
Symbol of Love in Lany's Songs Album *SOFT*

Dinda Artika Suryandari¹✉, Raudlotul Jannah²

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia

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Abstract

In a song, writers are free to express their imagination to describe the lives they live. Especially romantic lives, which are often found in songs on an artist's album. Romantic songs contain many symbols that have meanings behind them. Thus, representation as a symbol, especially the symbol of love, has a branch of science that explains how something can have meaning. With this interpretive approach, songs can transcend their original context and delve deeper into the exploration of love. This study aims to describe the representamen, object, and interpretant found in the lyrics of Lany's songs and how these elements reflect different types of love. This study is classified as descriptive qualitative research. The researcher uses content analysis with an interpretive framework based on Charles Sander Peirce's semiotic theory. The research data consists of the lyrics of four songs from Lany's latest album *Soft* (2025), namely "Soft", "Know You Naked", "Good Parts", and "Last Forever". The results of the study show that there are three types of love in the lyrics of these songs: passionate love, long-lasting love, and unconditional love. The signs of love in these songs are conveyed through Charles Sander Peirce's triadic theory, which includes objects, representamen, and interpretants. The symbol of sincere and delicate love is a true depiction of life as represented in the lyrics of songs from Lany's album *Soft*.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary music, songs often serve as a medium for artists to express their emotions and life experiences. (Im fine 2025Adinya Kalya Kaulika1, 2025) writes that song lyrics are carefully crafted words that contain messages derived from the writer's experiences, observations, and emotions. A theme that often appears in song lyrics is love, which remains relevant over a long period of time and across generations. Expressions of love in song lyrics often transcend the boundaries of ordinary language. In LANY's album *Soft*, love is described through poetic metaphors and subtle imagery that reflect various aspects of affection and intimacy. According to Chandler (2007), these symbols of love have deeper meanings that shape the listener's interpretation of the romantic experiences being conveyed. Understanding how love is symbolized in song lyrics is essential to uncovering the semiotic process behind musical narratives.

One of the most enduring music genres is alternative rock. This genre emerged in the 1980s as a form of artistic rebellion against the rigid structures of mainstream pop and rock music. It combines experimental sounds with reflective lyrics that often focus on emotional vulnerability and authentic self-expression (2024 mark dkk). This genre provides fertile ground for symbolic interpretation due to its tendency to express human emotions, including complex feelings of love, through figurative language and metaphors. LANY is an American alternative rock band formed in Los Angeles in 2014. Lany is well known among young people because their lyrics represent the atmosphere of falling in love with their romantic and sentimental narratives. Their album *Soft* (2025) is described as a journal of romantic stories full of emotional revelations, yet it does not want to dwell in prolonged sadness because of the intimate love felt. Through songs such as "Know You Naked," "Last Forever," and "Good Parts," LANY depicts love as a symbol of vulnerability and strength, expressed through poetic diction. From this background, researchers are interested in exploring the symbolism of love in the lyrics of the songs on the album *Soft*.

To analyze the symbols of love in LANY's album *Soft* (2025), this study adopts Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory as its theoretical basis. Peirce's triadic model consisting of the signifier (the form of the sign), the signified (what the sign refers to), and the interpretant (the understanding of the sign). Its serves as a framework for decoding how love is represented linguistically and symbolically (chandler 2007). As written by (Sabrina and Sweet), freedom in the interpretation process allows songs to transcend their initial contextual meaning and build a shared emotional space that opens up opportunities for

various interpretations and explorations of the meaning of love. Through a semiotic approach, we can understand how signs in musical works to shape our perceptions. This study applies a qualitative descriptive approach with content analysis, focusing on four selected songs from the album *Soft* (2025). Through interpretive reading and classification of lyrical symbols, this study aims to describe how LANY encodes emotional experiences and romantic values into signs that have meaning in the songs they sing. This is particularly interesting to study given the large number of LANY listeners on Spotify, which indicates that listeners can relate to the lyrics of LANY's songs, which are full of symbols of love.

