Film QUARTERLY

MUSIC VIDEOS

MORE FILM BOOKS

GODARD'S *PASSION*

VARIETY *ZELIG*

SWING SHIFT

FALL 1984

$2.75

RUTGERS ▪ FILMS

Rutgers University Press is pleased to announce a new film series. Each volume will include a continuity script, based on the most complete available print of the film, and such additional material as a critical introduction, reviews, interviews, a filmography, and a bibliography. The series aims to provide for students and film enthusiasts, first, accurate texts for study, and second, critical contexts in which to study the texts. The films selected are international, classic and modern; they are not tied to a particular studio, theory of film, or the names of famous writers, better known for their fiction. In addition, the texts will be unique in presenting copious transcriptions of action, images, decor, and soundtrack music where these descriptions enhance comprehension of the films. All of the titles will provide an abundance of stills and frame enlargements from important scenes and, where critical, a list of departures from the original shooting script.

The first three books in the series are:

MY DARLING CLEMENTINE
John Ford, director
Robert Lyons, editor

This volume contains a full transcript of the film as released and significant materials from Ford's shooting script. A 1964 interview with Ford provides valuable background information and the introduction explores Ford's use of Western history and familiar Hollywood conventions in creating this remarkable film.

196 pages, illustrated, $24.00 cloth; $9.95 paper

THE LAST METRO
François Truffaut, director
Mirella Jona Affron and E. Rubinstein, editors

In addition to the continuity script, this book has an introduction and chronology detailing the history of the Vichy government and the relation of French cinema to this critical period. The biographical sketch of Truffaut explains the film's many allusions to theatre and film and shows its special place in the context of the rest of Truffaut's work.

160 pages, illustrated, $24.00 cloth; $9.95 paper

TOUCH OF EVIL
Orson Welles, director
Terry Comito, editor

This star-studded movie and genius director are better understood through Comito's biographical sketch of Welles that traces the child prodigy's meteoric rise and how Welles was accidentally chosen as director for this film. Besides the continuity script, biographical sketch and introduction, there is an interview with Welles by André Bazin, an interview with Charlton Heston, critical essays, notes to the continuity script, reviews, a filmography and bibliography.

210 pages, illustrated, $24.00 cloth; $9.95 paper

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY PRESS,
30 COLLEGE AVENUE,
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ 08903

RUTGERS ▪ PRESS

VOLUME XXXVIII, No. 1 Fall 1984

ARTICLES

Music Video and the Spectator: Television, Ideology and Dream MARSHA KINDER 2

The spectacular burgeoning of music videos poses many intriguing questions about the form and its institutional setting, as well as the relations between video and dreaming.

Filming the Inside of His Own Head: Godard's Cerebral *Passion* JAMES ROY MACBEAN 16

Jean-Luc Godard's latest puzzle for critics recounts the filming of reconstructed famous paintings—a project which he feels "attains the status of sin."

REVIEWS

Variety LINDA DUBLER 24

Bette Gordon's ambitious and controversial film explores, from an avowedly feminist standpoint, what "pornographic" imagery for women might be like.

Zelig PETER HOGUE AND MARION BRONSON 28

Woody Allen's fictional compilation documentary is far more than a technical tour de force; its intellectual subcurrents are surprisingly intricate and its ironies remarkably ramified.

Swing Shift STEVE VINEBERG 31

Director Jonathan Demme hasn't been able to surmount the script problems in this promising story of the World War II home front.

Le Retour de Martin Guerre EDWARD BENSON 34

Only by understanding the historical context can we see why Bertrande de Rols first took an imposter as her long-lost husband and then joined the suit against him.

THE REST OF THE YEAR'S FILM BOOKS

History 38

Reference 45

Technical 48

Television 49

Textbooks 50

Theory 50

Miscellaneous 55

THE COVER: Christine at the box office: *Variety* (see review, page 24).

Editor's Notebook

MORE ON FILM BOOKS

We were gratified to learn, by the response to our appeal for comments on our film book surveys, that this feature is considered extremely valuable by many readers. As noted on page 37 below, which opens the second installment of this year's coverage, we are determined to maintain the comprehensiveness of the survey, which is unrivalled by any other publication. This will require abbreviated annotations for titles of minor value, and somewhat shorter treatment of works of modest importance. Since the flood of film titles has been even greater this year than last, we are still interested in hearing from volunteers to write reviews—especially short ones!

CONTRIBUTORS

EDWARD BENSON teaches at the University of New Mexico and has written for the *Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance*. MARION BRONSON lives in Chico; she has published in *Movietone News*. ROGER CRITTENDEN is on the faculty of the British National Film School, Beaconsfield. LINDA DUBLER studied film at NYU and is the program director of the Atlanta Film and Video Festival. JOHN L. FELL, member of our editorial board and editor of *Film Before Griffith*, now lives in Dover Plains, NY. SANDY FLITTERMAN, who teaches at Rutgers, recently won the first dissertation prize given by the Society for Cinema Studies. DOUGLAS GOMERY, who teaches at the University of Maryland, has published many articles on the economic history of the US film industry. ALLEN GRAUBARD is working on a book about Jewish revival and assimilation in the US. DAN GREENBERG wrote "The Reference Shelf Shuffle" in our Winter 1982-83 issue. JOHN HESS is co-editor of *Jump Cut* and lives in Berkeley. PETER HOGUE lives in Chico and has just finished a study of Howard Hawks and the literature of his times. MARSHA KINDER, of our editorial board, is also co-founder and co-editor of *Dreamworks*. VIVIAN KOENIG is a writer who lives in Berkeley. JAMES ROY MACBEAN's *Film and Revolution* (Indiana University Press) was recently cited by *In These Times* as one of the top 10 books of the seventies. PAUL MICHAUD lives in Paris, and was the producer of Bresson's *L'Argent*. DANA POLAN teaches at the University of Pittsburgh; he is the author of "A Brechtian Cinema?" and other essays. JONATHAN ROSENBAUM is the author of *Film: The Front Line* (Arden Press), an innovative look at avant-garde cinema. CHRISTOPHER SHARRETT lives in Dowlestown, PA, and has written for several film journals. SUSAN SITKIN is a writer who lives in San Francisco. STEVE VINEBERG is a student at Stanford University. MARY WHITELEY is a student at the University of Southern California. DON WILLIS, who lives in Berkeley, is our resident expert on fantasy and horror films.

FILM QUARTERLY (ISSN 0015-1386) is published quarterly at the subscription prices given below by the University of California Press, Berkeley, California 94720. Second-class postage paid at Berkeley, California, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to **Film Quarterly**. University of California Press, Berkeley CA 94720. $2.75 per copy, $11.00 per year, in the U.S. Elsewhere $13.00 per year. Institutional rates slightly higher. Back issues available at $5.00. Editor: Ernest Callenbach. Assistant to the Editor: Mary Guitar. New York Editor: William Johnson. Los Angeles Editor: Michael Dempsey. Boston Editor: Randall Conrad. London Editor: Colin Young. Rome Editor: Gideon Bachmann. Advisory Editorial Board: Andries Deinum, John Fell, Brian Henderson, Albert Johnson, Marsha Kinder, Neal Oxenhandler. Views expressed in signed articles are those of the authors. Indexed in **Art Index, Book Review Index, Film Literature Index, Humanities Index, International Index to Film Periodicals, Monthly Cumulating Periodical Index,** and **Popular Periodical Index.** Printed in U.S.A. Type: Freedmen's Organization, Los Angeles. Printing: Malloy Lithographing. © 1984 by the Regents of the University of California. Back issues subsequent to Volume 18 (1965-1966) can be obtained from the University of California Press.

MARSHA KINDER

Music Video and the Spectator:

TELEVISION, IDEOLOGY AND DREAM

Music video is a protean form that has proven its magnetic power on MTV, a national 24-hour cable station devoted entirely to this programming on a continuous basis. It is now popping up on other cable stations, frequently appearing between movies the way cartoons and newsreels used to punctuate the spaces between features at movie theaters. It is also breaking into commercial television, where as many as 300 programs across the nation are devoted to music videos during carefully chosen hours.

Music video has even found its way into movies, providing the central creative energy for a subgenre launched by *Flashdance*—films that weave loose narratives around hot dance sequences created by montage and that generate fast-selling videos. The connection with film also proved lucrative in Michael Jackson's *Thriller,* the 14-minute video directed by feature film-maker John Landis (*Animal House, American Werewolf in London, Twilight Zone*). According to *Newsweek* (August 6, 1984), the documentary film *Making Michael Jackson's Thriller,* though it's only a spin-off, has already sold 450,000 cassettes, making it the second-best-selling video in history. *Thriller*'s stunning commercial success, extended length and conscious positioning within the horror film genre helped strengthen the link between music video and mainstream film-making. Respected auteurs like Nicholas Roeg, Bob Rafelson, Tobe Hooper and Andy Warhol have entered the field, a trend that challenges the old unidirectional model which assumed *all* directors of commercials and television were fighting their way up from the boob tube to enter the celestial art of Cinema. Now, according to Warhol, "Everyone wants to make music videos!"[1]

What is the significance of this quicksilver phenomenon? Depending on which mass media reports you read, music video is a new means of extending the unique aesthetic possibilities of the avant-garde formerly restricted to independent film-making and video art, a new combination of music and images that redefines audiovisual relations in the mass media, a new means of marketing records and tapes that is saving the pop music industry, or a new source of violent sexist sadomasochistic images infecting the minds of our children.

While all of these perspectives may have validity, the underlying phenomenon that makes them all possible has been ignored: music video seems to be forging new codes of spectator relations, or more accurately, it is making the codes that were already operative in television more transparent. MTV provides a model that highlights through exaggeration the unique aspects of television, particularly those that distinguish the medium from cinema, and that have highly significant implications on two registers—television's relation to ideology and its relation to dream.

In the discussion of music video that follows, there will be no attempt to establish a canon or to create a pantheon of auteurs—projects that are already well under way.[2] I will not be examining the best works that the genre has produced, many of which have never been or are no longer being aired on MTV but are available in video stores and private collections. (Most songs have an even shorter life on MTV than they do on Top 40 radio stations.) Since I will be exploring MTV programming as a model of commercial television, I will limit my discussion to rock video, the station's main staple, though other forms of pop music such as jazz have also entered the field, and I will restrict my examples to those video clips being broadcast at the time I was writing this essay, choosing them almost at random to illustrate what is typical rather than what is most powerful aesthetically.

