

zuerst erschienen in: Characters in Fictional Worlds: Understanding Imaginary Beings in Literature, Film and Other Media, ed. Jens Eder, Fotis Jannidis and Ralf Schneider. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 2010, 290-317.  
link: <http://www.degruyter.com/view/product/44088>

CHRISTIAN HUCK / JENS KIEFER / CARSTEN SCHINKO

## A »Bizarre Love Triangle«

### Pop Clips, Figures of Address and the Listening Spectator

*Every time I think of you  
I feel shot right through with a bolt of blue  
It's no problem of mine but it's a problem I find  
Living a life that I can't leave behind*

New Order, *Bizarre Love Triangle* (1986)

Characters have always been a central element in the study of (narrative) literature and film; what these forms of art have in common is the representation of a diegetic world in which these characters exist. Music, however, is narrative and representational only in a very limited sense,<sup>1</sup> and its diegesis less clearly formed. Characters, in a word, do not exist in music. Pop music, however, (re-)introduces characters – at least in a rudimentary way – by adding words (lyrics) and images (record covers, posters etc.) to music. Music videos, which we will concentrate on in the following, embody this intermedial nature of pop music most perfectly. It is our aim to examine what strange figures appear in this mix of music, words and images.

Music videos are commonly characterized by »nonlinear storytelling, speed-of-sound editing, and the elevation of style over character development«.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, what is made to appear through the three minute-interplay of music, image and text is less a fully-fledged character, but a »figure«, a (human) shape or form that is easily recognizable as such, but somewhat empty beyond. For Carol Vernallis, who has presented the most detailed study of music videos to date, »characters« in a music video are most clearly distinguished from those in a feature film by the fact that

---

1 Wolf: Narrativität.

2 Feineman: Introduction, p. 15; cf. Vernallis: Experiencing, pp. 3–26.

whereas »an action of the latter spawns a series of effects that reflect back on him, thereby encouraging him to act again, the impetus in music videos resides episodically in the song or in the way the figures move in concert with the music.«<sup>3</sup> What is the figure, then, if it is so different from filmic and literary characters and if it is an effect of music rather than an acting subject?

Instead of analyzing characters in relation to a diegetic world, we are going to concentrate on a feature peculiar to music videos: the figure of a direct address. Music videos generally revolve around a »me and you« configuration,<sup>4</sup> and while the first-person narrator/speaker has been studied in great detail, the relation to »you« has found only little attention so far. What we will leave aside, then, is the figure (character) as an object of empathy or identification we know from literary and film studies, as well as the various ways authors and directors create characters and their traits; in this regard, the figure in the music video does not differ much from characters in film and music, which have been analysed in some detail already. Similarly, we will neglect the many supporting characters that might appear in a music video as these are merely and bluntly functionalized to highlight the central, performing and addressing figure of a music video<sup>5</sup> – often by contrast.<sup>6</sup>

Our figure is one that meets the eye, a source of address, a figure that transcends the distinctions between fact and fiction, (real) human being and (fictional) character. This figure is both corporeal and imaginary. While the study of pop music and music videos might have little to add to the intricate ways in which characters are created and received in film and literature, the focus on the »direct address« that is so prevalent in music videos might shed some light on this aspect of characters in film and literature as well. In order to do so, the figure has to be situated at the threshold of image, text and music.

## 1 The Media Condition of Pop Music and its Embodiment in the Music Video

To understand the specificity of the figure in music videos, we will have to consider the nature of pop music first. Pop is more than just music, even

---

3 Vernallis: *Experiencing*, p. 17.

4 Cf. Altrodge: *Bilder*, p. 128.

5 Cf. Vernallis: *Experiencing*, pp. 54–72.

6 Cf. Peeters: *Semiotics*.

more than *Music and Lyrics*, as a recent Hollywood production with Hugh Grant and Drew Barrymore defined it. Indeed, as the film itself reveals, pop is much more than just an aural phenomenon, more than mere sound – it is inseparable from its image. Pop music appears (in a phenomenological sense) only as a material event: it is bound to its ›carrier‹ – paradigmatically, it is pressed on vinyl, packaged, distributed, sold and listened to in specific socio-cultural contexts. It is this media-material condition and the parameters it sets for the determinations and possibilities of pop we want to look at in the first part of our text. However, our main focus will be to elaborate the consequences this condition has for (the understanding of) music videos and the function of the figure in these clips.

The media-material manifestation of pop forms the basis for every understanding of pop, as the pop theoretician Diedrich Diederichsen has highlighted. Pop songs are studio products, not simply the work of lyricist and composer, are *not* the *record* of a band performance, but the multilayered result of a complicated production process available as a ›record‹. This result is then, as highlighted above, pressed on vinyl (or burnt on a CD) and becomes – at least before the epoch of the internet – inseparable from the design of its visual-material packaging (cover, inner sleeve, booklet etc.; graphics, photos, typography etc.).<sup>7</sup> As such an audio-visual product, pop can be bought (or stolen) and transported to the locus of consumption: the teenager's bedroom, the subcultural club, the car, etc. It is not simply the message, encoded in the semantics of text and sound, that is important, but also the ›carrier‹ of this message and the embodied modes of consumption it enables. As every pop fan knows, every message comes in a bottle.

This media-material condition of pop has several consequences that are relevant for the question of the figure. Firstly, like movies, pop music does not have a single author as such; every author or speaker has to be created retrospectively. The figure that addresses the listener, consequently, can only be secondary, too. Secondly, pop music is inseparable from its image; even when the visuals accompanying the record are missing, as on the radio, the ›image‹, the ›face‹ of a band or artist ›behind‹ the song is saturated with visual images via concert bills, posters, magazine photo shoots, TV appearances etc. – not to know the image of a pop band has

---

7 Diederichsen: *Gesellschaft*, p. 327. It should be evident that this media-material paradigm has changed drastically with the advent of mp3's. In the present paper, however, we are interested in a specific period in which the video clip became the key site of pop's unique form of appellation.

to be considered a rarity. The image, however, remains at the mercy of sound. Thirdly, pop music is (or at least: can be) consumed alone, or with selected friends, individually and in privacy – even though it is a public, mass-mediated good. It is here, in this individual reception, that a pop song comes to life.

Taken together, the conditions of pop music facilitate a strange oscillation between mass mediated image and individual consumption on the one hand, and aurality and visuality on the other. In the following, we will argue that the music video is the perfect embodiment of this media situation. The *figure* of the performer, as we will see, is the knot that ties the different aspects together: s/he is both a public figure and a private interlocutor, both face and voice. This figure, however, comes into being only as a source of address.

Most new media technologies extend the reach of communication, both in numbers of consumers and in the sense of bridging geographical distance. The consequence of such technological abolition of distance is, somewhat paradoxical, often described as a culture of (social) distance: the physical co-presence of those communicating becomes unnecessary and interaction virtually impossible; communication becomes abstract, impersonal, public, alienated and »distanced« – directed, at least potentially, to everyone, everywhere, to a general, rather than a specific addressee.<sup>8</sup> However, as Rudolf Helmstetter has recently emphasized, forms of communication that have been deemed »popular« often work against the grain of this apparent technological determination on a semantic and pragmatic level: they copy forms, styles and themes of private, intimate and direct interactional situations into mass-media produced communications.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, figures of address come to the fore that were unknown to classical rhetoric – in the face-to-face situation on which rhetoric is built direct address is taken for granted.

