

## ILLUSTRATED BOOK AS A MEDIA OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE MYTH OF KALIMANTAN KUYANG VERSION OF ACHMAD BENBELA

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### ABSTRACT

We examined the phenomenon of the myth of kuyang originating from Kalimantan. In the past, it may have only been stories from village to village in Kalimantan but now it is adapted through information media in the form of books, one of which is Achmad Benbela's novel entitled "Kuyang". The novel focuses on a long narrative and few illustrations so that the information is less clearly described. So it needs to be seen using verbal and visual approach methods in conveying information. In the results of this study due to the lack of reading level so that the media illustration book is more in demand by the public. So that the researcher makes an illustrated book adapted from a novel by Achmad Benbela.

**Keywords:** *Illustrated Book, Illustration, Kalimantan, Kuyang, Mystical, Myth.*

### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has a diversity of cultures and customs, as well as many mythical stories about ghosts that are believed by some people in a certain area. One type of folklore is myth, which can be found in every culture and is passed down from generation to generation. According to Bascom (Danandjadja 1984) explains folklore, or folklor, is divided into three broad categories, namely: myths, legends, and fairy tales. Myth is a type of folklore that is passed down from generation to generation and is considered to have really happened. Myths are often associated with supernatural or mysterious things. Examples are stories about Pocong, Genderuwo, Kuntilanak, and other spirits. The myth of Kuyang is one of the most famous myths in Indonesian society, especially in Kalimantan. People in Kalimantan consider Kuyang as a human-headed demon with attached body contents, without skin and other limbs. The people of Kalimantan consider Kuyang as a woman who studies black magic to obtain beauty and immortality (Wikanjati 2019).



Figure 1. Kuyang, Ghost Story from Kalimantan

The Kuyang myth has also been adapted into several media, including novels. One example is a novel entitled "Kuyang" by Achmad Benbela (2022), published by Gagasmedia. Although this novel is fiction, the story is inspired by a true story. It tells the story of a couple who must face the terror of a creature allied with the devil in a remote village in the jungles of Borneo. The novel also explains the beliefs and rituals that can be found in Borneo. But apart from the story presented, this novel still has shortcomings, because the illustrations in the novel are relatively few because the novel focuses more on long and complicated narratives. Making the characters and scenes of the story in the novel less clearly depicted. As explained (Putri 2023), novels use complex language structures to convey the messages they want to express and also emphasize the values that the author considers important.

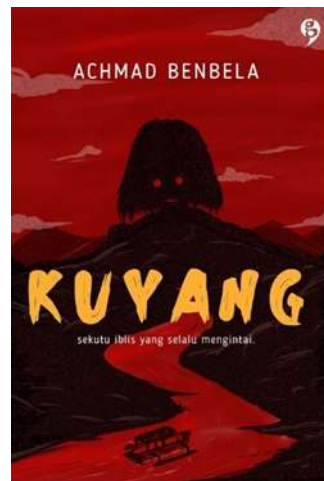


Figure 2. Kuyang Novel by Achmad Benbela

The shortcomings of the novel as the designer mentioned above and the curiosity of the community related to Kuyang Kalimantan, became the basis of the designer why it was necessary to raise and re-inform the myth of Kuyang Kalimantan by visualizing and creating new stories based on existing stories in the novel Kuyang by Achmad Benbela, in order to make it easier for readers to understand the contents of the story and readers can better imagine the contents of the story with the help of illustrations.

Based on the problems that have been described above, the purpose of this design is to raise one of the myths about mystical creatures in Indonesia, namely Kuyang Kalimantan, by creating a new story adapting the story from the novel Kuyang by Achmad Benbela by providing illustration elements such as characters and atmosphere of the story in the novel so that it can be enjoyed and readers can find out about the myth of Kuyang Kalimantan.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Because Achmad Benbela's work focuses more on long narratives and few illustrations, making information less clearly described and boring. Therefore, a change of information about Kuyang Kalimantan was formed in the form of an illustration book based on the story in the novel Kuyang by Achmad Benbela. The design of this information media aims to revive the myth of Kuyang Kalimantan and also so that people can know about the myth of Kuyang Kalimantan.

