

MASCULINITY REPRESENTATION IN ANIME (SEMIOTICS ANALYSIS ABOUT THE REPRESENTATION OF MASCULINITY IN TIGER AND BUNNY ANIME)

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Abstract — Masculinity issues rarely raised because society considers masculinity is fixed and can't be changed. Although in fact, both femininity and masculinity are constructed by the community's identity. This study will address the issue of masculinity represented by the characters in Tiger and Bunny anime and the myths behind the show.

The method used is based on the qualitative interpretative models of Roland Barthes' semiotic as a form of a sign systems which are divided into denotation and connotation that make up the myth that produces meaning. Data were collected by observing scenes in Tiger and Bunny and observing scenes that are considered capable of representing the masculine figure. The elements of anime digested by researchers as interpretan based on the experience gained from social interaction as a member of specified society/culture. From the research, it can be concluded that in Tiger and Bunny, male figure represents the image of a man who is totally different with traditional masculinity. It is assumed that a character in Tiger and Bunny shows a new construction of a masculinity, or even a new kind of gender.

Keywords – *i.e.* Gender, Anime, Semiotic

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender is a social construction that is shaped by it society and culture since birth, so that it mold the role of what is considered appropriate and inappropriate for by men and women. This is the background that rises the notion that woman's role is in the domestic sphere while man is in the public domain. The term gender refers to the limitation for feminine and masculine behavior.

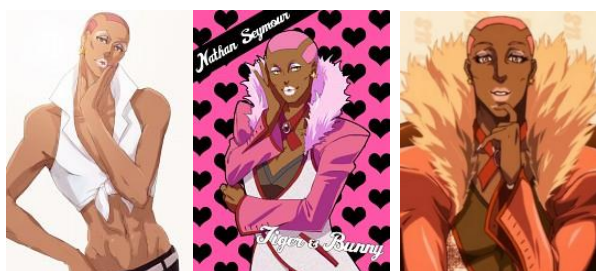
Women and men experience the process of

socialization to define whether he/she is male or female through a variety of mediums, such as school, community, state, family, religion and mass media. This socialization process used by the public for understanding gender identity. Sometimes it could lead to differences and gender inequalities that generally occurs on women or marginalized groups through alienation, subordination, stereotypes, and physical and mental violence.

The forming of gender identity as people know can not be separated from the complex role of the mass media as a communication medium. Media presents an experience from another point of view. Visual image conveying the idea of a communicator to form an images of what regarded as a truth.

The privilege of anime as a medium of mass visual communication, could easen the transfer of culture for the audience. The varieties of titles and genres offered are a manifestation of market demand as well as specification tastes.

Tiger and Bunny is an example of anime that is interesting to be studied. This anime was released in September 2012 followed by Tiger & Bunny: The Rising that released in February 2014. Tiger and Bunny tells the story of peoples called "Next" which has supernatural powers. These superheroes are hired to protect the Sternbild City from acts of crime. Their action was sponsored by the television program named "Hero TV" which broadcast their actions as a Reality Show (Tiger _ & _ Bunny, 2011). Masculinity issues rarely raised because society considers masculinity has been fixed and unchanged (Feasey, 2008: 2). It is a well-established social construction. So the researchers considered this anime interesting to study because it shows that women are not the only commodities, but also men. It is represented by how the main character, Nathan Seymour, imaged through its postures, accessories and gestures.



Gambar 1. Nathan Seymour, the main character in Tiger and Bunny

This study will address the issue of masculinity represented by the characters in Tiger and Bunny and myths that developed behind Tiger and Bunny.

2. LITERATURE AND THEORY

Semiology Roland Barthes

Roland Barthes was known as one of the many structuralist thinkers tha practice the model of linguistics and Saussurian semiology. Roland Barthes (Fiske, 2011: 118) developed two tiers of sign (staggered systems) which generates stratified meanings, the level of denotation and connotation. Roland Barthes also add a view of deeper meaning, a conventional meanings that related to the myth. Myth in Barthes' semiotic understanding is encoding the social values as something that could considered as natural thing or stories that used to explain a culture or in order to understand some aspect of reality or nature (Fiske, 2011: 121).