The popular, one might say, reintroduces communicational forms associated with corporeal closeness into the mass-media culture of distance: popular communication has an air of familiarity, it is affective and personal – without, however, neglecting its mass-media status. Pop music found its own ways to counter the distancing effects of the new, audio-visual mass media of the twentieth century by giving, quite literally, a face and a voice to mass-mediated communications – and by addressing each listener *individually*. While physical closeness to the performer is no longer necessary/possible in the age of radio and record, pop music

---

8 Cf. Zumthor: *Mündlichkeit*, pp. 248–249.

9 Cf. Helmstetter: *Geschmack*, p. 54.

reproduces closeness on another level. While the fan is banned from the place of production, intimacies are allowed to leave this place. Alone in the recording studio, bands produce sounds of intimacy that they might not want/be able to produce in the presence of a mass audience of strangers. The new technologies of recording and transmission that gave rise to pop music in the 1950s, indeed, preferred the liveliness and actuality of little imperfections to the idealized beauties of classical Hollywood film.<sup>10</sup>

With these new technologies it became possible to transmit indexical signs of other people's corporeality into the audience's home. Alone in the studio, the pop star speaks to thousands as if to one. On the receiving end, the fan consumes the mass-produced record, a public form of mass communication, privately, individually and alone. The pop record has a double function in the re-individualization of mass communication: it records traces of individuality, audible traces of living, breathing individual subjects, and it makes these traces available for individual consumption. The situation of the (oral) storyteller or traditional folk-singer, always talking to a *group* of people, is exchanged for private reception: vociferous declamations are exchanged for intimate whispers. The music video, as we will see, gives the personal, intimate address of the public song a visible, appealing face: other than in the cinema situation, the audience can not merely observe such intimacies, but is addressed intimately and becomes part of an intimate configuration.

The consequence of this intertwining of mass mediated communication and individual consumption in the realm of pop is a doubling of the addresser, who is at the same time the mediated, public figure *and* the physical, *real* individual speaking almost im-mediately to the consumer. Although Madonna can be bought by everyone, it is in *my* bedroom she talks to *me* face-to-face; and although I might *know* – as a cognitively aligned observer – that she is not *actually* talking to me, that she is not actually looking at me, I might still *feel* – as a somatically affected viewer – the warmth and excitement of a personal address.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, as Diederichsen stresses, it is constitutive for pop music that the speakers of pop music are never only fictional characters or authentic, real persons – it is never clear who is speaking in any given moment.<sup>12</sup> And that is what distinguishes music videos from all other forms of audiovisual mass media – and what makes its figures so special.

---

10 Cf. Diederichsen: Gesellschaft, pp. 328–330.

11 For these two modes of reception, see Lowry: Film.

12 Diederichsen: Gesellschaft, p. 330.

Consequently, as we will see, many videos show the performer in both these figurations, as a man from the street and as an otherworldly character. A video by the aptly named band Visage, for example, begins with images of the band as they exit a cab and enter a club; these are then contrasted with images of the singer, dressed and painted as a harlequin, performing the lyrics of the song (fig. 1).



Fig. 1: Visage – *Fade to Grey* (1981)

What is most striking about the video is the fact that both incarnations of the figure in the music video are looking directly at the viewer, looking him/her in the eye, meeting his/her gaze. This figure is more than just a plane for projections, but a vis-à-vis demanding positioning: Can you hear me? Don't you want me? Do you really want to hurt me?

Culture Club's *Do You Really Want to Hurt Me?* (1982) is a point in case here. Of course, on the level of the lyrics, the song could be an intimate, autobiographical communication directed to an (ex-)lover of George Alan O'Dowd (the ›real name of Culture Club singer Boy George): ›If it's love you want from me then take it – away‹. Here, the listening spectator is allowed to observe an otherwise private, intimate conversation. On the level of the filmic narration, however, the addressee changes: here, a judge, before which the fictional transgressor (dancing shockingly at a pool) is brought, becomes an internal narratee; the listening spectator becomes part of a public event. Finally, however, a third level, and with it a third addressee, emerges from the address of sound and image: as a popular figure, ›Boy George‹, living a deviant, homo- and/or transsexual life, asks the listening spectator: ›Do you really want to hurt me?‹ Do you really want to penalize apparently abnormal behavior? Do you really want to be part of a society that disciplines and punishes deviant lifestyles? Position yourself! ›Choose my colour, find a star!‹

## 2 The History of the Music Video and its Theory

Before we continue our own analyses of the role of the figure within the formation of pop music videos, we want to take a short look at the history of the music video and the theoretical debates that have been accompanying these videos. The ›figure‹ has not been granted much importance so far.

Music videos have a long genealogy. Their history reaches from synaesthetic experiments and the performance of songs in the cinema, to the so called ›Soundies‹ made in the 1940s for the Panoram visual jukebox and the Scopitone of the 60s – and finally to promotion clips for bands unwilling or indisposed to tour or appear live in the TV studio.<sup>13</sup> However, the proper birth of the music video as a discrete genre or medium came about with the launch of MTV in 1981: only now the generic forms and techniques were developed that characterize the music video as a TV-phenomenon, only now the popular song became available for private visual consumption. Music videos became a prime vehicle for the promotion of pop and were well funded by the music industry. However, with the rise of internet file-sharing and the demise of the music industry music videos began to disappear from the TV-screens. In our examinations we will concentrate on music videos from the MTV-era, but also consider more recent videos that formally follow these. Whether there might be a new kind of video, or indeed completely new forms of consuming and relating to pop music emerging from the medium of the internet is beyond our scope.<sup>14</sup> Also, we will concentrate on popular videos typical for MTV rather than avant-garde auteur-productions by Spike Jonze, Michel Gondry or Chris Cunningham, which might find their way onto a DVD rather than the TV-screen and consciously break with many of the genre conventions we are interested in here.

The ascent of MTV was coming at a time when a new branch of ›theory‹ came to reign much of the academic world during the eighties and nineties: postmodernism. Post-modern analyses of the music video and MTV soon abounded. John Fiske simply called one of his articles ›MTV: Post-structural Post-modern‹,<sup>15</sup> Brian G. Chang wrote ›A Hypothesis of

---

13 For a short history of the video clip see Feineman: Introduction.

14 At the moment, YouTube and DVDs have taken over the function of MTV in distributing videos, making them – like CDs – available for consumption at the consumer's choice; the videos themselves, however, might have become cheaper, but mostly still follow similar formulas and conventions; cf. Beebe and Middleton: Introduction.

15 Fiske: MTV.

the Screen: MTV and/as (postmodern) signs,<sup>16</sup> Ann Kaplan spoke of ›Feminism/Oedipus/Postmodernism: the Case of MTV.‹<sup>17</sup> Heidi Peeters sums up the claim against MTV in a recent article:

Music videos often have been characterized as the ultimate medium of the postmodern world. Fast. Empty. Lascivious. At least that is how the majority of the academic and educated world perceives them. Using Frederic Jameson's terms, music videos have been defined as a schizophrenic string of isolated, discontinuous signifiers, failing to link up into a coherent sequence, as a string without a center.<sup>18</sup>

Looking merely at the visuals and the (often lacking) narrative coherence of many music videos, such an interpretation might seem convincing, and as most scholars who attempted an analysis of the music video derived from film and literary studies, an emphasis on visual narration might not come as a surprise. Only slowly, new studies came to integrate other than visual aspects. The musical score, usually highly repetitive in rhythm and melody, for example, often defies the centrifugal powers of the visuals.<sup>19</sup> And although the videos might lack narrative coherence, most of them centre on the presentation of the human body and invite a centripetal, often (heterosexually) sexualized gaze.<sup>20</sup> Another form of coherence appears, if the cultural analyst starts looking beyond the apparently autonomous work the music video never was in the first place. By considering the star system,<sup>21</sup> youth and fan culture, musical traditions and genre conventions, many other elements of the music video give away their apparent obscurity. An adequate examination of the music video, therefore, demands a form of cultural studies that goes beyond (traditional) semiotic analysis and integrates phenomenological, discursive and media-material approaches.