STILL COURTESY EPIC RECORDS/CBS

Presence/Absence of the Visual Image

One of the most compelling aspects of rock video is its power to evoke specific visual images in the mind of the spectator every time one hears the music with which they have been juxtaposed on television. The experience of having watched and listened to a particular video clip on television establishes these connections in the brain circuitry; by repeating the experience very frequently within a short period of time (a situation guaranteed by the repetitive structure of MTV), the spectator strengthens these associations in the brain. Thus later when the spectator hears the song on the radio or in a different context in which the visuals are absent, the presence of the music is likely to draw these images from memory, accompanied by the desire to see them again. This process follows the basic patterns of conditioning well established in the field of cognitive learning.

In rock video it is not merely a matter of whether we hear and see the performer (as we do in live performance at a concert or nightclub). In many rock video clips the visuals do not focus *primarily* on the performer in the act of performing; those that do, risk appearing regressive for they are reverting to conventions used in rock film documentaries from the sixties and seventies like *Monterey Pop* and *Woodstock*. In most rock videos what we do see is a chain of disparate images, which may involve the musical performers, but which stress discontinuities in space and time—a structure that résembles the form of dreams. Though the pulsing kinetic rhythms of the visual montage are invariably accentuated by the musical beat, the continuous flow of the music and lyrics also imposes a unifying identity (sometimes augmented by a narrative component in the lyrics and/or visuals) onto the discontinuous visual track, distinguishing it from the chains of similar images in the video clips that precede and follow this particular musical text.

This structure insures that the visuals will be the primary source of pleasure, for it is the lush visual track that will be withdrawn, withheld or suspended, when the spectator is no longer watching television but *only listening* to the song on the radio or stereo. The reverse situation—the presence of the visuals and the absence of the audio—is not built into the system; it can be achieved only through technical breakdown or through the spectator's

intervention (turning off the sound while watching the images). Pioneer plays with this irony in one of its commercials for laser disc players by having blind singer Ray Charles deliver their slogan: "Video for those who really care about audio." This music video structure tends to subordinate the audio component of television by linking it with radio. Although some critics have argued that this linkage enables TV sound to act as a cue that draws the spectator's attention to certain video images, radio still remains the superseded medium which lacks the perceptual richness that television shares with cinema. In all television the visual component is privileged over the audio—a condition which is over-determined by historical, cultural and psychological factors[3] and which is revealed in the very term used for TV spectators, *viewers*.

The complex structure of the visual chain of images in most rock videos makes the reliance on memory and the value of repeated viewings all the more essential. If a person hears the song first before seeing the video clip that combines sound and image, the complexity of the visual form makes it virtually impossible for this listener to predict how the video would look. The situation is very different from the way it was in the sixties or seventies when a rock fan might buy a new album or audio tape by the Stones and then while listening, sit back and imagine how Jagger might look while performing this particular number.[4] It probably would have been even more likely for such a listener to place her- or himself in an imaginary setting and fantasize erotic behavior evoked by the lyrics, or to use the music as a sound track for actual physical acts (sex, dancing, exercise, or what you will). In such instances, the very absence of the live performers (represented only by still images on album covers, which frequently featured suggestive scenes or fetishes instead of the performers) invited the listener to create a waking fantasy. In those days the rock fan was expected to generate his or her own images; the visual component of the fantasies elicited by pop music were not totally prefabricated.

I don't mean to imply that music video is incapable of stimulating viewers to dream up their own chains of images, perhaps in a different style and with new combinations. Yet the remembering of images one has already seen seems an essential first step—a process I have seen prepubescent and teenage viewers transform into a game of Who can remember the most details? This goal of memory retrieval or replication is fostered by some of the performers. When recently interviewed by a video jockey on MTV, Roger Waters assured his fans that those coming to his latest live concert would not be disappointed when they *heard* "5:05 AM, The Pros and Cons of Hitchhiking," for they would be *seeing* visual effects that equalled those they had seen in the video clip. Most concert promotions currently being aired on MTV stress the extravagance of the visual spectacle as much as the music—spectacle designed to match what is being seen on television.

Music video challenges the listener to play a hip *fort/da* game of Can you recall the absent visuals? Can you return to being a viewer and experiencing the original plenitude of sight and sound? This game is designed to drive all players back to the TV set to compulsively consume those prefabricated fantasy images on MTV (or wherever they can be found), knowing that all popular favorites will be repeated but rarely being able to predict more than a half hour in advance the precise time that any particular clip will be aired. (Didn't the followers of Pavlov and Skinner teach us that inconsistent patterns of reinforcement would intensify and prolong the compulsive repetition of the desired behavior?)

Performance, Narrative and Dreamlike Visuals

Thus far I have been talking as if all music videos had equal visual complexity and were all characterized by one style, neither of which is the case. Yet virtually all rock videos *are* comprised of three distinct components, which are combined with different emphases to create considerable variety within the form. First, the performance of the singer or group identifies the form with the musical genre and with the historic pop tradition of recording live performances on tape or film. Second, a simple or complex narrative carried by the lyrics and / or visual images, and sometimes featuring a guest star, turns the video into a minifilm with specific generic identification

(e.g., horror, gangster film, screwball comedy, western, *noir,* melodrama, women's picture), making the visuals easier to remember and providing the spectator with a prefabricated daydream with varying degrees of space left for personal elaborations. Third, a series of incongruous visual images stressing spatial and temporal dislocations makes rock video closely resemble dreams—the primary medium that weaves loose narratives out of chains of incoherent images and that, despite its selective audio component, is predominantly a visual experience. Both performance and narrative work toward coherence, distinguishing the text from other rock video clips; in contrast, the dreamlike visuals work toward decentering and dissolution, revealing the deep structure of all television as an endless chain of images whose configuration into any structural unity or text is only a temporary, illusory byproduct of secondary revision.

The musical performance always dominates the audio, but varies in the degree to which it controls or is even present in the visuals. The narrative element is variable both on the audio and visual registers, sometimes dominating one or both, other times virtually absent except for the tendency of the human brain to read a story into any series of consecutive images, particularly when accompanied by words. The chain of incongruous images is restricted primarily to the visuals, varying in the quantity and pacing of the spatial and temporal dislocations and in the degree to which special effects are employed, but at least minimally present in the form of rapid montage which is featured in virtually all rock videos and also characteristic of commercials. While many commentators have called these dreamlike visuals *surreal,* it is important to distinguish them from the historical surrealism represented in film by Buñuel, a modernist movement which used dream rhetoric as a radical strategy to undermine the power of bourgeois ideology, particularly as it was manifest in the fine arts. In contrast, this postmodernist pop surrealism uses dream images to cultivate a narcissism that promotes our submission to bourgeois consumerism.

Music video has adopted quite consciously the visual conventions of the TV commercial, which has provided many talented directors (like Tim Newman and Bob Giraldi) for the new form. When viewing MTV, it is difficult to distinguish the video clips from the commercials because of close similarities in visual style, background music and short format. The same is true for the MTV news, which usually features three short items promoting commercial ventures, and for the station ID's, which sometimes include brief excerpts from clips of the most famous video stars—all presented in fast montage. These conventions from the commercial have been adopted because of their ability to capture and hold the spectator's attention, which is fundamental to their selling power. Research has shown that this kind of fast-paced visual style holds the attention even of the pre-school viewer, which is one of the reasons why it has been incorporated into kiddie shows like "Sesame Street" and why rock video has such an hypnotic effect on young children. The fast pace of MTV's programming might also be connected with the rise of cocaine as the dominant drug in pop culture in place of acid and grass. In Michael Jackson's Pepsi generation full of Pepper-uppers, Coke is it.

Like all television, the primary function of MTV's rock video is to sell products. While this goal is explicit in the TV commercial and fairly visible on MTV, it is disguised in most conventional programming on commercial television. Nick Browne has argued that while the television program is presented as the primary text and the commercials that temporarily interrupt it as secondary, the opposite is true, for the main function of the program is to provide a suitable environment for the commercial message. The actual television text is "a 'supertext' that consists of the particular program and all the introductory and interstitial materials—chiefly announcements and ads . . ." and "advertising . . . the central mediating discursive institution."[5] MTV exposes the "supertext" by erasing the illusory boundaries within its continuous flow of uniform programming and reveals the central mediating position of advertising by adopting its formal conventions as the dominant stylistic. In fact, *everything* on MTV is a commercial—advertising spots, news, station ID's, interviews, and especially music video clips.

Whereas other TV stations usually have to pay for the programs which the commercials

SAMPLE PROGRAMMING ON MTV

Monitored in Los Angeles

Sunday, July 15, 1984, 12 noon–1 pm

* = music videos

12:00 MTV station ID, leading into voice-over of VJ Mark Goodman announcing what clips and news items will be featured in the next half hour.

*Scorpions: "Still Loving You." Performance ruptured by fragmented visuals and shifts of scene.

12:05 *Bette Midler: "Beast of Burden." Screwball comedy narrative co-starring Mick Jagger, incorporating live performance by Midler, which Jagger eventually joins.

12:10 MTV promotion for stereo hook-up.

Commercial for Thunderbird cars, with fast montage.

Commercial for Little Steven album, including shots of live performance and concert schedule (usually included as news items).

Commercial for Reese's Pieces candy, featuring comic narrative with E.T. lookalike.

*Don Hartman (performance by the Sorels): "I Can Dream About You." Stage performance by black male singers, the Sorels, is framed by and intercut with romantic narrative about a white couple.

12:15 *The Alan Parsons Project: "Prime Time." Nightmare horror narrative featuring mannequins, some of whom come alive through the magic of special effects. We never see the singer or musicians performing.

12:20 VJ Mark Goodman on screen, comments on clips just aired and then presents the news, including 3 items all promoting commercial ventures:

Plasmatics singer Wendy O has done her first solo album; VJ presents a brief interview shown on a TV monitor.

Grace Jones, who made her screen debut in the new Conan film now playing in theaters, will have a new role in the next James Bond movie.

Judas Priest concert dates.

Commercial for the new Carpenters Album. The surviving brother talks about his dead sister Karen, who appears in brief excerpts singing their greatest hits.

12:25 *Stray Cats: "Stray Cats Strut." Comic narrative featuring the group performing in an alley, drawing female reactions from a real live puss, two groupies, and an old bitchy neighbor who throws things at them and then switches channels on her TV set but keeps getting their performance or an animated cartoon featuring other stray cats.

*Elton John: "Sad Songs (Say So Much)." Narrative involving another street performance, but featuring a catalogue of listeners in a variety of contexts hearing those sad songs on radio, TV, stereo, etc., matched by multiple images of Elton performing in a variety of hats and styles.

12:30 MTV station ID

*Ratt: "Round and Round." Narrative that parodies the horror film, featuring an elegant formal dinner where two of the guests are played by Milton Berle. The dinner is disrupted by rock performers in the attic who transform one beautiful guest and the butler, not into vampires or werewolves, but punk groupies.

