AN ANALYSIS OF THE VISUAL STRUCTURE
OF AMERICAN AND TAIWANESE MUSIC VIDEOS

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* * * * *

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On August 1, 1981 Warner Amex Satellite Entertainment Company started cable television's first channel that played only music videos for 24 hours everyday- MTV. Since MTV started, music video has enjoyed nine years of popularity. Not only has it influenced the American mass media, it also has become part of American culture. Furthermore, music videos have become an international cultural phenomenon and MTV can be seen in 29 countries, including Canada, France, Germany and Japan (Goldberg 63).

As music videos became popular internationally, scholars began to show their interest in this new medium and much research has been conducted in content areas, particularly concerning violence and sex (Caplan 144-47; Brown & Campbell 94-106; Sherman & Dominick 79-93; Rehman & Reilly 61-64; Walker 756-62). However, considerably less attention has been given to the form of music video. Since visual images are considered significant elements for capturing the attention of young viewers, and because music videos have greatly influenced society with respect to its advertising, fashion, culture, and how society views itself, it is important to understand the visual elements of music videos. Moreover, since music

1A short history of MTV can be seen in Appendix A.
video has become an international phenomenon, it is important to
determine how the visual elements of the music videos made primarily in
the U. S. impact on the audience and production practices of music videos in
other countries.

The purpose of this study is to analyze and compare the technical and
visual structures of music videos made in the United States and Taiwan.
This study focuses on the formal elements of music video in a cross-cultural
context. The study will try to answer the following research questions:
(1) What are the major categories of visual form which emerge from an
analysis of music videos?
(2) How does the distribution of visual categories in American music videos
compare with the distribution of visual categories in Taiwanese music
videos?

This thesis is organized in the following way: Chapter I - Introduction,
Chapter II- Literature Review, Chapter III - Method, Chapter IV - Results,
Chapter V - Discussion, and Chapter VI presents the Conclusion. In the
literature review, the importance of studying the medium or form in the
communication process, music video's uniqueness as a new form of
communication, visual traditions of television, commercials, and avant-
garde films, the aesthetics of music video, and the visual traditions in
contemporary films in Taiwan are discussed. The study's instrument and
procedures for the analysis are presented in Chapter III. Findings of the
research questions are explained in Chapter IV, followed by discussion of the
findings and the thesis' limitations. In the last chapter, conclusions are
offered and directions for future research are discussed.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Form and Content

In the development of communication theories, there has been a tendency to describe a message as if it were pure form (content being the effect of form on the viewer) or as though it were pure content (form being the inevitable construction and arrangement imposed upon content by the mechanics of the medium) (Whitaker 2). As Whitaker pointed out, these popular postures enable us to examine communications from fresh and often fertile points of view, yet either polar view is incomplete. Whitaker also argued that suggesting form and content are identical is nearly as ludicrous as the postulation that they are discrete. Content is the information that is to be communicated either visually or aurally, whereas form is how or in what manner the message is to be presented (Hamilton 12). It is more sensible to view the relation between form and content as mutually influential.

In order to let the receiver understand clearly what a message is, it is important for the message creator to use both form and content in an appropriate manner. Moreover, it is essential that the message creator recognize that form and content cannot function without each other. As Tony Schwartz states,
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]. (17)

Whether we consider the content of a message as the intentional
selection of the communicator or as the reaction from the receiver, "content
remains subjective and qualitative and practically an unmeasurable concept" (Whitaker 4). Therefore, Whitaker thinks that studies of form are more
likely to contribute to the perfection and understanding of the medium than
are studies of content in that "the studies of content decorate the original
message with the thoughts of the critic and, at their worst, obscure the
creator's thoughts in a tangle of amplification and apologetics" (4).

In **Sight, Sound, Motion -- Applied Media Aesthetics**, Zettl (1973)
emphasized 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. (10)

Music video has been regarded as a hybrid form of other media by many
critics and researchers. For instance, some critics have said that music video's
innovative combination of music and images challenges the distinction
between program and advertisement (Wollen 167-70). Levy pointed out that
MTV has been successful in adopting the "relatively media-primitive field of rock and in coaxing it into the ultracommercial video arena, where products lose identity as anything but products, where it is impossible to distinguish between entertainment and sales pitch" (123). A study by Fry and Fry (1987) found that music videos display visual characteristics of both drama and commercials. Nonetheless, music video also has its own aesthetic language. More studies of its visual elements should contribute to a better understanding of this new form of communication.

Music Video as a New Form of Communication

Music videos can be considered a new form of communication because of their novel combination of music and images. The visual ambiguity of most popular songs offers the video makers substantial freedom when interpreting a song for the television screen, and such freedom seldom accompanies feature films or conventional commercials (Krey 81). This visual freedom is music video's "unique blessing and greatest challenge because it offers limitless potential for cinematic innovation, within the confines imposed by the size and quality of the TV image" (Krey 82).

The arrival of music video was seen as a kind of necessary evolution of cultural forms by Dave Laing (1984). He indicated that music video represents a "discovery of a fully appropriate visual mode to complement an existing and varied aural one. . . Music videos were (instead) seen as (and called) promotional videos, as pictures to sell records" (81). As a result, some people think that the visuals are inevitably subordinated to the soundtrack.
However, music videos can make powerful and effective visual statements. As Curtiss (1987) described, effective visual statements engage the viewers, seduce the viewers as it were, and involve them in the process of experiencing and appreciating the work. They capture the viewers' attention yet leave something out to be completed mentally by the viewers. When the viewers have to employ a bit of their own creativity to fully appreciate a visual image, they feel gratified by the sense of exchange. They too have made an investment in the experience. As one study concluded, some young viewers of music videos are interested in the visual interpretations of the song and looked for these interpretations offered in the videos when they watched music videos (Sun & Lull 115-25).

According to Rudolf Arnheim, "Form is determined not only by the physical properties of the material, but also by the style of representation of a culture or an individual" (140). He pointed out that every medium has its specific quality to describe or interpret the real world. The image-making of music video transforms and adds new aspects to everyday matters and physical objects. The visual imagination shown in music videos does not create a new subject matter nor new shapes, but finds a new form for old content. Furthermore, there is a lot of room for experimentation in the process of image-making. A study by Baxter, DeRiemer, Landini, Leslie, and Singletary (1985) found that music video producers rely heavily on special camera techniques, superimposition imagery, costuming, and special effects in creating music videos. Combined with cultural artifacts and the director's individual style, the visual images of music video extend the aesthetic possibility of the avant-garde tradition, which formerly was restricted to independent film-making and video art (Kinder 2-15). The directors can
present a cultural or social issue by combining images in various ways. As one director said, “I like the medium... because they [music videos] are virtually done without supervision, it’s not a collaborative medium - it’s much more individual” (Eller 73).

Music Videos as Minimovies or Maxicommercials

There are different views of what a music video is. Some critics say that music video is a protean form “combining elements of live musical performance, film and TV to produce a kind of electronic mini-operetta, or -- an animated record sleeve” (Wollen 167). Other people regard music video as a popular artistic work that depends upon electronic technology (Bennett & Ferrell 344-62).

In function, music videos are the advertising vehicle of the record company. Advertising is a persuasive form of communication that may create wants. In displaying goods from which consumers can choose, “it [advertising] presents a series of styles (a style is a public display of goods) which, when purchased by a viewer, serve as a mode of expressing self in the world” (Fry and Fry 30). Music videos share the same quality and imprint powerful visual images in the minds of the viewers who relate the performers with particular stylistic options. The visual images of music video often are related to the rhythm of the music and this visually constituted rhythmic display carries the video’s force and ensures its success with its audience.
In form, music videos share much with some sophisticated ads. A lot of music video directors are from the field of advertising. For example, Tim Newman directed his first music video “I Love LA” after having directed commercials for ten years (Eller 73). David Mallet, the director of some of David Bowie’s music videos (e.g. “D.J.” and “Let’s Dance”), has been a director of British TV commercials for many years (Shore 117). These directors have adopted rather consciously the visual conventions of TV commercials to music video production (Shore 101; Walker 31).

Among these conventions, the most noticeable and important one is that the commercial must catch the viewer’s attention within a brief time-span. Therefore, its audio-visual elements are manipulated to “form an effective statement through the techniques of propaganda (repetition, reinforcement, involvement), the elements of emotional appeals (pity, fear, love), and the elements of cinematography” (Smith-Iguchi 18). Within brief periods of time -10, 20, 30, 60 - second-spots - the commercial must attract the viewer’s attention, interest and involve him or her, present the sponsor’s message and motivate the viewer to buy the goods. The image of a product in a commercial is imprinted in the viewer’s mind “as the commercial’s presentative qualities, i.e., the visual and audio elements, and their meanings or significance interact with the viewer’s perspective of the current cultural values and social norms” (Smith-Iguchi 32). How the presentative qualities are manipulated are determined in part by the advertiser’s assessment of the viewer’s needs and the principles of propaganda. A fundamental characteristic of the propaganda film is “its appeal to the emotions rather than the intellect” (47). By putting together the topic or product with some object or person of known emotional associations, the commercial can transfer
similar emotions to the new topic or product in the mind of the viewer.

To increase the power of the appeal, a tighter bond is created between the consumer and the product if the appeal satisfies a psychological or subconscious need of the viewer (56-57). The commercial’s power to communicate visually is essential to this process. As Smith-Iguchi stated,

Commercials which ‘show’ the viewer, i.e., those that used a demonstration, are accepted or ‘trusted’ more readily than commercials which ‘tell’. Visual communication is important because we tend to make emotional decisions based upon what we see … The visual appeal conjures up a mood quickly, and in seconds-long advertising, speed is essential. (60-61)

The short duration of TV commercials requires that the directors focus on producing an over-all concept. “Individual details are not as important as general mood” (Kurtz 86).

Similar to TV commercials, music videos are short, usually three to four minutes, designed to engage the viewer in a direct experience, and their major purpose is to sell records (Lynch 53). In addition, “the same kind of imagery used to sell a man a car is also frequently employed to sell a teenager a record: speed, power, girls, and wealth” (Gehr 40).

Another similarity between music video and TV commercials is that both deal with the significant nature of one medium - television. In Spots: the Popular Art of American Television Commercials, Bruce Kurtz discussed the differences between film and television:

The sensory balance of television is different from that of film. Film is primarily a visual medium, with audio playing a supporting role. While we listen carefully to the actor’s words and other sounds, it is the visual power of the camera that moves us. Television, developed really more from radio than from film, tends to be more audio. . . . (87)
Television usually comes into the viewer's private space - the living room, bedroom, kitchen. Because of this, the viewing conditions are different from the public space of a movie theater. While the viewer is watching television, he or she may need to pick up a phone or talk to someone walking by. There may be many distractions. Thus, the commercial spots have to produce gripping images to maximize their impact and to keep the viewer’s attention and therefore, dazzling visual devices, sophisticated sound-mixing and original writing are frequently used.

Kurtz further suggested that television is a more intimate medium. The shots selected on television tend to be closeups and extreme closeups. These shots convey a greater sense of intimacy than those that exist in most real-life relationships (86). In addition, in an analysis of a television commercial, Herbert Zettl pointed out that television often uses an inductive approach to image-making. “We are given a series of closeup details that inductively lead to the final overview of the whole configuration” (102). This is different from the traditional shooting technique in wide-screen cinema, which moves deductively from establishing a long shot to the closeup detail. The low-definition images (which show only details of the whole) of television “compels the viewers/perceivers to apply psychological closure, and to put more effort into their perceptual activity than in a high-definition deductive approach where all details are given on the large screen” (102-103). Another less obvious aspect of television is that it is a people medium (Zettl 103). Television needs to rely on the presence of the human image, at least in some form or another, while film can exist on landscape alone.
Music video also shares some characteristics with film. It can be noticed that music videos often resort to the use of dynamic visual techniques in order to maintain interest. One critic noticed that, "The complete visual freedom particular to the music promo offers an open invitation to the gratuitous use of special effects" (Krey 83). For example, David Bowie, in his video "Let's Dance", employed almost every one of the dynamic visual techniques (such as rack focus, zooms, slow motion sequences, and dissolves) to tell the story of Australian aborigines, who live in both rural and urban areas (Seidman 62).

Most music videos are shot on film (16mm or 35mm) and edited on video to a final video master (Viera 87). The technological development of video has brought down the production cost and brought more convenience to the editing process. But some directors still find that it is better to record original footage on film. As one director said, "Film has a richer texture; you can do more with depth and stuff... Whereas video's so flat, it either looks like TV news documentary or it's totally lurid and cartoony... Film and video take effects differently" (Shore 124). Michael Negrin, the cinematographer of Cyndi Lauper's "Time after Time", who received the 1984 American Music Video Award for best cinematography for this video, made this music video with theatrical film production quality and followed a feature film philosophy (Nunes 83-87). Actually, some directors approach the making of music videos "very much from the point of view of a mini-movie, instead of taking the usual hit-and-miss approach" (Blair 158). They use a detailed script and do a lot of pre-production arrangements and planning.

Many music videos make references to film history and use stock footage from the film libraries. In addition to film noir, gangster film and
horror film, the western, the science fiction film and the detective film also are pervasive. For example, David Bowie paid tribute to *From Here to Eternity* in his “China Girl” video (Shore 212). Madonna’s “Material Girl” is a homage to Howard Hawk's *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Goodwin 30). In Michael Jackson’s “Man in the Mirror” and a recent video of Living Color, “Cult of Personality”, we can see the footage of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Hitler, Gandhi, and many other famous people and famous events.

