made disaster) [11].

In its correlation with folklore in Indonesia, Sukmawan and Setyowati (2017) state that there are two types of folklore related to man-made disaster, namely (1) Human Causes and (2) Human Prevent. Human Causes are interpreted as natural disaster because of human's greed, rage, stubbornness, and disobedience. There are 12 Indonesian folklores belong to this group. They are the folklores that come from North Sumatra (The Origins of Lake Toba, Samosir Hill), West Sumatra (The Origin of Maninjau Island, Malin Kundang), Riau (The Legend of Senua Island, The Origin of Dumai), Jambi (The Origin of Negeri Lempur), Bengkulu (The Origin of Lake Test, The Legend of Balai Batu), West Java (Sangkuriang, The origin of Cianjur), and Bali (Calon Arang). In other words, the disaster happens because it is 'encouraged' by the character. Human Prevent can be interpreted as natural disasters that are prevented from spreading wider because human beings have intention to stop the catastrophe. Some Indonesian folklores have a hero/heroine character that becomes the savior of others by defeating disaster and he/she has power to do so. The folklores that belong to this category are The Legend of Timun Mas and Ajisaka (Central Java), Si Kelingking (Jambi), The Legend of Bali Strait

(Bali), The Legend of Gading Cempaka Princess (Bengkulu), Beru Dayang (North Sumatra) [12].

In RomOn, folklore as the basis of inspiration is implicitly appointed as the base of the story. The traditional philosophy in Folklore regarding human causes and human prevents combined into the story base. *Tsukumogami Folklore* is also used as a basis for plots in the context of embodiment of trash into a trash monster that disturbs humans who throw it away. Folklore of both Bali and Japan are not fully developed into story narratives, but rather used equivalent understandings adapted to rationalization and global market preferences. For example, in the formation of alien microorganisms narratives as a factor causing the change of house flies to become The BlueFly (*Alpha Musca*) as the host of aliens, the rubbish converter becomes RomOn Monster. This is the development of traditional Folklore which emphasizes the process of the waste impact due to cosmic forces (*Shakti*) which has a great impact on nature. *Tsukumogami folklore* emphasizes the cosmic process that changes waste objects to have a living 'soul'. This is similar to *Bhuta Cuil* Folklore in Balinese folklore.

Cultural identity is still applied but it is more implicit in the code application. RomOn's narrative in characterizing used European names as an attempt to market this character-based IP globally. Albeit in naming still uses names in the scope of waste and cleanliness in Latin, English and Greek such as: *Mundo* which in Latin means 'clean'. *Mundus* in Latin means 'clean', Broom in English is a tool for sweeping the floor, *Hygiea* in Latin means 'clean' and '*Rhea*' in Greek legend is the Earth Goddess. This is an effort to globalize local folklore in a new story narrative.

In the context of visual and character design, RomOn's monster character design was inspired by the visualization of giant Balinese masks with modern stylization. This was stated as an effort to create a tradition-based character but still relevant in the global market. Monster costumes that use a kind of fabric that implies a tribal look give the impression that this character is indeed inspired by Eastern culture.

The development of local folklore is the basis of IP narratives based on RomOn graphic characters using local knowledge differentiation strategies. Piliang (2005) describes this strategy as a strategy for developing local culture to the global level by exploring (researching) local knowledge sources, to produce unique and original products or designs [13]. Vico and Gottfried Herder share local knowledge into: (a) Local philosophy, (b) Local knowledge, (c) Local technology, (d) Local skills, (e) Local materials, (f) Local aesthetics and (g) Local idioms (typical forms) [14].

The local knowledge differentiation strategy from RomOn's narrative is a strategy for developing local knowledge into the global market. The fundamental difference is that RomOn places time-space relations in the action structure, where waste that is not completely disposed of in place will have a worse impact. The addition of alien intervention in the narrative structure, is more of a creative approach to implement rationalization and millennial paradigms to the structure of traditional

folklore. This is an attempt to process the local folklore globalization.

RomOn's story telling is built on the premise as a basic guide to the development of its storytelling process. RomOn's premise is simply made by monsters that change from rubbish dumped carelessly. The monster will aggressively attack the people who litters, until the person throws the garbage in its place. The premise is built by combining several folklore, namely the impact of rubbish disasters as a man-made (human causes) disaster as well as humans having choices as the preventer of natural waste (human prevent). Folklore *Tsukumogami* is used as inspiration in changing the garbage into monsters that live and attack humans.