Central to our approach is the fact that amidst the speed of change, often produced by experimental, spectacular forms of editing, and the ambiguity of the images that made MTV (in)famous, the music video places a rock that seems to surpass even the immediacy of the human voice: the personal or direct address of a face-to-face meeting.<sup>22</sup> Although music videos ›come in all sizes, shapes, and colors‹ there are hardly any successful music videos that renounce using this feature.<sup>23</sup> The figure that

---

16 Chang: Hypothesis.

17 Kaplan: Feminism.

18 Peeters: Semiotics.

19 Cf. Goodwin: Dancing, and Björnberg: Relationships.

20 Cf. McDonald: Feeling.

21 Cf. Peeters: Semiotics.

22 Cf. Stockbridge: Music Video.

23 Feineman: Introduction, p. 24.

addresses is so central that it is even indifferent to the constant changes of setting, lighting and camera angle: it survives even the most unconventional forms of editing. Our claim is that no form of mass mediated art has ever spoken to its recipients more directly than the music video – through the figure of address.

»Factual« genres, of course, such as news reports, game or other shows feature a direct address as well. Through quizmasters, announcers and »interviewers« they engage in a »para-social interaction« that has been studied since the beginnings of TV.<sup>24</sup> But although these »persona« are roles to be enacted, these roles are essentially *social* roles; what these persona miss is the oscillation between purely fictional character and real-life human that is characteristic for the figure in music videos and pop music in general. While the quizmaster exists before he/she addresses the audience, the figure of the music video is a product of the personal address of the song. Also, and equally important, the quizmaster speaks to his audience in the plural, while the singer addresses a single individual.

The figure we want to concentrate on exists, at least partly, within a fictional world. But while (mainstream) cinema has adopted the heterodiegetic narratee of the novelistic tradition, a number of studies have emphasized that »pop songs are often performed through a direct and/or first-person mode of address, thus breaking with the illusionism of the »fourth wall« of naturalistic cinema and television.«<sup>25</sup> While the actors of a feature film play characters who (apparently) do not know that they are being observed, the pop performer performs for an audience only: there is no point in singing and dancing when no one listens and watches – s/he, literally lives for the music.<sup>26</sup>

### 3 The Lyrics of the Music Video: Creating Popular Familiarity

Although the audiovisual impression of music videos might be perceived more intensely than the textual, and although some people might not even listen very closely to the lyrics of a song, figures in a video clip are not only composed through their visual appearance and their actions, but are already preconceived on the textual level of a song's lyrics. Of course, lyrics in pop music occur in a variety of different forms from complete

---

24 Cf. Horton and Wohl: *Mass Communication*.

25 Goodwin: *Fatal Distractions*, p. 47; cf. Vernallis: *Experiencing*, pp. 56–57.

26 Exceptions are, of course, avant-garde productions, post-modern comedies and musicals; for modernist productions and musicals see Stockbridge: *Music Video*; on musicals especially see Mundy: *Popular*, p. 242 We will return to this later.

narratives to mere utterances of a sentence, an onomatopoetic syllable or the shouting of an unintelligible sound. The degree of »narrativity« of a song's text, in which we are interested here, corresponds with its ability to design a detailed and concrete diegetic world. The world of Trio's famous *Da Da Da* (1982) is quite less detailed and concrete than the world created in The Pogues' *Fairytale of New York* (1987), for example, where the song's title already informs us about the setting.

When compared to the information a reader might extract from a novel it becomes obvious that the possible worlds of pop lyrics – similar to lyrical poetry – tend to be »undersaturated« in terms of information about time, place, the character's appearance and, most importantly, the referents of personal pronouns. Although we get to know the characters' names in, for example, Robert Palmer's *Johnny and Mary* (1980), we learn nothing about their age, whereabouts or biographies. Consequently, Peter Fuchs and Markus Heidingsfelder see a general tendency of pop lyrics towards reduced information as one of its central characteristic features, along with its high degree of self-referentiality and redundancy.<sup>27</sup> The hook, often the only part of a song the listener draws attention to, is especially vague – but all the more memorable: »da, da, da«.

However, such reduced informational content is not as strange as it seems: in some situations »da, da, da« and »I love you« make perfect sense. An everyday event where a limited degree of specificity and a general sparsity of information would appear as completely unproblematic is a conversation between two friends. Here, both interlocutors know the persons talked about, because they are familiar with each other's lives, and deictic references are obvious, too, at least in the typical face-to-face meeting of friends. It should be no surprise, then, that the majority of pop lyrics share the language of situated conversations.<sup>28</sup> However, it is one particular element of such conversations that is central to pop lyrics and wholly uncharacteristic for most other forms of mass mediated communications. In his study of lyrics based on fifty chart hits, Tim Murphey has found out that 86% of all songs contained unspecified »you«-referents.<sup>29</sup> What is interesting here is not only the fact that the majority of songs refer to a conversational situation by incorporating an addressee in the lyrics, but that the addressee remains unspecified, i. e. that it remains unclear to the listener who precisely is addressed. The addressee is both universal and specific at the same time, it is, indeed, *you*.

---

27 Fuchs & Heidingsfelder: Music, p. 298.

28 Murphey: Lyrics, p. 185.

29 Murphey: Discourse.

The use of the pronoun ›you‹ in narratives has been widely discussed in narratology under the term ›second person narrative‹.<sup>30</sup> There are different narrative situations where the pronoun ›you‹ occurs, and not all of these are of course unspecified. Furthermore, not all narratives using this pronoun should be understood as second person narratives, but only those were the addressed ›you‹ functions as an agent in the story. Nevertheless, some narrative texts – e. g. Michel Butor's *La Modification* (1957) – use this communicational device and leave it open whether the ›you‹ is a) a form of narrative self-address, b) referring to a diegetic character/narratee or c) addressing the reader. Similarly, in the music video, »we rarely know whether the singer is singing to us, to a particular hypothetical person, or to himself.«<sup>31</sup> This ›Protean you‹, as Helmut Bonheim labels it, offers the reader a highly intersubjective mode of reading; however, as a literary technique it remains rare.<sup>32</sup>

For the listener of a pop song, on the contrary, the unspecified ›you‹ is the default case, and we argue that many pop songs achieve much of their effect on the listener especially by this form of unspecified address as it invites the listener to feel him-/herself included in a conversation, familiarized and affected. The ›Protean you‹ that enables the listener to conceive him-/herself as the addressee/narratee is central to the popular appeal of pop songs. Through this device, listener and singer, addressee and addresser, are brought closer together: either they are both characters within the diegetic world or they are both part of a ›reak conversation. That it remains unclear which it is, or that the listener is oscillating between different positions, is a specific feature of pop. It is part of this ambiguity that listeners can never be sure whether the ›I‹ in the song is meant to be a staged or artistic ›I‹ (a narrative character) or the real ›I‹ (the individual behind the performer), whether the song is meant to be understood fictional or factual. Although there are lots of examples where it becomes quite clear whether the song was meant as factual or fictional communication, the prototypical chart song we are dealing with oscillates between these two poles.