Although the images of music videos have some connections with traditional American films, many videos often are considered avant-garde in their ways of assembling the images. Unlike the classical realist Hollywood film which told a fanciful story, some music videos are always eager to comment on their own processes of making the visual images (Kaplan 23). Even in videos that seem to tell a story, “editing devices routinely violate classical Hollywood codes of shot/counter-shot, the 180 degree rule, the 30 degree angle rule, eye-line matches, etc.”(33). Music video often discards the typical narrative form. There is no beginning, middle or end. In addition, many music videos use a lot of images from German expressionism, surrealism (Bunul and Dali), and Dadaism (Fritz Lang and Magritte) and these images are mixed together with those taken from the noir, gangster and horror films and there is no clear recognition of previously sacred aesthetic boundaries (Kaplan 46; Lynch 53-57).

Most avant-garde movies are expressionistic. The directors of these movies use film as a way to explore beyond the surface of the material world. They are concerned with creating “a totally imaginary universe” (Giannetti 368). They are not interested in recording scenes from actual life. Many of
them like to deal with a spiritual realm that has no counterpart in the literal world. They would rather invent than discover, and present than represent. The emphasis is often placed on “a direct expression of emotions, and not on an objectified presentation” (368).

Several different movements in film are considered avant-garde. For example, German expressionism (1919-1933) sought to present physical reality on the screen as a projection, or expression, of the subjective world and,

This was accomplished through distorted and exaggerated settings, heavy and dramatic shadows, unnatural space in composition, oblique angles, curved or non-parallel lines, a mobile and subjective camera, unnatural costumes and make-up. Such films create a dreamlike or nightmarish world. (Konigsberg 108).

It can be noticed that the visual images of some heavy metal videos and many experimental videos (e.g. David Bowie’s “D. J.”) incorporated part or all of these arrangements.

Surrealism, another avant-garde movement, stresses Freudian and Marxist ideas, unconscious elements, irrationalism, and the symbolic association of ideas. Surrealist movies were produced primarily in France, roughly from 1924 to 1931. Surrealists took a great interest in all spontaneous acts and they incorporated the free association principle into many films. They believed that the cinema is “the ideal medium for conveying the weird precision of dreams” (Giannetti 381).

Many surrealist music videos exploit spatial and temporal disjunction to create meaning (Lynch 56). In “Harden My Heart” by Quarterflash, we can see this kind of disjunction. The lyrics concern a girl’s need to leave her lover physically as well as psychically. In the video, a narrow corridor symbolizes the girl’s confinement and restriction; the desert represents freedom and a
third space is set in a future time. A garage with the band on motorcycles will become her means of escape. There is quick cutting from one space and time to the other until we see in the final frame that the narrow corridor is the desert. The girl walks out the door to freedom and climbs aboard a motorcycle. The building where the corridor is then collapses and burns (Lynch 56).

Dadaism is another avant-garde movement in the arts stressing unconscious elements, irrationalism, irreverent wit, and spontaneity (Giannetti 476). The Dadaists wanted to create an art that is free, vulgar, funny and fun. They seldom used narrative structures in the films because they believed that plots are based on logic and coherence. Editing allows a filmmaker to present scenes not in a sequential manner and in which there are no causes and effects. There are no stories, no beginning, middle or end.

"You Might Think" by The Cars is by far the most effective music video that is pure Dada. The whole video resembles a painting by Magritte. The colors in the video are bright pastels. "Change of scale, scale dissociation and displacement are the techniques used to create Dadaist surprise and humor" (Lynch 56). Another band, Talking Heads also has made videos in the Dadaistic style.

Film noir, gangster, and horror films were primarily made in the Hollywood studios. Gangster film is a distinct genre in American films. People have always been interested in such films because they allow vicarious thrills - "we all wish to unleash hostility or aggression and we all wish to triumph over the world around us" (Konigsberg 141). These kinds of stories are appropriate for film because they offer a good deal of action, color, and suspense. In the music video arena, Michael Jackson has several videos that
used this film style (e.g. "Smooth Criminal" and "Beat It").

The horror film usually seeks to cause fright and even terror in the viewer. The term "horror," often means an extreme feeling, "almost to the point of revulsion and disgust, caused by something shocking" (Konigsberg 159). Most of these films deal with some form of the unknown - the dead, the spiritual world, science, other space and madness. They force us to realize and fear the instincts or drives within us. Again, one of Michael Jackson’s videos, "Thriller", touched upon some of these subjects.

Film noir is a particular film style that represents, "a dark, brutal and violent urban world of crime and corruption, peopled by sordid and neurotic figures, and presented in a style that emphasizes bleak settings, heavy shadows, and sharp contrasts of light and dark" (Konigsberg 122). The settings and lighting as well as its somber tone and tense mood are partly derived from German expressionism and partly from the horror and gangster films.

Film noir lighting exists in many music videos. It is mostly seen in the videos of recent punk, new wave and heavy metal bands. For instance, in Billy Idol’s "Rebel Yell", "the spot-lights create pyramid-shaped panels of light, ... that are shed over the individual performers... The stage is basically lurid and shrouded in smokiness much of the time" (Kaplan 103). Night scenes and location shooting are also very common in many videos.

These avant-garde traditions formerly were restricted to independent film-making and video art. But music video directors revitalize these dead images by juxtaposing and re-working them in the experimental space and visual freedom provided in music video. Since music video offers new aesthetic possibilities and many producers have a general cinematic background, it is natural that film traditions become part of their origins of
creativity. However, as one critic pointed out, many music videos function at a level of only moderate inventiveness (Fry & Fry 31). Music video directors often create "rule-governed creativity" which "accepts the established cultural codes and the sign production rules derived from them, but seek novel expression forms within the parameters set by the code system" (31). They incorporate the avant-garde images to the extent that could be accepted by the audience's cultural expectations.

As can be noted from the above discussion, on one hand, music video is a promotional tool of popular music. To encourage the viewer to purchase the recording products, the first rule of making videos is to grab the viewer's attention and sustain it. This "full attention" rule had led producers into a search for startling images. The incorporation of devices to create unusual images is one of the best ways to gain and maintain the viewer's interest. Like TV commercials, music videos entertain and sell simultaneously. On the other hand, music video borrows its style from film, from the Hollywood gangster movies to the avant-garde Dada. In fact, a study that explored the montage structures of MTV videos found that music video is a hybrid form of television programming displaying visual characteristics of both commercial and drama (Fry & Fry 151-64). In addition, the study's results indicated that the hybrid structural characteristics serve both an entertainment and promotional function. These findings suggest that although its creative roots are in an amalgam of commercial, television, and film, music video is a unique form and should be treated differently.
The Structure of Music Videos

Basically, music videos can be identified with three basic dramatic structures (Kinder 2-15; Lynch 53-57). The most common one is performance in which a live concert or studio performance is presented. This kind of video often uses the form of the musical genre or pop tradition of recording live performance on tape or film. The performers may perform in an unusual environment, or the performance may be intercut with visuals related to the lyrics or with images that bear no relationship to the lyrics at all. In many videos, the performance itself serves as the main narrative event, in which spatial unity is constantly broken by disjunctive visuals. When the performers tell the story or appear in the setting where the narrative takes place in a music video, then the line between performance and narrative videos becomes thin.

Pure narrative, a second common music video structure, presents mini-dramas in which the performers play the heroes or heroines. "Far more typical is the use of a thin narrative line, witty in tone, which provides the basic situation for an erotic fantasy on which the spectator can elaborate according to his/her sexual tastes" (Kinder 8). Many videos of this kind are romances with the singer playing "a dramatic role within the story, which includes recitativo or a singing narration" (8). These mini-romances appear realistic in videos but are actually fantasies that can be interpreted differently by the viewers.

The third music video structure covers experimental or fantasy videos. Many fantasy videos have adopted the avant-garde traditions described before. Different colors are used. Rapid cutting from one space and time to another is common. As a result, they often are more confusing than
amusing. Some exploit the spatial and temporal disjunction to create meaning. Some internalize images from movies and television and combine them with private memories to generate new fantasies.

The Aesthetics of Music Video

Russell Mulcahy, a music video producer/director, stated his views regarding the visual content of a music video:

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. (Shore 110)

Steve Baron, another music video producer/director, described 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. (Shore 157)

As Shore observed, music videos “plunder all sorts of preexisting, received imagery from both popular and esoteric culture” (99). In order to hold the viewer’s attention, music video’s aesthetic is one that Shore called “image-assault.” The images are all the things we have seen somewhere before, at least in other videos. “Everything old is new again” for many videos (Shore 99).

Because music video offers an experimental space for many people, it is full of a variety of styles that include newly developed story-telling techniques. According to E. Ann Kaplan, the most prominent techniques
include: first, the abandonment of traditional narrational devices, "cause-effect, time-space, and continuity relationships are often violated, along with the usual conception of 'character'" (146-63). Second, self-reflexiveness is often seen in videos. We often see the video we are watching being played on a TV monitor within the frame. This and other kinds of framing within the frame are very common.

In addition, the inviolability of the image in illusionist texts is completely overthrown, which is from the avant-garde traditions. "No representation is stable or solid for very long" (Kaplan 38). All manners of surprising and unexpected operations are performed on the image.

Burns and Thompson think that there are several characteristics of the visual, auditory, or thematic signs that often occur in video production (11-25). First, many of the videos involve fragmentation of the body. They pointed out that eyes are the most commonly isolated or emphasized body part. Second, there frequently is a separation in space and time. The purpose of this device is to create the context of fantasy, nostalgia, fear, and longing.

Third, striking images of horror, hell and apocalypse are often seen, sometimes with no relationship to the song's lyrics. "Flames, Satan, demons, monsters, nuclear devastation, mushroom clouds and mutants lurk in many videos" (17). Fourth, media references abound in rock videos. Television is the most frequently seen equipment. Fifth, almost in every video we see, some form of image manipulation is used that presents movement or activity having no correspondence in reality. Slow or fast motion, jerky movement, freeze frames, multiple images, to name several, are commonly incorporated in music videos.
Another frequently used technique is color shifting. Shots in black and white are mixed with shots in bright and warm colors in one video. Finally, there are shots into bright lights in many videos. This technique often is combined with lighting techniques borrowed from film.

So far a lot of artistic discussion on music video has been centered on music video as an expression of postmodern art because repetition and citation or "pastiche" are the typical forms of postmodern cultural production. Deborah Curtis described postmodernism as "a collective term for all the art that is created in reaction to the simplified, elegantly proportioned visual statements in the Modern idiom. Thus it is more emotional, expressive and experimental" (93).

According to Fredric Jameson, postmodernism is fascinated by precisely what modernism tried to take a stance against, "the whole landscape of advertising and motels, of the Las Vegas strip, of the late show and the Grade-B Hollywood film, of so-called paraliterature with its airport paperback categories of gothic and romance..." (112). Modernism parodied these things whereas postmodernism uses pastiche, "a neutral practice of mimicry ... without that still latent feeling that there exists something normal compared to which what is being imitated is rather comic" (114). Like much postmodern art, music videos incorporate or pastiche other texts. Many videos took off from standard genres. Michael Jackson's famous video "Thriller" both used and parodied the gothic/horror genre, so did his "Billie Jean" parody the spy film.

In addition, music video's central concept often is discontinuity and disjunction. Its characteristic modes include appropriation, simulation and replication (Wollen 168). "The split screens, freeze frames, and shifting
perspectives of music video call attention to themselves in order to acknowledge their view of the world as subjective, fabricated, and incomplete” (Lipsitz 58). This is a world in which the sense of story disappears and the sense of the present exists perpetually, which Jameson associates with the schizophrenic state (Kaplan 45). The images were either provoked by lyrics or the rhythm and were free-associated.

Some critics think that this schizophrenic stance resembles the form of dreams. In “Postsynchronizing Rock Music and Television,” Margaret Morse said that,

The kaleidoscopic changes of color and motion are not merely a result of fast cutting and elaborate sets and costumes: music videos are condensations of a variety of heterogeneous material, and much like the dreams which Freud described in his The Interpretation of Dreams, objects and events do not obey the logic of everyday optics or rational thought. (17)

In “Dreams and Meditation in Music Video,” Gary Burns (1988) stated,

Many videos suggest dreams through shots of people sleeping or waking up . . . The narrative in most music videos is fragmented, nonlinear, and ambiguous, like that of dreams. Almost every video includes something that ‘can’t be real.’ (45)

This structure makes sure that the visuals will be sources of pleasure. Moreover, because the video must sell the record and artist, images of the performer or performers usually predominate. Singers often directly address the camera, which can mesmerize the viewer, “as if the TV set were a window through which one looks only to see somebody else’s face. The singer and viewer are thrust into intimate but mediated contact with each other” (Burns 45). This centering effect must take place and is mainly achieved by constantly returning to the lip-synching face of the singer who is
being "sold" in any particular video (Kaplan 47).

Music video is perhaps the most accessible form of postmodern art. Its open-ended quality engulfs the viewer in its communication with itself and it offers an alternative world where the image is reality. Its adoption of Hollywood film styles and the avant-garde techniques makes it a hybrid and technologically sophisticated form. This artistic innovation remains ambiguous and can be open to all kinds of interpretations. Like the Eiffel Tower described by Roland Barthes, music video can be regarded as a pure, empty sign that is full of meaning and invites different interpretation.