3.1.1. Logline

Logline is the development of the basic premise. RomOn as a story is developed in order to have rationality, so that readers understand the storyline. RomOn Logline was developed into: "Earth has unexpected arrival from asteroids that contain parasites from space". When entering the Earth's atmosphere, the asteroid is destroyed and spread alien parasites into the air. The parasite infects the house fly (*Musca Domestica*) and turns it into an alien host called The BlueFly (*Alpha Musca*), the rubbish converter to a monster if it is not thrown in its place. The monster is called RomOn which will attack humans until humans throw rubbish in its place". RomOn is described as an intervention of other planetary creatures that are aligned with the understanding of ghosts, souls, demons or demons told to local folklore. The juxtaposition in addition to providing a rational story for millennial readers also responds to the issue of global popular culture that puts aliens as one of its icons.

3.1.2. Archetypes and Characterisation

Character in character-based IP is the main point as a 'product' which later can have economic value. To be able to have economic value, an IP character besides having originality also has distinctive characteristics that are close to the reader. The closeness is built through an emotional approach in the development of stories and also the visualization of the character itself. Characteristics of a character show its humanistic nature which is reflected through the nature, emotional conditions, gestures, responses, behavior and communication patterns called *archetypes*. Carl Gustav Jung a psychologist developed a plethora of archetypes and their meanings, however we will focus only on those most commonly used in storytelling today: (1) The hero (2) The Shadow (3) The Fool (4)The Anima/animus (5) The Mentor and (6) The Trickster [8]. In RomOn the main emphasis is on the education of the impact of waste, namely the Rubbish Monster itself, but in the process of telling using a mirror-self as a reflection of the readers in RomOn's story.

3.1.3. The Hero

The characters in general engage in activities at the Greenoid Laboratory, a Laboratory for the Impact of

Waste and Environmental Safeguards. The main character is *Hugo Mundo* (in Germanic 'Hugo' means 'mind' and *Mundo* in Latin means 'clean'). 22 years old handsome guy, graduated from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, energetic and adventurous in the wild. Hugo is an apprentice at the Greenoid Foundation to seek experience and look for further research material for his master plan. Hugo aspires to create the most effective waste processing technology in the world. From ordinary students he becomes a student who loves nature and has hobby in automotive, especially on custom motorcycles. Hugo likes to assemble used objects into functional objects again.

3.1.4. The Shadow

Alien microorganisms that convert house flies (*Musca Domestica*) into large blue flies that are 1.5 times larger than ordinary house flies and are called Blue Flies a.k.a. The BlueFly a.k.a. *Alpha Musca*.

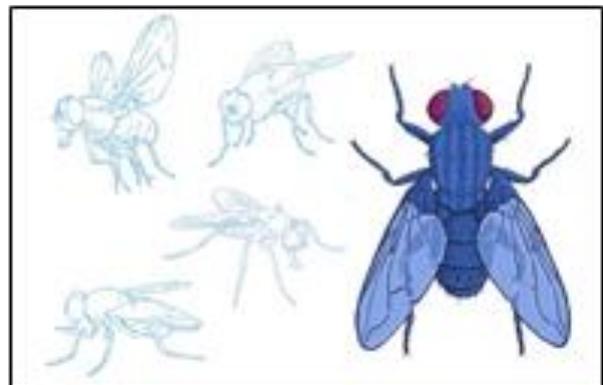


Figure 1 The BlueFly (*Alpha Musca*).

Gradually the whole nervous system and biological house flies turn perfectly into hosts of alien monsters from rubbish (RomOn). That rubbish monster is connected to its host mother on Planet Garbagora, which has big plans to migrate massively to planet Earth. The creature on its own planet has been conquered by the humanoid race, so it has been driven away from its own planet.

3.1.5. The Fool

One Greenoid staff named Robert (Bob) Hygiea aka Broom who served as a computer manager. Broom had been accompanying Prof. Mundus, because of his personal debt to the kindness of Prof. Mundus. Broom is 24 years old, has a fat body and always wears hat or t-shirt of famous comic, anime and manga characters. He likes to eat and drink soda, and is filthy. Often reminded by other Greenoid staff about his bad habits, Broom is very lazy to move his large body to carry out cleaning activities.

3.1.6. The Anima/Animus

Prof. Mundus' niece, 4th semester Biology student named Rosemary Rhea aka Rhea. She is the daughter of Prof. Mundus younger sister, Prof. Mundus himself did

not have offspring with his late wife. Rhea has a beautiful, tomboyish characteristic and like martial arts, but loves nature and plants very much. His goal is to develop herbal medicines, because she is often invited by Prof. Mundus to Greenoid to see firsthand the impact of waste on the environment and how the impact of waste on decreasing public health.