All in all, the lyrics of a prototypical pop song put a heavy emphasis on ›you‹, while the ›I‹ remains a vague presence only. Consider, for example, Mariah Carey's No. 1 hit *Hero* (1993):

---

30 Cf. Fludernik: Second Person.

31 Vernallis: Experiencing Music Video, p. 143.

32 Bonheim: Narration.

There's a hero  
 If you look inside your heart  
 You don't have to be afraid  
 Of what you are  
 There's an answer  
 If you reach into your soul  
 And the sorrow that you know  
 Will melt away

Chorus  
 And then a hero comes along  
 With the strength to carry on  
 And you cast your fears aside  
 And you know you can survive  
 So when you feel like hope is gone  
 Look inside you and be strong  
 And you'll finally see the truth  
 That a hero lies in you

Although the lyrics, the musical accompaniment of piano and strings and Carey's voice and intonation could hardly be more schmaltzy, the aim of the song is clear: it is designed to make the listener feel good about him-/herself, to encourage and invigorate him/her.<sup>33</sup> Those who expect authentic songwriters singing the truth have often criticized that this might be nothing more than a conniving trick to reach into the consumer's pocket. What is important to us here, however, is the fact that the song comes first, and only if the addressee accepts this as an address, an addresser is created: if these words are spoken to me, someone has to utter them.

#### 4 The Moving Image: Between Spectacle and Performance

While the lyrics highlight the act of addressing by emphasizing a ›protean you‹, the moving image gives a face to this address. Indeed, before being anything else, before being a ›character‹ of its own, the figure in the music

---

<sup>33</sup> That this schmoozing of the listener might undermine his/her resistance against the economic hardships of late capitalism is a claim against pop music that has been brought forward again and again since Horkheimer and Adorno's famous analysis.

video is the source of an address, comes into being as an addresser first and foremost. Let us look at an example.

In the video to Wham!'s second release *Wham! Rap* (1982) we see and hear George Michael praising the benefits of being on the dole. Strolling along the street while rapping ›I may not have a job, but I have a good time‹ he passes people who seem to be working in everyday professions. In the meantime, the nowadays nearly forgotten second member of Wham!, Andrew Ridgeley, is told off by his assumed parents for not looking for a job. To make sure that Andrew is not foolish enough to listen to their advice, George explains him his philosophy when they meet in the street: ›I'm a soul boy – I'm a dole boy, take pleasure in leisure, I believe in joy!‹ These words are not sung in vain and ›Andrew‹ merrily joins ›George‹ and some female background singers for the chorus: ›Do you enjoy what you do?‹ they ask, looking and pointing at the observer.



Fig. 2: *Wham! – Wham! Rap* (1982)

Although the lyrics leave it open who the addressed ›you‹ is – the singer himself, a fictional character or the listener –, the act of pointing at the camera, and consequently at the absent observer, makes it obvious that the clip is trying to make the viewer part of the communication process. It is not only Andrew who should be elucidated in terms of work ethics, but the viewer him-/herself should be shaken up by the question ›Do you enjoy what you do?‹ Indeed, the song already begins with a popular address: ›Hey everybody!‹ The listening spectator is asked to reflect upon his/her life, and, if necessary, act accordingly – if only by buying a record that promises to be enjoyable.

Having said that ›George‹ is not only communicating with ›Andrew‹ on a diegetic level but with the (real) audience, we might still ask ourselves: ›Why George?‹ Why do we assume that a character from the diegetic world is communicating with us and not the director of the clip. To clarify this point, we have to compare the communicational situation of the

music clip with that of a feature film. Although narratologists dealing with filmic communication do not agree whether films have a clearly identifiable enunciator at all, and whether all films have a narrator as a communicating figure, we can still say that viewers usually do not perceive *characters* as the originators of communications but directors, sometimes narrators or the film itself.<sup>34</sup> In classical Hollywood cinema, characters exist only at the mercy of those creating a diegetic world: they know nothing of the »real world and consequently cannot address anyone in this »real world. Nevertheless, there are of course many examples in cinema history where diegetic characters address the viewers directly. However, the direct address in comedies and (post-)modernist films are usually asides, which for that moment address the audience, but only very rarely the fictional characters at the same time. In musicals, the viewer stands in for the live audience in the diegetic world. In most of these cases the viewers usually perceive the direct form of address as an attempted transgression of narrative boundaries, as narrative metalepsis.<sup>35</sup> While cinematic conventions mark the character's turn towards his/her audience (if s/he is not the narrator at the same time) as an exception that causes disturbance or in many cases humor, the prototypical music video achieves its central effect by it.

The music video is not perceived as a communication uttered from an extradiegetic position, but by a character from within the diegetic world: the band, or in many cases just the singer, and not the director/producer of a music clip is understood as the source of communication.<sup>36</sup> The main reason for this might be that the viewer regards the imagery of the clip as secondary to the song, and that the song is communicated by the band/singer directly to the audience. Although the pop song and the music video are by no means the work of the singer, he still functions as a point of address, as a »Zurechnungsinstanz«,<sup>37</sup> that simulates a direct communication. George Michael is not only a figure in the video, but also becomes the enunciator of the whole communication as which the clip is perceived. Apart from the supposed pre-existence of the song before the

---

34 For different answers to the question of who the narrator of a film is, see for example Gaut: *Philosophy*, or Chatman: *Terms*. Bordwell denies that film is understood along a sender-receiver model of communication and treats films as narrations without a narrator; cf. Bordwell: *Fiction*.

35 For the concept of narrative metalepsis see Genette: *Erzählung*.

36 Cf. Diedrichsen: *Videoclip*, p. 73. We should add here that there are of course exceptions, and that auteur videos as e. g. those by Chris Cunningham or Michael Gondry might be treated differently by many people.

37 Cf. Jongmanns: *Kommunizieren*, p. 71

clip, this effect is achieved by the staging of the singer: we usually see a close up of the singer's face performing the song lip-synchronized, at least during the chorus.

The face of the singer becomes the source of an utterance that is clearly directed at the listening spectator: ›do you enjoy what you do?‹ However, as we learn only little about the figure in the song and the world s/he lives in, the balance of communication is tipped towards the receiver: it is his/her task to make sense of the ambiguous communication, to saturate the ›undersaturated‹ information of a pop song.