### METHODOLOGY

The strategy used through verbal and visual approaches has an important role in the process of conveying messages with the intent and purpose to be conveyed to the target audience, starting from determining the approach, conceptualizing and distributing media. The design strategy chosen is to revive the myth of Kuyang Kalimantan by creating a new story that adapts the story from the novel Kuyang by Achmad Benbela by providing illustration elements such as characters and atmosphere of the story in the novel.

### Data Collection

The first thing that is done as a data retrieval is a source interview, this source is Achmad Benbela as the author of the novel "kuyang". Achmad Benbela or often called Beben is a native Kalimantan child who was born in the upstream area of the Barito river. Since his childhood, Benbela has been familiar with various supernatural stories surrounding his homeland. This is what attracted Beben to write a book entitled "kuyang". The book tells the origin of kuyang through a historical perspective and mystical experiences experienced by Beben.

The next source is a person from the Ngaju Dayak tribe named Gading, 50 years old and lives in Palangka Raya City. We conducted an interview via telephone to the interviewee. According to Gading, the Ngaju Dayak tribe considers Kuyang as a creature or they call it hantuen. Kuyang is a demon in the form of a flying head with internal organs still attached and seeks the blood of babies and the blood of women giving birth. The people of Borneo believe that Kuyang is actually a human being practicing black magic to look young and live forever. According to Gading, the people of Kalimantan believe in the story of Kuyang because many have witnessed it firsthand or heard stories from people around them.

Gading argues that since ancient times until now, the story of Kuyang has been told from generation to generation, especially on the island of Borneo. Gading explained that the location of Kuyang itself cannot be ascertained where the area comes from, which is certain that Kuyang can only be found in inland areas on the island of Borneo.

In addition, we conducted a questionnaire consisting of 50 respondents aged 17-55 years which was conducted on April 29, 2023.

The domicile of the respondents consists of several regions, namely 32 people domiciled in West Java, 3 people domiciled in Jakarta, 4 people domiciled in Yogyakarta, 3 people domiciled in East Java, 4 people domiciled in Central Java, 2 people domiciled in Central Kalimantan, 1 person domiciled in South Sulawesi, and 1 person domiciled in Riau.

### Verbal Approach

Since the target audience of this design is from teenagers to adults, language will be used by combining Indonesian which is commonly used in daily life and using several ethnic languages in Kalimantan such as Dayak and Banjar, in order to maintain the authenticity of Kalimantan culture without reducing the value of the message to be conveyed. The purpose of this approach is so that the message can be easily understood, especially by teenagers who are the main target.

Of the 50 respondents who answered the questionnaire, the following data were obtained. 47 people believe in the existence of mystical creatures and 3 people do not believe in the existence of mystical creatures. Of the 50 respondents who answered the questionnaire, the following data were obtained. 21 people answered from friends/parents' stories, 16 people answered from personal experience, 5 people answered from social media, 5 people answered from online media, 2 people answered from print media, and 1 person answered from games media.

Of the 50 respondents who answered the questionnaire, the data was obtained with the following description. 30 people answered Pocong, 17 people answered Kuntilanak, 1 person answered Tuyul, 1 person answered Jin, and 1 person answered all of the above list are famous in Indonesia.

Of the 50 respondents who answered the questionnaire, the data was obtained with the following explanation. 43 people know the myth about Kuyang and 7 people do not know the myth about Kuyang.

Of the 50 respondents, 44 people who answered the questionnaire obtained data with the following description. 17 people answered from social media, 13 people answered from stories from friends or parents, 11 people answered from online media, and 1 person answered from personal experience.

