



110
441
THS

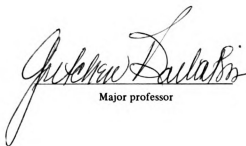


This is to certify that the
thesis entitled
CATEGORIZING COLOR-MUSIC TEXTURES
IN MUSIC VIDEOS

presented by
Holly Jill Hamilton

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

M.A. degree in Telecommunication


Major professor

Date March 12, 1987



RETURNING MATERIALS:

Place in book drop to
remove this checkout from
your record. FINES will
be charged if book is
returned after the date
stamped below.

--	--	--

CATEGORIZING COLOR-MUSIC TEXTURES IN MUSIC VIDEOS

By

Holly Jill Hamilton

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Telecommunication

1987

ABSTRACT

CATEGORIZING COLOR-MUSIC TEXTURES IN MUSIC VIDEOS

By

Holly Jill Hamilton

This study concerns a case study approach to five music videos examining form in terms of color-music combinations, or texture. Content analysis methods were also used to obtain textural "content" found within each video. Videos were taken from the MTV Top 20 Video Countdown from the week of January 24-30, 1987, and were examined for their colors and music. Coding broke down color and music schemes within each video. Four patterns of form emerged from the study, including (a) darker colors with "heavier" beats, (b) complementary color and music elements, (c) bright and warm colors associated with happy music, and (d) repetition of image or symbol colors in "visually dense" videos. From the study it was clear that form is a good way to examine music videos, but content is also needed to fully understand music videos.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Robert Albers and Dr. Gretchen Barbatsis for their time and effort on this project. I would also like to thank my parents for their patience.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Summary	8
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	12
Color, Form, and Texture	12
Texture	18
Color	18
Color in Music Videos	22
Music	23
Music in Music Videos	27
Summary	29
III. METHOD	32
Sample: Purposive	34
Coding	35
Judges	39
Analysis	39
Summary	40
IV. RESULTS	42
"You Gotta Fight For Your Right (to Party)"--Beastie Boys	42
Color	45
Music	46
Texture	46
"You Know I Love You (Don't You)"-- Howard Jones	47
Color	47
Music	48
Texture	49

	Page
"Big Time"--Peter Gabriel	49
Color	49
Music	50
Texture	51
"Open Your Heart"--Madonna	52
Color	52
Music	53
Texture	54
"Land of Confusion"--Genesis	54
Color	55
Music	56
Texture	56
Patterns of Music Video Texture	57
Summary	60
V. CONCLUSION	61
Problems	62
Sample	62
Coding Scheme	62
Reliability and Validity	63
Future Analysis	64
Summary	65
BIBLIOGRAPHY	67
APPENDIX A: CODING INSTRUMENT	70

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
2.1	Color Televisions in the United States	21
4.1	Color and Music Elements and Meanings	43
4.2	Texture Meaning (Color/Music Combination)	44

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
2.1	"Content" Message System	16
2.2	Effect-to-Cause Message System	16

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the inception of Music Television in 1981, society has become aware of the impact of music videos. Videos have influenced not only fashion, advertising, and the music industry, but also how society views itself. Many commentators, for example, have pointed out that the amount of sex and violence contained in many music videos is detrimental to young viewers.¹ Others, however, have celebrated the long-awaited connection between music and video.²

The idea of sound associated with image has been present for a long time. The viewing public has been accustomed to the idea of sound and picture since the beginning of the movie industry. Early silent movies were accompanied by musicians and sometimes orchestras; some movies had their own sound effects produced right in the theater. Eventually, talkies became the rage. The first talkie or soundie was Warner Brothers' The Jazz Singer (1927); immediately the public wanted more. "As lines formed for anything that spoke, dilatory theatre owners quickly ordered conversions,

and dialogue sequences were added to films already in production."³

As talkies became reality in the 1920s and 1930s, film musicals became the staple for many movie companies. In the 1940s, however, a new technology was proving to be a threat to the movie industry--television. Movie companies, realizing the threat of the television, used many different types of movie technology such as Cinerama and advanced color techniques to entice the viewing public to continue going to the movie theater.⁴

Music programs have been a part of television programming since its beginnings. In the 1950s, programs such as American Bandstand and Your Hit Parade were popular with teenagers and adults. This programming concept carried over the 1960s when such programs as Hullabaloo and Shindig were developed for television.⁵ In almost all of these programs, performers would lip sync their music on stage. Sometimes, though not often, sets were constructed that complemented the songs visually. For example, on a Your Hit Parade program in 1957, a concept video for the Rays' hit "Silhouettes" was created on stage.

A man and a woman sat on a couch in what appeared to be a suburban living room; on a table next to the couch was a lamp. Your Hit Parade's string-laden version of the song came up, and suddenly the face of the show's own Gisele MacKenzie, who sang the song, appeared superimposed on the lampshade. In a delightfully naturalistic comic touch, the man abruptly arose from the couch in apparent disbelief at the proceedings,

before his companion gently tugged him back to the couch; then the two seated figures became silhouettes, as did MacKenzie's face on the lampshade, while the seated figures watched MacKenzie's performance.⁶

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, many events were happening in Europe that would influence the history of music videos. One of the developments in France was the "Scopitone," which was a rear screen projection system that showed short 16-millimeter films of musical artists lip synching songs.⁷ Among the artists showcased were Dionne Warwick, Petula Clark, and Neil Sedaka. The format was a proving ground for up-and-coming artists as well as directors.

Such future filmmakers as Claude Lelouch honed their styles by churning out gaudy, action-packed Scopitone "mini-movies"--in much the same way that today's rock-video scene has proved a spawning ground for a new generation of feature-film directors.⁸

In the early 1960s, the rock music form began to change in the United States. Many musical groups emerged from England in what became known as "the British Invasion." Groups that crossed over to the American charts included Herman's Hermits, the Dave Clark Five, Gerry and the Pacemakers, the Rolling Stones, and, most important, the Beatles.⁹ The Beatles influenced not only the music of the time, but also fashion and culture. In the later 1960s, the Beatles created "Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," the first concept album, which may have been the print/audio predecessor of music videos--food for the eye and ear.¹⁰

Because of the nature of the psychedelic era, the idea of joining the visual with the aural did not seem unusual to the viewing and listening public.

The effect of "Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" upon the rock-and-roll album as an art form is immeasurable. It involved the highest production values, the most imaginative cover art and the most cohesive lyrical content of any Beatles album to date.¹¹

Nontraditional film musicals such as Head by the Monkees and Help and A Hard Day's Night (1964) by the Beatles also contributed to the development of the modern music video. For example, A Hard Day's Night (1964), directed by Richard Lester, used

. . . handheld cinema verite, vertiginous montage, cheeky wit, wonderful performances by the Beatles and everyone else (everyone appearing to be themselves, in itself revolutionary), madcap mise-en-scene, and techniques borrowed from the avant-garde.¹²

The techniques used to give A Hard Day's Night its unique shape led the way to mainstreaming techniques for future films and music videos.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the visual and rock music combination appeared to decline. However, the combination was kept alive to a certain degree with such films as Easy Rider and The Graduate because of their rock music soundtracks and accompanying albums.¹³ In the late 1970s, music and video reappeared in the form of rock music

"promos."¹⁴ At the time, the music industry was slumping as a result of the economic state of the United States.

The whole business had topped off in 1978, when 726 million records and tapes were shipped to a rock-sotted world. The next year, the bottom fell out. Revenues plunged 10.2%. Not only was music caught in the general economic clinch; there was a feeling that everything had peaked, maybe even played itself out.¹⁵

According to some in the music industry, sales did not only fall because of the economic crisis of the country. According to David Marsh, a well-known rock music critic and writer, sales also fell because of a lack of creativity and a reliance on formulas.

. . . At the slightest hint of a decline the reins [sic--record company management] were tightened and of course this only exacerbated the problems of overproduction, poor planning and hype. . . . It's no coincidence that the years of the slump coincided with this rollback of creative slack--or that "recovery" was based upon the work of performers who could not have been predicted or created by the record labels "formulas."¹⁶

Because of a decrease in sales, record companies began a new marketing strategy using the visual with the aural. "Promos," in the form of short film clips of musical groups, began playing in record stores.¹⁷ The films were transferred to video tape and could be easily cataloged and played over and over again. Television producers of weekly countdown programs that recounted the week's record charts began using these promos in their programs for more interesting visual material. Not only did viewers at home hear the top tunes of the week, they actually saw them. While

video promos entertained, they promoted a product at the same time--music, in the form of records and tapes.

In August 1981, several executives at Warner Communications put together an all-music network for cable--MTV, or the Music Television Channel.¹⁸ The idea behind the network's programming was to show what were known earlier as video "promos" and to incorporate them in a format similar to a radio station playing hit records. Videos were separated by music news (read by veejays, an equivalent of a radio deejay), interviews, and, of course, advertising.