The prototypical music clip we are dealing with is usually visually structured according to the song's variation of verse and chorus.<sup>38</sup> While the verse is depicted using narrative elements – a story or at least fragments of a story – the chorus usually presents the band or singer performing.<sup>39</sup> While during the verse George Michael and Andrew Ridgeley might be seen merely as actors playing fictional characters, the chorus points out that the two singing and dancing persons are not only actors but at the same time the real performers themselves. They dance and sing for the viewer as if they were singing and dancing just for him/her, as if they were giving a gig in the viewer's living room. The music clip thereby – not unlike a documentary – attempts to evoke a feeling of ›being there‹: the listening spectator, again, is drawn into the performers' world.<sup>40</sup>

Although the performance during the verses is embedded in (fragments of) a story with characters, the chorus scenes of a clip often aim at resembling a live concert that in the viewer's perception is not fictional – even if the microphones are not plugged in and they perform funny dances. While the verse scenes re-enact intimate conversations (George Michael ›raps‹ in a way close to his ›authentic‹, normal way of conversing), the chorus scenes are highly staged: the performers move from an everyday street scene into an exceptional studio, the everyday images of

---

38 This sort of the semi-narrative video clip is of course not the only form. There are also videos that only show the singer's performance (as for example in recordings of live concerts), videos that are purely abstract or videos that contain a complete narrative – although the latter two occur only rarely. For a categorization of different clip forms see e.g. Hustwitt: Heaven, or Künzel: Typologie. Altrogge develops a categorization that is based on the degree of the ›naturalness‹ of the musical performance, ranging from a pure performance to a conceptual video without performers. It becomes evident that the different types of music video resemble the different film genres (as in the sense of the German *Gattung*): documentary, (narrative) fiction film and experimental film.

39 Cf. Diedrichsen, p. 73.

40 For the narrative situation in documentary films, see Huck / Kiefer: Documentary.

brick and mortar are exchanged for a perfect white background and the conversational tone is exchanged for a chorus in which the individual voice is submerged by the layered chorus. In the end, the music clip is still an artificially created work, but one that makes it difficult, or rather: unnecessary for the listening spectator to differentiate clearly between fact and fiction, everyday life and artificial performance, the intimacy of the voice and the public beauty of the image. The listening spectator is addressed by a very peculiar figure, indeed.

The effect of this oscillation on the listening spectator can be immense. The listening spectator is not simply addressed, as by a real friend, but addressed by a hybrid identity. Unlike a »real« person, the figure is (semantically) charged with imaginary connotations of perfection, completeness and exceptionality, sometimes even otherworldly magic, created in the chorus scenes, which are inscribed on his/her body. These imaginary powers come to exist in the very moment of his/her choreographed, perfectly lighted and post-produced performance. »I have danced inside your eyes, how can I be real?«, Boy George asks in *Do You Really Want to Hurt Me?*

However, unlike a completely fictional character, the figure of the music video can transcend the diegetic world and address the listening spectator from within his/her own world. Unlike a real person or a realistically created fictional character, the figure is »empty« enough to be easily charged with imaginary elements – but unlike a literary (fictional) character, the figure is corporeal enough to stand eye-to-eye with the listening spectator and talk to him/her directly: s/he is indeed eye, mouth and make-up only. The above-cited video by Visage highlights this (fig. 3).



Fig. 3: Visage – *Fade to Grey* (1981)

As fiction, the video might be seen as a mere spectacle: something to watch from a safe distance for the purpose of entertainment. As a performance of a direct address, transcending the distinction between fact

and fiction, however, the moving image can *move* the listening spectator: to tears, to action, to affection. The question is, indeed: »Do you really want to hurt me? Do you really want to make me cry?« And while the figure remains more than flat as a character, as a figure of address it enables the creation of meaning by the listening spectator.

## 5 The Music of the Video: Somatic Sounds and Mutual Spaces

So far, when listening, we have been listening to words. But, of course, words are not the only, surely not the first, and probably not even the most impressive sound we hear when listening to pop: pop music is first of all *music*, and even words are often used and consumed for their musical qualities first and foremost. And music, as we will see, not only complicates the concept of a »listening spectator«, it also makes sure that an address is heard, and felt.

The narratological analysis of texts takes its central paradigms from the realm of the visual, and consequently »spectating« and »listening to lyrics« can be analyzed according to the same categories. Texts have a speaker who takes a specific »point of view«, who has a certain (biased) »perspective« on the »things« s/he observes.<sup>41</sup> The addressed is the looked at, and the speaker the observer: »I« and »you« are easily separated, distanced. However, such a neat perspectivism engendering the observation of things, or other observers, evaluating their position in relation to the observed, is hard to maintain once the shift to the sonic is on its way, as »music does not show, but takes us through an experience«.<sup>42</sup>

»No listener can think himself beyond the space of the audible«, Peter Sloterdijk argues, and this subverts the familiar set of (spatial) distinctions:

The ear does not know a vis-à-vis, it does not produce a frontal view on distant objects, because for the ear »world« or »things« only exist in so far as it is amidst the acoustic event – one could even say, only in so far as it floats in the auditive space or delves into it.<sup>43</sup>

41 On the visual bias of narratology see Huck: Senses.

42 Vernallis: Experiencing Music Videos, p. 178.

43 »Kein Hörer kann glauben, am Rand des Hörbaren zu stehen«. »Das Ohr kennt kein Gegenüber, es entwickelt keine frontale Sicht auf fernstehende Objekte, denn es hat »Welt« oder »Gegenstände« nur in dem Maß, wie es inmitten des akustischen Geschehens ist – man könnte auch sagen: sofern es im auditiven Raum schwebt oder taucht.« (Sloterdijk: Musik, p. 52; all quotes are trans. by C.H., J.K., C.S.); cf. Vernallis: Experiencing, p. 44.

A perceptual vis-à-vis gives way to a fuzzier »Im-Klang-Sein« (Sloterdijk). Occupying a perceptual middle-ground, the ear and its listening capability seem to be located somewhere between touching and seeing: the ear can overcome (a certain, limited) distance, but it is still »in touch« with the material resonance of sound waves. Sound encompasses us, disabling in its immersive quality any swift subject-object-relations that – despite their deconstruction – still organize most discussions about images *and* texts.

Music, consequently, can be even more literally »moving« than images. »Music, even if is not translated into corporeal movement, is heard with the body«, Rudi Thiessen writes, reminding us: »Not only the middle ear is a resonating body, but also the abdominal wall, for example«.44 »Sounds enter«, he adds, »and not only the ear«.45 Unlike pictures, sonic atmospheres co-emerging with and through sound perception do not place an image in front of a viewer. We can »enter« music while it unfolds, and once we are »in« the song, surrounded by ongoing sonic structures, we might even experience a lack of distinction between self and sound. Music can create a common ground: the distinctions between diegetic and real world, between fictional and real figures, even between addresser and addressed become fuzzy when a listener »enters« a song. Music enables an attachment to the song and a merging of fact and fiction which in turn forms the basis for the demand for positioning the personal address engenders: *if I am »in« the song, »you« is me.*

Music, as the dominating element of music videos, can even transfer its qualities to the other elements of the video: »in music videos, images can work with music by adopting the phenomenological qualities of sound: these images, like sound, come to the fore and fade away, »stream«, surround us, and even reverberate within us«.46 In short, the aural element of the music video undermines any strict distinctions between a real and a fictional world, between the world of the figure in the music video and the world of the listening spectator. All in all, music enhances the feeling of inclusion that the direct address of text and image begin.

The experience of pop music, however, is never fully somatic, but as deeply immersed in semantic negotiations. Moreover, pop fans might forget about the world and their often puberty-ridden bodies during the three minutes of a song; yet after this micro-moratorium has passed the sense of self is rather enhanced. Finally, we should not forget that – while

---

44 »Musik wird, auch wenn sie nicht in körperliche Bewegung übersetzt wird, mit dem Körper gehört«. »Resonanzkörper ist nicht nur das Mittelohr, sondern zum Beispiel auch die Bauchdecke« (Thiessen: Ohren, p. 42).

45 »Töne dringen ein. Nicht nur ins Ohr« (Ibid., pp. 42–43).