Several previous studies have examined love representation and semiotic elements in song lyrics. For example, Im Fine (2025) analyzes motivational messages in the lyrics of the song I'm Fine by BTS. The main focus of the study is how meaning is produced through the relationship between signifier and signified. The researcher uses a semiotic approach that allows the researcher to explain how signs in song lyrics function in conveying motivational messages. The result of this study is the discovery of hidden messages that the creator of the song "I'm Fine" wants to convey to listeners. Furthermore, Sabrina Sweet (2025) examined several songs by Sabrina Carpenter in the album Sweet and Taste, focusing on describing the representamen, object, and interpretant found in the lyrics of the songs and how these elements reflect types of love. The results of the study show that there are three types of love in the lyrics of these songs: self-love, intimate love, and obsessive love. Additionally, TTPD (2025) also examines how metaphors of love are expressed in three selected songs: "Guilty as Sin", "The Alchemy", and "But Daddy I Love Him", from Taylor Swift's album The Tortured Poets Department. This study highlights how Taylor Swift uses metaphorical language to capture the multifaceted nature of love, heartbreak, and personal transformation, demonstrating the important role of metaphor in shaping emotional meaning in contemporary popular music. However, limited attention has been given to the symbolic construction of love in LANY's works, especially in their *Soft* album, which emphasizes vulnerability and self-acceptance. Thus, this study fills that gap by uncovering the symbolic dimensions of love as represented through Peircean semiotics in LANY's lyrical discourse.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pierce's Semiotic Theory

Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory began to develop in the late 19th century, around 1867–1903, when Peirce introduced the idea of the "logic of signs," which later

became known as Pragmatic Semiotics or Peircean Semiotic Theory. This theory is also called the Triadic Model of Sign because it emphasizes the relationship between three main elements in the process of meaning formation: representamen, object, and interpretant. Peirce viewed signs as a dynamic process that constantly changes according to context and interpretation. In research, this theory is used to analyze how meaning is constructed and communicated through various forms of representation, including text, images, language, and cultural symbols. For example, researchers can use Peirce's semiotics theory to uncover the hidden meanings behind linguistic, visual, or media messages, as well as how audiences interpret these signs based on their social and cultural contexts.

Symbol of Love in Song Lyrics

Symbols of love in song lyrics explore how language, emotion, and cultural meaning interact in musical expression. Songs are not only works of art, but also linguistic texts that encode emotional experiences through symbols, metaphors, and imagery. As explained by Phillip Tagg (2013), music is a creative work of humans that uses the medium of sound to be enjoyed. Music operates as a sign system that conveys affective and cultural meanings beyond words, allowing listeners to engage emotionally with the song's message. Lyrics packaged with a unity of rhythm, melody, harmony, and dynamics produce beautiful songs that are enjoyed to express feelings. SZA (2025) has also researched that love is a very complex emotional experience characterized by closeness, passion, and commitment. In the songs on Lany's latest album, these sentiments are found as a reflection of her journey in love. With her love songs, Lany allows listeners to interpret the lyrics sung according to their desired concept.

Previous Studies

Several previous studies have explored representations of love and semiotic elements in song lyrics from various artists and genres. Im Fine (2025) analyzes motivational messages in the lyrics of BTS's song "I'm Fine," focusing on how meaning is constructed through the relationship between signifier and signified. The researcher explains how linguistic signs function to convey motivational messages to listeners using the semiotic approach. This study has clear application of Saussurean semiotics, which effectively reveals the hidden messages in the lyrics. However, this study has limitations in that it focuses only on denotative meaning, without exploring in depth how listener interpretation shapes the message as a whole.

Furthermore, SZA (2025) explores how love and loneliness are represented in six selected song lyrics by SZA, namely Kill Bill, Nobody Gets Me, Snooze, Saturn, Open Arms, and Good Days. This study uses a literary thematic approach to analyze how these emotional themes are expressed through poetic language and symbolic signs. This study uses a qualitative method by applying Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to interpret how loneliness is communicated through symbolic signs in the lyrics. The researcher concludes that SZA's lyrics provide a rich and layered representation of love and loneliness, conveyed through figurative expressions and symbolic signs. Nevertheless, this research neglects sociocultural and gender perspectives that are central to SZA's identity and artistic narrative.

