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VIDEOMUSIC AS PROMOTIONAL FORM: THE INCORPORATION OF POPULAR

MUSIC INTO THE TELEVISUAL

by

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Videomusic as Promotional Form: The Incorporation of Popular

Music into the Televisual

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ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the role of technology in cultural form by analyzing the development of videomusic in popular music. It argues that the integration of televisual presentation into the popular music discourse is a technological innovation which serves to reorient the form towards a greater concentration on its promotional and marketing elements.

The visual transformation of popular music is investigated in three principal ways. To establish the relationship between technology and cultural form a review of relevant literature is undertaken. Twelve interviews were conducted with representatives of record companies, a video production house and a videomusic station. The interview material is used to ascertain the role of the institutions in the observed transformation of popular music. To understand more about the content of videomusic, an analysis of a small sample of videos was done, using the semiotic concept of "connotation".

Through these techniques, the thesis, first of all, uncovers the way musical use is altered by the introduction of videomusic and the use of television is contrasted with the use of popular music. By emphasizing these visual presentations of songs, the close relationship of audience and use to popular music is devalued. Also, the institutional motivation behind the innovation is revealed. A convergence of interests exists between the recording industry and the cable television industry. For the major recording corporations, videomusic

represents a desired move to a stronger definition of their product through promotion. For the cable industry, videomusic is programme content specifically aimed at the youth market segment. The actual content of videomusic, it is argued, reflects the promotional nature of videomusic.

The thesis concludes that videomusic exemplifies the style of innovation that is fostered within the institutions of modern cultural production. This style of innovation imposes the constraints relating to the development of commodities on cultural expression.

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I. Introduction

An essential factor in current concepts of popular culture
is technology. Not only are sophisticated techniques utilized in
the production of popular culture, they are also used to
disseminate and receive the various forms. It is difficult to
think of a popular cultural form that is not technologically
mediated. The television, film, and recording industries – all
forms of expression highly dependent on technology for inception
and reception – dominate our use of leisure time and are
therefore our principal forms of media-based popular culture.
The domination of our leisure time by these three forms,
provides the modern definitional analysis of what is popular in
culture. If a form lacks the technological mediation, it is
unlikely to be popular. Thus, one of the defining
characteristics of popular culture has become its technological
mediation.

The melding of cultural form to technology to produce
popular culture makes the task of understanding the effect of
the technological component an elusive exercise. The
definitional link points to technology's role in making cultural
forms accessible; hence technology provides the vehicle for
popularity. To reveal further implications of technology on
cultural form, however, there is a need to study moments in time
where a cultural form has incorporated a new technological

structure into the form's expression. It would be fruitful to study the transformation of drama from the stage to film, or the change manifested by the introduction of sound to film, or the incorporation of computer graphics in television programming. All of these examples point to an 'interface' in cultural form. Interface identifies the transitory condition of cultural form between the adoption and integration of new technology and the reliance on past technology for expression. Fundamentally, the technological transformation results in a change in a cultural form's signifying system.

The insight into the relationship between technology and cultural form provided by interfaces is by nature temporary and fleeting . Because of popular culture's close affiliation with technology, the role played by any new technology is hidden by its quick incorporation into the production process. The technological transformation mitigates the awareness that there are, in fact, two distinct forms. Evidence for comparison and assessment disappears into the new hybrid form. The technological change defines the altered popular cultural expression, that is, the differences of the two forms are unified into one form.

For the sake of analysis, it is important to identify an interface as it occurs, before the disunity transforms into a new unity and the technological incorporation is complete. It is with these realities in mind that I have chosen a current example of interface for analysis. Recently, the recording

industry – particularly the popular music sector – has begun packaging its musical product in visual terms for exhibition on broadcast television. The new popular cultural form is called videomusic and the song representations are usually referred to as videos or videoclips. Videos are complete conceptual televisualizations of songs: each lasts about three minutes, the usual length of a single. The interface in popular music is the transformation of the form to the televisual and the implications of this technological transformation are the subject of this thesis.

Antecedents and Videomusic: Evidence of Interface

A valid question may be posed that this so-called transformation by technological innovation is really not an interface at all. It is true that there has always been a close connection between visuals and music. The list of visual music precursors is extensive: the movie musical of the thirties and forties specifically the Busby Berkelys, the Panorama soundie and the Scopitone – two distinct types of visual jukeboxes – in the forties and sixties respectively,[1] several showcase television programmes geared to teen audiences during the fifties and sixties (*American Bandstand* and *Hullabaloo* to name only a few), the plethora of Elvis Presley movies which featured his singing performances surrounded by a weak dramatic plot, the seminal – in terms of current videomusic – Richard Lester

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Beatles' films [2], the rock opera or documentary films of bands in vogue in the seventies and eighties[3], and the continuing visual connection through theme songs between popular music and the movie industry. [4] Even this abbreviated list provides a great deal of evidence that an interface does not exist; rather a continuum of visual connection appears to be the reality of popular music.

The antecedents of videomusic in essence do not dispute the uniqueness of the new form. For one, videos have arisen directly out of a promotional strategy for the record companies. In a very basic sense, they are advertisements for the selling of the musical product - the record. The cultural form interface of videomusic, by its position in the historical development of advertising's market segmentation strategies and the present blurring of the differences in broadcast television between promotion and entertainment, provides a point of entry into the convergence of commodity and cultural form. Also, stylistically and formalistically videomusic diverges from its predecessors. The frequently non-narrative and non-linear form of videos indicates a substantial break from traditional broadcast television's style. Its closest antecedent is the television commercial.[5]

Finally, the very pervasiveness of videomusic - its total incorporation into popular music and television broadcasting - is entirely new. Over 2,000 videos are produced each year. [6] The cost of production for the entire recording industry is 100%

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million/dollars.[7] In tandem, television has provided programmes for this massive output of cultural product. Over 200 so-called video shows have come on the air in the last two years. More important than this array of shows is videomusic's close association with cable television.

Music Television (MTV), a twenty-four hour videomusic station became available on cable throughout the United States in August 1981. MTV's programming criteria was to operate a visual FM radio station.[8] Following suit in 1984, the CRTC licenced a Canadian satellite-to-cable music television channel called Muchmusic.[9] Three other twenty-four channels surfaced on American cable television in 1984 and 1985 - all music related: the Discovery Channel, the Country Music Channel, and Video Hits One. There is no doubt that there has been a significant marriage between this form of entertainment and the developments in broadcast television. The marriage is indicative of that self-same intertwining of cultural form and the commodity which serves to distinguish this form from its predecessors. Cable television is on the cutting edge of inexpensive programming; entirely part of that strategy is the confusion and blurring of promotion with programme content.

Human Agency and Opposition in Recent Popular Music

Although human agency is so obviously central to the very consumption of a cultural product, it is often neglected in the analysis of the process of production. For example, the transformation of music into the televisual form appears to have little relationship to its audience and its use of the form. The ability of the industry to overlook musical use is probably the most disturbing element in the development of videomusic. At the most basic level, the visualization of popular music has altered a cultural discourse. The meaning of cultural discourse may be unclear in this context. Simply put, it can be defined as an interplay between the performer/creator and his/her audience. Popular music is somewhat unique in this almost conversational relationship. Unlike other forms of discourse, musical use is a major factor in the inception of the form. In other words, audience use has been a defining characteristic of popular music.

In recent history - over the last thirty years - popular music has developed into a form that has helped differentiate and identify youth culture. While the industry and its profit motive have demonstrated that popular music is, on one level, a business, the actual product of the music industry developed into a form that advocated some separation and distance from this dominant structure. The notions of differentiation and group identity are, to a degree, related to the cultural origins

of popular music.

Black rhythm and blues formed the expanding nucleus of what came to be known as rock 'n roll.[10] In the nineteen fifties, black music in America was as ghettoized as black culture. The distinctiveness of their music was derived from the general condition of the black community in the urban north. The cultural form of black music arose from the experience of oppression, and must be understood in historical terms. Like their enslaved ancestors of nineteenth century America, their music was a means to both make the conditions manageable and help define their own distinct culture. What is also significant about early black music was that musical expression and use were inseparable. They were both equal elements of the form.[11]

When that music was coopted into mainstream popular music, the emphasis on distinction and group identity remained. It became somewhat redefined by the new users of the cultural form and the new entrepreneurs involved in marketing the product. Rock 'n roll transformed the separation of the black urban poor from white-dominated society, into a separation of a community of American youth from an older generation of parents, teachers and other symbols of authority. Popular music began to 'speak' to only one segment of North American society. Its use was associated with adolescent gatherings; the music was part of the experience of youth through its integration into the fabric of events. Part of the rebellion revolved around the perceived repressive morality of an older generation. Sexual freedom and

individual liberation grew into epithets of rock music. Much
like the close connection between the black music and its black
audience, popular music's performers were the same age as their
audience.

The search for group identity through popular music allowed
for the expression of sentiments that were more overtly
oppositional. Popular music's recent history is punctuated by
two moments where the music, its use and its audience, created a
cultural form that coalesced in opposition to the existing
order.[12]. The protest movement of the late sixties had an
integral protest music that assisted in the establishment of a
common cause and attitude among American youth. A second
instance of overt opposition which arose from audience and
musical use was the punk movement in Britain during the late
seventies. Blatant rejection of 'normal' behaviour manifested
itself into stylized youth subcultures in working class Britain.
A musical style accompanied this rejection and opposition, a
style that spurned expertise and professionalism in favour of
nihilistic expression of discontent.

It is through the work of a group of scholars from the
Birmingham School of Contemporary Cultural Studies that the
connection between cultural form and audience is best
articulated. They have adapted Levi-Strauss' term bricolage to
their work on spectacular British youth subcultures.
Levi-Strauss used 'bricolage' to describe primitive societies'
way to make their environment meaningful. The limited number of

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cultural symbols and objects can be endlessly reorganized into new and significant meanings. Members of the Birmingham School extended the use of the term to describe subcultures' attempts to reorder their environment by taking existing objects and recontextualizing those objects to make their own meaning. This concept of bricolage can best be explained through punk culture's appropriation of the safety pin. The safety pin's intended use was entirely subverted by its use as an expressive ear, nose or cheek ornament by youth subcultures. It was a signal of both opposition to existing society and the wearer's allegiance to a meaningful subculture. [13]

The importance of these studies to the present argument is that they reorient the discussion to an awareness of the dialectic of popular music: on the one hand, there is the recording industry whose intent is to define and control a market; on the other, there is the audience who, by use, makes the music meaningful to their experience. Although there is always a tension between these two components of popular music, the cultural form has integrated the audience and its innovative and oppositional dimensions into the product in varying degrees. This integration of audience and use into the expression is one of the key values of this form of popular culture. Popular music's ability to continue to be based on living and real cultural contexts is an attribute uncommon in other popular cultural forms.

Intentions

By providing this brief historical account of popular music, and by explicating the nature of the new technological interface, it is now possible to explore the implications of technological change on cultural expression. It is my intent, through the exploration of the incorporation of the televisual into the popular music discourse to uncover evidence of the increasing commodification of cultural expression. It is hoped that some conclusions may be reached about the relationship of technological form to this movement to cultural commodification.

Principally, three areas will be investigated in this thesis. In chapter two, the theoretical basis in understanding the constraints of technology will be reviewed in the context of the video interface. Chapter Three will take those findings and determine the level and implications of incorporation on the popular music form. It will focus on identifying the *advertising mentality* in videomusic production. Interviews with industry representatives and others directly responsible for the visual transformation will provide the core material for the assessment. Also, a study of the format of the twenty-four hour Canadian video station, Muchmusic, will be undertaken to demonstrate the role of the dissemination process in the videomusic interface. The third and final area of investigation will be the subject of chapter four. The actual content of the videos will be analysed semiotically to ascertain the level and

effect of incorporation of the advertising mentality in the
visual transformation. Chapter Five, the Conclusion, will try to
weave the interface analysis into a more general, far-reaching
and comprehensive theme that will centre on an understanding of
the structures that technology and the commodity place on
innovation and cultural form. It is hoped that this thesis, in
total, will point to the process whereby cultural form is
transformed into the commodity.

Footnotes

1. David Ehrenstein, "pre-MTV," *Film Comment* 19 (July-August 1983): 41.

2. Ibid., p.42.
   The closest in form is a series of clips by two English groups: **Madness** and **Captain Sensible. The Monkees** television programme of the 1960s was directly derivative of Lester's films.

3. The Who's *Tommy* or Pink Floyd's *The Wall* are examples of rock opera or by present definitions - videofilms; The Rolling Stone's *Gimme Shelter* and *Woodstock* are examples of 'rockumentaries'.

4. Martin Laba, "The Visual Music Commodity," Paper presented at at the Canadian Communication Association Conference, Guelph, June 1984, p. 14.

5. The non-linear commercial style is a relatively recent development. It rapidly dominated the form of advertising, after Krugman's findings on left brain/right brain dichotomies as they relate to television watching. This study indicated that watching television caused the logical and analytical hemisphere of the brain (the left side) to "to tune out" and the right hemisphere "which processes information emotionally and holistically [to be] alert and fully functioning". His report was published in 1969 and the changes in television advertising style occurred in the 1970s. Joyce Nelson, "As the Brain tunes out, the TV Admen tune in," *Globe and Mail*, April 16, 1983.

6. "Betting Millions on Four Minute Musicals," *Fortune*, September 17, 1984, pp. 167-8.

7. Ibid.

8. Arnold Wolfe, "Rock on Cable: On MTV," *Popular Music and Society* 9 (No. 1 1983): 43.

9. Dan Westell, "Pay-TV Awards Reinforce Firms," *Globe and Mail*, April 4, 1984, p. B13.

10. See Martin Laba, "The Visual Music Commodity," pp. 1, 6-8.

11. Simon Frith, *Sound Effects*, (New York: Pantheon, 1981) pp. 16-17.

12. See Simon Frith, "Rock and Popular Culture," *Socialist Revolution* 7 (May-June 1977): 103-120.

13. Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*, (London: Methuen, 1979), pp. 102-109.

II. Technological Innovation in Cultural Form

This chapter focusses on the role of technology in the integration of the televisual with popular music. Although neither new recording nor new video technologies are part of this integration, the hybrid of videomusic is considered to be an innovation in the cultural form by the recording industry. It has been labelled a "natural progression"[1] and the "next logical step for artists to reach for something new and different"[2]. This orientation points to a treatment of the interface as a form of *technological innovation* in cultural expression.

To this end, a working definition of technology is critical. Because the term has been used in such a wide variety of ways, a good deal of confusion has been generated about its usage. The typical definition before the nineteenth century defined technology as the implements and tools used to complete a task.[3] This is roughly the same definition adapted by present-day engineers. A more complete definition has emerged since then: technology is seen as the application of science to the practical or industrial arts.[4] Yet even this attempt does not cover the term's usage by analysts and critics of technology. Jacques Ellul's attempt comes close to encompassing the diverse meanings of the term. Ellul explained that technology is "the totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency in every field of human activity".[5]

With Ellul's definition, technology transcends its material base and takes on a more universal sense. Through use (and possibly overuse), the technology of tools and machines helps foster a way of thinking - a symbolic interpretation of the relationship of man to his environment. The concept of technology, if it incorporates this universal non-material perspective, involves not just the tools and their application; it also describes a rationalization of human endeavour. Thus, as Lewis Mumford has pointed out, technology also includes the organization, planning and forecasting associated with the use of tools.[6]

With these ever-expanding definitions of technology, the term has become diverse and complex. Yet this factor of universality, to a certain extent, simplifies this complexity in that it identifies technology as an ideology.[7] As ideology, technology is a belief system or world-view that supports the application of science and scientific method to all concerns of a society. Imbedded in the ideology is the belief in technological innovation as progress. Therefore, change wrought by the application of scientific techniques is positive - a step forward. Consequently, application and the integration of the new artifacts derived from technology becomes the narrowed interest of modern society. Questions that would help determine what is lost or what is gained - that is, the total cultural costs and benefits - through the utilization of a given technology are left unexplored. The prevalent and relatively

unchallenged ideology of technology ensures that technological change is interpreted as both necessary and advantageous.

Various critics of modern society have identified this ideology of technology using different terminologies. Lewis Mumford, who calls the ideology the "mechanized world picture", offers a very comprehensive and insightful critique.[8] He argues that there has been an over-emphasis on "man" as tool-maker to the neglect of the compleat being:

> ...By utilizing only a part of the human self to explore only a part of its environment, the new science successfully turned the most significant attributes of life into purely secondary phenomenon, ticketted for replacement by the machine. Thus living organisms, in their most typical functions and purposes, became superfluous.[9]

According to Mumford, the neglected half of the human psyche is the creative, organic part. The belief structure around "technics"[10] has led to an imbalance that promotes continual change without the integration of the technological changes "in an appropriate social pattern".[11] The purpose of the machine in technological society is to reach for the perfection of the synthesis of nature. Progress, within the confines of this ideology of technology, is the ability of humans to replace and therefore control nature. In the most pervasive manner, "the machine came forth as the new demiurge that was to create a new heaven and a new earth".[12]

Similarly, Marcuse's discussion of the ideology of technology suggests the limitations of human thinking within the structures of this ideology. In an early work, Marcuse

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approaches technology from a more traditional notion of its neutrality: "Technics by itself can promote authoritarianism as well as liberty, scarcity as well as abundance, the extension as well as the abolition of toil."[13] The overriding factor is not the technology, but who controls the "technics" and this power relationship has determined its positive or negative influence. Scientific reason, by its application to society through technology has permeated all rational discourse - it has become the model of reason and reality. Marcuse uses the term "technological rationality" to describe the limited thinking proscribed by scientific reason. Application of science and its principles, that is, technology, has become the elevated objective of the modern society enveloped in this rationality.[14] Not only has technological rationality come to dominate the methods and means of the central institutions of government and industry, but it has invaded, according to Marcuse, social consciousness and behaviour. Through this pervasive support of technological rationality, the political structures that exist remain unchallenged. Marcuse identifies the political consequences of technological rationality:

> only in the medium of technology, man and nature become, fungible objects of organization. The universal effectiveness and productivity of the apparatus under which they are subsumed veil the particular interests that organized the apparatus. [15]

In this analysis, Marcuse transforms technology from a simple instrumental tool to a tool of domination. From Marcuse's perspective, the use of technology has led to the acceptance by

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the social body of a clearly subordinate role that permits that social body to be defined by the machines and apparati of government and the imperatives of work. In Marcuse's estimation, this process has been the endemic one-dimensionality of modern humankind.

