COVERING MUSIC: TRACING THE SEMIOTICS OF BEATLES ALBUM COVERS THROUGH THE CULTURAL CIRCUIT

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ABSTRACT

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Semiotics and visual rhetoric are a large part of technical communications. Technical communicators often use visuals within the documents they are writing and formatting. Visual rhetoric goes beyond the signs used for assistance; it's everywhere. One such example is album covers. Album covers are considered cultural images, but when looked at as a product, they travel through the cultural circuit. The cultural circuit looks to bridge the gap between cultural studies and technical communication. For this paper, the Beatles' album covers were used because of the great influence the band had on both music and visuals. Through a textual analysis of three Beatles' album covers: *With the Beatles*, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *The Beatles* ("The White Album") and the other six top selling albums of those years (1964, 1967, and 1969, respectively), were analyzed to learn if the Beatles covers were visual examples of Mikhail Bakhtin's monoglossia, heteroglossia and polyglossia. This is important to discover since this theory is ubiquitous in society (i.e democrat vs. republican, comedy vs. tragedy), and can be applied to images as well as texts and ideologies. The conclusions stated that while, in comparison to six other album covers of those years, *With the Beatles*, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and *The Beatles* can be considered heteroglossic or polyglossic, but after traveling through the cultural circuit, being redistributed by computers and rearticulated, they are monoglossic. However, since these covers have transcended from heteroglossic and polyglossic to become
monoglossic, they are ultimately polyglossic, because they become their own genre, resulting in bricolage.
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INTRODUCTION

As the field of technical communication grows, the use of visual and graphic representation grows as well. The world is saturated in visual rhetoric and this can help a reader understand a document better and aid in the ease of implementation. As audiences become more expectant and receptive to these visuals, a better understanding of visual rhetoric and semiotics will allow technical communicators another facet to encode information the reader is receiving.

Visual rhetoric is ubiquitous from traffic signals to computer manuals, to fliers and pamphlets to advertisements. At the same time, such popular media like album covers also use visual rhetoric. Album covers were once a way for a band to visually connect their music and themselves to their fans. Now that downloading music has become so popular, the need for album covers or CD inserts has decreased and the visual representation of music is mostly seen in music videos and band websites. Covers originally served as a way to protect the vinyl, but by the late 1950's, the covers had become a part of the band's marketing package (Goldberg A 36). Then, in the 1990's, the size of album covers, as well as the impact they conveyed, shrunk to accommodate compact discs. Currently with the evolution of music downloading, the significance of cover art is on the verge of disappearing. With millions of people choosing to download an album instead of buying it from a store, the need for album covers is shifting. What was once a tangible item to hold and feel as though one knew the musical artist is now condensed to a corner of a computer screen, or the computer screen itself, on a site where the buying public has only that one virtual, visual representation of the album. The visual
art on computers is widely available, but before the era of MTV, album covers acted as the first marketing visual of music. Now, the album cover is nearly unnecessary.

Album covers can also be studied as a product. As culture evolves, album covers and the visual rhetoric they encompass have become a marketing product. As this product, album covers go through a cultural circuit. As J. Blake Scott states in his article, "Tracking Rapid HIV Testing Through the Cultural Circuit," "the notion of circulation enables us to see how cultural products pass through a range of meanings and uses as they are taken up at various points in the social formation" (Scott 201). When applying the cultural circuit to album covers one can see that visual rhetoric has given album covers many meanings at various points throughout the years. With the cultural circuit, album covers can be viewed through their production, representation, distribution, reception/interpretation, and application/rearticulation (Scott 203). This is important because production, distribution, reception, and application changes along with technology.

Through visual rhetoric, as both a marketing tool and a symbol of themselves, one band revolutionized album covers and led a generation of music into an art form, separate from, yet representational of their music. Their album covers allowed cover art to be viewed as serious works of art that lead the emphasis into marketing an album in another direction. The Beatles undeniably changed music. They were together only eight years, but in those eight years they impacted the music industry forever. Along with the music, their album covers are recognizable and iconic. Some specific examples (With the Beatles, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, and The Beatles) could be considered visual examples of Bakhtin's monoglossia, heteroglossia, and polyglossia. According to
Mikhail Bakhtin in his book, *The Dialogic Imagination*, monoglossia is a centrifugal force that is "clearly more powerful and ubiquitous," while heteroglossia is, "less powerful and have complex ontological status" (xix). Polyglossia, "fully frees consciousness from the tyranny of its own language and its own myth of language" (61). In this paper, I examined how the iconic images of the Beatles represent a theory that dominates the world we live in.

**Topic of Examination**

Previous literature shows studies on both the Beatles and visual rhetoric. My research combines both the Beatles and visual rhetoric and hopefully reduces the gap between them both. I also hope to further areas of research done by both rhetoricians and popular culture studies. Our culture is so strongly steeped in visuals that it is interesting and fundamental to analyze them further, and technical communication is a field where writing and visuals work together to convey information. One area where words and graphics work together is album covers. The Beatles are one such example of figures, that used images to convey their message in album covers and have a strong place in our popular history.

To bridge the concepts of visual rhetoric and popular culture, I will be studying the *With the Beatles*, *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and *The Beatles* ("The White Album") covers through the use of semiotics and visual rhetoric to find the answers to the following questions:

- Are these particular album covers viable visual representations of Bakhtin's concept of monoglossia, heteroglossia, and polyglossia?
After moving through the cultural circuit can these covers remain heteroglossic and polyglossic, or do they become monoglossia?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Although some research has been done on Beatles album covers, it is important, in order to answer the previous questions, to look at both Beatles album covers (With the Beatles, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, and The Beatles) and other album covers of the time to truly establish the monoglossia, heteroglossia, and polyglossia of the Beatles covers. Through a textual analysis with a semiotic lens, I will be analyzing the Beatles covers as text and uncovering the significance that is associated with the covers as signs and define their relationship with Bakhtin's monoglossia, heteroglossia and polyglossia. By comparing covers, the visuals representation of the Beatles could be more fully defined. I will also be weaving the cultural circuit throughout to demonstrate the covers as a technical text, showing how a cultural study of visual rhetoric works within Technical Communication.

Method

I will look at the six top selling albums of 1964, 1967, and 1968 (the years when With the Beatles, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, and The Beatles were released respectively) according to Billboard Magazine. I have chosen With the Beatles because it is the first album cover that was released in the United States. Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band was chosen because it is considered the first concept album, both musically and through the cover (as a different band performing in front of an audience of notable figures). The Beatles was selected because with no picture of the musical artist and any noticeable title or band name, it completely went against the conventions of
album covers of that time. I will then list what all of these albums (Beatles and non-
Beatles) have in common or differences they may have. Variables I will be looking at will be:

- Type of graphic (photograph vs. illustration)
- The use of color vs. black and white in photographs
- Pictures of band vs. other visuals
- Expressions of band members (if photographs of the bands are used)
- Placement of band name on cover
- Placement of album title on cover
- Dominance of band name on cover
- Dominance of album title on cover
- Perspective and angle of photograph (if photographs of the band are used)
- Shading of photographs (if photographs of the band are used)

I will then use the same variables to analyze *With the Beatles*, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely
Hearts Club*, and *The Beatles*. I will compare the Beatles covers to the other album
covers and then apply Bakhtin's concepts of the dialogic imagination to the Beatles
covers. They are defined as:

- **Monoglossia** - centrifugal force that is "clearly more powerful and ubiquitous"
  (xix). This means that monoglossia is the discourse of power and is continuously
  seeking to maintain that power.