Of the 50 respondents who answered the questionnaire, the following data were obtained. 37 people answered from Kalimantan, 5 people answered from Java, 3 people answered from Sumatra, 1 person answered from Bali, 1 person answered from Thailand, and 3 people answered from Thailand, and 3 people answered that they did not know.

Of the 50 respondents who answered the questionnaire, the following data were obtained. 29 people were curious about the myth about Kuyang and 21 people were not.

Out of 50 respondents, 30 people who answered the questionnaire obtained data with the following description. 13 people were curious about the history and origin of Kuyang, 12 people were curious about the myths and beliefs related to Kuyang, 5 people were curious about how to protect themselves from Kuyang.

Of the 50 respondents who answered the questionnaire, the following data were obtained. 38 people like reading novels and 12 people do not like reading novels.

Of the 50 respondents, 49 people who answered the questionnaire obtained data with the following description. 32 people are interested, 16 people are less interested and 1 person is not interested.

Of the 50 respondents, 45 people answered the questionnaire with the following data. 26 people are interested because of the interesting plot, 5 people are interested because of the interesting characters, 5 people are interested because of the unique language style, 4 people are interested because of recommendations from friends/family, 2 people are interested because of the interesting page cover and 1 person is interested because of feeling.

Of the 50 respondents, 47 people who answered the questionnaire obtained data with the following description. 26 people like the horror genre and feel entertained by it, 17 people don't really like the horror genre, 3 people don't like it because it's too scary, and 1 person answered sometimes scary sometimes not.

Of the 50 respondents who answered the questionnaire, the following data were obtained. 48 people answered that they had never seen the novel before and 2 people answered that they had seen the novel.

Of the 50 respondents who answered the questionnaire, the following data were obtained. 35 people answered that it was quite interesting and wanted to read the novel out of curiosity, 6 people answered that it was less interesting and were not interested in reading the novel, 6 people answered that they were not interested in reading the novel, and 3 people answered that it was very interesting and wanted to read the novel.

Of the 50 respondents who answered the questionnaire, the data was obtained with the following explanation. 27 people were interested in reading the novel in the near future and 23 others answered that they were not interested.

### Visual Approach

The visual communication approach used in this design uses a semi-cartoon style that is made in such a way as a depiction of the character. This style tends to be a mixture of cartoon and realist styles. However, for the depiction of the Kuyang character, it is made creepy by using a combination of surreal and horror visual styles that give a dark and dark impression. This aims to make the human and ghost characters look contrasting and the ghost characters shown look more sinister. Because of the information conveyed and also seeing the many interests of teenagers and adults with horror themes in it. The illustration itself is made using manual sketches using paper then for the completion of coloring and editing using digital painting techniques.



Figure 3. Reference Illustration by Johanna Springer

### Mandatory



Figure 4. GagasMedia Publisher Logo

Mandatory serves to establish cooperation as the party that will publish the media that has been designed. Mandatory in this illustration book media design is GagasMedia. GagasMedia is a book publisher established on July 4, 2003 with a focus on books for teenagers. The books published by GagasMedia have a big impact on the Indonesian book world. GagasMedia was founded by FX Rudy Gunawan, Anthonius Riyanto, Moammar Emka, Hikmat Kurnia, and Andi Dominicus, and operates alongside AgroMedia Pustaka under the same umbrella. GagasMedia's book distribution is done through AgroMedia Distributor, which allows its books to be available throughout Indonesia.

## **Creative and Media Strategy**

According to (Iskandar 2007) creative is something that is interesting, both in terms of visuals and copywriting. Creative strategy is the stages in planning that aims to make the media informed can be designed and adapted to the target audience. Basically, the creative strategy can be compiled through the target audience data that has been determined.

