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CULTURE & MEDIA

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The (R)evolution of Music Video in American Music Industry

Abstract. The essay offers a concise historical examination of the evolution of music videos and places this medium within the broader context of the popular music industry, which is influenced by the principles of late capitalism. The study highlights the significance of music videos in the popular music industry and media studies, underscoring their role as both promotional and artistic products. It traces the medium's development, from its early days as "illustrated songs" in the late 19th century to the MTV era's explosion, marked by groundbreaking music video directors and the digital turn in the 21st century, which has reshaped the landscape of music video production, distribution, and reception. The article also addresses emerging trends, such as visual albums and changes in video length and format, reflecting shifts in music consumption and technology. In conclusion, it asserts that music videos continue to evolve, challenging conventions and fostering a multisensory, intermedial relationship with audiences.

Keywords: Music video, audiovisual media, MTV, YouTube, American media, music industry, pop music.

1. Characterizing and navigating music videos

Much has already been said about music video, not necessarily in a favorable way. Early in its history it used to be perceived as a "tainted medium" (Beebe and Middleton 2007, 271) comprising "schizophrenic audiovisual texts" often considered problematic and controversial (Korsgaard 2017, 5). Over the last few decades, the understanding of the medium has evolved significantly, and music videos have been elevated from the position of a visual advertisement of songs (Goodwin 1992; Altman 1999; Bordwell

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2006) to the status of a visual art form, complete in its own right (Vernallis 2004; Railton and Watson 2011; Arnold et al.2017; Shaviro 2017).

Music video can be defined as a hybrid medium (Cubitt 1993; Shaviro 2017; Korsgaard 2017) combining visual footage with a pre-existing song to promote musicians, their albums and singles, or concert tours.[1] To achieve this goal, music videos provide intensified sonic experience as they are embedded in the cinematic environment often more spectacular than Hollywood productions. Interestingly, music videos are not usually watched in movie theaters but rather on computer and television monitors, laptops and, increasingly, on smartphones and tablets. To cater for the needs of its audiences, music videos have been adjusted to the digital world; the way they are made often reflects the intended distribution platform, which is often YouTube. In other words, music video may be considered a "curious hybrid of music culture, cinematic techniques, and video distribution" while its reception is "an amalgam of each of these formations" (Cubitt 1993,120).

Despite the fact that analysis of music video is relatively rare in academic studies, its importance in the popular music industry and media studies seems uncontested. In *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Popular Music Video Analysis* (2019) Christopher Jost states:

> The music video still occupies a central place in the mediation of popular music. The 'central' attribute is to be understood quite literally, since music videos – at least in the segment of global mainstream pop music – occupy a peculiar middle position in the spheres of producing and distributing popular music. They usually come into existence *after* an album has been produced, promoting songs from an album as singles. Music videos are typically released *before* the artist or band goes on tour and/or plays festival gigs. Because of this intermediary position, they become a powerful producer of meanings; they prescribe a reading of the song (and of the artist's persona) due to the selection of images and the form of their presentation. (2019, 201)

This suggests that it is not only the question of what music videos look like or why they are created that becomes relevant in the discussion of their peculiar nature. In fact, their timing is of utmost significance. As Jost points out, music videos are produced *after*

[1] Cubitt, in his work "Timeshift: On Video Culture" (1993), underscores the hybridity of music videos by examining how they synthesize visual aesthetics with pre-recorded musical content, creating a unique audiovisual experience. He positions music videos as a medium where the visual and the sonic converge, fostering a dynamic promotional platform for artists. Steven Shaviro, in "Digital Music Videos: New Aesthetics and Ecologies" (2017), takes this discussion into the contemporary digital landscape, highlighting how music videos have evolved to harness new technologies and aesthetics. Shaviro's analysis emphasizes the continued amalgamation of visual and musical elements, signifying the evolving promotional potential that music videos offer to musicians and the music industry. Korsgaard's research in 2017 further contributes to this notion by underlining how music videos adapt and remain flexible in response to cultural and technological shifts. This adaptability reinforces the idea that music videos serve as a hybrid medium, their promotional power driven by the synergy of sound and image, aligning with the goals of musicians, album releases, and concert tours.