- **Heteroglossia** - centripetal force that is "less powerful and has complex
  ontological status" (xix). Heteroglossia is the discourse of challenge and is
continuously trying to take power away. Although it may have a power position, it never remains that way for long.

- **Polyglossia** - "fully frees consciousness from the tyranny of its own language and its own myth of language" (61). Polyglossia is the discourse of transformation. It wants to escape the binary of monoglossia and heteroglossia and stand on its own.

Instead of using a novel as the text as Bakhtin does, I will be using specific Beatles album covers as text and analyzing the language of the album covers.

**THE BEATLES' MYTH**

The Beatles revolutionized the music industry. They proved that artists could grow and change and still make great music. The 1960's were a decade of great change and revolution. The Beatles moved right with it, changing their style along with how culture was changing. The number of fans the Beatles had grew and remained loyal. Even 40 years later, Beatles are gaining new fans. They are still considered some of the best musicians in history. If the music industry was a monarch, the Beatles would be among the top of the royal court.

The Beatles recorded music together for only eight years. This was because at the top of their popularity, they had already grown tired of making music as a band. George Harrison, John Lennon, Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr each had their own musical interests. The band had become used to the monotony of the music industry. They were known as great performers, yet were rarely performing and when they did, they were just going through the motions, much like the wrestlers that Roland Barthes writes of in *Mythologies*. He states, “the function of the wrestler is not to win; it is to go exactly through the motions which are expected of him” (16). The Beatles were not putting any
more of themselves into the performance than was necessary for the fans and not publicizing any problems within the band. In fact, much of the conflict within the band was not well known to the public until years after their breakup. The Beatles, for the most part, were able to keep up appearances that they were one solid unit.

Because of their outstanding popularity and the fact that they broke up while they were still at the top of the music industry, the band was not viewed as just a band anymore; they were seen as more than real. According to Barthes’ *Mythologies*, “…kings have a superhuman essence…” (Barthes 32). The Beatles and other celebrities are often seen as monarchy figures, and therefore are seen as "better" than the average population. This is when the myth of the Beatles was formed. After the deaths of Lennon in 1980 and Harrison in 2001, the band could have lost that superhuman quality, but it has been just the opposite; the music and the image still live on in them and transcend the albums they made.

While the Beatles appeared to be four friends who loved to make music together, it was a different story behind the scenes and albums. *Let it Be* is basically a documentary of the band's breakup. But fans were still hesitant to accept the friction. According to Barthes, “The mythical signification on the hand, is never arbitrary; it is always in part motivated, and unavoidable contains some analogy” (126). The mythological signification of the band, even after their breakup and subsequent revelation of tensions, still managed to keep the myth of the band and the music in tact. They were still able to live on in their images and music. Their myth grew even stronger after the deaths of Lennon and Harrison. Now the remaining members speak only of the good in the Beatles.
The mythology of the Beatles has helped the band to live on. The Beatles were constantly changing their image and audiences can now see that in every stage of their careers. Even at the beginning at their introduction to the U.S. in 1964, the band was considered groundbreaking. Years later, it is apparent who the Beatles influenced is apparent. Artists such as U2, the Beastie Boys, and even Madonna are examples of musicians that have continued to let their music and image evolve with the times. They, like the Beatles, have remained the same, but changed at the same time, in that they have maintained their dominance in the industry; their albums are anticipated and well-publicized, yet their music changes from album to album and this shift influences new artists. This is like Michel Foucault's concept of tradition. He states in *The Archeology of Knowledge*,

> Take the notion of tradition; it is intended to give a special temporal status to a group of phenomena that are both successive and identical (or at least similar); it makes it possible to rethink the dispersion of history in the form of the same; it to pursue without discontinuity the endless search for the origin; tradition enables us to isolate the new against a background of permanence, and to transfer its merit to originality, to genius, to the decisions of proper to individuals (21).

Without tradition, we wouldn't be able to recognize the new. The tradition of the Beatles' music allowed them to create new music, let them maintain their phenomenon, and let their music turn in a new direction. Their influence on music (and in turn visuals) lives on today. Their myth lives on.

The new direction their music took allowed the Beatles to change their image as times changed. They reinvented themselves to stay ahead of their old selves. Fred
Johnson, in his article, “U2, Mythology, and Mass-Mediated Survival,” states that, “as the culture behind the myth evolves, the mythical signifier itself evolves – or falls out of use and disappears” (84). The Beatles recognized this in themselves and the world around them. Their myth also holds importance in the fact that they were one of the first bands to change and mature with the times. Johnson also writes, “To maintain cultural relevance, the mediated performer must be a potential carrier for numerous cultural concepts in many different contexts in many different times” (85). They were some of the first performers to appear in films and made a documentary about the making of an album. As their career progressed, they progressed with new mediums, such as film and television. With each new medium, they entered the cultural circuit. They are still going around the cultural circuit, over 30 years after their breakup. With advancing technology, new mediums are born and the Beatles continue in the cultural circuit.

THE CULTURAL CIRCUIT

J. Blake Scott states in his article, "Tracking Rapid HIV Testing Through the Cultural Circuit," that, "Cultural forms or structures are not essential or static but can be rearticulated in different ways" (202). Technical communication works this way as well. As different technology is enhanced and made available to consumers, technical communication changes, both textually and through design. It is rearticulated. As computers and their capabilities grow, the documentation that accompanies them is altered and perhaps more detailed. The same can be said of album covers. As covers have diminished in size and distribution, the design of covers (the documentation itself) has changed to accommodate its use.
How do cultural studies and technical communication work together? According to Scott, "Cultural studies can help address…the narrowing emphasis on the pragmatics of the production process, and the sparse attention given to broader power relations that condition technical communication" (199). Technical communication caters to audiences. They dictate what is written and designed in technical documents. Since technical communicators interact so intensely with audiences, how could technical communication and cultural studies not collide? Cultural forms are like new technology; "discursively shaped and materially inhabited" (Johnson 43). Album covers, while not necessarily new technologies, or in some cases, not considered technology at all, are new in how they are used, or not used, as the case may be. But album covers are shaped as marketable product and design and technical communicators have a part in that. As Scott states,

First, technical communicators can help ensure that the design process is more responsive to and inclusive of users. Second, technical communicators can help account for and become directly involved in the marketing and distribution of technology and related communication. Finally, technical communicators can help ensure that technical documents accompanying technology shape its application, interpretation, and subsequent uses in ethical ways…(209)

Technical communicators can work this way with album covers as well. Album covers encompass the various points in the cultural circuit: productions, representation, distribution, reception/interpretation, and application/rearticulation. Beatles album covers make important statements in each of these. Production works as the actual photographs and concepts developed for each cover. Representation works as the iconicity of each. Distribution has changed since the original covers in that it has moved from albums to
tapes to compact discs and to computers. Reception/interpretation is the place each cover has in history (which connects to representation). Application/rearticulation is constantly evolving because of the new forms of distribution.

