

Semiotics analysis of angus and julia stone

Science



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Using semiotic theory, this essay will analyse and identify the signs and symbols present in the music video directed by Jessie Hill for Angus and Julia Stone and finally identifying the meaning that is communicated. Video

Overview The video begins with a musician self on the living room floor playing the guitar. The scene changes to her 'partner', a corporate looking woman, in the kitchen visibly bothered by the mess in the kitchen/house. A conversation ensues in the living room about the mess and then the musician self shouts an "I love you" while her partner walks off mumbling a response.

B-roll film of a backyard chair and table are introduced as well as that of a dining room area and aerial view of a messy white bed. A car enters, the scene moves to the 'Corporate' partner watching the inside of the house and her partner from inside the car as she sighs. The scene bounces to the 'musician' partner running her fingers down 'corporate' partners back then back 'corporate; partner exiting the vehicle and entering the house. 'Corporate' partner sits on a black single sofa watching 'musician' partner play the guitar. This scene is often cut into by scenes of the couple in bed caressing each other, the couple in the kitchen as one serves the other lunch. They then walk out onto the lawn barefoot in their lingerie, smiling. 'Musician' partner brushes/strokes 'corporate' partners hair as she sits on the lawn chair previously introduced. She then grabs a jug and pours water over her hair and they share a moment. The video then ends with a moving shot from the bottom of a bed of 'corporate' partner laying her head on the belly of 'musician; partner as they embrace in a semi-foetal position in bed. Signs, Signifiers and Signified According to S. Langer, a symbol is "an

instrument of thought”. [Langer, Philosophy in a New Key, 1942] The thought, therefore, that is perceived and interpreted by an individual watching the video is one of a difficulty in continuing to love oneself or one's partner.

Clothing The first sign that differentiates the two characters in their roles is their dress/outfit choice.

The partner who seems to be a professional is dressed in a white buttoned down shirt. This could be taken as an icon as the outfit directly resembles the appearance of someone in a corporate environment. The outfit is synonymous with the official dress code standards of a professional corporate work environment. Her partner is dressed in a sweater and long socks. This combination with the guitar is often associated with an artist or someone artistically inclined. This kind of imagery is seen in movies such as *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (2008) in which Penelope Cruz is also dressed in this oversized shirt, bare minimum style to clothing in her ‘studio’.

This is a symbol that's created from the perceptions cultures have created surrounding artists and their aesthetics. This symbol could also refer to a laid back, nonchalant type of individual following the lyrics “you just wanna grow old, sit still while everybody else runs’. Meaning that the partner who's stayed home does nothing all day but pursue their ‘artistic passions’, while the other is doing what they have to do to provide for themselves as well as their partner. The difference in outfit could refer to the way each individual's brain; how the one in the professional attire might be the left brain which is more logical, reasoned and critical in thinking while the right is more intuitive, creative and emotional. In the more intimate scenes, the couple are dressed in lingerie. The ‘left brain’ is dressed in a silk nightdress while the

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other is in a 1960s style bra and knicker with a pink shirt over.

Lingerie/nightwear is usually associated with intimacy as it is rarely seen outside the bedroom so this signifier signifies a transition to a more intimate and close up look at their relationship. Essentially, following the couple into their bedroom affairs. This idea is also brought forward as they walk outside, symbolising this 'bringing to light' of their relationship, finally seeing the real dynamic of their relationship. Traditionally on a four or twelve year anniversary gift, linen or silk are gifted as the silk represents how they've endured working through difficulties and anticipate a smoother road ahead of them. It is also a luxurious and elegant gift. Considering this cultural norm, the 'left brain' could be dressed in silk to show how she prefers finer things, luxury through the association. It could also be significant of the strength and endurance the left brain has; to be logical and reasoned one follows a methodology that is tried over and over until a successful one is found or it succeeds. The lingerie that resembles that found in the 1960s could signify how she could be a housewife or viewed as less important than her working partner. In the 1960s, women were meant to stay home, look pretty, all very little and take care of the house.

She was meant to spend her day making the house right and catering to her partners needs. This could create the meaning that the 'right brain' is just there to be the 'wife' and nothing more. It could also be showing the viewers how the 'left brain' sees the 'right brain' in their relationship and the role she wants her to portray. The Home The home the video is shot in has a mid century modern style. The style grew in America and was influenced by the Bauhaus from Germany. This style came to prominence after the second

world war when a demand for new modern furnishings came into play. Technology had advanced enough to make it possible to broaden the spectrum of materials, textures and colours and forms. The features of mid century modern design were functionality, minimal ornamentation, clean lines, juxtaposition and contrasts as well as an exploration of different materials. This could be a symbol of their relationship, it is influenced by traditional ideals however it is different and modern (the way they used 2 women instead of a man and a woman). It is also significant to note that it could also be showing their nostalgia for what once may have been.

Most mid-century homes are replicated with the nostalgia of old times in mind, hence their scenery could be symbolic of the nostalgia that they carry at points in their relationships when it isn't working- how she looks at her partner from outside in a sort of contemptuous way but we also get them doing the traditional couple routine of eating together, sleeping together and spending time together. The colours are muted brights maybe referring to the dulling of their relationship. The spark is still there, however it is not as bright or colourful as it used to be.