

**SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF *LOVE ALBUM COVER BY  
ANGELS & AIRWAVES BAND***

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**ABSTRAK:**

Penelitian ini berjudul “**Semiotic Analysis of *Love Album Cover by Angels & Airwaves Band***”. Data diambil dari “Angels & Airwaves” (AVA) sampul album. Kegiatan ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi unsur-unsur semiotik dan untuk mengetahui makna serta pesan yang tersirat dari simbol dalam sampul album. Data yang terkumpul dianalisa secara kualitatif berdasarkan teori semiotik oleh *Peirce* dalam mengeksplorasi ikon, indeks dan simbol dari tanda visual. Teori pendukung yang digunakan yaitu teori komunikasi visual oleh *Dyer*, yang membantu untuk mempresentasikan elemen semiotik di balik sampul album; serta menggunakan teori makna oleh *Ogden dan Richard*, setelah mengetahui maknanya, maka analisa dilanjutkan dengan mengungkapkan pesan yang terdapat dalam sampul album dan disajikan secara deskriptif. Temuan analisis menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan teori semiotik berhasil menyampaikan pesan (makna) di balik tanda visual dalam sampul album. Tampilan dalam tanda visual tersebut juga dimaksudkan untuk menarik perhatian penonton agar terbuju untuk membeli album AVA.

**Kata kunci:** *Semiotika, sampul album, tanda, komunikasi visual, istilah warna.*

**1. Background of Study**

People were amazed in what they had seen, wondered if they were not deceived by the senses, and began to realize its limitations. In fact, there are signs all around us in everyday life, for example, that when we heard a knock at the door, it is a sign of someone who asked to open the door to get in the house, or a sign that people are lining up some toilet, so knock was signalled that we have to rush out of the toilet. This example shows that the sign is very important in our lives, especially for the process of communication, in order to understand the intent of the speaker or when to act, from a different point of view, and also to train our sensitivity.

Semiotics is the study of signs in human life, all present were seen as a sign that contains a meaning. The sign has special characteristics that are important: first, the sign must be considered, in the sense that the sign can be

captured and secondly, the sign must be referring to something else that could replace, represent and serve. So, with a deep knowledge of semiotic (study of sign), it is easier to interpret all sorts of signs around us.

## **2. Problem of the Study**

Based on the background above, the problems can be formulated as follows:

- 1) What are the elements of semiotic found in the *Angels & Airwaves' album cover*?
- 2) What messages are implied in the symbol in album cover?

## **3. Aims of the Study**

All scientific research has aims, so does this writing. Based on the problems, the aims of this writing can be determined as follows:

- 1) To identify semiotic elements in the *Angels & Airwaves' album cover*.
- 2) To explain the messages implied in the symbol in album cover.

## **4. Research Method**

The methodology in this research is concerned with three aspects, namely data source, data collection, and data analysis, each of which is further described below:

### **4.1 Data Source**

Data source is the source from which the data are obtained. The data in this study were taken from cover of *Angels & Airwaves L)VE Album Part Two* (2011). The album was chosen as the primary data because they contain many relevant data to the problems discussed in this study.

### **4.2 Method and Technique of Collecting Data**

In collecting data, this study used qualitative method that relies on reasons behind various aspects of behaviour. Several steps of collecting data are firstly, selecting intensively the data source (listed and compared); secondly, finding the signs and classifying the data in accordance with their types; finally, the messages that stand behind the sign are observed.

### 4.3 Method and technique of analyzing data

All the data were analyzed and presented by applying descriptive method. The data were analyzed based on semiotic theory proposed by *Peirce*, also the supporting theory of visual communication proposed by *Dyer* and theory of meaning by *Ogden and Richard*. Several steps of analyzing data are first, describing the visual signs and analyzing the elements of semiotic found in album cover; second, investigating the structure/construction of the symbol (the image, colour, shape, and the position of the image); and the last, investigating the message that imply behind the symbol. The data were presented descriptively in order to give a clear and complete explanation that can make the audience understand every detail of the study under concern.

### 5. The Semiotic Anaylisis of Love Album Cover by Angels & Airwaves Band

The type of semiotic used in this study is Social Semiotic approach, because the aim of this study is to reveal something of the subjectivity, the meaningful sign from the album cover, created by the member of AVA through a systematic analysis of their use of a number of semiotic resources. The concept of semiotic used in this study is Semantic Semiotic approach, because the study has relationship between sign, object, and its interpretant.