The cultural circuit constantly offers a paradigm that includes each point. The iconic nature of Beatles album covers have a place at the different points in the circuit. First of all, these photographs have been produced and reproduced (starting and completing the cultural circuit). Secondly, the representation of the band through the photographs also has a place in the cultural circuit. The public's desire to see the photographs and what meaning the band was trying to convey has allowed the photographs to reproduced several times over, in many different genres. Images of the Beatles are recognizable in our culture and continue to be. However, can these Beatles covers remain heteroglossic or polyglossic after they have traveled through the cultural circuit? Do the production, representation, distribution, reception/interpretation, and rearticulation affect this?

Production and Representation

Before music videos, album covers were one of the few ways to represent music visually. Angelynn Grant states that album covers "offer the opportunity to create a visual to represent a non-visual art" (82). They acted much like a music video does now. Additionally, covers provide a form of advertising and marketing. According to Ian Inglis, in his article, "Nothing You Can't See That Isn't Shown': The Album Covers of the Beatles," album covers tend to follow the same conventions of other forms of media, "notably the news headline and/or lead, which acts as enticement to the reader to keep reading; and the magazine advertisements or television commercial, which similarly seek
to attract and retain the consumer's attention" (84). If a potential consumer's attention can be caught by a visual on a cover, they might be curious of the music and buy the album.

It is interesting to note though, that when album covers were such an important marketing tool, they were so conformed to every other cover of every other band. Every album had to feature a picture of the artist or band, and that picture had to show them smiling and happy. Also, every album had to predominately feature the name of the artist or band and the album title. Radicals, the Beatles broke this mold as often as they could. As Sam Sutherland states in his article, "Show and Sell: The Singular, Long-Playing Relationship Between Entertainment and the Boxes It Comes In," which discusses the trends in album marketing through covers from the beginning in the 1940's to the technology driven present, "Conventional type placement and product identification were abandoned, notably by the Beatles, who eliminated their name from cover designs, beginning with Rubber Soul, setting in motion a dismantling of the normal copy protocols long held mandatory by marketers" (53). Beginning with their first album cover, With the Beatles, the Beatles changed the conventional notions of album covers.

To show the distinction between Beatles covers and other album covers of the time, I will be looking at the following album covers, from the years 1964, 1967, and 1968 with the following variables in mind:

- The type of graphic featured (photograph vs. illustration)
- The use of color vs. black and white (if photograph was used)
- Facial expressions of musical artist (if photograph was used)
- Placement and dominance of artists' name on cover
- Placement and dominance of album title on cover
- Perspective and angle of photograph (if used)
- Shading of photograph (if used)

1964

**Louis Armstrong, Hello Dolly**

![Image of Louis Armstrong on the cover of the album Hello, Dolly! Louis Armstrong]

**Figure 1**
- Black and white photograph of Armstrong
- Armstrong is smiling
- Armstrong's name is in large, block, red lettering, centered at top
- The album title is thinner, red lettering, directly above Armstrong's name
- The photograph is taken at a horizontal angle
- The photograph is grainy

**Beach Boys, Beach Boys Concert**

![Image of The Beach Boys performing on the cover of the album Beach Boys Concert]

**Figure 2**
• The band is in color, against a black backdrop

• Band is smiling and performing

• Large title in red and yellow block lettering, centered at the top

• The photograph was taken close-up, but far enough away to show their entire bodies

**Original Soundtrack, *Hello Dolly***

![Image of the *Hello Dolly* soundtrack cover]

**Figure 3**

• Bright colored graphic in left corner, of black background, next to Carol Channing's name and above title which is bordered in blue

• Title in all capitol letters, center justified

• Channing's name is pink and larger than the names of the rest of the cast (which are in yellow)

*Armstrong's* *Hello Dolly*, *The Beach Boys Beach Boys in Concert* and the *Hello Dolly* soundtrack are all more conventional album covers. They contain all of the typical features like, large title and distinct pictures and images of artists.
Barbra Streisand, *People*

Figure 4
- Color photograph of the back of (presumably) Streisand on a beach
- Streisand's name is in red lettering, right justified
- Album title is in blue lettering, directly under Streisand's name
  The lettering is not too large, but pops out against the color of the clouds in the sky
- The photograph was taken at a distance, Streisand's figure is small in the center of the photograph

Streisand's cover has heteroglossic tendencies. While it does feature her name and album title, the photograph of Streisand is of her back. While it gives the feeling to the audience that they are standing with her looking at the sunset, it does not focus on her face and does not directly announce that this is a Barbra Streisand album.
The Beatles, *With the Beatles*

![Image of With the Beatles album cover]

**Figure 5**
- Black and white photograph
- No band name on cover
- Title at the top in white strip above photograph
- Horizontal perspective, with Lennon in front and Starr in lower right corner
- Shadowing over right half of their faces

There was one other album that rounded out the top six selling albums of 1964. It was *A Hard Day's Night*, by the Beatles. However, for the purpose of this study, I chose only to take *With the Beatles* into consideration because this was the first Beatles album released in the United States, making it the first time many fans were introduced to the band.

Gary Heba explains M.M. Bakhtin's heteroglossic discourse in the article, “Everyday Nightmares,” as a way to “de-center tradition, function as languages of emerging or revisionary social orders” (107). Monoglossic discourse can be defined as a hegemonic discourse that seeks to maintain power; in other words, a “totalizing master narrative with sources of power and truth” (Heba 107). In 1964, the year *With the Beatles* was released, an album cover would be a color photograph showing the artist smiling or dancing and
singing. Often times, the album title was as large as the photo. Take the Beach Boys, 
*Beach Boys Concert*, for example. The band is in color, making that the main focus of the 
cover. They are performing and smiling while they do so. The titles are large and 
centered at top. Another example is Louis Armstrong, *Hello Dolly*. While it is a black and 
white photograph, it features Armstrong smiling, with his name and album title in red 
lettering centered at the top, which brings the focus down to Armstrong's image. *With the 
Beatles* was one of the first pop/rock and roll album cover photographs that experimented 
with positioning and shadowing, and left off the band's name, revolutionizing traditional, 
conventional album covers. It "de-centered" the traditional, conventional album cover. It 
took the elements needed on an album cover, and redeveloped how they should be 
presented.