From Mumford and Marcuse, two correlative approaches to the ideology of technology are conveyed. Mumford's work concentrates on the determinist nature of technology. There is inadequate control of what is adopted by society and a new balance needs to be reached, where humanness reasserts its dominance over mechanical thinking and machine culture. Marcuse's analysis emphasizes the political nature of the appropriation of science to technology and society. Technology has been used to legitimate existing societal positions of dominance and subordination. When the two approaches are integrated, it becomes clear how the two facets of the ideology of technology are related: the actual form of technological apparati works hand in hand with the institutions that fostered their creation. Thus, the determining factors of technological form cannot be separated from the elements of society which allowed these forms to be developed and utilized.

By utilizing the concept of technology as ideology - which identifies the determining nature of form and those in control of the form - the transformation of popular music into the televisual will be analyzed. Although these two elements of the ideology are virtually inseparable, for analytical purposes the

investigation will be divided into a study of formalistic change
and institutional change. In both cases, the particular
transformation of popular music from the perspective of the
general relationship of technology to cultural form will be
addressed.

Part One: Transformation of Form

In the context of an ideology of technology, the study of
cultural forms of expression immediately encounters a paradox.
It has been a traditional interpetation that technology and
creativity are antagonistic to each other: technology's emphasis
on technical perfection is viewed to be at cross-purposes to the
creative intent of cultural forms. Since both television and
popular music are highly dependent on mechanical/technological
innovation, it could be interpreted that this dependence
frustrates the development of the creative elements of these
cultural forms.

Consider television's close definitional relationship with
sophisticated technology. Its invention is derived from the
scientific and military tradition.[16] The technology of the
cathode ray tube is a complex process of shooting electrons on
to a screen. This technology has relied on extensive knowledge
of nuclear physics for its invention. To broadcast television
signals is equally elaborate and technologically based. It would
appear that this basis of innovation has little bearing on the

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created content of television programmes. Indeed creative use seems to overcome the obstacles of technologically based innovation and its associated ideology.

This kind of analysis treats the technological apparatus of cultural forms as entirely transparent. However, though the technology of television - by its ability to simulate images correctly - appears to be simply a transmitter, it is in fact a mediator of cultural messages. Similarly, the complex apparatus used by the recording industry to produce music on discs and tapes is also a form of technological mediation. A more comprehensive study is needed which links content and use with the technological form. The difficulty in achieving this link between content and technology is that the literature on technology is somewhat divorced from the discussion of cultural expression.

The critics of the technological society have argued that machines and automation have dehumanized modern work through the destruction of craft knowledge and further, have destroyed the connection between humanity and nature. However, they have given relatively cursory treatment to the effect of technology on cultural form. The arguments against the ideology of technology are all-inclusive - the separation and specialization of cultural form from the other components of life, is counter-productive to this literature's basic intention of integration. It is implicit in Mumford's work that specialization into 'cultural' and 'non-cultural' is symptomatic

of a society operating under the structure of the "mechanized world picture". Nevertheless, the contradiction of creative use within technological form remains underaddressed. It follows then, that the transformation of cultural form by technology to uncover the determining factors of the technological component must be elaborated upon. Certain writers, Walter Benjamin, Marshall McLuhan and Lewis Mumford in particular, offer a framework for this investigation.

Walter Benjamin, in his classic essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", gives some account of the new relationship of technology to cultural form.[17] Art of past centuries, according to Benjamin, was out of the reach of the masses. The appreciation had been the exclusive domain of the ruling classes. Benjamin calls this distancing of an art object from the mass audience, the "aura" of art. Aura denotes two principal means of art/audience separation. First, it was thought that a level of cultivation was necessary to understand the human and universal aesthetic of any work. Secondly, the very uniqueness of each painting or sculpture - its authenticity - meant that the work was exhibited in a special and individual place. These two elements of aura operated within the existing class structure by investing the works with an elaborate tradition complex. Its appreciation was therefore one of the bases of class differentiation. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the mechanical reproduction of art objects has brought about the destruction of aura. Art, through this

reproduction is emancipated because it became part of a personal and social context. Because of the ability to make an infinite number of copies, authenticity has become quite meaningless. Mechanical reproduction - the identifiable improvement of cultural form through technological change - therefore has allowed greater participation in cultural expression.

Benjamin sees the power of the technology to transform traditional societies. Through his discussion of Duhamel's attitude to the new technologically mediated cultural forms, Benjamin identifies this second implication inherent in the use of mechanically reproduced forms. [18] Technological forms lead to the creation and fostering of the mass audience. Benjamin argues that the masses' new participation permits fundamental changes in the cultural form which are ultimately positive . In other words, these new cultural forms will tend to represent the working class and its interests. He points to Soviet film of the Thirties as evidence of the transformation to participation. [19] While the validity of this claim is certainly debatable, it can be said that cultural forms that are dependent on reproducible technologies, have by their nature, the relatively hidden intent of forming what has come to be called mass culture.

Although he did not foresee the same political consequences, Marshall McLuhan sees intrinsic value in the possibility of mass participation in the new cultural forms. Similarly, he sees that the actual technological transformation permitted this new level of access. The new "electric

technology" - television and computers in particular - are

leading the world to a new global village:

> Above all, however, it is the speed of the electric
> involvement that creates the integral whole of both
> private and public awareness... because electric media
> instantly and constantly create a total field of
> interacting events in which all men participate.[20]

McLuhan's notion that the "medium is the message"[21] can be

understood as a rallying cry for mass participation in the new

technological forms. Electric technologies allow for total and

inclusive sensual experience.[22]

McLuhan considers all media as extensions of the senses.

Different media, McLuhan thinks, isolate on specific senses. For

example, the printed word has resulted in an over-emphasis on

the visual sense. Therefore, his investigation of media

concentrates on the determining nature of technologies to assess

their value to society: "the use of any kind of medium or

extension of man alters the patterns of interdependence among

people, as it alters the ratios among our senses."[23] In effect,

then, McLuhan becomes an apologist for the new technologies

because they are on a course of emulating ourselves, of becoming

through their instantaneous network, a larger central nervous

system - a media that is quite im-mediate.[24]

A major problem is evident in McLuhan's assessment of media

technologies. There is complete disregard of the role of

institutions, both political and economic, which control the use

and content of these new media. In other words, McLuhan's belief

in massive participation in the new technologies carries with it

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tacit approval of those in control. The full implications of mass society have been ignored by McLuhan. He explores inadequately the extension and domination of different cultures by one culture and its technology. Also, he fails to acknowledge the one-way flow of these electric technologies of broadcast; surely this limits the participation of the individual in the forms. A further consideration of the implications of mass society and this bias of technology for spatial and territorial control will be discussed in the second section of this chapter dealing with the institutions of technology.

Despite this major weakness, McLuhan's work does have some relevance to the study of the transformation of cultural form. His scattered and often inconclusive work highlights the determining nature of technology. It explicates this nature by emphasizing the primacy of form over content of any medium. For example, the content of television, he remarks, was merely the form of film; likewise the content of film is its predecessor, the novel.[25] Because of this media lag, McLuhan considers that the form on its own -its technological extension of the senses - is all that is worth studying because it is precisely what has altered. Focussing on content only confuses what the real transformation is. The extremity of this position points to the same flaw in McLuhan's media analysis discussed above: the individual's ultimate control of his/her relationship with new technologies is a perplexing "given"' and therefore there is no acknowledgement of the social context of this relationship. To

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glean the insight from this overstated case is difficult; but, I
think it can be simplified to suggest that technological form
both determines content and, ultimately, the human use and
response to a cultural discourse.

Because of his stance as a technological apologist, McLuhan
fails to delve into the actual ideological import of technology
that accompanies these transformations. Not surprisingly, Lewis
Mumford has attempted to understand this full role of
technology. In a series of essays entitled *Art and Technics*,
Mumford explains the implications of the increasing separation
of the technical and artistic aspects of production.[26] The
strongest thread in his argument is the movement to technical
perfectionism which, as an end, stunts creativity:

> The very growth of mechanical facilities has given
> people the false ideal of technical perfectionism, so
> that unless they can compete with the products of the
> machine or with those whose professional training
> qualifies them for such a public appearance, they are
> all too ready to take a backseat.[27]

Mumford acknowledges that modern technics have served to
"democratize the image" and calls this "one of the universal
triumphs of the machine"[28] However, he also sees in the
transformation brought about by this over-emphasis on
machine-culture a division that counters this positive factor:

> We are rapidly dividing the world into two classes: a
> minority who act increasingly for the benefit of the
> reproductive process and a majority whose entire life is
> spent serving as the passive appreciators or willing
> victims of this reproductive life...[-] a second-hand
> world, a ghost world, in which everyone lives a
> second-hand and derivative life.[29]

The technological development of cultural form is analogous to

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our attitude to nature: we dominate nature by remaking and synthesizing it so that we are no longer dependent on its laws. Similarly in cultural form, the technological goal is to synthesize, above all else and as perfectly as possible, real cultural practice. Where technology as ideology leads us to replace the environment with something human-made, it also directs us to emphasize a parallel artifice of simulated living in our cultural realm. As Raymond Williams explains:

> More drama is watched in a week or weekend by the majority of viewers, than would have been watched in a year or in some cases a lifetime in any previous historical period... [D]ramatic simulation of a wide range of experience is an essential part of our modern cultural pattern. [30]

Greater parts of our life are lived through mediation. More value is placed on this technologically simulated world *because it is technologically simulated*. The expression that is often made after seeing a film or watching a television programme of "that was so real" will take on added significance when the movement from two-dimensional image creation is replaced by three dimensional productions.

In essence, by emphasizing technical perfectionism in cultural form, modern society is de-emphasizing the human element in the discourse. The concentration of energies on improving the synthetic nature of a form, serves to reduce the role of other elements. Technical perfectionism separates the objectivity of perfect synthesis from the inherent subjectivity of cultural discourse. Development or progress in cultural form comes to be defined by technological transformation rather than

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some illumination of the human condition or living culture.

Without examples, the role of technology in cultural form transformation is all too vague. However, in this review of literature on technology and culture, three main points which identify this role of technology can be isolated:

1) The facility of reproduction and extensive distribution determine mass participation in the new forms. This participation has helped foster both mass culture and the notion of mass society.

2) The determining nature of technological form over content and use is evident in the new technologies.

3) The ideology of technology - defined in this instance as the movement towards technical perfectionism - governs the development and change of (popular cultural) forms.

In the final section of this part on the transformation of form, I will utilize these identifications to help explicate the transformation of popular music into the televisual discourse.

The Televisual Transformation

Popular music's origins are, in terms of early cultural practice, an "inherent resource".[31] Like dance, its nascent development was through social relations which needed very little appropriation of material objects. Thus, the inherent resource quality of singing and dancing made these two forms, "in complex as in simple societies, the most widespread and

popular cultural practices". [32] The appropriation of non-human
materials transforms both the materials and the original social
relation into a cultural production infinitely more complex. [33]
Popular music, in recent decades has adopted and adapted
technological innovations to embellish its basic communication
system. A major reason for this development was the search for a
new identifiable signification. [34] For example, the desired
prominence of rhythm in popular music is one of the key and
determining factors in the development and modification of
musical technologies. Similarly, Les Paul's innovation of the
solid body electric guitar is exemplary of the search for
distinctiveness. More recently, the appropriation of the
synthesizer into popular music provides further evidence of the
close association between popular music discourse and technology
for meaning. Although the institutional component of popular
cultural forms will be dealt with later in this chapter, it can
be noted here that popular music was also dependent on the
machines of reproduction and distribution so that a mass
audience was involved in the cultural product.

Integrated into the adoption of new technologies into
recent popular music was the search for distinctive sounds, that
would differentiate the music from the style arising from either
Broadway or the classical or operatic traditions. [35]
Accompanying this move to separate from the customary sounds of
Western music, was the development of simplicity of execution.
As a form, rock and roll signified a break in the progression

towards specialization of function that dominated the music of
the big band era and that has ruled classical music since the
early nineteenth century. [36] Instead, popular music in its
current form, drew from the traditions of black rhythm and blues
to formulate a new musical genre. The attitude that playing rock
and roll - not just listening - was possible for anyone,
pervaded the music. Partially to emulate black rhythm and blues
combos, rock and roll bands reduced the number of performers
(usually to between four and six members), who often played
guitar, saxophone or the drums. The prominence of the beat
reduced the traditional western emphasis on melody. In a way,
the development of the distinctive sound of modern popular music
- that is, rock and roll - is in opposition to the recent
dominant musical traditions in the same way that the music came
to represent the opposition of parents and authority to youth. [37]
As well, with two notable exceptions[38], popular music's populist
simplicity has been made significantly more complex as the
emphasis of differentiation moved to variations of sound and
spectacle. The development of the concert spectacle, and the
utilization of more equipment and greater variety of both
instruments and production/engineering techniques has made
popular music a more technologically dependent cultural form.

However, there is an element of popular music that has
maintained its populist accessibility: the human voice. In
contrast to the operatic or classically trained singer, the
popular singer effuses individuality and unique emotion - once

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again, a direct cross-over from rhythm and blues. Where the trained voice attempts to achieve the technical perfection of an instrument, the popular vocalist reaches for expression of individuality and emotion. In classical singing there is an almost 'platonic conception of form' of the various specialized types of singers: baritones, altos, sopranoes, tenors all have difficult-to-master roles. A popular vocalist with his/her untrained voice is in comparison 'unprofessional'. Because of the sophistication and the need for perfection, classical singing is relatively inaccessible. Conversely, the very emphasis on individual styles and mannerisms in the popular music singing form promotes general accessibility to listening, appreciating, performing or composing. The vocals of popular music can be thought of as one way the form sustains a connection to living and real cultural interactions.

A second connection to living culture is sustained through audience's use of popular music. Drawing from McLuhan's logic, the reverse of the relationship between form and use is probably equally true: the uses made of popular music determine the complete cultural form. Popular music is received by its audience in a number of ways - but principally people hear music on the radio, from turntables, from cassette decks, and of course, now, on television. In other words, most of the music listened to is not live but recorded. The interaction with a form that isolates on one of the senses has led to the use of music to be associated with other activities. Dancing is one of

the most obvious, direct and important responses to recorded music, but it is not the only use. For example, people listen to music while driving cars. Others work to popular music. As described in chapter one, youth uses recorded music in social interactions to help define a unity of interest. It is apparent that the form of reception of popular music makes these seemingly disparate uses quite similar. For one, the form does not demand full sensory involvement and allows personal experiences to complete the meaning derived. Secondly, because of that potential for minor involvement or more engaging involvement, popular music is pervasive in leisure time; in some ways, it has become a major artificial environmental soundscape for our activities. Finally, popular music in this form maintains an obviously close connection to other elements of day-to-day, lived cultural practices.

With the introduction of the televisual form into the popular music discourse, a number of changes occur. In terms of form, there appears to be little difference between the mass audience fostered by television and the mass audience developed by popular music. The mass dissemination of television programming is roughly similar to the radio's music programming. A closer look reveals that television as a form is directed towards a much larger audience than radio. Unlike radio, television programming is dominated by centralized networks. In the particular case of videomusic, the principal showcases are cabled satellite superstations. Thus, identical programming is

beamed to all parts of a country. Radio's mass audience is segmented not only by taste cultures but by geographical constraints of radio signals. Videomusic programming in Canada and United States is national. So popular music has, through its move to the televisual, a more centralized method of dissemination of cultural product.[39] In the interface of videomusic, both the determining role of technological form on content and use, and the effect of a desire within these forms for technical perfectionism is evident. Because these two implications of technology on cultural form are so intertwined in videomusic, I will analyze their effect on the transformation concurrently.

From the perspective of the perfection of technological form, videomusic is an innovation which unites the senses of sight and sound. Records reproduce only the sound element of popular music. Video now provides the visual reproduction of the music that was lacking in the original product. The breakdown and recombining of audio and visual echoes the scientific method of the breakdown of nature into its abstracted constituent parts so that it can be synthesized by technology. Videomusic, in this sense, is an artifice of synchronicity; it epitomizes the movement to full sensory simulation. In terms of the ideology of technology, videomusic symbolizes the progress towards the perfection of cultural form.

However, the adaptation of the televisual is not as synchronous as the ideology of technology would lead one to

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believe. The medium of television operates on what can be termed the *reality principle*. Though television is a veritable " stream of images"[40], these images are "fundamentally familiar"[41]. It uses codes that are close to those by which we perceive reality".[42] As a result, there is a fairly rigid linear direction in almost every situation comedy, drama, variety or news programme. Sequences make sense in terms of a viewing of 'objective reality'. The very location of television as the centre-piece of domestic life also helps to foster the idea that what is presented is objective reality. Moreover, the entire history of broadcasting, which has defined the form's role in society as, above all, a service to the public and public interest, intensifies the operation and dependence of the form on the reality principle.

Popular music, on the other hand, is not nearly so dependent on the reality principle. The experiential element of popular music use, the poetic and thus non-linear construction of songs, the populist yet oppositional orientation of the form are all evidence of the incongruity of the two forms. In its adaptation to the televisual these incongruities and oppositions are translated into technological oppositions. What this means in terms of the content of videomusic is that an opposition is made within the technological form: videomusic, in terms of technique and style is in opposition to normal broadcast television. Thus, the styles of jump-cuts, rapid juxtaposition and time displacement in videomusic presentation come to

represent the differences in form between television with its reality principle and popular music with its oppositions. The visual transformation tends to defuse the elements of real and living cultural practice into the innovative techniques of videomusic. In a study of the television popular music programme, *Top of the Pops*, Fiske and Hartley come to a similar observation. The show broadcast on BBC attempted this same technological opposition in the 1970s:

> Electronic effects, colour distortion, odd camera angles, [are] sometimes to reinforce the significance of the dance, but sometimes to distinguish stylistically between this programme and the rest of television output, for this programme is aimed at the audience who uses television the least, and who will thus respond best to a programme that dissociates itself from the mainstream. [43]

Like these earlier television programmes, videomusic as a form contrasts itself by technique with the broadcast television to define the related youth market of popular music.

Finally, the actual use of popular music is also partly dismantled by the transformation of the form into the televisual. The experiential component is reduced because of the fuller sensory involvement of the television viewer over the popular music user. Television demands the involvement of both sight and sound, a level and intensity that is not necessarily required when listening to music on the radio. Watching television is a stationary and focussed activity; listening to popular music is again not necessarily a sessile activity. The relative passivity of the television audience invades the active element of popular music through videomusic. The close and

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almost definitional association between dance and popular music is made more distant through the televisual mediation.[44] Audiences use the visuals to understand the meaning of the music. Experiential meaning is downgraded as the 'correct interpretation' of the song is given. It is of little consequence that the video by its technological oppposition is meaningless. The form of television - its basis on the reality principle - creates the atmosphere that meaning is derived from the images. As a result, our use of popular music, now transformed into the televisual form, is usurped by our normal use of television. The double sensory involvement closes the former open conceptual circle around popular music; an injected meaning engages the user.

