



The Role of Typography in Loki Serial Title

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ABSTRACT

This research discusses the use of typography in the title of the Loki series. As a title design, the Loki series received unfavorable comments, especially on its aesthetics. The purpose of this study was to find out how typographic elements are applied in the title of the Loki series. This type of research is qualitative using content analysis methods. It is known that the title of Loki series puts forward functions in the typographic design. So that the design is able to represent the content of the message in the story.

KEYWORDS

Typography
Design,
Communication,
Pop Culture,
Movie

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1. Introduction

Typography is one of the key elements in various communication media, one of which is in the world of film as a promotional medium. In their journal, Rahman, Utami, and Raden (2018) said that typography is one of the important elements in the world of marketing, which must be able to explain the content and characteristics that want to be conveyed to the audience. In the world of cinema, typography is used to write the title, both the film and the series that will be aired. This is in line with research conducted by Hartanto (2003) which said that the typographic design in the title of the film must be able to represent the content or message that will be conveyed in it. One of the production houses that took advantage of this is Marvel, with its cinematic world, called the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).

Competition in the increasingly competitive entertainment industry requires the perpetrators to continue to develop strategies in reaching the market, as did Marvel Studios. Before releasing the film, they made an announcement first to the public, regarding the film that will be released. On its official website, Marvel released a timeline of the film, both already and which will air. This can apparently attract the attention of MCU fans, because of the common thread between one film and another, commonly referred to as the Cinematic Universe. Marvel Studios is a film studio that focuses on the superhero genre. The film is an adaptation of a comic book published by Marvel itself. Surely the adaptation process is tailored to the film format and market interests, or by combining multiple stories in comics into a single film.



Figure. 1. Loki Serial Title

Every film released by Marvel Studios often receives a positive response from the public, including television series that aired on the Disney+ Hotstar streaming service. Among all the films and series announced in 2019 by Marvel, the Loki series received special attention from the public, especially in the typographic design section of the title. From a typographic point of view, Loki's serial title design seems unusual when compared to other Marvel series and movie titles. The typographic design chosen in the title of this series does not seem to blend between one letter and another. While the title of the series and other Marvel films have visual harmony. Due to the title's unusual typographic design, the Loki series received a less positive response from its fans. In an article issued by sea.mashable.com (2019) it is known that many fans of Marvel are less satisfied with the new logo of the Loki series. Many fans feel that the logo has too many visual elements, and they feel that it was created with Word Art in the Microsoft Word program. Many fans also channel their disappointment on social media such as Twitter, even they make memes to create a fanart from the logo. With a less positive response in the eyes of its fans, Marvel as the producer of the Loki series sticks to the design they have released. Marvel did not bother with the many negative responses from fans and continued their promotions, ranging from posters, trailers until the series aired.

1. 2 Role of Typography in Design

According to Ardianto (2015), typography has an important role in all design products, because it is able to convey a variety of information while paying attention to the readability, legibility, and clarity of the message conveyed. This also applies to the typography of the film title. The typography used in the title of a film and series must be able to make prospective viewers understand, as well as interested in watching it, so it needs to be made as interesting as possible, without removing important elements of information. This is in line with the opinion of Sihombing (2015: 182) who said that the addition of special effects in typography, will strengthen the message and can make a dramatic impression. However, the use of special effects in typography needs to pay attention to needs, because excessive effects will negatively affect legibility, readability, and can reduce the aesthetics of a design.

1.3 Typography Implementation in Movie Titles

Typography is one of the supporting elements in visual communication design, so typography has an important role in work. This is in line with hartanto (2004) which says that typography is an abstract concept, which can give meaning, imagery, and impressions visually. Therefore, typography can load a variety of messages in one visual display and is able to convey them simultaneously to the audience. One obvious example of typography implementation is in the creation of a movie title or logo that mostly appears in movie posters. Typography in movie posters, especially superhero movies is always changing following market trends and times, to attract market interest. Therefore,



the proper application of typography can bring out the appeal and interest of watching from prospective audiences.

Hartanto (2004) said that the title or logo of the film in the movie poster can give the first impression to the audience, for that it requires the selection of the right typeface (typography) so that the characteristics and strengths of the film can be demonstrated. However, typography cannot stand alone. Typography in the title of the film is also influenced by illustrations and images, all three of which must be an effective unity. There are 3 main requirements for the application of typography in the title of the film, including readability, style, and compatibility. These three things become important because they feel able to be a reflection of what will appear in the film. In line with this, the study analyzed the visual relationships that appear in the title of the Loki series logo with the characters of Loki characters, as well as the storyline in the series.

1.4 Design : Form Follows Function

Typography is a creative process, to translate abstract words into a meaningful visual form. Not only does it look at the shape, but it also contains a message that can be conveyed. Cullen (2012:12) says that the typographer composes the letters and provides meaning that corresponds to the context of the subject. In typography, there are letters, the two complement each other. Letters are only a medium that carries a message, while typography can have an emotional impact on the reader. Cullen (2012:14) also says that typography is central to the design. Typography is analytical and instructive, dramatic and unique, as well as conceptual and interpretive. Thus it can be mentioned that typography agrees with the view of form follows function because typography prioritizes its function as a message-conveying medium rather than prioritizing the beauty of form only. This understanding makes function and beauty go hand in hand. This research uses the concept of "form follows function" in looking at the role of typography in the Loki serial logo.