Album covers were a way for artists to establish their identities. *With the Beatles*, 
as Inglis states, "served to consolidate their identity" (Inglis 86). The black and white 
photograph of the band, with their faces half-silhouetted, also tried to consolidate John 
Lennon's identity as leader of the band. "Visual Social Semiotics: Understanding How 
Still Images Make Meaning," by Claire Harrison explains how professional 
communicators can use social semiotics in their documents or website and describes how 
various functions can be used in terms of perspective, narrative, angles, salience, and 
information to "evoke generally uniform reactions" to visuals. One function that can be 
applied to *With the Beatles* would be point of view. The cover photograph's point of view 
is taken at a horizontal perspective, usually implying that equality exists (49); however, 
equality does not seem to exist in the band. On this cover, Lennon, who is up front and
his face is not as shadowed as the others, visually appears stronger than the other members.

With every album released, the Beatles were able to change the concepts of covers for all other musicians. Contrary to the usual smiling, Technicolor photographs of artists, the Beatles were photographed in black and white, not smiling and their faces half-silhouetted on *With the Beatles*. According to Inglis,

Black and white photographs had been used for jazz album covers, whose standards of design were consistently high, but it was the first time to my knowledge, that a black and white photograph had been used on an LP cover for popular musicians (91).

Starting with their first cover, the Beatles were experimenting with different visual styles than what music fans were used to.

1967

**The Monkees, More of the Monkees**

![Figure 6](image)

- Color photograph framed by olive green border
- Two members are smiling and two appear somber
• Title is a combination of black lettering and the Monkees logo, which overlaps the photograph, not quite centered and not quite left justified
• The photograph is taken at an upward angle, looking up at the band

**The Monkees, *Headquarters***

![The Monkees, Headquarters](image)

**Figure 7**
• Color photograph of band with white background
• They appear smiling and playful
• The Monkees' name is in the form of their logo in the left corner
• The album name is in blue under half of the band name, angled upward
• The photograph is taken from above, the band is looking up at the photograph

**Bobbie Gentry, *Ode to Billy Joe***

![Bobbie Gentry, Ode to Billy Joe](image)

**Figure 8**
• Color photograph, Gentry on the right side
• The name, Gentry, is in large, white lettering, left justified

• The album title, Billy Joe, is in orange lettering, left justified, directly underneath

**Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass, *Sounds Like***

![Herb Alpert](image)

**Figure 9**

• Color photograph of Alpert's head against a blue backdrop; Alpert's head takes up 80 percent of the cover

• Name is in large white font in the lower left corner

• Album title is in black font, directly above band name

• Alpert has a serious look on his face

**Diana Ross and the Supremes, *Greatest Hits***

![Diana Ross](image)

**Figure 10**
• Small drawing of band in evening gowns featured in green and yellow tones in the center of cover, framed by dark blue border

• Band name is centered at top (Supremes is the largest, Ross's name is smaller but at top)

• Album title directly below artist's name in smaller serif font

• In the drawing, two of the three Supremes have serious expressions on their faces while one is smiling.

All of these albums, once again, have the typical elements of album cover design: names of artists, album titles, and photographs or graphic of the artists.

**The Monkees, Pisces, Aquarius, Capricorn and Jones, Ltd.**

![Image of album cover]

**Figure 11**

- Drawn graphic of color flowers and black and white band members, waist high;

  The band members have no faces as if trying to hide their identity

- The Monkees, in the form of their logo, rests on top of the flowers

- The album title is written across the top of the album; encompasses the entire width of the cover

While this Monkees' album does encompass traditional elements of album covers, the fact that the band members were drawn without faces makes this cover considerably
heteroglossic. There is no smiling on this cover, there is no frowning either. Perhaps because of the number of albums the Monkees released in 1967, the band wanted a way to establish this record from the rest of their work.

The Beatles, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*

![Figure 12](image)

- The band is front and center, in brightly colored suits, holding brass instruments that set them apart from a crowd including Mae West, Lenny Bruce, Dylan Thomas, Stuart Sutcliffe, Shirley Temple, Sri Mahavatara Babji, Albert Einstein and even the Beatles themselves as the suit wearing, mop-topped band that arrived in America in 1964. The crowd surrounding the band is notable figures, some pictured in color and some in black and white. Also among the band are stone figures and busts, even a television set. The background is sky blue.
- Their name is predominant on the bottom, written in red flowers
- The title is on drum at bottom, in front of the band

The "Summer of Love" in 1967 allowed many bands to experiment with their album covers using bright psychedelic colors and distorted photographs or illustrations. Although some were experimental, most of these albums display a picture of the artist and the name of the artist and album. The Monkees, *Pisces, Aquarius, Capricorn and*
Jones, Ltd is one such cover that includes visual psychedelic themes of drawn flowers with the drawn band members having no faces. Two of the more conventional covers of 1967 are The Supremes Greatest Hits and Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass Sounds Like. The Supremes are also in a drawing that is completely centered in the cover with their names and titles top and centered. Alpert's picture takes up most of the cover, from top to bottom. In these pictures, the artists have serious expressions on their face, a throw back to 1964 when With the Beatles featured the Beatles without smiles. No album cover that year was truly as complex as Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, which displayed a concept that paralleled the music, which was the first concept album ever produced. This cover truly fits the definition of heteroglossia. Because at first glance, the band is faces in a sea of many faces, the cover appears to be less powerful; not as flashy as other covers of 1967. It is complex in its details of living and dead figures and identities, bringing a story to life.

On Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, no one member is visually portrayed as leader of the group. In fact, for this cover, the Beatles tried to form another identity. By 1967, the Beatles themselves were growing tired of "Beatlemania" and as producer George Martin recalls, "the boys were tiring of their prison of fame and each wanted their identity back" (Martin 10). Martin recounted the experience of making Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, one of the best known Beatles albums, featuring perhaps, one of the most well known and iconic images of the Beatles, in his book, With a Little Help from my Friends: the Making of Sgt. Pepper. Paul McCartney invented the idea that the Beatles would become Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (Martin 63). McCartney and artist Peter Blake envisioned the concept of the cover where the Beatles, as Sgt.
Peppers Lonely Heart Club Band, would perform in front of an audience of famous and infamous people, whom the Beatles admired. Among the audience are the Beatles themselves as the mop-topped band that arrived in the United States in 1964, which helps to further separate them from their original identity.

*Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* also changed album covers by being a complex, narrative, visual representation of the album, the first concept album in history, every song connected together. (Martin). It was also released early in the "Summer of Love," during 1967. According to Allan Moore in his essay, "The Brilliant Career of Sgt. Pepper," the examination *Sgt. Pepper's* as a strong textual influence in the 1960's, he compares the counterculture and "Summer of Love" to the movement in music the Beatles were making. It was a shift away from the conventions of the early 60's when the Vietnam War and the Beatles first began. The need for experimentation and self-growth figured predominately to 1967 society and the Beatles were no different. According to Moore, "Peter Blake's cover art and gatefold sleeve give the album an identity rare at the time (and recognizable even today)," and that the album, "amplifies how heady, how unrepeatable, and ultimately how irreducible that summer of 1967 was" (151). This shows how the Beatles reacted and led cultural influences.