#### 1) Icon/iconic

The icon here is represented by methapor of an astronaut who was sitting on the crescent. If it is applied in real life it is not possible. So, we can

conclude that the picture conveyed another meaning which implies that an astronaut may land on the moon (crescent).

## 2) Index/indexical

The index here consists of many links that can be interfered or observed:

- a. Natural sign, there are some natural signs from the cover, such as the crescent, the sky, the glows.
- b. Signal, the signals that we can catch from the cover are the title of the album, the darkening of the background mixed with colourful light.
- c. Pointer, a pointer that contained in this picture is an object which is placed in the centre of the cover; an astronaut that looks like sitting on the crescent.
- d. Personal trademark that found in this cover album are the word “ANGELS & AIRWAVES L)VE ALBUM PART TWO” as the headline (mentioned the owner/band and the title of the album) and the word “AVA-Angels & Airwaves” as the signature line (the brand name of the album).

## 3) Symbol/symbolic

The symbols used in the cover is title of album, namely “L)VE” with a large font size. It looks very prominent because it lies in the center of album cover, which is white in the black background. Also, the picture of an astronaut who was hanging in the letter or symbol “)”, it looks like the crescent, thus supports the role of the astronaut there. The other symbol found in this cover album were the uniform of the astronaut (the colour is orange); also the background colour: predominantly black but mixed with the other colours (blue, purple, magenta and white light that glows from the crescent).

## 5.1 Visual Communication Elements in “Love Part Two” Album Cover

### 1. Appearance

There are seven elements of appearance used in this picture on the cover, i.e. age, gender, nationality and race, hair, body, size and also looks. The observation of these elements will be explained as follows:

#### a. Age

We could imagine that the astronaut represented as the creator and member of the band, *Tom DeLonge*. Based on his profile in

<http://modlife.com/>, he was born on December 13rd 1975 (he is 37 years old right now). So, we can conclude that the age could be around 35 to 40 years old.

b. Gender

From these pictures, we can see that the astronaut is a male, represented by members of the band that all personnel are male.

c. Nationality and Race

The creator himself was American, based on the information on his profile. Besides, the first astronaut that successfully landed on the moon was from NASA and we know that the United States is the owner. Thus, it was clear that the figure in the cover is an American.

d. Hair

As an American, the figure in the cover picture (the creator) has possibly blonde, black or can be also brown hair.

e. Body

For the body of an astronaut, it is certain that only someone who has passed the health test is granted permission to conduct the research on the moon. Of course his body is healthy, strong and energetic with heights and weights are also ideal.

f. Size

For the body size of the astronaut is around M or L. Because these size are categories of ideal body.

g. Looks

His look is identified as energetic man with positive spirit and power but is sometimes with full of anger. This emotion and expression show how important the message that the creator wanted to convey.

## **2. Manner**

The three elements of manner will be observed here, they are expression, pose and clothes. The observation of these elements is explained as follows:

a. Expression

Actually, we did not know how was the expression of the figure on the cover picture was because of the helmet used by the astronaut. But, if we

connected it with the background behind him which dominantly used black colour, we could explain that the colour of black is too strong, so it is not easily stained colour. The black colour is the dominant colour but can also mean darkness. A positive effect of the use of black as show firmness was also found.

b. Pose

Pose which occurs by the figure in the cover is kind of passive pose, because from the cover picture we know that the astronaut only stayed at one place, he was just sitting on the moon.

c. Clothes

The clothes used by the figure on the cover is a kind of formal clothes. An astronaut wears the uniform that shows formality.

### **3. Activity**

The body movements are divided into three parts, as described below:

a. Touch

There is no touching act in the picture, the figure just touch himself with both hands on his thigh in sitting position. The position by the hands of the astronaut indicates that he felt the serenity, peacefulness.

b. Body Movement

The body movement is related to what the actor or the figure is doing. And the event that can be captured from a picture was an astronaut who was sitting on the moon on the dark sky.

c. Positional Communication

The relationship between the actor and the object was extremely significant, shown by the position of the astronaut who was sitting on the moon on the dark sky. The actor position, size activity, and their relationship to the space around him can signify power, freedom, peace and the eternity of science.