Elements of Visual Form

Music video is a new form of communication. But as the discussion stated earlier, music video incorporates many traditions from television, commercials, and film. Therefore, it is important to understand the fundamental visual elements of these media. For the purpose of this study, the selection of the visual elements focuses on the techniques affecting the visual images.

Lighting

Lighting is perhaps the most important tool to modify the meanings of form, line and color. It is responsible for the quality of the image on the screen and for the visual's dramatic effect. At the most general level, lighting can be classified as available lighting or artificial lighting. Available lighting refers to shooting with the natural light (the sun) or domestic light (house lamps), while artificial lighting refers to any designed, man-made light used
in interior shooting.

The key light is the main source of illumination for an interior shot. Terms commonly used in describing this kind of lighting are "high key" and "low key." High key lighting emphasizes bright, even illumination with a minimum of shadows. Low key lighting is more towards the grayer and darker scale, where the key is less bright and does not dominate (Konigsberg 191). Another style of lighting, with strong contrast between bright light and shadow and a small amount of in-between gray scale, is called high contrast lighting.

A different category scheme uses the terms realistic, expressionistic and neutral lighting. Realistic lighting uses the available light and studio light to imitate natural effects seen in real life. Expressionistic lighting, on the other hand, creates symbolic implications by deliberately distorting natural light patterns. Neutral lighting's purpose is to illuminate foreground objects, making them the focus of the viewer's attention.

Color

Color adds a dimension to images. Like lighting, color can be strongly emotional in its appeal, expressive and atmospheric. There are warm colors such as red and yellow and cool colors like blue and green. Hue, intensity, and saturation are important factors in the uses of color. Considering the complexity of these factors, this study will choose to concentrate on the use of overall color value for the whole scenes or shots, for example, black-and-white or color.

Color often is thought to detract from a visual's message, and some directors choose not to use it. These directors prefer black-and-white because
it adds to the “realness” of an image. According to Gerald Mast, black-and-white is a medium of unities and contrasts and color is a medium of individuation and proliferation. “Black-and-white emphasizes line, shape, pattern, and texture; color calls attention to the minute diversities of objects and within objects themselves” (Mast 89).

There are other color schemes offering more stylized effect than black-and-white or color. For instance, solarization (or posterization) is a process of reversal or shift of the color spectrum so that blues become yellow, reds cyan, and greens magenta. It reduces the various brightness values to only a few and gives the image a strangely flat, poster-like look.

The Camera Angle

There are five basic camera angles: the bird’s-eye view, the high angle, the eye-level shot, the low angle and the oblique angle. The bird’s-eye view angle is a shot in which the camera photographs a scene from directly overhead. In effect, this kind of shot permits us to hover above a scene like all-powerful gods. The people photographed become antlike and insignificant (Giannetti 13-16). A high-angle shot, in which the subject is photographed from above, is not so extreme. A high angle gives a viewer a sense of general overview. In addition, this angle tends to reduce the height of objects and to be ineffective for conveying a sense of speed.

The eye-level shot is done by placing the camera at approximately the subject’s eye level. This angle permits viewers to make up their own mind about what kind of person is being presented in the shots. A low-angle shot is a shot in which the subject is photographed from below. Psychologically, this kind of shot heightens the importance of a subject. “The subject looms
threateningly over the spectator who is made to feel insecure and dominated" (Giannetti 15). Finally, an oblique angle involves a tilted camera. A man photographed at an oblique angle will look as though he is about to fall to one side. Psychologically, this angle suggests tension, transition, and impending movement.

Subjective/Objective Placement of Camera

There are basically four kinds of camera movements: pans, tilts, crane shots and dolly shots (Giannetti 103-114). Panning is a revolving horizontal movement of the camera from left to right or vice versa, while tilting involves vertical movement of the camera up or down. Pan shots tend to emphasize connectedness and suggest symbolic rather than literal connections. The same applies to tilt shots.

Crane shots are taken from a special device called a crane, which resembles a huge mechanical arm. The crane carries the camera and the cinematographer, and can move in virtually any directions. Dolly shots, or tracking, are useful for capturing a sense of movement in or out of scene. Dolly and crane shots tend to give the viewer a sense of entering into or withdrawing from a set.

Generally speaking, a stationary camera tends to convey a sense of stability and order, unless there is a lot of movement within the frame. The moving camera, because of its instability, can create vitality, flux, and sometimes disorder.
The Shots

There are basically five kinds of shots: the extreme long shot, the long shot, the medium shot, closeup, and extreme closeup. An extreme long shot is a panoramic view of an exterior location photographed from a considerable distance, often as far as a quarter-mile away (Monaco 431). The extreme long shots serve as spatial frames of reference for the closer shots and for this reason they are sometimes called establishing shots.

The long shot corresponds approximately to the distance between the audience and the stage in the live theatre. Long shots are favored by realistic directors, since they include a considerable portion of the locale as well as the human body in full. The medium shot contains a figure from the knees or waist up and reveals a moderate amount of detail.

The closeup is taken from a short distance or through a telephoto lens, showing detail of a subject. Since it excludes a large portion of the background, it tends to elevate the importance of the subject, usually suggesting a symbolic significance. The extreme closeup shows a detailed view of an object or person, perhaps only a character’s eyes or mouth.

In general, the closer the shot, the more confined the photographed figure appears to be. Furthermore, the greater the distance between the camera and the subject, the more emotionally neutral we remain. “Conversely, the closer we are to a character the more we feel that we’re in proximity with him, and hence, the greater our emotional involvement” (Giannetti 73).
Lenses of Different Focal Length

Basically, there are three major categories of the lenses: normal-angle lenses, wide-angle lenses, and narrow-angle lenses (Wurtzel & Acker 75-78). A normal-angle lens usually provides a medium depth of field with a fairly wide area of acceptable focus around the principal subject. It produces a natural depth perspective with no exaggeration of depth, subject size or speed of movement. This kind of lens also produces flattering effects on subject’s face and features with minimum of distortion.

A wide-angle lens produces a deep depth of field in which all elements within the frame appear to be in focus. It increases perception of depth and exaggerates subject/camera movement. When a subject works too close to this type of lens, he/she appears distorted and his/her prominent features would be emphasized and could look grotesque and unnatural.

A narrow-angle lens provides a shallow depth of field with a small area of acceptable focus around the principal subject. It compresses perspective and reduces perception of distance. It makes subject/movement appear slower than in reality. In addition, it may magnify heat waves from the ground when used for extremely long distances on remotes.

Editing

Editing is the art and science of arranging the picture and sound tracks so that they form a logical, rhythmical progression that tells a story, sets a mood, etc. There are different theories of editing resulting in different emphases on the process. For the current study, parts of D. W. Griffith’s ideas are chosen because his art of editing covers various treatments of time and space and thus could be used in the analysis of music videos.
Cutting to continuity is a technique that tries to preserve the fluidity of an action without literally showing all of it. Often, all the movement is in the same direction. Cause-effect relationships are clearly set forth. Thematic montage, on the other hand, stresses the association of ideas, irrespective of the continuity of real time and space. Different images can be juxtaposed, as long as they associate with the same theme. Thus, the continuity is conceptual, thematic and not physical or even psychological.

Some editors cut according to musical rhythms. In King Vidor’s “The Big Parade”, for example, the march of soldiers was edited to the beat of a military tune (Giannetti 134). Some American avant-garde filmmakers who feature rock music soundtracks also use this technique.

Animation

Animation is the process of combining still drawings, individual shots or photographs to create the illusion of movement. In cartoon animation, various parts of a scene are drawn on cells. Today, computer graphics are used for animation work in both cartoons and live-action features. With many graphics computers, outlines can be drawn on a pad or directly on the monitor screen. Color can be filled in by defining color areas and keying in the correct values on a keyboard. The images can be manipulated in a variety of ways and separate images can be synthesized to form a new whole. In addition, these images can be either static on the screen or form part of an animated sequence (Hedgecoe 234).
Special Effects

The general definition of special effects includes both effects achieved through special photographic techniques or processes and those specially created before the camera when it is shooting normally. In general, there are two categories of special effects. The first category mostly refers to optical effects - pictorial elements achieved mostly through an optical printer. Examples of these kinds of effects include fades, dissolves, freeze frames, and wipes.

The second category is mechanical effects and refers to various kinds of phenomena that are created mechanically on the set before the camera. Examples include the creation of natural phenomena such as rain, snow and fog, and the production of fire and explosions of any sort or size. Sometimes visual and mechanical effects are used together, for instance, makeup and stop-motion photography are employed for the transformations in early werewolf films.

Other special effects include distortions of movement such as fast motion, slow motion and reverse motion. Fast motion is achieved by photographing or taping events at a slower rate than 24 frames per second for film and 30 fps for video. When the film/video is projected at the standard rate, the action will appear to be jerky, machinelike or inflexible. On the contrary, slow motion is achieved by photographing or taping at a faster rate than 24 fps for film and 30 fps for video. It tends to ritualize movement or adds a choreographic gracefulness. Reverse motion involves shooting an action with the film or video running reversed. The uses of reverse motion often achieve a comic effect.
One effect commonly used in all forms of video work is color separation overlay, or chromakey. Chromakey relies on electronically removing one particular color value from the shot - usually blue, and then filling in the desired space with another scene. In current video production, digital video effects (DVE) also are used frequently. These effects are made possible by devices that change the normal (analog) video signal into digital (numerical) information. These effects include compression and expansion, flips, rotations, slides, etc.

The above techniques do not include all the elements of production principles of film and video. But they are one set of major elements that can be observed in most music videos. These elements will serve as the bases of the coding instrument for analyzing the music videos collected for this study. Other elements, such as the structure of a music video, also will be included in the analysis categories.

Visual Traditions in Current Taiwanese Films (1980s)

The literature reviewed so far has looked at some visual traditions of TV commercials and avant-garde films that American music videos have incorporated. Since this study examined the technical and visual structure of music videos from the U. S. and Taiwan, it is important to build the study on cross-cultural studies on the preference of certain visual structures and cross-cultural audience taste studies. However, there is dearth of these kinds of studies. The researcher tried to look for research about the visualization practices or traditions in Taiwan. But there was no such published research
at the time this thesis was done. Therefore, the researcher turned to the small body of literature that deals with visual traditions displayed in Taiwanese films.

Realism has been an important influence on the visual structure of the Taiwanese films (Tseng 10-11). Before 1980, most Taiwanese films were about realistic portrait of common people. But these films were often criticized as depicting superficial reality. In the 1980s, the realist theory offered by French film theorist Andre Bazin has provided a new insight into Taiwanese films. The major film directors who have received international attention (e.g. Hou Hsiao-hsien and Edward Yang) have employed deep-focus shots, location shooting, and lengthy takes to capture the sense of realness (Liu 128).

Deep-focus shots, sometimes called wide-angle shots, are a technique in which objects very near the camera as well as those far away are in focus at the same time. These kinds of shots were used to preserve the unity of space. By using this technique, Taiwanese directors directed the viewer’s attention to the relationship between the foreground and the background, guided the viewer’s eyes from one distance to another and hoped that the viewer could observe the realness of the entire scene. Lengthy takes are shots of long duration. They were frequently used because they also tend to preserve the sense of real space and time.

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2The researcher had talked to the secretary general of Communication Arts Research Institute in Taiwan, which began to address the importance of studying visual aspects in Taiwan’s mass media in 1988. According to him, the content of a message has always been the focus of the government and the scholars, not the form of a message. Library searches for studies on form also proved futile.
Location shooting involves any filming at an actual place as opposed to shooting performed in a studio or on a studio lot. This type of shooting often is used in Taiwanese films and videos because it produces naturalness and authenticity of reality. In addition, it directs the viewer's attention to the interaction of characters and environment, which is an important issue with which these major directors have been concerned.

There are two major filmmakers who received attention from the critics in Taiwan as well as other parts of the world. They represent the prominent influences on the Taiwanese films. The first one is Edward Yang, who has a background of studying in the U. S. and was famous for his portrait of urban alienation.

In addition to the adoption of the realistic traditions, Yang is known as a director who captured the essence of the western cinematic traditions (Yen 54). He has been good at using fragmentation of objects, point-of-view shots, montage, and off-screen voice to create significant collages of meaning (Chiao 8; Huang 98). In addition, the formal composition of his films was similar to that of western classical music. He broke down the narrative tradition of classic Chinese cinema and imposed a more objective perspective. In one of his films, That Day, On the Beach (1983), the arrangements of series of flashbacks were like the exposition, development, and recapitulation in a sonata (Yen 55). In another of his films, Taipei Story (1985), "there is little story line: the characters, in all their moods, reflect facts of modern-day Taipei life..." (Elley 330). These styles revealed his efforts to look for a perfect form for his films.

However, Yang has been criticized for his enthusiastic adoption of the western visual traditions and for not incorporating classical Chinese
aesthetics. It was pointed out that his use of fragmentation of objects and montage did not conform to traditional Chinese aesthetics (Yen 1987). For example, in the tradition of landscape painting, the subject is usually seen from above. In addition, it could be seen from the traditional scroll painting that the viewpoint of the subject is often continuous, similar to the pan shots in the film or television.

While in the films by Hou Hsiao-hsien, who completed his cinematic education in Taiwan and received the Golden Lion Award in the film festival at Venice in 1989, the combination of traditional Chinese aesthetics of poetry and painting and his individual styles was most noteworthy (Yen 1987). Similar to Yang's films, in Hou's films the sound and images often were combined using counterpoint to create a dialectic relationship. But the images were mostly produced to preserve the primitive nature of the world. Furthermore, the concept that the microcosm of man participates in the macrocosm of landscape, an important feature of the Chinese monumental landscape painting, was prevalent in many of his films.