Paul Kohl agrees with Moore that *Sgt. Pepper* helped to redefine album covers and that could be used as a text. In his article, "A Splendid Time is Guaranteed by All: The Beatles as Agents of Carnival," Kohl discusses how *Sgt. Pepper's* evoked Bakhtin's concept of carnival. Like carnivals, that are "positive spaces of leveling," the music juxtaposed several different sounds, broke down the hierarchy of music and allowed the masses to enjoy something they had never heard or seen before. Further, this can be
applied to the *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* cover. The Beatles were never afraid to break down the hierarchy of the music industry and try something new. Kohl's analysis of Beatles music compared to Bakhtin's ideas of carnival stresses the importance of the cultural influence the band had on music and art, with a perspective not viewed before. This reinforces the cultural circuit with the Beatles using culture to affect the reception/interpretation point for fans.

1968

**Simon and Garfunkel, The Graduate**

![Figure 13](image)

- Photograph, scene from film, *The Graduate*
- Name of musicians in smaller, black lettering under title
- Title in large black lettering, right justified

**Simon and Garfunkel, Bookends**
Figure 14
- Black and white photograph of group
- Band name is in small white lettering at bottom of cover next to title
- Title is in small, white lettering at bottom of cover
- Horizontal perspective

Glen Campbell, *Wichita Lineman*

Figure 15
- Color photograph of Campbell, on a green background
- Artist's name in large, white lettering, right justified
- Album title name in smaller, white lettering, right justified, directly above artist's name

These covers also are more monoglossic in that they have all conventional elements in large, noticeable fashion.
Paul Mauriat, *Blooming Hits*

Figure 16
- Color photograph of a side view of a naked woman with painting on her side, on a white background
- Artist's name in red lettering, centered, parallel to woman's leg
- Album title in smaller, purple lettering on top of artist's name

Big Brother and the Holding Company, *Cheap Thrills*

Figure 17
- Several drawn graphics are squared off in the appearance of a comic book
- Band name in black lettering on top of yellow in right corner next to title
- Title is in large red lettering at top of album, centered

Both Mauriat's and Big Brother and the Holding Company's covers take traditional elements of cover design and skew them to become more heteroglossic. While their
names and titles are loudly clear, the images used, one of a naked woman and the other as a comic book, allow these albums to stand out from their counterparts.

**The Beatles, The Beatles**

- White square
- The words, "The Beatles" in embossed lettering
- Serial number on the bottom.

After the release of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, the use of bold colors and experimenting with ideas of psychedelic became common practice for album covers. But there were many different styles of covers in 1968. From conventional pictures of artists that took up the majority of the cover and predominately featured the title (Glen Campbell *Witchita Lineman*) to a simple black and white photograph and small mention of titles (Simon and Garfunkel *Bookends*), all albums had some sort of image on the cover, (Paul Mauriat featured a naked woman on *Blooming Hits*) and the name of the artist and album (Big Brother and the Holding Company's *Cheap Thrills* resembled a comic book). "The White Album," in its attempt to distance itself from other album covers of the time is very polyglossic (seeking to escape the binary constructions of
monoglossia and heteroglossia). The cover goes completely against the conventions of album covers of 1968 and any other time for that matter. While traditionally, album covers feature some sort of photograph of the band and the name of the band and album predominately on the cover, "The White Album" had nothing visible, but a serial number. "The White Album" had no picture of the band, no color and the name of the band and album were not obvious; they were in raised lettering on the cover. "The White Album" completely freed itself from the tyranny of album cover design by going against convention and was able to free itself from the myth of the Beatles.

The freedom the band was looking for could be because the band could no longer find a way to represent themselves as a whole band (Blashill, et.al. 87). According to David Quantick, in his book, Revolution: The Making of the Beatles White Album, the album, (its songs and cover) had a lasting effect on pop music, the music industry, and the Beatles themselves. The book also presents the tensions and events that led to making the album and the band member's relationships with each other, which had begun to strain and become tense. They were no longer trying to confirm their identity as a band, or reinvent their identity, they were trying to escape being "The Beatles" and the blank, white square was the best way to escape into nothingness without fully escaping.

"The White Album," although completely unconventional, was considered overly commercial. According to Inglis, "It was a very radical way to package the album. Richard Hamilton (photographer) saw it, not as an art statement, but as a way of competing with the lavish design treatments of most post-Sgt. Pepper sleeves" (89). This in turn allowed "The White Album" to stand out. Instead of color standing out in a sea of black and white, the white stood out in a sea of color.
In fact, Hamilton wanted to follow *Sgt. Pepper's* colorful, eye-candy with its "polar opposite, a blank white square" (Quantick 164). However to appease record company executives, Hamilton did include a photograph of each Beatle on the inside of the cover, "to leaven the arctic wasteland of the design" (Quantick 165). "The White Album," Inglis concludes, has become an, "exceptional, if startling, alternative to the lustrous and decorative colors of psychedelia (93). Not only was it an alternative to other album covers of 1968, it was an impressive marketing tool, that stood out in a record store. It also was released with a poster of the band and can be considered multi-media. It could have also been a step back from the "Summer of Love," that extended to 1969. With the disaster of the Rolling Stones Altamont concert, where Hells Angels hired as security became violent and killed fans, the age of the hippies was over. The hippie generation had moved from a counterculture to a thorn in American culture's side, and the Beatles were shifting away from the free-love lifestyle. By the 1970's, album covers were a completely new art form and marketing tool and the Beatles were the pioneers of that redefinition.

**Distribution**

The Beatles album covers were originally distributed as a 10-inch by 10-inch square, large enough to cover an album. These images were made to cover these dimensions. Compact discs are 5 1/4 inch by 5 1/4 inch. As time moved on, the original images were manipulated to be smaller. Portions of the photograph were cropped. This is especially evident on *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, the most detailed of the Beatles covers. Some members of the audience and details at the bottom surrounding the band name do not appear on compact discs. The color tint of *With the Beatles* has
changed from its grainy brown tint to sleek and gray. In the evolution from album to compact discs, the embossed lettering spelling the Beatles on the “White Album” has disappeared. What seems like a minute detail is one of the aspects that made the cover so iconic. So while the evolution of music mediums has brought the Beatles’ music to a new era of fans, the original intent of the images is evolving in its distribution.

The current trend in music is downloading a song or an album from various Internet sites. Through legal venues, such as iTunes and walmart.com, users can view a thumbnail image of the album cover from which they are downloading songs on their screen. The user is actually downloading a thumbnail size of the album covers when they are downloading a song. For example, if a user was downloading "Strawberry Fields Forever," from *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, the cover would be displayed on the screen while the song played, as well as on the file that the user saved the song under in their computer. iPods can even feature the cover on its screen when a song is playing. This has shrunk the size of the album cover even more. Now many music fans are only seeing Beatles covers on a computer monitor, not in its full original size. What many new fans of the Beatles know of their album covers is what they see on their computer screen.

iTunes has downloadable versions of covers available that users print and insert into their blank cd case when they download an album. These can be the original cover or different designs. ITunes' process of downloading an album cover allows the user to download the album cover and track listings and print them to the size of a CD case. iTunes has also created cover art that can be used for a "mix" CD. It also gives users templates for black and white and color printers (iTunes.com). This will, perhaps, bring more attention back to album covers, allowing fans to see, although not the original
cover, a larger sense of what the covers represented. The distribution, as Scott discusses, "...cannot only affect its accessibility but transform its use, by shaping how the user will encounter and interpret it" (207). This step furthers the use of an album cover, from protection of the vinyl back to the visual representation of the music to the listener.