RESEARCH METHODS

The researchers used descriptive qualitative methods to gain a deeper understanding of the lyrics of four songs from Lany's album *Soft*. Qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meanings that individuals or groups attach to social or human issues through non-numerical data (cari referensi 2018). The research data consisted of the lyrics of four songs from Lany's album *Soft*, released in 2025. The songs in this album include "Soft," "Know You Naked," "Good Parts," and "Last Forever." Lany's album was chosen as the object of research because of its significant impact and importance in the music industry today. This latest album also greatly supports Lany's monthly listeners, which reached 12.1 million on Spotify. Before conducting qualitative research, the researcher wrote down the lyrics of the four songs in Lany's *Soft* album. Next, the researcher analyzed and categorized the types of love found in the songs. The researcher then examined the relationship between the songs using Peirce's semiotic theory framework to explore how signs and symbols play a role in conveying meaning in love song lyrics. Using the triadic concepts of representamen, object, and interpretant, the researcher analyzed the data collected from Lany's songs to reveal the layers of meaning and symbols hidden within them.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to Regan (2022) in the *minbodygreen* journal, which explores adult love life, there are eight types of love, namely *Eros* (passionate love), *Pragma* (long-lasting/practical love), *Ludus* (flirtatious love), *Agape* (unconditional love), *Philia* (deep friendship), *Philautia* (self-love), *Storge* (familial love), and *Mania* (obsessive love).

Data 1 The song “Soft”

a. Table 1

No	Data (Lyric Excerpt)	Representament	Object	Interpretant
1	I'd let you drown me if you want to	The metaphor of <i>drown me</i> represents total surrender and emotional submission towards love.	This line refers to the narrator's willingness to be consumed by love by his lover.	This excerpt from the lyrics seems to show the writer's deep dedication. He doesn't mind if his love pushes him into a phase of vulnerability, because he himself feels that love is an act of sacrifice. This reflects the controlling and rather extreme nature of a feeling of love.
2	You're the only light left in the room	<i>Light</i> serves as a symbol of hope, guidance, and purity in darkness that maybe haaunted him in life.	This line refers to the beloved as a source of emotional clarity and safety amid loneliness or despair.	This lyric seems to suggest that the author interprets his love for his partner as a spiritual and fundamental force, connecting emotional intimacy with the motivation to see the beauty of the world.
3	That there's a whole world, but I'm the only one that gets to Take you upstairs? Closer to Heaven	This line symbolizes the intimacy the author feels towards his partner, supported by the phrase “closer to Heaven,” which symbolizes that their relationship can bring boundless happiness.	This excerpt refers to the exclusive bond between lovers, which elevates physical intimacy to a sacred experience that can make both of them float in feelings of love.	This line seems to show that the writer is describing the beauty of his romantic relationship with his partner using the theme of intimate spirituality, symbolizing that his feelings of love run that deep.
4	Worship your body in the dark	The lyrics worship you combine sensual beauty and spirituality, describing love as something sacred and deeply personal between the two.	Reflecting respect for the body and presence of the partner. This phrase is also a form of deep worship of the partner.	This line shows that the love felt by the author goes beyond the emotional, physical, and bodily, becoming a symbol of the unity of their relationship.
5	Nothin' 'bout you ever hurts me You're so soft	The word “soft” in these lyrics symbolizes the tenderness and emotional comfort felt by the author.	Referring to love that heals rather than hurts. It seems to suggest that everything the author's partner did never hurt him.	This line seems to express the emotional security and tenderness that exists in their relationship. The author feels secure with their partner because of their partner's gentle attitude, emphasizing the healing nature of love.

The most dominant symbol of love in LANY's song “Soft” is passionate love. This form of love is characterized by an intense desire for constant connection between the writer and his lover. This song symbolizes that the writer will allow his lover to dive as deep as

possible into himself, which means that he is willing to be conquered by love. The repeated use of phrases such as “I’ll let you drown me if you want” and “Worship your body in the dark” illustrates the writer's surrender. In this song, passion is not portrayed as something negative, but rather as something gentle and intimate within a romantic relationship. Through Peirce's semiotic theory, words such as “drown,” “heaven,” and “worship” function as representamen that point to the object (the lover) to describe the emotional feelings felt by the writer. The interpretation formed in the listener's mind is that love—even though it is full of passion—is felt as the union of two different bodies and souls that melt into one.