Early MTV programming came under fire because of the lack of black artists featured. According to such programming executives as Robert Pittman, Kent Burkhart, and Les Garland, the programming concept was rock oriented--perhaps even FM-radio formatted--and black artists did not fit in MTV's programming.¹⁹ Eventually, MTV began to play music of black artists regularly--a direct result of the success of Michael Jackson and his "Thriller" album/video package.²⁰ Since that time, MTV has begun playing black artists on a regular basis--perhaps its original programming has changed with the time. VH-1, a branch of MTV, features softer rock videos than are featured on MTV. Where MTV is more likely to feature newer "concept" artists and "heavy metal" bands, VH-1 is likely to play such artists as Barry Manilow, Dionne Warwick, and the group Air Supply.²¹

MTV's enormous success has inspired the creation of other video shows such as "Night Flight" and "Friday Night Videos." MTV has changed in many ways since its inception, as can be expected. Its audience, once a late-teen to mid-twenties age group, has now shifted to a younger age group. Programming has changed as well. Once a proving ground for new directors and artists, its focus has shifted from the innovative to the somewhat conservative. For example, where new artists were once the focus of MTV, those "new" artists have become stagnant and have not produced any greatly innovative material.

. . . Since most new music has reacted to the chance of public success by becoming completely powderpuff in both music and articulated sensibility, that's less of a big deal than MTV or new music partisans claim:²² "new product" is probably a more proper designation.

The quality of videos shown on MTV has increased because of digital technology as well as a better understanding of the form. It is not uncommon to see, for example, complex computer-generated graphics. The technology of television has also gotten to the point of finer picture resolution and stereo sound, thus enhancing a video's visual and aural quality. However, with innovation there have been some negative consequences. As David Marsh stated,

. . . It's also worth observing that as the technical quality of the videos has risen, largely as the result of working with directors whose experience is in

advertising, so has the amount of casual sexual stereotyping and, worse, violence against women.²³

Because music videos have greatly influenced society in the 1980s in the way of advertising, music, fashion, culture, and how society views itself, it is important to understand them. However, when one studies them for their social value, one must understand how they are organized (i.e., do the visuals alone influence fashion, or must visuals be enhanced by music?). One such way of analyzing them is through the examination of color/music combinations--how music videos reach the viewer's senses of seeing and hearing. The purpose of this study is to examine pop-rock videos of 1987, five and one-half years into the influence of MTV, from the perspective of their color/music construction or structure.

Summary

The idea of linking film with music has been present for a long period of time. Although film became popular without sound, it soon became clear that sound linked with film was the means by which to "sell" movies to audiences. Television, which became a viable medium in the 1940s and 1950s, also brought music and visual form together. In the 1950s it became clear that the music/visual form was popular with audiences, and many programs such as American Bandstand and Hullabaloo were developed. In the 1960s, films such as

A Hard Day's Night and Help revitalized the music/visual form. This form carried over to television again, and television creators provided such shows as The Monkees. In the 1970s the record industry saw a slump in the market for albums and tapes and developed "promos," short film clips of musical groups, to sell more records. Television program creators began using "promos" as part of the material found in many "countdown" shows. In August 1981, MTV, or Music Television, was created and used "promos" or videos as its primary programming material. Today it is clear that music videos, popularized by MTV and its counterparts, have influenced society's culture. Therefore, to better understand music videos, this study examines videos from the perspective of their color/music construction or structure.

Endnotes--Chapter I

¹Michael Shore, The Rolling Stone Book of Rock Video (London: Rolling Stone Press, Straight Arrow Publishing, 1984), pp. 107-109.

²Ibid., pp. 13-16.

³David Shipman, The Story of the Cinema: An Illustrated History, Vol. 1 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984), p. 204.

⁴Louis Giannetti and Scott Eyman, Flashback: A Brief History of Film (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1986), pp. 286-93.

⁵Shore, p. 30.

⁶Ibid., p. 26.

⁷Ibid., pp. 27-28.

⁸Ibid., p. 28.

⁹Nicholas Schaffner, The British Invasion: From the First Wave to the New Wave (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1983), pp. 3-12.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 35-37.

¹¹Charles P. Neises, ed., The Beatles Reader (Ann Arbor: The Pierian Press, 1984), p. 57.

¹²Shore, p. 44.

¹³Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁴Rex Moorfoot, Television in the Eighties: The Total Equation (London: British Broadcasting Co., 1982), p. 55.

¹⁵Jay Cocks et al., "Sing a Song of Seeing," Time, December 26, 1983, p. 55.

¹⁶David Marsh, Fortunate Son: The Best of Dave Marsh (New York: Random House, 1985), p. 76.

¹⁷Moorfoot, p. 55.

¹⁸Shore, p. 82.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 190.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 195-96.

²¹Tony Seideman, "MTV Aging Via Second Net," Billboard,
September 1, 1986, p. 1.

²²Marsh, p. 190.

²³Ibid., p. 191.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Color, Form, and Texture

Television messages comprise two components: form and content. Content is the information that is to be communicated either in a visual or an aural fashion, while form is how or in what manner the message is to be presented. In order for a message to be understood clearly by the receiver, it is essential for the television creator to use both form and content in a coherent manner. The question may be asked as to whether one can function without the other. According to Tony Schwartz (1974), the answer is "no" because each has a different though complementary function within the message.

If we seek to communicate a situation or event, our problem is not to capture the reality of that situation, but to record or create stimuli [content] that will affect the home listener or viewer in a manner similar to a listener's or viewer's experience in the real situation. What counts is not reality, as a scientist might measure it, but the ability to communicate the situation in a believable, human way [form].¹

Content in a televised message can be presented in several modes. For example, the content in a teleconference is very compact--the teleconference's purpose is to

disseminate information in a short time. Form is merely skeletal. On the other hand, if the same information were presented in a dramatic program, the form would be decidedly different. Form would contain dramatic structures and would have a definite direction for each program.

As stated above, the content of a message is that information that is to be provided to the listener or viewer. The television creator's job is to create and/or present a message to the receiver. However, he or she must keep in mind that messages can be interpreted differently. Steve Barron, a music video producer/director, describes an experience in creating the visual content of a music video:

. . . Believe it or not, a lot of time when you ask an artist what the song is supposed to be about, they say, "I don't know." Or the old tried-and-true explanation, "The song means whatever people take it to mean." So you make a deliberately ambiguous video in the same sense.²³

Russell Mulcahy, another music video producer/director, states his views regarding content in music videos:

You try to pack as much into a clip as possible with editing and imagery, so that people can see the clip over and over and still be noticing things they haven't before. . . . I always prefer to stay away from a literal approach to a song and take it to another level, where people can take it wherever they want. That's how most musicians feel about their music, too, so in that sense, a rock video can be "visual music." You build the abstract, noncommittal quality there to give it a more universal appeal, and because if people can figure it out, then they₃ get bored with it. You want to keep them intrigued.

Form can easily alter the content of a televised message. For example, a serious message such as drinking and driving would have one meaning in a comedy program because of its presentation and form (i.e., comedy sketch). On the other hand, the message would have a different meaning on a public affairs program because of its form--serious, perhaps controversial, messages presented in an all-knowing fashion. Very often, the television producer forgets the role of form in a televised message and its relationship to content. However, it is possible to deliberately manipulate production elements to suit or "fit" the message. According to Herbert Zettl, very often "the medium is considered a mere distribution device rather than a production element that has a great influence on the content as well as its reception by the television audience."⁴

In reality, form is as important as content in shaping what Zettl calls the "process message," the result of the interplay of message, medium, and viewer. This interplay often produces a final message significantly altered by the form of the medium. An example of this could be seen in the television series M*A*S*H. On the surface (form) the program appeared to be comedic in nature; however, the heart (content) of the show was something else--a social comment on war.

Many television creators feel that it is not the fault of the medium or form if the message does not come across as intended by the content producer. Zettl states that many times "content dictates the production procedures,"⁵ and many times the television creator agrees with the content expert "not necessarily because it makes for exciting television, but because it gets the job done with a minimum of effort and friction between the client and the station."⁶ Although Zettl does not advocate the content approach, he outlines the process with a diagram from Severin and Tankard (see Figure 2.1). Zettl believes that a more systematic approach to producing is using an "effect-to-cause" system--emphasizing the viewer's experience (see Figure 2.2).