3.1.7. The Mentor

The Mentor in RomOn's story is 2, namely: 1. *Professor Edmund Mundus* that have a professor degree in the field of microbiology and every Friday teaches at Amet University. Prof. Mundus is in his 50s, with a short fat figure and a geeky face that highly upholds scientific culture. His wife has long died of food poisoning, therefore he is enthusiastic about conducting research activities at Greenoid to prevent the general public from pollution and garbage that poisoned health. He does not want other people to feel sadness due to the loss of loved ones due to food poisoning. 2. *Purgo The Alien Astronaut* is alien creature from Garbagora planet who hunts RomOn on Planet Earth. He has a mission to destroy RomOn, because his planet has been destroyed by RomOn itself.

3.1.8. The Trickster

The trickster in RomOn's story is a collection of monsters born of various types of monsters with all their unique characteristics. The Unique Selling Point of RomOn's character is the design of its character inspired by Balinese Mask as a cultural identity, although visually it has adapted the character of the Global IP. Canina Metallicus as an example, is a type of RomOn monster that has become stereotypes of other types of RomOn monsters.

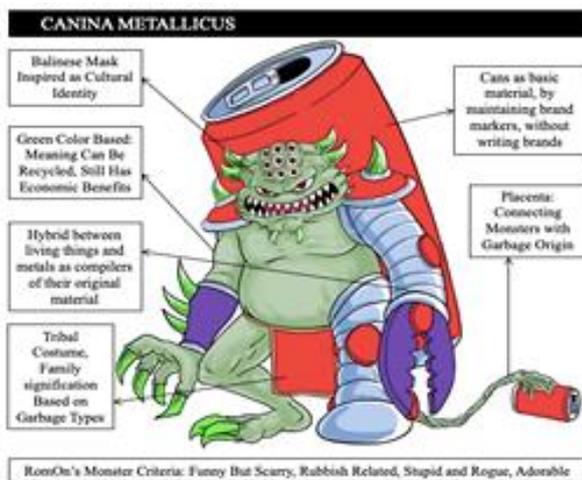


Figure 2 RomOn Monster Canina Metallicus.

Canina Metallicus still shows the origin of the basic rubbish that is integrated with monsters. Monster naming is also part of the implementation of educational aspects of the IP Premise. The naming taxonomy follows the taxonomy of biology so that the reader is indirectly invited to think systematically. The Archetypes and characterization of the RomOn Monster as the trickster

become the point of interest of the whole story. This is due to the garbage education side as the majority of the narratives are implemented there. All of RomOn's Premises, logline and characterization developed traditional folklore's narrative structures.

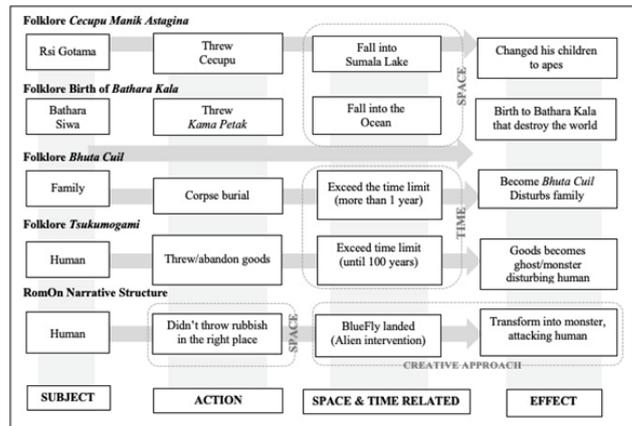


Figure 3 Chart Correlation of Folklore Structures with Local Knowledge Differentiation Strategies

3.2. Marketing Strategy Approach

Graphic character-based IP inspired by folklore requires a marketing approach in an effort to penetrate the global market. Approaches such as Market & Competitor Studies and SWOT Analysis are used as systematic efforts to create a local character that is accepted by the Global market. Cultural Gap from folklore stories is avoided by specific marketing research, so that it can produce a character whose cultural identity also has a high market monetization value. Character-based IP can be developed as a brand or product that has an economy. RomOn as a brand targets environmental themes, especially rubbish, which have a high market potential.

