



good
marketing or
poor design:
analyzing
fan response to
charli xcx's
brat
cover

Marie Murphy- COM465

Introduction & the Unexpected

- In June 2024, Charli XCX released *brat*, her sixth studio album.
 - Music rollout began in late February; released nine of the 15 songs early
 - Full album release June 7
- The music itself wasn't what made this album different; it was its cover, as seen here:

brat

Dramatizing Message

- *Urfavgalpal* took to Reddit to start the conversation about the proposed album cover by reposting a text Charli sent to fans who subscribed to a text service about her music:



The screenshot shows a Reddit post from the user 'urfavgalpal' (263d). The post text reads: 'Brat - this summer. 15 songs. 41:23 minutes long. was struggling to find the words for this earlier. every record i make is my "favourite record" once i finish it, but i think this one might be my all time favourite forever. picture disc vinyl is available today and i'll probably never sell it again. i'm excited for you to hear it. okay love you angels xx'. Below the text, there are two lines of context: 'From her text subscription thing re: this album' and 'Edit: this is indeed the cover of the vinyl'. At the bottom right, there are icons for a menu, a medal, an upvote, and the number '474'.

urfavgalpal · 263d

Brat - this summer. 15 songs. 41:23 minutes long. was struggling to find the words for this earlier. every record i make is my "favourite record" once i finish it, but i think this one might be my all time favourite forever. picture disc vinyl is available today and i'll probably never sell it again. i'm excited for you to hear it. okay love you angels xx

From her text subscription thing re: this album

Edit: this is indeed the cover of the vinyl

... 🏆 📈 474

Purpose

What are fans willing/not willing to accept about *brat*?

extrinsic analysis

Symbolic Convergence Theory

- The Unexpected

- “When we share a dramatization of an event, we make sense out of what prior to that time may well have been a confusing state of affairs. Uncertainty and confusion generate group fantasy. By creating a script that accounts for what happened, we deal with uncertainty in a psychologically satisfying way.” (Bormann, 1982, p. 54)

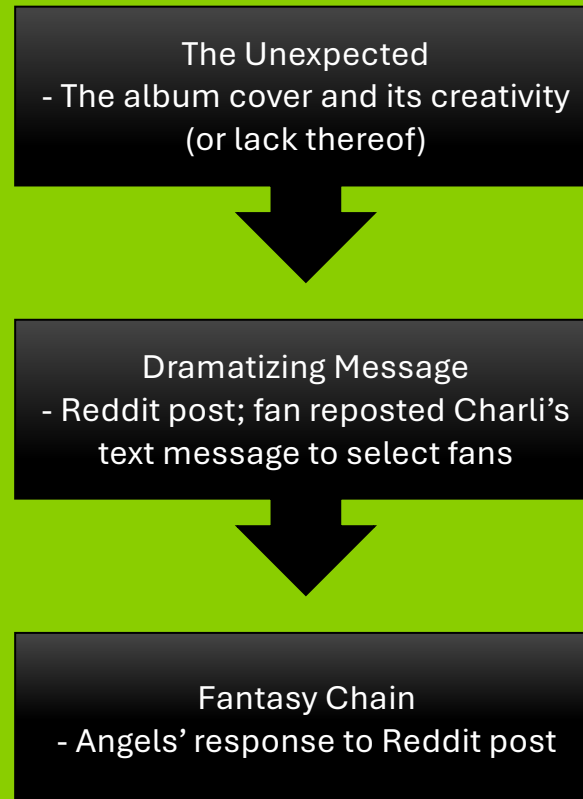
- Dramatizing Message

- A message that, according to Bormann, Knutson, and Musolf (1997), “when a person dramatizes [it], others in the group may respond to the message by growing excited and expanding or adding to it.” (p. 255)

- Fantasy Chain

- “When a person dramatizes, others in the group may respond to the message by growing excited and expanding or adding to it. The tempo of the conversation quickens, others join in, and a chain reaction takes place.” (Bormann, et al., 1997, p. 255)

SCT and *brat*

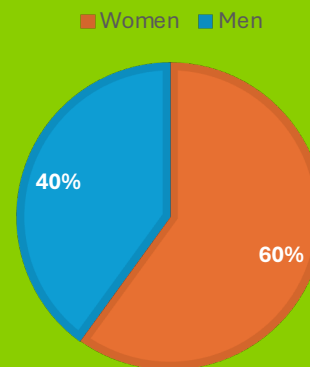


Charli's Fandom

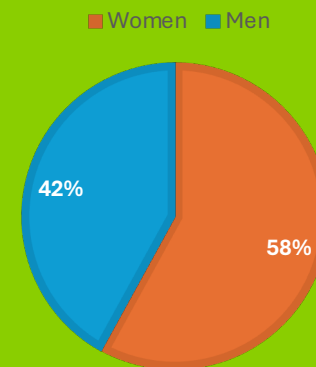
- Known as "Angels", inspired by *Charlie's Angels*
 - Mostly based in the UK and the US
 - London, New York, Los Angeles
- Angels are consumption fans
 - "Belief in brands and consumer products can become part of their identity...for those individuals, the act of consuming becomes but an entry point into a wider sphere of participation." (Foster, 2023, para. 1)



PERCENT OF INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS



PERCENT OF TIKTOK FOLLOWERS



Argument

Fans are not willing to accept the album cover as a whole.



intrinsic analysis

Critical Analysis

- Angels had mixed reactions to the cover
 - Reddit thread titled *Charli XCX announces new album 'Brat' coming this summer* posted in February 2024; 192 comments
 - I analyzed 32 of them



13 preferred comments

Comments where the readers' understanding of the message is consistent with the creators' intent. (Duncan, et al., 2015, p. 344)



15 oppositional comments

Comments that interpret the creators' messages in a way that was not intentional (Duncan, Levitz & Smith, 2015, p. 344)



Four negotiated comments

Part of the creators' intent was accepted and the other part wasn't. (Duncan, et al., 2015, p. 344)

Preferred Comments



DAMONSIPICH · 250d

i like the cover lol it fits perfectly with her aesthetic




Cautious_Slay · 250d

I LOVE the cover. So funny and actually good looking in a library of other albums, it's a cool shade of green.






Oppositional Comments

 **SpaceAids420** • 263d

the way brats are trying to defend this album art
girl i coulda made this in ms paint in 2 seconds 🤪


... 👤 ⬆️ 0

 **christopher_aia** • 263d

 I blame it on your JUICE 

kind of but I would prefer iconic and good-looking instead of iconic and hideous 🤪

... 👤 ⬆️ 70

 **imaginativeintellect** • 252d

i care in this case because this is pus green with arial text font which i'll be visualizing with every song. just vomit green for whenever i turn it on. on every charli album previously we've gotten SOMETHING coherent and striking. can a girl ask for a modicum of effort? even just picking a non-snot-colored background would improve the listening experience tenfold. and to be clear i dont remember any criticism of the GUTS cover, it's very well composed and fits the contents of the album well.

... 👤 ⬆️ 14

Negotiated Comments



International_Pen_11 · 250d

initially i hated it but it's already growing on me

however im apprehensive about buying the vinyl bc it would look so ugly on my wall with the covers i display. idk. i kinda just wish it looked a bit cleaner & more polished but i understand that it's intentional. just not my fav. a shame bc the inside is such a slay



So What?

- Angels were so taken aback by and hated this cover that they were skeptical about the music inside
- It shows that fans aren't used to change and will stick to what they know if they don't think it'll be a good representation of their favorite artist
- This cover wasn't what the fans were expecting, but it was what they needed

References

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