12:35 *Ultravox: "Vienna." Surreal visual images disguise narrative intrigue, as the lyrics keep telling us "this means nothing to me."

12:40 MTV promotion for appearance of Christine McVie.

Commercial for Mountain Dew soft drinks, wtih fast montage.

Commercial for Novabeam television, a large screen. "Once you see it, you'll never be able to watch a small screen again."

Commercial for Soft 'n Dri deodorant, featuring a narrative about a young black female newscaster making her TV debut.

MTV station ID

12:45 *Police: "Wrapped Around Your Finger." Performance disrupted by dreamlike visuals involving hundreds of long candles, constant camera movement with deep focus, cross dissolves, dynamic montage, and a flicker effect.

*Rick Springfield: "Don't Walk Away." Romantic narrative with dreamlike visuals that follow the singer to his apartment, where paintings provide settings for a series of inset narratives that tell the same story of a sad parting in a variety of scenes associated with different genres.

12:50 VJ Mark Goodman on screen to promote clips by Sam Hagar and Huey Lewis which will debut on MTV.

Commercial for Chrysler Laser XE—with fast montage.

Commercial for Fabergé body spray—with fast montage.

Commercial for "Electric Dreams," a new movie directed by the man who directed

Michael Jackson's "Billy Jean" video (in some of the other commercials for this same movie we are told that it features music by the Culture Club and other MTV video stars).

Commercial for Scope mouthwash, with series of brief narratives.

MTV station ID—featuring brief excerpts from clips of some of the most famous video rock stars like Michael Jackson, Boy George, Billy Idol, etc.

12:55 *Van Halen: "Panama." Performance ruptured by fragmented visuals and brief scenes featuring bizarre or outrageous images, but which still tend to illustrate the lyrics.

1:00 MTV station ID, with voice over of VJ Mark Goodman announcing the clips that will be aired during the next half hour.

interrupt, MTV has no such overhead. No wonder their station ID's are so varied and spectacular; they are practically the only "programs" that MTV produces. This situation highlights the main business of every TV station—not to generate programs, but to deliver viewers (at the lowest cost per thousand) to advertisers who pay both for the commercials and for the time it takes to air them. The music industry is happy to provide the video clips as free programming for MTV because the air time for these thinly disguised commercials is also free. In this sweet business arrangement, as long as the viewers keep watching and buying, both station and advertiser not only profit, but get something for nothing.

All three components of rock video serve consumerist goals. The performance motivates the spectator specifically to buy a particular album on which the featured song is recorded. The name of the group, song, album, and record company appear at the beginning and end of every clip every time it is aired, implying that the spectator should be eager to note this information in order to facilitate the anticipated purchase.[6] More generally, the performance is also selling the performers, whose future commercial ventures (concerts, nightclub dates, and future recordings) the spectator will be expected to support. Both the narrative and dreamlike visuals motivate the spectator specifically to buy, not just the album, but the video itself. If the viewer has no playback equipment, then he or she is motivated to purchase a VCR in order to make the purchase or rental of the video more feasible. The narrative and the visuals also strengthen the viewer's motivation to consume all products affiliated with the performers (other albums, tickets for live performances, T-shirts and toys that display their name or image, soft drinks or other products that carry their endorsement). It is the narrative and dreamlike visuals, with their direct connection to private fantasy, that best define the unique features of rock video, distinguishing it from previous means of marketing pop music and supporting the infrastructure that insures the commercial success of the form.

At this point, it might be useful to examine some specific rock video clips to show the interaction among the three components.

Videos Dominated by Performance

Performance dominates both the sound and image of many video clips, but usually with the intervention of a subordinate narrative or a visual fragmentation that disrupts the temporal and/or spatial unity. In those instances where such disruption is absent or minimal, as in the Pretenders' "It's a Thin Line between Love and Hate," the video seems oldfashioned and tedious. This judgment is supported by the fact that some vintage songs have been released with historic footage of a live concert, granting a place on MTV to dead veterans like Jim Morrison. In such cases, the excitement is generated by the rarity of seeing the "living" record of a great performer who was ahead of his time but will be giving no more live concerts. But for live performers who want to be on the cutting edge, something else is needed.

In White Snake's "Slow 'n Easy," the sensuous, extravagant performance of the singers is periodically interrupted by inserts of a two-lane blacktop and by glimpses of a sexy blonde wearing pearls tightened around her throat. Presumably the "superstitious woman" mentioned in the lyrics, the blonde appears in scenes that take place off stage—as if she is the woman the singer has in mind while performing this song. Yet in some shots she is positioned as a spectator, as if the masochism of her response matches or is evoked by the aggression in the performance. We see a close-up of her throat that reveals the bruises made by the pearls, and a long shot of her sit-

ting in her flashy car deciding whether to pick up the male singer (who stands next to a smashed vehicle on a deserted highway) and then speeding away leaving him stranded in the middle of the road. These suggestive shots and lyrics encourage the spectator to construct a sadomasochistic narrative in which either the man or the woman is bound to be the object of desire and revenge. The crosscutting between the narrative and the performance gradually accelerates in pace, as do the tempo of the music and the cutting rhythm with which the performance is fragmented into close-ups of fetishistic details, an acceleration that renders the song title ironic. Although this video clip is dominated by performance, the fast pace of the montage makes it anything but easy to recall the chain of visual images that accompany the music.

In many videos the performance itself serves as the main narrative event, whose spatial unity is broken by the disjunctive visuals—either through special effects as in "Mental Hopscotch" by the Missing Persons or by shifts in setting as in Nena's "99 Luftballoons." The lyrics in such video clips frequently comment reflexively on the cognitive process that the visual style demands of the spectator (mental hopscotch) or on the direct connection with dreams ("99 dreams I have had, everyone a red balloon"). In "The Heart of Rock 'n Roll" the performance of Huey Lewis and the News is fragmented spatially, as the settings for the singing shift from New York to LA, and to other stops on the tour, and from concert halls, to nightclubs, to the streets; and also temporally, as their performance is situated within the history of rock 'n roll. The inserts of Elvis Presley and other historical precursors that are intercut with present footage of Lewis and the News, are echoed in the contrasting dance styles of different eras as well as in the two historical TV formats of color and black-and-white, between which the visuals constantly alternate. In this video, the self-reflexive visuals narrativize the performance by positioning within it the history of pop music and of television.

Videos Dominated by Narrative

At its most extreme, narrative can dominate both words and images—making the latter illustrate the former and moving the song toward ballad and the visuals toward mini-film, as in the case of Tony Carey's "A Fine, Fine Day." Opening with gritty black-and-white images before shifting to color and relying heavily on flashbacks, this mini-gangster film is presented with low mimetic realism, except for the singing of the narrator (who tells the story of his father released from prison and rubbed out by gangsters all on one fine day) and by the incongruity, at a key dramatic moment, of having the Mafia boss mouth Carey's words—an effect which is comically deflating, to say the least.

Far more typical is the use of a thin narrative line, witty in tone, which provides the basic situation for an erotic fantasy on which the spectator can elaborate according to his/her sexual tastes. The holes in the plot are usually filled by the lush visuals—the exotic settings, costumes, hair styles and make-up as well as the fast cutting and effects. The narrative line makes these visuals and their sequential arrangement easier to remember, for the order appears to make sense rather than being random. Instead of performing on stage, the singer plays a dramatic role within the story, which includes recitativo or a singing narration.

As a case in point, Van Stephenson presents an explicit masochistic fantasy which transforms a hair stylist into a "Modern Day Delilah." In a witty development of the conceit, the hair-styling equipment becomes elaborate sexual paraphernalia, the beautician herself a feline predator with leonine tresses, and Stephenson the willing Samson. Despite the extravagance of the visuals, they are still limited to illustrating the lyrics. Though it is possible to identify either with Samson or Delilah in this fantasy, it is clearly the male masochist who controls the clip. While watching this video, the spectator is more likely to savor the wit at an emotional distance, storing the images for reprocessing in private fantasies to come.

Eddy Grant's "Romancing the Stone" pits sound against image to design a narrative (the raw material for a romantic daydream) that can be read from multiple points of view. While Grant, a black reggae singer, dominates the sound with his performance, the visuals focus on a white female magazine photographer working on chic shots so that she can afford to fly back to her romance-starved, machete

wielding, hip-swinging third world lover in vacation land. Each is a subject of the other's art and fantasies: from his humble shack, he sings to her about how much he misses her; in her urban studio his photograph is displayed like a trophy. He sends her a post card that carries, not only the refrain from his lyrics, but also his moving image carefully packaged and framed. Later it appears in her studio next to his photograph—a moving audiovisual reminder, like a video clip displayed on an Advent, of his talent and appeal and a strong incentive for her to buy a plane ticket as soon as possible (in fact, her paycheck is magically transformed into a ticket by means of a dissolve). Depending on whether one focuses on the music or the photography, the fantasy could be interpreted as a product either of the man or the woman, the black or the white, the colonized Third World which provides the raw talent and lush natural resources or the prosperous colonizer who develops and consumes them. Though at first we only hear him and see her, the visuals intercut between the white woman working in the city (coping with traffic and sexism) and the black man waiting in the tropics—a reversal of traditional sex roles, but a demystification of political-economic realities, particularly in the music industry (where black music is produced, packaged and sold by whites) and in the movies (where "Romancing the Stone" is the title song of a film that uses the third world as a background for romantic adventures of whites, a typical ploy of Hollywood thrillers). While the surface romance may evoke a daring fantasy of miscegenation and sexual reversals, the underlying politics tell the same old story of commercial exploitation. In this mini-romance, the contrapuntal use of sound and image reveals an ideological subtext; yet by allowing more possibilities for spectator identification, it enhances rather than subverts the marketing strategy of selling reggae to American consumers.

Videos Dominated by Dreamlike Visuals

Those rock videos that are dominated by dreamlike visuals seem to make the richest use of the medium—a judgment widely held by reviewers writing for pop magazines devoted to the art (*Record, Cream, Video, Optical Music,* etc.). Some video clips like Duran Duran's "Reflex," Peter Gabriel's "Shock the Monkey," and Depeche Mode's "Everything Counts" create effects that evoke works by some of the most advanced independent film-makers, such as the rich multilayered imagery of Pat O'Neill. Such connections could presumably cultivate a more receptive audience for independent films, but it's also possible for those avant-garde conventions (that extend backward to Surrealism and Dada) to become co-opted.

The video clips that I find most revealing are those that comment self-reflexively on how rock video works, particularly in its relation to the spectator's private fantasies and dreams. Though we have already noted this tendency in performance-dominated videos like "Mental Hopscotch," "99 Luftballoons" and "The Heart of Rock 'n Roll" and in the narrative-centered "Romancing the Stone," it tends to be developed more fully in clips dominated by visuals and in those that make a balanced use of all three components.