The creative strategy in the design of this Kalimantan Myth information is to create a new story that adapts the story from the novel Kuyang by Achmad Benbela by adding illustration elements such as characters and the atmosphere of the story in the novel into a medium that can visualize the story of Kuyang Kalimantan through an illustration book. The illustration book designed will be organized into a graphic novel format, whose story is set before the story that occurred in the novel Kuyang by Achmad Benbela. The creative strategies used in the design of illustration books are as follows:

- **Copywriting**

The use of good copywriting can make the information media designed have its own characteristics. Copywriting is generally used in the advertising world to make the advertisements displayed have more appeal. Visuals need to be combined with words to give maximum results and easily understood by the target audience. In the context of designing illustration books, copywriting aims to determine the title of the book. The main book title used in this design is "Titisan Darah Kuyang".

- **Visual Concept**

Visual concepts are needed so that the information to be given can be organized properly and look attractive. Visual concepts include Layout or layout, Typography, Illustration, and also color. In this design, the visual concept is determined by looking at the target audience that has been determined. Broadly speaking, the concept that will be used will be the same as the existing references that are designed in such a way as to look in accordance with the theme of the illustration book to be designed, which is horror-themed. The illustration book will combine writing and images that aim to keep readers from getting bored when seeing a lot of narration.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Design Format**

The format of the illustration book designed is A5 or 21 cm x 14.8 cm with portrait orientation. This is to contain more information to provide space for readers to understand the narrative and illustrations. The size chosen is fairly common for books that are A5, this aims to make the book not take up a lot of space and practical to carry anywhere.

### **Layout**

Layout on the contents of the book is made differently following the information and illustrations that will be packaged. This aims to keep readers from getting bored. The edge distance on the content or margin is using a distance of 2 cm, but for the margins in a differentiated size of 2.3 cm so that when binding the content in the book can still be read. Using 11pt text size so that the information can be read clearly with the reading direction from left to right.

## Typography

Typography is a technique of composing or arranging letters and texts that aims to create visuals that are attractive and easy to read, so that the message to be conveyed can be understood (Adieb 2021). Typography is a very important element in conveying information. As explained (Wantoro 2017) Lettering is one of the important graphic elements to complete a design that is intended for a wide audience. Typography can also give characteristics to a design in order to create a certain impression to the target audience. In designing illustration book media, the typography used is as follows:

- **Heading**

Heading 1 is the head of the text that is used for the title of the illustration book to be designed. The size of the heading is made bigger than the bodytext, it aims to differentiate from the bodytext and attract the reader's attention. The font used for the title is Something Strange, this font was chosen because the shape that looks like dripping like blood adds a spooky effect. This font was created by Jonathan S Harris with a Free for personal use license which means that this font is licensed for free if used for yourself and must be purchased if used for commercial purposes.



Figure 5. Font Something Strange

- **Caption text**

Caption text is a text that is used to complement the text in the illustration book that will be designed. This font will be used for the purposes of writing captions and page numbers. The font used for the title is Haunt Aoe, this font was chosen because of its shape that resembles writing written in blood. This font was created by Astigmatic One Eye Typographic Institute, with a 100% Free license which means this font can be used for personal and commercial purposes.

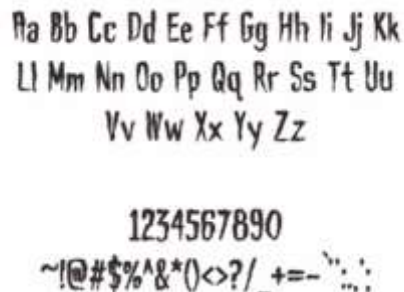


Figure 6. Font Haunt HOE

- **Bodytext**

Bodytext is the body or text used to explain a sentence in an illustration book. IM Fell DW Pica was chosen to be the bodytext because of its serif writing that gives the impression of manually typed journal writing and has a fairly clear readability level, so that information can be seen clearly by the reader. This font was created by Iginio Marini with a Free for personal use and commercial use license which means this font can be used for personal and commercial purposes.

Ac Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo  
Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz  
1234567890 ;:?!