Data 2 The song “Know You Naked”

a. Table 2

No	Data (Lyric Excerpt)	Representament	Object	Interpretant
1	You're a masterpiece, the wonders of the world are overrated	The word “masterpiece” serves as a symbol of the idealization of the writer's partner's perfection.	Masterpiece here refers to a beloved figure who is considered the most beautiful and extraordinary creation because of the feelings of love.	This line reveals the author's deep admiration and attraction towards his lover. The author greatly adores his lover, whom he considers to be perfect.
2	I don't mean to stare I'm just fixated, elated You and nothing else is just amazing	The repetition of emotional descriptors such as “I only focus on you” symbolizes the writer's emotional infatuation with their lover.	This line refers to the beloved as a source of emotional clarity and safety amid loneliness or despair.	This line shows the writer's complete attention and obsession with the person he loves. His love is so great that it seems as if the rest of the world fades away when compared to their feelings and relationship.
3	Show me every angle All that I want Is to know my angel	The phrase “know my angel” describes that the writer wants his partner to be completely open with him.	The object in this line refers to the author's desire to connect fully, both physically and emotionally, with a loved one.	These lyrics describe how love is not only about physical appearance but also about accepting your lover's weaknesses. Knowing your lover completely will lead to a healthy and lasting relationship.
4	Baby, leave it off, this is my favorite Every second that you're not I hate it	The command to let go contains the meaning of longing for physical closeness between two couples who love each other.	This line refers to a deep desire for constant presence and connection with the person they love.	This line reflects the dependence and urgency to stay with one's partner. The lyrics “Every second that you're not I hate it” show possessive love where everything feels wrong when apart.

From the perspective of the eight classical types of love, “Know You Naked” predominantly represents passionate love. In this LANY song, love is depicted through sensual imagery in the close relationship between the author and his lover. Lyrics such as “Every second you're not here, I hate it” and “I don't mean to stare, I'm just fixated, elated” reflect the author's deep craving for his lover's presence. Using Peirce's semiotic theory, the representamen (“masterpiece,” “angel,” “leave it off”) symbolizes the extraordinary beauty of the author's lover. Meanwhile, the object represents the lover as a muse who plays an important role in the emotional center of the author. The interpretant shows that love here is a combination of passion and dedication between two people in a relationship. This song also blurs the line between physical attraction and emotional affection in the heart.

Data 3 The song “Good Parts”

a. Table 3

No	Data (Lyric Excerpt)	Representament	Object	Interpretant
1	You never had to wonder where I stood, I was always one step behind	The word “masterpiece” serves as a symbol of the idealization of the writer's partner's perfection.	The object refers to the narrator's role as a loyal lover who remains steadfast even though he is unrecognized and the relationship has ended.	This line reflects the narrator's sincere love, which is selfless and patient. It also expresses pure loyalty because of his great love without coercion or restraint.
2	There's a reason that our love made it all that time. Cause you can't tango alone, it takes two, there's another side	The metaphor “you can't dance the tango alone” symbolizes the cooperation in the narrator's romantic relationship with his partner.	It refers to the author's efforts to maintain the relationship amid all the problems that exist.	This line shows the author's mature love for his lover. Even though it did not end well, everything that happened in the relationship shows that the narrator contributed to the relationship that was built. That they both went through many processes of mutual forgiveness.
3	When you're all alone and laying in the dark. You remember all the good parts	The phrase “the good part” serves as a symbol of the narrator's nostalgic reflection on their romantic relationship.	It reflects the memories of love that remain after a painful breakup, but there are still good things left behind.	This line signifies the narrator's emotional maturity and gratitude. Even though the relationship has ended, he focuses only on positive memories rather than resentment. This shows that love remains even though the presence is gone.
4	There's nothing good about goodbye, they're never in the plan. But I will always	Reflecting the mixture of love and hate that arises from the pain of	Referring to the pain of separation that coexists with strong feelings of love.	This line expresses a balanced and realistic view of love. That when separation occurs in a