Part Two: Institutional Transformation

In Part One, the role of technology in the transformation of form was analyzed. To complete the analysis, this section will look at institutional changes that result from technological innovation in cultural forms. Once again, the study will be directed towards making some observations on the videomusic interface.

The role of institutions addresses the second element of the ideology of technology. Often determining the direction of change and the movement towards the adoption of technology are society's dominant institutions. In some way, change is seen as

advantageous for the maintenance or extension of these structures.

It is the common conception that technological change is some sort of revolution. There is the 'information revolution', the 'computer revolution', or the 'video revolution'. Revolution has the ingrained connotations of the social upheaval and societal transformation. Authors in the "pop sociology" tradition, like Toffler and McLuhan, find it useful to associate technological change with these notions of revolution. However, instead of a term that helps us understand the nature of technological change, revolution now only hides its true direction. Technological change often reinforces existing social relations. For example, computer technology may have changed the way information moves within and between corporations, but it has not brought about a change that would threaten the existence of the corporation as an entity. The adoption of this technology supports the present institutions of capitalism. To call the transformation a revolution is not only a misnomer; it is a rhetorical tool to legitimize through technology existing dominant structures of modern society.

Simon Frith offers a different view of technological innovation in cultural form. He suggests that new technologies create an instability within the cultural industry that allows for new creativity. Frith explains that:

> Innovation, in such an oligopolistic industry, is
> possible because technological changes *open gaps* in
> existing market control... [T]here is for a moment a
> burst of musical creativity [and] industry innovation.[45]

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Entrepreneurs and risk-takers enter the field as independents. In popular music, this process was characterized by the correlative emergence of independent record labels with 1950s' rock and roll.[46] Then, in an almost evolutionary fashion, the major recording corporations reasserted their control by buying these independents and producing a similar music for a larger commercial base. The gap eventually closed once again.

The size of the gap brought about by innovation is likely directly proportional to the sophistication and the related cost of implementing the new technology. Technology (here defined as the machines of production), by its complexity and expense, becomes increasingly the property of those who can afford the innovation. The greater the need for capital for development, implementation, and maintenance, the more critical the need for larger institutions to be fostering the innovation. Technology, in its most intricate and expensive form gravitates toward a symbiotic relationship with large institutions of government or commerce.

Videomusic is an example of technological innovation that provides the smallest of gaps to change the social relations of production. It is a marriage of two major institutions of the culture industries - the multi-national record companies and the corporation involved in cable and satellite television.[47] Thus to be innovative in the televisual form is also pursuing a method of exclusion of smaller independent record labels from participating actively in the innovation. The innovation may

change the use of popular music; but change in the level of control held by the major recording corporations does not accompany the reorientation.

The capacity for dominance is an important criteria in the appropriation of technologies by existing institutions. As noted in the discussion of cultural form transformation, it is evident that technology provides the means for either mass reproduction or mass dissemination. The fostering of these technologies is in the hands of existing institutions of government and business, and the impetus behind their pervasive implementation is an institutional desire to extend the sphere of influence. For governments the value of the technology of television is its ability to extend and reinforce the artifice of community and nationhood across the entire nation-state. For a capitalist enterprise, television provides the means for the extension of markets.

Harold Innis has explained that historically the appropriation and ascendency of certain technologies in a society led to an imbalance in favour of either the control of space or the control of time. For example, the medium of clay or stone tablets for writing indicated a bias for time and tradition; paper as a technology, because of the ease in transportation of messages, emphasizes a society's bias for space and territory.[18] Modern western society, by its elevation of broadcasting and mass reproduction, has the obvious bias for control over space. Capitalism, whether state-controlled or

working under the dubious title of free enterprise demands growth and expansion for increasing profits. Television, then, is a major agent in the breakdown of the community in favour of a mass culture of consumers and voters - it is the purveyor of a uniform culture propagating uniform needs.

Whether uniform mass culture is a reality beyond the institutional conception of its existence is certainly questionable. When looking at popular music, there seems to be ample evidence that the varied use of mass-produced cultural forms breaks down the hollowness of mass consumption. For the institutions of production, the notion of mass simplifies the process of needs satisfaction. Alan Swingewood describes the concept of "mass" in terms of an ideological support structure of post-industrial capitalism:

> The myth of the mass is as necessary a foundation for modern capitalist legitimacy as is the myth of universal, egalitarian and social integrative mass culture.[49]

Swingewood links mass society with the myth of liberalism and the equality of free enterprise system. He goes on to conclude that

> There is no mass culture or mass society; but there is an ideology of mass society which capitalism is dependent on perpetuating for the mode of production and the commodity relationship.[50]

Swingewood explains "mass" in terms of its utilitarian use for the hegemonic order of modern capitalism. Myth is the keyword in his analysis: it is a non-reality that is built into an ideology and a belief structure. In this case, myth is more

important than the day-to day realities of modern life, and therefore becomes impervious to attacks on its validity. This myth helps explain the impetus behind the technologically mediated cultural productions. It allows for an interpretation by those in control of the production process, that products, whatever their form, are competing for a mass audience of consumers. Maintaining the notion of mass culture reinforces a belief that the existing structures fulfill the needs of society. It supports a pluralistic notion: competition provides for a marketplace of ideas and objects which are chosen freely by the consuming public. Success is indicated by mass consumption.

Television is one of the main players in the perpetuation of the myth of the mass. The support for its cultural productions is entirely dependent on the programme's ability to attract a mass audience for the advertising of consumer products. The programmes are constrained by this close association with the commodity. Television programming reflects this pressure by embodying a commodity status into its form. Thus, Neilson ratings - an audience size measurement - become crucial to the survival of any show. The institution is driven to produce audiences which parallel particular advertised commodities. Ultimately, the show's value is overridden by its ability to foster the exchanges of goods and services.

By the adoption of the institution of television, the videomusic interface describes the movement to greater

commodification of its form. The very timing of the transformation is significant. As television tries to identify and define its audience into smaller segments of mass culture in order to produce effective sales results for their sponsors, the actual programme and commmercial content begin to converge. There is, in effect, a blurring of programme and commercial in this reach for market segment. The movement to blurring is reinforced by the statistical support of demographic psychographic profiles of a particular mass market segment which purchase certain products and views certain styles of entertainment. The concept of mass remains. What has changed is the strategy of specific targets for marketing of products. Videomusic programming is a consequence and a demonstration of this evolution of broadcasting to the specific market segment. One specific channel broadcasts round-the clock videos to the youth market. The products advertised are geared to the youth market segment. The videos themselves are also advertisements for various musical products. Thus, with videomusic, television fulfills complete blurring of programme and commercial; that is, the entire time is filled with the marketing of some commodity – the non-selling time of costly programming is eliminated.

It is clearly on the institutional level that mutual advantage is seen in the transformation. For the major recording companies it is increased exposure and promotion for their product. For the television programmers, videos provide a more precise definition of a particular market segment proven to be

popular by the continued existence of the popular music product. A whole programme geared to the selling of products is more directly in line with the marketing statistics and demographic studies that inform broadcast progamming decision-making than other vaguely identified entertainment programmes.

Finally, the institutional transformation of cultural form can distance the creative source from the final production. The structure of institutions dominant in material production extends into cultural production when the level and sophistication of technology require it. The division of labour, the hierarchy of organizations are integrated parts of cultural forms dependent on larger technological processes. There is a new collectivity not fostered from like interests, or even a community attitude to expression, but formed because of the demands of the technology and associated institution.

The new collectivity found in popular cultural forms has been analyzed from a sociological perspective by Raymond Williams.[51] His review of cultural production reveals that the corporate professional has permeated the creative process of technologically mediated cultural forms. Salaried creativity is now "dominant and even typical"[52]. "Modern forms", he contends, "are parts of the whole social and economic organization at its most general and pervasive".[53] In the television industry, the professional nature of writers, producers, and numerous technical support staff brings into some doubt who in fact is in control of the programme. In order to simplify this

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professionally associated creativity, the programmes' actors represent the entire production of the industry. Through the cult of the celebrity, the nature, intent and role of the institutions of the culture industries is obscured. The celebrity is identified as the creative source of the production. In their critique of the entertainment industry, Adorno and Horkheimer explain this obscuration of intention by making key distinctions between appearance and reality in cultural production. Although the productions of the culture industries appear to be pure entertainment, they functioned in reality as a support mechanism for the dominant ideology and structure of society.[54] While Adorno and Horkheimer were directing their thinking mainly to the study of the Hollywood movie industry of the 1930s and 40s, their analysis is even more potent when applied to our present dominant form of entertainment - television. Its closer association with the marketing and therefore the consumption of commodities, means that it needs to obfuscate its corporate nature more than the film industry. As an industry, television is one of the key mediators between modern production and consumption.

Following this logic, the current televisualization of popular music chronicles the deterioration of artist control of the form in favour of some more commercial purpose. As attention diverts to the visualization of the music, the band or artist no longer has the technical ability to direct the whole production. Video directors are hired to assume the responsibility for the

televisual component of the music. The abdication of control has two crucial effects on the control held by the artist:

1) It allows for the possibility of the injection of meaning and content into the visuals that are related to marketing and promotion.

2) It reduces the artist/band to the status of actors in the televisual presentation. Like t.v. and film actors they assume the duty of obscuring the promotional nature of the production and the positions of the professional who helped conceive and make the video.

Conclusion

In the above analysis, the role of technology in cultural forms has been separated into the implications on form and on institutions. In terms of form, technological innovation plays a role in the development of mass culture, it determines content and use, and finally it perpetuates a progression towards technical perfectionism of simulation. In the context of institutions, it can be seen as a method to both maintain and extend the control of existing structures by directing innovation towards larger technological transformations(thus fostering the notion of mass society). As well, by the integration of a larger technological process, the ability for a corporation mentality to be injected into a cultural form is dramatically increased. The interface of videomusic was shown to

be demonstrative of each of these elements resulting from technological transformation.

To provide a conclusive understanding, however, the analytical isolation between form and institution needs to be dissolved. This conclusion will reintegrate the indissoluble elements through videomusic. The institutional desire to extend the sphere of influence is manifested by the formalistic change towards televisual technology of popular music. A homogeneous marketing system is created by the utilization of television. Secondly, the videomusic form is also a transformation of content and use of popular music that permits the elevation of the goals of promotion and marketing to supersede many of the elements of the form that have previously made it distinctive. In harmony with the movement towards technical perfectionism, are the institutional desires of injecting a greater role of the commodity into the cultural form. Videomusic in its fuller simulation of music serves to separate the artist from the cultural product because a more elaborate and technical staff is needed for the completion of the endeavour. By altering the form through videomusic, the industry has effectively increased the level of commodification of popular music.

There is a strong argument to be made that popular music is already a form that epitomizes a high level of commodification. However, I think the present argument emphasizes that the ideology of technology can function as a support structure for the adaptation of cultural form to a greater level of

commodification. In other words, technological innovation can
integrate the opposition of a cultural form into the
institutional mainframe. The interface of videomusic articulates
the movement of a cultural form into another form that is the
centre-piece of our modern consumer society. Television, the
mediator of our system of production and consumption, now
services the popular music industry.

Footnotes

1. Interview with Art Graham, Head of Pop Product - CBS Records, Toronto, 7 September 1984.

2. Interview with Paul Orescan, Video promotions - A&M Records Canada, Toronto, 7 September 1984.

3. Langdon Winner, *Autonomous Technology: Technics-out-of-Control as a Theme in Political Thought*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1977), p. 8.

4. *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 1976, p. 1188.

5. Jacques Ellul, *Technological Society*, (New York: Vintage-Knopf, 1964), cited by Langdon Winner, *Autonomous Technology: Technics-out-of-Control as a Theme in Political Thought*, p. 9.

6. Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), Chs. 1 and 2.

7. The term ideology is loaded with connotations that would appear to only confuse the definition of technology further. However, ideology does identify a certain way of thinking that is an underlying characteristic of a society. Essentially, ideology is a belief system which tacitly approves a given order and structure. The silent approval of the great majority of the populous and the active support of the organizations of industry and government for technological change leads one to conclude that technological progress is one of the ideological support structures of modern western society.

8. Lewis Mumford, *Pentagon of Power*, (New York: Harcourt Brace and Jovanovich, 1970) p. 51.

9. Ibid., p. 68.

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10. Mumford defines technology: "[It] describes the field of the practical arts and the systematic study of their operations and products." He uses the word "technics" in a manner that is the closest to technology as ideology: "Technics [is] the field itself - that part of human activity wherein, by an energetic organization of the process of work, man controls and directs the forces of nature for his own purposes." Lewis Mumford, *Art and Technics*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), pp. 15-16.

11. Mumford, *Pentagon of Power*, p. 27.

12. Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*, p. 58.

13. Herbert Marcuse, "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology", *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, eds. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Continuum Publishing Co., 1982), pp. 138-139.

14. Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), p. 144-169.

15. Ibid., pp. 168 -169.

16. Raymond Williams , *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, (London: Fontana, 1974), pp. 14-25 - "Unlike all previous communications technologies, radio and television were systems primarily devised for transmission and reception as abstract processes with little or no definition of preceding content....the means of communication preceded the content." p. 25.

17. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Kohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), pp. 217 -251.

18. Ibid., p. 239.

19. Ibid., p. 232.

20. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), p. 248.

21. Ibid., p. 7.

22. Ibid., p. 57.

23. Ibid., p.90.

24. McLuhan, Ibid.

25. Ibid., p. 8.

26. Mumford, *Art and Technics*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953).

27. Ibid., pp. 6-7.

28. Ibid., p. 83.

29. Ibid., p. 97.

30. Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, p. 59.

31. Raymond Williams, *The Sociology of Culture* (New York: Schocken , 1982), p. 89.

32. Ibid., p. 89.

33. Ibid. p. 90. Williams' breakdown of the steps in material appropriation in cultural form is extremely valuable and informs my analysis of the material appropriation of technology in popular music.

34. Signification, a term derived from semiotic theory, is the process where material objects, images or expressions become signs. For example, the electric guitar as a musical instrument does not necessarily signify youth culture. But the sound and the image of the guitar have been appropriated by youth culture and society in general as symbols of both the music of youth and youth culture itself. Signification is the process where the signifier

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and the signified are linked to form a meaningful or
motivated sign. For further elaboration of the process of
signification see below, ch. 4, pp. 89-91.

35. Simon Frith, *Sound Effects*, Chapter 3.

36. "...[the] mimetic impulse with Beethoven becomes
     orchestral, thus escaping from the fetishism of a single
     element(voice or rhythm) ... To want to play Beethoven is
     to see oneself as the conductor of an orchestra" -Roland
     Barthes, *Image - Music - Text*,(New York: Hill and Wang,
     1977), p. 150.

37. See above ch. 1, pp. 7-8.

38. See above chapter 1, p. 8. The folk movement of the sixties
     and the punk movement of the late 70s are examples of the
     simplification of the technological form of popular music.

39. An indepth analysis of Muchmusic is found in Chapter 3.

40. John Fiske and John Hartley, *Reading Television* (New York:
     Methuen, 1978), p. 17.

41. Ibid., p.17

42. Ibid., p. 17.

43. Ibid., p. 140.

44. In a 1983 study of Vancouver suburban pubs that broadcast
     MTV, it was discovered that audiences seemed to prefer
     watching the video screens over watching a live band
     perform or dancing. P. David Marshall, "Videomusic: The
     Limits of Commodified Expression," Paper presented at the
     Canadian Communication Association Conference, Guelph,
     1983, p. 17.

45. Simon Frith, *Sound Effects*, pp. 89-90.

46. Ibid., See chapter 5, pp. 89-122.

47. Warner Communications, the owner of Music Television in the United States, is involved in the recording industry and the cable television industry. More will be said about this marriage in Chapter 3.

48. H. A. Innis, *Empire and Communication* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).

49. Alan Swingewood, *The Myth of Mass Culture*, (London: Macmillan & Co., 1979), p. 96.

50. Ibid., p. 119.

51. Raymond Williams, *Sociology of Culture*, pp. 49-56.

52. Ibid., p. 53.

53. Ibid., p 54.

54. T. Adorno and M. Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, (New York: Continuum, 1982), pp. 128-32.

III. Incorporation: Industry Realignment

The transformation of popular music into videomusic has effectively changed both the recording and the cable television industries. Essentially, the two media entities have developed a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship through videomusic. The new form has permitted a convergence of interests - between the industries - around the need for promotion and advertising. This chapter will study these changes within each industry that have resulted from the visual transformation of popular music. First of all, the recording industry will be analyzed to assess the level and importance of an *"advertising mentality"* in videomusic production. An advertising mentality is a fundamental corporate belief in the need for massive visual promotion for massive sales; in other words, because of this belief, advertising is fully integrated into modern strategies of production. Secondly, to elucidate the development of videomusic narrowcasting, an indepth discussion of the cable industry will be undertaken in the second part of the chapter. Finally, a case study of the format of Muchmusic - a twenty-four hour cabled videomusic station - will be detailed to understand the conventions, practices and techniques that make videomusic a promotional vehicle for both the cable industry and the recording industry.

Note On Method

Despite the dominant presence of videomusic, very little has been written directly on the industry realignment. While a great deal of attention has been given to the deleterious effects of videomusic - its violence and its ability to limit the audience's imagination - minimal research has been devoted to understanding the reasons for the development of videomusic. Accordingly, the principal technique that I have employed in this investigation is personal interviews with representatives of the recording companies, a director of videos, and key people involved in the programming of Muchmusic. Due to time and financial constraints, it was impossible for me to expand my interview base beyond Canada. However, both the headquarters of the Canadian recording industry and Muchmusic are located in Toronto. Most of the interviews took place there between September 1984 and January 1985. I concentrated on interviewing subjects who were directly responsible for the production and utilization of videomusic. As a survey of the industry, I realize the limitations of my investigation without the requisite international research component. Thus my research interview analysis can be construed only as an exploratory investigation. My conclusions, while addressing the nature of the international transformation, often only highlight the control and influence that the American and European based multinationals possess over the domestic popular music industry.

PART ONE: Incorporation of the Advertising Mentality

Advertising is a fundamental factor in the production of goods and services in modern society. Over forty years ago, Adorno and Horkheimer declared that advertising no longer had the simple task of informing members of society of products; it had become a tool to sustain the institutions of production.[1] To them, the sheer cost of advertising ensured that only the largest and most dominant could actively compete in the marketplace. This reality becomes even clearer in the late twentieth century.