Masculinity

MacInnes and Beynon (2002: 2) explains that masculinity formed from the men's fantasies of how they should behaves, acts and dresses. Metcalf and Humphries (in Nixon 1997: 296) asserts that the character of masculinity as tough/rugged, well-built, muscular, and tend to act cold.

Masculine is a form of construction to indicate manliness. Construction that formed through a long social and cultural processes . Therefore, the meaning of masculinity is not always fixed. It never could be concrete, and can be modified. The concept of masculinity can not be removed from the patriarchal system. A system of social structures and practices where men dominates, oppresses and exploits (Walby, 2014: 28). At an abstract level, patriarchy works as a system of social relations. Helen MasDonald explain a clear distinction between men and women:

MEN ARE SHOULD BE	WOMEN ARE SHOULD BE
Masculine	Feminine
Dominant	Submissive
Strong	Weak
Aggressive	Passive
Intelligent	Intuitive
rational	Emotional
Active (do things)	Communicative

Source: Magazine Advertising and Gender dalam http://www.mediated.or.uk/posted_documents/MagazineAdverts.html

Soft Power of Anime

Joseph S. Nye Jr., is a figure who popularized the term soft power in international relationship. His experience influence him in describing the terms of soft power, written in *Soft Power The Means to Success in World Politics* (2004). According to Nye, soft power is the ability of a country to achieve its goal by using attraction more than coercion and payment. Soft power can take the form of a country's culture, political values and foreign policy. Although soft power is not coercive, but that does not mean soft power is a weak form of international relationship. In the concept of soft power proposed by Nye, he explained that soft power can come from three things owned by a country, the culture (that is attractive to others), political values (which can be applied both inside and outside the country), and foreign policy (if it has the legitimacy and moral authority).

The third source of soft power can be used by a country in achieving its objectives to other countries. In addition to the appeal of culture, political values of a country could also become a potential source of soft power. Political values are intended as the values of democracy, human rights, freedom, openness, equality, anti-racism, and others. The perception of other countries to the political values held by a country is highly dependent on how this country spread its political values on their own country. Through anime, Japan can convey messages such as the freedom to express ideas, culture and living habits of Japanese society, including the introduction of social construction of gender.

3. DATA AND METHODS

This qualitative study used the approach of critical study method with case study based research, which examines and expresses the visual image as a research base. In the

interpretation process, researchers will conduct dialectic process with the text as an object. After that, the relative reality could be obtained. This means that researchers assume that the reality is the result of a mental construction of a social individual, thus the reality was understood differently by each individual. The steps of the research as follows:

1. Tiger and Bunny as an object of study will be documented and observed closely.
2. Observing and selecting scenes from Tiger and Bunny to be analyzed using methodology of visual approach, particularly in the area of *site of image itself* to acquire signs that articulated by its characters. Observation process is by viewing, which includes in-depth observations on the figure's characterizations, facial expressions, prop, clothing, body proportions, behaviors, colors, layout, composition, the supporting elements in background and foreground of the picture, and the scenes/settings, based on the theory of visual communication design.
3. The researchers then used the most relevant theoretical approaches in accordance with the visual characteristics of the image and its visual effects. The relation between the meanings and its latent value can articulate certain deeper-meaning expression as an implementation of the connotation aspect.

Unit Analysis

The unit of analysis used in the study of Tiger and Bunny includes thing as following:

1. Overview of Color

Color is the impression of a light to the eye. Color has a very close and impactful role for human perception.

2. Illustration Overview

Visual illustration has a very strategic role in the process of delivering the message because it is a form of simple, effective and efficient visual communication. This illustration review seeks to explore the representation of body (age, gender, hair, body size and appearance), representation of manner (facial expressions,

poses and eye contacts), representation of activity (touches, gestures, and communication positions) and the props and settings.

Data Collection Technique

In general, the research conducted through observation of the studied objects:

1. Documentation and observation. Documenting Tiger and Bunny using video capture application by setting it to high-resolution, so that the image quality remains good when the display image is enlarged, in order to facilitate the analysis process. As for the units that need to be observed carefully, it consist of the aspect of modality technology, composition modality and social modality based on the theory of visual communication design, specifically the review of colors, illustrations, and composition.

