

# Analysis symbolism: Semiotics in Agust D music video “Amygdala”

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## ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the symbolism in Agust D's music video "Amygdala" using a semiotic approach. The music video, part of the "D-day" album, presents various symbolic elements that reflect emotional and psychological struggles. By utilizing Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, this research examines the denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings behind the visual symbols in the video. Through these symbols, Agust D conveys messages of trauma, resilience, and inner conflict. The qualitative analysis is based on direct observation of the music video and related literature, aiming to explore how these symbols resonate emotionally with the audience. The findings highlight the depth of meaning embedded in the video's visual representation, making it a rich subject for semiotic analysis.

## Introduction

In recent years, the Kpop or Korean Pop industry has experienced rapid growth in Korea and around the world (Jannah et al., 2023). One of the most famous Kpop boy groups is BTS “Bangyan Sonyeondan” which comes from Bighit Entertainment under Hybe Labels and consists of seven members: Rm, Jin, Suga, Jhope, Jimin, V, and Jungkook. Since their debut in 2013, BTS has achieved remarkable achievements in various music awards. The lyrics in their music are full of profound messages that are loved by many. In addition, BTS has also become brand ambassadors for several world-renowned brands, been invited to speak at the United Nations (UN), and been appointed as UNICEF ambassadors (Urber, 2019). BTS' success is not just limited to the music field, but also creates a huge cultural impact, making them one of the most influential global pop icons today.

Agust D is the nickname of Min Yoongi, better known as Suga in the BTS group. Apart from being a singer and rapper, Suga is also known as a very talented music producer and songwriter. As Agust D, Suga has released several mixtapes and albums that he wrote and produced himself. His first mixtape was “Agust D”, which was released in 2016 and contained 10 songs. The second mixtape was “D-2”, released in 2020, also with 10 tracks. In addition, Suga also released his first solo album titled “D-day” in 2023, which also consisted of 10 songs. In the album “D-day”, there are several songs that are highlights, including: “D-day”, “Huh?!”, “SDL”, “Polar Night”, “Snooze”,



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“Haegeum”, “Amygdala”, “People pt. 2”, “Interlude: Dawn”, and ‘Life Goes On’. The album “D-day” is Suga latest work that has been released, the release of this D-day album marks the closing duck of the trilogy by Minyoongi’s other nickname besides Suga, Agust D (Aprilio, 2023).

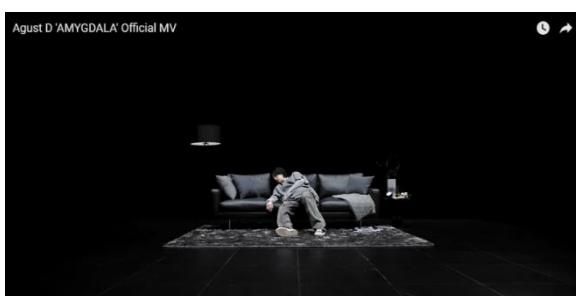
“Amygdala” is one of the songs in Agust D’s “D-day” album. This song has a strong hip-hop trap genre. The word “Amygdala” comes from the Greek word Amygdale, which means almond. Amygdala is the part of the brain associated with the processing of various emotions, especially fear (Rahayu, 2022). In the lyrics of the song “Amygdala”, Agust D reveals traumatic experiences that he has gone through. He mentions that his mother had heart surgery, and he himself had a motorcycle accident while working as a food delivery boy. In the music video for “Amygdala”, Agust D shows that to calm his mind, he consumes almonds, which symbolically refers to the name “amygdala” derived from the Greek word for “almond”, which is a similar shape to the brain structure of the amygdala. In this way, Agust D conveys his emotional experiences through song lyrics and visuals in music videos.

Semiotics is the study of signs and communication systems used in everyday life to convey meaning (Sitompul et al., 2021). In semiotics, signs can be images, symbols, gestures, or objects that are used to represent or refer to something else. Semiotic theory is considered very important because language can be seen as a system of signs (Wicaksono & Diyah Fitriyani, 2022). Language consists of signifiers and signs. Semiotics has a very important role in interpreting all things, especially signs.