46 Vernallis: Experiencing, p. 177.

too much emphasis has been put on pop lyrics in cultural studies – words *do* accompany sounds, and increasingly so.<sup>47</sup> Even if fans at times sing along merely every second line. What we need, finally, is an account of pop music and music videos that does treat the song as its basic unit, a unit that only heuristically can be distinguished into music, lyrics and image.

## 6 Pop Musical Semiosis

To treat music simply and only as a trigger for a certain atmosphere would run the risk of missing the intricate sonic semiosis of pop songs. What, then, is the nature and function of pop musical signs? What allows us to set them apart from language and/or images? How can we understand the meaning of a pop song that goes beyond the sum of words, image and music? Music critic Ann Powers, noticing the appropriative gestures known of pop fans worldwide, suggests: »Perhaps the real essence of having a song is having it to yourself.«<sup>48</sup> Even more than language and images, pop songs enable the personalization of a public sign: *pop songs create a personal address even before they have a speaker.*

Songs invite mimetic behaviour, imitating not (only) the star, but (also, and especially) the *addressed*. Even though this investment at times does not live up to the words: »As a teen, I did things for my songs – I grew my hair long to be more like the heroine of Bruce Springsteen’s ›She’s the One‹, Powers reports.<sup>49</sup> Here, the listening spectator does not want to be like the star, s/he wants to take the place of the loved one. Slightly amending Susan Sontag’s famous words, one could argue that pop songs have achieved what she called for: in place of a hermeneutics, we have an erotics of pop – even though it turned out far less benign and is unabashedly profane. »But I still loved it, made my friends shut up while I played it, and felt that somehow, although it was hardly clear how, it spoke for me.«<sup>50</sup> The pop song, here, speaks *for* the listener, because it speaks *to* her: it enables a personal address beyond textual semantics – it is ›my‹ song, speaking just to and for *me*. »My gift is my song and this one’s for

---

47 The amount of words used in a pop songs have enormously increased over the last decades (an average of 176 words per chart song in the 1960s against the 436-word-standard in 2007), making the instrumental hit single a thing of an ancient past; cf. Weir: *Words*.

48 Powers: *Love*, p. 185.

49 *Ibid.*

50 *Ibid.*

you / And you can tell anybody this is your song«, as Elton John famously sung.

What is that »it« speaking here, addressing us? »At its most intense«, Powers reminds us, the power of a song

can go beyond the private world to feed whole movements. Those moments when songs have emerged as anthems form the soundtrack to our American history of oppression and liberation [...]. Mostly, though, songs exchanged do not travel quite so far. They become part of a personal economy of meaning, shining innocently, like rings bought at the local discount jeweler, their value coming in the giving. Although only in modern times have all songs seemed to be love songs, popular music has functioned as a form of communication between sweethearts for centuries.<sup>51</sup>

Pop songs talk to you as a lover talks to you – a lover, in this case, you hardly know. Indeed, it is only the »love-like« mode of address that produces the figure of the music video as a source of address: the value of the song »is coming in the giving.«<sup>52</sup> And only because the song produces the lover can we accept the fickle nature of the pop consumer's love: it is love, and being loved, that we love, not the lover.<sup>53</sup>

How, then, could we assess the semiosis of pop? While it is hard to separate the imagery from the sound and its experience, Powers seems to be on the right track reminding us of an important philosophical contribution. In *Philosophy in a New Key*, published in 1951, Suzanne Langer

calls music an »unconsummated symbol, and although she is writing about music without words, her phrase applies to pop songs as well, since their words are not only listened to quite inattentively, but usually so oblique or clichéd (or occasionally poetic) that they elide specific meaning.«<sup>54</sup>

In Power's reading of Langer, music does not capture and represent particular emotions so much as engender modes of feeling, crude moods – such as »joy«, »anger«, »love« and other semantic core concepts – which we refine, specify and make our own within the process of reception:

The listener must form an erotic bond with music for it to have meaning. Listening, linking these sounds and words to memories and unarticulated hopes, she converts songs that naturally belong to no one into personal possessions. But she is also

---

51 Ibid., p. 186.

52 Obviously, this is the point of departure for capitalistic exploitations; music companies, however, can use pop music only because it produces such subject positions, which they might then attempt to make permanent through the star system or other devices.

53 Once again: music companies and »stars« might attempt to monogamize and stabilize such love, but this is a notoriously difficult task.

54 Powers: *Love*, p. 187.

possessed by it, penetrated, and whenever she hears it next it will arouse a similar set of emotions, even when she doesn't want it to.<sup>55</sup>

In short, the openness of the pop musical sign privileges the individual listener and allows him or her to emotionally assess and access the sound. Not unlike the ›Protean you‹ discussed above, the pop song opens to the listener, demands him or her to specify the relatively unspecific atmosphere, draws him near, affects and consequently moves him/her. Here, the often lamented formulaic nature of popular culture, the repetitive nature of its characters, plots, melodies and images, becomes its greatest asset: each recipient can repeat the same with a difference, because the fact that the general form of a popular song is always already known allows it to be vague enough to become open for individual appropriations; works of high art often show a much greater complexity and attempt to create newness in themselves, leaving less room to make them one's own as they are always and forever owned by the author.

What attracts the listening spectator can be a lyrical line, a specific image or a riff or chord progression. Most often, however, it is the coincidence of all three elements that make a song remarkable and memorable. Most importantly, the conjunction of these three polyvalent levels in the pop song hardly ever complement each other to form a complete whole. Instead,

pop's artists arrange these half-revelations with profound grace, so that the listener can then complete them. [...] To enter into the circular economy of meaning that gives art its emotional power, a song needs to give you space to make your own conclusions. It needs to need you.<sup>56</sup>

This doubled need, undoubtedly, is enhanced by the fact that the majority of pop songs have been love songs. And these love songs, even though they might be directed to a specific addressee in the real world, or a fictional narratee in the diegetic world, need the listening spectator to come to life. Indeed, the bizarre love triangle becomes a field of mimetic desire: if the narratee's love is needed, the listener's love is needed, too, and if the narratee can love the singer, we can all love the performer and his/her song. And only because the pop song and the music videos find modes of addressing you, the love for the figure in the music video, and with this the figure as such, can come into existence.

---

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

## 7 ›Come on, I'm talking to you‹ (Tears for Fears)

If we return the figure's look/gaze that holds together the video clip, we simultaneously (if unconsciously most of the time) (un-)tie the knot that binds the different levels of performance together. For the eyes that perpetually meet our gaze in video clips belong to pop singers »involved in a *double enactment*: they enact both a star personality (their image) and a song personality, the role that each lyric requires«. <sup>57</sup> Especially during the chorus, the performer's face and body are often disconnected from the narration's diegetic level or series of visual stimuli shown in the background. At other moments, the performer is part of a story unfolding to the song's music that is left surprisingly intact in the vast majority of clips. <sup>58</sup> Often, the figure is both part of a story *and* performing, and thus Frith understands pop's performance as the »art [...] to keep both acts in play at once«. <sup>59</sup>

However, it is difficult to talk about the performer without acknowledging the possibility to distinguish the on-stage persona from an assumed ›real‹ person ›behind‹ the performance. Consequently, following Frith's account, Philip Auslander sketches three layers of performance as »the real person (the performer as human being), the performance persona [...] and the character (Frith's song personality)«. Not only can all these heuristic levels »be active simultaneously in a given musical performance [...], all three levels of personification contribute to the performance's meaning for the audience«. <sup>60</sup> All three levels, also, contribute to the figure that addresses us.