The cost of production is being dwarfed by corporations' advertising budgets. In the marketing of new products, the massive role of advertising is most clearly seen. To launch a new product line, "sums of 50 million dollars in marketing support during the first two years are not unusual"[2]. Consequently, it is not surprising that large multinationals dominate the introduction of new products on the market.[3] Despite the massive amount of promotion, however, 80 per cent of additions to the marketplace fail.[4] Advertising - as a method - is not interpreted as the reason for the failure because the system of production continues to invest faithfully in its techniques of persuasion. Conversely, when a product does succeed, advertising is often perceived as the reason for the large sales. Although the reason for success or failure through

advertising is by far not fully understood, it is a reality of contemporary industry that advertising has been integrated completely into the production process from the very inception of any new product.

This integration can be understood in the context of the incorporation of an advertising mentality into the modern economy. Advertising is thought of as the support mechanism that sustains the modern mass production process by, first of all, informing a large public, and then by actively creating the desire for what has been produced in that consuming public.

It is the creation of desire - the second element of the advertising mechanism - that has become the primary method used in the selling of products. Basically, images and symbols are attached to products through commercials to enhance the good, and ultimately, to create a desire to consume. Because of this concentration in promotional strategies on the creation of desire, it is not surprising that Kline and Leiss, in a study of advertising, discovered that in advertisements there has been an historical increase in emphasis on images and a correlative decrease in emphasis on explicit information about a product's merits.[5] The images of advertising, they concluded, are intended to "resonate" [6] with the audience's "stored information", so that ads produce favourable consuming responses. Lifestyle beer commercials on television provide the best examples of the technique of resonance: the product is surrounded with images of cultural activities - people enjoying watersports or a barbecue,

for example - so that the audience makes a favourable association between the product and the cultural activities depicted.

The creation of desire, through advertising and image association, concentrates the effort in the production process on the selling of any good. Also, this concentration on promotion may confuse the public's identification of the product's need. The commercial symbolically simplifies the product's relationship to need and audience satisfaction. In any case, this corporate advertising mentality promotes an understanding of the production and consumption process that elevates the importance of image production of desire.

Advertising: The Primary Intention

By the adoption of the televisual, the recording industry appears to be integrating the production of promotional imagery into its cultural product. To see the level of incorporation of the advertising mentality in popular music, it is necessary to develop further the close association between advertisements and videomusic. Similar intention in producing videos and advertisements would provide a basis for comparative analysis.

Robert Quartly, the premiere video producer in Canada, suggested crucial links between video and promotion. He recognized that his company, Champagne Pictures was both a "production house of visual music and commercials".[7] Quartly

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stated the advertising origins of the cultural form:

> I would say it's[the video is] seen as a promotional
> item by the record company ... That is the purpose of it
> - to sell a song to sell the album so the money is
> generated.[8]

Kevin Godley, half of the top British video production team of

Godley and Creme, echoed Quartly's sentiments. He emphasized

that videos are essentially commercials that promote the artist

and the music. [9]

Paralleling these sentiments, record representatives from

most of the major labels that were interviewed underlined the

promotional and advertising intentions behind the investment

into videomusic. Paul Orescan, video coordinator for A&M Records

Canada recognized that,

> In a business sense, it's a mini-advertisement for the
> band. It enhances the band's image. It lets the fan or
> person who's never seen the artist before, watch, and
> maybe get turned on. [10]

Similarly, Sarah Norris of Capitol-EMI remarked that,

> With a commercial, we're selling a product; with a video
> we're selling a product. So, I don't see a difference.
> Sure, we try and gear it as an ad - in that direction -
> because we want to sell an artist.[11]

Generally, videomusic was seen by the industry representatives

as an advertisement that sold the artist and the music. They

recognized that the origins of the form were inseparable from

the marketing intentions of the record business. Art Graham,

head of Pop Product for CBS Records connected this market and

advertising intention of videomusic production to the desired

results of the industry:

Video has given us more exposure. More exposure means

potentially more record sales. Because you are getting
to more people. It's your two basic things in
advertising and that is reach and frequency: the more
people you get more often, you're going to have more
sales.[12]

There was a definite concurrence of opinion concerning the
advertising nature of the form between those hired by the
recording industry and the record industry representatives
themselves. Both treated videomusic as a promotional tool that
fulfilled the two goals of the advertising mechanism: informing
a large public by capturing its attention and creating a desire
for the products' consumption. The recording industry's desire
to fulfill these two goals of the advertising mechanism through
videomusic can be understood in terms of its efforts to

1) extend their markets, and

2) inject image, money and artistic merit into the musical
product to enhance its value. The following two sections will
discuss each of these strategic efforts. The final two sections
- "Videomusic - Commercial Homology" and the "Injection of
Meaning" - will identify the consequences of this industry focus
on advertising strategies.

The Extension of Markets

Significantly, all of the record industry representatives
interviewed expressed the view that video was an important tool
in the extension of markets. To Art Graham, videomusic
simplified national markets for the selling of albums. He

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thought videos made radio programmers respond to the success of any nationally televized video by focussing on the video single.[13] However, it was clear that the more important value of video was for the extension and control of international markets. Sarah Norris, national publicity manager for Capitol-EMI Canada, explained that the domestic label's A&R department was not set up "to sign Canadian bands for Canada. It was to be in touch with Canadian acts for possible worldwide sales". In a similar vein, the use of video was for this identical goal of extension:

> I mean you've got a market like Japan. What are the chances of our band getting to Japan? They're very slim. So you need a video for the market, so that these kids can relate to what they are hearing on the radio.[14]

Videomusic production was geared to replace expensive touring as a promotional strategy of the record companies. As a result, videos were used originally by bands and record companies for distribution to locations where the band was not likely to tour. Videos first surfaced at record distributor's conventions to convince these distributors unfamiliar with certain recording acts to carry a company's products. Simultaneously, countries like Australia came to rely on videos of American and British bands in lieu of their appearance. As a result, videomusic was central to the Australian popular music market well before it became important in North America.[15] The development of videomusic appears to be coordinated with the international marketing strategies of major multi-national recording labels. Michael Godin, V-P of the A&R department of

A&M Records Canada, expressed this international sentiment that pervades the entire industry:

> It's folly to think that something's going to happen in our own company - you've got to think on the global level. The population [in Canada], the numbers are so small.[16]

The development of videomusic has suited the multinational structure of the recording industry. With videomusic, promotion can be centrally coordinated for world-wide market penetration. The promotional goal of market extension is serviced by the videomusic innovation.

The Elevation of Purpose: The Injection of Art, Money and Image

On a basic level both the video directors and the record companies agree on the promotional and advertising purpose of video. But, as with other industries that have come to rely on product image advertising, popular music has come to attach a great deal of importance to its now dominant form of promotion. Moreover, videomusic is a full promotion of a cultural form; that is, an entire song is visually transformed into a promotional vehicle. Thus, the distinction between musical product and the video promotional form becomes quite blurred. The video, then, tends to be considered the more "complete" and "finished" product of the recording industry.

From the video director's perspective, the promotional form clearly is meant to go beyond its simple commercial intent and

become a basic component of the popular music aesthetic. Rob Quartly explained that his task was to conceptually visualize the song; in other words, he usually considered himself the "auteur" - the creative source - when a song was transformed into the visual. Further, Quartly considered that the techniques that he used in video production - juxtaposition, or time and space displacement - were means to both attract an audience and a means of interpreting a song on its emotive level:

> I think that emotion is probably a good word to use. When I listen to a song, I hear an emotion, I get a feeling. I don't feel as if I necessarily have to necessarily understand what is going on. And maybe videomusic has brought back to the forefront that you can actually watch and not necessarily understand it. Now as a filmmaker I try to think that - I very much try to put into my work - there is meaning and layers of meaning to be extrapolated if you want. If not, you can just sit there and watch it and enjoy it on just that level [the emotion of an image][17]

Quartly's strong sense of his role as auteur and visual translator of music is not atypical. Michael Shore's review of video directors found that most thought of themselves as the auteur. Indeed, 90% of directors had complete control of the conceptualization of the video with the artists serving as lip-synchers and actors.[18]

The record companies, the source of financial backing for almost all video productions, generally concur that the visual productions are more than promotion. Those interviewed all indicated the ability of the video to transcend the purely promotional and appear as a cultural product in its own right. Frequently, it was called by record representatives an "art

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form" in and of itself. Orescan saw videos directly working in this confusing realm of cultural product and promotion:

> I don't think videos are as aggressive as advertisements... I don't really see videos as selling anything. I see them more as enhancing - enhancing the artist or band. Really making more of a personal contact even though that's a funny word to use because there's no personal contact being made, but making it a little more personable. The fans get to *see* the artist.[19]

A second effect of the convergence of promotion and product is that the promotional element is becoming a bona fide product. The merit of video as a cultural form has begun to be marketed. Currently, Sony is manufacturing video 45s, which are two or three song selections of videos, for sale. In fact, the record industry seems to be planning with this progression in mind. Michael Godin foresaw this new product identification:

> Technologically speaking, I think it's going to happen. You won't just buy the record; you won't just by the cassette. Everything will be one format. You'll have the opportunity of audio and visual from one source.[20]

To some degree, this future scenario has already happened. Roughly twenty per cent of current video cassette sales are music related.[21] Also, most of the international recording companies have set up associated departments for video production, distribution, and sales. The best example of this trend was the formation by Capitol Records of Picture Music International - a production house that has begun to handle all the aspects of the visualization and marketing of videos as both promotion and product.[22]

A third result of the confusion between promotion and product is the reflexivity of videomusic on the original popular

music product. The very determination of what acts are signed by a major label is now virtually dependent on the ability of the artist to create a sellable video image. Art Graham described one of CBS' new "acquisitions", Platinum Blonde, as a "very 80s band" because their style was visually oriented. In fact, the video made for Platinum Blonde was modelled on English videos - even though the band was Canadian - so that the record could "tap into the new music" of England. Clearly, the record industry has incorporated the visual element into their screening criteria for financial success. As well, videos have been used to transform an artist to a new image and its related market. According to Sarah Norris, Capitol-EMI transformed its artist, Luba, from an original MOR market to a more "contemporary audience" by using appropriate visual cues for a more urban and artistic look. [23]

Videomusic is now well-entrenched into the formation of popular music. The separation of promotional video and musical product is becoming increasingly difficult. The confusion of product and promotion, the belief in the artistic transcendence of the form and the elevation of style and image into the musical product are all indicators of both the complete adoption of video and the confusion surrounding its use.

The Videomusic - Commercial Homology

The recording industry strategy behind the adoption of videomusic is not unlike the strategy employed by other companies through their use of commercials. For example, a study of advertising by Schudson found that the corporate practice of investing large sums into commercials was "a hedge against uncertainty".[24] The method to determine the amount to be spent is "essentially illogical"[25]. Producers thus advertise not because of any positive connotation "but because they are not sure it will not work"[26]. It is not surprising to discover that CBS' Art Graham made the same claim about the value of producing videos:

> The question is, is it[video production] worth the money we're spending..... Marketing is very difficult thing to measure. To say if we spend this much will we sell this many records. It's very hard to measure that. What I do know is that if we don't do anything, we're not going to sell as many records as if we did something[27]

Through the appropriation of video, the music industry has straddled itself to the same visual transformation of their musical product that numerous other industries have previously incorporated into their cost of production. The video, like the advertisement, is a "focal point of immense creative effort".[28] The cost of most videos is roughly equivalent to the cost of most commercials. The average cost per commercial is $50,000, but ranges from $20,000 to 1 million dollars.[29] In Canada, the average cost of a video is between $25,000 and $35,000. [30] The upper end of the cost of production has been established by Michael Jackson: the 13 minute "Thriller" video cost an estimated 1.2 million.[31] There is little doubt that video is

eclipsing the cost of record production and, as a result, must be considered crucial to the profitability of the recording industry.

Transformation: The Injection of Meaning

A key word in both video and commercial production is *transformation*. The commercial transforms a product into a representation of a 'living' and 'social' situation. The video transforms the music into a visual conceptualization of its contents; it brings the music to (a simulation of) life and movement. In both cases, there is an injection of meaning into the products promoted.

There are three principal consequences of this promotional/visual injection of meaning on the cultural form of popular music. First of all, there is a disguised loss of artistic control through the development of videomusic. By situating the recording artists prominently in these visual conceptualizations, the video directors accomplish the task of linking the visual production and encoding to the band/artist regardless of the band's level of involvement. The band is assumed to be responsible for its visual content. However, quite often this assumed involvement is lacking and the directors are responsible for the interpretation. Some artists have decried this abdication of control. Joe Jackson, realizing his limited input into his own videos, refuses to make any more.[32] But, for

most artists the point over control is left mute and the process of production remains hidden behind the image of the recording artist. Like the Hollywood movie industry, the means of production - with its technicians, writers and directors - is simplified into the cogent commodity of the celebrity.

Secondly, as discussed in the previous chapter, the visual injection of meaning also alters the use made of popular music. The audience interpretation of popular music becomes more focussed around the meaning of the visual production and less around its use. In this way, the close relationship established between popular music and its audience has been tampered with through this emphasis on visual promotion.

Finally, like commercials geared to different audiences, the promotional intention of videomusic highlight the references of the particular audience segment. Advertisers are attempting to effectively reach an audience group by taking the audience's symbols of meaning and incorporating them into the promoted product. Video directors are asked to accomplish a similar task of making direct visual references to an audience most likely to purchase the recorded product. Godin of A&M called the attempt to match their audience with the video a strategy "to reinforce" the musical product. Like an advertisement it must resonate with its audience. Art Graham explained the connection of video to audience as a strategy of "correlation", where the audience identifies closely with the image and style of videos.[33] Furthermore, when a cultural commodity is the object of the

promotion (i.e. the recorded music), that commodity itself is a defining characteristic of a particular audience group. The record is already working within the symbolic realm of cultural mediation. Thus videomusic attempts through interpretation to become self-referential to the general youth audience segment as well as trying to be part of the "reference system" itself. Underlying the marketing of popular music through videomusic is the knowledge that the video is a symbol/style selling a symbol/style. There is a hoped-for circularity in the promotional strategy.

Summary: Record Industry Realignment

It may be concluded from this comparative critique of videomusic with advertising that there are obvious similarities in intention. The transformation of recorded music to the televisual appears to suggest that an advertising mentality has been incorporated into the encoding procedure.

The incorporation of the advertising mentality into popular music through videomusic has resulted in several significant changes in the industry. Most significantly, there has been a reduction in the number of new signings by all the major record companies. The reason cited for the tightening of operations is the cost of video production.[34] According to David Chesney of CBS Records, the multi-national has reduced its total artist roster from about 375 to under 200 acts.[35] It is also relevant

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to the realignment of the industry that two of the world's major recording corporations attempted to merge in 1984.[36] There appears to be a major consolidation of the industry since the introduction of videos. The utilization of videomusic has generally thought to have been spurred on by a slump in sales for recorded music in the late seventies. The industry response was to integrate into their marketing a more aggressive, more pervasive form of promotion; quite simply, the principal recording companies were willing to invest more money into the techniques of persuasion and advertising. Videomusic can in this way be likened to the move of the film industry in the seventies to the concentration on blockbuster movies. Greater amounts are poured into fewer products. With popular music this technique was manifested in promotional clips for individual songs. The movement fundamentally reflects an advertising mentality gaining dominance in the industry.

Part Two: Dissemination: The Establishment of Music Television

The development of videomusic was as much dependent on the recording industry's strategies as it was on the goals and intentions of the television industry. Because this synergy of interest did not exist in the 1970s in North America, the role of video in popular music was relatively unimportant when compared to its integration into Australian and European industries. The difference in development is closely related to

the existence of showcases for the promotional product.

In Australia, a national network programme, *Countdown*, became dependent on videos of top international acts. In England, two top-rated shows, *The Kenny Everett Video Show* and *Top of the Pops*, also provided outlets for videomusic inserts. In North America however, videomusic was originally limited to non-national and non-prime-time exposure. In Toronto, a local *New Music* show played videosegments interspersed with artist interviews in 1978. About the same time *American Top-Ten*, a syndicated chart countdown programme utilized abbreviated videos to visually highlight current musical taste. Before 1981, there were only scattered outlets for the playing of videomusic. Videos, more associated with avant-garde visual artists, appeared in clubs in the late seventies and early eighties. However, the involvement of both the record and television industry in videomusic was minor because no real link in markets had been established.

The link was made by Music Television (MTV) in August 1981 when this twenty-four hour American satellite-to-cable video station came on air. The value to produce videos for the domestic market suddenly became real. Through this cabled entity, the recording industry had both the national reach and frequency it had developed previously with radio stations. MTV became the 'natural' home for videomusic.

The impetus behind this significant technological transformation, to a large degree, was orchestrated by the

corporate owners of MTV. Music Television was and continues to

be only a subsidiary of the entertainment conglomerate Warner

Communications Incorporated. Warner's properties and interests

have included a major film and television production company, a

manufacturer of videogames and other computer software and

hardware (Atari), a cosmetics business and both a baseball and

soccer team.[37] Two other major concerns of this industry giant

have been cable television and the recording industry. In 1983,

28 % of its revenues were derived from the music business. As

well, it has developed (along with its corporate partner

American Express) into the fifth largest cable company in the

United States.[38] MTV is a subsidary of this cable corporation

called Warner-Amex. The development of MTV cannot be separated

in any sense from the development of the American cable industry

and Warner's efforts to market and promote their specific

interests. Thus, the videomusic impetus can be comprehended in

terms of three corporate intentions:

(1) The selling and marketing of cable television.

(2) The desire to increase the market share of their subsidiary

recording labels - Wea Music International

(3) the effort to consolidate and vertically integrate the

entertainment conglomerate from production to distribution so

that it is coordinated with the new communication technologies

of cable and video.

MTV represented the means to achieve elements of all of these

goals.

In the marketing of cable television, there is a good deal
of evidence that, unlike Canada, the American industry has had
some difficulty in achieving market penetration. There was a
strong need to sell the distribution through the enticement of
specialized services or programme content which appealed to
specific audience segments. Not only was it necessary for cable
companies to be involved with distribution, but it became almost
a prerequisite of ownership that some sort of production
facilities were needed. In the case of Warner Communications,
their cable was marketed and promoted through the offering of
their own Movie Channel — a station which broadcast only
first-run films for a cable subscription fee. The ability of
cable companies to offer this type of programming/production
served to concentrate ownership among larger corporations who
possessed the facilities or resources to produce new channels.
Warner, with its size and extent of operations, was ideally
situated to both perpetuate and participate in this direction
towards consolidation.[39] The competition among cable companies
forced a further push for new alternative programming. With the
advent of VCR sales, movie channels no longer were strong enough
attractions to continue to enlist cable subscribers. It was at
this secondary juncture in the development of the American cable
industry that MTV was founded.