2. Literatures, collecting data from as books, cultural encyclopedias, scientific journals, magazines, websites, articles, et cetera, that is related to the theme of the research which are visual culture, cultural studies, gender and masculinity perspectives.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Gender ambiguity = Androgyne

As a social construction, gender traits are very contextual. Identification of various masculine and feminine characteristics has no valid basis, only from socio-cultural agreement. Androgyny is a form of gender construction that merge both the concepts of femininity and masculinity, so that the boundary between the become blurred. Androgyny oftenly used to refer a person that having difficulty to decide his/her gender, but can not be similiarized with intersexual or transgender.

Based on the analysis on connotation and denotation levels, Nathan Seymour is slender, dark-skinned, thick lips with pink lipstick, nail-polished finger, but ont he contrary, he also have a broad and muscular chest, arm and thigh. Nathan Seymour's appearance represents the mixture between feminity and masculinity.

Gender ambiguity displayed by Nathan Seymour also corfirmed through the representation of its manner. His sitting, standing, even fighting position tend to displays the characteristics of femininity, namel his habit to cross his legs. Swaying arm and fingers gesture also dominate his expression.

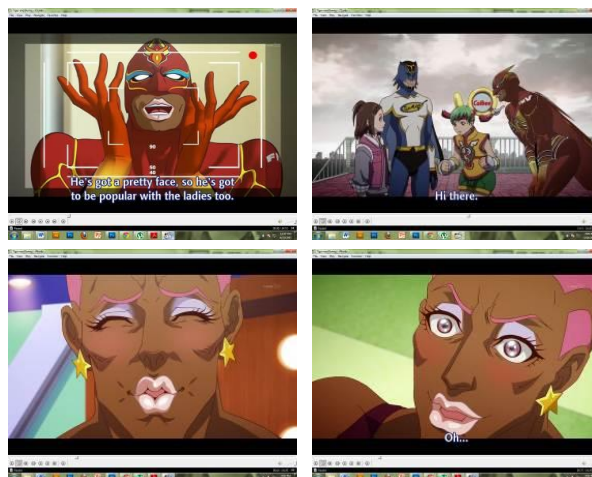


Image 1: Representation of Seymour's body and manner

Nathan Seymour's representation of property can be identified from his extravagant makeup (bright eye shadow and pink lipstick on dark skin), matching shirt and tights color (pink and purple), covered with low-cut chest formal attire, and a feather accent on the neck.

His body appearance, gestures, expressions and property has shaken the traditional codes of traditional masculinity. It is still shaken though, not shattered, because there are still few things remained from the dominant codes of traditional masculinity, such as the size and shape of the stocky and muscular body.

The mass media in the era of popular culture, offering an alternative to the masculinity and femininity, the concept of androgyny (either become 'the new man' or 'new woman'). The concept of masculinity often proscribe expressive and emotional appearance, but in this anime, Nathan Seymour showed as an emotional guy, sensitive and expressive (happy, sad, angry, sulk, even tease). Everything seemed different, but actually remains the same. Male remains the standard of normality. When they adopted the symbols of femininity, they look even more convincing

as a rational male.

Based on that, Nathan Seymour provide a position that can be describe as new by his looking which is like a man, his body language which is like a woman and the same time by his job as superhero which is very rare to see a superhero with that characteristic. This unique appearance combinations can create a perception about “anyone can be a superhero even the weird one”.

The mass media can not be separated with it relation to capitalism, where the market becomes the main orientation. The diverse concept of masculinity is a created by the market. Nathan Seymour reflect the aspirations that influenced by the tastes of the market.

The assertion Homophobia

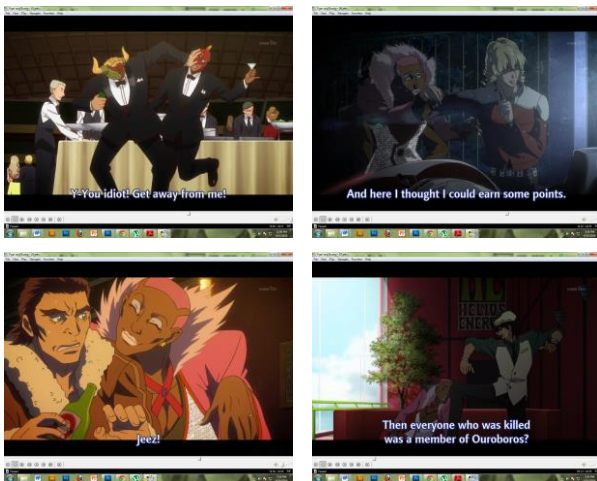


Image 2: the assertion homophobia through each Anime’s scenes

Nathan Seymour's erotic gesture raises hatreds to other characters in the story. Other characters deliberately keeping distance, kicking, and expressing fear when interacting with Nathan Seymour, it confirms their homophobic nature