The ›bizarre love triangle‹, then, unfolds between the listening spectator, the fictional narratee or real-life addressee and the figure of the music video, which is itself threefold: real-life person, performer and fictional character. The listening spectator, consequently, competes with the fictional and/or autobiographical ›you‹ as well as all the other ›you‹ for the affection of the multiple addressing figure: if they can like him/her, we can like him/her, too, if they need him/her, we need him/her, too. Drawn into the triangle by the affective energies of the somatic and the demand/invitation to contribute to pop musical semiosis, to make the song one's own, the addressee is moved enough to be forced

---

57 Frith: *Performing*, p. 212.

58 Cf. Allan: *Musical*, p. 4.

59 Frith: *Performing*, p. 212.

60 Auslander: *Performance*, p. 6.

to take a stance – if s/he does not want to loose her-/himself, which is also a possible desire.<sup>61</sup>

Consider, finally, the following example of a 2004 R&B hit by Ciara (feat. Petey Pablo), where the media condition of individuated mass reception, the ›protean you‹ of the lyrics, somatic sound and the ›fourth walk-breaking direct address come together to form a pop song you can love and make your own. The video begins with a phone conversation between ›Ciara‹ and a friend:



Fig. 4: Ciara (feat. Petey Pablo) – *Goodies* (2004)

This prologue could be seen as a ›threshold‹ between reality and fiction, introducing the listening spectator to the depicted events and pre-structuring the ensuing experience. The scene is indeed part and not part of the music video: it is obviously part of the video because it marks the beginning of its airing, but it is at the same time not part as the song itself has not yet begun. Here, a (closed) diegetic world is established: the two friends, speaking with their everyday voices, arrange to meet at a car wash; independent of the question whether the scene is meant to be factual (autobiographical) or fictional, or, most likely, a bit of both, the scene adheres to the traditional cinematic convention of the ›fourth walk – no one seems to notice that they are filmed, and observed. The listening spectator remains external to this scene.

However, as soon as the music of the song sets in, the situation changes. Although the diegetic setting is upheld (Ciara is now in the car,

---

61 We are less interested here in the sociological question in how far the ›listening spectator‹ might want to follow, or even imitate the ›star, or what a star might be beyond the music video; instead, we are interested in the phenomenological encounter between the music video and the listening spectator, and the media and discursive contexts that inform this encounter.

probably on the way to the car wash), ›Ciara‹ is now clearly a performer addressing the camera; her fellow travelers, however, do not address the camera, and consequently remain within the diegesis. Although her lyrics (›You may look at me and think that I'm just a young girl‹) leave it characteristically open whether she addresses a diegetic narratee (maybe the person she was on the phone with), an autobiographical (ex-) lover (›Petey, who raps before Ciara sings, for example) or indeed the listening spectator, the image is less ambiguous. The (camera) position she is looking towards cannot be occupied by a character within the diegetic world; the high angle camera – unusual for feature films, but typical for music videos – highlights this transgression. And even if her words should be addressed to a specific real-life person, the public airing and the openness of the ›pop musical sign‹ offers the position of the addressee to every listening spectator. The listening spectator, indeed, becomes the centre of attention, overshadowing the figures in the video in importance.



Fig. 5: *Ciara (feat. Petey Pablo) – Goodies*

The music of the song contributes to the destruction of the ›fourth wall‹, too; it quite literally moves the boundaries between diegetic and real world: the bass line of the song regularly shakes the image – the song within the diegetic world comes to affect the tele-audio-visual reproduction at the place of consumption. Like Ciara's hand, the song reaches out into the world of the listening spectator; the music encompasses a mutual world where fact and fiction begin to merge. We might even dance together with the characters.

On the visual level, the video quite obviously invites a classical, heterosexual male gaze, objectifying the depicted women and turning them into ›goodies‹.<sup>62</sup> The chorus, once again set apart from the diegetic

62 Cf. Cole: Pornographic.

world of the verse, shows Ciara and other female dancers performing for an imaginary (male) spectator, who, finally, can stand in for, or rather: displace the narratee in the ›love triangle‹. Here, Ciara has changed into a dance ›costume‹ and performs a choreographed routine not in a car or on the street, but on an especially designed, perfectly lighted stage: here, she becomes a ›star‹ whose performance on such a mass mediated stage suggests that she is indeed loved and desired by many, and that the individually addressed listening spectator can (and should) like and love her, too.



Fig. 6: Ciara (feat. Petey Pablo) – Goodies

The transformation from verse to chorus embodies what Richard Dyer has recognized as the creation of a utopian world through the star: where there was *lack*, there is now *abundance*, where there was *exhaustion* (hanging out at home) there is *energy* (dancing), where there was *fragmentation* (single mother) there is now *solidarity* (dance group), where there was *obscurity* (where are they going?), there is now *transparency* (a party!), where there was *vagueness* (a tentative rap-beat), there is now *intensity* (a driving bass).<sup>63</sup> The figure in the video appears to instigate this utopian world and indeed becomes a star only in this process. From this utopian world, Ciara can see us – and address us. And only within the realm of the music video such a direct address can be attributed to a figure in a (fictional) utopian world.

In the lyrics the image of the easily available, commodified and therefore purchasable ›good‹ is contradicted: »Lookin' for the goodies? / Keep on lookin' cuz they stay in the jar / Oh-oh Oh-oh Oh-oh Oh-oh«. Although the somatics and the imagery of the video might affect the

63 Cf. Dyer: Entertainment; Peeters: Semiotics.

listening spectator, ›turn him on‹ and physically move him, the semantics of the lyrics resist a complete appropriation. Even though the song relies on ›you‹ to come to life, the song has a life of its own that can resist the listening spectators appropriative gestures. The figure, a product of the song's mode of address, brought to life by the listening spectator, comes to meet his/her creator – eye to eye.

