Commodification Digital Comics on Instagram Account @asupankomik

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Abstract: Instagram is one of the social media that is used to disseminate information widely. The social media has power in its visual text. One account that uses Instagram is @asupankomik. The account uses Instagram not to upload personal content. However, to reupload works from other comic creators. This study aims to determine the commodification of text by the @asupankomik account in order to gain profit. The method used in this research is qualitative. The unit of analysis in this study is content from the @asupankomik account. The analysis technique used is semiotic analysis from Charles S. Pierce. The results of this study found that the content chosen by these accounts tends to describe the life of the middle and lower social classes. This can lead to stereotypes about their lives. In addition, the commodification carried out by @asupankomik changed the use value of comics as entertainment content into content for economic gain. The benefits are not only in the form of money. But also in the form of investment in the form of the number of followers and posts.

Keywords: Instagram, Digital Comics, Commodification, Semiotics

INTRODUCTION

Development technology information and progress of the times make it easy do effort business as well as without know space and time. In the past, people didn't a little if want offer goods or his services must come in a manner look face (*face to face*), come from no distance near for persuade use personal communication with approach style communication persuasive to society interested and up buy it until maintain make loyal customer . However , this time didn't carey experience they wanted toth and differencservices,stheydhad toy normal , manner,ople wface-to-facean add-to-fershis pocket in dodistance, andhe internet; people who haven't once same-very scold who and eto persuade societyt onbe be the target marketing busitheyhmaintained aough the media.. dium is now famous among society with the designation *New Media*.

Straubhaar and LaRose (in Nasrullah, 2014) state that there is a change in terminology concerning the media. The media changes related to development technology, coverage area, production mass (*mass production), and* distribution mass (mass *distribution*) have different effects on what's in the mass media.

So it's not imaginary when the media can become a powerful weapon for perpetrator business, because it turns out the media can give information that is educational, entertaining, or even socially controlled. Development technology is more up-to-date. This has implications for technology, information, and communication in the industrial world. With change, how the media is used could permanently survive and change the ways they display information. However, there arise a number of worries about whether traditional media, such as letters, newspapers, and magazines, can stay in the middle of this. The Internet is still ambiguous as a "mass" medium, owing to its mass function as well as individual use.

One new media form is social media. Media social is an embodied medium that works the same as generating user content (*user-generated content).* In this matter, this medium can also be said to be a container for various messages and information public-wide all over the world.

One social media example is Instagram. At the beginning of its existence, Instagram was just a social networking site for sharing photos and videos. Initially, Instagram was only used by its users to save photos and videos deemed worthy of immortalization and then get responses in the form of *likes* and comments. Over time, the use of Instagram has also grown. More and more users are using Instagram as a medium to disseminate information to the wider community, even though at first they don't know each other closely, in order to improve their economic level, add friendships, and so on.

One Instagram account that has many *followers* is @asupankomik. Instagram user @asupankomik often posts various kinds of accounts, which are then *followed* by many people. The account has more than 90,000 *followers.* Given the large number of *followers*, @asupankomik also uses it for promotions or advertisements. This @asupankomik account uploads various kinds of pictures and videos. In accordance with the account name, @asupankomik uploads content in the form of cartoon videos and comic images. Of course, the uploaded images are meant to entertain. But unfortunately, the uploaded content is not his own production content. It's content produced by other creators. The @asupankomik account simply *reposts* and gains popularity from its activity. In this way, he can make a profit based on what is in his interests.

Based on this background, the purpose of this research is to find out the commodification of text by the @asupankomik account in order to gain profit. The term "commodification, the origin of the word commodity, often involves the media, and this media is still relatively new to social scientists, so it is widely discussed in various places regarding capitalism's actions to accumulate wealth. Mosco (in Syafuddin and Andreas, 2018) defines commodification as the process of changing the value of a product that previously only had a use value and then became an exchange value (selling value). This commodification practice can now be easily done through social media. Visual and written texts that have been used as sources of information can now be seen as commodities for profit for producers.

METHOD

The research method used is qualitative. In this study, researchers collected data in the form of visual text and written text posted on the Instagram account @asupankomik. The data is an artifact, which is the unit of analysis for the researcher in conducting this research. The analysis technique used is semiotics, offered by Charles S. Pierce. In practice analysis, Pierce (in Budiman, 2011) explains the triadic concept. The triadic concept is a structure consisting of representamen, interpretant, and object. Representamen is something that is formed in a person's mind or thoughts. Interpretation can be interpreted as a sign that is created from the results of someone's interpretation. While the object is something that can be felt by someone through the five senses, Through these analytical methods and techniques, the researcher conducts a study of the object under study through the texts produced. Thus, it can be seen that the commodification carried out by text producers is based on their interests.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Digital comics from Pierce's semiotic perspective

Comics are one of the content that is often used to provide entertainment. In Indonesia, there are already many Instagram accounts that produce digital comics to provide easily accessible entertainment. In this study, researchers discuss digital comics that are available or uploaded by the Instagram account @asupankomik.