One scene from Duran Duran's "Reflex" is particularly emblematic. We watch an audience watching a movie screen on which appears a giant wave. When it crashes, it breaks free from the screen and invades the audience's space, completely engulfing the spectators. This tidal wave, an archetype from nightmares and anxiety dreams, evokes rock video, whose images carried by the air waves break out of the television set to penetrate the private space of our consciousness and lives.

The process of internalizing media images from movies and television and combining them with private memories to generate new fantasies and dreams is dramatized in Cyndi Lauper's "Time after Time"—a process that is facilitated by repeated exposure, as the song title implies. The clip opens with Cyndi watching a Bette Davis movie on television while her lover sleeps beside her. Certain images from this woman's picture evoke personal associations from the singer's past, which are recombined to form a romantic fantasy that sharply contrasts in visual style and tone with the banal setting of the framing situation.

This same process—involving movies, fantasies and dreams, all mediated through video—is elaborated in Roger Waters's "5:01 AM, The Pros and Cons of Hitchhiking." Opening with movie images from *Shane,* the clip then

turns to shots of a woman cruising in a convertible, picking up a handsome blonde hitchhiker. The lyrics reveals that she is an Encino housewife pursuing a romantic fantasy—one that was repressed in *Shane* (where the pioneer housewife never acted on her sexual attraction to the roving gunfighter played by blond Alan Ladd) but liberated in *The Wild One* (a film that is evoked in the clip, not through authentic footage, but through reprocessed lookalike images and whose rolling stone hero, clad in black leather, is associated with Jack Palance, the gunfighter villain whom we see blown away in one of the excerpts from *Shane*). Again, as in "Romancing the Stone," we are presented with a dual point of view—the male singer telling the story and the Encino housewife whose fantasies seem to control the visuals. Yet as the clip progresses, other dreamlike visuals disrupt the narrative—particularly images of a man flying across a cloudy sky. The dual perspective is revealed in the ending when we see a man and a woman asleep in bed, where they have both been reprocessing media images in their respective dreams.

Omnipresence of the Spectator

This self-reflexive attention to the viewing process foregrounds another characteristic of television that is exaggerated on MTV—the omnipresence of the spectator. One video clip that plays with this dimension is "Tell Her About It," where performer Billy Joel is introduced by Ed Sullivan (really an impersonator) for his historic TV debut on "The Toast of the Town" while Rodney Dangerfield (the real comedian in a guest appearance) waits in the wings. The spectator is depicted not only through the live audience in the theater where Joel is singing, but also through diverse TV viewers who watch (or don't watch) his performance in a variety of period contexts, which provide settings for mininarratives eventually involving Joel, whose live presence (like Duran Duran's tidal wave) invades their life space: a neighborhood bar, a family room, a sorority house, a TV studio, and even a Soviet spaceship. In contrast to "The Heart of Rock 'n Roll," here it is the TV spectator rather than the performer whose living continuity with the historic past is dramatized.

Through constant reminders that, at any moment of broadcasting, someone is watching, in television, unlike cinema, the spectator is made to seem omnipresent.[7] This sense is particularly strong in live television, where the omnipresence of the spectator is highlighted as a distinguishing feature of primary value. Live television departs from the basic film-making model (film crew and actors shooting on a closed set) by frequently granting a place for the spectator in the studio or on camera, as we see in game shows and comedy-variety programs like "The Johnny Carson Show" and "Saturday Night Live." The "live" component survives even in the reruns where we viewers are made to feel that we belong to a live audience responding to living legends like John Belushi. As with the historical footage of live concerts on MTV, "live" is redefined; no longer restricted to the recording or transmission, it becomes associated with whatever occupies the present consciousness of the spectator. It's as if by watching television, the spectator gains the divine power of granting life to whoever or whatever appears on screen. The viewer can extend the TV life of Phil Donahue and Joan Collins or kill them off in a season. Of course, it's really the networks and advertisers that decide what's on the screen, but the audience is constantly told that it is their viewing (and buying) habits that control those decisions.

This feeling of the spectator's omnipresence is cultivated even on shows that are taped or filmed. Canned laughter is used on situation comedy series, and viewers are directly addressed in the second person in commercials, on news and sports shows, on children's programs like "Sesame Street" and "Nickelodeon," and by virtually all video jockeys on MTV.

Instead of stressing the changeovers from one VJ to another, which would accentuate them as TV personalities and create the effect of separate programs (as occurs on some music radio stations), MTV makes the transitions subtle. The name of the next VJ is announced along with the upcoming performers and news for the next half hour segment. Sometimes the new VJ is first heard in a voice-over at the end of a station ID before being seen on screen. Other times both VJ's chat together on camera at the end of the connecting station break. Despite the diversity in their age, sex, personality and style, it's as if the main function of

these VJ's, who also double as newscasters, is to maintain a continuous live presence that creates the illusion of an on-going dialogue with the audience. On MTV the omnipresence of the VJ helps to strengthen the omnipresence of the spectator.

When an audience is seen, heard or addressed on screen, it signifies for the individual spectator both the object of identification and the Other with whom he or she is temporarily bonded. The TV spectator has a dual role: first, as an individual viewer/listener absorbing images and sounds into one's own consciousness and memory, usually in the privacy of one's own home or bed; and second, as a member of a mass audience or community (McLuhan's "global village") who share common associations, desires and ideological assumptions. In unifying private and public identities, this dual role facilitates the integrated functioning of two complementary actions—both of which are well illustrated in the specific video clips already discussed: (1) the internalizing of TV images into one's own fantasy life, incorporating them into a private reservoir of dream images; (2) the positioning of the spectator in the public marketplace where one becomes an active consumer purchasing products one has been trained by television to desire, thereby contributing to the capitalist economy. Because of advertising's control over television, the private action is made to serve the public goal of internalizing consumerist desires. Nowhere is this co-option more apparent than on MTV.

Presence/Absence of the TV Receiver

Since the TV spectator appears omnipresent, it is the presence or absence of the TV set, the basic receiving apparatus, that is all important. As a receiver, the TV set functions for the spectator in a dual capacity: both as an object of desire and as an object of identification. If you don't have one, you are left out of the community. If you don't have one, your dreams, fantasies and life will be impoverished. If you don't have one, you won't recognize the names and faces of culture heroes that populate mass-circulation magazines like *People* and *Star* and that pop up in conversations. In order to enter the mass culture and its marketing system, you must invest in this basic equipment that promises, not merely temporary admittance to another world, but a dramatic change in you and your world forever. Like buying a Barbie doll, the purchase of a TV set begets other purchases. Once you own and become the basic receiver, you are trained to desire everything it has to offer—as big a screen as possible, color as well as black-and-white, a stereo hook-up, remote control, all of the commercial, PBS and cable stations available, a VCR, and eventually 3-D, high definition and digital television. As in the automotive industry, obsolescence and rapid technological improvement are made to seem inevitable.

Once you possess a TV set, you have unlimited access to the images and sounds it receives. Yet the programming structure with its varied repetitions is designed to create a withholding or suspension that increases your viewing time by intensifying desire. You find yourself waiting for your favorite clip on MTV, waiting for a particular movie to appear on cable or commercial stations, waiting for the particular guest you want to see on the Johnny Carson show, waiting for the sports or weather or whatever news feature will reveal the information you seek, waiting for an instant replay of a dramatic moment in sports, waiting for the reruns of a show that you missed, waiting for the next episode in the soap or miniseries you're faithfully following, waiting for the cable station to reach your neighborhood, or even waiting for your favorite commercial ("Where's the beef?") to explicitly articulate the mechanism of withholding.

When the spectator is not watching television, then he or she, whether out in the world or at home, is still affected by the TV images already internalized. That's when the *fort/da* game really pays off for the sponsoring institution. In the public marketplace, the spectator becomes a consumer looking for the beef—following the cues of point-of-purchase advertising to find and buy the videos, records, T-shirts, soft drinks, and toys promoted on television. In private, the spectator becomes a daydreamer, driving on the freeway listening to songs on the radio or seeing billboards that trigger associations with TV images already programmed into the brain; or by night, a dreamer, reprocessing those TV images into visions of the future. In order to understand

the impact that television can have on dreams, it's necessary to know more about the process of dreaming.

Speculations on the Dream Connection

The most compelling dream models that have emerged from recent neurophysiological and psychological studies suggest that dreams are an evolutionary medium that mediates between biological programming and cultural imprinting. More specifically, the Hobson-McCarley Activation-Synthesis model assumes that the rapid firing of giant cells in the primitive brainstem activates the dream by generating signals within the brain; the rhythm, frequency and duration of the dream are biologically determined.[8] The forebrain then selects images from the memory to "fit" the internally generated random signals; this synthetic process (about which little is known) is probably a function of the right-brain hemisphere (that takes a synthetic or gestalt approach rather than an analytic one to problem solving) and also the site for the psychological level of the dream.[9] The images selected from the memory and recombined in new ways carry the cultural imprinting.

This model has significant implications for the study of television and movies since these two mass media play a key role in the imprinting process, supplementing the dreamer's ordinary experience with thousands of prefabricated moving visual images that are directly absorbed into the cultural dreampool and influencing both the form and content of dream texts. Since these two media have appeared fairly recently in the history of western civilization and since certain nations with advanced technology and imperialist tendencies (most predominantly the USA) have specialized in producing texts that could be exported (even via satellite) to other parts of the world, movies and television have the potential to render dreams more similar all over the planet, a tendency that could have far-reaching political and evolutionary implications. (This issue is brilliantly explored on film by Nicholas Roeg in *The Man Who Fell to Earth* and in literature by Manuel Puig in *Betrayed by Rita Hayworth* and *Kiss of Spider Woman,* which is now being made into a movie.)

The strong impact of the media on dreams is based partly on the phenomenological similarities between dreaming and the viewing of the movies and television: the visual primacy of these experiences; their spatial and temporal discontinuity; the double identity of the spectator as passive voyeur and active participant; the physical comfort and partial immobility of the spectator; the abrupt shift to a different physical and psychic state and to the forgetting of most of the images when the lights go on, the tube goes off, or one awakens from the dream; the two-way process of adaptation, involving the use of dreams as a creative source for artists generating movies and videos and the incorporation of media images into the dreams of viewers; the regressive nature of these fictions which arouse pleasure by fulfilling repressed infantile wishes and needs; the guilty feelings evoked by excessive indulgence in these idle pastimes that substitute for constructive work; and the combination of private and communal roles in these experiences which pass for personal pleasures while serving deeper cultural, ideological or evolutionary goals.

While considerable work has been done on dream and film,[10] very little has been written on dream and television.[11] Yet this relationship is particularly important since dreamers start watching the tube from infancy and since television contributes more images to the cultural dreampool than any other medium. While I am in no way denying the important and unique connections between film and dream, I am interested here in exploring the unique similarities between dream and television.