According to Marilyn Gillen, future album covers will be available online, “in four-color graphics, which consumers with color printers can download and print out” (1). Not only can the public go to music sites and download covers, the music industry is hoping that an artist’s website will act as an album cover. Greg Phelan, in his article, “It’s Got a Good Beat, But Where’s the Cover?” examines the music packaging shift to online services and how the image may be obsolete from the music once it evolves completely to the Internet. Even though the art may be compromised, album covers and their cover art going online affects the cultural circuit of album covers. This is a whole new way to distribute to the product. If it continues this way, images may be chosen to accommodate the space.

It is inevitable that music will turn to computers to market the album; it is how culture and communication is changing. Now, with the use of computer graphics and desktop publishing, album covers can be sleeker, more visually enhanced, and perhaps easier to market. Sutherland states,

Through it all, the need to sell the music is balanced against the constant tides of cultural change, with contemporary designers integrating fresh graphic directions from computer graphics, video and desktop publishing to update the look of packages, advertising and display materials. Much as the music itself now increasingly uses computers, art departments have followed their peers in other
marketing sectors to adopt computer technology to generate and organize imagery, assemble credits and even transmit images (55).

Although with the invention of downloading music from the Internet, the emphasis put on album covers is decreasing as a marketing package. Now that a consumer can download an entire album from the Internet instead of purchasing the album from a store, cover art has found a new place on the Internet for consumers to download it as well. Gillen discusses the computer revolution of music and music packaging and how record companies are now previewing music clips and music video clips from albums before the albums are released. This new marketing concept has become a huge undertaking and joint venture between online services, record companies, and even consumers. Album covers moving to the web also furthers music branding. According to Sylvia M. Chan-Olmsted, in her article, "Branding and Internet Marketing in the Age of Digital Media," as branding and marketing undergoes a fundamental shift, "...new players entering the distribution business and formulating new ways to deliver content" (642). Album covers, as a way of marketing music, may be forced to move to the web to stay competitive.

Reception/Interpretation

When With the Beatles, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, and The Beatles were released, fans looked forward to the cover just as much as the album itself. Covers helped connect the listener/fan to the artist. Whether it was a black and white photograph, a colorful extravaganza, or a white space, the Beatles were always able to form a relationship with their fans through their album covers. These images allowed the world to establish a relationship with the band. The Beatles made covers before the visual
representation of the music could be found elsewhere. Their covers acted as photo spread, music video, and website all in one. This was one of the few instances that the fans could see the band, besides concerts or television appearances. Album covers were even better; they were not fleeting, fans could hold on to covers forever.

From the beginning, with *With the Beatles*, the Beatles album covers were unlike other album covers of their time. The half-silhouetted headshots of *With the Beatles* were one of the most imitated images of the 1960's (Quantick 163). This is what makes *With the Beatles*, as well as *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, iconic in image. John Louis Lucaites and Robert Hariman have found iconic photographs throughout American, twentieth-century culture. In their article, "Visual Rhetoric, Photojournalism, and Democratic Public Culture," they state that iconic photographs produced in print, electronic or digital media are iconic because they are,

1) recognized by everyone with a public culture, (2) understood to be representations of historically significant events, (3) objects of strong emotional identification or response, and (4) regularly reproduced or copied across a range of media, genres, and topics. (37)

Their example was of the 1936 photograph, "Mother Migrant" by Dorothea Lange. In the 1930's the photograph was used as a symbol of parents during the Great Depression. The photo was later appropriated by the Black Panthers, a Bill Clinton campaign film, and by *Time* Magazine. Often appropriated images indicate iconicity. Beatles album covers have been imitated many times over many decades, like "Mother Migrant."

*Sgt. Pepper's* is also a recognizable, often imitated ("copied"), photograph of the Beatles. Strom Thurgenson and Audrey Powell, in their collection of the 100 "best album
covers ever" apply Lucaites and Hariman's definition of iconic to album covers when they state that the photograph must identify and associate with the music and the band the cover is representing and that it reflects the feelings and ideas the album encompasses (112). M. Azerrad and S. Futterman of Rolling Stone magazine also agree. They feel the Beatles not only broke the mold of music visuals, but broke it wide open. In a study of 100 top album covers, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band and The Beatles (a.k.a. "The White Album"), are ranked 1 and 3, respectively, while With the Beatles was number 78 (92).

While some people feel the Beatles and their album covers are iconic and made an impression on the music industry in regards to visual rhetoric, Inglis disagrees. However, he does concede that the Beatles

...have been credited with providing an early impetus for the expansion of graphic design industry into the imagery of popular music, and have been seen as largely responsible for allowing the connections between art and pop to be made explicit. (83)

He, however, does examine the band and their album covers as a revolution of the album package and as a growing concept, parallel to their music. After a textual analysis of twelve Beatles album covers examining image and identity, impacts and influences, and readerly and writerly texts, he concludes, especially in 1967, the beginning of the Summer of Love, that

It may be iconic that the group praised more than any other for its daring should, in this particular facet of its career at least, demonstrate its affinity with the
routine and the popular, rather than the avant garde with which it has so often
been linked (95).

While the Beatles may not have appeared to tear down the visual barriers at the
time, they did produce images that have lasted the test of time and are still imitated and
parodied, even now. Images of the Beatles are recognizable in our culture and continue to
be.

However, as the size of album covers has evolved over time, so has the
marketable need. Since the early 1980's, the most common visual representation of music
has been music videos. Fans could see their favorite artist sing and dance several times a
day and not wait until the next album to see more pictures of the band. Now, there are
several music video channels, music industry magazines saturating the market, and the
web brings photographs, information and videos to a fan instantaneously. Dave Herda,
site designer, states, “The Web site will become the living album cover, the way to bring
people to a band or a musician” (Phelan 7). There is little need for reception when it
comes to album covers; what fans used to get from a cover (a tangible, holdable version
of the band) they can now get from several different mediums.

The reception and interpretation have also been altered through parodies of the
images. The images used on these Beatles covers are so identifiable and recognizable that
an imitated and parodied image of the Beatles is just as recognizable. With the Beatles
has been parodied by such musicians as 4 Bitchin' Babes, The Rutles, Laurence Juber and
Yellow Note. It has also been imitated by the Muppets and in an episode of The
Simpsons. The Rutles also parodied Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, along with
Frank Zappa, and the Nashville Superpickers. The Rolling Stones' cover for Their
*Satanic Majesties Request* is their take on *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

Comedians parodied "The White Album." Lewis Black and *This is Spinal Tap* has and Dennis Miller named his *The Off-White Album*. For *The Simpsons* soundtrack, they combined a parodied image of *Sgt. Pepper's* with the title, *The Yellow Album*. Other performers are not just the only people to parody or incorporate these album covers into various other documents. In the fall of 2004, two graduate students at Bowling Green State University superimposed one of their faces into *With the Beatles* for a flyer advertising a reading.