Of course , when reposting , the @asupankomik account doesn't do it haphazardly. There are characteristics of comic content that become provisions or choices in *reposting* . He does this in accordance with his interests in building the image of the account itself.

Based on observations made by researchers, the majority of content re-uploaded by the @*asupankomik* account is content that describes the lives of young people. Of course life is described based on social class. Comics that are re- *uploaded* by these accounts are more likely to elevate the lives of young people who have a middle to lower social class. Some of these comics are represented in several pictures that the researcher shows in the attachment below.

The life of the lower social class has often been shown by the mass media in various forms of content (Seliyana, 2013). Lower-class life is considered attractive, but in the end it risks creating stereotypes. This can build negative narratives about the lives of young people, both from the male and female sides.

One of these can be seen in picture 1. In this picture, the @asupankomik account is uploading digital comic content that was previously produced and uploaded by the @si.ha.lu account on its Instagram. Based on the analysis of visual semiotics, it can be seen several objects of clothing worn by the characters in the comic. In the *syntagmatic* context , the man is wearing a light gray shirt with dark gray pants. Meanwhile, the women wore beige shirts with dark gray trousers. From a *paradigmatic point of view, the* clothes and pants attached to the two comic characters both show lower social class.

This social class is further strengthened by the presence of brown stains affixed to the clothes of the two figures. The brown color on their clothes becomes the object of dirty stains which further emphasizes their social class. The object represents the *dirty spot mark.* Apart from that, there are three other objects that show their social class. The three objects in the context of their iconicity are objects that look like gray jar lids attached to dollar indexes. Then there is also a sign that resembles a sidewalk object, as a place for them to sit. As well as the shop door, which in his visuals is slightly blurred to indicate the background they are sitting in front of the shop. The three objects give rise to the interpretant that they are beggars, so the representation appears that the two comic characters are *poor youths*.

As digital comic content, of course, this content has narrative narrative. This story further strengthens the picture of life they feel. In Pierce's view (in Budiman, 2011) something that is felt (in this case the life of that class people) enters one of the first trichotomies, namely *qualisign. Qualisign* is a quality which is a sign, although basically it has not become a sign before it is *embodied*.

In the typology of signs according to Pierce, this situation is included in the typology of *secondness* (Budiman, 2011). Through comic pictures, storytelling, and the plots that are made, the account shows the reality that becomes one of the lives of young people in living their love life.

In the digital comic in figure 1 it is told that the man expresses his love for the woman. When expressing his love, he said that the man only has that woman. It turns out that this is not a sentence built metaphorically as a form of seduction. But what is revealed is a reality that is firmly established. Because of that then their lives are described as poor lower class people.

This in the end can be a criticism of the love life of young people today. Where one of them is through seduction which is considered excessive when a man says he only has the only woman. In the end, with the experience that digital comic creators have, this situation is described in a straightforward manner. Creators describe this condition could be currently happening in society. Young people are considered to exaggerate in expressing love, thus obscuring dreams, ideals that they should strive for in life in the future. Especially when living together, they will be faced with the

necessities of life that must be fulfilled. This is what can lead to stereotypes when playing the life of the lower social class in a content. They will be material for spectacle and entertainment. Even this is packaged in the form of animation.

Apart from the lower class, the @asupankomik account also chooses life for middle class people. This digital comic content is re-uploaded from the @sampahiasi account. This can be seen in Figure 2. In this image, a *frame* of the life of the people living in the cafe is shown. There are 4 characters shown in the comic *frame* , namely a person about to enter a cafe, a man with a mustache playing a game on a Nintendo DS console, a woman in a yellow shirt, and a woman with a pink headband.

The cafe setting in the image is indicated by various visual cues. Among them is the bell above the door, a cup of coffee in front of a man playing a game, and a glass of drink with a straw in front of the two women.

In this case the life of the lower class is shown in 2 activities. The first is the activity of playing games while drinking coffee which is carried out by a man in a red pirate hat. This hat does not represent that he is a pirate. But the hat is a sign that he is wearing a costume out of place. In contemporary culture, this is often attached to a culture called weaboo (if it refers to Japanese culture).

However, this *frame* is more focused on the activities of the two women. Where they are chatting about the context of the lipstick commodity. The context of their conversation shows that they are in a consumptive society.

According to Jati (in Umanilo, Nawawi, and Pulhehe, 2018) in his research entitled *Less Cash Society* , he sees the necessities of life for the middle class currently undergoing a transition. They no longer consume goods to fulfill their daily needs. But for the fulfillment of symbolic needs.

This is different from Figure 1, where the message is more dominated in visual form. In figure 2 the message is shown more through written text or in comics this can be considered as verbal text. In *syntagmatic order 1* , there is a sentence that reads, *"EH SIS, DINA'S TIME TO BUY LIPSTICK BUY 1 GET 1".* Then in *syntagmatic* , the other 2 women said, *"OH GOODNESS, THE DINA IS SO FOOLED EVEN WHEN SOMEONE BUY 1 GET 10".*

Apart from the use of capital letters because this can occur due to the choice of *font* , the conversation between the two women shows that they are described as people from the middle social class. They know about the price of lipstick and the purchase bonus. Where it is only known to those who are dominant in fulfilling their symbolic needs.