**Figure 7. Fabio Furlani Philipp Herrmann Syncro Bold**

### Illustration

According to (Rohidi 1984) "illustration is the depiction of a visual element in order to explain, explain, and beautify a text, so that readers can feel directly through their own eyes, properties, and impressions that exist in the story presented" Illustration is a face that will always be the main concern before seeing the contents of an object. The illustration book that will be designed will use a semi-cartoon style that is made in such a way as a depiction of character figures. This style tends to be a mixture of cartoon and realist styles. But for the depiction of the Kuyang character is made creepy by using a visual style of a combination of surreal and horror visual styles that give a dark and dark impression.

### Character Study

Character study is the process of studying the appearance of the character to be designed so that there is a reference in making the illustration of the character to be designed. In the design of this illustration book, the visualization of the Kuyang figure becomes an important focus because the Kuyang figure is the central character in the story that will be discussed in the design of this illustration book about the myth. The character of Kuyang will be drawn in a way that looks scary, but still refers to the description of Kuyang's form according to the novel version of "Kuyang" in Achmad Benbela's version. In the novel, Kuyang is described as a human head that flies with its entrails. It has two fangs sticking out and a heart that looks like a ball of fire and disheveled hair. Because everyone has different perceptions or images to imagine the form of Kuyang, in this illustration book the designer makes Kuyang's mouth look wider with black pupils to give a more sinister impression. The following is an illustration of Kuyang in the illustration book to be designed.





Figure 8. Digital Sketch of Kuyang Character

### Color

Color plays an important role in design, (Ismi 2020) explaining that color in design has a major role in attracting the attention of the target audience. This is because color gives a strong impression and is easily remembered by the audience when they see something they have never seen. In addition, the use of color in design can also help a brand in branding efforts and help the brand become more widely known. In the design of this illustration book, the colors used include red, yellow, black and white.

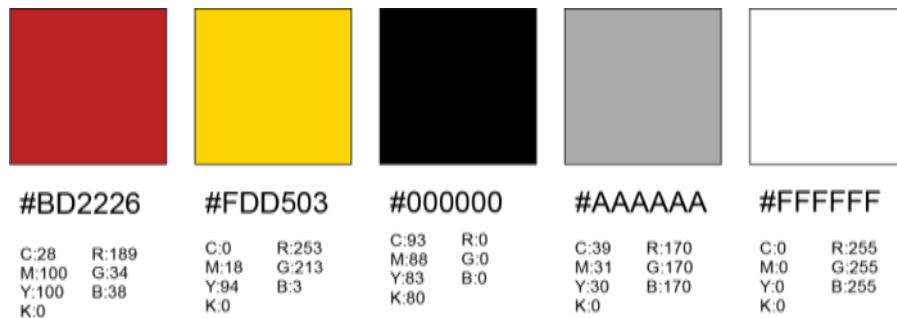


Figure 9. color selection

### Main Media

The illustration book designed will be organized into a graphic novel format, whose story is set before the story that occurs in the novel Kuyang by Achmad Benbela. Graphic novel is a type of book that combines illustrations or images to illustrate the storyline contained in the novel. In simple terms, graphic novels can be considered as books that contain comic elements. The term "graphic novel" was first introduced in America in November 1964 by Richard Kyle through a newspaper for members of the Amateur Press Association (Manjorang & Situmorang 2023). The illustration book designed will be made serialized so that the target audience is curious about the continuation of the story, so that curious readers continue to find out the continuation by reading the story in the novel Kuyang by Achmad Benbela.



Figure 10. illustration book sample

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In the design of this illustration book, the designer makes an information media with the aim of bringing back the myth about mystical creatures in Indonesia, namely Kuyang Kalimantan. Finally, an illustration book was chosen as an information media to retell the myth of Kuyang Kalimantan by Achmad Benbela. The choice of illustration book is because illustration is able to help visualize the story or concept contained in the book. Starting from describing characters, backgrounds, events in a clearer way than writing.

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