The issue of rubbish as a basis for RomOn's great narrative has high economic value. Recorded in Indonesia, one of the businesses in waste management is a Waste Bank managed by the Community or village, has a high economic value. According to Kompas Daily, the amount of waste managed in Waste Banks has increased from 81 percent from 755.6 tons per month to 1,366.9 tons per month. The total value of the transaction if expanded increases by 11 percent from Rp 1.6 billion per month to Rp 1.8 billion per month [15]. Opportunities for RomOn-based IP characters can be synergized with Waste Banks so that they strengthen each other between brands.

In the global context, green and/or eco label products have a high market economic value. Eco-friendly products or organic products have higher prices compared to conventional products. Consumers' awareness of environmentally friendly products provides integration of RomOn products as an environmentally friendly or garbage brand. In the context of the marketing approach, RomOn IP can be integrated from upstream (policy) or product downstream through RomOn derivative products and collaboration with other products. The Free RomOn campaign can be used as an effort to integrate RomOn's character with other

products, as a label that product's rubbish is not negatively affecting the environment. In this context, the function of folklore is more about the togetherness in action through collective awareness of the dangers of rubbish based on local wisdom. In addition to the closeness of culture, especially Bali and Indonesia, it has special economic value both nationally and globally.

Economically graphic character based IP is also supported by derivative products such as comics, animation and character merchandising through toys and other products. According to Euromonitor, South Korea, Indonesia and Singapore are the top three countries in terms of licensing penetration in the region, with more than 40% of the toys being licensed in 2014 properties globally for consumers aged 0-14 years [16]. These data show that the market opportunity for merchandise characters is very high and has a tendency to increase, supported by the increasingly widespread character-based films.

3.3. Character Design Approach

Character design has an important position in character-based IP. The existence of folklore, which is more of an oral tradition, opens opportunities for development into the visual media. Tillman (2011) explains that what makes a good character design is the combination of story, narrative, archetypes, shapes, silhouettes and aesthetics. This combination gives the character being created more than just a good look; this gives it life in order to convince an audience and get their approval. The RomOn character design focuses on visualizing various types of monsters from garbage. Garbage as a basic material of monsters, is still tied to monsters through both the placenta and the enlargement of the garbage attached to the monster's body (see Figure 2).

In the character design, aspects of the folklore narrative are left narratively and a new story structure is built that tells a different world. In the context of character-based IP marketing inspired by local folklore for the global market. It requires a transcultural character design approach. Isbister (2006) recommends transcultural visualization in character design:

- (1) *Use simple human universals in character relationships.* Everyone has family struggles. Such a simple situation avoids cultural complexities yet takes advantage of the powerful emotions that attach themselves to these familiar social relationships.
- (2) *Consider avoiding real races and cultural moments.* These characters avoid activating ethnicity, and they are forgiven for behaving in odd ways because they are so clearly not part of the usual human social structure. Their worlds do not correlate to any specific culture's time and place. Similarly, alien races from far-distant stars or mythic races of beings from fantasy literature help avoid localization issues. Playing these characters is equally alien to all.
- (3) *Borrow from existing transmedia.* The global media culture can be leveraged for character design concepts. Recognizable characters and types—

gangsters, rappers, martial artists, and the like—take advantage of the fact that most audience can apply what they have learned from other media to know what to expect from the characters.

- (4) *Be true to the localization of your characters in their own world.* Whatever the cultural setting is for the characters, make sure to work it out thoroughly and to have an internally coherent, rich, and realistic social world for the characters that the design team knows like the backs of their hands
- (5) *Test early and often with members of the target culture.* Remember that cultures are not homogeneous—there will be many perspectives within a given group, and it is important to get a range of reactions to ensure that the characters will have the proper appeal [17].

RomOn's character design development targets the transcultural world to market to global markets, though inspired by Balinese Folklore and Japan. The original cultural codes will be wrapped in the whole world of RomOn so that it can be understood by the global community.

4. CONCLUSION

Development of Local Folklore as the basis of character-based IP inspiration requires 3 approaches namely cultural approach, marketing approach and the approach to character design. The three approaches are mutually reinforced and synergized so that the characterization process is accepted by the global market. Folklore as a communication of the local paradigm in looking at a phenomenon of life. Waste management education requires a variety of communications tailored to the millennial generation, while maintaining the cultural wealth stated in folklore. But in the context of global marketing, folklore must be packaged so as not to cause a conflict by expressing the universality of a culture. Character-based IP is one of the educational media which functions as preservation, strengthening identity and also has economic value.

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