2. Method

The study applies qualitative research with content analysis methods. Qualitative research according to Pawito (2007: 35), aimed at finding an understanding of how a communication and visual symptom can occur. While the method of content analyst according to Marx and Weber in Eriyanto (2013: 15) is a series of processes that aim to make valid conclusions based on a number of texts that are used as a reference for research.

The author conduct observations and literature studies to collect all data related to communication design, specifically data that discusses the color and typography of the film title, which will then be equipped with data related to the characters and plot of the story in the Loki series. All data collected are identified and grouped according to categories that will then be continued with the analysis process by checking and drawing conclusions (Weber, 1990: 30).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Data collection results

3.1.1 Retro TVA Design (Time Variant Authority)

Kate Herron, director of the Loki series, said in Kumparan.com (2021) that TVA (Time Variant Authority) in the Loki series has a touch of futuristic retro style, inspired by several 80s sci-fi films. According to an article uploaded by cnet.com (2021), it is known that this style was deliberately chosen to represent the existence of TVA which is not described as the past, nor the future, so it can be said that TVA describes the present, which exists between the past and the future. Herron said that TVA combines various old-school technologies, with futuristic touches, such as time portals, time pads, and advanced weapons, but still uses computers with tube screens to various documents that are still being done manually.



3.1.2 Loki's Ambiguous Character

In an article published by [bbcamerica.com](https://www.bbcamerica.com) (2021) Tom Hiddleston, the actor Loki said that he still can not fully understand the character of Loki. Hiddleston says that Loki is a nimble shape-shifter. It's hard to trust Loki because his character is unpredictable. Loki's position in the MCU still gets a big question mark not only for Hiddleston himself but also for many MCU fans. Until now no one knows the exact portion of Loki's character, because he is not portrayed as a hero, but not entirely as a villain, nor an anti-hero. This can be said in accordance with Loki's character as a delinquency god, where he can deceive anyone with magic, or literally transform himself into someone else, to become an animal to disturb his brother. But it is undeniable that Loki pretty much took part in saving the world.



Figure. 2. Loki Character Design

3.1.3 Identify Loki's Character Design

Marvel's official website states that Loki is the God of Mischief, who was adopted by King Odin, the father of Thor. Loki's character is identical to the green and gold colors. In an article issued by [kompas.com](https://www.kompas.com) (2008) it was written that in addition to being synonymous with fertility, the color green can also describe jealousy and cunning. Loki's character is not far from the jealousy he feels for his adoptive brother, Thor. In addition, Loki's cunning is also seen in the way he uses to manipulates his opponents in disguise. In addition to the color green, the color gold is also often associated with Loki. In the official website of Psychologenie, it is known that in addition to being synonymous with wealth, and luxury, the color of gold also has a selfish meaning, greed, thirst for power and authority, this is in line with the attitude of Loki who is willing to do anything to be able to occupy the throne of his father, as king of Asgard.

3.1.4 Identify the Typography of Loki's serial logo

The letter "L" uses the Dameron font. From the website [Dafont.com](https://dafont.com), one of the font provider websites, it is known that this font belongs to the category of sans serif fonts that represent retro styles. In the letter "L" we can also see the effect of concrete and gray color with a slight stain so that it seems dirty.

Phinney, a typographer expressed a surprising fact to [Quora.com](https://www.quora.com) (2020) that the letters O and I in Loki's logo were written in the same font, cloister black. Based on the classification of vox atypi letters from designhistory.org, this font is blackletter type. Historically, this font was used in the past and was written using a special pen with a flat end. The design of the letter "O" is given a gold effect and color.

The letter "i" also uses the Cloister Black font. Although it represents the letter "I", but actually this letter is taken from the lowercase of the letter "L". The design of the letter "I" is given the most striking color, which is green with a 3D impression.

The letter "k" uses the ARB 85 font, which is written in the uppercase letter. Through the website [Fontmeme.com](https://fontmeme.com) it is known that these fonts are grouped in modern categories. In the vox



atypi classification from designhistory.org, this font is closer to the calligraphic type of script. The design of the letter "k" has an iron effect with a gray color.

The letters "L" and "k" use gray, although the special effects given are different. According to Sanyoto (2010), gray has the meaning of doubt, being in the middle of black and white, the courage to relent and abdicate, the character is more pleasant.

3.1.5 Serial Summary

The Loki series aired on the Disney+ streaming service. The number of episodes is 6, which airs once a week. The main character in the series is Loki, who is a supervillain and antihero in the MCU world. This character has a nosy nature but is also clever in overcoming problems. In addition to these properties, Loki also has magic abilities and changes shape into any form.