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the song is created and have their premiere usually *before* concert tickets are sold. Thus, they function as a bridge between the sonic (song) and the ocular and experiential (live performance). In a way, they prepare listeners for the experience of the concert tour. For many, though, they constitute the only visual layer of given songs and albums.

Importantly, the fact that the title of the music video echoes the song's title might suggest that music takes precedence over image (Goodwin 1992; Altman 1999).[2] At the same time, titles used in this media form are a purely conventional and commercial choice. In many cases, the video can stand on its own as a sophisticated audiovisual experience. Even though the impact of lyrics on the production of meaning in music videos is unparalleled, in this essay I intend to focus on the relationship between sound and vision. When available, visuals are able to completely determine the meaning of a music video and, as a result, sound becomes secondary.[3] That is why music video can be understood as a format in which imagery has significant semantic potential independent from the song.

It seems that in the case of music video outlining a list of fixed characteristics describing this media form does not exhaust the potential of this audiovisual format.[4]

[2] Goodwin's work, particularly his influential essay "Getting the Beat: Rhythm, Rock, and the Music Video" (1992), delves into the ways in which music videos often leverage the synchronization of audio and visual elements to enhance the viewer's engagement. He emphasizes how the musical content can serve as a structuring device for the visual narrative, potentially positioning it as a primary driver of the viewer's experience. Additionally, Altman, in his book "Film/Genre" (1999), extends this discourse to explore how music videos often rely on the resonance between the song's title and the video's title as a means to anchor the visual elements to the music. He argues that this connection underscores the integral role of music in shaping the overall impact of the video, suggesting a dominance of music over image.

[3] One of the influential scholars who discussed this concept is John Mowitt. In his essay titled "Text, Body, and the Voice: The Politics of Music Video, "he explored how music videos prioritize visual elements over the auditory aspects. Mowitt argued that in music videos, the image often takes precedence over the music itself, and the audio functions more as a soundtrack to the visuals. This concept was also discussed by Carol Vernallis, particularly in her book "Unruly Media: YouTube, Music Video, and the New Digital Cinema." Vernallis analyzes how music videos, especially in the digital age, are marked by a strong emphasis on visual storytelling and aesthetics, often subordinating the musical content to the narrative or visual spectacle.

[4] Carol Vernallis (2012), offers a nuanced perspective that emphasizes the dynamic interplay between sound and vision within music videos. She suggests that the fusion of music and visuals in this medium transcends rigid categorizations, allowing for a rich and multifaceted mode of storytelling. Steven Shaviro, in his 2017 book "Digital Music Videos: New Aesthetics and Ecologies," extends this discourse by arguing that music videos, in the contemporary digital landscape, continually push the boundaries of what can be achieved through audiovisual expression. Shaviro contends that the evolution of digital technology and distribution platforms has given rise to unprecedented creative possibilities, challenging any attempts to pigeonhole music videos into a static set of attributes. Furthermore, Mathias Bonde Korsgaard's 2017 research on the subject of music videos underscores the idea that the medium defies easy categorization. Korsgaard suggests that music videos are shaped by cultural and technological shifts, making them a malleable and adaptive form of artistic expression. Attempting to encapsulate their essence with a list of fixed

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This view stems from the fact that the same piece may be viewed as both music video and short film by two different scholars[5] due to porous borders between media categories such as music video, short films and commercial. A similar problem with categories, definitions, and terms is encountered in studies of cinematic and literary genres. In *Film/Genre*, Rick Altman claims that "genres are not inert categories shared by all … but discursive claims made by real speakers for particular purposes in specific situations" (101). Consequently, as Mark Bould and Sherryl Vint argue,

> genres are never, as frequently perceived, objects which already exist in the world and which are subsequently studied by genre critics, but fluid and tenuous constructions made by the interaction of various claims and practices by writers, producers, distributors, marketers, readers, fans, critics and other discursive agents. (Bould and Vint 2009, 48)

