SATANISM AND ANTI-CHRISTIANITY IN BLACK METAL
(SEMIOTICS ON A LIVE CONCERT VIDEO OF BLACK METAL BAND GORGOROTH, IN BLACK MASS EVENT
AT KRAKOW, POLAND 2004)

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SATANISM AND ANTI-CHRISTIANITY IN BLACK METAL (SEMIOTICS ON A LIVE CONCERT VIDEO OF BLACK METAL BAND GORGOROTH, IN BLACK MASS EVENT AT KRAKOW, POLAND 2004)

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Abstract

Black Metal is a quite popular music genre among teenagers. They like the music as well as the style that the band brings. However, most of them do not aware what the attributes that the band wears convey. Based on that phenomenon, this study focuses on the semantic meaning that is contented in the Black Metal attributes. Specifically, this study analyzes the Satanism and Anti-Christianity symbols in a Black Metal video that is performed by Gorgoroth. Applying a qualitative descriptive method, the symbols found in the video are then analyzed using semiotic theories. The results show that there are 5 symbols belong to Satanism and 3 symbols are identical to Anti-Christianity. Based on the findings, symbols are created intentionally to deliver certain messages and they are used to declare war against Christianity by the Scandinavian Black metal musicians.

Keywords: Satanism, Anti-Christianity, Semiotic
INTRODUCTION

Satanism and Anti-Christianity is a topic that often avoided to be discussed, although, in fact, it has become a lifestyle, philosophy, even religion. Anton Szandor LaVey was very popular in 1960 because of his Satanic Church which was full of darkness/ obscurity and his Satanic Bible which shocked many people. Some people welcomed LaVey and even made him their mentor (Howe, 2005: 1).

Music is used as universal and effective media which can tell ideas, messages, and expressions of the creator to the listeners through its lyric, composition, choice of instrument, and manner of performance. Music is in the level of mass communication. This is due to the number of music listeners which is not a little, but a lot and they are in everywhere, anonymous, and heterogeneous. We might ever hear an extreme music genre, called Black Metal. That genre is quite popular among some people, almost in every continent, especially teenagers. Black Metal can be identified as a hard music by its characteristics that are terrific appearance, related to violence, drug abuse, sex, insulting certain religion (usually Christians) and other Satanic elements. 

Gorgoroth is a Black Metal band from Norway. They have a quite controversial stage act when they performed in an even called Black Mass, located in Krakow, Poland, in 2004. Gorgoroth displayed tens goat’s heads which were attached to poles, crossed men and women’s bodies with their heads covered by cloth and their bodies were covered by blood. The result of their concert made local government of Krakow, Poland, sued Gorgoroth’s wicked acts toward animal and their insulting acts toward certain religion sect. The goat’s heads displayed were used to symbolize Satan that they worship, which is Baphomet, a Satan having head of a goat and body of a woman.

This study focuses on the costumes and stage properties attributed in the live
concert video Gorgoroth the Black Metal Band, in Black Mass event, Krakow, Poland in 2004 which is assumed to be fully contented with Satanic and Anti-Christianity symbols. This is a prior study since there was no study that discuss about Gorgoroth or even the Satanic and Anti-Christianity symbols attached to them. However, there are some other studies discussing about other metal genres. This study will also discuss about how the Satanic and Anti-Christianity symbols contented in the video of Gorgoroth the Black Metal Band in Black Mass event, in Krakow, Poland 2004 are able to be interpreted. Therefore, this study applies semiotic theories as the basis. Semiotics is a knowledge of or method for analyzing symbols. Symbols are set of way in order to find better path in between and together with human. Semiotics—Barthes’ term refers to Semiology—basically studies how humanity signifies things. ‘To signify’ in this term is different from ‘to communicate’. ‘To signify’ refers to the fact that objects do not only provide information, but also other structural system of signs. The other purpose it to show illogical acts, interesting riddles, and the most trusted details (Sobur, 2004: 66).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Semiotic Approach in Communication Studies

Semiology explains how symbols are formulated and the rules that govern the symbols. Pierce argues that the basic of semiotics is symbols. Besides language and communication systems, the symbols also include the things in human environment that enables human to build relationship with the environment (Sobur, 2004: 12)

However, this study will focus on the semiology as proposed by Roland Barthes. Barte was a French structuralist who practiced Saussure's linguistics model and semiology. Barthes argued that
semiology studies how humans put meanings on things. However, the meanings here imply that the objects not only convey information, but also the symbol system (Kurniawan, 2001 in Sobur, 2004).