In this study, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the semiotics in Agust D’s music video “Amygdala” by presenting images from the video. The research location was conducted on YouTube and the internet. The data collection techniques used was direct observation of the video and related literature studies. The theory used in the semiotic analysis of this music video is Roland Barthes’ theory, which classifies the meaning of each sign using the concepts of denotative, connotative, and myth. This research aims to identify and analyze the signs, symbols, and hidden meanings in the video.

## Discussion

In the music video “Amygdala” by Agust D, there are several symbols that refer to semiotic, namely:



Picture 1

Source: Hybe Labels

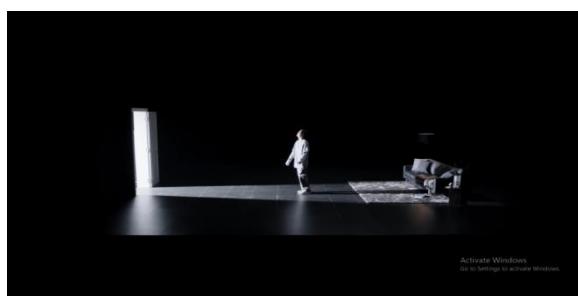
- a. Denotative: Suga who was asleep on a sofa in a dark room.
- b. Connotative: Suga appeared to be trapped in a recurring nightmare that he struggled to get out of. The dreams lead him into negative thoughts related to traumatic experiences that bring him down.
- c. Myth: A dark room is often considered a sanctuary to avoid anything harmful, a place of refuge to avoid threats or dangers, and a symbol of security and protection from anything unwanted.



Picture 2

Source: Hybe Labels

- a. Denotative: Suga climbed towards the door, meanwhile the room began to tilt or turn upside down.
- b. Connotative: The dark room where he brooded to wrestle with his thoughts was not just a place he had to avoid, but a mountain or an obstacle he had to climb and face.
- c. Myth: A dark room is often considered a sanctuary to avoid anything harmful, a place of refuge to avoid threats or dangers, and a symbol of security and protection from anything unwanted.



Picture 3

Source: Hybe Labels

- a. Denotative: Suga walked towards the white door that opened for a moment with a limp body.
- b. Connotative: Suga wanted to stop and escape the painful memories and hardships he had endured, but he felt unable to forget them easily. The memories and events continue to haunt him, showing how difficult it is to break free from deep emotional influences.

- c. Myth: Doors are often thought of as the divide between human reality and the other world, reflecting a person's transition when entering or leaving a room, marking a phase change in their life.



Picture 4

Source: Hybe Labels

- a. Denotative: Suga was seen at the door holding a cutlass, seemingly intending to cut himself.
- b. Connotative: Suga felt depressed because it was difficult to forget the traumatizing memories and events and drowned in negative thoughts, which deepened his feelings of depression. In order to vent his feelings of depression he hurt himself.
- c. Myth: The act of self-harm can symbolize one's sacrifice in the face of something difficult, reflecting a deep struggle in overcoming the challenges one faces.



Picture 5

Source: Hybe Labels

- a. Denotative: There is a cutlass scar on the Suga eye area.
- b. Connotative: The scars depict Suga resilience or inner strength in the face of pain or adversity, as well as his personal journey in overcoming a difficult past.
- c. Myth: Scars signify an event that has happened to an individual, suggesting that the individual has experienced trauma or an event that has caused permanent physical and emotional harm.

## Conclusion and Suggestion

The music video "Amygdala" is a work that is rich in symbolism and semiotic elements in it. There are several symbols in the music video, namely: The dark room symbol reflects protection from threats and traumatic experiences that haunt Suga. The

door is used as a visual representation of Suga attempt to escape from the painful thoughts and traumatic situations that have affected his emotions. The use of the cutter as a symbol of deep psychological struggle and the act of self-harm illustrates the emotional complexity experienced by Suga. The scar on the eye as a symbol of inner resilience depicts a challenging personal journey. These symbols illustrate the concept of emotion, trauma, and a psychological struggle of Suga. Through these symbols Agust D succeeded in conveying deep messages that can be felt and understood by the audience emotionally.

After analyzing the semiotic in the music video “Amygdala” by Agust D, there are several recommendations that can be applied for further research, namely:

1. Further research can expand the object of research study.
2. Future researchers can combine semiotic analysis with other disciplines.

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