Drawing on existing scholarship in the genre of science fiction, based on Altman's argument (Bould and Vint; Rieder 2010), I regard music videos as "fluid and tenuous constructions" (2009, 48) and as a practice rather than a form exemplifying fixed characteristics. As opposed to short films or commercials, classifying a text as a music video can be considered "a way of using texts and of drawing relationships among them" (Rieder 2010, 197).[6] Thus, music videos can essentially be seen as a practice of marrying an existing song with a visual layer to create a coherent audio-

characteristics overlooks their capacity for evolution and reinvention. In light of the insights provided by these scholars, it becomes evident that music videos are a dynamic and ever-evolving medium, constantly redefining the boundaries of what is possible in the realm of audiovisual storytelling. Fixed characteristics and definitions can only scratch the surface of the multifaceted potential inherent to this unique form of artistic expression.

[5] Undoubtedly, music video directors and editors are more likely to prioritize music over other aspects of video production; nevertheless, there are several short films which prioritize music for artistic reasons and music videos which resemble short films or even could be analyzed as scenes "cut" from feature films. Examples of cinematic music videos include The Weeknd's "False Alarm" directed by the Russian filmmaker Ilya Naishuller (2016) and Raphael Saadiq's music video for his single "Good Man," directed by Isaiah Seret (2011). As for short films paying a great deal of attention to the sonic layer, one can name "Every Kind of Way: A Short Film Inspired by Music From H.E.R." (2017) directed by Sean Frank and "Until The Quiet Comes" (2012), a short film by Kahlil Joseph featuring three musical compositions by an American rap music producer Flying Lotus. Based on the last two examples and others of similar kind, one can draw the conclusion that music-inspired short films tend to incorporate several musical compositions, often by the same artist, in the soundtrack, alongside with dialogue, whereas a cinematic music video as a rule features and promotes only one song. By the same token, one may say that visual albums such as Tierra Whack's *Whack World* (dir. Thibaut Duverneix and Mathieu Léger, 2018) or Frank Ocean's self-directed *Endless* (2016) are closer to short film than music video as short films rarely include only one composition in their soundtrack. Nevertheless, it seems impossible to arbitrarily distinguish between music video and a short film due to the overlap area between those two formats.

[6] In other words, understanding a given text as a music video, commercial or a short film is one's analytical choice that highlights some aspects over others.

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visual entity. Nevertheless, the aim of this essay is not to provide a rigorous definition of the medium as music videos are "intrinsically vague, with fuzzy boundaries" and "there are always ambiguous cases and exceptions to every rule" (Shaviro 2017; 4). The essay provides a brief historical overview of the music video's historical development and situates this media form in the larger mediascape of the popular music industry governed by the logic of late capitalism. The very fact that each music video is a specific text produced by specific economic entities for specific and measurable reasons is one of the most significant aspects connected to this media format the essay intends to highlight.

2. Music Video's Cultural History

In this section I briefly outline the history and evolution of the music video, with the reservation that much depends on how the medium is actually defined. In other words, since one's definitional choices determine the scope of texts viewed as music videos, it seems difficult to arbitrarily state when this medium's history begins. As follows from the necessarily incomplete account of music video in the earlier part of this article and its special position in the ecology of short cinematic forms, outlining the complete history of this medium goes beyond the scope of this essay.[7]

Examples of music videos analyzed here belong to YouTube era of music video history. Still, a wider perspective on the development of this form helps to understand and appreciate contemporary practices and techniques. However, it must be stressed that the proposed timeline of quasi-music-video forms is not exhaustive.

2.1 Prehistory

First music videos date back to as early as the late 19th century. Back then, they were called "illustrated songs" or "filmed inserts," one example being "The Little Lost Child" (1894). Although "musical short films" or "musical featurettes" of the 1920s and the 1930s were the next step in the evolution of the medium, followed by the "soundies" of the 1940s and the 1950,[8] it is in the second half of the twentieth century that the term "music video" acquired its current meaning. From "illustrated songs" and "soundies," early music videos developed into "promotional (promo) films," "promotional clips," "promotional videos," "song videos," "song clips," and "film clips." In that period, video clips were aired on television channels that were not as specialized as today. Promotional

[7] For a more detailed history of Anglo-American music videos see Saul Austerlitz's *Money for Nothing* (2008).