Within the television industry, audience demographic
studies have tended to show that network programming has a much
reduced share of audiences between the ages of 12 and 34.[40]

Other activities and other forms of entertainment - particularly popular music - have tended to usurp television watching time. That same age-group is also the audience that advertisers direct their messages to most often because this youth segment is a relatively new group of consumers. The youth demographic is at the very nexus of changes in market share; without ingrained habits of consumption, as a group they are most susceptible to the advertising message. As a consequence of this reality of mass network programming, Warner-Amex was aware that the method to expand its subscriber base was to somehow, through specialized programming, reclaim the youth audience by returning them to the status of television programme consumers. If normal television failed to make significant penetration, cable, with its possibility of multiple speciality channels, was in a position of fulfilling the need.

For the Warner-Amex partnership, this was translated into a direct infiltration of the form of entertainment dominant with the crucial youth audience segment - popular music. Forty-four million dollars was invested in the corporation into a generation centre and production facility. Because of this massive start-up cost, MTV lost money for its first three years. To create an attractive audience size and demographic for advertisers, it was imperative that the cable firm's strategy focussed on expanding its audience base. After its initial three years the strategy of extension can now be considered successful. MTV is presently carried by 25.8 million homes, a

number that is roughly 70 per cent of the cabled homes in the United States.[41] The demographic profile of the cable subscriber is also appealing to advertisers: overwhelmingly the profile is typified by either urban or suburban middle class members.

The bridge from the cable industry to the recording industry has also been a very attractive impetus for the parent company to encourage the development: in effect the bridge has created a cross-fertilization of two of their principal subsidiaries. Bob Pittman, vice-president of programming for MTV says it has been "designed to be a service to the music industry"[42] and that it has been formatted "to draw record-buying demographics, (the twelve to thirty-four year olds) that are "not served by extant cable service". [43] Not only have overall record sales for all major labels increased since the introduction of MTV, but Warner's share of that larger pool also increased by approximately 10% in the first year of MTV. [44]

The full integration of videomusic into popular music has been the result of a complex series of developments in the entertainment industry. Primarily, the changes have occurred in the methods of infiltration of cable into the homes of Americans. But, the essential point about videomusic that is highlighted in the development of MTV is that without the vested interest of a vertically integrated entertainment industry conglomerate, the innovation would not have been incorporated into the popular music form. The interconnectedness of Warner's interests has been crucial and seminal in the development of

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videomusic.

The Canadian Response: Muchmusic

The Canadian equivalent to MTV, Muchmusic, has been in essence an MTV derivative station. The similarities have far outweighed the differences: both have been broadcasting nationally, both have attempted to twenty-four stations, and both have geared their marketing and programming to the youth market segment of popular music. The fundamental similarity between the two stations is that Muchmusic, however varied its format is in comparison to its antecedent, was dependent on the American entity to define a realizable market. Before Muchmusic came on air in September 1984, local pubs and taverns across Canada with satellite dishes had been showing MTV for well over two years. The formulation of a Canadian equivalent already possessed the conceptual framework of what was successful in the North American market. When applications were submitted to the CRTC in 1983 for a music channel, the need, the form and the nature of music television were already determined. The CRTC decision to grant the licence to a major existing media corporation called Chum Limited of Toronto, indicated the acceptance of the a priori style. The decision was less based on the content of the new 24-hour cable station but more on its financial viability to present a parallel form which would replace and basically emulate MTV.

Chum was in the perfect position to assume this
responsibility. For decades, the company had been involved in
Top Forty and FM rock radio programming. Within Chum's corporate
orbe 15 radio stations operate. [45] Significantly, the
corporation had also acquired a local Toronto television
station, which had established itself as the channel that
appealed to the urban youth market segment. City-tv was a
deliberate effort to "narrowcast", that is to focus on a
specific market within a city and direct all programming to
maintaining that demographic: the appeal of a defined audience -
the principle of narrowcasting - was seen to be the attraction
to advertisers of products aimed at this target. To the
advertisers, the mass audience of network television meant that
though the overall numbers reached was large, the targeted
audience for their product was only a sector of that number.
Narrowcasting, through isolation on segments of the mass
audience, allowed advertisers to perfectly match their market
with television content.

The move into 24-hour music television was an elaboration
of this narrowcasting strategy. John Martin, director of Music
programming for Muchmusic explained the natural development of
greater coordination between marketing and programming in the
development of the Canadian music channel:

> [Muchmusic] is a narrowcast national service. We're
> going for a specific audience and we're getting a
> specific audience. And it makes a lot of sense in the
> climate of the world today. A major advertiser like Coca
> Cola can buy time on our service and he'd have to buy
> twenty times as much - or it would cost twenty times as

much - to get the penetration on normal broadcast
outlets as he would with us. He's getting right to the
people he wants to talk to.[46]

In the following section an analysis of the format, style
and flow of Muchmusic to explain the nature of narrowcasting and
the effect this development in television has on the
transformation of popular music into current televisual
discourse will be undertaken.

Narrowcasting: An Analysis of the Muchmusic Format

Muchmusic's headquarters and production studio is located
in Toronto. Through various cable companies throughout Canada
its satellite signal is transmitted to subscriber's homes.
Although the service is advertising-supported, in order to
receive the channel an extra fee on top of normal cable rates is
required. A converter is also needed to receive the signal. Each
day, it broadcasts six hours of television programming which are
repeated three times to create a twenty-four service. One live
broadcast, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST is transmitted daily.

To analyze the format of Muchmusic, I have surveyed four
consecutive days of broadcasting from February 11 to 14th.
Because of the repetition of programming, four days was seen to
be sufficient to identify one week of programming. Also, because
of repeat broadcasting, the ninety-six hours of programme was in
reality 24 hours of new programme time. Six hours of samples
were taped from the survey period to facilitate further study.
To ascertain the connection between programming strategy and

this study of format, an interview with the programming manager of the station was conducted in September, 1984 during the first week of regular Muchmusic broadcasts. The analysis presented has attempted to link the station's intentions to the findings of the survey.

The dominant format of the channel is videomusic. In the four days surveyed, promotional clips supplied by record companies provided over 95% of non-advertisement format. The remainder of the programmed time focussed on a short segment entitled *Rock News*, other transitional background pieces, and intros and extros from videos shown.

An overwhelming number of the videos shown were recent releases (87%) which paralleled record releases whether charted albums or singles. Between 65 and 75 videos are shown each day for a total of 286 over the four days. 13 of these were repeated each day of the survey; 7 were shown three of the four days; 44 were run twice. A criterion is built into the formatting determined by popularity and success. The Muchmusic response to this evidence is video repetition. Because the programme is repeated four times each day, the number of times the most heavily rotated video is broadcast in four days is 16. Finally, 117 videos were broadcast only one of the four days. This group of moderately rotated content can be divided into two groups: only if they are a recent release will they be repeated later in the week; the remainder will not be formatted to be seen again.

Primarily, the programming flows from one video to the next. The use of video hosts and studio production is utilized to maintain the concept of flow. After every two or three videos shown, the programme returns to the video host. Background information on artists just presented or, more often, about to be presented forms the basis of their transition pieces. Consistently, they will introduce upcoming videos in reverse order with the most popular video being the final of any given set. Here is an example of this technique to maintain flow: "So here is Bryan Adams' 'Somebody', but before that Nick Hayward and Roman Holliday...." (9:10, Wed. Feb. 13) Songs are not only identified by these introductions, they are also reinforced by visual graphics of the song, artist and record company name at the beginning and end of each video. These are superimposed over the video in the bottom left hand corner of the screen. This form of overt exposure is a clear acknowledgement that their video content is free. As John Martin explained, video programmers by necessity "work quite closely with the record companies".[47] To promote their product is an integrated and recognized function perceived by Muchmusic.[48]

Videos are grouped into sets based on various inconsistent criteria. If there is a similarity in title (i.e. all have the word 'Telephone' in the name), if all the artists are black or Canadian there is a possibility they may be grouped. The overriding criterion appears to be the sessions will tend to have different artists.

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Periodically, what can be weakly defined as special programming interrupts the basic flow criteria. Each day, for one half hour, a specific artist is highlighted with four consecutive videos shown in the *Muchmusic Spotlight*. Two weekly features also reorder the content. There is *The Power Hour* (heavy-metal videos) and the *Coca-Cola Countdown*. Despite the appearance that these are special programmes, they maintain the same style of programme flow which permeates the entire broadcast. There is no format breakdown. Indeed, the introductions to these shows tries to blend and blur differences in content.

The set of Muchmusic also serves a purpose in the organization of a promotional programming strategy. By reducing the production set to nil, Muchmusic has created a newsroom style of presentation. On camera are desks, telephones, people wandering behind the hosts, monitors, technicians and office workers. The message is one of immediacy, that Muchmusic is as contemporary as the music it plays. By outfitting the hosts in contemporary fashions the identical connotations of immediacy, urban and fast-paced lifestyle are conveyed.

The commercials broadcast on Muchmusic identify with the same ideas of contemporary style that are connoted in both the video productions and Muchmusic's studio transitional pieces. Only 22 types of products and services were advertised. Twenty-five per cent of those were promotional spots for Coca-cola. Another 17 percent were advertisements for youth

movies. The third largest sponsor was Molson Canadian. Other

products featured included jeans, milk, Chevrolet's Cavalier,

Cadbury's chocolate bars and Lifesavers. Almost all of the

commercials were based on popular music and its associated

videos. By tailoring their commercials to the Muchmusic format,

the difference between advertisement and video became somewhat

indiscernible. The overall programme flow was continuous,

uninterrupted by the eight minutes of commercials each hour.

It is quite evident that the formatting of Muchmusic is

based on FM radio strategies. The frequency of rotation has more

to do with insufficient funds to operate a full twenty-four hour

station. Thus, repetition of programme content tends to make the

format closest to a Top-Forty AM station. In radio programming,

the style of station whose format is based on videomusic

stations is called contemporary hit radio.[49] Following the

video lead, FM stations soon were emulating this same format of

concentrating on singles and hits.

John Martin made the correlation between Muchmusic and

radio programming quite directly. People have either station

turned on throughout the day:

> First of all, it's a flow service and people use it much
> like they use their radio. It's in stereo and it's
> available while you make your morning coffee, and at
> four o'clock in the morning if you still want to party.
> And people use it as an electronic fireplace and leave
> it on while people are around when they would not
> normally leave a tv set on.[50]

Although programme flow is distinctly drawn from radio, Martin

considered the segmentation of audience somewhat different than

radio. By necessity radio became heavily formatted. He noted that in Toronto,

> there are seventeen competing radio stations. And if they are going to keep an identity they have to narrow their playlist down to a particular appeal. We don't have to do that.[51]

Because of the need not to alienate an audience group, style segmentation is de-emphasized. Essentially this narrow-casted music station has been attempting to adopt to the realities of national television service. Its broadcast scope necessitates a generalization of its appeal. Martin therefore underlined that "what it comes down to is that we do a television show. And we pace for a television show rather than just play punk music 24 hours a day."[52]

Each week, playlists are published that indicate what level of rotation has been given to each video. The official criteria posited by Martin for selection is either "good" music or a "good" video. Whatever is meant by good music, it is clearly aimed at general popular musical taste and the associated market segment of youth: "although we're 95 % per cent a rock and roll/popular music service, we will also play the best of reggae and funk and country". High rotation is automatically given to established acts:

> If it's the Rolling Stones or Michael Jackson - it's quite likely - and it's a good video and song, it's quite likely it will go straight into high rotation. If it is somebody obscure that we've never heard of.... they have to work their way up to that level.[53]

Also, there are two directives from the CRTC which determine programme flow. No more than eight minutes of commercials are

permitted on this pay-tv channel. Secondly, by their own proposal, ten per cent of content must be Canadian. This amount is significantly lower than the thirty per cent content rules governing radio play.

The difference underscores one of the key alterations in the transformation of music from radio to television play. As John Martin mentioned, radio has been segmented into various taste-cultures. There is all news radio or easy listening or dinosaur rock stations: each format survives on individual and separate stations. Content of the various music stations is provided by record companies. Just by the very existence of these stations there is ample 'product/content' available to fill the often twenty-four hour daily formats. Not only do independent record productions play a more major role in producing the content of many of these segmented audience stations, they also provide one the key sources for Canadian content/product. A videomusic station, on the other hand, has a somewhat limited content-pool. Their product, the video-clips, is a derivative product of the recording industry. Radio plays the actual purchased product. Television plays a visualization of the purchased product: it is not the product itself. Thus, independent record labels, because of the cost of the visual production of music, are less likely to produce videos for their recording artists. As a result, the availability of broadcast quality videos of recorded music is restricted by a preliminary control mechanism *before* any criteria of programming and

rotation have been instigated by Muchmusic.

The control mechanism of cost works in the following manner:

(1) Independent record companies produce music for esoteric markets.

(2) Video production of music is not part of the product.

(3) A separation of video and product is made.

(4) Broadcast quality video production is expensive and entirely an "add-on" cost to original product; that is, it is defined as promotion.

(5) Radio plays the identical product - not a derivative product.

(6) Independents focus on record production, radio and other forms of promotion.

(7) Majors, in contrast, incorporate video into the production process.

This differentiation can be no more clearly articulated than in the development of Canadian content for Muchmusic. John Martin called the video production industry in Canada "a little fragile now - it's just beginning". What has been established to increase the Canadian video content is a corporation - Videofact - which is funded by 2.4 % per cent of the gross earnings of Muchmusic. Videofact is a company that gives grants to artists to produce videos of their music. By the normal economic process, the above seven-stage process normally occurs. It is only through a grant procedure that videos are made in Canada by

independent record labels. In the survey period 3 Videofact products were shown, an amount that was approximately 20 % of the Canadian videos in rotation.[54]

Major record labels naturally (economies of production) have dominated the station's content. 82 % of videos shown in rotation were products of the five largest recording labels. The largest two, CBS and WEA, controlled 50 % of the Muchmusic video content. The distribution system of these larger companies matches the mass dissemination of a satellite television station. With videomusic, the marketing of new product can work on a national campaign for national sales. Simultaneously, the video acts as a new method of determining airplay and playlists for the numerous local AM and FM radio stations across the country. John Martin explained the transformation into national audience for Canadian bands in the context of the American acceptance of British music on MTV: "I mean basically, if Duran Duran can break in the Mid-West in America with a good video then if a band can't break nationally here, then there's something wrong".[55]

The symmetry of audience target and size between the major record companies and Muchmusic makes videomusic a more natural symbiotic relationship than the past connection with radio. It may be confusing to use the word "natural", but the term in this sense defines the close association of goals and objectives of the producers and disseminators. Both demand markets that extend beyond the community into the vague but lucrative realm of mass

consumption. At this stage, both are naturally dependent on a national market. One subtle difference between these two groups, but by no means a destructive difference, is the foreign ownership of all the principle record companies and the domestically controlled national satellite service. The connection facilitates a simple promotional network for international acts by providing a wide market instantaneously.[56]

Finally, the limitations on content are dictated by one more major factor that relates to the differentiation delineated in the seven-stage process between product and promotion. Videos are rarely released as album videos. Usually, they are made from singles as mentioned above. It is only after the video has been successful in promoting album sales that a second video is made. In terms of content restriction, Muchmusic can only play the song that a video was made, even though there may be ten other songs on the album worthy of airplay. Unlike an FM station, Muchmusic (or MTV) must be content with playing hit singles in conjunction with the delivery of each individual video from the record company. This control mechanism is one more preliminary criteria for the selection of videos for any programme or station. Promotional strategy is focussed by the transformation to the visual.

The governing strategy for the dissemination of music television is the maintenance of programme flow. A consistency of content that is loosely based on a defined demographic appears to be the principle behind the national narrowcasting of

television. The content in this case is composed primarily of videos and commercials, two forms that have converged stylistically in the envelopement of the popular cultural form in the advertising mentality. The rapid sequences of images found in commercials and videos is peculiarly suited to the current directions in television formatting and cable television. A recent study discovered that increasingly audiences, because of the prevalence of remote controls, change channels frequently when either commercials are on or programmes lag. Music television, by its style and the length of individual videoclips deters this practice. Martin explained in an interview that,

> One of the nice things about our service is that
> everything lasts about three and a half minutes. So, if
> you don't like what you're looking at you can hang in
> for just three and a half minutes and more than likely
> there will be something there that you do.[57]

Because the audience is held, the service is more attractive to advertisers. With its specific appeal to the youth market segment, the advertising value of music television is dramatically increased.

The synergy between the recording industry and the television industry is created by their parallel needs to promote, to market themselves and their products. Videomusic is the vehicle which has served its two converging industries well.

Footnotes

1. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pp. 162-163.

2. Tony Thompson, "Against all the Odds", *Report on Business Magazine*, April, 1985. p. 74.

3. Ibid., p. 75.

4. Ibid., p. 74.

5. Stephen, Kline and William Leiss, "Advertising, Needs and Commodity Fetishism," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, Vol. 2 No. 1 (1978), p. 18.

6. The term "resonance", used by Kline and Leiss, is derived from Tony Schwartz, *The Responsive Chord*, (New York: Anchor, 1974).

7. Interview with Robert Quartly, President - Champagne Pictures Ltd., Toronto, Ontario, 9 September 1984.

8. Ibid.

9. Muchmusic. "Special Interview with Godley and Creme", June 21, 1985.

10. Interview with Paul Orescan, Video Coordinator, A&M Records Canada, Toronto, Ontario, 7 September 1984.

11. Interview with Sarah Norris, National Publicity Manager Capitol-EMI Canada, 22 January 1985.

12. Interview with Art Graham, Head of Pop Product - CBS Records Canada, Toronto, Ontario, 7 September 1984.

13. Art Graham

14. Sarah Norris interview

15. Michael Shore, *The Rolling Stone Book of Rock Video*, (New York: Rolling Stone Press, 1984), pp. 68.

16. Interview with Michael Godin, V-P Promotions, A&M Records Canada, Toronto, Ontario, 20 January 1985.

17. Quartly interview

18. Michael Shore, pp. 154 - 166.

19. Paul Orescan interview - Emphasis added.

20. Michael Godin Interview.

21. This trend towards video becoming a product in itself can be identified in Aljean Haremtz, "Coming soon to a video cassette near you," *Globe and Mail*, Aug. 31, 1984, p. E3 and Alan Hecht, "Consumer Guide to Rock Video," *Record*, June 1985, pp. 35-39. Also see Mark Mehler, "Musicvideo 1984: The Bulls and the Bears," *Record*, Nov. 1983, pp. 38-39.

22. Sarah Norris Interview.

23. Sarah Norris Interview. Luba had gained recognition with a Middle of the Road song and needed to reorient herself in the next song to a wider audience base. The result was a fashion and style oriented video called "Let It Go".