In Sight, Sound Motion--Applied Media Aesthetics, Zettl further emphasizes the importance of the "medium," or form, in the communication process:

The media, such as television and film, are not neutral machines that represent merely a cheap, efficient, and accessible distribution device for ready-made messages. On the contrary, the media have a great influence on the shaping of the message, the way the original event is clarified and intensified. Television and film speak their very own aesthetic language; they have their very own integral part of the total communication process, not just the channel by which the communication is sent.⁷

Keeping all this in mind, it is essential to realize the importance of content and form as separate entities, as well as the ways in which the two work together. If the two

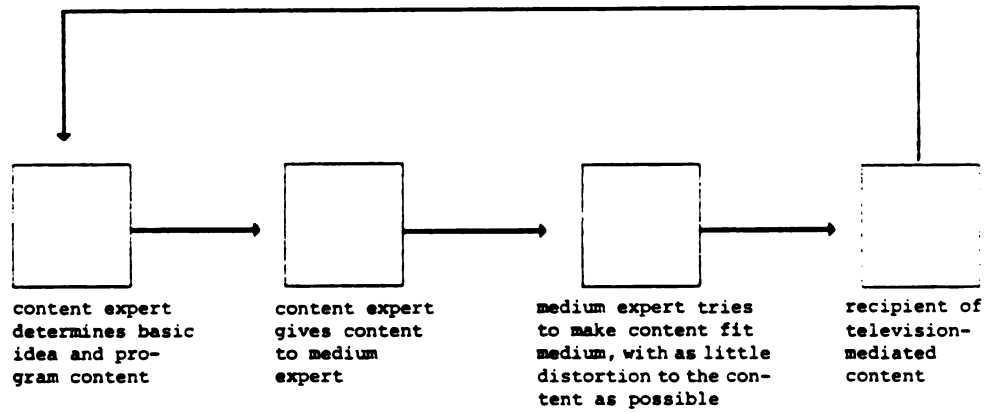


Figure 2.1.--"Content" message system.

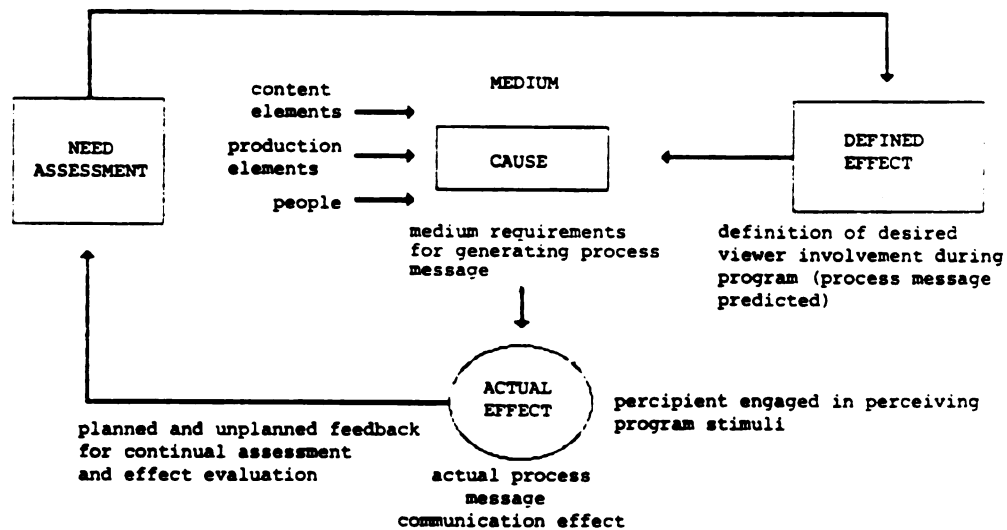


Figure 2.2.--Effect-to-cause message system.

do not work together in a cohesive manner, the message may be lost. According to Robert Snow in Creating Media Culture:

. . . The form of the communication must be immediately apparent to an audience as there is not enough time to explain intentions before their attention turns to something else. Because of the need for predictable audience response, mass media use forms that are familiar to the audience and over time add nuances that become routine and unique to the medium.⁸

The preceding statement implies that there is little room for experimentation in the creation of forms. This is not true, however. Music videos broke through this "barrier" in the early 1980s, when they became, in a sense, a new form of television communication. Although the elements of music videos had been around since the beginning of film and television, it was the music industry itself that brought all the pieces together.

While form and content work together in the message-making process, one can be more important than the other. Miami Vice, for example, a television crime drama with elements of music videos, emphasizes its textural elements (form) while its plot or content is minimal. As writer Elvis Mitchell, television critic for the Los Angeles Herald Examiner states:

"Miami Vice" was a success d'estime during its first year because the program moved television out of the Fifties. The electric combination of colors, milieu, music and minimalistic plot elements gave the show a feel wholly different from anything else on network television. If the series didn't reinvent TV, then it

at least, gave the medium total reconstructive facial surgery.

On another program, such as Family Ties (NBC), the dramatic structure is maintained for each program while its content is primary for each show. Different form and content combinations are key in setting different television shows apart from one another.

Texture

Texture in the message process is part of form and is created with elements such as color, shapes, and sounds. The television producer consciously or subconsciously uses texture to share a feeling with the audience. Texture is not tactile in the traditional sense, but rather it is a way in which a producer can convey an idea to the audience using shared sensory experiences. It is textural elements such as color and music that make music videos come alive on the screen and differentiate Miami Vice and Crime Story from traditional crime dramas. The viewer sees the different elements work together, creating an "experience" different from ordinary television.

Color

Colors can be defined in terms of their physical properties, as well as examined in terms of associations or emotions they evoke. When one thinks of a color associated with passion, for example, one usually thinks of red. Color

can also be thought of in terms of light rays naked to the human eye. Taking both physical and emotional elements into consideration, it is not surprising that scientists believe that humans react to colors because of their relationship with nature. For example, according to Egbert Jacobson in his book Basic Color, "The blues and greens in water and in the depth of a forest are associated with the real experience of coolness."¹⁰

Just as the content of television programs can be interpreted differently, colors can also be looked at in different ways from one person to the next. According to Jacobson, the reason for this phenomenon is that everyone has unique associations or memories with certain colors. This is also true from one society to the next. In the United States, for example, the color black is linked with death, while in another country, such as Japan, white is traditionally used in death-associated ceremonies.¹¹

Color has been used in films since the 1930s. Color was at first used in "epic" type films such as Gone With the Wind or extravagant musicals such as The Wizard of Oz. Many directors liked the effects of black and white films--it added to the "realness" or "grittiness" that the director wanted to project. Color was thought to detract from a film's message, and many directors opted not to use it. However, color began to be used routinely in the 1960s in

order to capture an audience that had been lost to television. Directors had no choice other than to use color to the fullest extent in order to get funding for their pictures. Many in the film industry still argue against the use of color for many reasons. For example, George Klima, in his book Multi-Media and Human Perception writes:

Although certain cinematic effects may be achieved by selecting different colors and arranging them spatially to create filmic statements in which the colors and their interactions connote harmony, dissonance, tension, garishness, social pretension, and other physiological or sociological responses, an overemphasis or concentration on merely the color combinations within the filmic space may interrupt, distract, and interfere with the forward movement of the film.¹²

Today, film directors still use black and white film on occasion, but it is usually for effect (i.e., Woody Allen's Zelig) or message manipulation.

Color and television have been linked since the 1950s even though the technology was developed in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Because of the expense of the technology and its controversy, it took much litigation to put color into use. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) finally gave RCA the approval for their color system in 1953. In 1954 NBC (under the ownership of RCA) aired Kukla, Fran, and Ollie with the Boston Pops as their first color program. In 1954 CBS and ABC also began broadcasting in color with a total of 68 hours of color programming. By the

mid-1960s all three networks became all-color networks¹³
(see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1.--Color televisions in the United States.

Year	Number of Color TV Households	% of TV Households With Color TV
1964	1,610,000	3.1
1966	5,220,000	9.6
1968	13,700,000	24.2
1970	23,400,000	39.3
1971	27,600,000	45.2
1972	32,800,000	52.6
1973	39,400,000	60.1
1974	44,950,000	67.3
1975	48,500,000	70.8
1976	51,200,000	74.0
1977	54,900,000	77.0
1978	56,900,000	78.0

Source: Steinberg, TV Facts, p. 144.

Many critics argue that color technology has affected how the medium is projected to the viewing audience. Jeff Greenfield suggests, for example, that "with the advance of color TV, the close-up human conflict dramas in which early TV excelled gave way to the graphic 'big screen' movie values of color, movement and action, thus changing the face of TV drama in the late 1950's."¹⁴ Erik Barnouw argues that "the shift to color film in 1965-66 affected some TV

topics, including war: 'Mud and blood were indistinguishable in black and white; in color, blood was blood.'¹⁵

Once again this illustrates the inseparable relationship of form and content in television programming--the form (color television) affected its content.