Hou often used "ellipsis and metaphor", which were prevalent in the Chinese art, to transform the images into an absolute visual phenomenon (Yen 56). He liked to combine shots that did not appear related. The traditional cause-and-effect relationships were discarded. These individual styles were regarded as an excellent way to express the inner freedom of human beings, a similar idea advocated in the Taoist philosophy (Yen 57).

In addition, shifting perspective, which resembles the space arrangement of classical Chinese scroll painting, was often used to connect the prominent characters with Mother Nature. Most of his films were events that occurred in the rural areas and nature was an indispensable element in
the shots. In one of his films *Love's Uncertainties* (1986), there was a scene of the male leading character crying on his bed after knowing that his girl friend was going to marry another man. The next shot was an extensive scene full of reed. The camera panned slowly as if the actor’s moodiness spread over the nature but then faded away (Yen 57).

As one critic pointed out, Hou has been excellent at constructing films based on “the selection he makes of reality, not from his transformation of reality” (Yen 57). This kind of style was the essence of realist films in that “It is the purpose of realistic genres to make us discard our significations in order to recover the sense of the world” (Yen 57).

As the researcher pointed out, there has been shortage of systematic studies of the visualization practices in Taiwan. However, there has been some discussion of the differences between the American and Taiwanese films in Taiwan. As one film critic indicated, for many years, many Taiwanese directors, regardless of their cinematic background, prefer the tradition of realism, whereas there were more varieties of selections in the American films (Wang 15).

In addition, one scholar in Taiwan pointed out that many of the Taiwanese realistic films still follow the classical narrative structure (Lee 90). These films appear to move from beginning to the point of closure. Every event had a cause and every conflict or contradiction that the narrative set up in the beginning was resolved by the end. These practices are similar to the traditional Hollywood production in the U. S. But generally, the tempo of Taiwanese films tends to be slower than that of the American Hollywood movies and the composition of the visual images is less complex and less technically polished (Lee 90).
Furthermore, due to the influence from traditional Chinese painting, Taiwanese directors tend to use more long shots and less closeups and include more details of the authentic locations than the American directors (Wang 15). Moreover, in many Taiwanese films (e.g. Hou Hsiao-hsien), man is often portrayed as but one small element within the enormity of nature (Yen 57). While in the American films, nature seldom plays a dominant role in affecting the human's mind or life.

From the above discussion, it can be observed that the visual images of music videos can be influenced by many visual traditions. The study hopes to gather preliminary findings concerning the visual structure of the American and Taiwanese music videos.
CHAPTER III
METHOD

As mentioned in Chapter I, this study will address the following research questions:
(1) What are the major categories of visual form which emerge from an analysis of music videos?
(2) How does the distribution of visual categories in the American music videos compare with the distribution of visual categories in the Taiwanese music videos?

In this exploratory study, it is appropriate to content analyze music videos to consider the research questions.

Instrument

Development of the Instrument

Although previous analyses of film and television commercial are available, not all of the coding instruments used could be applied readily to music videos. The interest of this study is in the visual treatment of music video that the average audience may be able to recognize. (The average audience here means the general viewers who watch TV very often but have little or no cinematic background and have not been trained to observe the
visual elements that appear in the media.)

Because of the lack of appropriate instrument for this study, there was a need to develop a coding instrument for collecting the data. Taking the interest of this study into consideration, the development of the coding instrument did not focus on one or two possible features, such as lighting or color. Instead it was developed to gain a more complete view of the visual treatment of music videos. Basic production principles of film and video, discussions of the form of music video by many scholars and critics, and the promotional nature of music video, etc. (discussed in chapter II) were all important elements guiding the creation of the coding instrument.

A preliminary coding instrument was developed and prototyped based on an intuitive assessment by the researcher of three music videos from the U. S. and three from Taiwan as stimuli. Two students with some cinematic background and three students who are film majors were asked by the researcher to do the coding of three different viewings. In the first viewing, one coder and the researcher watched the six music videos together and identified ambiguities in the interpretation of the categories. Part of the preliminary coding instrument was refined. In the second test of the instrument, two coders were given more extensive verbal explanations of the definition of each category. The intercoder reliability was not high enough. (It was calculated at .56, which was not acceptable for the visual content analysis.) After the viewing, the researcher again refined the categories.

After three iterations, a total of forty-six categories were incorporated for the coding scheme. For the third test, two new coders were trained by watching visual examples with verbal explanations. In addition, a practice video was played twice so that the researcher could reinforce the coders’
understanding of the definition of the categories. The same six music videos were played four times and the reliability between the two coders reached .80, which was considered acceptable (Cronbach, 1978).

**Final Instrument**

The 46 categories were organized in the coding sheet following the rationale described below. A detailed description of these categories can be found in Appendix B (see Appendix B).

In this study, there are two major parts in the analysis of a music video. The first part concentrates on the general features of the whole video. The coders need to look at the whole video to assess these general features.

**Performance, Narrative, Fantasy, or Hybrid**

First, when we look at a music video, we usually can identify the structure of the video. Basically, there are three dramatic structures of music videos: performance, narrative, and fantasy or experimental. In a performance video, the artists perform on the stage with or without a live audience. In a narrative video, the visual is usually telling a story. In a fantasy video, the discontinuity of space and time is often stressed and the visual consists of incongruous images. A hybrid video is a video in which there are two or more than two structures described above.

**Lyric-Related, Free-Associated, Performing Images or Combination**

Next we look at the visual images in the video to determine whether these images are related to the lyrics or not. That is, some music videos contain lyric-related images, while others contain free-associated images.
And many music videos combine these two kinds of images. For music videos which simply recorded a performance, the video is regarded as composed of performing images.

Pace related to the Lyrics, to the Music or Both

We also can notice by examining the video as a whole whether the pace of the video is related to the lyrics or to the music or both. Although music is the central part of a music video, the pace may not be related to the musical rhythm. Therefore, it is essential to find out if one music video has a pace related to the lyrics or to the music or both.

Color, Black-and-White, Stylized, or Combination

The use of color enhances the atmosphere or meaning in a music video. Thus, it is important to identify the general color value in a music video. Some videos contain only black-and-white images, some only color images. A few music videos consist of stylized color, here meaning using negative imaging or solarization. And a large number of music videos combine two or all of these images.

Realistic, Expressionistic, Neutral, or Combination Lighting

Lighting enhances the general mood or meaning of a music video. In this study, the lighting styles included realistic, expressionistic and neutral. As in the case of the use of color, some music videos used only one type of lighting, some incorporated two or more to produce different effects. Realistic lighting tends to produce a documentary look in the image. The style is unobtrusive. There is no trace of distortion or manipulation that violates the
natural affinities of lights.

Expressionistic lighting is used to create symbolic implications and often stress these qualities by deliberately distorting natural light patterns. The light patterns of this type of lighting have no direct imitative associations, but create a visual appeal. Finally, neutral lighting creates non-associative effects - no imitative associations nor visual appeals. It only illuminates the subjects at the foreground.

**Continuity Editing, Thematic Editing, Cutting to the Musical Rhythm or Combination**

For the purpose of this study, three major types of editing served as categories - continuity, thematic, and cutting to the musical rhythm. Because sometimes it is difficult to choose one out of the three as the dominant type of editing, a category named combination is included.

**Special Visual Devices**

The last portion of the first part of analysis is to identify some special visual devices used in a music video. Many music videos feature different kinds of “unnatural” images, images that are mostly produced by some special electronic devices. In this study, the special visual devices were divided into eight major effects - animation, optical effects, matting, wide-angle effect, diffusion effect, mechanical effects, distortions of movements and digital video effects. It may be important to identify as many kinds of special devices used in a music video, but considering the interest of this study, the researcher thought that identifying these eight sets of special devices should be sufficient.
Artist as Performer, Narrator, Actor/Actress or Playing More than One Role

The second part of the analysis focuses on the recording artist in the music video. Since music video is supposed to sell the recording artist, part of the visual structure of the music video should be centered around the star to create certain images. Therefore, it is important to identify the role(s) that the artist plays in the video.

Bird’s-Eye View, High Angle, Eye-Level, Low Angle, or Oblique Angle

Different camera angles have different psychological effects on the viewer. For example, the bird’s-eye view includes much information of the locale, but may make the artist look insignificant. The low-angle shot heightens the importance of the artist while the high-angle shot tends to reduce the height of the artist. Each of the five camera angles was coded differently within this category.

Extreme Long Shot, Long Shot, Medium Shot, Closeup, Extreme Closeup

The camera shots not only reveal the amount of information within the frame but also have psychological effects on the viewer. Closeups tend to elevate the importance of the artist while the long shots tend to describe the relationship between the artist and the locale or environment. Consequently, camera angles and shots were chosen to find out if certain approaches occur to give the viewer certain feelings about the artist in the video.
Video Selection Process

To obtain the American music videos, a total of 215 videos were recorded from those broadcast on the MTV cable channel on the days of December 16 and 30 of 1989 and January 12, 1990 because weekend viewing was found to be the greatest during the week for the adolescent viewers (Sun and Lull 115-25). Subtracting the three videos used in the pretest, 212 videos remained.

Taiwanese videos were drawn from the music videos aired on three television programs on the three national networks. These music video programs are broadcast on Saturdays and Sundays, which is the weekend in Taiwan. Among these three programs, two are one-hour long and one is only half-an-hour long. In order to obtain sufficient quantity of videos, the recording included the broadcast content of the programs from January 6 to February 18, 1990. A total of 58 videos were recorded. Subtracting the three videos used in the pretest, there were 55 videos that could be used. Six out of each country's sample were selected randomly for the analysis.

Among the six music videos from the U.S., only one was by a female vocalist. Another one presented a male-and-femal duet and the other four were about a male vocalist or group. Two of them were mainly performance videos, one was a narrative and three were some performing images intercut with conceptual images. In addition, two videos were released in 1983, and four were released in 1989. Among the four music videos that were released in 1989, three songs have been on the Billboard’s Top 40 list.

For the six music videos from Taiwan, two were by a female vocalist and four were by a male vocalist. One was a performance video, one narrative, and four were performances intercut with some conceptual images.
Five of them were released between December 1989 and January 1990. Only one was released in early 1989. In addition, four of the six songs have been on Taiwan's Top 10 list. A list including titles of the 12 music videos selected is included in appendix D.3

Procedures

The unit of analysis was the entire music video. The length of the coding instrument influenced the researcher's decision to instruct the coders not to indicate multiple appearances of certain categories, especially the use of camera angles and shot selections, in the same music video. The researcher was interested in the percentage of videos containing at least one reference to a category and not in the number of times the same element appeared in a particular video.

Subject Training

Because the sample contained music videos from Taiwan, the researcher asked two graduate students from Taiwan who did not have any cinematic background to be the subjects for the study. Before the coding, the researcher trained the two subjects the same way as in the third testing of instrument. In the training, the researcher first gave each subject the list of definition of category to read and answered any questions they had. Later, each category was explained again by the researcher and visual examples were

3 A copy of each music video used is available from the Department of Communication at the Ohio State University for other scholars and students who may be interested in further analyzing the music videos.
shown to the subjects to further clarify what the researcher was looking for in each category. Several of these visual examples were drawn from three of the six videos used in the instrument design phase.

The other visual examples were pictures from five television/video or film production books (Zettl 374-85; Monaco 64; Kindem 107; Hedgecoe 232-35; Giannetti 11-12). Finally, a fourth video, also drawn from the videos used in the pretest, was shown twice to the subjects. There was discussion between the researcher and the subjects regarding the entire analysis during and after the second viewing. The whole training took about one and one half hours.

**Viewing Conditions**

During the actual coding, the two subjects viewed each of the 12 music videos four times together. After each viewing, there was a three-minute period for the subjects to do the individual coding. During the first and second viewings, the videos were played nonstop. In the third viewing, the video was played nonstop but in slow motion. For the fourth viewing, the video was played in normal speed also nonstop and the subjects were allowed to make any appropriate changes on the coding sheets. These arrangements were to make sure that the subjects would be able to watch the video carefully and do the coding as correctly as possible. During the coding period, any comments that the subjects made regarding their decisions were recorded by the researcher.

The six music videos from Taiwan were played first and then the six American videos were played. The viewing of all 12 videos required about five hours. A coding manual including the training procedure of the subjects and definition of each category is located at Appendix B. A sample coding
sheet is included in Appendix C.

Reliability

Because the coding instrument for analysis was newly developed and used for the first time in this study, there was a need to determine its reliability. This was done by comparing the codings between the two subjects using the formula offered by Holsti (see Table 1).

As can be observed from the table, the reliability for most tests was above .80, with one reliability calculated at .77. The two subjects had more agreements in the analyses of Taiwan's music videos than in the analyses of the American music videos. The average reliability was calculated at .85 for the analyses of Taiwan's videos and .82 for the analyses of the American videos. The intercoder reliability was calculated at .83.
Table 1

Results of Reliability Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MTV Videos</th>
<th>Subject1/Subject 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I See You Smile</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner of A Lonely Heart</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let Love Rule</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sowing the Seeds of Love</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Red Wine</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taiwan's Videos</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Train of Sadness</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Land Of Youth</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who Found My Heart in Fall?</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I Own Nothing At All?</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Love</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Hero</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

A total of 12 videos were analyzed for occurrences in 46 visual categories. Overall frequencies are found in Table 2. These categories are listed following the order in the coding sheet. Table 3 shows the same results but the frequencies under the “Hybrid” or “Combinational” categories are sorted out and put into each identified category in order to find out what the major visual categories are in the music videos analyzed. Table 4 contains the number of major special visual devices used in each video. There are eight categories of effects selected for this study.