**Student Parody**

![Figure 19](image)

These artists are paying homage to the Beatles. While parodies often occur for the sake of comedy, it is also done out of affection, a way to pay respect.

**Rearticulation**

Beatlemania still exists through the remediation of their products and images. The remediation of the Beatles and their images are important to note because this aids in the rearticulation of their images and the use of these images. In fact, remediation and rearticulation are similar concepts. While remediation is one medium being represented in another medium (in this case Beatles album covers and their shift into computer
downloading practices), rearticulation is taking an object or concept, skewing or "revamping" it and releasing it as new. Both concepts need culture and society to accept these "new" appropriations of older, "classic" examples.

The Beatles have managed to stay current in an ebb of new technology. Their music and their image have progressed from albums to CDs, DVDs, and even the computer. It has crossed mediums. No longer are they just contained to music, an audience's need for the Beatles has been remediated. As Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin state, "…we call the representation of one medium in another remediation…"(45). As technology has continued to grow, the preservation of the Beatles in our culture grows as well, and though they were once known for the music, they can now be associated with much more.

In 1995 the three-part mini-series, The Beatles Anthology aired on ABC. The program drew large ratings and spawned three more top selling albums that coincided with each part. The Beatles released two new singles, “Real Love,” and “Free as a Bird,” with the then, three living members, singing with Lennon’s taped voice (“Beatlemania Redux” 38). The anthology will soon be released on DVD (Kozinn B5), another market the band is taking over. Along with the anthology, A Tribute for George, a memorial concert for George Harrison, and Lennon Legend, a program celebrating John Lennon’s life have been released on DVD (Gunderson 1D). Not only are they conquering the television and DVD market, every year new books about the band are released, from coffee table photo books to scholarly studies. People are even expanding older material and reissuing biographies and in 2003, a reinvention of Let it Be where the orchestration was removed from the tracks, titled, Let it Be...Naked, was released (Gunderson 1D).
With the remediation of Beatles materials, fans old and new cannot get enough information about the Beatles.

Just as recent as February 2004, the Beatles were making headlines. That was the 40th Anniversary of the Beatles first appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. This milestone was all over the media. Magazines as wide ranging as *American History* and *Rolling Stone*, featured the anniversary on covers and in articles. A two-set DVD compilation of all Beatles performances on *The Ed Sullivan Show* during 1964 and 1965, appropriately called, *The Four Complete Historic Ed Sullivan Shows Featuring the Beatles* can be found at local multi-media stores (Fricke 42). In fact, *The Ed Sullivan Show* appearance in 1964 is the most requested tape in the, “600,000-program collection of the Museum of Television and Radio in Manhattan” (Marks 1). It also is counted as among the most watched television shows and specials of all time according to a study released in February 2004 of “TV hits according to the percentage of the population that watched” (Gunderson 3D). This proves that years after the Beatles disbanded, there is still an interest in the band and the products they inspired.

The Beatles also still have major power in areas of money and influence. As of 1995, they rank as the highest-paid entertainer, right after Steven Spielberg and Oprah Winfrey (“Beatlemania Redux” 38). This is due to the remediation of their material and likeness. According to Bolter and Grusin,

> Each new medium has to find its own economic place by replacing or supplementing what is already available, and popular acceptance, and therefore economic success, can come only by convincing consumers that the new medium improves on the experience of older ones (68).
By remastering previous albums and releasing them in different medium (compact discs and computer downloads) and by simulating their performances on DVDs, the replacement and supplementation of their materials has been popularly accepted by new and old audiences.

The Beatles have also had incredible influence, not only on monetary terms, but in culture as well. The Beatles, according to some, ended the era of Gershwin and Sinatra as popular music, “…even Sinatra ended up covering a song from Abbey Road” (“A Cultural Revolution: 1964-1980” 58). There has been a wide array of tribute and cover albums devoted to the Beatles. Among the most eclectic are Chet Atkins Picks on the Beatles, an instrumental guitar version, All You Need is Love: Beatles Songs for Kids, Here Comes…el Son – Songs of the Beatles with a Cuban Twist, Soul Tribute to the Beatles, and Come Together: America Salutes the Beatles, a country music tribute album. The Beatles have crossed so many musical cultures, it would be hard to deny that they have not influenced nearly every genre in the music industry.

Even more recently, underground DJ Brian Burton remixed Jay Z’s a cappella songs from The Black Album, mixed them with samples from “The White Album,” and put in new rap beats to make The Grey Album (Song 83). Burton was inspired by the unusual a cappella nature of Jay Z’s album and decided he could mix the two albums together (Gitlin 18). The album was only available on the Web until EMI Group, which releases Beatles’ recordings ordered Burton to stop. This articulation of their music has spread so rapidly, it is almost as if it is a genre of its own. And the Beatles are still able to retain their integrity as artists. As Bolter and Grusin explain, "…remediation does not destroy the aura of a work of art; instead it always refashions that aura in another media
form" (75). So while technology and tools become more widespread and accepted, the remediation of the Beatles is being rearticulated. Stuart Hall explains that articulation theory,

> aims to mediate between history and space without either falling back into a simple, deterministic historical narrative or degenerating pure fragmentation. The processes of articulation (disarticulation and rearticulation) both involve historical and spatial aspects; nothing is predetermined by historical weight (Johnson Eiliola) 163).

This theory is interesting to note when looking at *With the Beatles, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and *The Beatles*. Historically, these covers were a protection of the album. Then they became marketing strategies, which turned into iconic images. These covers continued to shrink because the space they were allotted was shrinking. Now, while users are still able to literally walk into store and buy an album or compact disc, the most common way the cover images are being seen and used is while music is being downloaded. It is universally and culturally accepted to turn on a computer for music. And whether the platform is PC or Macintosh, there are covers downloaded among the many files that fill up a hard drive. This is the articulation and rearticulation of album covers, not only the Beatles, but album covers in general.

In the articulation and subsequent rearticulation of these covers, culture has been accepting of the images. They have been so widely seen by generations of users, they have become the very definition of iconic and they have moved from medium to medium successfully. These images, through these processes, have become monoglossic. They are hegemonic and work to maintain their power. Beatles album covers, like their music, are
unlike other covers. They have become iconic. And in their iconicity they are "powerful" and "ubiquitous." However, if one were to look at these covers historically, they were heteroglossic and polyglossic. They bucked the conventional album cover trends and ran from the comfortable to change the industry. They were unconventional covers; they encompassed the basic elements and used them in their design unlike anyone had before. In 1964, 1967, and 1968, respectively, the Beatles were taking part in a counter culture revolution, which were also trying to flee convention and traditional comfort zones. Forty years have passed and artists and designers have been trying to recreate the revolutionary aspect of many album covers since. According to Johndan Johnson Eiliola, "articulation theory offers a way of representing the possibility of resistance to dominant cultural formations" (Johnson Eiliola 21). Could the Beatles and their visual representation of their music be that "resistance?" They obviously hold a place in both the "realms" of monoglossia and heterglossia. They have created, in many ways, their own genre. This mingling of Bakhtin's binary construction is ultimately a polyglossic force.