What is particularly fascinating to me and central to my argument is that the main similarities between dream and television which are *not* shared by film are precisely the same characteristics that are exaggerated on MTV: unlimited access, structural discontinuity, decentering, structural reliance on memory retrieval, live transmission and the omnipresence of the spectator. Most of these characteristics have been widely written about by television historians and theorists; what I am interested in briefly suggesting here is their connection with MTV and dreams.

Unlimited Access

While the frequency and length of dreams are biologically determined (a REM period occurs around every 90 minutes and lasts

about 20 minutes, making the daily average dreamtime approximately 90 minutes), one can increase the amount of time spent dreaming on any given night by extending the hours of sleep or by taking catnaps throughout the day. The amount of time that can be spent daydreaming is, of course, unlimited.

A similar unlimited access is offered, not by cinema, but by "The tube of plenty," forcing the individual spectator to monitor his or her own time devoted to TV viewing. This temptation is dramatized by the 24-hour availability of rock videos on MTV—a feature that is prominently emphasized in all of the promotional spots for the station.

Structural Discontinuity

All TV viewing is marked by a structural discontinuity caused by frequent interruptions by commercials, station breaks and channel-switching. These frequent ruptures are exaggerated on MTV where there is no long program to interrupt, merely a chain of brief segments, all featuring spatial and temporal discontinuity.

Such structural discontinuity evokes a comparison with dreams, which are similarly marked by abrupt scene shifts which Allan Hobson has linked to the bursts of rapid eye movements (REM's) and firings of brain cells that trigger and accompany dreams.

> The rapid eye movements themselves appeared to be generated by the activity of a group of giant cells in the pontine brain stem whose bursting discharge preceded the eye movements during REM sleep. Thus the possibility was raised that specific visual information might actually be generated within the brain. The giant cells not only may drive the eye movements but also may send information into the visual relay nucleus and cortex about the direction and speed of the eye movements. Since this information is highly non-ordered with respect to the external visual world, *scene shifts and dramatic changes in visual dream content might possibly be a function of the generating system* [ital. mine] rather than a censor's attempt to disguise the ideational meaning of 'dream thoughts.'[12]

Both Hobson and Vlada Petrić have compared this structural discontinuity of dreams to cinema: Hobson has charted structural analogies between film devices and dream processes,[13] and Petrić has prescribed the four "most effective cinematic techniques which can enhance the oneiric impact of a film and stimulate the neural activities similar to those occurring during dreaming": "camera movement through space (especially when combined with deep focus"; illogical and paradoxical combinations of objects, characters and settings (while . . . preserving the vivid representation of the photographed world"; "dynamic montage (with concentration on the close-up and subliminal condensation of brief shots"; and "dissolution of spatial and temporal continuity (especially by using 'jump-cuts')."[14] While these techniques can be used to single out certain film styles and auteurs for high praise, they are commonplace in music videos.

Decentering

The structural discontinuity of television creates a constant flow or decentered supertext. Viewers tend to watch television rather than specific programs. This decentering process is carried to an extreme on MTV, where the short commercial is the featured attraction. Though commercially determined, the sequencing of clips has a quality of randomness for the viewer; one sees whatever videos happen to appear on screen while one is watching.

One finds a similar decentering in dreaming, where all dreams on a single night tend to share the same themes, where the dreamer usually remembers specific images or scenes but no clear boundaries around individual dream texts, and where one never knows in advance which dreams or images will appear on the mindscreen. Individual texts of dream and television rarely receive the same degree of artistic status that is ordinarily attributed to film texts—a difference that is more a matter of structural presentation than of artistic merit.

One does not normally find decentering in film. It must be designed as a conscious artistic strategy as in the films of Godard, Makavejev and Alea, usually with the conscious political goal of breaking Hollywood's codes of representation to reveal and oppose the bourgeois ideology they carry. While bourgeois consumerism is also exposed in the decentering processes of television, it is not undermined, but, on the contrary, promoted.

Structural Reliance on Memory Retrieval

The Hobson-McCarley activation-synthesis model posits that while dreaming, the forebrain selects sense images from memory to fit signals about eye movement that are inter-

nally generated by the dreamer's own brain and attempts unsuccessfully to render "the series of shots as a continuous narrative."[15] In elaborating on this model, Hobson frequently uses an analogy with film which sometimes becomes strained:

> During waking, the brain is 'taking pictures': images are accepted at a rate of about 10-20 per second. Owing to the operation of the afferent image-efferent signal comparator process and visual blanking, we perceive the visual world as continuous and the visual field remains constant in space. *Our brains shoot, develop, and edit instantaneously* [ital. mine]. The individual images or the fused image (we know not which) are stored in memory (by unknown mechanisms). They can be called up with difficulty and are weakly perceptible in waking fantasy, but are more easily accessible and vividly perceptible in dreams.[16]

In cinema it is impossible "to shoot, develop, and edit instantaneously," but these mental processes are ordinary practice in live video, which suggests that television might provide a better model than cinema for how the human brain processes images during waking hours.

Earlier I argued that one of the most powerful aspects of music video is its programming of viewers to retrieve specific visual images from memory every time they hear a particular song. Although the triggering sounds of the song usually come from external sources like radio or television (unlike the internally generated signals in dreams), the music video fan has been taught to identify with the external receiving apparatus, so some degree of internalization occurs. This process of retrieving the prefabricated video images from memory may help train viewers to retrieve them more readily during REM sleep. In other words, the structural reliance on memory retrieval shared by MTV and dreams may give these music video images a privileged position within the cultural dreampool. The fact that so many rock video artists cultivate the explicit connection with dreams in their song titles and lyrics, in the visual style and images of their video clips, in their narrative themes and situations, and even in the names of some of the groups (like R.E.M., or the Revolving Paint Dream) suggests that they are seeking this position of power.

Live Transmission and the Omnipresent Spectator

As the most solipsistic of forms, the dream takes place inside the spectator, who is by necessity omnipresent. In the live transmission of dreams, the protean dreamer functions, not only as spectator, but also as writer, director, star, supporting players, location, and technical apparatus.

We have already seen how the television viewer is made to feel omnipresent, particularly through conventions associated with live transmission. It is this very quality that fosters the kind of delusional experiences depicted in Martin Scorsese's film *King of Comedy*[17] and in Hubert Selby's novel *Requiem for a Dream* in which isolated viewers lose the boundaries between television images and their private fantasy projections. In a sense these characters cannibalize the world of television, transforming it into a solipsistic medium like dream.

Unlike movies and dreams which suspend one's normal waking experience by functioning as an alternate reality, television and radio, because they are not totally absorbing, only supplement one's ordinary life. TV viewers frequently do something else while watching. If that other activity happens to be daydreaming, a behavior stimulated by many programs and virtually all commercials, then it is easy for the two imaginary realms to be fused.

MTV tries to capture the best of both worlds. Like radio and ordinary television, it can provide a continuous sound track for partying, dancing, sex, or whatever you happen to be doing and brighten up a room with a flashy visual that can be glanced at whenever you get bored. Yet because of the visual intensity of most video clips, it also strives for the all-absorbing attention a spectator normally devotes to films and dreams. It's the omnipresent spectator, constantly addressed in the second person by the MTV VJ's, who decides which mode of viewing to adopt; but the very presence of both options makes it possible to watch the station for longer stretches at a time.

While exercising its powers of manipulation, MTV makes the spectator feel potent and decisive: he or she is the one who chooses which records, videos and products to buy; who picks which styles and behaviors to imitate; who hums the tunes; who memorizes the visuals; who decides when to look and when to listen; who switches the station on or off. Like all television, it trains the spectator to focus on one's personal powers of choice and reception while ignoring the remote sources

of transmission—the true Remote Control—whose ideological determinants and manipulative strategies remain mystified.

In this examination of MTV as a model for commercial television, I have focused on the medium's relationship both to ideology and to dream. The observations concerning ideology, for the most part, echo or lend support to arguments of others who have been writing on television. But the speculations on the connection with dreams open new paths that warrant further investigation. Perhaps most essential is the interaction between these two registers—the role of dream in internalizing and reprocessing the ideology transmitted through television, a process that is blatantly dramatized in music video on MTV. In the last sixty years we have witnessed how advertising has colonized the public airwaves, first on radio and then on television. Now, through the medium of music video, commercial interests may be extending their sway over the evolutionary medium of dreams.

NOTES

1. *Record* (July 1984), p. 41.

2. See, for example, "Rock Makers," *Video* (July 1984) by Noë Goldwasser, who writes: "The excitement in pop-music video is being generated by a handful of talented filmmakers working in the video-clip medium. People like Russell Mulcahy, Bob Giraldi, Tim Newman, and Tim Pope crank out clips by the hundreds and send them on their infectious way to MTV, *Night Tracks* and the like. This community of directors amounts to a video new wave which is forging the aesthetic basis of music video in much the same way as the French new wave in film—Godard, Resnais, Truffaut—changed our way of looking at movies 20 years ago. . . .

"No one better personifies the music video *auteur* than Tim Pope. . . . He could be called the Jean-Luc Godard of the video age because of his frenetic pace and constantly flowing fountainhead of new visual images. . . . The skinny 28-year old averages about two videos a week in his London studio, and is constantly turning down American groups who come over and throw money at him to make them stars on MTV Stateside." (pp. 81–82)

3. Such causes include the fact that television superseded the audio medium of radio, the neglect of sound and its potentialities both by film-makers and film theorists, and the dominance of vision over all other senses in dreams.

4. One of the few precursors of the new relationship between music and image is the "Memo from T" sequence performed by Mick Jagger in Cammell and Roeg's *Performance* (1970), a visionary rock film that was far ahead of its time.

5. Nick Browne, "The Political Economy of the Television (Super) Text," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, 9, 3 (Summer 1984).

6. Unlike credits that appear at the end of a film, these data do not inform the viewer whom to credit for the artistic achievement (for example, the name of the director never appears on the rock video clip); the information is provided solely to increase the likelihood of the sale.

7. Of course, there is also a place for the spectator in cinema, as current work on suture, spectators-in-the-text, and self-reflexiveness have shown; one can even find instances of direct address throughout the history of film. Yet these cinematic practices are not so direct as the on-screen presence of TV studio audiences nor as ubiquitous as the use of direct address on television.