Results for Research Question One

This first question sought to find out what major visual categories can be found in the analysis of music videos. As can be observed from Table 3, this study found that performing images, recording artist as performer, eye-level angles, low angles, long shots, medium shots, and closeups appeared in each of the 12 music videos.

Performance music video, pace related to music, color images, and distortions of movements were used in 11 music videos. Lyric-related images, realistic lighting, high angles, and extreme long shots were used in 10 music videos. Optical effects were used in nine music videos. Eight music
Table 2

Frequency of Occurrence for 46 Categories in 12 Music Videos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>The U.S. Frequency</th>
<th>Taiwan Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy/Experimental</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid form</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1: P + N; 3: P + F/E)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyric-Related Images</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free-Associated Images</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing Images</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combinational Images</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4: Performing + Lyric; 1: All three)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3: Performing + Lyric; 2: All three)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace Related to the Music</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace Related to the Lyrics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combinational Pace</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-and-White Images</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color Images</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylized Images</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combinational Color Images</td>
<td>3(B&amp;W + Color)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2: All three; 1: B&amp;W + Color)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic Lighting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressionistic Lighting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Lighting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combinational Lighting</td>
<td>3(R + E)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2:R+E; 1: R + Neutral)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting to Continuity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic Editing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting to the Musical Rhythm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combinational Editing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1: Thematic + Musical; 1: Continuity + Musical)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1: Continuity + Thematic; 2: Thematic + Musical)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>The U.S. Frequency</th>
<th>Taiwan Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optical Effects</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide-Angle Effect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion Effect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Effects</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distortions of Movement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Video Effects</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor/Actress</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than One Roles</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Performer + Actor/Actress)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird's-Eye View</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Angle</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye-Level angle</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Angle</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oblique angle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Long Shot</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Shot</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Shot</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeup</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Closeup</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

Frequency of Occurrence for 39 Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>The U.S. Frequency</th>
<th>Taiwan Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy/Experimental</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyric-Related Images</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free-Associated Images</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing Images</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace Related to the Music</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace Related to the Lyrics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-and-White Images</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color Images</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylized Images</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic Lighting</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressionistic Lighting</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Lighting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting to Continuity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic Editing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting to the Musical Rhythm</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>The U. S.</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optical Effects</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide-Angle Effect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion Effect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Effects</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distortions of Movement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Video Effects</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performer</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor/Actress</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird’s-Eye View</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Angle</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye-Level angle</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Angle</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oblique angle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Long Shot</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Shot</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Shot</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeup</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Closeup</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These figures are computed by putting the frequency of the "Combinational" categories in Table 2 into each identified category.*
Table 4

The Number of Special Visual Devices Used in Each Video

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Video</th>
<th>The Number of Devices Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MTV Videos</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I See You Smile</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner of A Lonely Heart</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let Love Rule</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sowing the Seeds of Love</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Red Wine</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taiwan's Videos</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Train of Sadness</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Land of Youth</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who Found My Heart in Fall?</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I Own Nothing At All?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Love</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Hero</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

videos contained lyric-related paces. Black-and-white images, cutting to musical rhythm and recording artist as actor/actress appeared in seven music videos. Fantasy/Experimental music video, expressionistic lighting, and thematic editing appeared in six music videos.

Overall a total of 23 visual categories appeared in half or more than half of the 12 music videos. The other 16 visual categories such as narrative music video, neutral lighting, continuity cutting, etc. appeared in less than six music videos.
Results for Research Question Two

This second question sought to find out if there were differences between the distribution of visual categories in the American and Taiwanese music videos. As can be observed from Tables 2 and 3, most of the American and Taiwanese music videos in the sample were hybrid music videos with combinational visual categories. Four of the six American videos were hybrid music videos and five of the six Taiwanese videos were hybrids. Moreover, most music videos in the sample contained performing and lyric-related images. Four American videos contained performing and lyric-related images and three Taiwanese videos contained these two images.

In the analysis of pace, it was found that the pace of the American and Taiwanese music videos in the sample tends to be related to the music and sometimes to both the music and lyrics. Three American videos and four Taiwanese videos contained pacing related to both lyrics and music. Two American videos and two Taiwanese videos contained pacing related to the music’s rhythm. Furthermore, the recording artists in the sample of videos would do some performing and acting in the videos. The recording artists in three American videos and four Taiwanese videos played the roles of performer and actor or actress.

Color images and high angles also were used in more than half of the sample. Five American and six Taiwanese videos contained color images. Five American and five Taiwanese videos contained high angles. Finally, eye-level angles, low angles, long shots, medium shots, and closeups appeared in all American and Taiwanese videos.

Some differences were found in the distribution of other visual categories. Two music videos from Taiwan included stylized color images
whereas no American music videos included these kinds of images. Also more realistic and less expressionistic lighting styles were used in Taiwanese music videos than in the American music videos. Realistic lighting was used in six Taiwanese music videos and four American music videos. Expressionistic lighting was used in four American and only two Taiwanese music videos.

Thematic editing was also more frequently used by Taiwan’s music video directors in the sample as the dominate type of editing or to be combined with other types of editing. Four Taiwanese videos consisted of this type of editing while only two American videos consisted of this type of editing. In addition, cutting to musical rhythm was used in four American videos and three Taiwanese videos.

The study’s results also show that Taiwanese music videos in the sample relied heavily on the special visual devices whereas American music videos did not. All of the six Taiwanese videos contained at least three kinds of special visual devices. Only one American video contained five kinds of special visual devices and one contained three. In addition, in the analysis of camera angles and shots used to portray the artists, it can be noticed that more oblique angles were used and more information of the locale was revealed by including extreme long shots in the music videos from Taiwan. Three Taiwanese videos contained oblique angles but only one American video contained these kinds of angles. Extreme long shots were used in all six of Taiwan’s videos. Four American videos contained these kinds of shots.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

In the analysis of the structure of each American music video, only one video was considered a pure performance video and one was considered a narrative. The other four videos were coded as hybrid forms and all of these contained performances and other conceptual images. Similar categorizations occurred in the analysis of the music videos from Taiwan. Only one video was considered a pure performance video. The other five Taiwanese videos were considered hybrid form and they also contained performances with some conceptual images. Moreover, as one subject observed, the narrative in the hybrid music videos often was fragmented rather than linear.

Music video has adopted characteristics from other mass media, mainly television, commercials, and film. A music video usually contains human images and most of these images show the artist as a performer or in other roles. In addition, the music video director must arrange the visuals in a particular way to attract the viewer's attention. As shown from the hybrid videos in the study, two structures were parallel or intermixed and separation in space and time, an important feature of avant-garde films, was more frequently incorporated than narrational devices. These results suggest that music video is a complex medium.
All the music videos analyzed included performances. The frequent inclusion of performing images, even just lip-synching, seems to indicate that the artist is constantly reminding the viewer that he or she is the one that is singing the song when he or she is also playing another role in the video. These images appear repeatedly throughout the whole video. This is important since the main function of music video is to sell the artist and the song.

In the analysis of Taiwanese music videos, it is interesting to note that there were very few appearances of musical instruments in the performing images. While the singers in the American videos would perform with the musical band behind or around him/her to create the feeling of a live performance, most Taiwanese pop singers were very comfortable only lip-synching throughout the entire video. This may indicate that the audience in the U.S. and Taiwan have different expectations as to how the singers would perform their songs in front of them. American audiences may expect the singers to perform with musical bands so that the whole performance could bring the same dynamic feelings or excitement as in the original songs as they watch the performers' hands and fingers actually touch the musical instruments.

Taiwan's audiences may only expect the appearance of the singers. It may not be important to them whether these singers perform with or without musical bands. In fact, there are very few live concerts in Taiwan. Even for those singers who have established their positions as the most popular singers in Taiwan, many of them have not held a live concert even once in their career. When they appear on television, most of the performers lip-synch the song without the appearance of a musical band. Their record
companies arrange small parties that can accommodate an audience of several hundred members once or twice a year. In these occasions, they perform live in the set, but the music is usually taped in advance.

As to the types of visual images that the sample of videos contained, the data indicated that most of the music videos used in this study did not include free-associated images, but had lyric-related images, in addition to performing images. Five American and five Taiwanese music videos contained lyric-related images. This is what Kaplan called the centering effect (47). This effect is produced by the song-image format and the constant return to the lip-synching face of the artist who is being "sold" in the video. From this viewpoint, the inclusion of lyric-related images may also have to do with the promotional nature of music video. A music video needs to contain at least some images that are related to the song's lyrics so that the viewer would probably memorize the song and the video more easily. Similar to television commercials, these images might serve to bring reinforcement and involvement with the artists and their songs. According to Bryan Johnson, a music video producer/director, making a music video is an advertising campaign. Record companies are actually throwing percentages out at the directors: "We want forty-percent band, forty-percent concepts and the girl in maybe ten percent" (Goldberg 64). When the visuals do not focus primarily on the performers, for example in "Owner of A Lonely Heart", the lyric-related images can still build a bond between the artist and the viewer.

Moreover, as can be observed from the music videos collected for this study, even though many images were considered lyric-related, some of these images were not related to each other. For example, in "Who Found My Heart in Fall?", a shot of the artist drinking coffee in a cafe was immediately
followed by a shot of her walking alone in the woods. As some critics pointed out, the representations in music videos are not stable or solid for very long and do not obey the logic of rational thought (Burns & Thompson 11-25; Morse 15-28). These visual treatments may leave some room to be completed by the viewers and may engage the viewers and involve them in the process of experiencing and appreciating the video.

Furthermore, much of the significance of the visual images may lie in the way they are associated by the targeted viewers to construct patterns of identification with the particular artist. Similar to the art of advertising, music video presents the artist with a particular style and this particular style was designed with the targeted audience of the artist's music in mind. When the director produces a music video, he or she must consider the target audience's demographic characteristics (e.g. age and gender) and their cultural traits so that they can accept the artist style and identify with the artist. For instance, most of the fans of the young artists in “The Land of Youth” are young children. Therefore, the artists’ style in the video was energetic and dynamic. The visual of the video was full of performing images that showed the artists sing and dancing all the time. These arrangements reflected the director's concern about the viewer’s appreciation and acceptance of the artists’ style.

In addition, when watching the videos, the subjects noted that overall the composition of the six American music videos was more complex and intriguing than that of the six Taiwanese music videos. It seemed to them that the American directors of these videos had developed some creative concepts before they produced the videos and that they manipulated the images to create the effects they wanted. For example, in “Owner of a Lonely
Heart," the composition of the dramatic settings and striking images was complicated so that the visuals could be seen several times without the viewer feeling bored. In contrast, they thought that the Taiwanese directors did not seem to spend much time in developing concepts before they made the videos. As a result, the composition of the visuals was relatively simple. Compared to the American music videos, the visuals in the Taiwanese music videos provided much less pleasure. As one Taiwanese scholar observed, not enough creativity is displayed in many Taiwanese music videos and thus the adolescent viewers are not attracted to them (Lee 90). The subjects' observation may explain part of the reason why the young viewers in Taiwan prefer to watch American music videos rather than Taiwanese music videos.

In the analysis of pace, the results showed that five of the six American music videos contained a pace related to the music, and three of these five had a pace related to the lyrics at the same time. The pace of the six Taiwanese music videos was related to the music and four of these six also had pacing related to the lyrics or narrative of the song at the same time. These results may indicate that having the visual images matched with the pace of music is an important feature of music videos since music videos need to promote the song.

In identifying the general color value in the videos, it is interesting to note that while we do not see many black-and-white images on television or in films except for old programs or movies, black-and-white images were popular in the music videos analyzed. This may be because since we now see everything in color, black-and-white images are likely to attract our attention. On the other hand, it is probable that since music video is a postmodern form that uses parts of preexisting traditions, black-and-white images, which were
once favored by some film directors because they add to the realness of the visuals, are favored and adopted by the music video directors.

As to the stylized color images, the results showed that only two Taiwanese videos contained these kinds of images and in the six American music videos they did not appear at all. The images using posterization effect or a negative imaging might give the artist a strangely flat look. It might be for this reason that these kinds of color images were not popular in the videos of the study. Although incorporating these kinds of images would add variety to the images in the video, the artist might prefer to have a natural presentation of him/herself so that the viewer could always identify where he or she is in the video.

As to lighting, the American and Taiwanese directors of the videos in the sample both seemed to favor combinational lighting and most of the combinations were of realistic and expressionistic lighting. Three American music videos contained combinational lighting and all of these combinations were of realistic and expressionistic lighting. Three Taiwanese music videos contained combinational lighting and two of them were of realistic and expressionistic lighting and one was of realistic and neutral lighting. As these results showed, expressionistic lighting was used more often in the American music videos than in Taiwanese music videos and realistic lighting was used less often in the American music videos than in Taiwanese music videos. This may be due to the different visual traditions of the two cultures. Many American music video directors adopted expressionistic traditions from avant-garde movies. In contrast, the visual traditions in the films of Taiwan, especially in recent years, have been influenced by Realists such as Bazin and De Sica. The music video directors of Taiwan also may be influenced by these
realistic traditions. However, it is also possible that this is due to the fact that the average budget for producing a music video in Taiwan is much lower than that in the U.S., and therefore, there is less manipulation of lights to help create the general mood because exotic lighting costs more money. It was reported that the average budget was between NT$50,000 - NT$70,000 (approximately US$2,000 - US$2,800) for each Taiwanese music video (Lee 77-78). But the average budget was between US$10,000 - US$40,000 for each American music video (Blair 193).