Similar to the previous picture, in figure 2 there is also the risk of forming stereotypes about the life of middle-class women. By representing the lives of the two characters, it can generate perceptions related to the symbolic consumption of today's young women. They can be judged to have consumptive behavior, not towards basic needs, but towards non-essential needs as in the conversation. In the end, this can simultaneously encourage the current symbolic needs to become basic needs for some parties.

From the two examples that are samples for this unit of analysis, it can be seen that @asupankomik's tendency in choosing content to be reposted. The account is more trying to post comic image content which contains the lives of young people from the middle and lower classes. This is done because of the life they can sell. As is the case with the mass media which also carries out this strategy to benefit from the interests of media capitalism that occur.

Comic repost commodification

In the process of capitalism which is carried out through Instagram, the @asupankomik account can be seen practicing the commodification of content. The account converts digital comic content that has use value as entertainment content, into selling value for its own sake.

Efforts to convert use value into selling value cannot be separated from the economic interests of the account owner. This is shown in his Instagram bio which is in picture 3. The bio says *Info Paid Promote? DM!* which directs *viewers* if they want to ask for promotional assistance, so they can send private messages to the account admin.

Of course this is interesting, because the digital comic content in the account posts is not his personal work. Even in the *reupload process* , he still includes the source of the content. However, he still utilizes the use value that has been built by the owner of his comic as entertainment content to become content for trading. Even in the *highlights* , the account also displays info for *endorsements*.

This, of course, in the current era can be a strategy for personal gain. With the ease of access offered by information and communication technology, we can easily obtain other people's content and use it for personal gain. This can be done safely and securely as long as you get approval and don't commit theft so it doesn't cause problems.

When viewed from the development of this account, of course, the activities carried out can be said to be legal. This is because the account does not remove the copyright identity of the owner or producer of the digital comic. Therefore, its activities are still running without encountering resistance from the owners of the content.

On the other hand, this is a criticism, that technological progress will eventually bring setbacks. Of course, the decline that appears is not direct. This is shown from @asupankomik's efforts to achieve personal gain. He doesn't need to hire employees or expend labor to produce content himself. It is enough for him to take advantage of the work and results of other people's work for his personal interests in obtaining income.

This personal interest is of course not directly seen as income in the form of money. But it can also be seen in the form of an increase in the power of *followers* and *posts* . Of course, the strength of *followers* for accounts that have economic goals is very important to continue to improve. The more *followers , the greater* the possibility and opportunity to get advertisers. Likewise with the number of *posts, it can increase the level of viewers '* trust in the activity of the account.

The quantity of these numbers can ultimately be seen as an economic investment, where the greater the increase, the greater the opportunity for profit. Of course, if there is no agreement, the economic benefits will only be obtained by the @asupankomik account. That way the digital comic content owners who become the first producers, they will only be free workers. This happens if in the content re- *uploading process* there is no agreement or buying and selling process for the creator's product.

Thus, the strategy from @asupankomik can be seen as a labor utilization practice. He earned free labor through *reupload activity.* In this way, indirect labor exploitation practices can occur. Although basically the first digital comic creators have already benefited. But that popularity and profit can also be taken with this *reuploading practice*.

Figure 1. Lower class youth

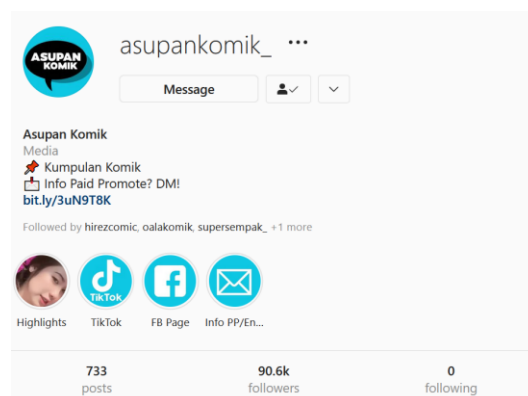

Figure 2. Middle class conversation

Figure 3. Instagram Profile @asupankomik

CONCLUSION

The practice of *reuploading* from the @asupankomik account can ultimately be said to be a process of commodification. Changing the entertainment value which is the essence of digital comics to be used as a selling point. This *reuploaded* digital comic will eventually become a commodity. The account ultimately has the opportunity to profit personally. This advantage is obtained by utilizing the workforce of comic creators. Thus there is exploitation of labor. On the other hand, the selection of re- *uploaded content* also risks creating stereotypes. Stereotypes that appear refer to the life of the middle and lower social classes. Even though this is only content for entertainment, the essence of the content is built on the basis of the creator's life experience or observations. When the work is listened to by many people and they agree with it, then the stereotype can be strengthened.

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