8. J. A. Hobson and R. W. McCarley, "The brain as a dream state generator: An Activation-synthesis hypothesis of the dream process," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 134 (1977), 1335–1348. Hobson has also presented this model in relation to film studies in "Film and the Physiology of Dreaming Sleep: the Brain as Camera-Projector," *Dreamworks*, I, 1 (Spring 1980), 9–25; and in his reply to Raymond Durgnat's "The Hunting of the Dream Snark"), *Dreamworks*, II, 1 (Fall 1981), 83–86; and in "Dream Image and Substrate: Bergman's Films and the Psychology of Sleep," in *Film and Dreams: An Approach to Bergman*, ed. by Vlada Petrić (South Salem, N.Y.: Redgrave Publishing Co., 1981), 75–95.

9. An excellent survey of the issue of involvement of the right brain hemisphere is provided by Bruce Kawin in "Right-Hemisphere Processing in Dreams and Films," *Dreamworks*, II, 1 (Fall 1981), 13–17.

10. In the psychoanalytic context, the relationship between film and dream has received considerable attention in the line of discourse derived from Lacan and Metz, most prominently in *The Imaginary Signifier*. Still within the psychoanalytic context, but deviating from Metz on important issues are Robert Eberwein's *Film and the Dream Screen* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1984) and Gay Lynn Studlar's *Visual Pleasure and the Masochistic Aesthetic: The Von Sternberg/Dietrich Paramount Cycle*, Unpub. dissertation, USC, 1984 (a selection from which will appear in Volume II of *Movies and Methods*, ed. by Bill Nichols, U. of Calif. Press). Vlada Petrić's *Film and Dreams: An Approach to Bergman* is a collection of essays, some of which (including Petrić's work and mine) draw on the neurobiological models. This perspective is also represented in several essays (including ones by Petrić, Hobson, Durgnat, Kawin and me) appearing in *Dreamworks*, an interdisciplinary quarterly on the relation between dream and the arts.

11. The two key works on this topic are Peter H. Wood's "Television as Dream" in *Television: The Critical View*, ed. by Horace Newcomb (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 517–535, and "Reality and Television: an Interview with Dr. Edmund Carpenter," *Television Quarterly*, X, 1 (Fall 1972), 42–46. Works that have attempted a three-way comparison usually focus on cinema at the expense of television, arguing that the comparison between film and dream is more interesting (see Raymond Durgnat, "The Hunting of the Dream-Snark," *Dreamworks*, II, 1, Fall 1981, 76–82) or more fruitful in generating formal similarities (see Vlada Petrić's "A Theoretical-Historical Survey: Film and Dreams," in *Film and Dreams*, pp. 1–48.)

12. Hobson, "Film and the Physiology of Dreaming Sleep," p. 14.

13. Ibid., 23.

14. Petrić, "A Theoretical-Historical Survey," p. 23.

15. Hobson, ibid., p. 24.

16. Ibid., 23–24.

17. For an excellent analysis of what this film reveals about television, see Beverle Houston's "*King of Comedy:* A Crisis of Substitution," *Framework*, 24 (Spring 1984), 74–92.

BACK ISSUES FILM MAGAZINES

The former publisher of Film Comment is selling his vast personal collection of film magazines, priced way below retail. Long SASE brings giant list of titles from the 50s till now.

Austin Lamont
279 Franklin Street
Newton MA 02158

JAMES ROY MacBEAN

Filming the Inside of His Own Head: Godard's Cerebral Passion

The phrase isn't my own; at least I don't think it is, though I don't know where I might have encountered it. But "filming the inside of his own head" seems to me utterly appropriate as a description of Godard's *Passion.* Godard's point of departure in *Passion* seems to have been images he was carrying around in his head; and he asked himself the question, "Could a film be made starting not from a script or even a 'story' but from *images*?" Significantly, the images Godard had in mind were not 'new' or imagined ones he wished to create (or to 'surprise' and 'capture' from the real world), but rather images which haunted him from the tradition of European oil painting, from Rembrandt, Goya, Delacroix, Ingres and El Greco.

In a sense, these images appear in *Passion* as "found objects," that is, we recognize at certain moments that the filmic images are derived from paintings. Thus, there are two distinct blocs of material in *Passion:* the behind-the-scenes lives of a director, actors and actresses, crew, etc. working on a film-in-progress-within-the-film; and some half-dozen *tableaux vivants* consisting of elaborately constructed movie sets with actors and actresses in period costumes adopting poses which mimic the compositions of famous paintings. These set-pieces constitute the raw material, or scenes-to-be-filmed, of both the film-within-the-film and the film itself.

Thus, images derived from paintings (images deformed slightly, due, no doubt, to their long sojourn in the head of Godard) not only become intrinsic to the film but also could be said to engender it. Or, perhaps we should say that the film becomes intrinsic to *them,* that Godard's *Passion* (as well as his passion) is about "getting into the image," about entering and exploring the space—above all, the emotional space—of the painterly image.

Years ago, back in 1966–67, when making the film *Made in USA,* Godard had experimented with this sense of getting inside the image. "What I wanted," he said at the time, speaking about both *Made in USA* and his short film *Anticipation,* "was to get *inside* the image . . . just the way certain paintings give one the feeling of being within them, *inside* them, or give the impression that they can never be understood as long as the viewer remains outside."[1]

Where Godard's *Made in USA* is concerned, it was indeed a very painterly film. In writing about it when it first came out, I included *Made in USA,* along with Antonioni's *Red Desert,* Agnès Varda's *Le Bonheur* and Bo Widerberg's *Elvira Madigan,* in what I termed the burgeoning genre of "painter's cinema" due to the way so much of the narrative in these films was "told" in color, composition and light.[2] But *Made in USA* also had a fairly strong storyline. It was even based on a novel, a David Goodis thriller of political intrigue and double-agent machinations. What was interesting about *Made in USA,* however, was the way the "text" and the "sub-text" flip-flopped, the way the "story" became inconsequential while the "sub-text" —the Americanization of Europe—asserted itself forcefully in the images.

In *Passion,* however, Godard goes further: there is no "story," or wasn't when he began making the film. But Godard has spoken of the resistance he encountered, from the actors and crew on *Passion,* in trying to create a film that would organize itself around images rather than around a script.

> At certain moments in making a film it's very painful, but there is at least a scenario. On this film,

> what was difficult was that, as is my habit, I didn't have a scenario, but the actors and crew all know me as Mister-No-Scenario, which boils down to the same thing: they say, "We arrive on the set, we wait, Jean-Luc will eventually tell us what to do." So here, I didn't say anything to them; they just stayed there on the set.
>
> But no sooner do I arrive than they ask: "What are we to do?" "What do you want to do?" This quickly became a kind of provocation.[3]

So difficult, and alien, did it seem, apparently, to attempt to work from the images towards the words (if not of a script at least of improvised dialogue) that Godard eventually came to think of his endeavor as a transgression—a "sin"—against some unwritten law of the cinema, something almost grounded in scripture, like "in the beginning was the Word," or "thou shalt not make graven images."

> This is not at all a religious film, but ultimately I think it attains the status of sin. I end up saying to myself, regarding my story of the image, that one never gets to see it as primary, it's always relegated to secondary status. The text, which one sees first . . . as is the case where the unions and the workers are concerned, it's always either the bosses or the unions who speak for the workers, one never sees the workers . . . the text will always come before the image.[4]

In making *Passion,* Godard fought against this so-called "law"; but, in the process, apparently, he ended up fighting with quite a few of the people he wanted to work with him on the film. Even before production started, Godard was turned down, in succession, by four different directors of photoggraphy with whom he wanted to work: Vittorio Storaro, Ricardo Aranovich, Henry Lecar, and Henri Alekan. Finally, he turned to his veteran colleague, Raoul Coutard, whom Godard praises as "not, like the others, a colonel of photography but rather a peasant of photography—a humble and very practical man."[5]

With Coutard as director of photography, Godard was finally able to get the production under way, and, more importantly, to get the kind of stunning visual imagery he wanted for this film about images. However, Godard continued to have difficulties with other members of the production team: two directors of production and a decorator quit on him during the shooting. And Godard seems to have alienated just about everyone by turning the tables on them over the issue of how to proceed without a script or even a rough scenario. To demonstrate the difficulty of his predicament, and, also, he claims, to seek their collective help, Godard, in effect, said to everyone: "Look, you want me to put something in writing; what if I in turn ask you to put in writing what *you* can do, what you *want* to do on this particular film?" Of course, nobody took Godard up on this—a fact which rankles him. "I always thought the cinema was an important means of communication," says Godard, playing the innocent, "but the people who work with this

Michel Piccoli and Hanna Schygulla in Godard's PASSION

Jerzy Radziwilowicz directs the film within Godard's PASSION

means don't want to use it."[6]

But how does the finished film of Godard's *Passion* communicate with *us*? Godard may have started with certain paintings in mind and attempted to build the film from these images. A film, however, unfolds in time; and Godard's *Passion* doesn't begin, chronologically, with those paintings. We are not given at the outset the paintings (or rather their cinematic reconstitutions) as raw material from which *we* are asked, or allowed, to build something. Instead, we come upon these images, from time to time (and never images that merely duplicate, in the frame of the movie screen, the precise compositions of the paintings, but always "more" or "less" . . . and "other" . . . than the painted images); and they are imbedded, albeit uneasily, loosely, within a narrative, a "story," or sorts, the very existence of which the images not only predate but also supposedly engender.

The process by which these images from paintings engendered this "story" is suggested, obliquely, by the fact that the "story" of *Passion* is nothing other than the story of the making of a film; and this film-within-the-film is also called *Passion*. So, in a sense, we are retracing the steps of Godard's "Passion," following him on this *via dolorosa* that is the martyrdom of the film-maker, or at least of this singularly self-martyred film-maker.

What we get, then, are bits and pieces, fragments of images, fragments of sounds, stuck together loosely, roughly, *as if provisionally,* as if, at some later date, these individual pieces might be pulled apart, separated out, to be reutilized in some other combination, in some other context. Moreover, the viewer-listener of Godard's *Passion* often has the impression that the very bits and pieces we are seeing and hearing in this film have themselves been ripped out of other Godard films, to be thrown, pell-mell, perhaps at random, into *Passion*. There is the fascination with cars and car accidents from *Weekend;* the ubiquitous pin-ball games from *Vivre sa Vie;* the Lorca quotation from *Pierrot le fou;* and the frequent eruption of push-and-shove fights from *Sauve qui peut* (most of which have a farcical knockabout quality reminiscent of Claude Brasseur's fight with Ernest Metzger's nephew in *Bande à part*). In *Passion* there is an Italian film producer who evokes both Jack Palance from *Le Mépris* and the boss of the salami factory from *Tout va bien*. There is the strangely disquieting "doubling" effect of the pairing film-video from *Numéro deux;* and from that same film there

MARSHA KINDER

Music Video and the Spectator:

TELEVISION, IDEOLOGY AND DREAM

Music video is a protean form that has proven its magnetic power on MTV, a national 24-hour cable station devoted entirely to this programming on a continuous basis. It is now popping up on other cable stations, frequently appearing between movies the way cartoons and newsreels used to punctuate the spaces between features at movie theaters. It is also breaking into commercial television, where as many as 300 programs across the nation are devoted to music videos during carefully chosen hours.