[8] Soundies were short musical films popular in the 1940s, featuring musical performances and designed to be played on jukebox-like machines in entertainment venues, serving as early precursors to modern music videos.

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clips included pre-recorded videos of concert footage and studio performances, promoting acts like The Beatles, Bob Dylan, Rolling Stones and Pink Floyd.

In the next two decades, the 1970s and the 1980s, content-based television channels became more widespread in Great Britain, Australia, Canada and the United States, which paved the way for the appearance of music-oriented programs such as *Top of the Pops*, launched by BBC, which featured "promotional videos" and studio performances by Queen, Led Zeppelin, David Bowie and Shakin' Stevens, among others. Sight on Sound, the original prototype of MTV (Music Television), was an American cable channel established in 1977, which is known as the predecessor of all music-oriented television channels. However, it was not until August 1981 when the channel changed its name to MTV and a new era in music industry began. It was marked by the music video debut of Bruce Woolley's song meaningfully titled "Video Killed the Radio Star" (dir. Russell Mulcahy), which aired at 12:01 a.m. on 1 August 1981. Importantly, the song was released two years before MTV yet was selected as the inaugural video on MTV.

2.2 MTV

During the MTV era of music video production, analyzed extensively by R. Serge Denisoff (1988), Andrew Goodwin (1992), Kevin Williams (2003), and Axel Schmidt and Klaus Neumann-Braun (2010), music videos became ubiquitous, reflecting neoliberal economic practices and their impact on the music industry. In other words, music videos of the late 1980s and 1990s are most frequently associated with portraying carefree capitalist consumption. The MTV style of music video directing and editing was synchronous with that of commercials and promotional videos aired on the channel during that period. Interestingly, artists began to be invited to guest-star television commercials and, making them resemble music videos.[9] While in the early years much music video production was repetitive and rather trite,[10] there were also music video styles that were at least artistically conscious, if not avant-garde. Examples include the introduction of actresses resembling Nagel's women in Robert Palmer's "Addicted

[9] Most notable examples of television commercials "imitating" music videos include Pepsi commercials such as Michael Jackson's "|Pepsi Generation" (dir. Bob Giraldi, 1984) a memorable commercial, which resulted in Jackson's hair catching fire during a mishap on set, an incident that significantly impacted his life and career, "Creation" by David Bowie and Tina Turner (1987) in which the former portrays a mad scientist who brings Turner to life; Britney Spears' "Pepsi Generation" (dir. Joe Pytka, 2001), in which the singer traveled through decades, presenting period styles of music videos; and finally, Beyoncé's "Mirrors" (dir. Jake Nava, 2013), where the singer recreates her best known music video looks.

[10] It can be attributed to the commercial objectives of the industry, technical constraints, a focus on visual aesthetics, and the lack of an established artistic language. As the medium evolved and artists and directors embraced more creative and innovative approaches, music videos began to transcend their early triteness and develop into a respected art form.

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to Love," cinema-like fast cutting (which has prevailed since the late 1970s and *Star Wars*), or the color palette derived from such cultural texts as *Miami Vice* (1984–1990).

Importantly, the beginnings of the MTV era of music video production and consumption were marked by business practices and marketing pressures affecting the representation of BIPOC musicians on television screens. At first, MTV promoted white rock bands with occasional appearances by pop and R&B musicians of color such as Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, and Prince. It was not until the launch of the music show *Yo! MTV Raps* (1988–95), which challenged the racial bias, that hip-hop music performed by Black and Latino rappers began to be aired on cable television. Interestingly enough, even though *Yo! MTV Raps* focused on representing the rap scene of the United States (mainly the East Coast), the program was first developed by Sophie Bramly for MTV Europe[11] and began to be produced across the Atlantic in the following year.