Color in Music Videos

The use of color in music videos is much like its use in films. In an article tracing the development of music videos' influence on advertising, Judith Topper states that music videos were influenced by film directors:

Though the music video medium brings with it more legitimacy and exposure to driving rhythms coupled with color intense visuals, the actual debut of this style came overseas with the European directors on the first splash of the New Wave.¹⁶

Many music video creators state that not only do their influences come from famous filmmakers but also from other sources found in the popular arts. Annabelle Jankel, co-director of such videos as Donald Fagen's "New Frontier" and Tom Tom Club's "Genius of Love," states that her influences come from "early experimental films like Metropolis and Un Chien Andalou but that "we get most of our ideas [with her co-director] from graphic design, advertising, illustrations, that sort of thing."¹⁷

Many music video directors choose to use colors to project an image or theme within their videos. For example, Julian Temple's use of color in his two Stray Cats videos,

"Stray Cat Strut" and "Rock This Town," "were crucial in solidifying the band's carton-rockabilly image."¹⁸ Another director, Mark Rezyka, states: "I like to go for darker scenarios, because rock music usually isn't about all sweetness and light; there's usually at least some sort of underlying aggression or something there."¹⁹

Music video directors often choose film (if the budget allows it) for creating their works of "art" because film has a richer feel than video. As director Steve Barron states:

Both film and video have their respective merits. For me personally, I like film better because it has a richer look, a nicer texture. Video looks too real and at the same time too plastic; there's something very flat and harsh about it. It also tends to look cheaper than film, unless you're doing something very effects-oriented.²⁰

It is interesting that many music videos are not created with video but rather with film. Perhaps it is the property of film and film's history that has led music video directors to use the principles of film making in creating music videos as we know them.

Music

Music is another textural element found in the popular arts. Like color, music also brings forth emotions or associations. Music has also had the tradition of different interpretations, and this too is linked with varied life

experiences. James Glennon, author of Understanding Music, writes:

We might also define music as "expression in sound," or "the expression of thought and feeling in an aesthetic form," and still not arrive at an understanding of its true purpose. We do know, however, even if we are not fully conscious of it, that music is a part of living that has the power to awaken in us sensations and emotions of a spiritual kind.²¹

Another expert, Wayne Barlow, reiterates this perspective:

A composer "expresses himself" through music as projected in relationships of sound in the same way that an artist "expresses himself" through painting as he works with line and color. Into the work of each is infused something personal of the composer or the artist, whether the medium is a symphony or a still life on canvas.²²

Music can also be defined in terms of its physical properties. Music consists of vibrations found in the air. Regular vibrations are defined as sound, while irregular vibrations are deemed noise. Many argue that noise is unpleasant while sound is considered more pleasing to the ear, although there are those who claim the musicality of noise. Keeping all this in mind, Webster's Dictionary defines music as "the science or art of incorporating intelligible combinations of tones into a composition having structure and continuity" and "vocal or instrumental sounds having rhythm, melody, or harmony."²³

Music has been present in the film industry since its early beginnings. Early problems occurred because the technology of linking sound and picture (synchronous sound)

was not available. Many forms of the technology were developed and abandoned. Such systems included sound-on-disc as well as the approved sound-on-film.²⁴

Surprisingly, many movie companies rejected sound film due to their successes in the silent movie industry. However, Warner Brothers' success with The Jazz Singer (1927) proved that sound was more than just a passing fad. Other film companies realized that in order to keep up with the competition, sound and/or music needed to be integrated into their films.

Since sound was first linked with film, the movie musical has been a staple of the film industry. However, the musical has had its low and high points in popularity. Whereas the film musical was quite popular in the 1930s and 1940s, its popularity has now decreased due to a lack of interest from the viewing public and because of the expense of production.²⁵

Rock music has been associated with film since its beginnings in the 1950s. For example, Bill Haley and the Comets' "Rock Around the Clock" was used as theme music in the 1955 film Blackboard Jungle.²⁶ Elvis Presley, a rock idol from the 1950s and 1960s, made many films centered on his rock music which were very popular with the younger generation.²⁷ In the early to mid-1960s something changed in the rock music industry: the Beatles. Because of their

popularity, the Beatles made several movies that used their music as the theme. Such movies were Richard Lester's A Hard Day's Night (1964) and Help (1965).²⁸ These films then influenced a new crop of rock films including the Monkees' Head (1968) and Woodstock (1970).²⁹ Many of these films would later work into the development of music videos in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Because television had the technology of sound when it was first broadcast, it did not incur the problems that the film industry had experienced. Music and variety programs have been a big part of television programming since its beginnings. Such early shows included the Original Amateur Hour, Dinah Shore, Arthur Godfrey and His Friends, Sing Along With Mitch, and the Frank Sinatra Show.³⁰ Rock music has been present in television programming since the 1950s. Such shows included Shindig and American Bandstand.³¹ Just like music in the film industry, musical and variety programs on television have had high and low points in popularity. On network prime-time television today (with the exception of PBS), there are virtually no continuing musical or variety programs because they attract such low audiences.³² However, with cable television technology, those types of programs can be viewed on cable networks such as the Arts and Entertainment Network, the Nashville Network, or on HBO or Showtime specials.

Music in Music Videos

Music Television (or MTV) and VH-1 are cable networks whose programming is devoted solely to music videos. As stated earlier, music videos are a product of the music industry with influences from both film and television. The music that can be found on MTV and VH-1 is much like the music heard on popular radio stations. In fact, the programming concept behind MTV was that it was to be kind of a visual radio--visual images to influence the buying of popular music. As Robert Pittman, the man behind the concept of MTV, states:

MTV is the first thing to come along that will draw these people [12 to 34 year old age group] back to watching their TVs--because MTV is a visual radio station playing their favorite music, on video and in stereo. MTV is meant to be viewed in an "ambient" situation, the same way we listen to radio: you don't turn on the radio and sit listening intently to it, you turn it on and leave it on in the background, and from time to time it draws your active attention. Same thing with MTV: it's radio with pictures. You're not supposed to watch it the same way you watch regular TV.³³

Music videos have several formats, and MTV uses all of them in their video rotation. The format that gets the most airplay is the performance video. Basically, it is a camera capturing the performance of an artist. One such video is Bruce Springsteen's "Dancing in the Dark." The viewer at home sees Bruce performing the song on stage "live" on tape with no visual effects.

Another video format is the concept video. In this format there is an attempt to portray visually, though not always literally, messages in a song with overlapping images. Many concept videos are visually dense, meaning that images and/or symbols overlap to such a great extent that the message is often confusing. One concept video is the award-winning Peter Gabriel video "Sledgehammer." Literal and nonliteral images overlap, and the viewer does not see the artist actually perform the song in the traditional manner. Nontraditional film techniques (i.e., computer graphics and Claymation) are also used to achieve chaos.

The third video format is actually a combination or hybrid of both concept and performance concepts. In this format, videos can be further distinguished into two categories. Performance/concept types are performance videos with conceptualized plots such as Eddie Money's "I Wanna Go Back." In this video Eddie performs the song against the backdrop of his old neighborhood. Performance videos with associative imagery are performance videos with associative imagery, and an example is the KBC Band's "America" video. In this video the KBC Band is seen performing the song with "pictures" of America as a backdrop.

As history has shown, it is likely that it is an artist's intention to create texture with color and music in

order to convey an "experience" to his or her audience. It is the properties of texture in color and music, both physical and intangible, that are capable of doing this for the television creator. Because color and music separately can evoke feelings, emotions, and associations, it is logical to believe that when the two are combined they will produce a higher incidence of association. These high-powered color-music combinations are the tools of the music video creator that allow him/her to communicate messages through texture.

Summary

Television messages comprise two elements: form and content. Content is that part which contains the actual information of the message. Form is the element that shapes how the message is to be provided to the receiver. Two elements that contribute to form are color and music. Color and music together create "texture" within a message. The television creator is able to convey feelings or associations through texture. The color red with up-tempo music, for example, might be described as creating a feeling of passion or frenzy. The creator is able to do this because of certain unwritten rules about color and music. Music video creators use the tools of color and music to communicate messages through texture.

Endnotes--Chapter II

¹Robert P. Snow quoting Tony Schwartz in Creating Media Culture (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1983), p. 17.

²Michael Shore quoting Steven Barron in The Rolling Stone Book of Rock Video (New York: Rolling Stone Press, Straight Arrow Publishing, 1984), p. 157.

³Ibid., p. 110.

⁴Herbert Zettl, Television Production Handbook (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing, 1984), p. 471.

⁵Ibid., p. 470.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Herbert Zettl, Sight Sound Motion: Applied Media Aesthetics (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing, 1973), p. 10.

⁸Snow, p. 17.

⁹Elvis Mitchell, "'Miami Vice' Losing Its Virtue," Rolling Stone, March 27, 1986, p. 45.

¹⁰Egbert Jacobson, Basic Color (Chicago: Paul Theobald, 1948), p. 128.

¹¹Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, Japan: Its Land, People and Culture (Tokyo: Ministry of Education, 1964), pp. 713-14.

¹²George Klima, Multi-Media and Human Perception (Elenora: Meridian Press, 1974), p. 83.

¹³Cobbett S. Steinberg, TV Facts (New York: Facts on File, 1980), p. 144.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 145.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 145.

¹⁶Judith Topper, "Music Video Colors Advertising: Mainstream Moves Out of Ordinary," Backstage, May 18, 1984, p. 56.

¹⁷Shore, p. 130.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 121.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 136.

²⁰Ibid., p. 153.