The outline of the series tells the story of Loki who has to deal with timelines and variations of himself from other dimensions. The place settings that appear in the series are diverse and divided into 4 groups, past, present, future, and time beyond the timeline. The past is depicted in a place setting in a gothic-style church, the city of Pompeii, the desert, to a festival attended by people with a typical medieval dress style. Then the present is shown with the initial scene in New York City, the Alabama city in 2050, and the most often seen is TVA's own office depicting the office of the 80s. Then the future setting represented by the planet Lamentis looks like the future with the technology that appears in the series. And the last is the time of the timeline, a place in the middle of nowhere that was used as a dumping ground by TVA. It was here that Loki met the real ruler of TVA and Loki's change of purpose.

3.2 Analysis

Each font in Loki's serial typographic design uses an existing font type. From the font are then given special effects to give a more dramatic impression. This is in accordance with the opinion of Sihombing (2015: 182). Special effects are not too excessive so that typographic design can still communicate the message.

In Gooova.com article it is known that the Loki serial logo displays a wide variety of font types, ranging from Sans serif, Blackletter, and Scripts that represent a particular age. The selection of fonts on the letter "L" that seems retro, becomes a representative form against the times that are not too ancient but also not too modern. In an interview, TVA design on the Loki series takes an 80s design approach. This approach was chosen because the 80s were considered not too sophisticated, but also not too futuristic. In addition, the retro style approach is also reinforced by the impression of office bureaucracy that became typical of the 80s.

The selection of fonts for the letter "o" is included in the form of blackletter calligraphy classification. This letter is representative of the past. Historically, the blackletter type was used in gothic times and became one of the popular font types to write books of that era. In the Loki series itself, there are scenes that take place in the past. The setting takes place in a gothic-style church, the setting of a place in the city of Pompeii that will go extinct, as well as a festival attended by people with typical medieval clothing styles. The golden color of the letter "o" also represents one of the colors attached to Loki's costume. This color also describes Loki's selfish nature and wants power.

The selection of a font for the letter "k" based on its description, becomes representative for the modern or future. It is also reinforced by the administration of iron effects, which are close to the machine. For color, this letter is given a gray color. In addition to depicting Loki's uncertain future at the end of the story, This color also represents Loki's character who undergoes a change from evil to good character, from black to white. It is also said that Loki became depressed after losing his motivation, then lived a new life, as Sadjiman (2010: 51).

The selection of a font for the letter "I" becomes the most unique thing among other letters. Although it reads as "Loki", the letter "I" is made using the letter "L". The selection of this letter outwits the audience who think the font is a large "i". This relates to Loki's ingenious and manipulative character to outwit. In addition, the use of green color is also identical to the costume commonly used by Loki. This is supported by Hartanto 's (2004) opinion that typography cannot



stand alone. It takes visual elements such as shape, color, effect, and meaning to be able to convey the message in question.

When viewed simultaneously visually, Loki's title design has no relationship between one letter and another. Each letter uses a different font type. So it can confuse the audience because of the difference in fonts in each letter and become a question for MCU fans. As Cullen (2012:14) says that typography has dramatic and unique properties, It seems that the typographer from Marvel deliberately brings out the uniqueness of the Loki character and gives a dramatic effect on the storyline of the series. These details appear in the design of the Loki serial logo so that after the audience watches the series, they just wake up and receive the message and aesthetic side of this logo. Thus, the logo of the Loki series has applied the concept of "form follows function" as described by Cullen. Cullen (2012:12) says that typography is a medium of conveying messages, so messaging becomes the main thing.

Although initially doubtful, it seems that the logo of the Loki series has fulfilled three main requirements in typography, namely readability, design style, and compatibility (Hartanto, 2004). Readability is seen from the ease and readability of the writing "LOKI" in the logo of the title of the series so that it does not occur ambiguously. Furthermore, the Loki serial logo has also included several design styles, as well as depicting the contents of the story in this series. With the depiction of the contents of the story, as well as showing that the Loki series logo has compatibility of the meaning of each letter. This is in line with the opinion of Ardhianto (2015) who said that typography must be able to convey a variety of information appropriately to the audience simultaneously.

4. Conclusion

Typography is one of the design elements that are often applied in various media, one of which is as a film or series title. The use of typography as the title of a film should be able to represent the message or concept carried in the film. In order to convey a stronger message through typographic design, the use of effects can be done, although still adjusting to the needs. The title design in the Loki series, when the beginning appeared did get less good criticism because it was aesthetically less pleasant to look at. But over time, and once the audience understands the intent in Loki's series, the title design becomes more accepted. In this research, it was found that the typographic design of Loki serial title has put forward its function as a representative of the story concept, so in making the typographic design on the title, it is necessary to put forward its function.

In the future, research needs to discuss the motion graphics of Loki's title. Motion graphics can strengthen the role of typography in the title as well as concepts in the film series. Then you can also find out how important the title design relationship is with the content of the story or message for the audience. This can be known using different methods.

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