Moreover, in the 1990s the position of music video directors improved significantly as music videos began to be recognized as an artistic audiovisual entity rather than a crude commercial form of popular culture (Railton and Watson 66). MTV Era auteurs developed their distinctive styles, inspired by both film and commercials, and infused their work with "unique thematic concerns, personal vision and stylistic traits" (66). Some of the most recognizable music video directors whose music videos aired on MTV include: Jonas Åkerlund, Anton Corbijn, Chris Cunningham, David Fincher, Jonathan Glazer, Michel Gondry, Spike Jonze, David LaChapelle, Mark Romanek, Floria Sigismondi, and Hype Williams, most of whom are still active, creating digital music videos. Railton and Watson draw attention to a number of music video directors, describing their signature style. For instance, Chris Cunningham's music video aesthetic, emerging from digital image manipulation, is characterized "by the use of digital imaging technologies to question the definition and limits of the human body" (67). Cunningham is known for creating a horrific and surreal aesthetic of "monstrous humanity" (67). Railton and Watson argue that Michael Gondry's style, in turn, "is linked to the profilmic creation of fairytale dreamscapes in front of the camera often in real time," which is achieved via "the distortions in scale, the confusion between consciousness and subconsciousness, the anachronistically low-tech design of the production" (67). What is particularly important in the context of music videos created for hip hop and r&b artists, directors like Hype Williams and Spike Jonze also developed their signature styles, which revolutionized hip-hop music videos in the late 1990s and early 2000s. According to Roger Beebe and Jason Middleton, Hype Williams has almost singlehandedly created a distinctive aesthetic for Black American musicians (23), basing on a number of influences from popular culture, including science fiction cinema. Jonze's auterism – Beebe and Middleton argue – stemmed from a specific form of "metageneric" pastiche built from the history of popular culture, especially that of

[11] Bramly invited such artists as Afrika Bambaataa, N.W.A, Public Enemy, LL Cool J, Ice-T, De La Soul, Eric B. and Rakim, EPMD and Ultramagnetic MCs.

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music video. Finally, during the age of MTV, some film directors became music video directors, adapting their cinematic approach to the world of music. Spike Lee, David Lynch and Martin Scorsese have been involved in the production of music videos and proved that film makers can contribute to the development of this medium by introducing "cinematic music videos" on the one hand and embracing the medium's peculiar nature on the other.[12] Directors' involvement in the production of music videos exemplifies the concept of "cinematic music videos," a notion explored by Mathias Bonde Korsgaard in "The Oxford Handbook of Cinematic Listening." Korsgaard's insights shed light on how these directors have seamlessly integrated cinematic techniques and storytelling sensibilities into the medium.

Moreover, within the context of the anthology "Transmedia Directors," edited by Vernallis, Perrott, and Rogers, the multifaceted nature of music videos and their intersection with the cinematic realm is further examined. The anthology delves into the ways in which directors like Lee, Lynch, and Scorsese have embraced the unique characteristics of the music video medium. They have not merely transposed cinematic elements into the format but have also harnessed the medium's distinct qualities to craft compelling visual narratives that complement the songs they accompany.

In this manner, Spike Lee, David Lynch, and Martin Scorsese have not only pioneered "cinematic music videos," but they have also celebrated the medium's inherent ability to merge with their cinematic vision, thus expanding the horizons of what music videos can achieve. Their contributions illustrate the harmonious coexistence of film and music videos, demonstrating the artistic potential that arises when two distinct forms of visual storytelling converge. Even though in the 1990s some of music video directors were undoubtedly in the limelight, Vernallis argues that "while film studies has long debated the meaning and value of auteur studies and has created a canon of its own, no similar corpus exists for music videos" (2013; 25).[13] Still, it is the MTV

[12] Most notable examples of music videos created by film directors include: Public Enemy – "Fight the Power" (1989), Prince – "Money Don't Matter 2 Night" (1992), Michael Jackson – "They Don't Care About Us" (1996), The Killers – "Land of the Free" (2019) by Spike Lee; Moby – "Shot In The Back Of The Head" (2009), Interpol – "Lights" (2011), Nine Inch Nails – "Came Back Haunted" (2013) by David Lynch; and Robbie Robertson – "Somewhere Down the Crazy River" (1988), Michael Jackson – "Bad" (1987) by Martin Scorsese.