²¹James Glennon, Understanding Music (London: Robert Hale and Co., 1973), p. 1.

²²Wayne Barlow, Foundations of Music (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953), p. 11.

²³Webster's Dictionary, 7th ed., 1963.

²⁴John Fell, A History of Films (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), pp. 204-207.

²⁵Jerome Delamater, "Performing Arts: The Musical," in American Film Genres, ed. Stuart M. Kaminsky (Pflaum Publishing, 1974), p. 121.

²⁶Shore, p. 41.

²⁷Ephraim Katz, The Film Encyclopedia (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Publishers, 1979), pp. 929-30.

²⁸Ibid., p. 715.

²⁹Shore, pp. 34-46.

³⁰Steinberg, pp. 10-49.

³¹Shore, p. 29.

³²Timothy Scheurer, "The Variety Show," in TV Genres, ed. Brian G. Rose (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985), pp. 307-23.

³³Shore, p. 184.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Many artists use texture to capture an audience and to relate an experience or emotion. This is true in many music videos. There is surprisingly little research, however, in the area of "texture" in music videos. Research is found in related fields such as art and music, but there is virtually none in the area of music videos. Perhaps this is true because music videos are a relatively new phenomenon. But how are color/music combinations used in music videos? Does the music complement the color or vice versa? What effects do color/music combinations in music videos have upon its audience? The purpose of this study is to begin to address these questions: most specifically to categorize color/music combinations in order to better understand the form of music videos. With this contribution, further research can begin to include this source of information in the examination of the effects of music video as cultural message subject matter. A combination of two research methods--case study and content analysis--was used as the most appropriate

way to gather data for the questions addressed in this study.

At this preliminary stage in the examination of form variables, the most appropriate approach is case study analysis. With this exploratory study, it is logical to use a purposive sample rather than a random one because the music video form is new and little research has been conducted concerning form. The primary type of research that has been conducted is contextual in nature, namely research concerning sex and violence within music videos. With the case study approach, form patterns and variables can be identified and can then be pulled apart and expanded with further research.

In this exploratory study, it is also appropriate to use content analysis because the interest is in what textural "content" is found within each video. There are, however, arguments in various fields of research concerning the definition of content analysis. Where many argue that quantitative data are required for a true content analysis, the method used here also recorded qualitative data. The interest is in what colors are found in the various videos as well as how many times a color was viewed. The researcher here recorded data not only as manifest or surface content, but also as latent content. For example, if a video contained bright colors, colors were not only

recorded according to hue, brightness, and saturation, but also according to research known about color meaning (i.e., blue is a cold color) and how the music video creator used that particular color.

Sample: Purposive

Videos were collected on 1/2" Beta videotape from MTV, or Music Television. The sample taken was from the MTV Top 20 Video Countdown for the week of January 24-30, 1987. The cases chosen for analysis were five "concept" videos taken from these 20. Considering the three video format categories, it was believed that creators of concept videos were most likely to deliberately manipulate color/music combinations.

Five concept videos, as defined by the researcher, were found within the 20. In the sample, three different conceptual styles were exemplified: (a) film style--videos that use traditional film techniques and structures (i.e., narrative structure) to communicate a message; (b) animated style--videos using animation or stop-frame techniques to communicate a message; and (c) nontraditional--videos that used nontraditional film techniques such as computer/digital effects, Claymation, or puppets to communicate a message. Videos obtained for this study were the Beastie Boys' "You Gotta Fight For Your Right to Party" (film style), Madonna's "Open Your Heart" (film style), Howard Jones's "You Know I

Love You" (animated), Peter Gabriel's "Bit Time" (nontraditional), and Genesis's "Land of Confusion" (nontraditional).

Coding

A coding system was developed from Zettl's Sight Sound Motion to record textural data (see Appendix A). Categories were developed according to principles outlined by Guido Stempel in Research Methods in Mass Communication. These principles include criteria that: "(1) Categories must be pertinent to the objectives of your study. (2) Categories should be functional. (3) The system of categories must be manageable."¹ These principles were followed to achieve reliable and usable data. Colors, for example, were looked at in terms of their hue, brightness, and saturation. Colors were divided into dominant and secondary colors--dominant colors appearing to be most important in the video while secondary colors were colors of objects that were not essential to the video. Music was analyzed in terms of tempo, timbre, loudness, and duration. The following is a definition of each category:

1. Colors:

Hue--Actual color of object (i.e., red or green)

Brightness--Value of color (i.e., light or dark)

Saturation--Strength or richness of color (i.e., high or low)

2. Music:

Pitch--Lowness or highness of sound/tone (i.e., low or high)

Timbre--tone color or quality (i.e., thin or rich)

Loudness/intensity--Strength of tone (i.e., loud or soft)

Duration--Length of sound/tone (i.e., long or short)

Attack/decay--Speed at which tone reaches loudness or at which it can no longer be heard (i.e., fast or slow)²

A second set of categories was developed to guide analysis. Analysis statements allowed for the coder, or the researcher, to subjectively look at what meanings texture (color/music combinations) might be conveying within each video. For example, questions are asked as to whether the color/music combinations complement or contrast one another or what feeling (i.e., happy, sad) the dominant color scheme encodes (See Appendix A, pp. 3-4). Standard color associative definitions as well as music meanings were used in the subjective analysis (i.e., bright colors being hot colors and blues and greens defined as cool or colder colors). The following are color and music meanings developed from Zettl's Sight Sound Motion and Faber Birren's Color Psychology and Color Therapy:

<u>Color</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
White	Enlightenment, purity, faith, glory, youthful
Black	Death, evil, mourning, ominous, depressing
Red	Love, passion, fire, blood, exciting, extreme emotions
Blue	Loyalty, compassion, truth, subduing, melancholy, contemplative
Green	Hope, eternal life, quieting, refreshing
Yellow	Cheerful, inspiring, vital, celestial
Orange	Jovial, lively, energetic, forceful
Purple	Dignified, pompous, mournful, mystic
Brown	Melancholy
Gray	Old age

Note: Colors associated with tragedy: gray, blue, purple
 Colors associated with comedy: red, yellow, orange

<u>Music Term</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Pitch	High Low Exciting, light Solemn, heavy
Timbre	Thin Rich Brassy Simple, clean, uncomplicated Complex, vital, strong Cold, shrill, forceful, big
Loudness	Loud Soft Forceful, energetic, important Weak, delicate, soothing
Duration	Long Short Peaceful, calm, stable Exciting, restless, nervous
Attack	Fast Slow Exciting, sharp Gentle, velvety, soft
Decay	Fast Slow Intimate, confined, definite Spacious, open, alive, smooth

After the data were collected from the videos, the next task was to categorize texture types. Texture types were identified according to the five basic human senses. For example, from previous color studies, blues have been identified as being cool to the touch while slower-tempo music has been identified as being soothing to the ear. Keeping these two considerations in mind, it is logical that a video with muted colors of blues and greens associated with a slow-tempo song could be identified as having a "cool" texture. In this case, color and music also complement one another, meaning that cooler colors better accompany slower music and warmer colors, more up-tempo songs. Colors and music contrast if, for example, hot colors, such as reds and oranges, are placed with slower tempos. This logic follows familiar color and music meanings. The following is a color temperature chart that was used to help guide texture types as well as complements and contrasts.

<u>Color</u>	<u>Temperature</u>
Red	Warm/hot
Orange	Warm
Yellow	Warm
Blue	Cold
Green	Cool
Purple	Cool

Using and understanding Rudolf Arnheim's perception of color temperature in this particular study, "it is not the

main color that determines the warm-cold effect, but the color of the slight deviation from the main hue. Thus, a reddish blue looks warm and a bluish red, cold."³

Judges

In terms of reliability and validity, there is the question of objectivity. Since there was only one coder, there were no questions of disagreement among coders. However, it seemed appropriate to have another person spot check work in areas in order for a more objective approach to the data. Music categories, for example, were clarified by a second coder to obtain maximum reliability and understanding. Visual material was also re-examined after data were obtained.

Analysis

When texture types were identified from the video sample, they were analyzed according to patterns that were found. Patterns were identified as color or music schemes that occurred more than once in a video or were deemed pertinent to the video's structure. When patterns were identified, they were analyzed in the context of how they related to form. It must be remembered, however, that the analysis here concerns textures within each video and how patterns relate to a whole form structure.

Summary

In this exploratory study of form structures in music videos, a purposive sample was an appropriate method to discover variables and patterns. Videos were collected from the MTV Top 20 Video Countdown and were looked at from a case study/content analysis approach. Categories were created in the areas of color and music to examine those parts of form. Categories for color included hue, brightness, and saturation while the categories of music included timbre, duration, loudness/intensity, and duration. Reliability and validity depended heavily on the researcher's subjectivity. After data collection, texture types were identified in accordance with the five human senses and recognized patterns.

Endnotes--Chapter III

¹Guido Stempel, Research Methods in Mass Communication (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1981), p. 91.