### **4. Props & Setting**

The props that were used in the cover album will be described as follows:

- a. The moon shows love, power wise and peace loving. The astronaut is regarded as in authority (who was sitting on the moon that becomes

spotlight in the centre of the image) and can save everyone from the darkness (with the knowledge of the real and eternal).

- b. Astronaut uniform, showing ceremonial and also security (which covered the body from top to bottom).
- c. Head Cover (helmet), demonstrated safety, rescues (also a patron).

Also an outdoor setting is kind of the setting used in this cover album. It provides lots of beautiful things in the sky such as a pretty moonlight around the astronaut.

### **5. Analyzing Visual Image**

The observation of visual or images in this cover album provides five elements, the observation will be explained as follows:

- a. Focus and Depth of Vision

Focus and depth vision appeared on the black background which makes the whole screen turn dark.

- b. Close-ups

The close-up picture can be seen in the album cover that shows the appearances of the astronaut with the object and setting such as the moon and the sky.

- c. Lighting and Colour

Lighting in the picture of the cover album is made as natural as possible, by creating an atmosphere of a real sky.

- d. Camera Angle

- 1) There is just front angle used to take the picture of an object.
- 2) To produce a dramatic and unusual effects like everyone could see the moonlight so close that astronaut could reach out and occupy (sit in another sense).

- e. Special Effects or Montage

Special effects and montage in this cover album appeared on:

- 1) The Astronaut, it looks so real sitting on the crescent.
- 2) The moon, which emits white glow that shows peacefulness, excitement. White is colour at its most complete and pure, the colour of perfection, innocence, wholeness and completion.

- 3) Black colour as the background indicated firmness or eternal power. It can also be interpreted as black magic because black is the colour of the hidden, the secretive and the unknown, creating an air of mystery.
- 4) The colourful and small glow in each corner (mixture of white, purple and magenta in the upper left and the bottom right corner). It shows that if the human was on top along with the astronaut, then surely peace will come to them (based on the meaning of each colour).

## **5.2 The Verbal Representation Used in “L)VE Part Two” Album Cover**

The structure of *semantic triangle* proposed by *Ogden* and *Richard* can be seen as follows:

### 1) Symbol

The symbol symbolises to the thought of reference. The symbol that evokes the reader's thought in AVA album cover II is an astronaut who was sitting on the crescent.

### 2) Thought of reference

Thought of reference refers to the referent (object). The reader refers the symbol back to the matter. To support this analysis, the colour term based on western culture can be used as a supporting theory. The first is the colour of the uniform of astronaut, that is, orange as the colour of social communication too. Then, the colour of astronaut helmet and the small glow that is white as the colour of perfection, suggesting innocence, reflecting peace (like the white dove). The dominant colour is the background of the album cover, that is black, which reflects mystery. It was also represents power, control, intimidation. Blue represents trust and authority, corporate, peace and calm. Purple suggests royalty, spirituality, high ranking positions of authority. The last is magenta which suggests creative, artistic, loving and encourages emotional balance.

### 3) Referent

The referent stands for the symbol (the matter or object that evokes the writer's thought). The astronaut symbolises the highest ideal especially the young children and the astronomy lovers in the world. The crescent moon symbolises hope very deep, in which its little light can illuminate the whole earth from the dark.



## 6. Conclusion

From the analysis of the *AVA Love Album Cover Part Two*, there were some points that could be taken as conclusions of the study. By using Theory of Visual Communication by *Dyer*, the semiotic elements in the album cover are identified. The astronaut as an icon in the album cover can be explained according to their appearance, manner, activity, props & setting, analyzing visual & image. The figure on the cover is a male astronaut, he is an American with blonde, brown or black hair, the age was around 35 to 40 years old, the size body was around M and L, but his looks not clearly enough. With a passive pose, he was just sitting on the crescent, also his uniform creates an impression that something serious was going on, so the astronaut's face may look strained or edgy.

The use of colour is the most elements found in producing the meaning. The elaboration of colour and the words makes the album cover eye catching, attractive and readable. About the purpose of the use of the letters in a big size is to attract the audience's attention. The messages that can be captured from the sign according to the film that were the basic needs of a human being as a social creature to communicate and cooperate with other creatures and it remains us to still believe in God if we felt limitless power of hope for any of our problems.

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