[13] Despite the undeniable prominence of certain music video directors in the 1990s, the process of "canonization" in the context of music videos remains notably distinct from the well-established practice of auteur studies in film. As highlighted by Carol Vernallis in her work (2013; 25), film studies has a rich history of debating the significance and merit of auteur theory, ultimately leading to the establishment of a canonical list of celebrated film directors. In contrast, the same level of recognition and formalization of a canon for music video directors has not been realized. Vernallis' observation underscores an important point in the development of music video as an art form. While directors like Spike Jonze, David Fincher, and Michel Gondry achieved substantial recognition for their contributions to music videos during the 1990s, there has been a relative absence of a systematic approach to canonization in this medium. The focus within music video scholarship has often been on the medium as a whole, the impact of specific videos, or broader

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era that contributed to the development of a specific style of directing music videos. Although there is no such thing as a fixed music video canon, it was the 1990s that helped develop the music video aesthetic.

2.3 Post-MTV a.k.a. YouTube Era

As a medium, music video has changed dramatically in the last forty years. Traditionally, music videos were shown on television on channels such as MTV or VH1, which primarily targeted adolescent music fans. However, in the early 2000s, due to the decline of television audiences, especially among younger viewers, the demand for music videos on network television has waned. This situation coincided with MTV's transition to reality programming effected by a variety of cultural, economic, and industrial factors (Klein 2021, 3). Since then, the Internet has become a new venue of music distribution and promotion, attracting much broader audiences than network television channels.

Online video-sharing platforms such as You Tube or Vimeo, which contributed to today's transformation of the medium into the next phase, have enabled music listeners to form Internet communities, creating a way to provide immediate feedback, an innovation that has revolutionized the music video industry. Music-oriented forums, websites and databases such as Pitchfork, PopMatters, The Wire, and Internet Music Video Database as well as the YouTube comments section have not only shaped other users' opinions about a given music video but also provided important feedback required by record labels. This has significantly affected the music industry as during the MTV era audiences did not have much impact on which music videos are given more airtime. Nevertheless, selection of music videos on YouTube content is algorithm-driven, offering suggestions based on previously music videos watched and SEO tools positioning one music videos ahead of others.

The mid 2000s offered not only new channels of music video distribution, including music-video-oriented web-based magazines and blogs, not to mention YouTube, Vimeo, and Daily Motion, but also platforms for promotion, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Music-video-oriented websites and blogs have significantly impacted audiences, delivering a plethora of music video charts ("the best hip-hop music videos of the 1990s," "the greatest music videos of all time," "10 best political music videos," "50 most iconic music videos," etc.) that combine classic 1980s videos with the more recent ones (Railton and Watson 6). Of course, were it not for YouTube's play-on-demand model, the ability to watch music videos from all over

trends, rather than on individual directors in the same way that film studies has celebrated and analyzed iconic filmmakers. This contrast reflects the unique and evolving nature of music videos within the wider landscape of visual culture. It also raises questions about the criteria and methodologies that would be required to establish a canon of music video directors, considering the medium's diversity and the collaborative nature of music video production.

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the world and from different decades would be drastically limited. That is why, in the twenty-first century, "the distribution and redistribution of music video takes on added levels of complexity" (Railton and Watson 6) as they are streamed to computer screens rather than watched on cable television.

The second decade of the twenty-first century can be regarded as the digital turn in the development of digital music videos. Although YouTube was founded in 2005 and purchased by the Google Group in 2006, it was in the late 2000s and early 2010 that music videos became ubiquitous on this platform. As noted above, from mere marketing tools they evolved into works of art and commerce. Thanks to improving digital technologies, music video production has become cheaper and easier in the 21st century, even when they included elaborate special effects (Shaviro 2017; 6). New technologies have been readily adopted and used for creative purposes by directors of post-millennial music videos, including BRTHR, Alan Ferguson, Romain Gavras, Ian Pons Jewell, Melina Matsoukas, Dave Meyers, and Hiro Murai, to name just a few.[14] Hiro Murai and Dave Meyers in particular have been known for experimenting with CGI to create complex visual landscapes matching the digitally produced sounds of trap, hip-hop, pop, and indie music.