When editing styles are compared, the American music video directors tend to edit the videos according to the musical rhythm while the music video directors in Taiwan tend to use thematic editing. Four American music videos were edited according to the musical rhythm and three Taiwanese music videos were edited according to the musical rhythm. Four of the music videos from Taiwan contained thematic editing and only two American music videos contained thematic editing. In the four Taiwanese music videos that contained thematic editing, images of different events at different space and time were often juxtaposed in the music videos to describe an idea or concept or create moods of the songs.

As to the American music videos that were edited to the musical rhythm, discontinuity of space and time also was an important element in the videos. Sometimes an image did not remain stable very long because it had to be in synchronization with the rhythm of the music. These devices that produce a separation of space and time seem to create a context of fantasy for the viewer and reveal more of the postmodern nature of music videos.

An unexpected finding in the analysis of editing is that cutting to the musical rhythm was not used in every music video. Two of the six American
music videos and three of the six Taiwanese music videos did not cut to the music. Some people think that because the purpose of music video is to sell records, the visuals inevitably are subordinated to the soundtrack. This study’s results seem to suggest that sometimes the visual content is more important in a music video than giving the audience the rhythmic feeling of the song by quick cuts. As a new visual form to promote popular music, music video provides a different phase of manipulation on promotional principles. The visuals can become the primary sources of pleasure for the viewers. Therefore, some directors may like to put efforts at composing effective visual statements to attract the viewer’s attention rather than relying on the audio elements. In one of the American music videos that did not combine musical cutting (“Red Red Wine”), the visuals were arranged to tell a story of a young, unhappy boy. In the video, the director was more concerned with transferring the emotions of the boy (the artist) to the viewer than with emphasizing the rhythm of the song. In the other video that did not combine musical cutting (“Let Love Rule”), the importance of love was emphasized by presenting lyric-related images. The overall mood was sober and musical cutting was not incorporated.

In the three Taiwanese videos that did not combine musical cutting, the three songs were all sad songs that told of a lost love. It might be due to the sad moods of the songs that the directors did not edit the videos to the music since a lot of cuts between shots might prevent the sadness within the images to grow and linger. Transitional devices such as dissolve and wipe were frequently used. In these videos, the visuals that showed the artist’s melancholy state were usually images in which the artist sat alone in big, empty rooms or places with an unhappy expression on his or her face.
Because the artist’s sad moods emerged from time to time at different places, different images associated with the sadness were juxtaposed to create the overall melancholy mood.

In analyzing the special visual devices used, the findings showed that music videos from Taiwan relied heavily on special visual devices whereas the American music videos did not. Optical effects were used in every Taiwanese video. Distortions of movements such as slow motion were used in five videos. Matting and digital video effects were used in three videos.

While some American scholars such as Baxter, DeRiemer, Landini, Leslie and Singletary suggested that a lot of music videos use different types of special effects to create unusual images, only certain devices were used very frequently in the six American music videos in this study. Slow motion was used in every American music video and optical effects (e.g. dissolves and multiple exposures) were used in three videos. Digital video effects were used in only one video.

These results suggest that music video directors like to employ dynamic visual techniques to maintain the viewer’s interest. The differences found between Taiwan’s and America’s music videos may indicate that the American directors have put more emphasis on other visual elements to create the images that would go with the song and at the same time hold the audience’s attention whereas the music video directors in Taiwan tend to rely on special effects. While the American directors would hire professional actors or dancers to play a part in the music video or create a complex setting in an exotic place, Taiwan’s directors rely on the special visual effects to hold the attention of the audience. Similar to the uses of lighting schemes, the reliance on special visual effects seen in most Taiwan’s music videos may be
due to the confines of low budget. Relying on special visual devices, Taiwan’s directors can lower the cost of production.

As to the roles that the artist plays in the video, there is a tendency in both the cases of the U. S. and Taiwan that the recording artist would do some acting him/herself in the video in addition to the performance. No artist in the 12 music videos was coded as playing the role of narrator. This result suggests that the artist tends to dominate the action in the video. In addition, playing a character in the video may draw more of the viewer’s attention and cause more emotional attachment to the artist while listening to the song. Consequently, most artists would do some acting in the videos.

In the use of camera angles, the results showed that low angles were used in all American and Taiwanese music videos. Low angles are not frequently used in television or film production unless the director wants to emphasize the importance of a subject. Since this study did not record all the occurrences of each camera angle used, no clear indication of the use of low angles can be obtained. But it could be observed from four American and three Taiwanese music videos that in the performing images the artist was often photographed from a low angle. In these images, the artist’s stance seemed to become large, potent and symbolic. The viewer could feel like being drawn into the crowd below the stage in a live concert.

Other camera angles such as high angles and eye-level angles were used in every music video. High angles were used to give the viewer a sense of general overview of the locations in the videos. In the scenes in which eye-level angles were used, the artists would fix his or her eyes in a steady and intent look at the camera. These looks or gazes may not seem unusual because the artist had to look at the camera when the camera was rolling. But
they also may indicate the artist's efforts to convey a sense of eagerness for the viewer's attention. Bird's-eye views appeared in three Taiwanese music videos and only one American music video. This may indicate that Taiwan's music video directors would include more information of the locale in the videos than American music video directors. This may be due to the influence of different visual traditions. The dominant realistic tradition in Taiwan emphasizes the relationship between humans and the environment, therefore, Taiwanese directors may tend to shoot a scene from a very high angle so that more details of the environment can be included within the frame. Oblique angles were used more frequently in Taiwanese music videos than in the American music videos. This may suggest either that Taiwan's directors used oblique angles to dazzle the viewer's eyes or that the oblique angles were used to convey the unstable moods in the songs.

In the analysis of camera shots, it can be noticed that as shown in the use of camera angles, the American music videos tend not to include much information of the locale when compared with Taiwanese music videos. But not many differences can be demonstrated because this study did not record all the occurrences of the uses of shots. The data also showed that extreme closeups were not used in these music videos, but closeups that photograph the artist's face were used in every music video, especially when the artist lip-synched the song. In these closeups, the singers frequently addressed the camera directly. This was pointed out by Burns as "a practice that is still unusual in mainstream dramatic film and television" (45). Since these closeups can convey a greater sense of intimacy between the artist and the viewer and give the viewer the sense of live performance, it is likely that they would be used frequently. In addition, since the artist is an important
figure in the videos, closeup shots need to be used and possibly very frequently used to show the artist’s face.

As expected, conventional shots—long shots and medium shots—were used in every music video. Long shots were used to reveal some details of the locale in the videos. Medium shots showed the artist from waist up and were combined with long shots and closeups for the purpose of variation.

Overall the results of this study showed that some visual elements of music videos can be observed and categorized. Some of the categories that frequently appeared in the American music videos were adopted by Taiwan’s music video directors. This suggests that some visual elements of the American music videos such as lyric-related images and music-related pace are universal formal requirements of music video and can possibly be used by people from different cultural backgrounds. Most of these categories are related to the music or lyrics of the song. Since the song or the artist is the “product” that the video intends to sell, the directors or producers must include visual elements that are related to the song and/or the artist. The video must contain some performing images because these images focus on the performing artist. The video also must include lyric-related images because these images can help the viewer connect him/herself with the song. In addition, the pace of the video must be related to the music so that the viewer can connect the visuals with the song. These visual elements promote the song and the artist and can motivate the viewer to buy the recordings so they become the basic formal components of a music video.

Furthermore, these elements are fundamental and important because making a music video is an advertising campaign. The video must present the sponsor’s (the record company’s and the artist’s) message. Performing
images show the viewer who the singer is. Lyric-related images tell the viewer what the song is about and music-related pace can reinforce the mood of the song. They are indispensable to the promotion of the song and the artist. Though the directors or producers may be from different cultural background, when they compose these elements, they may only need to take the artist’s style or look and the song’s music and lyrics into considerations. These considerations may not have to deal with complex ideas or concepts and thus cultural or visual traditions may not be involved.

In addition, the song usually exists before the video. The director may have less concern or control of how to combine these basic components. According to a report by Iain Blair, a record company would often choose a director who has “compatibility” with the artist (192). Since music video has become popular, a lot of record companies have entire departments and staffs devoted exclusively to video. The video executives at the labels have “responsibilities ranging from the coordination of a visual image for both artists and videos with the respective marketing personnel, to assigning individual projects to specific production companies, directors and writers” (192). After a director is selected, in most cases, he or she would come up with concepts him/herself. But if the artists, especially those superstars, have had the concepts themselves, the directors usually need to take these concepts into serious consideration. As more and more artists become increasingly conscious of video, it is not unusual that the artists will give input into or even control a concept.

The study’s results also indicated that some visual elements such as lighting, camera angles and shots may be influenced by different visual traditions. These visual elements are either relatively complex or are mostly
involved with certain codes or concepts that are prevalent in the society. As a result, directors of different cultural backgrounds would tend to abide by the codes or adjust to the concepts that the general viewers in the society would accept or find attractive. For instance, realism is considered the dominant influence in the communication arts in Taiwan and has been accepted by the directors and audience for many years (Tseng 10-11). Even when Taiwanese directors have access to the same resources that American directors have, they may still prefer to adopt this tradition and produce a music video that consists of realistic lighting, long shots, and location shooting because the video needs to be appreciated and accepted by Taiwanese audience. Different cultures have developed different storehouses of shared images, attitudes, and ideas. The directors have to develop the concepts and arrange the visual elements in a way that the general viewers can appreciate and have interest. Therefore, the cultural milieu and social norms are important factors that they have to consider when producing the videos.

Other factors, such as budget limitations may be an essential factor in producing a music video. Production values involve anything and everything from the amount and kinds of locations and/or sets as well as extras and/or dancers to be used, to the use of special effects (new digital video effects are especially expensive), to the decision whether to shoot the clip on video (cheaper) or film (more expensive) (Shore 153). For the record companies that usually pay for the making of a video, the budget is determined by the potential market of a song. Compared to the U. S., the record market in Taiwan is very small. Consequently, the record companies would not spend much money hiring directors to produce expensive music videos. Thus, the directors have to use available light or rely on special
effects to lower the production cost.

In addition, the study’s results suggest that music videos are mainly commercial art. As one critic stated, “Music video is rooted in the mass marketing of popular songs” (Auderheide 59). Similar to television commercials, music videos in this study are short and have strong promotional intentions. The directors have to consider the demographic and psychographic characteristics of the target audience when they produce the videos. Moreover, there is no formula that can be set for producing a successful music video for an artist. Different artists or directors need to figure out their own options of combination to create a special style that would attract the audience.

Furthermore, the study’s results suggest that in most music videos in the study, traditional categories (e.g. lighting and editing) are often used but sometimes they are blurred rather than clearly presented. In addition, some music video directors would use some techniques from the avant-garde traditions (e.g. expressionistic lighting and special and temporal disjunction). But devices of more experimental nature such as free association and spontaneity were not often incorporated.

In essence, as the study done by Fry and Fry (1987) suggested, music videos are hybrids, they fall somewhere between television, commercials, and film. It can be noticed that music video has given the recording artists new images, unlike those that we have seen in television, commercials or films. Many music videos blend promotional images with other conceptual images that are mostly related to the song’s lyrics and these conceptual images can be related to the audience in many ways. These images promote the artist and the song but at the same time provide the viewer visual pleasure. Because of
these factors, music video should be regarded as an unique form of communication and the significance of its visual form should be further explored.

Limitations

Video Selection Process

The sample collected for this study was small. Only six American and six Taiwanese music videos were used. Therefore, no generalizations could be made based on the small sample. To better document the visual form of music video, a larger number of music videos should be used.

Instrument

The instrument for analysis was not complete. Not every visual element was included in the instrument. For example, camera movements, were not explored in the analysis. In addition, the analysis did not take a closer look at each element. In the analyses of camera angles and shots and special visual devices, the total occurrences were not counted. As a result, which kind of camera angle, shot or visual device is more frequently used than the others were not found.

Subjects

The subjects of the study were both from Taiwan. As a result, they had more agreements in the analysis of Taiwanese music videos than in the analysis of American music videos. The overall reliability was acceptable.
But more comprehensive results would be obtained if American subjects were matched with Taiwanese subjects.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

This study tried to answer two research questions. The first one was, What are the major categories of visual form which emerge from an analysis of music videos?

According to the results of this analysis, twenty-three visual categories appeared in at least half of the 12 music videos used in the study. Among these categories, performing images, recording artist as performer, eye-level angles, low angles, long shots, medium shots and closeups appeared most frequently in the sample of videos. Performance music video, pace related to music, color images, and distortions of movement were the categories that showed the second highest frequency of occurrence.