Music video has even found its way into movies, providing the central creative energy for a subgenre launched by *Flashdance*—films that weave loose narratives around hot dance sequences created by montage and that generate fast-selling videos. The connection with film also proved lucrative in Michael Jackson's *Thriller,* the 14-minute video directed by feature film-maker John Landis (*Animal House, American Werewolf in London, Twilight Zone*). According to *Newsweek* (August 6, 1984), the documentary film *Making Michael Jackson's Thriller,* though it's only a spin-off, has already sold 450,000 cassettes, making it the second-best-selling video in history. *Thriller*'s stunning commercial success, extended length and conscious positioning within the horror film genre helped strengthen the link between music video and mainstream film-making. Respected auteurs like Nicholas Roeg, Bob Rafelson, Tobe Hooper and Andy Warhol have entered the field, a trend that challenges the old unidirectional model which assumed *all* directors of commercials and television were fighting their way up from the boob tube to enter the celestial art of Cinema. Now, according to Warhol, "Everyone wants to make music videos!"[1]

What is the significance of this quicksilver phenomenon? Depending on which mass media reports you read, music video is a new means of extending the unique aesthetic possibilities of the avant-garde formerly restricted to independent film-making and video art, a new combination of music and images that redefines audiovisual relations in the mass media, a new means of marketing records and tapes that is saving the pop music industry, or a new source of violent sexist sadomasochistic images infecting the minds of our children.

While all of these perspectives may have validity, the underlying phenomenon that makes them all possible has been ignored: music video seems to be forging new codes of spectator relations, or more accurately, it is making the codes that were already operative in television more transparent. MTV provides a model that highlights through exaggeration the unique aspects of television, particularly those that distinguish the medium from cinema, and that have highly significant implications on two registers—television's relation to ideology and its relation to dream.

In the discussion of music video that follows, there will be no attempt to establish a canon or to create a pantheon of auteurs—projects that are already well under way.[2] I will not be examining the best works that the genre has produced, many of which have never been or are no longer being aired on MTV but are available in video stores and private collections. (Most songs have an even shorter life on MTV than they do on Top 40 radio stations.) Since I will be exploring MTV programming as a model of commercial television, I will limit my discussion to rock video, the station's main staple, though other forms of pop music such as jazz have also entered the field, and I will restrict my examples to those video clips being broadcast at the time I was writing this essay, choosing them almost at random to illustrate what is typical rather than what is most powerful aesthetically.

STILL COURTESY EPIC RECORDS/CBS

Presence/Absence of the Visual Image

One of the most compelling aspects of rock video is its power to evoke specific visual images in the mind of the spectator every time one hears the music with which they have been juxtaposed on television. The experience of having watched and listened to a particular video clip on television establishes these connections in the brain circuitry; by repeating the experience very frequently within a short period of time (a situation guaranteed by the repetitive structure of MTV), the spectator strengthens these associations in the brain. Thus later when the spectator hears the song on the radio or in a different context in which the visuals are absent, the presence of the music is likely to draw these images from memory, accompanied by the desire to see them again. This process follows the basic patterns of conditioning well established in the field of cognitive learning.

In rock video it is not merely a matter of whether we hear and see the performer (as we do in live performance at a concert or nightclub). In many rock video clips the visuals do not focus *primarily* on the performer in the act of performing; those that do, risk appearing regressive for they are reverting to conventions used in rock film documentaries from the sixties and seventies like *Monterey Pop* and *Woodstock*. In most rock videos what we do see is a chain of disparate images, which may involve the musical performers, but which stress discontinuities in space and time—a structure that résembles the form of dreams. Though the pulsing kinetic rhythms of the visual montage are invariably accentuated by the musical beat, the continuous flow of the music and lyrics also imposes a unifying identity (sometimes augmented by a narrative component in the lyrics and/or visuals) onto the discontinuous visual track, distinguishing it from the chains of similar images in the video clips that precede and follow this particular musical text.

This structure insures that the visuals will be the primary source of pleasure, for it is the lush visual track that will be withdrawn, withheld or suspended, when the spectator is no longer watching television but *only listening* to the song on the radio or stereo. The reverse situation—the presence of the visuals and the absence of the audio—is not built into the system; it can be achieved only through technical breakdown or through the spectator's

intervention (turning off the sound while watching the images). Pioneer plays with this irony in one of its commercials for laser disc players by having blind singer Ray Charles deliver their slogan: "Video for those who really care about audio." This music video structure tends to subordinate the audio component of television by linking it with radio. Although some critics have argued that this linkage enables TV sound to act as a cue that draws the spectator's attention to certain video images, radio still remains the superseded medium which lacks the perceptual richness that television shares with cinema. In all television the visual component is privileged over the audio—a condition which is over-determined by historical, cultural and psychological factors[3] and which is revealed in the very term used for TV spectators, *viewers*.

The complex structure of the visual chain of images in most rock videos makes the reliance on memory and the value of repeated viewings all the more essential. If a person hears the song first before seeing the video clip that combines sound and image, the complexity of the visual form makes it virtually impossible for this listener to predict how the video would look. The situation is very different from the way it was in the sixties or seventies when a rock fan might buy a new album or audio tape by the Stones and then while listening, sit back and imagine how Jagger might look while performing this particular number.[4] It probably would have been even more likely for such a listener to place her- or himself in an imaginary setting and fantasize erotic behavior evoked by the lyrics, or to use the music as a sound track for actual physical acts (sex, dancing, exercise, or what you will). In such instances, the very absence of the live performers (represented only by still images on album covers, which frequently featured suggestive scenes or fetishes instead of the performers) invited the listener to create a waking fantasy. In those days the rock fan was expected to generate his or her own images; the visual component of the fantasies elicited by pop music were not totally prefabricated.

I don't mean to imply that music video is incapable of stimulating viewers to dream up their own chains of images, perhaps in a different style and with new combinations. Yet the remembering of images one has already seen seems an essential first step—a process I have seen prepubescent and teenage viewers transform into a game of Who can remember the most details? This goal of memory retrieval or replication is fostered by some of the performers. When recently interviewed by a video jockey on MTV, Roger Waters assured his fans that those coming to his latest live concert would not be disappointed when they *heard* "5:05 AM, The Pros and Cons of Hitchhiking," for they would be *seeing* visual effects that equalled those they had seen in the video clip. Most concert promotions currently being aired on MTV stress the extravagance of the visual spectacle as much as the music—spectacle designed to match what is being seen on television.

Music video challenges the listener to play a hip *fort/da* game of Can you recall the absent visuals? Can you return to being a viewer and experiencing the original plenitude of sight and sound? This game is designed to drive all players back to the TV set to compulsively consume those prefabricated fantasy images on MTV (or wherever they can be found), knowing that all popular favorites will be repeated but rarely being able to predict more than a half hour in advance the precise time that any particular clip will be aired. (Didn't the followers of Pavlov and Skinner teach us that inconsistent patterns of reinforcement would intensify and prolong the compulsive repetition of the desired behavior?)

Performance, Narrative and Dreamlike Visuals

Thus far I have been talking as if all music videos had equal visual complexity and were all characterized by one style, neither of which is the case. Yet virtually all rock videos *are* comprised of three distinct components, which are combined with different emphases to create considerable variety within the form. First, the performance of the singer or group identifies the form with the musical genre and with the historic pop tradition of recording live performances on tape or film. Second, a simple or complex narrative carried by the lyrics and / or visual images, and sometimes featuring a guest star, turns the video into a minifilm with specific generic identification

(e.g., horror, gangster film, screwball comedy, western, *noir,* melodrama, women's picture), making the visuals easier to remember and providing the spectator with a prefabricated daydream with varying degrees of space left for personal elaborations. Third, a series of incongruous visual images stressing spatial and temporal dislocations makes rock video closely resemble dreams—the primary medium that weaves loose narratives out of chains of incoherent images and that, despite its selective audio component, is predominantly a visual experience. Both performance and narrative work toward coherence, distinguishing the text from other rock video clips; in contrast, the dreamlike visuals work toward decentering and dissolution, revealing the deep structure of all television as an endless chain of images whose configuration into any structural unity or text is only a temporary, illusory byproduct of secondary revision.

The musical performance always dominates the audio, but varies in the degree to which it controls or is even present in the visuals. The narrative element is variable both on the audio and visual registers, sometimes dominating one or both, other times virtually absent except for the tendency of the human brain to read a story into any series of consecutive images, particularly when accompanied by words. The chain of incongruous images is restricted primarily to the visuals, varying in the quantity and pacing of the spatial and temporal dislocations and in the degree to which special effects are employed, but at least minimally present in the form of rapid montage which is featured in virtually all rock videos and also characteristic of commercials. While many commentators have called these dreamlike visuals *surreal,* it is important to distinguish them from the historical surrealism represented in film by Buñuel, a modernist movement which used dream rhetoric as a radical strategy to undermine the power of bourgeois ideology, particularly as it was manifest in the fine arts. In contrast, this postmodernist pop surrealism uses dream images to cultivate a narcissism that promotes our submission to bourgeois consumerism.

Music video has adopted quite consciously the visual conventions of the TV commercial, which has provided many talented directors (like Tim Newman and Bob Giraldi) for the new form. When viewing MTV, it is difficult to distinguish the video clips from the commercials because of close similarities in visual style, background music and short format. The same is true for the MTV news, which usually features three short items promoting commercial ventures, and for the station ID's, which sometimes include brief excerpts from clips of the most famous video stars—all presented in fast montage. These conventions from the commercial have been adopted because of their ability to capture and hold the spectator's attention, which is fundamental to their selling power. Research has shown that this kind of fast-paced visual style holds the attention even of the pre-school viewer, which is one of the reasons why it has been incorporated into kiddie shows like "Sesame Street" and why rock video has such an hypnotic effect on young children. The fast pace of MTV's programming might also be connected with the rise of cocaine as the dominant drug in pop culture in place of acid and grass. In Michael Jackson's Pepsi generation full of Pepper-uppers, Coke is it.

Like all television, the primary function of MTV's rock video is to sell products. While this goal is explicit in the TV commercial and fairly visible on MTV, it is disguised in most conventional programming on commercial television. Nick Browne has argued that while the television program is presented as the primary text and the commercials that temporarily interrupt it as secondary, the opposite is true, for the main function of the program is to provide a suitable environment for the commercial message. The actual television text is "a 'supertext' that consists of the particular program and all the introductory and interstitial materials—chiefly announcements and ads . . ." and "advertising . . . the central mediating discursive institution."[5] MTV exposes the "supertext" by erasing the illusory boundaries within its continuous flow of uniform programming and reveals the central mediating position of advertising by adopting its formal conventions as the dominant stylistic. In fact, *everything* on MTV is a commercial—advertising spots, news, station ID's, interviews, and especially music video clips.