²Herbert Zettl, Sight Sound Motion: Applied Media Aesthetics (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1973), p. 343.

³Rudolf Arnheim, Art and Visual Perception (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), pp. 327-28.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

When analyzing the data, each case was viewed in terms of its separate color and music characteristics, as well as its texture, or its color-music combinations. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the color and music elements identified for each case. Using what is known about color temperature combined with music meanings, Table 4.2 provides texture meaning or "temperature" meaning developed from the five cases. A description of the findings for each case follows.

"You Gotta Fight For Your Right (to Party)"--Beastie Boys

This video focuses on a narrative structure. It is the story of a couple of "nerdy" young men who decide to have a party when their parents are away for the evening. When discussing party plans, they hope that "no bad people come." Instead of holding a relatively mild party, the Beastie Boys show up and wreak havoc. Pies are thrown, things are broken, and generally, "all hell breaks loose."

Table 4.1.--Color and music elements and meanings.

Video	Dominant Color Elements	Dominant Meanings	Dominant Music Elements	Dominant Meanings
Case 1	monochrome/drab, red, blue	melancholy excitement	brassy percussive; high pitch; brassy, bold timbre	exciting, forceful, heavy beat
Case 2	black/white, primary colors	enlightenment, love, truth, cheerful	brassy, rich timbre, slow attack and decay, high pitch	exciting, open
Case 3	various colors, bright to dark contrast	varying from happiness to sadness	rich timbre, high/ low pitch, slight crescendo	complex, heavy
Case 4	blue/black, contemplative yellow, orange	depressing, melancholy vital	melodic vocal, instrumental, brassy, metallic timbre, high pitch, varying attack/ decay scheme	cold, forceful, exciting
Case 5	various colors, dark colors dominating	heaviness, sadness	percussive, high/low pitch, slight cre- scendo, varying attack/decay scheme	exciting, solemn, definite

Table 4.2.--Texture meaning (color/music combination).

Video	Colors--Color Temperature	Music Meaning	Texture Meaning "Temperature"
Case 1	Bright--hot	Exciting, forceful, big	Hot
Case 2	Primary (bright reds, yellows, blues)--hot	Exciting, open, spacious	Hot
Case 3	Bright to dark contrast-- hot	Complex, exciting, heavy	Warm
Case 4	Blue, black--cold Yellow, orange--warm	Cold, forceful, exciting	Warm
Case 5	Various--dark colors dominating--cold	Exciting, solemn, definite	Cold

Color

The video's color scheme begins as bland--generally monochrome, with drab colors. The nerdy young men wear dark suits with black bow ties, and the walls and floor of the set are white. Other set pieces, such as rugs, a piano, and the couch, are also dark colors such as browns, blacks, and dark blues. The set remains stark throughout the video, although walls are lit with red and blue gels when the Beastie Boys arrive. The one set piece that does not fit the stark set is a bright orange and green painting that hangs on the wall. The three singers, the Beastie Boys, as well as the other "bad people," are dressed more colorfully than their nerdy counterparts. One of the singers wears a bright red T-shirt, for example, and several of the other "bad people" wear blue jeans.

When analyzing the color of "You Gotta Fight For Your Right (to Party)", one can easily see the two contrasting schemes--the dark, drab colors of the nerds and the brighter colors of the "bad people." The feeling that is evoked with the two contrasting schemes is one of excitement. This is the case because the darker scheme is overpowered by the more colorful scheme. At the end of the video when the parents walk in, the bright gels remain on the set where they (the bright colors) were not present at the beginning.

Color temperature throughout the video could be classified as hot.

Music

The music for "You Gotta Fight For Your Right (to Party)" is classified as a type of "rap" music, meaning that the singers talk the words rather than sing them. The singers' voices in this video could be described as irritating and off-key. Words are shouted, and the pitch has a tendency to be high. The actual instrumental portion of the music is very bassy and percussive, and the texture leads one to a happy or lively feeling. This is also emphasized in its brassy, bold timbre. Attack is quick throughout the song while decay is slow. The reason for this can be determined in its aforementioned percussive nature.

Texture

The color/music combination for "You Gotta Fight For Your Right" is hot. The reasoning for this can be found in its primary color scheme, bright colors, and its upbeat percussive music. It is interesting that the color and music textures are complementary not only on the level of their "upbeatness" but also in terms of their garishness. The colors, for example, could be viewed as nonreal in the sense that set pieces are stark and surreal. At one point the viewer sees an actor bump into a flat of the set,

providing additional evidence that the location is nonreal. The music can also be identified as nonreal. The singers are not actually singing for the most part, and the music itself is not musical in the classical sense of harmonies and melodies.

"You Know I Love You (Don't You) "--
Howard Jones

This video is animated for the most part, though at one point the director uses film. It is conceptual in the sense that images overlap, but it is also visually literal at points. For example, the singer, Howard Jones, at one point in the song says that "I need you like a flower needs a bee," and the viewer actually sees the flower and the bee. At other points, however, the animation concerns the singer as well as visual symbols of love and music, such as rainbows and hearts. These images do not necessarily match the literal content of the lyrics.

Color

The color scheme of the video is the contrast between black and white and bright colors. The singer, for the most part, is animated in black and white, while the colors that surround him are bright. For example, at the beginning of the song, the singer is black and white, while the keys on the synthesizer he is playing are the colors of the rainbow. The video shows "things" such as hearts, and musical notes

surrounding the singer. All of these "things" are bright colors, usually the primary colors of red, blue, and yellow. All the colors that are portrayed are highly saturated and bright. The singer is intentionally made to stick out in his black and whiteness, though at times something on him might have color. This was seen at one point when the handkerchief that sticks out of his jacket suddenly colorizes to yellow. Toward the latter part of the video, the singer's body is completely surrounded by slashes of bright colors, primarily reds and oranges (reds traditionally portraying excitement and extreme emotions, oranges meaning energy).

Music

The musical scheme of "You Know I Love You" is up-tempo. The singer's voice, along with the musical accompaniment, is soothing. However, the song at the same time is techno-pop. The instrument that is most prominent in the song is the singer's synthesizer, and the viewer sees it at various times throughout the song. It is both slow in its attack and its decay. Timbre is a combination of rich and brassy sounds created with a range of instruments or sounds that are created on the synthesizer. One hears trumpets in the song as well as percussive instruments.

Pitch is high throughout the song, signifying its lightness or excitement.

Texture

The color/music combination texture is not because of the video's bright colors as well as the song's upbeat tempo. The textures, therefore, are complementary. By comparison to the other videos in the sample, this is the only one in which color and music are one, meaning that color and music complement one another to the highest degree. The feeling of happiness and joy that is created is not matched by any of the other videos in the sample.

"Big Time"--Peter Gabriel

This video was created using Claymation, a nontraditional film technique, as well as traditional film techniques. The film does not have a narrative structure. It uses instead overlapping images that are, for the most part, literal to the lyrics of the song. These include cars, buildings, growing things, and the singer himself. The video is dense. It took several viewings to distinguish what images were important. Once dominant images were established, they were coded for their colors.

Color

The color scheme for "Big Time" was difficult to analyze in that images constantly overlap one another. For

the most part, the video is very colorful because there are so many images; however, colors become more complex in the various image categories. For example, there are several building types in the video, ranging from a simple house to city buildings to a church. Each building is a different color or a combination of colors, and each has a different range of brightness and saturation. The small house, for example, is bright orange and blue and is highly saturated, while on the other hand city buildings are mostly dark and light grays and not as highly saturated. The "church" in "Big Time" is slot machines and money and is really a collection of darker colors with low saturation. Backgrounds for various images, such as a blue one behind a money pyramid, are bright colors and highly saturated. It appeared as if the director intentionally used bright colors to bring out the image in front of the background. Overall, there were no true secondary objects that could be analyzed in terms of their colors. The most important images appeared more than once throughout the video, emphasizing their importance.

Music

The music scheme for "Big Time" can be described as "techno-pop" because of the instruments that are used as well as the singer's "talk" style of singing. The

instrumental portion of the song primarily comprises synthesizer, bass, guitar, and a drum machine. Emphasis is on the synthesizer and a low guitar sound. Pitch for the song has highs and lows and timbre is rich. The song crescendos or builds slightly, though not dramatically. The attack scheme is different for each instrument, including the singer's voice. Guitar attack and decay, for example, is fast while organ attack and decay is slow, thus indicating different meanings for each (i.e., fast attack and decay meaning excitement and/or sharpness).

Texture

The color/music combination texture for "Big Time" is classified as warm for several reasons. The music has quick rhythm and tempo with a heavy beat. The colors have a range of brightness, saturation, as well as hue. The color/music relationship could be classified as being contrasting, though not to a great extent, because the music is regular throughout (though it does crescendo slightly) and the range of colors remains static throughout the video. It is contrasting because the colors are bright as well as dark, but the music is bright and up-tempo throughout. When one merely examines form it is difficult to ascertain the reason for this phenomenon. Including an examination of the lyrical content within the song, however, might provide a better explanation.