Other categories that appeared frequently in the videos included lyric-related images, lyric-related pace, recording artist as actor/actress, and visual cutting to musical rhythm. The study found that some of these categories (e.g. performing and lyric-related images, recording artist as actor/actress) were related to the promotional nature of music videos and some categories reflected dynamic visual techniques (e.g. distortions of movement). In addition, the study found that traditional narrational devices were not used in the music videos analyzed. Instead discontinuities of space and time were frequently incorporated in this sample of videos. These findings suggest that music video blends characteristics of television, commercials, and film. The
combination of these visual elements not only promotes the song and the artist but also produces effective visual statements. They can engage the viewers and involve them in the process of experiencing and appreciating the video. These visual elements capture the viewers' attention yet leave something out to be completed by the viewers.

The second research question was:
How does the distribution of visual categories in the American music videos compare with the distribution of visual categories in the Taiwanese music videos?

The study found that there were few or no differences in the distribution of the categories of hybrid music video, performing images, lyric-related images, pace related to music, artist as performer and as actor/actress, color images, low angles, and closeups. The findings seem to suggest that these visual elements are the fundamental formal elements of music videos at least in these two cultures. Since these elements only deal with the artist and/or the song, the directors may not need to develop complicated ideas or concepts to compose and arrange them. Moreover, the composition of these elements may be more in the control of the artist or the record company because they are increasingly conscious of music video's influence. The directors may have less control in manipulating these elements.

More differences were found in the distribution of lighting, editing, special visual devices, oblique angles, and extreme long shots. These differences may be due to the different visual traditions in each country. In Taiwan, the realistic tradition has been a dominant influence on visualization practices, particularly on film production. Therefore, Taiwan's music video directors tend to use realistic lighting and include more details of
the environment. American directors, on the other hand, may be influenced
by the avant-garde traditions and tend to use expressionistic lighting.

The limit of budget also may be an important factor in explaining
differences in the visual elements used. The much lower budgets for
Taiwanese music videos may force directors to rely on special visual devices
and oblique angles to dazzle the viewer's eyes and to use realistic lighting
created by available light and studio light. For American directors,
complicated sets and lighting, professional dancers, etc. may be "purchased" to
capture the viewer's attention.

Directions for Future Research

Overall, the instrument developed for the study proved to be a viable
way to gain insight into the visual form of music video. Some preliminary
findings of music video's visual structure and possible effects were obtained.
Due to the exploratory nature of the study, these findings were addressed
qualitatively. A quantitative analysis using a larger sample of videos or a
shorter time unit of analysis (e.g. 10 seconds rather than the complete video)
might build on the findings of this study.

Furthermore, this study focused on identifying the appearance of each
visual element and did not look at the context when each element appeared
in the video. For example, the subjects only coded whether a low angle was
used when the artist appeared and did not record the location, duration, or
other contextual elements when a low angle was used. Different coding
methods would obtain different results for the study. Future analysis might
use other coding methods that focus on exploring the relationship between
one visual element (e.g. camera angles) and its context.

In addition, some variables such as lighting, camera angles and shots, could be examined in more detail. Future research in lighting could explore the possible influences from each country's cultural and visual traditions. Studies on camera angles and shots might attempt to find out whether some camera angles or shots are used more frequently than the others and what the effects these kinds of camera angles or shots can have on the viewer. The same could be applied to studies of special effects.

Furthermore, in order to better understand the music video phenomenon, future studies should try to combine studies on the viewer's experiences in watching music videos with identifying the visual elements. Studies on form alone are not enough to gain complete insight into the meaning of music video. Music video has become part of everyday life for many young people. In order to better understand the influence of the artistic work, the viewer's experiences in interpreting the symbolic meaning of the artistic form should not be ignored.
APPENDIX A

HISTORY OF MUSIC TELEVISION
History of Music Television

Any discussion of the American music videos must start with MTV - Music Television. On August 1, 1981 Warner Amex Satellite Entertainment Company started cable television’s first channel that play only music videos for 24 hours everyday - MTV. MTV began its service with 2.5 million households connected to the service (Viera 81-82). It continued to grow as its subscriber numbers exploded: 8.6 million (1982), 19.3 million (1983), and 24.1 million (1984). In three and a half years, MTV had grown from 2.5 million subscriber households (offered over 300 cable system affiliates) to 24.1 million subscribers (available from 2700 cable affiliates). And in an article in the February 8, 1990 issue of Rolling Stone, it was reported that nearly 50 million United States homes are wired for MTV (Goldberg 63).

MTV is the first channel to play only music videos. But music videos played on MTV are certainly not the first innovative music-visual combinations. Before MTV, there had been some promo clips existed. And before these promo clips, there were a number of popular music programs on TV in 1950s.

However, according to Michael Shore, who wrote The Rolling Stone Book of Rock Video, the first promotional short or as what Shore calls “visual music” appeared in 1921 (20-21). A German pioneer, Oskar Fischinger, began to make films which were synchronized to jazz and classical music in 1921. Later in 1934, Fischinger’s shorts were, in Shore’s view, ahead of his time. “His use of rhythmic patterns of abstract geometric forms and color swirls still dazzles, and has been eclipsed only in terms of high budgets and high technology by latter-day computer-graphic animation” (21).
The first visual jukebox, the Panoram Soundie, was introduced in the late forties (Shore 21-22). These jukeboxes could be found in bars, restaurants, and other locations. They enjoyed a brief vogue until the early fifties but they had set up much of the subsequent pattern of music-visual conceptualization.

Television was introduced and commercialized in 1949 and has enjoyed the golden age as the favorite of many American families. In TV’s golden era, there were some famous popular music shows such as *Paul Whitman’s TV teen Club* (1949-1954), *Face the Music* (1948-1949), *Your Hit Parade* (1950-1959), and *The Big Record* (1957-1958). *Your Hit Parade* was considered by Shore “a pathfinder in the conceptualization of music video” (25). This weekly show had its own singers who would perform renditions of current hits. Little dramas and set pieces were often used to complement the song and to provide added visual diversion.

By the early fifties, a virtually unrivaled rock music program, *American Bandstand* began in 1952 (Shore 27). It was a youth-oriented version of *Your Hit Parade*. Ironically enough, *American Bandstand* had a sort of “music video” show in 1952 but was dropped and replaced by live performances in the studio. The format of this program was copied by many programs at that time but only it had survived.

In the sixties, the roots of current rock-video productions began to merge. A lot of famous bands made videos that stood up perfectly well compared with today’s conceptual videos. These bands include The Kinks, The Who, The Rolling Stones, and the Beatles. There were performances mixed with dramatic shots in The Rolling Stones’ films. Sped-up action and crazy-cut scenes appeared often in The Beatles’ promo films. In fact, The Beatles had made some clips with avant-garde techniques.
In the seventies, there was a grand prerock video example set by Pink Floyd in their 1974 world tour (Shore 37). Still-frame and moving film images were carefully synched to the music and then projected onto a giant round screen high above the stage.

In addition to the above, there were rock-films (Shore 44). Among the example are The Beatles’ A Hard Day’s Night (1964) and Magical Mystery Tour (1967). Frequently, techniques were borrowed from the avant-garde films and self-conscious surrealism.

In the seventies and early eighties, more and more music videos were produced by rock bands and there were more and more outlets for them in clubs and on cable TV. Before MTV, there was a half-hour show called Popclips which was basically the MTV-style programming (Shore 82). Popclips was made in conjunction with Warner Cable and shown through most of 1981 on Warner Cable’s youth-oriented Nickelodeon channel. This how aroused the interest of Warner Cable. Said former executive vice-president John Lack, “The radio stations weren’t playing new artists, so the companies needed new ways to promote records. Cable television offered us the possibility of promoting music in stereo on television” (Shore 82).

Thus the idea for MTV was born. Some executives were recruited from all strata of the music and television industries. Later Robert W. Pittman became the executive vice-president (Paskowski 61-68). He presented his plan and research studies in January 1981 to chairman of Warner Communications and American Express that teamed up to create Warner Amex.

MTV was launched on August 1, 1981 at an initial cost of $20 million (Kaplan 146). Pittman described his creation as “a new form for television designed especially for TV babies... a channel with no programs, no
beginning, no middle, no end” (Boyer D8). Pittman said that though music videos had been around for a while, there was little success (Paskowski 64). MTV’s research found that they were useless as self-contained program. But MTV people found that “they are marvelous building blocks if we package them the right way, put in other elements like music news and graphics, and put a real spin on them” (Paskowski 64).

The challenge then was to sell the MTV idea to four core constituencies— the cable operator for distribution; the music industry for programming; advertisers for revenue; and of course, the viewer. Apparently MTV succeeded. As Steven Levy described, “MTV has executed its concept brilliantly, taking advantage of the power of video to enhance the scientific, logical, strictly financial aspect of the music business” (Levy 123). As its executives boast, MTV is a way of thought, a way of life.
APPENDIX B
CODING MANUAL
CODING MANUAL

Study Overview

Music videos, developed as an advertising medium for rock music records, have caught the attention of adolescents and young adults unlike any other advertising vehicle. In addition to the musical part, the visual images are considered significant elements for capturing the viewer’s attention. The purpose of this analysis is to find out how music videos produced and directed in the U. S. differ visually from those produced and directed in Taiwan. The perspectives of producers and the audience are considered in the creation of coding scheme for the analysis.

Definition of Categories for Analyzing a Music Video

You will be coding each music video according to these definitions, not your own. Please take time to read them carefully.

I. The General Features

1. Types of Music Videos

a. Performance: This is a video in which the artist performs in a concert or a studio setting with or without a live audience.

b. Narrative: This is a video in which there is a simple or complex narrative primarily based on the story line or subject of the song and featuring the artist as hero or heroine or the artist as narrator who tells the story or appears in the setting where the narrative takes place.

c. Fantasy/Experimental: This is a video in which there is usually a series of incongruous visual images stressing spatial and temporal dislocation. These images may or may not deal with the song’s lyrics.
d. **Hybrid**: This is a video in which there are two or more than two of the structures described above.

2. **Types of Visual Images in a Music Video**

a. **Lyric-Related Images**: These are images based on or related to the literal meaning, story line or subject of the song.

b. **Free-Associated Images**: These are images that have little or no relation to the lyrics of the song.

c. **Performing Images**: These are images that show a performance or performances by the recording artist(s).

d. **Combination**: When a video is composed of two or more than two types of images described above, the video is considered containing combinational images.

3. **Pace of the Video**

a. **Pace Related to the Music**: The speed or tempo with which the video advances is related to the music of the song.

b. **Pace Related to the Lyrics**: The speed or tempo with which the video advances is related to the lyrics of the song.

c. **Combination**: The speed or tempo with which the video advances is related both to the lyrics and the musical rhythm.

4. **Overall Color Value of a Music Video**

a. **Black-and-white**: This is a video consisting of only black-and-white images. ("Black-and-white" includes black-and-white tinted with red, blue, or brown.)

b. **Color**: This is a video consisting of only color images. ("Color" includes low to highly saturated color.)

c. **Stylized**: This is a video in which the color value is specially progressed. Some typical techniques include the use of negative or reverse imaging and solarization (posterization).
d. **Combination of Color:** This is a video consisting of two or more than two of the color images described above.

5. Lighting

a. **Realistic Lighting:** The overall use of lighting is to use available light and studio light to imitate natural effects seen in real life. For example, sunlight through a window can be imitated by a lamp shining through the window at a similar angle. The style of this type of lighting is unobtrusive. There is no trace of distortion or manipulation that violates the natural affinities.

b. **Expressionistic Lighting:** The overall use of lighting is to create symbolic implications by deliberately distorting natural light patterns e.g. a silhouetted unknown person, lit only by a rectangular slit of light across his or her eyes. Or a face lighted from below often appears sinister, even if the actor/actress assumes a totally neutral expression. The light patterns have no direct imitative associations, but create a visual appeal.

c. **Neutral Lighting:** The main purpose of this type of lighting is to illuminate foreground objects, making them the focus of the viewer's attention.

d. **Combination:** In the video, different lighting styles are used in different scenes to create a variety of moods.

6. Dominant Type of Editing

a. **Cutting to Continuity:** The editing in the video concerns itself primarily with the clarification of an event, e.g. a performance or a story. It keeps the video moving in a straight-forward, logical, and smooth way, uses time and space coherently, and develops narrative in a linear manner. The cutting is unobtrusive, with characters and objects continuing from shot to shot largely through match cuts, and scene following scene without any sudden breaks or jumps.

b. **Thematic Editing:** The editing in the video stresses the association of ideas, irrespective of the continuity of real time and space. Different images, usually of separate events, can be juxtaposed, as long as they associate with the similar or same idea, subject, or theme that may or may not deal with the lyrics of the song.

c. **Cutting to the Musical Rhythm:** The shots of the video are edited to the beat of the song.
d. **Combination:** In the video, two or even three kinds of editing are incorporated.

7. Unnatural Visual Images: Images that cannot be seen in real life and are the results of special electronic devices.

   a. **Animation:** The process of combining drawings, puppets, silhouettes, or inanimate objects to create the illusion of mobility. Sometimes, computer graphics is used to create animation. The images can be manipulated in a variety of ways and separate images can be synthesized to form a new whole.

   b. **Optical Effects:** Pictorial elements achieved mostly through an optical printer or special effects generator. Examples include:

      Dissolve: The linking of two shots as the first fades out and the second fades in, usually signifying a lapse of time and a change in place.

      Multiple Exposure: This effect is produced by superimposing many images simultaneously.

      Split Screen: A frame in which several images are combined, all from different sources and none superimposed.