Homosexuality and homophobia are historically constructed concept (Chapman, 2014: 45). Nathan Seymour with all its attributes represents his sexual urges, wild and aggressive, as well as an unbridled fantasy. He is the source of fear. So he became *the other*: beyond the 'normal boundary'. Homophobia arise because of the masculinity ego as the

majority of community. Masculinity ego shows male rejection against the domination and control of the same gender (Maltby, 2001: 175). Ego is also supported by the negative stigma and social norms resistance. Thus encouraging the perception and behavior that marginalize the 'abnormal'. Masculinity ego that encourages homophobic behavior was developed and internalized through family, school, and religion.

Masculinity ego assume that all men are heterosexual. So when these assumptions collide with the reality, specifically minorities (androgynous, transgender and bisexual), they tend to oppose, even assault. Moreover, the act of assault also supported by religious norms as well as social norms, they regarded as a disgusting being.

Tiger and Bunny, reflected and also reinforced the homophobic phenomenon that occurs in society. It also confirmed the assumptions of discriminating attitude of masculinity ego to the minorities.

Anime Studies as an Art Product

Anime is the Japanese's mass culture products that have broad market segment because it has a lot of genres that can be enjoyed by a wide range of age. The majority of anime appears as the extension of its manga (the Japanese term for comics) version. Both are an integral part in shaping the story and create what is called by Susan Sontag as "consuming image". Data shows that the business cycle of this field is around \$ 2.5 billion (Makino 2007). The fans of anime or better known as otaku, become an example of how a visual work could be a mass product. In regard to the concept of soft power, anime offers a leisure product with a simple theme and story but brings a visual that can be enjoyed by a wide range of audiences.

As a product of art, anime has the nature to offer the fun for the audience. This art then become a commodity so it can be called as a Product. This is because as a product of art, anime gives pleasure based on the market's demand. Media can not be separated from the influence of market presence that creates

needs. These need artistic spectacle that drives anime to become a commodity. As an artistic commodity, anime has the subjectivity of the author or creator. This subjectivity can be seen from the style of drawing, coloring, the characters, the story even to the ideology that fused into an anime title. Anime has its own realm for the audience. This is because the anime is a continuation of a manga masterpiece. So even though the story presented is the same, anime lovers have higher expectation than the manga version. This expectation that make up a realm in the mind of readers. This realm is simple, the nature of manga medium does not move, while the anime has advantages as audio-visual works. So the story presented is dynamic, supported by sound and visual effects, more spectacle than manga medium. The dynamic nature become anime's main value or in marketing language, USP (Unique Selling Proposition) Uniquely, anime are not not cannibal to its manga. Both still have fans, even generally anime fans are the fans of manga as well.

Fans of anime such as Tiger and Bunny become a part of a consumption circle, in a society of global capitalism they are usually under the control of the mass media (Piliang, 2003). In a display of mass media, audiences are invited to enjoy the spectacle and in this case, anime with its entertaining nature, has the advantage to attract more attention from audience. Anime's ability to creates appealing visual and complex story can be a way to elaborate signs, experiences, construct a new idea. Furthermore, Piliang assist the understanding of consumption, that consumption means spending or transforming the values contained in an object. In this case, the anime as a form of art product, loaded with various "ingredients" to be consumed and later can be digested as part of the audience's ideology.

In anime, elements that mold the objects within is a collection of semiotic signs, each of these things give various meaning to its audience. The nature of visual works, rich of codes and marks, gives a peculiar appeal for

the significance of anime as a medium. In the spectrum of semiotic phenomenon , visual elements of anime such as color, character design, color design, background and stories, could potentially embed powerful message to the minds of its audience. Anime become media's sign "seller" where the visual elements offered become a mass consumption, even extending to the real world via cosplay (costume player) events. This phenomenon is a sign that we currently in the era of visual consumption or art consumption, where the art, in this case anime, created the world within real world that based from virtual world.

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