"Open Your Heart"--Madonna

In this video, structure is centered on its narrative form. It is the story of a "stripper" in a seedy peepshow and her "relationship" with a boy who waits for her outside of the building.

Color

Through the use of contrasting colors, the viewer gets a general understanding of the relationship of the boy and Madonna. The boy sees Madonna as an angel of sorts, and this is portrayed in the warm colors that are seen outside of the peepshow where he waits. At one point when Madonna is towering over the boy, a low-angle shot reveals Madonna with a ring of lights around her head. Inside the peepshow, on the other hand, the colors that are viewed are shades of blues and blacks--colors associated with coolness and death. At the beginning of the sequence within the peepshow house, Madonna wears a black wig which she immediately sheds to reveal her blonde hair. Madonna shimmers in the dark peepshow atmosphere with her translucent skin and bleached-blond hair. The several peepshow attendees are generally dressed in darker colors with the exception of the two sailors in their dress-white uniforms.

Several feelings are conveyed with the color structure of the video. When Madonna is in the peepshow house

performing her act, the feeling is one of sadness or despair because of the dark colors. Outside the peepshow where the boy awaits there is a warm, happy feeling. The overall feeling is one of warmth because the cheerful feeling created with the warm colors outweighs the one of despair created with the blues and blacks within the peepshow house.

Music

The music scheme for "Open Your Heart" is melodic in a techno-pop context. The music itself is artificial or mechanical sounding. The instruments used include a drum machine, a synthesizer, electric guitar, and electric bass. Madonna's voice, on the other hand, is melodic and soothing. Her voice is thin: tones have a tendency to be pure. The instrumental portion, on the other hand, is brassy or metallic. Pitch is high. The music does not crescendo or decrescendo dramatically. Attack and decay times are different for different instruments as well as voice. The synthesizer has slow attack and slow decay, for example, while percussive instruments have fast attack and fast decay. Overall, the feeling that is conveyed with the music is one of mystery. The music has an ironic feel because there is an underlying feeling of despair (traditionally associated with slow music) but the music is up-tempo.

Texture

The color/music combination texture within this video is warm because the music is upbeat and the color visuals are warm and cold. Without examining the actual words to the song it is difficult to determine the actual meaning of the music, whether it is happy or sad. The relationship of the color and music is complementary. The music is upbeat though not frenzied. The color structure relies on two sets of colors without leaning toward hot colors, such as reds and bright oranges, or too many colder colors such as blues or blacks.

"Land of Confusion"--Genesis

This music video uses many dark overlapping images to create a heavy-feeling video. Without examining the actual words to the music it is difficult to understand all of the political messages intended with this particular song. The focus of the video is a Ronald Reagan character. Images or symbols that surround him include Nancy Reagan and worldwide political statespeople in puppet form. Genesis, the group singing the song, is also included in the video in puppet form. It is difficult to understand all the images in this video because it is image-packed and conceptual. For example, at one moment the viewer sees "Ronald Reagan" in bed tossing and turning and the next moment dressed in prehistoric clothing in the middle of the jungle.

Color

The color scheme remains primarily dark throughout the video. There are moments of bright colors, but they are brief or indiscriminate. The political characters created in the video are darkly lit, while other characters, with Genesis being the exception, are more bright or colorful. It should be noted, however, that when Genesis is singing in their black turtlenecks, they are "standing" in front of a fairly bright blue background with stars. Other locations, with the exception of the Reagan bedroom, are dark and are created with colors such as greens, browns, blacks, and blues--all cool or colder colors. The dominant color scheme for the video projects heaviness or sadness because of its darkness. This is also true with the secondary color scheme. Feelings of dread or foreboding, as if an Armageddon were approaching, are created with the dark colors found in both primary and secondary color schemes. In fact, the last image of the video is a bright orange and red nuclear explosion, but one cannot use that image (because it is a part of content) in order to understand the actual form of the video. In this circumstance, the textural message is ambiguous because the contextual portion of the video is needed for the communication message.

Music

The music scheme for "Land of Confusion" is based on a heavy percussive sound created with drums and a drum machine as well as other instruments. The primary singer for the song, Phil Collins, has a gravelly deep voice though it has melodic overtones. His pitch is somewhere between high and low, with a tendency toward the high end of the range.

Timbre for "Land of Confusion" is rich. There are many overtones or overlapping sounds. The music builds gradually in the song, though not too dramatically. Duration is long, and attack and decay times differ for each instrument. The percussive instruments, for example, have fast attack and slow decay, while the synthesizer has slow attack and slow decay. Guitar, as well as bass, sounds metallic and synthetic rather than melodic. Overall, the music is very percussive and heavy sounding, and this is because of its varying pitch range and rich timbre.

Texture

The color/music combination texture is classified as cold because of the heavy music sound and the predominantly dark colors seen throughout the video. Heavy sound is created primarily with percussive instruments, and the colors that are seen are, for the most part, browns, greens, and other darker shades of colors. The relationship between the two, color and music, is complementary. Although the

music is upbeat, its general sound is heavy or one of doom. The colors vary throughout the video, but the ones that have a primary function are darker colors.

Patterns of Music Video Texture

When examining all five videos as a group, one is able to see certain patterns emerging in color, music, as well as color/music combinations. Such patterns include:

1. Darker colors with "heavier" beats of music
2. Complementary color and music elements
3. Bright and warm colors associated with "happy" music
4. Repetition of image or symbol colors in visually dense videos

The first pattern that one can recognize from the five videos is that darker colors are associated with "heavier" music. This pattern occurs clearly in "Land of Confusion" and "Big Time" and, to an extent, in "You Gotta Fight For Your Right (to Party)." In "Land of Confusion" a "heavy" sound is created with a percussive beat as well as the singer's voice. Color is primarily darker shades of browns, greens, and grays. Lighting, though not one of the primary considerations in the coding scheme, is also dark throughout the video. There is heavy shadowing both on faces and in locations. Peter Gabriel's "Big Time" has

brighter colors, but again lighting has a dark effect on them. The video also has darker colors such as grays and black. The music for the video has a heavy synthesizer sound, almost bass-like at times, and thus emphasizes the darkness of the video. In "You Gotta Fight. . ." the colors are surreal and dark again, created both by the colors themselves and the lighting techniques. Although the song is up-tempo, the primary sound that emerges from the music is heavy bass.

Another pattern that is seen from this video sample is that color and music complement one another in conceptual videos. In all five of the videos, color and music are complementary though not always in a pure sense. For example, in Madonna's "Open Your Heart" the music is up-tempo, but color and music do not clearly match because there are two different color schemes. In "Land of Confusion," on the other hand, color and music clearly complement one another--both are dark and heavy. However, the video that most clearly demonstrates the relationship between color and music is Howard Jones's "You Know I Love You." The music is very upbeat and happy, while the colors that shine are bright primary and secondary colors such as shades of yellow, red, and blue.

Another pattern that emerges from the five videos is that bright and warm colors are associated with happier

music. This is clearly seen in "You Know I Love You" by Howard Jones. The phenomenon is also evident in Madonna's "Open Your Heart." In "Open Your Heart" the color scheme is complex in that there are two color schemes--one that is cold and frightening and one that is warm. Inside the peepshow, colors are cold and foreboding; this is created with varying shades of blue and black. On the other hand, outside where the small boy awaits his "Madonna," colors are shades of yellow and brown--very warm. The music for the video is somewhat mysterious because one does not know if the singer is singing with hope or despair.

The final pattern that is identified from the video sample is that if a certain video is visually dense (images overlap, causing confusion in meaning) colors associated with particular images will remain in some degree throughout the video. For example, in "Big Time" growing things are prominent. Colors associated with "growing things" are brighter shades of reds, yellows, and greens, and this is viewed throughout the video. On the other hand, money, another significant image, is seen as lighter shades of colors such as green and yellow throughout. In "Land of Confusion," Genesis is seen throughout wearing shades of gray and black. Political figures, too, are seen in darker shades of color such as black and brown.

Summary

In the five cases that were viewed for the study, four patterns of form emerged. These included:

1. Darker colors with "heavier" beats of music
2. Complementary color and music elements
3. Bright and warm colors associated with happy music
4. Repetition of image or symbol colors in "visually dense" videos

In each of the five videos, one pattern was primary to its form meaning. However, it was seen that several patterns of form can be present in a video to achieve textural meaning. It was also understood that textural meaning can be ambiguous or confusing at times without consulting content (i.e., lyrics or images).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

When one examines all of the evidence, it is clear that form is a viable way to gain insight into the meaning of a music video. It is not complete meaning, however, because content is needed along with form. It is impossible to gain clear insight into an art form (unless it is abstract art where form is content) through a mere examination of form alone or its content. They are difficult to separate as one can clearly see in this analysis. In the "Land of Confusion" video, for example, meaning was lost by examining form alone--political knowledge and an examination of the lyrics were needed in order to better understand its content meaning with form. When form and content work together, however, it is a significant method of gaining an understanding of a particular art form such as music videos.

