

## Research Article

# The Visual Narrative of Satria Barong's Character as a Representation of the Mystical Entity of Barong Ket

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**Abstract.**

This study aims to bring the aesthetic, ethical and cultural values contained in the Barong Bali entity to the audience through a modern cultural paradigm. The physical form of Barong—specifically the chosen one – is Barong Ket. Modified with a popular culture approach, specifically selected, is the Japanese Pop culture approach in terms of the concept and terminology of *Tokusatsu*. The modification of Barong's form is carried out with an art creation model that involves exploratory and experimental aspects. This exploratory and experimental activity, as an initial methodological step, was carried out to find the ideal visual structure as a result of modifying the Barong Ket entity form to the *Tokusatsu* Barong model. Next, a narrative strategy is designed with a visual narrative approach. Reference studies were conducted to find supporting literature and audio-visual references. The supporting literature in question is related to transformative art, modification of visual forms, visual narratives, and Japanese pop culture models, especially the *tokusatsu* genre. The next methodological step in the creation of this art is to realize a visual narrative strategy in the form of presenting a short film performance. This process involved designing and creating art resulted in a short film with a special message delivered to each scene. Before being officially broadcast, an initial evaluation was carried out involving videographers, filmmakers and art observers as evaluators. This evaluation was carried out using a structured interview technique with the aim of exploring the research aspects to be evaluated more broadly and in depth. From the evaluation results, the short film entitled Satria Barong was feasible to be shown to the target audience with a note that there was an emphasis on detailed visual introductions.

**Keywords:** visual narrative, Satria Barong, Tokusatsu

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## 1. Introduction

Barong Ket is a mythological figure characterized by Balinese culture which is believed to have the power as a protector of goodness, generally in the form of animals and humans [1]. Barong is delivered in the form of a sacred cultural performance as well as for cultural tourism. The Barong Dance is a form of staging a typical Balinese performance which is still preserved and popular among local and foreign tourists. It can be seen from the volume of enthusiasm that is always high in foreign and domestic tourists to see the Barong performances when they come to Bali. The Barong figure itself is a result of the acculturation of Balinese culture with Chinese culture. The word “*barong*” comes from Sanskrit, namely the word “*b(h)arwang*” which in Indonesian or Malay is parallel to the word “*beruang*” (in English it refers to ‘bear’). In this study, barong will be presented in the form of a figure from Bali. It aims to introduce Balinese culture and traditions to outsiders through a short film medium. Besides that, it also helps to preserve Balinese culture, so that later Barong figures can be favored by all levels of Balinese society [2]. Barong modified performance in short films can present information visually that is able to convey messages with an aesthetic approach to it. Barong—specifically the chosen one is Barong Ket, has been modified with a popular culture approach, specifically the Japanese Pop culture approach “*Tokusatsu*” concepts and terminology. *Tokusatsu* is a genre made from Japanese superhero films that is equipped with special effects. The term tokusatsu is often used to refer to Japanese live-action sci-fi/fantasy/horror films. The modification of Barong’s form is carried out with a new art creation model that involves exploratory and experimental aspects. Further exploration will be carried out by improvising Barong Ket’s visual identity into a character called Satria Barong. While the experimental form is used in choosing the right material or media in designing the characters in the film. This exploratory and experimental activity, as an initial methodological step, was carried out to find the ideal visual structure as a result of modifying the Barong Ket entity form to the *Tokusatsu* Barong model. The making of this short film with the character of Satria Barong, is packaged in a very distinctive way [2]. It is done by incorporating visual elements of Balinese tradition in particular. The ornaments are formed in such a way that it embodies a new figure or character as an Indonesian superhero. Barong is extremely adequate to be a superhero because in each of his roles he shows the nobility against evil. The Barong story in question includes stories that have local content but can be enjoyed globally. In short films there are no long-winded stories because they are limited by a short duration,

therefore short films have their own advantages over normal duration films, namely on how they convey messages that have great meaning in short durations. Visual effects will be presented in this film in a unique way and have elements that support the role of a figure or character. With the barong figure, it can add to the repertoire of the nation's culture and can be used as a basis for the next design.