**Music in Cultural Studies**

Aiming to seek profits, the industries produce a variety of products, either material or non-material, to distribute to the society. Music is a universal and effective medium used to convey the arrangers' ideas, messages, and expressions to the listeners. For its universality, music is a perfect medium for mass communication. Among the tremendous kinds of music, indie music emerged as a revolt against mainstream music, a term that describes popular music produced by major musical labels.

Cultural industry, mass culture, and mass media are able to influence society's opinion, view, lifestyle, even individual beliefs. The rapid development of technology enables music to spread massive influence to the listeners. However, the case is different with indie music as they are the reflection of heart feelings. Early 1990s, some teenagers in Bandung who played grind core music created some songs that contained rude words. They distributed their music within their own circle (Theodore KS, 2013: 292).

**Satanism**

Peter H. Gilmore High Priest in the Church of Satan (Church of Satan) wrote in his book "The Satanic Scriptures", Satanism is a philosophy of religion which includes the concept that animals and humans should it contains an art, which is a reflection of the creative efforts of individuals who making, as well as the cultural environment in which it was created. However, it is selective in nature, only the aesthetics of art
that depicted a human experience, including actual experiences directly as well as indirectly achieved through imagination or through the media for transmitting information (Gilmore, 2007: 68).

A truly Satanist usually choose to be someone who is individualistic, and racism, especially toward religion. Satanists not only tolerate weirdness for granted but also try to find the same relationship with fellow followers of satanic teachings. A Satanist is like a wolf howling at night. But sometimes they can get together and form a group of fellow Satanists too. They look to themselves that they are different from those around them. Satanists also consider themselves one with the animals that are considered clean for them, but not for people in general (Gilmore, 2007: 26).

**Anti-Christianity**

Vikernes (2012) believes that if Christianity has destroyed their ancestral culture. 'Pagan' is derived from the word 'Paganus', which means 'Villagers' when translated in English, which means that people living or occupying a particular region or country. People believe that the word Pagan is used, because, first Christians came to urban, which means the people in remote areas still practice ancient rituals handed down his ancestors, before their eventual conversion to Christianity. Given LaVey's Church of Satan belongs; Vikernes considers when LaVey has successfully dropped the morals of Christianity that has long been underway. Anti-Christianity is a generation element of Paganism, in an attempt to the rejection of the values of devotion to Jesus, as 'Object of Chosen People' by the Jews. Because Varg, Christians believe comes from the land of Jerusalem, where the Jewish and Zionist organizations thrive. The goal is to purify the ancient beliefs of European society, to uphold the values of Paganism.
RESEARCH METHOD

Type of the Research

This research is a descriptive qualitative research that applies communicative semiotic methodology. A descriptive research aims to describe the phenomenon systematically, factual, and accurate. This research aims at describing the happening realities without explaining the relations among the variables. Descriptive research refers to research procedures that result in descriptive data. This research does not apply any quantification and is supposed to explain a phenomenon in detail. (Kriyantono, 2010: 56).

Object of the Study

The Object of this research is a text in the form of live concert video of Gorgoroth Black Metal band, at Black Mass event in Krakow, Poland, in 2004 with 00:55:03 (fifty five minutes and three seconds) video length.

Technique of Analyzing the Data

The technique will be applied to the signs identified on the video. Then, they will be analyzed by using semiology theory proposed by Roland Barthes that focuses on two levels of significance (denotation and connotation). In this research, the data are about Satanism represented by Gorgoroth, and then they will be analyzed by Roland Barthes’ semiology.

In the first stage of signifying the data (denotation), both verbal and non-verbal data are presented separately. After that, at the second stage (connotation), the significations is carried out thoroughly to reveal an in depth understanding on the
themes and meanings which relates to visual aspects such as lightning, shot, angle, setting, fashion, and make-up. This second stage is then referred to several aspects: cultural, social, and value system in society (mythology).