24. M. Schudson, "Advertising as Capitalist Realism," University of Chicago, mimeo, 1980, p. 20, cited by Sut Jhally, "The Codes of Advertising: Fetishism and the Context of Meaning in Modern Society" (Phd. dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 1984) p. 46.

25. Ibid., p. 44.

26. Ibid.

27. Art Graham interview.

28. Sut Jhally, p. 191.

29. R. Kaatz, *Cable and the Advertiser's Guide to the New Electronic Media* (Chicago: Crain, 1982), cited by Jhally, p. 192.

30. Robert Quartly interview.

31. For further information on elaborate expense and effort that goes into commercial production see Michael Arlen, *Thirty Seconds*, (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1980).

32. *Rolling Stone*, Aug. 30, 1984. p. 32.

33. Art Graham interview, p. 15.

34. *Variety*, February 15, 1985 p. 1.

35. Interview with David Chesney, CBS Records Canada, Vancouver representative May 1985.

36. William Dawkins, "Music Industry Faces Far-reaching Changes," *Globe and Mail*, Feb. 20,1984, p. IB4. Throughout 1984, Wea and Polygram, the second and third largest recording companies in the world, worked towards a merger. Although the deal was approved in Europe, the concerted opposition of the FTC in the United States led to the abandonment of the proposal. It was also reported that CBS, the world's largest label, was also looking for a merging partner. MCA, another major corporation, was interested in merging with either Polygram or CBS. For further elaboration see also Laura Lando, "Plans for Warner Communications Merger dropped," *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 7, 1984, p. 3.

37. *Moody's Industrial Manual*, Vol. 2, Moody's Investor's Service Inc. New York, 1983.

38. *Fortune*, July 27, 1981. p. 40.

39. See "The New Colussus of Communications," *Marketing and Media Decisions*, Oct. 1981, pp. 72-73.

40. "Things Upbeat at MTV", *Advertising Age*, Sept. 14, 1981, p. 71.

41. *Broadcasting*, April 8, 1985, p.10; and May 13, 1985, p. 11 - 44% of U.S. homes are serviced by cable.

42. Arnold S. Wolfe, "Rock on Cable: On MTV," *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 9 No. 1 (1983): 42.

43. Ibid., p. 43.

44. "Chart Action Survey", *Billboard*, Dec. 26, 1981.

45. *Financial Post Corporation Service* (Toronto: Maclean-Hunter, 1984).

46. Interview with John Martin, Director of Programming -Muchmusic, Toronto, 4-5 September 1984.

47. John Martin Interview.

48. Ibid.

49. Richard Gold, "Format Changes for Album Radio," *Variety Weekly*, June 15, 1983, p. 1; also *Broadcasting*, Aug. 29, 1983, p. 73.

50. John Martin interview.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Under 12 % of videos presented were by Canadian artists. 10
    % of records sold in Canada are by Canadian artists - Liam
    Lacey, "Ottawa is urged to give assistance to music
    industry," *Globe and Mail*, June 29, 1984, p. E6.

55. John Martin Interview.

56. Conversely, domestic acts, developed by major record
    companies through video exposure, can gear their interests
    towards international sales in a much more concrete and
    pervasive fashion than without this emphasis on promotion.

57. John Martin interview.

IV. The Production of Visual Meaning: Decoding the Transformation

The preceding two chapters have identified the framework that has been placed around popular music through the incorporation of the televisual. The constraints of the technological form and institution of television have produced a style of innovation which is primarily focussed on the promotional intent of cultural production. To complete the study, this chapter will survey the actual content of videomusic production to determine how this emphasis on marketing is reflected in the visual transformation of popular music. The investigation to follow will explore the consequences and strategies of marketing and promotion within the new form.

To understand the entire field of videomusic content is problematical. Even with a cursory view of the productions, there appears to be no sense, no dominant themes(other than music) which would provide evidence for generalization. The images are varied - when narratives are presented they are often based on diverse concerns. Frequently videos make no effort in formulating a meaning and thereby are a source of frustration for any interpretation.

Nevertheless, some studies have been able to make comprehensive statements about the content. Most of these have conducted quantitative content analysis. The results have

indicated that videomusic presents an inordinate amount of violence and in particular violence of all forms against women.[1] However, quantitative analysis, with its emphasis on numerical content is an inadequate technique for the present study because it does not attempt to uncover the intent behind the production of meaning. With videos presenting a confusing array of images that often appear unrelated, the quantitative content analysis can only identify the images and cannot be used to understand their significance or meaning in the promotional context of production. To relate the context to the content of meaning production, an analysis that utilizes the semiotic concept of connotation has been chosen. If images of violence and sexist stereotyping are dominant in the form, this method of review not only helps identify this reality, but, more importantly, facilitates an understanding of the reasons why it has developed. The next section will briefly introduce semiotics and how the derived concept of connotation can elucidate the understanding of the videomusic interface.

Connotation as Analytical Tool: A Semiotic Perspective

> I think that the definition of a "theory of the lie"
> should be taken as a pretty comprehensive program for
> general semiotics... [It is] the discipline studying
> everything which can be used in order to lie...[-]
> *significantly* substituting something for something else.
>   Umberto Eco [2]

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Semiotics is a study of representation through signs. Signs
are always composed of two elements: the signifier and the
signified. In reality, these two components are inseparable; the
sign is only divided for the purposes of analysis. For example,
a road sign indicating a curve in the road can be divided into:
the *signifier* - the physical sign and all its material
characteristics; and

the *signified* - the sign message that there is a curve in the
road.

It is the role of the reader "to add a mode of signification or
relation between the two" elements of signifier and signified.[3]

This simple relationship between signifier and signified
describes the first level of signification which is called
denotation. However, most signs also operate on a second-level
of signification called *connotation*, where the signified becomes
the signifier. Thus, another signified is read into the original
sign. In the example above, the signified 'there is a curve in
the road' is the signifier for the interpretation that one
should "drive with caution". To summarize, 'a curve in the road'
is *denoted*, and from that, "drive with caution" is *connoted*.[4]

Further distinctions need to be made between denotation and
connotation. Signs that attempt to operate entirely on the
denotative level of signification are basically technical,
logical or scientific codes. They are strongly identified.
Symbols of mathematics or chemistry are used explicitly and
specifically to identify certain phenomena. Other levels of

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meaning are extraneous to the discourse. In contrast, signs that operate in the realm of cultural discourse are mediated to a greater degree by a more subjective understanding of social significance: that is, they operate on the connotative level.[5] The meaning is "motivated" in a manner not derived "from the sign itself, but from the way society uses and values both the signifier and signified".[6]

The importance of semiotic theory for social analysis resides in the notion of connotation. This element of the theory has been successfully applied to the critique of advertising. The connotative level of signification is actively played upon in the advertising message. Associations are made between disparate goods and activities through the images of advertising. Recently, Judith Williamson has elaborated on the approach. By concentrating on the connotative message encoded, she explicated the "basic equation of all advertising: it establishes an identity between two social 'products' which originally belonged to different orders of social life but have become exchangeable through their co-partnership in signification - people and things."[7]

With videomusic closely affiliated with advertisements, the same analytical focus on connotative meanings in video productions can lead to an understanding of this popular cultural form. The non-sense can become sensible and comprehensible through a similar semiotic application.

To begin with, the general intent of videomusic production is to reach a symmetry of connotations between the youth audience segment and the actual videos. In the same way that advertisers have appropriated the women's movement for the marketing of cigarettes,[8] the producers of videos have appropriated youth culture to sell recorded music. Stuart Hall's work on the symmetry of message transfer in television provides the necessary background for understanding the reason for the connotational content of videomusic.

Hall raised the possibility that oppositional readings of television programmes are entirely possible. In other words, some segments of an audience would derive connotations from the content that were not part of the intended message of the programme.[9] In fact, the interpretation could be diametrically opposed to the intention of the programme. The development of videomusic content tends to indicate that the ideas of asymmetrical message transfer and oppositional readings have been identified and incorporated into the production and marketing strategy. By isolating and focussing on a specific market segment, the televisual discourse of videomusic maintains a high degree of message symmetry and thus eliminates much of the potential oppositional readings. The encoders of videomusic, that is, the record representatives and the video producers, attempt to read youth culture for the appropriate visual cues. The videos reflect this conscious effort to match the audience's connotative interpretation.

What is undertaken below is an analysis of sample videos that uses the semiotic concept of connotation to identify the incorporation of the commodity relationship and marketing through visualization into popular music. For indepth analysis, samples were chosen from the February 11 to 14, 1985 survey of Muchmusic (utilized in the previous chapter), from a review of content of a field of 181 unique video clips. The criteria for selection was that each sample represented some common and recurring feature found in videomusic. I am aware of the subjectivity of my selection procedure. But, the limitations of one viewer are outweighed by the comprehensive and expedient value of one viewer. Working with a basic semiotic approach means extending the particular to expand to the general. In the analysis below, it may be said that the move to the general is informed by a larger initial sample (181), which is in itself informed by a year's sampling of video content prior to the present survey.

Sample Analysis

Note on Format:

The video samples are grouped into separate case studies which identify the various encoding intentions in meaning production. The first sample of each case study is analyzed fully. Further samples, unless they represent something

stylistically unique, are generally summarized to substantiate the first example.

The analysis of the principal representative videos is divided into four sub-sections. The first, the "General Structure", briefly describes the style of the video as performance, conceptual, dramatic, narrative, linear or non-linear. The second, the "Opening visual sequence", attempts to describe scene by scene the action of the visuals. The symbol / indicates a scene change or "cut". The use of the semi-colon ; means that the text is an elaboration of the same scene. The third subsection, called "Synopsis" tries to summarize the remaining visual text. These two sections, the "Opening visual sequence" and the "Synopsis", can be thought of as describing the denotative level of meaning of the video. The fourth subsection, the "Analysis", concentrates on the connotative meaning level encoded into the production. It attempts to connect the visuals to the encoded purpose.

The sample analysis will conclude with a study of general themes found in videomusic, that seem to transcend the case by case technique of investigation.

Case One: Cultural Symbolic Transfer

Sample A: Billy Ocean, "Loverboy", Quality Records
General Structure: "Loverboy" is a concept video which is a clip

that works within a linear dramatic format. The example
resembles an abbreviated film and can be analyzed on one level
as a narrative.

Opening Visual Sequence - Greenish pyramid moves
towards(graphic) /A backgound of moving stars appears/
foregrounded by images of graphic rings of fire/ A line of pink
light appears/ fades to a planet(graphic icon) on a spiral
towards the camera/ Pink "laser" light hits the planet's
surface/ An explosion of light on the surface signals the end of
opening sequence. (changes in visual images in this sequence are
punctuated by a synthesized beat and surrounded by synthesizer
phrases)

Part two: Dramatic sequence - Aerial view (distant) of a
redcaped horse and Rider with peaked red cape galloping along
beach shoreline; brilliant blue sky/ Close-up of rider; it is
clear he is not human but humanoid/(Vocals begin) Rider
dismounts on the beach by a cave mouth and enters the cave/
Rider enters cave; we see cave through his eyes/Cave becomes a
dark bar filled odd creatures milling about/ Several cuts to
various examples of these creatures/ A close-up of the Rider
indicates his lizard-like features/ Barman is an automaton/ A
helmetted spaceman passes.

Chorus sequence - Break of scene to green pyramid which through
a rotation becomes the image of the singer Billy Ocean singing
the words of the song; he is singing with intense facial
expression/ Brief return to bar scene/ Back to leather-jacketted

Billy Ocean singing/ Image of Singer distorts, reduces and transforms into greenish pyramid/ pyramid becomes a small decoration in the bar scene....

Synopsis:

The visuals continue to juxtapose these three sequences outlined above: the narrative action dominates but is interspersed with occasional sequences of Billy Ocean performing or visual graphics focussed on planets or the pyramid. The narrative follows a simple story line:

The Rider sees a woman-like creature who is sitting with another other-worldly monster. The drama is now set. The object of the Rider's desire is the woman. He snarls and challenges her companion. The Rider shoots her companion and grabs the protesting woman. He takes her out of the cave. They mount his horse - the woman is no longer protesting. The closing sequence mirrors the opening dramatic sequence with the pair on horseback galloping along the beach's edge.

Analysis:

First, the three visual elements are somehow integrated into one structure. The graphic visuals - particularly the pyramid - work as a bridge between the dramatic action sequences and the singer and his song. It is through the interspersion throughout the story of the singer that we connect the visuals to the artist. An obvious link is made in the opening visual sequence. The image of the ocean is meant to connote the artist's name, Billy *Ocean*. Thus the hero of the drama

represents the artist; the visual meaning of the concept video
is attached to the song. Secondly, the dramatic visuals are
highlighting two fragments of the song's lyrics - the possessive
obsession and the intensity of his love - that are repeated
several times:

> Can't stand the thought of you
> With somebody else,
> Gotta have your love,
> Gotta have it all to myself--[10]

These two derived ideas are translated into a visual drama that
has simplified the poetic discourse into an almost
incomprehensible melodrama. Although the action does follow a
narrative structure, it does not seem to cover the meaning of
the song. What appears entirely incomprehensible is why the
setting was chosen.

Yet as an advertisement, the visual style suddenly makes a
great deal of sense. There are two levels of meaning in
operation when one is decoding videomusic or advertisements. The
denotative level has been outlined in the description above. The
visual images signify the meaning of the story. The connotative
level works on a more associational level. The signs of the
denotative level become signifiers in themselves. What is
signified at the connotative level in Billy Ocean's video is the
intergalactic barroom scene found in the original *Star Wars*
film. Through this replication of filmic images, the video
attempts to establish an appeal to an audience that finds the
space fantasy film genre engaging. The visual marketers of Billy
Ocean, who is a black artist, are attempting to expand the

potential market from his black audience base into a wider sphere. The strategy involves a positive symbolic linkage to a large youth demographic and a de-emphasis on the black artist to ensure its playability on the national video stations that cater to this larger audience. One cultural commodity's symbols and its connotations – in this case, the space fantasy film – are being *injected* into the Billy Ocean cultural production. The symbolic appropriation is determined by the previous market success of the space fantasy film genre.

Sample B: The Dazz Band, "Let it all Blow", Quality Records

General Structure: "Let it all Blow" is a collage video. There is no linear structure, only rapidly changing images.

Opening visual sequence: Football field; mid-air pass completion/ Seamobiles traverse lake/ Baseball player hits ball in major league game/ Soccer goal scored/ Ice hockey body check/ Successful base run/ soccer kick/ Man dives from platform/ Male gymnast on pommel horse/ Two points scored in basketball/ Time clock at basketball game spells "D-A-Z-Z"/ Basketball cheerleader dances/ fingers playing keyboard/ One man's head moves to music's beat/ eight men (7 black, one white) snap their fingers as they advance towards the viewer/ windsurfer splashes over wave...

Synopsis: Changes of scenes are abrupt. The visual montage continually moves from sport to sport. All are action shots. Further scene examples include parachute jumping, a cyclist

spinning out, the start of a marathon race, a surfer under a wave, a hang glider falling, a women's wrestling match and dirt-bikers traversing sand dunes. Each cut lasts no more than 2 or 3 seconds with the average scene length less than a second (0.8 seconds). The changes are coordinated with the synthesized rhythm of the music. Periodically, scenes depicting the Dazz band dancing or playing their instruments are shown for equally brief moments.

Analysis:

Where Billy Ocean's video transfers fantasy film images, the Dazz band's production attempts to inject the excitement of sport into its synthesized dance music. Except for the interludes that feature the band dancing or singing to the music, the entire video is constructed from archival sport film footage.

The technique of rapid editting, where the visuals jump from one exhilarating sporting moment to another, is often used as a promotional tool for sports television programming. In those situations, popular music is appropriated as the soundtrack that gives the continuity to the sports advertisement montage. The relationship between the visuals and music is arbitrary.

Similarly, the relationship of the music to the visuals in the "Let it all Blow" video is equally tenuous. The connection is entirely established by the visual editting of the sequences in coordination with the beat. The visual content of sports is

quite arbitrary. Thus, the visual use of sports 'moments' in the production is to attach a visual symbolic memory and meaning to a musical style. The connotative interpretation of the musical product transferred from the visual reading is 'excitement'.

It is worthy of note that the use of cultural symbolic transfer through video production is a technique used by black artists to achieve access to the dominant white culture. Herbie Hancock's "Rockit" video represents the origins of this marketing technique where evidence of blackness is downplayed in the visual reproduction of the music. The black artist hardly appears in these videos.

Case Two: Performance As Successful Mediator

Sample A: Bryan Adams, "Somebody", A&M Records
General Structure: "Somebody" is entirely a performance video. The whole clip is a film of a concert rendition of the song. Opening visual Sequence - Drummer with headphones/Guitarist playing/ shot of microphone head/Bryan Adams pulling away from microphone/ Crowd scene; arms in air; all standing; crowded around stage/ Reverse shot of Bryan approaching front of stage;both microphone and crowd in background/Front on shot - Brian sings into microphone; white t-shirt, old jeans, guitar slung over shoulder/Bryan struts right side shot; his foot hitting stage floor/Shot of front view of crowd from behind drummer with Bryan foregrounded/(End of first chorus)Bryan

twirls/image repeated in slow motion.

Synopsis: The change of scenes is orchestrated around the end of each line of lyrics and the beat of the music. Changes and cuts are made frequently. The video continues with only slight visual variations from those described above. The closing sequence shows Bryan being pulled into the audience by its members.

Analysis:

Dividing the video, "Somebody", into its two levels of meaning uncovers the functional approach of the production and a strategy that demonstrates a well-entrenched marketing mentality. On the denotative level, the video works on a variation of the reality principle. Through the technology of television, we are permitted to see Bryan Adams in concert. It is live and current. The crowd is reacting to the music and we are observers of an event.

The video also depends on a decoding that is aware of the images normally associated with rock concerts. The success depicted in the video, where the audience is moved by the performance, is an attempt to stimulate a "resonance"[11] with a social experience. The aroused excitement of the youthful audience reminds the viewer of actual concert events. The crowd depicted in the video is developed into an element in the marketing of Bryan Adams' music and personality. They *represent* the viewer enjoying the music, or more accurately how the video viewer would enjoy a Bryan Adams concert and music if he/she were a participant. Viewers connote a specific taste-culture

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through the members of the crowd. Their style, their youth, their music, all become part of the advertisement. The video then through its re-presentation attempts to foster emulative behaviour: positive connotations of the 'style' of Bryan Adams and his fans will foster record sales. The video appropriates the social use of music and makes it an image of success and value.