## References

- Allan, Blaine: Musical Cinema, Music Video, Music Television. In: *Film Quarterly* 43/3 (1990), pp. 2–14.
- Altrogge, Michael: Wohin mit all' den Zeichen oder: Was hat Madonna mit dem Papst und Pepsi-Cola zu tun? In: Hanns J. Wulf (Ed.): *Film- und Fernsehwissenschaftliches Kolloquium*, Berlin '89. Münster 1990, pp. 221–234.
- Altrogge, Michael: Tönende Bilder. Interdisziplinäre Studie zu Musik und Bildern in Videoclips und ihre Bedeutung für Jugendliche, vol. 2. Berlin 2001.
- Auslander, Philip: Performance Analysis and Popular Music: A Manifesto. In: *Contemporary Theater Review* 14/1 (2004), pp. 1–13.
- Björnberg, Alf: Structural Relationships of Music and Images in Music Video. In: *Popular Music* 13/1 (1994), pp. 51–74.
- Bonheim, Helmut: Narration in the Second Person. In: *Recherches Anglaises et Americaines* 16 (1983), pp. 69–80.
- Bordwell, David: *Narration in the Fiction Film*. London 1985.
- Butor, Michel: *La Modification*. Paris 1957.
- Chang, Briankle G.: A Hypothesis of the Screen: MTV and/as (Postmodern) Signs. In: *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10/1 (1986), pp. 70–73.
- Chatman, Seymour: *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca 1990.
- Cole, Sheri Cathleen: I Am the Eye, You are My Victim. The Pornographic Ideology of Music Video. In: *Enculturation: A Journal for Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture* 2/2 (1999). <[http://enculturation.gmu.edu/2\\_2/cole/](http://enculturation.gmu.edu/2_2/cole/)> (Aug. 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009).
- Diederichsen, Diedrich: Allein mit der Gesellschaft. Was kommuniziert Pop-Musik? In: Christian Huck / Carsten Zorn (Eds.): *Das Populäre der Gesellschaft. Systemtheorie und Populärkultur*. Wiesbaden 2007, pp. 322–334.
- Diederichsen, Diedrich: Kunstvideo versus Videoclip: Eine Musik, die ohne Bilder nicht leben kann. In: Ulf Poschardt (Ed.): *Look at me, Video*. Ostfildern-Ruit 2003, pp. 70–82.
- Dyer, Richard: *Only Entertainment*. London 1992.
- Feineman, Neil: Introduction. In: Steven Reiss (Ed.): *Thirty Frames per Second: The Visionary Art of the Music Video*. New York 2000, pp. 10–29.
- Fiske, John: MTV: Post-Structural Post-modern. In: *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10/1 (1986), pp. 74–79.
- Fludernik, Monika: Second Person Fiction: Narrative You as Addressee and/or Protagonist. In: *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 18/2 (1993), pp. 217–247.
- Fludernik, Monika: Second-Person Narrativity as a Test Case for Narratology: The Limits of Realism. In: *Style* 28/3 (1994), pp. 445–479.
- Frith, Simon: *Performing Rites. On the Value of Popular Music*. Cambridge, MA 1998.

- Fuchs, Peter / Makus Heidingsfelder: MUSIC NO MUSIC MUSIC. Zur Unhörbarkeit von Pop. In: Soziale Systeme 10/2 (2004), pp. 292–324.
- Gaut, Berys: The Philosophy of the Movies: Cinematic Narration. In: Peter Kivy (Ed.): The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics. Oxford 2004, pp. 230–253.
- Genette, Gérard: Die Erzählung. München 1994.
- Goodwin, Andrew: Dancing in the Distraction Factory: Music Television and Popular Culture. Minneapolis 1992.
- Goodwin, Andrew: Fatal Distractions: MTV meets Postmodern Theory. In: Simon Frith / Andrew Goodwin / Lawrence Grossberg (Eds.): Sound and Vision: The Music Video Reader. London, New York 1993, pp. 45–66.
- Helmstetter, Rudolf: Der Geschmack der Gesellschaft. Die Massenmedien als Apriori des Populären. In: Christian Huck / Carsten Zorn (Eds.): Das Populäre der Gesellschaft. Systemtheorie und Populärkultur. Wiesbaden 2007, pp. 44–72.
- Huck, Christian: Coming to Our Senses: Narratology and the Visual. In: Peter Hühn / Wolf Schmidt / Jörg Schönert (Eds.): Modeling Mediacy: Point of View, Perspective, Focalization, Berlin, New York 2009, pp. 201–218.
- Huck, Christian / Jens Kiefer: Documentary Films and the Creative Treatment of Actuality. In: Anglistik: International Journal of English Studies 18/2 (2007), pp. 103–120.
- Hustwitt, Mark: Sure Feels Like Heaven to Me: Considerations on Promotional Videos. (International Association for the Study of Popular Music Working Paper 6).
- Jongmanns, Georg: Kommunizieren und Darstellen. In: montage/av 11/2 (2002), pp. 69–77.
- Kaplan, E. Ann: Feminism/Oedipus/Postmodernism: the Case of MTV. In: Peter Brooker / Will Brooker (Eds.): Postmodern After-Images: A Reader in Film, Television and Video. London 1997, pp. 233–247.
- Künzel, Werner: Zur Typologie der Videoclips, die Wiederkehr der Oper. In: Wolkenkratzer-Artjournal 6 (1985), pp. 116–119.
- Lowry, Stephen: Film – Wahrnehmung – Subjekt. In: montage/av 1/1 (1992), pp. 113–128.
- McDonald, Paul: Feeling and Fun: Romance, Dance, and the Performing Male Body in the Take That Videos. In: Sheila Whiteley (Ed.): Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender. New York 1997, pp. 277–294.
- Beebe, Roger and Jason Middleton: Introduction. In: Roger Beebe and Jason Middleton (Eds.): Medium Cold: Music Videos from Soundies to Cellphones. Durham 2007, pp. 1–12.
- Mundy, John. Popular Music on Screen. Manchester 1999.
- Murphey, Tim: The When, Where, and Who of Pop Lyrics: The Listener's Prerogative. In: Popular Music 8/2 (1989), pp. 185–193.
- Murphey, Tim: The Discourse of Pop Songs. In: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Quarterly 26/4 (1992), pp. 770–774.
- Peeters, Heidi: The Semiotics of Music Videos: It Must be Written in the Stars. In: *Image & Narrative: Online Magazine of the Visual Narrative* 8 (May 2004). <<http://www.imageandnarrative.be/issue08/heidipeeters.htm>> (Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007).
- Powers, Ann: I'll Have to Say I Love You in a Song. In: Karen Kelly / Evelyn McDonnell (Eds.): Stars Don't Stand Still in the Sky: Music and Myth. New York 1999, pp. 183–191.
- Schoefield, Dennis. The Second Person: A Point of View. The Function of the Second-Person Pronoun in Narrative Prose Fiction (1998). <<http://www.members.westnet.com.au/emmas/2p/thesis/0a.htm>> (Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008).

- Sloterdijk, Peter: Wo wir sind, wenn wir Musik hören. In: Peter Sloterdijk: Der ästhetische Imperativ. Hamburg: Philo & Philo Fine Arts 2007, pp. 50–82.
- Stockbridge, Sally: Music Video: Questions of Performance, Pleasure and Address. In: *Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media and Culture* 172 (1987). <<http://www.mcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/1.2/Stockbridge.html>> (Nov 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007).
- Thiessen, Rudi: Mit den Ohren hören, mit dem Körper denken. In: Dietmar Kamper, Christoph Wulf (Eds.): Der andere Körper. Berlin 1984, pp. 41–48.
- Vernallis, Carol: Experiencing Music Video: Aesthetics and Cultural Context. New York 2004.
- Walton, Kendall: Mimesis as Make-Believe. On the Foundations of the Representational Arts. Cambridge, MA 1993.
- Weir, William: Words Words Words. Are Excessive Lyrics Ruining Pop Music? In: Slate Magazine (March 11, 2008) <<http://www.slate.com/id/2186341/>> (March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008).
- Wilson, George M.: Elusive Narrators in Film and Literature. In: *Philosophical Studies* 135/1 (2007), pp. 73–88.
- Wolf, Werner: Das Problem der Narrativität in Literatur, Bildender Kunst und Musik: Ein Beitrag zur intermedialen Erzähltheorie. In: Ansgar Nünning / Vera Nünning (Eds.): Erzähltheorie transgenerisch, intermedial, interdisziplinär. Trier 2002, pp. 23–104.
- Zumthor, Paul: Mündlichkeit/Oralität. In: Karlheinz Barck (Ed.): Ästhetische Grundbegriffe. Historisches Wörterbuch in sieben Bänden, vol. 4. Stuttgart 2002, pp. 234–256.