The fact that the new era of music videos arrived in the twenty-first century is also connected with the digital turn in film production and the emergence of user-generated content on platforms like YouTube. As David Bordwell discusses (2002; 16–28), the digital turn in cinema is characterized by intensified or disrupted continuity and dynamic editing, defining today's audiovisual practices as most contemporary productions, including music videos, are cut more rapidly than at any other time in the history of filmmaking (17). While describing the "You Tube Era" and transformations within the music video format during that period, Vernallis mentions the phenomenon of the "YouTube-ification[15] of both film and music video. She differentiates nine char-

[14] Some of the most notable examples of music videos from the YouTube era include Iggy Azalea – "Bounce" (2013),Travis Scott – "goosebumps" (2017), The Weeknd – "In The Night" (2015), Lana del Rey – "Chemtrails Over The Country Club" (2021) directed by BRTHR; Katy Perry – "Hot N Cold" (2008), Beyoncé – "Party" (2011), Janelle Monáe – "Q.U.E.E.N." (2013) and "Make Me Feel" (2018) directed by Alan Ferguson; Justice – "Stress" (2008), M.I.A. – "Born Free" (2010), Jay-Z and Kanye West – "No Church in the Wild" (2012) by Romain Gavras; DJ Shadow – "I'm Excited" (2011), Naughty Boy – "La La La" (2013), Vince Staples – "Senorita" (2015) directed by Ian Pons Jewell; Beyoncé feat. Jay-Z – "Upgrade U" (2007), Lady Gaga – "Just Dance" (2008), Rihanna – "S&M" (2011), Solange – "Losing You" (2012), Beyoncé – "Formation" (2016) by Melina Matsoukas; Britney Spears – "Lucky" (2000), Missy Elliott – "Get Ur Freak On" (2001), Pink – "U + Ur Hand" (2006), Ariana Grande – "God Is a Woman" (2018), Taylor Swift feat. Brendon Urie – "Me!" (2019; directed with Taylor Swift), Camila Cabello – "Liar" (2019), and Travis Scott – "Highest in the Room" (2019) by Dave Meyers; Usher – "DJ Got Us Fallin' In Love" (2010), Chet Faker – "Gold" (2014), Childish Gambino – "This Is America" (2018), FKA Twigs – "sad day" (2020) by Hiro Murai.

[15] YouTube-ification of music video can be defined as employing the YouTube style to music videos, films, and commercials. Vernallis defines it as "a do-it-yourself look or aesthetic" (2013; 14)

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acteristics of "YouTube-ized" music videos that have defined that historical moment.[16] Although visual effects from the 1980s such as the video trail, kaleidoscope, stamped multiples, and sinusoidal designs[17] were also used in earlier music videos from the MTV era (Vernallis 2013; 212), they gained prominence in the YouTube era (Korsgaard 2012; 1–8).

3. Music Video's Future

With the new advances of audiovisual technologies in the twenty-first century, music video is still evolving. Music consumers are today witnessing the dawn of new developments that, undoubtedly, will find their reflection in music videos. Changes in music videos include methods of production, platforms on which they appear, narrative development and imagery. Similarly to streaming platforms, advances in technology have further revolutionized how contemporary music videos are produced and consumed. New trends in music video production, distribution and reception include: vertical music videos (including Camila Cabello's "Havana" [dir. Sam Lecca, 2017] and Maroon 5's "Girls Like You" [dir. David Dobkin, 2018), the use of virtual and augmented Reality discussed, for instance, by Eugy Han and Saul Quintero (John Mayer's "Heartbreak Warfare" [dir. Studio B, 2009), Björk's "Notget VR" [dir. Warren Du Preez and Nick Thornton Jones, 2017), and Maroon 5's "Wait" [dir. Travis Schneider, 2018), and increased popularity of visual albums widely analyzed by Ana Sedeño Valdellos, among others (Beyoncé's *Lemonade* [dir. Beyoncé and Kahlil Joseph, 2016]; Frank Ocean's *Endless* [dir. Frank Ocean, 2016], Janelle Monáe's *Dirty Computer* [dir. Andrew Donoho and Chuck Lightning, 2018]). Visual albums have proven particularly influential for the development of the music video format. They highlight the importance of musicians involved in production. As argued by Ciara Barrett, artists such as Beyoncé and FKA twigs have steered this format "towards a radical expression of female authorship" by not only addressing the repressive politics of gender and race representation, as early hip-hop and urban music videos did, but also challenging classical cinematic styles and narrative techniques (2016, 41). Although Pink Floyd's epic rock opera *The Wall* (dir. Alan Parker, 1982), Prince's Oscar-winning *Purple Rain* (dir. Albert Magnoli, 1984) and R. Kelly's epic multi-part R&B story *Trapped in the Closet* (dir. R. Kelly and Jim Swaffield, 2005) can be considered visual

