

**SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER'S MOTIONS IN MARVEL COMIC'S
IRON MAN 3 PRELUDE – IRON MAN EXTREMIS**

by

Made Widya Wibawa

email: madewidyawibawa@gmail.com

English Department, Faculty of Letters and Culture, Udayana University

Abstrak

Judul studi ini adalah Semiotic Analysis of Character's Motions in Marvel's Comic Iron Man 3 Prelude – Iron Man Extremis. Studi ini membahas tentang arti dari masing-masing gerak karakter dalam komik dan hubungannya dengan perangkat tekstual dalam penciptaan suatu kejadian di dalam komik. Data yang digunakan adalah gambar dalam sebuah komik Marvel berjudul Iron Man 3 Prelude – Iron Man Extremis (2013) yang dikarang oleh Chistos Gage, Will Corona Pilgrim, Ramon Rosanas, dan Steve Kurth. Teori yang digunakan adalah teori dari Ferdinand de Saussure tentang Semiotics untuk menganalisis signifier (petanda) dan signified (penanda) dari gerakan karakter, dan teori milik Scott McCloud untuk menganalisis hubungan antara gerakan karakter dan perangkat tekstual dalam pembuatan suatu kejadian dalam komik.

Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa gerakan karakter dalam komik yang memiliki petanda dan penanda memang terlihat seperti gerakan manusia dalam kehidupan nyata sehingga mudah dipahami oleh pembaca. Disamping itu, perangkat tekstual seperti balon pidato dan efek suara dapat memperjelas ide yang ingin disampaikan oleh gerakan karakter dalam penggambaran suatu kejadian.

Kata kunci : karakter, signifier, signified

1. Background of the Study

Sign is a mark or symbol which is used to represent something. The existences of signs are very close to human life. Signs can be found everywhere, such as on the side of the street, on the wall, in the book, and even also on the human body, it is showed by body movement or gesture. According to Oxford English Dictionary, gesture is a movement of part of the body, especially a hand or the head to express an idea or meaning. However, gesture is not always performed by hand or head. Any part of human body which can be moved to express a meaning is called gesture. We perform body movement or gesture to support our speech when we talk. Or in other words, it is used to strengthen the purpose of what we want to convey in our speech. Further, the use of gesture is also important in the process of drawing the picture of human in comic.

Comic is a visual medium used to express ideas by combining text and images, and usually, in the form of panels that are made sequentially. In comic, there must be a character (in the form of human or something, but acts like human being) which perform motions or gestures to create the event. It is purposed to make the story flow well and act like human being in real life because usually, the story of comic is based on the reality.

2. Problems

Based on the background of the study, there are two problems discussed in this study. The problems are as follows:

1. What are the signifiers and signified of character's motions illustrated in *Marvel Comic's Iron Man 3 Prelude – Iron Man Extremis*?
2. What is the relation between the character's motions and textual devices in creating an event which occurs in *Marvel Comic's Iron Man 3 Prelude – Iron Man Extremis*?

3. Aims

In response to the problems, the aims of this study are as follows:

1. To find out the signifiers and signified of the character's motions illustrated in *Marvel Comic's Iron Man 3 Prelude – Iron Man Extremis*.
2. To find out the relation between the character's motions and textual devices in creating an event which occurs in the comic.

4. Research Method

The data used in this study were taken from the *Marvel Comic's* book entitled *Iron Man 3 Prelude – Iron Man Extremis* (2013). They were collected by applying documentation method and analyzed descriptively using qualitative method.

5. Result and Discussion

Analysis of Character's Motions in Marvel's Comic Iron Man 3 Prelude – Iron Man Extremis.

The second panel in page 28.



- The Signifiers:
 - a. A man (Justin Hammer), on the left, raises his right hand and moves it forward. Then, he puts his left hand behind the black-grey machine guy. Also, his face looks like facing ahead and his mouth opens.
 - b. The black-grey machine suit guy stands beside the man. He sees ahead and stands upright.

- The Signified:
 - a. The man wants to introduce the black-grey machine guy. The raised right hand forward indicates that he wants to present the black-grey machine suit to the people in front. While, the left hand which is behind the machine suit guy indicates that he wants to show it to the masses. Then, the opened mouth indicates that he is saying some words.
 - b. The black-machine suit guy stands upright and tries to be seen by the people because the man beside him is introducing him.

This panel shows the reader about a man who introduces the black-grey machine suit guy to the people by saying, “*Ladies and gentlemen, today I am proud to present to you the very first prototype in the variable threat response battle suit. And its pilot Air Force Lieutenant Colonel James Rhodes!*” and “*For America and its allies, Hammer Industries is reporting for-*“. In addition, there is another textual information behind Justin Hammer. It says “*STARK EXPO*” and it indicates that the setting of the event is in the Stark Expo.

Meanwhile, this panel uses two of the Words-Pictures Relation Theory, **Additive** and **Picture-specific Combination**. It can be said performing the Additive Combination because the words of Justin Hammer which contain the presentation of the black-grey machine suit and its pilot, and the movement of his right hand which looks like introducing something is working together in producing an idea for the event. The textual information “*STARK EXPO*” and the illustration of Justin Hammer who introduces the black-grey machine suit can be said to show the combination of Pictures-specific because the words of textual information only have a little role than the illustration of Justin Hammer. They have a role just as the additional information.

6. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the signifiers of the illustrations of the character’s motions lead the signified to find out the meaning of each character’s motions. Therefore, the character’s motions in each panel have different meanings based on their signifiers and signified. Besides, in creating the events of the story, the textual devices play the important role to clarify what the character’s motions want to tell to the readers.

7. Bibliography

- Chandler, Daniel. 2001. *Semiotics for Beginners*. Downloaded in 2013/11/10, from <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem01.html>.
- Dillon, George L. 1999. *Art and the Semiotics of Images: Three Questions about Visual Meaning*. Available in <http://faculty.washington.edu/dillon/rhethtml/signifiers/sigsave.html> (last accessed in 2014/12/3)

- Hornby, A.S. 2005. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary; 7th Edition*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Kendon, Adam. *An Agenda for Gesture Studies*. Available in <http://www.univie.ac.at/wissenschaftstheorie/srb/srb/gesture.html> (last accessed in 2014/12/3)
- McCloud, Scott. 1993. *Understanding Comics*. Downloaded in 2014/12/3, from [http://www.jessethompsonart.com/artpage/Pre_C_drawing_Video_files/Understanding%20Comics%20\(The%20Invisible%20Art\)%20By%20Scott%20McCloud.pdf](http://www.jessethompsonart.com/artpage/Pre_C_drawing_Video_files/Understanding%20Comics%20(The%20Invisible%20Art)%20By%20Scott%20McCloud.pdf)
- Setiaji. 2012. *Apa Itu Komik*. Available in <http://ngomikindonesia.blogspot.com/2012/05/apa-itu-komik.html> (last accessed in 2014/12/3)