**FINDINGS**

The symbol of Satanism and Anti-Christianity that are represented in the live concert video of Black Metal band Gorgoroth at the Black Mass event in Krakow, Poland, in 2004, is quite diverse and clearly presented on the stage. Gorgoroth wasn’t disguised any kind of element that contains both of symbol of Satanism and Anti-Christianity in the show. Through the stage design, lighting, and the personel’s gestures, it can be clearly observed in the live concert video.

The symbols of Satanism and Anti-Christianity that are represented in the video includes: Naked-Crucified Human (category symbol of Anti-Christianity), Goat's Head (category symbol of Satanism), Pentagram (category symbol of Satanism), Inverted Cross (category symbol of Anti-Christianity), Corna (category symbol of Satanism), Red Lights (category symbol of Satanism), Spikes (symbol category Anti-Christianity), and Corpse-Paint (category symbol of Satanism).

**ANALYSIS**

The meaning of the Satanism symbols that represented in the live concert video of Black Metal Band Gorgoroth, in Black Mass event at Krakow, Poland 2004, there are: (1) Goat’s head, is an offering for Lucifer (an angel who was cursed by God) in the Satanic rituals, and the blood is also taken for the ceremony. (2) The Pentagram symbol (five-pointed star) used by the adherents of Satanism. Each corner on the pentagram symbol represents the elements of a Soul or a Spirit, Water, Fire, Wind, and
Land. Then, (3) *Corna*, when the word translated from Italian, it means 'Horn' or 'horn'. Corna is a fingers greeting cultures derived from their Italian grandmother called ‘Malochio’. This greeting has a curse as well as a sense of when someone gives and directs it towards our symbol, therefore, we can reciprocate by using the same greeting as well as the counter form of the curse. (4) *Red Lights* are associated with the arrival of the Red Lunar Eclipse (Blood Moon). Moon has always been an object of fear and the human imagination since the first. The moonlight, which is actually just sunlight, that reflected by the moon to the earth, for the Satanist was contained a mystical powers. (5) *Corpse-paint*, the Black Metal musicians’ makeup is, interpreted as a creature. Scandinavian Black Metal musicians regard corpse-paint as Wraiths which means the Spirit / Ghost. So they feel closeness with Satan.

The meaning of the *Anti-Christianity* symbols that represented in the live concert video of Black Metal Band *Gorgoroth*, in Black Mass event at Krakow, Poland 2004, there are: (1) The use of human models to be naked on the cross as referring to the Jesus on a cross with a half naked, already illustrates, the form of 'embarrass' himself. With these measures, already indicated that the followers of the teachings of satanic conduct harassment against Christianity. (2) Some of Satanic groups in the West are using *Inverted Cross* symbol that has been broken, as the attitude that they are Anti-Christianity. For the adherents of Satanist, inverted cross is not only used as a symbol of opposition to God, but also as a statement of loyalty and obedience to the devil. (3) Spikes, that we can see on the surface of the jacket, bracelets and belts of the Black Metal musicians, not only used it as an accessories, but also as the symbol of the opposition to the dominance powers.
CONCLUSION

Symbol is a complex element to be interpreted. However, with the earlier myths, it becomes easier to be understood. The meaning that is contained within the symbol sometimes can be forgotten, even though, the person who presents a definite symbol must have a specific purpose. Symbols of Satanism and Anti-Christianity that was once used as an intermediary ritual, now represented with a different packaging forms and media such as music, so it can be assimilated easily to produce a new product.

The Black Metal musicians in Scandinavia absorb most of the symbols of Satanism and Anti-Christianity to be interpreted as a counter to the ‘teachings of Christ’ that has long mastered the religion of the region. The choosing of symbol of Satanism and Anti-Christianity symbol that is used in the Scandinavian Black Metal musicians aims at creating a ‘new war’ through the music. The symbols that proud to be wearing according to the religious dogma on the basis of ideology that they builds, have an aim of cleaning Scandinavian region from the Christianity.
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