## 1.1. Research Focus

This research uses an art creation research model by carrying out data collection procedures at the beginning (exploration and experimentation), then creating a short film. The visual narrative concept used in the short film Satria Barong is postmodern with a tokusatsu style. The identity chosen to be introduced is Barong Ket with a modern Balinese cultural background. The superhero character Satria Barong takes the ancient Balinese mythological figure, Barong Ket, which is adapted to the setting of contemporary life. The costumes still have the characteristics of Barong Ket but will be dominated by beige and gold colors and combined with silver colors to have a modern and industrial impression. The weapon used by this barong superhero uses a Balinese shield which symbolizes the protector of the performing concept that adapts *cosplayers* (costume player) [3] which is also implemented in the short film scene. Dramatization strategy (Visual effects) as typical in tokusatsu—are used in the form of laser beams, explosions, fire, and smoke in order to make the audience feel the tension of the film. The naming of the characters in this short film uses the original Balinese name so that the audience can feel closer in the cultural aspect (locality locus). The main character is named Ekawira which means 'brave spirit'.

## 1.2. Logic (Rationale)

The introduction of the manifestation of Barong Ket into Satria Barong through a short film adapting the *tokusatsu* style aims to popularize Balinese cultural assets (Barong Ket) to the audience with a modern Indonesian cultural paradigm. In designing the short film Satria Barong, practical steps were drawn up in realizing the desired final artwork. The steps are: Identification of problems followed by data collection through the method of exploration and experimentation. The identified problems are then deepened through the 5W + 1H scheme so that more accurate data and logic are obtained. The film design

is then carried out in three steps which include Pre-production, Production and Post-Production. Pre-production begins with the preparation of a mature concept, writing a synopsis, designing a storyboard and determining a clear visual narrative strategy related to illustrations, typography, audio, and media output. Production is done by editing and adding appropriate visual effects and audio effects to the rendering process. Post-production is the result of processing short films as final artwork that is ready to be published and tested for validity. The quality of the results is obtained through testing by media experts, content experts, and to connoisseurs of film art/cinema.

### 1.3. Theoretical Framework

The theories used in this research are about Visual Narrative[4], and Japanese Pop culture theory in the *Tokusatsu* genre [5]. Visual narrative is the arrangement of the past, present and future through the analysis of Expectation, Attention and Memory, the result of which is that the future is expected, through the present, towards which it is present to the past that it remembers. And to understand it requires an understanding of the compositional and syntagmatic rules that govern the diachronic order of a story [6]. Pop culture is a culture of developing the creativity of visual arts from the results of cultural acculturation, in this case the *tokusatsu* genre.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Exploration

Exploration is carried out in several ways, namely observation, Interview, and literature study. Observations were made by discovering the barong dance performance, observing the barong with all its identities and observing the *tokusatsu* genre film that had been circulating on the internet, then re-observing the suitability of the materials used with the aim of getting the right identity for the Satria Barong character according to Barong's visual characteristics. The interview was conducted using a structured interview technique with selected sources (purposive sampling) including a media expert named I Wayan Adi Sucipta. His purpose in this interview is due to his expertise as a Barong Ket researcher. The second interview was conducted with I Ketut Kodi as a humanist and Barong performing arts practitioner. The literature study is used to find data regarding the identity, history and philosophy of the Barong Ket. In the literature,

data is also obtained about the style of *tokusatsu* as part of a Japanese film. In the next process, an analysis of previous creation or previous research is carried out in order to place the state of the art

From the data exposure, it is found that the shape of the Barong is an imaginative creature but has similarities to lions and bears. Barong is depicted with glaring eyes, long hair on his cream-colored body and is then decorated with gold ornaments. The color combination used is a *tridatu* color consisting of red, white/yellow and black.

## 2.2. Experiment

In Experiments, concepts and ideas are processed in the form of experimental experiments which include appropriate shapes, materials, colors, and motions. Experiments were carried out on the visualization aspect of the main character Satria Barong's costume. The experimental process begins with a sketch of a character which is then refined with other visual elements. Experiments were also carried out on the aspects of illustration, audio, text and color so that the display of short videos as a form of visual narration of Satria Barong's cultural message was able to be conveyed to the audience with a modern cultural paradigm.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

From the exploration results, it was found that the structure and visual concept of Satria Barong was to be presented as a character entity whose visual concept refers to the concept of Kalarudra, Barong is known as Banaspati Raja which is a form of Kalarudra, namely Shiva who is in the middle of *tiwikrama*. *Tiwikrama* is the act of changing oneself to be extraordinarily great to overcome various forms of obstacles and obstacles. The appearance of Barong *mesolah* (dancing) which shows the form of Shiva's *trivikrama*, is when Barong dances while rattling (jaw rattling) playing with both his jaws so that the upper and lower rows of teeth collide with each other causing a frightening sound. Likewise, his feet were tight (treading loudly) on the motherland (earth) so that it caused an earthquake and the asuras fled in fear. (Segara, 2000)