In 1964, the Beatles were causing riots across America. It was not unlike when Elvis Presley began his career. The Beatles wore their hair too long and sang rock and roll infused with rhythm and blues (an articulation of music at the time). The cover for *With the Beatles* represents this articulation of music that was still new in American rock and roll. The black and white and use of shadowing was a technique most common on jazz album covers. By 1967 and 1968, they were swimming in a counter culture that was resisting a safe life, which was created by patriarchal and matriarchal influences. This too was shown in the covers of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *The Beatles*. *Sgt. Pepper's* featured bright colors and the Beatles as Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club
Band. *The Beatles* (the White Album) was counter movement lead by the Beatles in itself, in the fact that the cover featured nothing, not even obvious letters and words. These covers showed the Beatles opposition to the power of the music industry in the 1960's. They formed their own establishment of music and visual representation and challenged the norm.

But as these album covers travel through the cultural circuit, they have engaged the powerful. They are the powerful images. Their iconic status of today has made these images established within the art community. They are no longer "just" album covers, they are images that represent, not only a certain time in the career of the Beatles, but of the world. Viewers, new and old, can place these images. Once these images are available to everyone, apart from their original use, they cease to be heteroglossic. They no longer have less power in the music industry. They can no longer escape. The parodies of these images move into the heteroglossic realm. When an image is so recognizable that the image can be parodied, the parody is trying to gain the power of the monoglossic, original image. Essentially, the non-elite, the groups pursuing change, have made that change and are now the elite.

These images can remain heteroglossic, but as technology changes, they are also hovering on monoglossia. However, articulation encompasses this seemingly contradiction. "In other words, articulation theory accepts the breakdown of contemporary culture," states Johnson Eiliola, "but also insists there are contingently coherent cultures and ongoing, constantly-under-identities" (21). Monoglossia and heteroglossia are coherent cultures in the case of the Beatles and their album covers. Contemporary culture lives within Bakhtin's binary. However, the third element,
polyglossia, transcends the binary. In some ways it covers and includes both heteroglossia and monoglossia, in the same way that Bakhtin parodic-travesty grows from polyglossia (61). Therefore the Beatles, because they are so closely associated with each binary side (because of its various articulations) are polyglossic. These album covers, as they began, were different and untraditional, and then they were tilted into mainstream cover art. This is a sort of counter-bricolage. Whereas bricolage is "where the things are put to uses for which they are not intended and in ways that dislocate them from their normal or expected context" (Sturken and Cartwright 223), counter-bricolage is when users take products that are culturally known and intentioned for an original use (in this case album covers as marketing and Beatles' album covers being marketable and in return iconic) and adapt a different meaning (now the cover as a symbol of a song file a user is downloading). In this sense, users have taken the traditional and individualized it to their own needs. The Beatles took album covers and adapted them from marketing to art. Many musicians and artists try to incorporate a piece of the Beatles iconicity into their work. It is then redefined further from the original bricolage. They stand on their own. Society accepts this. Then it is all articulated and rearticulated. Society's acceptation does not cover the fact that these images were unlike anything seen at the time.

CONCLUSION

In the past fifty years, the concept of album covers has evolved from cardboard used to protect the vinyl records to serious works of art. The evolution essentially began with the Beatles. Prior to 1964, when the Beatles first broke in the public as superstars, album covers were homogenous and plain. The Beatles were constantly updating the ideas and concept of cover art. With every album released, they outdid their own previous
artwork. Much of the research of the Beatles focuses on the Beatles and their music. Articles analyze their music as cultural influences and as breakthroughs in what was traditional music in the 1960's. Their albums are listed among several top lists of albums of all time. Through their music, the Beatles have become cultural icons in themselves. Most everyone can agree that the Beatles and their music serve as icons for several generations and continue to this day. Other research focuses on iconic images and the semiotics used to analyze iconic images. Some scholars define what constitutes iconicity. As technology grows, this research transcends genres. Not only are researchers looking at paintings and photographs, but videos and websites are being analyzed through semiotics. Why not study album covers through semiotics? Especially since album covers could invariably evolve to websites.

Better yet, why not combine studies of the Beatles and their album covers through an alternative semiotic lens. Very few people would contest the iconicity of the Beatles and their album covers, so why not analyze them differently? Through this research I found that although there is much emphasis on the Beatles, their music and album covers in general, there is nothing that combines them all. Since, as stated earlier, visual rhetoric is everywhere, focusing research on album covers and using a different lens in which to do this, would further the research on images and icons and even the Beatles themselves. It can also take the field of technical communication in a different direction by fusing the technical aspect with popular culture and furthering the cultural circuit. According to Scott, ",…a few other scholars have turned to critical theory and cultural studies to argue for a critical attention to the broader cultural relations of power inherent in technical
discourse" (199). By analyzing the visual rhetoric and semiotics of Beatles album covers, I can help narrow the gap of cultural relations in technical communication.

It is important for technical communicators to see images, like album covers, travel through the cultural circuit. Images are very important in documents, they can help the user deduce information. In fact, anything traveling through the cultural circuit is important to note, especially with technology constantly evolving. Our culture embraces the constant evolution of technology. It is no longer a foreign concept to audiences, it is a part of everyday life. People can no longer separate technology and culture; they are merging together.

Because, according to Harrison, "The important fact for professional communicators is that readers/users no longer rely on written text for comprehension; they absorb and process all that they see within a document to create meaning for themselves (46)," it is also important for technical communicators using images to consider the binary construct and the discourse Bahktin discusses. This is another way that technology and culture have merged. If a picture is supposed to say a thousand words, shouldn't a document designer know what he/she is trying to say with an image; what kind of message it ultimately carries through time? Design and images combine with words to make a document more usable; therefore there is room for this discourse in technical communications.

Technical communications can take the powerful and less powerful and combine them. In marketing, these concepts become "new" again. They are sold as authentic in counter bricolage and reclaim the more powerful. In the 1960's the Beatles or their album covers would not have been associated with technology. As the role of album covers
changed and technology grew they traveled through the cultural circuit again, this time as a different form. What they represent now is monoglossic; album covers infiltrate many users computers when a song is downloaded. Beatles covers have a new meaning now that they are remediated. But in their original time, they stood out and were individual as album covers. These covers, and the Beatles images have survived the cultural circuit in many different roles. They, hopefully like technical documents, stand the test of time.
Works Consulted


Armstrong, Louis. Hello Dolly. MCA, 1964


Scott, J. Blake. "Tracking Rapid HIV Testing Through the Cultural Circuit." *Journal of*