      Freeze Frame: This is a shot composed of a single film or video frame that gives the illusion of a still photograph.

      Wipe: An optical effect used as a transition between two shots in which the first often appears to be pushed vertically off the screen to the right by the gradual appearance of the second shot from the left, with a dividing line moving between them; other variations include horizontal, diagonal, iris, and spiral wipes.

   c. **Matting:** The optical or electronic insertion of one or more images into a single composite background by means of mattes for blocking out unwanted areas.

   d. **Wide-angle Effect:** An effect in which a camera lens with a short focal length and a wide horizontal field of view is used to increase perception of movement. When a subject works too close to this type of lens, he/she appears distorted and his/her prominent features could be emphasized and could look grotesque and unnatural.
e. **Diffusion Effect**: An effect in which diffusion filter is used to give the whole scene a soft, slightly out-of-focus look or to soften only the edges of the picture, but leave the center clear and sharp. A similar effect can also be achieved by greasing the edges of a piece of glass with petroleum jelly and taping it over the lenses or greasing only the edges of the glass.

f. **Mechanical Effects**: The creation of natural phenomena such as fog, smoke, snow or fire explosion produced mechanically on the set before the camera.

g. **Distortions of Movements** such as:

- **Slow Motion**: The illusion of filmed or taped action that is much slower than normal action, achieved by operating the camera at a rapid rate and projecting the film or playing the video at standard speed.

- **Fast Motion**: The illusion of filmed or taped action that is faster than normal action, achieved by operating the camera at a slower rate and projecting the film or playing the video at standard speed.

- **Reverse Motion**: Shots or prints of filmed or taped action that goes backward.

- **Strobing**: A skipping or rotary motion of a filmed or taped object at a speed inconsistent with the persistence of vision phenomenon; can be caused by a pan shot made too rapidly.

- **Zoom Shot**: A shot made with a zoom lens, which has the ability to zoom in and out, changing the size of the image relative to the position of the camera, without having to refocus.

h. **Digital Video Effects** such as:

- **Compression and Expansion**: An effect that makes a picture smaller or bigger while keeping the entire picture intact. The picture can be shrunk from its original full-screen size to a mere point on the screen. After compressing a picture to a zero-size image, it can then be expanded to full frame.

- **Horizontally or Vertically Stretched Aspect Ratios**: An effect that changes the aspect ratio of television (three units high and four unit wide) into horizontally or vertically stretched formats.

- **Echo Effect**: An effect created by repeating the same image as though it were placed between two opposite mirrors. This effect can be displayed as a static image, or shown as it multiplies.
Change of Perspective: An effect that distorts the image in such a way that it looks three-dimensional, thereby changing the point of view (looking at it from above or below, or straight on) and the illusion of depth.

Horizontal and Vertical Flip: An effect that reverses the image vertically or horizontally through electronic sweep reversal.

Mosaic Effect: In this effect, an image is broken down into many equal-sized squares of limited brightness and color to obtain a mosaic-like texture.

Slide Effect: In this effect, the entire original picture slides off to one side (or corner), revealing the second picture, which seems to lie underneath the original picture.

Rotation Effect: An effect which can rotate any image about all three axis: the width, the height, and the depth.

Fly Effect: In this effect, a picture zooms from zero to a certain image size and at the same time, it moves and spins into a specific screen position in the frame.

II. The Recording Artist(s)

8. The Artist’s Role in the Video

a. Performer: The artist performs on stage, or in a studio setting. The artist may perform live or lip-sync.

b. Narrator: The artist appears in scenes of usually a narrative video and lip-syncs the lyrics. He/She may seem to tell a story of his/her own or to tell a story of other people.

c. Actor/Actress: The artist does some dramatic acting in the video.

d. Playing More than One Role: The artist plays more than one of the roles described above.
9. Types of Camera Angles Used to Photograph the Artist

a. **Bird’s-eye view Angle**: A shot in which the camera placed very high above the artist and photographs the artist from directly over head.

b. **High Angle**: A shot in which the artist is photographed from above. The camera may be only a few feet above the subject for a close-up, or hundreds of feet above it for a long shot.

c. **Eye-level Angle**: A shot in which the camera is placed at approximately the artist’s eye level.

d. **Low Angle**: A shot in which the artist is photographed from below.

e. **Oblique Angle**: A shot involving a tilted camera. The artist photographed seems about to fall to one side of the frame.

10. Types of Camera Shots in Which the Artist Appears

a. **Extreme Long Shot**: A shot that has a panoramic view of an exterior location photographed from a considerable distance.

b. **Long Shot**: A shot that includes all of the artist and part of the detail of the scene.

c. **Medium Shot**: A shot that contains the artist’s figure from the knees or waist up and reveals a moderate amount of detail.

d. **Closeup**: A shot in which the artist is photographed so that he or she fills most of the frame. This kind of shot usually includes only his or her face and shoulders or a portion thereof.

e. **Extreme Closeup**: A shot which shows a detailed view of the artist, sometimes includes only his or her eyes or mouth.
TO THE RESEARCHER:

TRAINING OF THE CODERS

The following training procedures were used in this study. In the training, the researcher tried to make the coders understand and memorize the definition of each category.

1. The list of definition of each category was given to each coder to read and the researcher answered any questions that the coders had.

2. The researcher explained the definition of each category to the coders by showing visual examples of the 46 categories. Examples for camera angles and shots, wide-angle effects, stylized color, and digital video effects were drawn from five television/video or film production books. Three music videos, one from Taiwan, two from the United States were used to demonstrate the other visual categories. Each video was played and stopped whenever a reference to a category appeared. The parts of the video that contained references were played repeatedly until the coders fully understood and memorized. A fourth video, "Oh Father" was played twice to demonstrate how to analyze a music video. In the first viewing, the video was played nonstop. In the second viewing, the video was stopped several times so that the researcher could explain to the coders what to look for and how to do the coding. Whenever the coders felt confused they went back to read the list of definition and the researcher would clarify the ambiguity and explain why certain decisions were made.

A sample coding guide is located at the end of this manual.
Analyzing a Music Video: With Example of An American Music Video

"Oh Father"

I. Looking for the General Features

(1) Performance, Narrative, Fantasy or Hybrid

   In general, when we first look at a music video, we usually can identify which type of music video it is. Basically, there are three dramatic structures of music videos: performance, narrative, and fantasy or experimental. "Oh Father" is a hybrid video because we can see performance intercut with visuals that tell a story. Therefore, hybrid should be coded.

(2) Lyric-related Images, Free-associated Images, Performing Images or Combination

   "Oh Father" is a song about a girl’s (the artist’s) memory of her father and the video contained images of her childhood living with her father. In addition, Madonna appeared in some of the scenes in the video and lip-synched the song. The video contained performing and lyric-related images; therefore, combinational images should be coded.

(3) Pace related to the lyrics or to the music or both

   "Oh Father" is about an unhappy childhood and the song’s tempo is slow. The movement within the shots in the video also was slow and this helped to create a melancholy mood. Thus, the pace of the video should be considered related both to the lyrics and the music.
(4) Color: Black-and-white, Color, Stylized or Combination

"Oh Father" contained only black-and-white images. Thus, black-and-white should be coded.

(5) Lighting: Realistic, Expressionistic, Neutral or Combination

In "Oh Father", the overall use of lighting created a dreamlike quality and most light patterns were deliberately manipulated to create heavy and dramatic shadows. Thus, the video should be considered containing an expressionistic lighting.

(6) Editing: Continuity, Thematic, Cutting to the Musical Rhythm or Combination

In "Oh Father" we could observe that the whole visuals were arranged to tell a story. In addition, cause-and-effect relationships could be seen and the images were mostly linear. Therefore, continuity editing should be coded.

(7) Special Visual Devices

The major categories of these kinds of devices include:

a. Animation -- cartoon animation, computer graphics, etc.
b. Optical Effects -- dissolve, multiple exposure, freeze frames, split screen, wipe, etc.
c. Matting
d. Wide-angle Effect
e. Diffusion Effect
f. Mechanical Effects
g. Distortions of Movements -- slow motion, fast motion, reverse motion, strobing, etc.

(8) Digital Video Effects--compression and expansion, change of perspective, mosaic effect, rotation, etc.

In "Oh Father", dissolves (optical effects) were used and some shots were in slow motion (distortions of movements). Also wide-angle effect was used when the father was scolding the child wearing her mother's necklace. Diffusion effect was also used to create a dreamlike quality. And the snow scenes should be coded as using mechanical effects. Other effects were not used.

II. Focus on the Recording Artist(s)

(1) Artist as Performer, Narrator, Actor/Actress or Playing More than One Role

In "Oh Father", except for lip-synching the song, Madonna was a narrator telling her own story. She also did some acting in the video. Therefore, she played all three roles and should be coded as playing more than one role.

(2) Camera Angles: Bird's-eye view, High, Eye-level, Low, Oblique Angles

When Madonna lip-synched the song, she was mostly photographed from low and eye-level angles. When she appeared in the graveyard, she was photographed from a high angle. No oblique angle angles were used to photograph her. Thus, high, eye-level, and low angles should be coded.
(3) The Shots: Extreme Long, Long, Medium, Closeup, Extreme Closeup

In "Oh Father", Madonna was seen in all of the shots except extreme closeups. There were extreme long shots of her sitting in the snow and in the graveyard. Long shots were used in some scenes when she was with her father in the graveyard. When Madonna lip-synched the song, medium shots and closeups were used.
APPENDIX C

SAMPLE CODING SHEET
Sample Coding Sheet for Music Video Analysis

Coder: ______________________
Title: ______________________

1. Which type of music video is this:
   ___ a. performance
   ___ b. narrative
   ___ c. fantasy/experimental
   ___ d. hybrid (___ + ___ + ___)

2. The whole visual images are:
   ___ a. lyric-related images
   ___ b. free-associated images
   ___ c. performing images
   ___ d. combination (___ + ___ + ___)

3. The pace of this music video is:
   ___ a. related to the music.
   ___ b. related to the lyrics.
   ___ c. combination.

4. The color of this music video is:
   ___ a. black-and-white
   ___ b. color
   ___ c. stylized
   ___ d. combination (___ + ___ + ___)

5. This music video uses:
   ___ a. realistic lighting
   ___ b. expressionistic lighting
   ___ c. neutral lighting
   ___ d. combination (___ + ___ + ___)
6. The dominant type of editing is:  
   ___ a. cutting to continuity  
   ___ b. thematic editing  
   ___ c. cutting to the musical rhythm  
   ___ d. combination (___ + ___ + ___)

7. What kinds of the special visual devices were used in this video?
   a. animation (including computer graphics)  
      ___ Yes  ___ No
   b. optical effects (e.g. dissolve, superimposition, multiple exposure, split screen, freeze frame, wipe.)  
      ___ Yes  ___ No
   c. matting  
      ___ Yes  ___ No
   d. wide-angle effect  
      ___ Yes  ___ No
   e. diffusion effect  
      ___ Yes  ___ No
   f. mechanical effects (e.g. snow, fog, rain, fire explosion)  
      ___ Yes  ___ No
   g. distortions of movements (e.g. slow motion, fast motion, reverse motion, strobing, zoom)  
      ___ Yes  ___ No
   h. digital video effects. (e.g. compression and expansion, horizontally or vertically stretched aspect ratio, echo effect, change of perspective, horizontal or vertical flip, mosaic effect, slide, rotation, or fly effect)  
      ___ Yes  ___ No
8. What kinds of roles does the artist play in the video?
   ___ a. performer
   ___ b. narrator
   ___ c. actor/actress
   ___ d. more than one role
       ( ___ + ___ + ___ )

9. What kinds of camera angles are used to portray the artist when he or she appears in the video?

   a. bird’s eye-view angle   ___ Yes   ___ No
   b. high angle             ___ Yes   ___ No
   c. eye-level angle        ___ Yes   ___ No
   d. low angle              ___ Yes   ___ No
   e. oblique angle          ___ Yes   ___ No

10. What kinds of shots are used in the video when the artist appears?

    a. extreme long shot      ___ Yes   ___ No
    b. long shot              ___ Yes   ___ No
    c. medium shot            ___ Yes   ___ No
    d. closeup                ___ Yes   ___ No
    e. extreme closeup         ___ Yes   ___ No
APPENDIX D

VIDEOGRAPHY
Videography

I. Videos from MTV:

Owner of A Lonely Heart
Yes
90125
ATCO Records, 1983

When I See You Smile
Bad English
Bad English
Epic Records, 1989

Dangerous
Roxette
Look Sharp Live
EMI Records, 1989

Red Red Wine
UB40
Label of Love
A & M Records, 1983

Sowing the Seeds of Love
Tears for Fears
The Seeds of Love
Mercury/Polygram, 1989

Let Love Rule
Lenny Kravitz
Let Love Rule
Virgin Records, 1989

II. Videos from Taiwan:

The Train of Sadness
Yang Chun-jung
The Train of Sadness
Hsiang-cheng Records, 1989

Who Found My Heart in Fall?
Yeh Huan
Who Found My Heart in Fall?
UFO Group, 1989

The Land of Youth
Little Tiger
Happy New Year
Kai-li Records, 1989

Do I Own Nothing At All?
Wang Chieh
Do I Own Nothing At All?
UFO Group, 1989

First Love
Chen Pai-tan
First Love
Chi-ma Records & Tapes, 1990

Ordinary Hero
Yang Jo
Ordinary Hero
Mo-lo Music, 19
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