The kakawin Smaradahana *pupuh* VIII: 7-10 describes Shiva's *trivikrama* as follows: (1) Lord Shiva the Great rose up angrily; (b) As by itself it immediately takes the form of *trivikrama*; (3) Fierce and dreadful he places himself in the midst of the sky (even)

the giant among the giants half stares at him with fear and trembling; (4) He develops himself in the form of Rudra with the immeasurable 5 heads; (5) scary tousled hair, shiny and tight; (6) like the mega-mega at the time of destruction, reddish curls; (7) frightfully (he stretched out a thousand arms in all directions); (8) His eyes are like the moons and the suns lined up in a semicircle and deep like a cave his nostrils (wide) and deep like a cave; (9) His mouth with sharp fangs like (gateway) death by the grinding of his teeth into thunder and a storm that does not stop; (10) He is like a mountain (with arms) and feet on both sides; (11) His body feathers hanging from his body can be likened to the twilight; (12) On each plot of land where he put his feet an earthquake (earth) shook as if torn by the action of his feet[7].

In the experimental process, various alternative visual costumes were obtained for the main character and the antagonist character. This alternative develops from the initial version to the version agreed as the final (plenary) version. The development of costume visualization from start to finish can be seen in Figure ?? (from left to right)

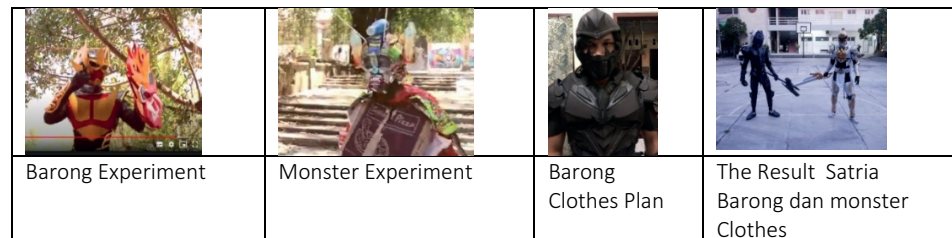


Figure 1: Satria Barong Experiment Process.

The experiments carried out on aspects of illustration, audio, text, color, composition or layout and media resulted in several things which are described as follows: (1) The illustration in the film tells the character of Ekawira as a superhero from Bali named Satria Barong. Satria Barong acts as an exterminator of crime which in this case, is a monster. The movie style chooses the *Tokusatsu* style. The illustration takes place in several places on the island of Bali. This film depicts a Superhero from the beginning creating a Super power that makes the character become Satria Barong; (2) The audio used in this video is the result of dubbing and natural back sound ranging from natural sounds, and artificial music that aims to build emotions in certain scenes, making the film more interesting and makes the audience feel carried away by the scene shown; (3) In this short film, the opening of the video will use the font "*batmanforeveral terna*" which makes a firm, strong impression and is also easy to read by the audience, and the font below is "*bebas neve regular*" for the series title of this short film; (4) The color used in this short film is predominantly red, with the addition of black vignette on the side of

the screen to make this short film look more cinematic; (5) The transitions used in the making of this short film are Deep to black and Cross Dissolve and cut to cut. black to represent the transfer of video 1 to another video, Cross Dissolve used to display dramatic and Cut to Cut scenes that represent normal transitions in this short film; (6) The work area used in this video is HDTV (High Definition TV) video format with a screen size resolution of 1920x1080 px. The use of full HD (High Definition) results in high image quality (720p). The frame rate uses 25 frames per second (25 fps). The screen ratio uses the standard 16: 9 in order to take pictures wider / wider, and adjusts to cellphone and laptop screens that are commonly used with this ratio. The initial evaluation involves videographers, filmmakers and art observers as evaluators. The evaluation was carried out using a structured interview technique with the aim of exploring the aspects to be evaluated more broadly and in depth. From the initial evaluation, it was found that the quality of the video or audio video of this information was well above the 89.65% figure. The text contained in the short film Satria Barong can be read clearly by the audience and the visual effects for this short film are worthy of publication.

#### 4. Conclusions and Suggestions

The tokusatsu approach can be used as an alternative way of introducing cultural practices within the framework of popular culture to an audience whose acceptance model is in the category of modern cultural paradigms. From the results of testing and observations, it is recommended that in the production of short films, an exploration of other Balinese cultural forms such as masks, dances, rituals, and other cultural forms can be carried out and recommended.

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