Because of the powerful effect that music videos have had on culture in the past decade, it is important to understand them. Music videos, for example, have altered fashion for the young and have played an important role in the development of advertising. Because of these achievements,

it is useful to understand the meanings that are conveyed by structure within music videos. Form, as a part of structure, is an important focus of analysis. However, as stated before, analysis of form alone is not enough to gain complete insight into the meaning of a music video message.

Problems

Sample

One of the primary concerns of this study arose from the sample of videos that was chosen. Under the strictest definitions, not all of the videos fell into the purely conceptual category. Several videos borderlined the performance category. To truly understand form, more conceptual videos should be used. As stated earlier, directors of such videos are more likely to manipulate form elements than are directors of performance-type videos.

Coding Scheme

The coding scheme for analysis was not complete in that color was looked at more broadly than music. Music, for example, could have been examined for its harmonies and melodies in order to obtain better meanings. Many music categories were too narrow, and analysis did not use those specific categories. This was true in the case of duration, length of music, attack and decay to an extent, and loudness. The items that were key in identifying music textures were

the actual instruments that were used, as well as the rhythms that were employed. Informal subjective data analysis was helpful in the music analysis, however, because it extracted feelings or associations from the coder.

Color categories for the study were useful; however, it was difficult at times to separate dominant and secondary colors. This could have been prevented with less-vague coding instructions. Difficulties prevailed with image-dense videos because there were so many objects or color images. Code sheets did not provide provisions for image-dense videos; therefore, difficulties arose. The category that did prove helpful in coding "Big Time" and "Land of Confusion," both image-dense videos, was the brightness variable. Although images were separated, colors were categorized primarily as being either dark or bright and were then compared with music structure. In other videos such as "You Know I Love You" and "Open Your Heart," the actual hues themselves were more helpful for analysis, although colors were still analyzed on the brightness spectrum.

Reliability and Validity

Because there was only one coder for this study, feelings or associations with colors and music were limited. As seen from the literature (i.e., Wayne Barlow's Foundations in Music¹), life experiences are pertinent in the

emotional understanding of both color and music. Therefore, in this case, a full range of associations or feelings was not gathered or maintained for the study. The question of reliability and validity is important here also because the study relied heavily on the researcher's objectivity. It is not to say that the researcher did not practice objectivity, but there is always the question of discrete misunderstanding in categorizing or analysis.

Future Analysis

In future research, several things could be done to gain more significant information about form. For example, different form variables could be used. Viable variables such as shape, angle, and lighting techniques are excellent tools for examining form. In this study, lighting appeared to be very important in seeing colors. Colors were sometimes muddled or exemplified because of lighting, and because of this, lighting appears to be the next step in better understanding form. From the music perspective, harmony and melody are good variables to better understand music form.

From this exploratory study, it is evident that more research is needed in the structure area of music videos. Much has been conducted in the content area such as studies concerning violence and sex, but music video form has not

been recognized as important in the understanding of music video format. Because music video structure is based on production principles of both video and film, many believe that the rules concerning structure or form are the same for music videos. This is true to an extent, but music videos should not be classified as either just video or film because they are a synthesis of both. They are probably best approached as an entirely new format.

Summary

In this study, it was clear that form is a good way to examine music videos, but it does not go far enough to entirely understand a video. Content is needed along with form to fully understand a music video's concept. Music videos have been an important part of society's culture in the 1980s, and it is important to understand them. Form, as a part of music videos' structure, is an important focus of analysis. Problems evolved as the study progressed. These problems included form variables for both color and music and defining concept videos. Reliability and validity depended heavily on the coder or researcher but did not prove to be a problem in the analysis. Future research should focus on other form variables such as harmony and melody for music and lighting, angle, and shapes for the visual aspect. Overall, it is clear that more research is needed in the area of the music video format.

Endnotes--Chapter V

¹Wayne Barlow, Foundations of Music (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953), p. 11.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arnheim, Rudolf. Art and Visual Perception. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.
- _____. Film as Art. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957.
- _____. Visual Thinking. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.
- Ball, John, and Byrnes, Francis G., eds. Research, Principles, and Practices in Visual Communication. East Lansing: National Project in Agricultural Communications, Michigan State University, 1960.
- Barlow, Wayne. Foundations of Music. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953.
- Birren, Faber. Color Psychology and Color Therapy. New Hyde Park: University Books, 1961.
- Cocks, Jay, et al. "Sing a Song of Seeing." Time, December 26, 1983.
- Delameter, Jerome. "Performing Arts--The Musical." In American Film Genres. Edited by Stuart M. Kaminsky. Pflaum Publishing, 1974.
- Durgnat, Raymond. Films and Feelings. London: Faber and Faber, 1967.
- Evans, Ralph M. An Introduction to Color. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1948.
- Fell, John. A History of Films. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973.
- Giannetti, Louis. Understanding Movies. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1982.
- _____, and Eyman, Scott. Flashback: A Brief History of Film. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1986.

- Glennon, James. Understanding Music. London: Robert Hale and Co., 1973.
- Gold, Nick. "Rock Music and the Senses." In How Does It Feel? Edited by Mick Csaky. New York: Harmony Books, 1979.
- Jacobson, Egbert. Basic Color. Chicago: Paul Theobald, 1948.
- Japanese National Commission for UNESCO. Japan: Its Land, People and Culture. Tokyo: Ministry of Education, 1964.
- Katz, Ephraim. The Film Encyclopedia. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Publishers, 1979.
- Klima, George J. Multi-Media and Human Perception. Elenora: Meridian Press, 1974.
- Marsh, David. Fortunate Son: The Best of Dave Marsh. New York: Random House, 1985.
- Mitchell, Elvis. "'Miami Vice': Losing Its Virtue." Rolling Stone, March 27, 1986.
- Moorfoot, Rex. Television in the Eighties: The Total Equation. London: British Broadcasting Co., 1982.
- Neises, Charles P., ed. The Beatles Reader. Ann Arbor, Mich.: The Pierian Press, 1984.
- Schaffner, Nicholas. The British Invasion: From the First Wave to the New Wave. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1983.
- Scheurer, Timothy. "The Variety Show." In TV Genres. Edited by Brian G. Rose. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985.
- Seiderman, Tony. "MTV Aging Via Second Net." Billboard, September 1, 1986.
- Shipman, David. The Story of Cinema: An Illustrated History, Vol. 1. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984.
- Shore, Michael. The Rolling Stone Book of Rock Video. New York: Rolling Stone Press, Straight Arrow Publishers, 1984.

Snow, Robert P. Creating Media Culture. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1983.

Steinberg, Cobbett S. TV Facts. New York: Facts on File, 1980.

Stempel, Guido. Research Methods in Mass Communication. Edited by Bruce H. Westley. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1981.

Topper, Judith. "Music Video Colors Advertising: Mainstream Moves Out of Ordinary." Backstage, May 18, 1984.

Zettl, Herbert. Sight Sound Motion: Applied Media Aesthetics. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1973.

_____. Television Production Handbook. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1984.

APPENDIX A

CODING INSTRUMENT

CODING INSTRUMENT

OBJECTIVE CODING SHEET

Date_____

Name of Video:

Date of Release:

Producer/Director:

Record Company:

Color Scheme of most important objects relative to video:

Dominant Colors

Object (s)	Hue	Brightness	Saturation
	(i.e. red, blue)	(i.e. light, dark)	(i.e. highly, less)

Secondary Colors

Object (s)	Hue	Brightness	Saturation
	(i.e. red, blue)	(i.e. light, dark)	(i.e. highly, less)

Music Scheme:

Identified instruments (i.e. rhythm guitar, bass, percussion)

Describe singer(s)'s voice (i.e. soothing, irritating, melodic)

Describe musical accompaniment (i.e. percussive, melodic, pop, bright)

Pitch: High Low

Timbre: Thin Rich Brassy, Bold

Loudness/Intensity: Loud Soft

Did music crescendo or decrescendo dramatically or gradually?

Duration of music/phrasing: Long Short

Actual time of music: _____

Attack/Decay of individual instruments: Fast Slow

ANALYSIS OF DATA (Subjective):

What feeling does dominant color encode?

happy/light sad/heavy mystery other (describe) _____

What feeling does secondary color scheme encode?

happy/light sad/heavy mystery other (describe) _____

What is the overall color "texture"? Explain (i.e. bright colors convey feeling of happiness and joy):

MUSIC

What feeling does overall music scheme encode?

happy/light sad/heavy mystery other (describe) _____

What is the overall music "texture"? Explain (i.e. upbeat music conveys feeling of happiness and joy)

What is the color/music combination texture? Why?

What is the relationship of the color and music textures? Are they complementary or contrasting? Why?

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



3 1293 03084 8117