Related Sample: Autograph, "Turn Up the Radio", WEA Records

The video by 'Autograph', while being another example of a band promoting itself through the visualization of performance, provides an obvious contrast in the marketing of artist and music. In this example, the concert appears to be manufactured. The hall and the setting are controlled. The images of the audience are used to indicate the desirability of the band members and their music: there is a predominance of young blonde women. The men in the crowd appear equally contrived for their visual impact. Most are barechested bodybuilders who keep their fists raised throughout the video. The style of music - that is, heavy metal - has generated a parallel visual music genre. The visual style of heavy metal must emphasize the concert setting, and actual playing and performing. There needs to be evidence of sweaty performers, leather apparel, guitar playing, large speakers and a concert audience filled with raised, clenched fists. The producers of the "Turn up the Radio" video have skilfully crafted these elements into a simulated concert experience. To maintain the heavy metal audience, they must

instil the impression of a real heavy-metal concert.

Case Three: Movie Tie-In: The Double Promotion

Sample A: Madonna, "Crazy for You",

General Structure: The visuals are drawn from a full-length
movie. They are editted down to a series of approximately four
second scenes (3.6 seconds). The style can be described as
impressionistic continuity, that is, the video is neither
narrative nor non-linear in structure, but simply provides an
impression that there is a progression.

Opening visual sequence - Dawn over river; pans back to full
panorama of young man (silhouette) running over a bridge/
(singing begins) Madonna sings in dark red-neon lit pub/ young
man doing push-ups in bedroom/ Madonna singing (same as above);
Slow-motion of young man skipping rope; the lighting is only on
him - the background is completely dark/ Madonna swaying and
singing/ Young woman standing by lockers/ Reverse shot of young
man tying shoes as he turns to look at woman/ Madonna singing/
Young man and woman walking (at night) by a lighted car-lot; he
runs in front of her and gestures/ Madonna singing into
microphone/ Woman in doorway holding a coffee cup at side/ Young
man sleeping on pillow/ Woman smiling and laughing/ Young man
turns to see/ Madonna singing....

Synopsis: The structure of the video is to gradually bring the
young man and woman together. Increasingly, scenes with the man

and woman holding hands, kissing, or lying together become the content of the drama. Almost every other scene in this development is a shot of Madonna singing the song. The closing sequences bring the relationship of the young man and woman into the context of the song and Madonna: the couple slowdance on a dance floor while Madonna continues to sing.

Analysis:

Simultaneously, two products are being promoted through the "Crazy for You" video: the musical product and the movie product. The heavy-handed alternation between the film sequences and the popular music star - Madonna - singing, underline the technique of double promotion.

The connection between Madonna and the film is not established solely within the content of the video. Rather, the interpretation of the impressionistic visuals is reliant on an *informed* audience. For one, the popularity of Madonna - her value as celebrity - is known by the youth audience. Because of that connotation, the presence of Madonna in the video signifies the idea of youth audience movie. Secondly, the audience is aware of the connections between the video and the film. Radio, television and newspapers, both in the form of articles/features and advertisements, provide the necessary background to deepen the codes of the video to the level of familiarity. The video represents a more gentle form of marketing. Its intent is to expand the connotations and impressions of the film beyond the focus of the commercials. The emphasis in the commercials was

centred around youthful lust for an older woman; the video complements the promotion by emphasizing that the film content also deals with successful romantic love.

But, there is a required incompleteness in the video. The content of the romance is sketchily portrayed. By giving only an impressionistic outline, the video functions in a manner similar to the advertisement - a tantalizing excerpt to create the desire in the audience to complete the story by going to see the film.

Related Samples:

In the period surveyed, seven videos could be classified as movie promotions. Most followed the general structure described above by interspersing the recording artists' renditions of the music with rapid and frequent edits of the movie. One example, Toto's 'Theme from Dune' was composed entirely of sequences from the film. The repeated imagery of violent explosions and battle scenes dominated its content. The Pointer Sisters' "Neutron Dance", which is part of the "Beverly Hills Cop" movie soundtrack, was a concept video where the action revolved around a theatre that was exhibiting the film. Once again, the cross-over connotations among song, artist and film were being pursued in the video production.

Case Four: Iconic representation

Sample A: Gary O., "Shades of 45", RCA Records

General Structure: "Shades of 45" is a concept video that

however non-linear it appears to be, the video does develop a coherence around a visual message.

Opening Visual Sequence - Antique clock face/ Second-hand of clock moving - one second at a time/ face of clock flashes the name 'Enola Gay'/ visual pan of a model of an old airplane(bomber?)/ Singer's fingers drum on table top/ Singer - in leather bomber jacket sings into camera/ Picture of model airplane with bars of light and darkness passing over it/ Two women, hair and clothes in the style of the 1940s, walk by; one wears a hat with a decoration that looks like an aircraft destroyer/ Singer sings into camera/ Women are startled by red warning light of plane/ Gary O' continues singing....

Synopsis: The singer narrates the visual text even though there is no direct correlation. Images of an injured soldier, a woman clutching a child closer to her, a child playing the role of a drummer, a woman who looks like Greta Garbo are flashed periodically. Other than the singer, the other recurring image is the model airplane. The closing sequence focusses in on decorated veterans marching into a hall where Gary O' is playing The backgound is decorated with the Union Jack, the tri-colour national flag of France, and a camouflage net. Candles surround the stage.

Analysis:

With very little time to convey the message of war and war's end, the video tends to focus on recognizable codes of the the second World War experience. The blood-soaked bandaged head

of an injured soldier represents the tragedy of war. The model plane represents Enola Gay, the bomber that carried the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima. The images are coordinated with the beat of the music; each image appears in the form of a flash that signifies the explosion of a bomb. Finally, with veterans marching into a hall, the connotations of World War Two with the youth audience are assured.

Because of the style of presentation of videos, the messages are conveyed through icons.[12] The resemblance to reality is not the most important criteria; instead what is emphasized in videos are images that represent what is believed to be real. Icons are then representations based on representations. The videomusic icon simplifies meaning down to the basic and common level of understanding. Thus, what is highlighted are the most blatant features of any object or thought.

In an effort to build videos on easily identifiable codes, the encoders (the video producers) have structured their images around the images of film and television. The representations of war in "Shades of 45" draw heavily on the established icons of the cinema and television news. To make any statement in the video form, the image utilized must be commonly known - an element of the popular consciousness that is derived from the modern media.

Related Samples:

The reduction of images to iconic representation facilitates the ability of videos to tell an apparently complex story within three minutes. In the analyzed sample, a video by REO Speedwagon, "I Can't Fight this Feeling", reduces the life story of a man, from birth to old-age, into its readily recognizable codes: Childhood is represented by a teddy bear, adolescence by images of girls, young adulthood by marriage, middle age by home and children, and old age by solitude. Rickie Lee Jones' video, "The Real End", attempts to signify the trappings and temptations of the material lifestyle through her spurning, in rapid succession, a row of household appliances, sports cars and men. In both of these examples, the videos are dependent on the derivation of meaning from overt referent systems.

Case Five: Completion of Desire - Woman as Object

Sample A: Malcolm McLaren, "Madame Butterfly",
General Structure: This is a concept video. No band is shown; there is also no lip-synching. What is created is a visual mood. The whole video is filmed in a Turkish steam bath.
Opening Visual Sequence - Thick white mist; faint image of a woman walking by; she is wearing a beige cloth bathing suit; A second woman with the same attire walks by; mist thickens/ A third woman - also in a bathing suit - walks slowly and sits

down; another behind her does the same; a third lies down; another finds a place (all are in the same style of bathing suits)...

Synopsis: The parade of sitting, reclining or walking women continues. All the women bear the same expressionless, emotionless visage; their eyes look far away. Movement is slow, controlled or non-existent. A middle sequence breaks the lack of movement: one woman gives a second naked woman a full back rub complete with foamed soap. The video concludes with a final parade: each woman rises from her bed, wraps a sheet around herself and walks away from the camera down a steam-filled hall.

Analysis:

Malcolm McLaren's video "Madame Butterfly" identifies a visual technique that is used in a large number of videos sampled. Women are on display as a means of engaging the viewer. They are reduced to the status of objects, limited by the construction of the video to non-action. In "Madame Butterfly", the woman's role is to enhance the music merely by their visual presence. Thus, the image of woman is transformed into a technique of appeal that is no different than the other video techniques of fast-editing, juxtaposition and time-displacement. All are methods to sustain the viewer's attention.

Because of the lack of movement, the "Madame Butterfly" video resembles a painting in structure and style. The audience is permitted lengthy views of the various repeated scenes. In this way, the video production is attempting to reach for an

"aesthetic", not normally associated with popular music, but often sought in painting and sculpture. Evidently, the video has drawn directly on a tradition in western art, identified by John Berger, in which women are depicted as objects for lengthy, perusal and observation. Moreover, according to Berger, the depiction of women in art is a representation of the dominant patriarchal structure of western society. Berger discovered that modern advertisements, especially in their representation of women, emulate and perpetuate this existing dominant/subordinate - male/female social relationship. [13] Although "artfully" disguised, Malcolm McLaren's video exemplifies this continuing reduction and subordination of women in cultural production.

Case Six: Intervention and Fulfillment of Cultural Interaction
Sample A: Flash and the Pan, "Midnight Man", CBS Records.
General Structure: Once again this is a concept video. The difference in this case is the more significant intrusion of the music and the artist on the action presented.
Opening Visual Sequence - (because of extensive use of juxtaposition, the opening scenes are imagistic)
Dark wet road/ Light of train speeds over a footpath/ picture of clock/Street lamp - white light/ Flash of young people dancing at disco - one beat/ woman's buckled shoes treading on dark wet road/ Flash of disco scene/(Vocals begin) Silhouette of man singing words of song - only a band of light across his mouth/ Woman's legs climbing stairs(exact match with lyrics)/Face of

woman at apartment door; dyed red hair; fashionable; urban/walks into apartment -lit by street lamp; she's wearing only one sock; turns on light switch in kitchen/ cut to phone and note board/looks in refrigerator(exact match to lyrics)/ Woman appears distracted(chorus begins)/ walks to see what it is/ Door handle is shaking violently/ opens door - green light beams in/ Woman's eyes and mouth open wider - breathing harder[close-up]/slams door/Grabs chair and jams under door knob...

Synopsis: The woman tries to sleep but cannot. She is disturbed and restless... A large white gloved hand opens her door and pushes and pokes her into getting dressed into a particularly revealing dress and style. Flashes of the disco scene are interjected to demonstrate some relationship between this 'Helping Hand' and the inevitable return of the woman to the nightclub. She returns to the disco nightclub and a man eyes her from across the room. The man, wearing a tuxedo and appearing older and sophisticated approaches her table. He leans over and lights her cigarette. The woman now sees that he is wearing a white glove. This image of his gloved hand on her shoulder is repeated. The closing sequence: the man begins walking down the dark wet alley; moments later the woman runs after him and accompanies him out of sight. Throughout the video a repeated image of the singer's mouth singing intervenes in the action. Also some visual graphic lines are used to interconnect scenes.

Analysis:

The video is characterized by intervention. The strong use of juxtapositon is one way to establish a feeling of external influence or control in the visuals. Even more significant authoritarian techniques are the use of three 'actors' who perform intervening roles in the video: the large white hand pokes and prods at the heroine; the lipsynching mouth identifies her every action; the tuxedo-dressed man becomes the "Helping Hand", the "Midnight Man" who she runs to for aid. The visuals work as a reinforcement of the interventionist spirit of the lyrics and haunting sounds of the music.

Several visual codes are identifiable in the video. The urban setting, the English look to the streets and the apartment, the dyed hair and the fashion of dress of the heroine, and the "look" at the nightclub all play a role in identifying a musical genre through visuals. The lack of emphasis on band members and the contrasting emphasis on a disco scene where no band is playing tend to indicate how the music is supposed to be used and perceived. The emphasis is clearly on dance music. Therefore the principal product is the record and there is little effort on marketing the band as a corollary cultural commodity.

The most telling sign of the video's purpose is the close connection made between each line of lyrical text and each scene of visual action. By using the frame of the lyrics as the frame of the visuals, the use of the music tends to be circumscribed by the visuals. The culmination of action and resolution

occurring at the disco directs our thinking in an authoritative manner. With purpose we are moved to the perceived use of their music. 'Midnight Man' not only identifies an emulative visual style for its audience, it also appears to be a self-conscious product of video style. In other words, 'Midnight Man' shows a production cognizant of the need to associate their musical style with a video style; hence the requisite close correlation of words and visuals. The artist's lyrical composition appears to have incorporated video marketing as a necessarily integral level of meaning in their cultural product.

Related Sample: David Bowie, "Let's Dance",

Unlike "Midnight Man", Bowie's "Let's Dance" lyrics bear little resemblance to the content of its video. Red shoes represent the only substantial link between the words of the song and the video. But, similar to sample above, the visuals are a significant intrusion on the audience interpretation of the music. Through the video, Bowie has created a second and deeper meaning level for the song. While the lyrics concentrate on the simple theme of dancing and romantic love, the video injects the concepts of racial oppression and destruction into the meaning. The principal characters are two Australian aborigines who, in the beginning accept the materialism of Western culture, but then ultimately reject western culture's intimated false happiness.

Bowie has successfully created two songs out of one. By double connotations, he has given the musical product more

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impact. The video, in this case, by expanding the meaning of the music deepens the significance of the product for its audience.

Case Seven: Authenticity - The Unmediated Message

Sample A: R.E.M., "South Central Rain", IRS Records

General Structure: With no conceptual pieces, "South Central Rain" is a performance video. The performance is in the confines of a sound studio. No audience is present.

Opening Visual sequence - Spotlight silhouette on two singers; formed by white backdrop screens behind each artist/ Silhouette of guitarist, foregrounded by silhouette of microphone/ Close-up of singer (singing begins); hand over headphones; eyes closed/ full view of two silhouetted guitarists/ gradual close-up on singer/ camera moves from mid-distance front-view to right-side view of singer/ left side-view of singer/ Silhouette of drummer/ close-up front view of singer and microphone/....

Synopsis: The video continues with the same pans, close-ups, and angle changes. Instead of an abrupt cut between scenes, the technique of fading in the new scene is used throughout.

Analysis:

Several techniques of production are utilized in the video to connote the concept of alternative style. The predominant use of fading in contrast to jump-cuts and juxtaposition, signifies the separation of this music from other forms of videomusic. The entire video was filmed in black and white. Again, its opposition to the flash, colour and brilliance of the normal

flow of videomusic programming indicates the music's uniqueness and seriousness. By their introspective appearance (for example, the closed eyes of the lead singer), the artists maintain the interpretive code of importance. The visual message is that the aural message is paramount.

It may seem that this video has failed to incorporate the televisual into its expression; quite the contrary is true. This sparse video style is dependent on the existence of other videos with extravagant imagery. The video is part of the discourse - a visual reply that emphasizes the importance of the music over the visuals. In this way, the encoded connotative message is an appeal to an audience segment who are equally serious about their music, and wish to downgrade the relevance of visual injection. To maintain its audience, it must sustain the connotations of visual opposition. The overall connotation encoded is that because there is no technical wizardry, the music is authentic.

Sample B: John Fogerty, "Old Man Down the Road", WEA Records

General Structure: Although directed towards a different form of connotation than most other examples, "Old Man Down the Road" is primarily a concept video. It should be added that the visual sequence has no cuts and is therefore a continuous filming of incidents.

Opening Visual Sequence - (note: the camera is always moving forward over the scenes presented) Swamp and mist; leafless tree

branches; camera is at or near ground level; crocodile opens mouth; scene follows the creek; end of creek, there is a fire and smoke; through the vines and smoke to a man sitting down; he is unshaven - Mexican looking, large brimmed hat; smiles into camera; stands up; removes blanket from seat to reveal an amplifier and red cord (singing begins); camera leaves man and follows red plastic cord through branches, brambles, and underbrush to the edge of a road; boy in wooden hot rod is being pushed by younger sister down the road; the sun is low in the sky(morning); camera follows cord across road to grass; women's shoes; a picnic basket; a checquered table cloth; woman and man are reclining and having a picnic; cord goes between the man's legs and then through the legs of a man dressed in black (end of first verse)....

Synopsis: The visuals continue to trace the cord from its origins to its final destination. It passes through a limousine, and passes by a pick-up truck, a cheerleader and two motorcyclists. Other images include a barefoot pregnant woman hanging up her washing, an old man in a rocking chair on a porch, and a grave being dug. The video concludes with the cord returning to the road and being connected to a guitar played by the man dressed in black. This is the artist, John Fogerty, who lip-synchs the final words of the chorus.

Analysis:

With no apparent editing, "Old Man Down the Road" establishes a certain authenticity in production. The camera

simply follows the cord. What the cord traces is a linear narrative of birth to death, from the origins in the swamp to the old man and the grave. It is the technique, which appears as uninterrupted camera flow, that connotes the same authenticity that a documentary film attempts to capture. The visual images reinforce the connotation of authentic music. They depict simple, straightforward, apparently unmediated incidents in American life. Thus, John Fogerty is being visually promoted as an artist who represents a reaffirmation of American folk music. The camera angle - which is always close to the ground - connotes the return to musical roots. John Fogerty, an artist popular a generation ago, visually represents the power of past American rock music and its current relevance and vitality.

Related Samples:

Authenticity as visual message is translated into several videos shown during the sample period. Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the USA" concentrates on the artist's performance, with only occasional cutaways to documentary-style scenes of the United States. Julian Lennon's two videos, "Valotte" and "Too Late for Goodbyes", are stylistically reduced to simple performances in empty studios: the intention is to convey the sincerity and unaffected nature of the artist. Midnight Oil's "Power and the Passion" along with the Smiths' "How Soon is Now" are examples of visual anti-technique: to convey the same connotation of serious lyrical and musical message, both deliberately use grainy and lined film footage to underline the visual mediation.

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Case Eight: Inclusion and Expansion

Sample A: Dan Hartman, "Second Nature", MCA Records.

General Structure: "Second Nature" is a concept video that makes the artist and his music directly related to the dramatic sequence.

Opening Sequence: A pick-up truck advances/ Woman is in foreground picking up purse/ Front on view of woman/ Grill of truck approaching/ Woman stands moves head quickly; mouth open/ Second truck appears full of melons/ Man in truck turns wheel to avoid collision/ Black woman on pay-phone; her eyes get bigger/ Truck careens -melons fall out of the side of the truck/ Close-up of melons/ Sidewalk shot two women clutching themselves/ Punkers point and run to accident/ Melon truck driver gets out / More people run to scene....