[16] Since these media forms are found nowadays predominantly on that platform, they are produced in line with new expectations toward audiovisual material found on the Internet. According to Vernallis (2013), the features of YouTube video-clips include: 1) pulse and reiteration; 2) irreality and weightlessness, 3) graphic values; 4) a sense of scale that matches the medium; 5) unusual causal relations; 6) intermediality and intertextuality; 7) sardonic humor and parody; 8) condensation, and 9) formal replication of the web (23).

[17] Examples include Michael Jackson's morphing in "Black or White" (dir. John Landis, 1991) and kaleidoscope effect in Beyoncé's "1 + 1" (dir. Beyoncé, Laurent Briet, Ed Burke, 2011).

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albums, it is such productions as *Lemonade* and *Dirty Computer* that herald further development of visual albums.

Another leading trend, which stands in opposition to feature-length visual albums, consists in presenting incomplete music videos or their sneak-peeks instead of regular versions, which traditionally would be of the same length as the original songs.[18] The popularity of applications like Vine, Musica.ly and Tik Tok, which enable creation of short videos (6–60 seconds long), often accompanied by a song, might have influenced the length of music videos. In fact, the same demographic group that includes users of these apps (primarily Millenials and Generation Z) is the main target audience of music videos. One interesting example is a self-directed "fraction of the video," which was released by American mainstream rapper Tyler, the Creator as accompaniment to the single "I THINK" (dir. Wolf Haley aka Tyler, the Creator, 2019). On 24 October 2019, a two-minute video was released, while the album version of the song is three and a half minutes long. The difference does not seem significant at first, but in fact over one third of the song is missing.

Vernallis notes that "music videos appear in new and unexpected media, interactive games, and iPhone apps" as was the case with Björk's *Biophilia* (2011). Although this ever-changing and "dizzying array of user-based content ranges from vidding and remixes to mash-ups," it still seems justified to refer to these audiovisual forms as "music videos" (Vernallis 2013; 208). Whether a "fraction of the video" or "screen visualizer" (a looped frame, resembling a screensaver, which plays the role of a music video in Tierra Whack's "Clones" (dir. Thibaut Duverneix of Gentilhomme, 2019), both new forms show that the medium continues to develop. All of these changes may herald the end of music video as we know it. However, this medium's new aspects not only exemplify innovations in production but also reflect the newly emerged society of music consumers.

To conclude, music video's role is not merely to promote artists by popularizing their songs. As Thomas Doherty argues, this audiovisual form is both "promo and product" and has "revised the nature of contemporary music" (1987, 349). As a short media format, it requires its audience to pay close attention to what heard and seen as every second, sound, word, and image matters, carrying meaning. Music videos challenge established conventions concerning editing, aesthetic, and setting, inviting audiences to engage in a multisensory and intermedial contact. The medium has evolved not only in terms of platforms on which it is distributed and consumed but, more importantly, in the context of their position in the music industry: from the status of a commercial audiovisual format, perceived as inferior to cinema, to a synesthetic work of contemporary art.

[18] Some music videos are longer than the song as they include dialog and transitions between scenes, making them resemble short films. Examples include Michael Jackson's "Thriller" (dir. John Landis,1982), Notorious B.I.G.'s "Hypnotize" (dir. Paul Hunter, 1997), FKA twigs "sad day" (dir. Hiro Murai, 2020), and many more.

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