	love you and always hate that it had to end	separation in the narrator's relationship.		relationship, we must accept the heartbreak we feel. The lingering affection is enough to be felt without the need to avoid it.
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From the perspective of the eight classic types of love, “Good Parts” predominantly represents long-lasting love. Good Parts is a song that represents the writer's feelings towards his lover in a long-term relationship that has even ended. This type of love often appears in relationships that have been tested by various trials such as communication, time, and effort between the two. This type of love can be maintained through the wisdom of both parties in the relationship. In the lyrics, “There's a reason why our love has lasted this long / Because you can't dance the tango alone, it takes two,” the author explains the cooperation and reciprocity that form a strong foundation in a relationship. This lyric acknowledges that love endures through shared belief and responsibility. Through Peirce's semiotic theory, representamen such as “beautiful parts,” “tango,” and “goodbye” function as signs of love in the face of trials in a relationship. The object refers to love that grows even greater despite the loss of a partner. The interpretant that is formed is a sense of acceptance of love and affection, both sweet and bitter, as something that continues to exist even after separation.

Data 4 The song “Last Forever”

a. Table 4

No	Data (Lyric Excerpt)	Representament	Object	Interpretant
1	When I first saw your face It took my breath away	The phrase “took my breath away” describes the writer's admiration for his lover.	Masterpiece here r It refers to the moment when the writer first fell in love, which was thrilling for him.	This line signifies the instant emotional connection between the writer and his lover, where he was already smitten at their first meeting. The feeling is described as something that captivated him intensely.
2	Flowers bloom, then they die "Hellos" end in "goodbyes"	Using the life cycle of flowers as a symbol of contrast between “hello” and “goodbye” illustrates the impermanence of a moment or feeling.	Depicting an awareness of the temporary nature of love, which can change at any time.	This line reflects a mature understanding that love is as dynamic as life itself. It will change at some point, but the author realizes that all of their feelings are still worthy of appreciation.
3	Every beat, every breath, every minute I have left You're the only thing in life I've ever had That I wanted to last forever	In this line, hyperbolic repetition (every beat, every breath, every minute) symbolizes the writer's immense	It refers to the beloved as the embodiment of eternal love at all times.	This line shows the writer's deep attachment to his beloved. It also describes love as if it were the ultimate goal in life.

		love for his beloved.		
4	I would die if one day we couldn't be together, I'm begging, baby, please, for you to promise me	The statement "I will die if..." describes the writer's despair at the absence of his lover.	This reflects the strong bond and the writer's vulnerability to separation.	This line expresses a love so deep that it causes despair stemming from the fear of future separation.

The dominant type of love in "Last Forever" is unconditional love. This is evident in the lyrics written by the author as a reflection of pure and selfless affection. This can be seen in the lyrics, "Every heartbeat, every breath, every minute left in my life, you are the only thing in my life that I have ever wanted to last forever." These lyrics are proof of the author's love that transcends time. The use of the word "forever" signifies the writer's strong attachment to his lover, to the point that he desires eternal love and a lasting relationship. According to Peirce's semiotic theory, the object of this eternal love is the beloved, who is the center of the writer's life. The interpretation that emerges is that true love is not eternal, but it is sincere love that makes it last as long as possible.

CONCLUSION(S)

From the nine types of love according to Regan's theory (2022), three types of love are found in Lany's album *Soft*, namely passionate love, eternal love, and unconditional love. After examining four songs, namely "Soft," "Know You Naked," "Good Parts," and "Last Forever," it was found that each of Lany's songs describes a unique aspect of love through symbolic signs with quite poetic language. The lyrics of the song *Soft* describe love that can increase a person's vulnerability to their partner. The passionate love felt by the author is expressed through tenderness in relationships. This song implies that love can be both controlling and healing at the same time. In "Know You Naked," love turns into fascination, which also describes passionate love. The lyrics describe an admiration that combines physical affection and the writer's heart, which always wants every second of togetherness with their partner. In contrast, "Good Parts" represents the mature affection that comes with a long-term relationship. The kind of lasting love in this song is supported by self-acceptance because it describes the beauty of cherishing memories even after separating from a partner.

Finally, the song "Last Forever" describes the desire for eternal love amid the dynamics of human life. Unconditional love is the dominant type of love in this song. This is evident through symbols such as "forever" and "every breath," which represent the

writer's prayer that his love will last as long as possible. Therefore, the album *Soft* not only expresses love as a romantic feeling, but as an emotional journey that continues to evolve.

REFERENCES