Synopsis:

A melon truck driver is distracted by a pretty woman bending over to pick up her purse. Melons are strewn all over the street as he tries to avoid another truck. A street scene develops. The singer/artist is looking down on the scene from his apartment window. He comes down. there is general chaos and arguments. A wide array of on-lookers watch and talk: punkers, an older black woman, fat men, fat women. The street is totally blocked with people melons and trucks. A school bus arrives with football players, cheerleaders and a marching band. More mayhem. Dan Hartman sings his way around the scene until people begin to join in through dancing and singing. Arguments become settled.

Hugging replaces bickering.

Analysis:

"Second Nature" comes the closest of any videos sampled to operate in the reference code of television commercials. The immediate connotative meaning of the visuals is based on a recognition of a style of commercials I shall describe as *"panorama Americana"*. The most obvious examples of this form are Coke and Pepsi advertisements. Coke tries to focus its visuals around the phrases:

> Got the look, that gets the look, Lookin' good and
> feeling number one........ Coca-cola! Coke is it!

Pepsi's slogans are even more blatant:

> We're the pepsi generation....
> Look who's drinking pepsi now!.

The visual montage of these commercials is focussed on providing scenes of life and lifestyle which are mediated through use of the product. Through scene juxtaposition, the feeling of inclusion and emulation are built to a crescendo and climax. Similarly, 'Second Nature' is based on providing a panorama of people relating to the music. Its climax of juxtaposition is reached when all the people come to enjoy the mayhem through the musical experience. Gradually, people are converted to dancing , singing, clapping hands or watching Dan Hartman perform. The song mediates the social interaction, much the same way as the soft drink becomes involved in a social event. To understand Hartman's video, we must be well versed in the decoding of panorama commercials. The song's value is visually interpreted

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as its *inherent* popularity. All types of people seem to enjoy
the music.

Related Sample: Tears for Fears, "Shout", Polygram Records.
This video parallels the above connotation of expansion and
inclusion. The visuals begin by showing each of the two
vocalists singing by themselves while overlooking coastal
cliffs. Eventually, they continue singing by the water's edge -
this time together. By the third verse, the scene has changed to
a sound studio. People of all ages have congregated around the
band. The small crowd joins in on the chorus. Once again, the
visual message is the universality of the musical message. The
video invites participation.

General Themes

Three themes pervade the videomusic form. This short
addendum to the sample survey is an attempt to identify and
explain their near universality in the context of the encoder's
purposes.

A. Modernity

The theme of modernity is expressed in a wide variety of
ways in the content of videos. Some videos depict the decadence
and decay of the inner-city. A great number emphasize the most
current styles of hair and clothing. Often the humour found in
videos is internal and for decoding depends on a contemporary

knowledge of the form and popular culture in general. But, probably the most common method of representing the newness of the product is through filmic technique. Innovations in both mainstream and avant-garde film-making are implemented in videomusic production. From the mainstream, we see an incorporation of computer-generated graphics and images into the content. From the avant-garde, the repeated use of surreal imagery and non-linear and non-narrative format are appropriated.

The emphasis on innovation in technique and content in the production of videomusic is motivated by three factors. First, it is simply a means of attracting an audience. If the unique style and the rapidly changing images capture the attention of the viewer, they have accomplished their purpose. Secondly, because the market segment that is being sought in the productions is the youth audience, it is thought that an emphasis on current and new style will be favourably received. Finally, it is the nature of the popular music production process to continually replace past products with current products. Videos as promotional tools highlight the current value of products to help foster the notions of continual change and improvement.

B. Introspection

Although some videos present narratives where the point-of-view is external and objective, the majority of videos

connote some introspective perspective on external reality. In other words, dream sequences, nightmares, memories dominate the internal structure of videos.

It appears that the introspective point-of-view is the theme that video producers(in a collective sense) feel best expresses the musical product. The task of visualizing music - even within the promotional confines of the form - has led to a relatively new genre of expression.[14] The non-narrative structure is a visual translation of the poetic nature of musical lyrics and the emotive connotation of the rhythm and the music. The encoders are grappling with representing something that is often visually indefinable. The solution to the problem is to move into the second-order interpretation so that the visuals are less linked to real perception and are more closely linked to the less defined imagery of dreams, fantasies and nightmares.

C. Cult of the Celebrity

The theme of the celebrity is ever-present in the production of videomusic. As a result, the recording artist is featured prominently in most videos. The intent is to inject depth into the personality by making the artist more interesting, more humourous, or more enigmatic. The images are often formulated from past pop icons: the James Dean outsider, the Marilyn Monroe sex goddess, the Bowie enigmatic androgyny, and the starving, tortured artist, all have been used

extensively to formulate new images for the same purpose. It can be concluded that the development of a visual personality simultaneously assists the marketing of the musical product and the definition of the celebrity commodity into a marketable form.

Conclusion

The sample study of videomusic has been a conscious effort to understand the visual content within the context of the intentions of the encoders. Video producers formulate their content with two overriding concerns. Imbedded in each production is the promotional nature of the form: the video must try to enhance the musical product to either increase sales or maintain a share of the market. Secondly, the producers are cognizant of the need for the product to achieve mass dissemination: not only is the goal to gain airplay, but also to achieve a high level of watched repetition viewing of the video on the programme.

Each "Case" in the study exemplifies a particular technique to achieve these two goals. In a general sense, videos work on the connotative interpretation of the musical product by the audience. The video producers are interpreting both the meaning of the music and the relationship that can be visually created to favourably link the music to its youth audience/market.

In some videos, the intention results in the reduction of people and ideas to iconic representations. Visual symbols become the key elements of the commodity exchange process. To that end, women are often denigrated to the point of becoming mere marketing tools. The icon of 'woman as object' is used in Case One - the "Loverboy" video. Although set in another world, it is the *woman* who is most identifiable as *female*. While the males revel in their grotesqueness and individuality, the female remains a stereotype, unable - for the meaning of the video - to break the cultural code of objectified female. The stereotype is not borne in advertising or in video; however, by the rapid staccato presentation of images, it is made into a stronger stereotype.

The marketing intention in meaning production also explains the value to the recording industry of providing a visual interpretation of the musical product. To establish an interpretation as an authentic interpretation can be construed as an effort to secure a market. As the video "Midnight Man" emphasized (although any of the videos analyzed could substituted for this idea of injection), the video can direct the viewer in a focussed way. In a market defined by its internal segmentation, the dependence on stylized image can be a way to make the segments more defined and self-referential. If the music is more related to individual or group experience, it becomes more difficult to gauge the effectiveness of any recording on reaching and becoming part of the experience. If

the meaning is injected into the cultural product from its inception, in total conjunction with the recording, at least there is a decrease in uncontrollable factors. Considering that in recent decades, only ten per cent of records produced made money, a very high priority of the major recording labels would have to be the reduction of this failure ratio.[15] Apparently some success seems to have been achieved through the transformation of popular music into visual music. As mentioned in the previous chapter, fewer artists are now signed to the major recording companies. Videomusic seems to provide some insurance of financial success for each product.

Finally, it cannot be forgotten that videomusic enters into the cultural discourse of popular music after the original form has been produced. The video consciously attempts to enhance the musical product. Directors are employed to achieve repeated airplay on videomusic stations. This add-on promotional reality of videomusic production, results in the natural tendency of the form to reflect the commercial component of popular music in its content.

Footnotes

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1. Judith Finlayson, "Any way you want me," *Globe and Mail*, Oct. 12, 1984, p. 11 – According to the National Council on TV Violence, 50 % of videos on MTV featured violence; 35 % featured violence that was sexual in nature.

2. Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, (Midland: Indiana University Press, 1979), p. 7.

3. Pierre Guiraud, *Semiology*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 24.

4. See Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, (London: Cape, 1967).

5. Guiraud, pp. 11 - 14.

6. Fiske and Hartley, *Reading Television*, 1978, p. 41. Also see Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, (London: Cape, 1972).

7. Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements*, (London: Marian Boyars, 1978). p. 170.

8. Ibid., p. 178.

9. Stuart Hall, "Encoding and Decoding in the Televisual Discourse", Stencilled Occasional Papers, CCCS Birmingham, 1973, pp. 13-18.

10. Lyrics by Robert John Lange

11. Schwartz – see above chap. 3 p. 87 n. 6.

12. Umberto Eco explained icon in terms of the cultural influence of the 15th century painting of a rhinocerus by

Durer. Durer had depicted the fallacy that the rhino had rough skin. Though it has had no basis in reality, rhinocerus, in the western mind, maintains the connotation of rough skin. The representation had become the more important reality by becoming an icon. Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, p. 205.

13. See John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, (London: BBC and Penguin, 1975).

14. It should not be forgotten that video production has appropriated many visual techniques that definitely predate the latest innovation in popular music. In an interview, the video director Robert Quartly said that many of the styles of videos draw on avant-garde film-making from the Twenties and Thirties. Nevertheless, the use of these techniques to visualize popular music must be considered to a degree an attempt to deal with musical form in the visual medium. Indeed, it also must be recognized that the lack of definitive codes for this translation has permitted a certain freedom of expression for video directors to interpret the musical product.

15. Simon Frith, *Sound Effects*, p. 147.

V. CONCLUSION

By looking at the specific transformation of popular music, this thesis has uncovered the central relationship between the adoption of visual technology and the commodification of a popular cultural form. The analysis has identified the latest example of the ever-present link between the technological and marketing components of contemporary cultural expression. This study of the videomusic interface with popular music has described how a technology can alter an existing form of popular culture both in terms of production - how the form is created and produced - and in terms of consumption - how an audience uses and takes meaning from a form.

Through the incorporation of the televisual into its cultural expression, popular music has attached itself simultaneously to a new form and a new institution. The adoption of the form of television appears to offer popular music a new means of signification. In this sense, the use of the televisual form serves to enhance the musical experience by providing associative images. However, the adoption of the televisual form into popular music also results in two important negative effects. First, the visual presentation alters the audience use of popular music. Videomusic provides a "correct" meaning for the music that often supersedes the audience interpretation and use of the cultural form. To a degree, the televisual form

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divorces popular music from its close association with lived cultural practices - an association that has been traditionally thought of as the inherent value of popular music. Secondly, the new visual technology integrated into popular music has led to the loss of artistic control over the cultural form. The original artist, unfamiliar with televisual technology, is forced to abdicate his/her responsibilities over the music to video directors and producers.

It is equally significant to realize that popular music has also become attached to the institution of television. This technological innovation, then, implies more than a simple a means of enhancement and improvement of a cultural form. The entire incorporation has been motivated by the interests of both the television and the recording industries. In effect, popular music has been visually transformed into a means of defining and maintaining a mass television audience segment, and a technique for expanding the impact, reach and frequency of the musical commodity. Therefore, videomusic is dependent for its existence on the institutional marriage of the television industry (cable television) to the recording industry.

The union of these two media institutions has fostered a relatively unique form of cultural expression. Videomusic broadcast on television is neither simply promotional content or basic programme content. It is a hybrid that combines the promotion of a commodity into its programme presentation. Videomusic epitomizes the style of innovation that arises from

the large technologically-based institutions of cultural production. Considering that television is one of the principal mediators in modern society between the production and consumption of goods and services, it follows that a cultural form that adapts itself to the technology of television, is necessarily focussing on the promotional mediation of its cultural product. Currently, innovation within the institution of television, works towards blurring the commercial and entertainment components of broadcasting. Videomusic represents the most advanced state of this promotional/cultural form convergence. Thus, the use of a technology - in this case, television - can alter the development of a cultural discourse by establishing an emphasis on the form's status as a commodity and by de-emphasizing the meaning derived from the cultural expression or its fulfillment of a cultural need.

Although this thesis has considered only one specific example of technological transformation, the overall intent of the study has been an effort to understand the general role of technological innovation in cultural form. What the analysis has revealed is that the appropriation of large institutional forms of technology is a technique of commodified innovation - that is, a change in cultural form derived principally from the promotional and advertising elements of the form's production process. Commodified innovation is the style of innovation that is the most acceptable to the current institutions of cultural production because the motivation behind the creative extension

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of a form is entirely commercial.

There are a number of characteristics of commodified innovation that can be derived from the study of videomusic. These characteristics can be isolated into four different themes:

1) Selling a product

2) Blurring

3) Reaching a Market Segment

4) Creating Rituals of Consumption

It is hoped that these identified characteristics may be useful in describing the form that innovation tends to follow within the dominant institutions of the cultural industries.

Selling a Product

A growing prerequisite for the use of innovative techniques of presentation is that the form is selling something other than itself. The desire to enhance a product through advertising appears to hold few predictable boundaries of innovation. For example, corporations are willing to spend millions of dollars on commercials to sell their product. Likewise, video production for popular music seems to offer the opportunity for lavish experimentation because it is directed towards the marketing of a good.

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Blurring

The obscuration of commodity promotion and cultural forms
is a technique that is central to the strategies of cultural
production. The intention behind this form of innovation is to
render the notion of promotion a universally integrated
component of every cultural form of expression. Occasionally,
this intention is translated into a covert style of promotion.
For instance, the promotional music video, because of the
dominant visual sense, becomes inseparable from the popular
musical product. In film, product tradenames are prominently and
cleverly displayed without the interruption of dramatic action:
companies pay to have their products used and therefore
advertised in movies. Also, in television, the commercials that
are made for videomusic stations resemble - both in visual and
musical content - music videos in order to blur and blend into
the programme content.

Reaching a Market Segment

A third characteristic is somewhat derived from the notion
of blurring. A great deal of effort is directed towards
isolating the appeal of a cultural form on a particular market
segment. Images and symbols are then injected into cultural
forms to resonate with that particular mass audience group. By
attaching cultural forms of expression to the perceived symbols

of a market segment, the cultural product is attempting to ensure its commercial success. Through video production, popular music is now surrounded with images of youth culture and its fantasies. Similarly, the movie industry divides itself into defined markets and produces films which have a directed appeal to each specific market segment (i.e. teen movies).

It is also characteristic of commodified innovation to go beyond simply producing forms that resonate with a particular market segment. There is a desire that the cultural form itself will be included in the definition of the isolated demographic. Thus, videomusic, as a popular cultural form, is also attempting to become one of the defining elements of youth culture.

Creating Rituals of Consumption

In order to maintain the modern production process, cultural forms must try to sustain audience consumption at a consistent and perpetual level of activity. Innovation in form and technique is often centred around the need to develop rituals of consumption. The meaning of ritual, in this context, is in direct contrast with the meaning defined by British subcultural theorists. In subcultural theory, consumption ritual is used to define the *active* symbolic transformation of objects into significant cultural symbols; but, in the present context, consumption ritual simply means the tendency of an audience to repeatedly and perhaps passively consume (watch, purchase or

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use) certain cultural forms as part of their everyday life. Several techniques are used to help foster these rituals.

First of all, some cultural productions, like television, try to create the feeling of programme flow. The format is designed to encourage continuous television consumption, so that instead of watching single programmes, an evening of watching television becomes the norm. When popular music was adapted to television, the programming emphasis was naturally on programme flow: one video faded into the next and hosts attempted to maintain continuity. Secondly, to encourage the ritual of consumption, cultural products tend to be repetitious in content or style. In television programming, this is typified by the ever-present serialization of almost all programmes. A familiarity with characters, situations and storylines is sought, so that the community of television personalities begins to have greater relevance to the audience. The development of this artifice of the television community, helps to create habitual viewing behaviour. Repetition is also fostered by previous financial success. Within this context, innovation translates into the ability of a cultural production to emulate success.

It is no surprise, therefore, that videomusic's images are often repeated innumerable times as producers attempt to match some previous relationship perceived between a video and the commercial success of the musical product. Similarly, the television industry often relies on the movie industry to define

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the elements of a successful production and then imitates that
technique/style in serialized form. In all the culture
industries, the drive for commercial success tends to result in
the overt plundering of any successful innovation in any other
cultural form.

Signification without Meaning: Attraction and Attention

A particular characteristic of commodified innovation is
found in the most sophisticated productions of advertising and
videomusic. It is in these forms that the meaning of a
production is often quite unintelligible from an initial
viewing. Images in videomusic are flashed onto the television
screen void of obvious contextual framework, or in magazine
advertisements, seemingly disparate objects are bizarrely
juxtaposed. The images presented lack strong reference codes
and, without the codes, any "reading" of these productions is
frustrated.

However, though not readily apparent, this style of
innovation is codified with clear intention. The purpose of
signification-without-meaning is to empty images of their
contextualized meaning so that the display of images is reduced
to its simple intent: to attract and subsequently engage an
audience. Modern cultural forms are produced in an environment
where audiences are inundated with spectacle. Great portions of
our lives are devoted to the watching of television, the viewing

of films, the listening to music, and to the consumption of other forms of indirect experience.[1] Commodified innovation is directed towards the differentiation of its expression from the massive amount of spectacle that is available for audience consumption. Thus, advertising, stylistically differs from the narrative technique of television programmes or magazine articles that surround it. Videomusic also distinguishes itself from the normal fare of broadcast television.

The distinctions, it must be remembered, have the overriding intent of simple attraction. The techniques of innovation are not meant to deepen the meaning of the cultural form; rather, they are used only to make the spectacle more spectacular. Without creating an underlying message, the promotional focus of the production is maintained without confusion. The analogy of an elaborate fireworks display that has no relationship to any special day or function best explicates this characteristic of commodified innovation. There is wonderment and awe generated by the spectacle in the gathered crowd, but fundamentally, the display is, as the Shakespearean adage suggests, "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." [2]

Summation

The development of videomusic in popular music should not be seen as an entirely unique or exceptional case. All popular cultural forms are produced within the constraints of the marketplace and the large corporations which produce cultural

commodities. Instead, the transformation should be understood as exceptional only in the capacity that the innovation reflects popular culture's commodity status so clearly and overtly. It should not be concluded from this thesis that popular music has lost something permanently, or that videomusic is nothing more than a blight on the form. A different point has been made. It is more to the point to conclude that videomusic locates the nature of innovation *within* the current institutions of cultural production. Whether the close relationship that popular music has developed with lived cultural practices can be reclaimed within the new technological form remains an unanswered question. However, at this stage of the televisual transformation of popular music, the promotional intention defines the cultural form.

Footnotes

1. Fundamentally, this increasing attachment of modern society
   to simulated experience, is indicative of our allegiance to
   an ideology of technology (See ch. 2, pp. 15-18, 25-26). With
   videomusic the televisual techniques are seen as a
   technological progression, and only the "Luddites" of our
   society equate the changes with something deleterious. Jean
   Baudrillard's notion of the "hyperreal" identifies this same
   universal acceptance: mediated events and incidents are now
   given more value and validity than real and lived
   experiences. This hyperreality - the mediated spectacle -
   has become, according to Baudrillard, our perception and
   reality. See Jean Baudrillard, *In the Shadow of the Silent
   Majorities*, (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983), pp. 48-61.

2. *MacBeth*, Act 5, Sc. 5, lines 27-28.

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