Whereas other TV stations usually have to pay for the programs which the commercials

SAMPLE PROGRAMMING ON MTV

Monitored in Los Angeles

Sunday, July 15, 1984, 12 noon–1 pm

* = music videos

12:00 MTV station ID, leading into voice-over of VJ Mark Goodman announcing what clips and news items will be featured in the next half hour.

*Scorpions: "Still Loving You." Performance ruptured by fragmented visuals and shifts of scene.

12:05 *Bette Midler: "Beast of Burden." Screwball comedy narrative co-starring Mick Jagger, incorporating live performance by Midler, which Jagger eventually joins.

12:10 MTV promotion for stereo hook-up.

Commercial for Thunderbird cars, with fast montage.

Commercial for Little Steven album, including shots of live performance and concert schedule (usually included as news items).

Commercial for Reese's Pieces candy, featuring comic narrative with E. T. lookalike.

*Don Hartman (performance by the Sorels): "I Can Dream About You." Stage performance by black male singers, the Sorels, is framed by and intercut with romantic narrative about a white couple.

12:15 *The Alan Parsons Project: "Prime Time." Nightmare horror narrative featuring mannequins, some of whom come alive through the magic of special effects. We never see the singer or musicians performing.

12:20 VJ Mark Goodman on screen, comments on clips just aired and then presents the news, including 3 items all promoting commercial ventures:

Plasmatics singer Wendy O has done her first solo album; VJ presents a brief interview shown on a TV monitor.

Grace Jones, who made her screen debut in the new Conan film now playing in theaters, will have a new role in the next James Bond movie.

Judas Priest concert dates.

Commercial for the new Carpenters Album. The surviving brother talks about his dead sister Karen, who appears in brief excerpts singing their greatest hits.

12:25 *Stray Cats: "Stray Cats Strut." Comic narrative featuring the group performing in an alley, drawing female reactions from a real live puss, two groupies, and an old bitchy neighbor who throws things at them and then switches channels on her TV set but keeps getting their performance or an animated cartoon featuring other stray cats.

*Elton John: "Sad Songs (Say So Much)." Narrative involving another street performance, but featuring a catalogue of listeners in a variety of contexts hearing those sad songs on radio, TV, stereo, etc., matched by multiple images of Elton performing in a variety of hats and styles.

12:30 MTV station ID

*Ratt: "Round and Round." Narrative that parodies the horror film, featuring an elegant formal dinner where two of the guests are played by Milton Berle. The dinner is disrupted by rock performers in the attic who transform one beautiful guest and the butler, not into vampires or werewolves, but punk groupies.

12:35 *Ultravox: "Vienna." Surreal visual images disguise narrative intrigue, as the lyrics keep telling us "this means nothing to me."

12:40 MTV promotion for appearance of Christine McVie.

Commercial for Mountain Dew soft drinks, wtih fast montage.

Commercial for Novabeam television, a large screen. "Once you see it, you'll never be able to watch a small screen again."

Commercial for Soft 'n Dri deodorant, featuring a narrative about a young black female newscaster making her TV debut.

MTV station ID

12:45 *Police: "Wrapped Around Your Finger." Performance disrupted by dreamlike visuals involving hundreds of long candles, constant camera movement with deep focus, cross dissolves, dynamic montage, and a flicker effect.

*Rick Springfield: "Don't Walk Away." Romantic narrative with dreamlike visuals that follow the singer to his apartment, where paintings provide settings for a series of inset narratives that tell the same story of a sad parting in a variety of scenes associated with different genres.

12:50 VJ Mark Goodman on screen to promote clips by Sam Hagar and Huey Lewis which will debut on MTV.

Commercial for Chrysler Laser XE—with fast montage.

Commercial for Fabergé body spray—with fast montage.

Commercial for "Electric Dreams," a new movie directed by the man who directed

Michael Jackson's "Billy Jean" video (in some of the other commercials for this same movie we are told that it features music by the Culture Club and other MTV video stars).

Commercial for Scope mouthwash, with series of brief narratives.

MTV station ID—featuring brief excerpts from clips of some of the most famous video rock stars like Michael Jackson, Boy George, Billy Idol, etc.

12:55 *Van Halen: "Panama." Performance ruptured by fragmented visuals and brief scenes featuring bizarre or outrageous images, but which still tend to illustrate the lyrics.

1:00 MTV station ID, with voice over of VJ Mark Goodman announcing the clips that will be aired during the next half hour.

interrupt, MTV has no such overhead. No wonder their station ID's are so varied and spectacular; they are practically the only "programs" that MTV produces. This situation highlights the main business of every TV station—not to generate programs, but to deliver viewers (at the lowest cost per thousand) to advertisers who pay both for the commercials and for the time it takes to air them. The music industry is happy to provide the video clips as free programming for MTV because the air time for these thinly disguised commercials is also free. In this sweet business arrangement, as long as the viewers keep watching and buying, both station and advertiser not only profit, but get something for nothing.

All three components of rock video serve consumerist goals. The performance motivates the spectator specifically to buy a particular album on which the featured song is recorded. The name of the group, song, album, and record company appear at the beginning and end of every clip every time it is aired, implying that the spectator should be eager to note this information in order to facilitate the anticipated purchase.[6] More generally, the performance is also selling the performers, whose future commercial ventures (concerts, nightclub dates, and future recordings) the spectator will be expected to support. Both the narrative and dreamlike visuals motivate the spectator specifically to buy, not just the album, but the video itself. If the viewer has no playback equipment, then he or she is motivated to purchase a VCR in order to make the purchase or rental of the video more feasible. The narrative and the visuals also strengthen the viewer's motivation to consume all products affiliated with the performers (other albums, tickets for live performances, T-shirts and toys that display their name or image, soft drinks or other products that carry their endorsement). It is the narrative and dreamlike visuals, with their direct connection to private fantasy, that best define the unique features of rock video, distinguishing it from previous means of marketing pop music and supporting the infrastructure that insures the commercial success of the form.

At this point, it might be useful to examine some specific rock video clips to show the interaction among the three components.

Videos Dominated by Performance

Performance dominates both the sound and image of many video clips, but usually with the intervention of a subordinate narrative or a visual fragmentation that disrupts the temporal and/or spatial unity. In those instances where such disruption is absent or minimal, as in the Pretenders' "It's a Thin Line between Love and Hate," the video seems oldfashioned and tedious. This judgment is supported by the fact that some vintage songs have been released with historic footage of a live concert, granting a place on MTV to dead veterans like Jim Morrison. In such cases, the excitement is generated by the rarity of seeing the "living" record of a great performer who was ahead of his time but will be giving no more live concerts. But for live performers who want to be on the cutting edge, something else is needed.

In White Snake's "Slow 'n Easy," the sensuous, extravagant performance of the singers is periodically interrupted by inserts of a two-lane blacktop and by glimpses of a sexy blonde wearing pearls tightened around her throat. Presumably the "superstitious woman" mentioned in the lyrics, the blonde appears in scenes that take place off stage—as if she is the woman the singer has in mind while performing this song. Yet in some shots she is positioned as a spectator, as if the masochism of her response matches or is evoked by the aggression in the performance. We see a close-up of her throat that reveals the bruises made by the pearls, and a long shot of her sit-

ting in her flashy car deciding whether to pick up the male singer (who stands next to a smashed vehicle on a deserted highway) and then speeding away leaving him stranded in the middle of the road. These suggestive shots and lyrics encourage the spectator to construct a sadomasochistic narrative in which either the man or the woman is bound to be the object of desire and revenge. The crosscutting between the narrative and the performance gradually accelerates in pace, as do the tempo of the music and the cutting rhythm with which the performance is fragmented into close-ups of fetishistic details, an acceleration that renders the song title ironic. Although this video clip is dominated by performance, the fast pace of the montage makes it anything but easy to recall the chain of visual images that accompany the music.

In many videos the performance itself serves as the main narrative event, whose spatial unity is broken by the disjunctive visuals—either through special effects as in "Mental Hopscotch" by the Missing Persons or by shifts in setting as in Nena's "99 Luftballoons." The lyrics in such video clips frequently comment reflexively on the cognitive process that the visual style demands of the spectator (mental hopscotch) or on the direct connection with dreams ("99 dreams I have had, everyone a red balloon"). In "The Heart of Rock 'n Roll" the performance of Huey Lewis and the News is fragmented spatially, as the settings for the singing shift from New York to LA, and to other stops on the tour, and from concert halls, to nightclubs, to the streets; and also temporally, as their performance is situated within the history of rock 'n roll. The inserts of Elvis Presley and other historical precursors that are intercut with present footage of Lewis and the News, are echoed in the contrasting dance styles of different eras as well as in the two historical TV formats of color and black-and-white, between which the visuals constantly alternate. In this video, the self-reflexive visuals narrativize the performance by positioning within it the history of pop music and of television.

Videos Dominated by Narrative

At its most extreme, narrative can dominate both words and images—making the latter illustrate the former and moving the song toward ballad and the visuals toward mini-film, as in the case of Tony Carey's "A Fine, Fine Day." Opening with gritty black-and-white images before shifting to color and relying heavily on flashbacks, this mini-gangster film is presented with low mimetic realism, except for the singing of the narrator (who tells the story of his father released from prison and rubbed out by gangsters all on one fine day) and by the incongruity, at a key dramatic moment, of having the Mafia boss mouth Carey's words—an effect which is comically deflating, to say the least.

Far more typical is the use of a thin narrative line, witty in tone, which provides the basic situation for an erotic fantasy on which the spectator can elaborate according to his/her sexual tastes. The holes in the plot are usually filled by the lush visuals—the exotic settings, costumes, hair styles and make-up as well as the fast cutting and effects. The narrative line makes these visuals and their sequential arrangement easier to remember, for the order appears to make sense rather than being random. Instead of performing on stage, the singer plays a dramatic role within the story, which includes recitativo or a singing narration.

As a case in point, Van Stephenson presents an explicit masochistic fantasy which transforms a hair stylist into a "Modern Day Delilah." In a witty development of the conceit, the hair-styling equipment becomes elaborate sexual paraphernalia, the beautician herself a feline predator with leonine tresses, and Stephenson the willing Samson. Despite the extravagance of the visuals, they are still limited to illustrating the lyrics. Though it is possible to identify either with Samson or Delilah in this fantasy, it is clearly the male masochist who controls the clip. While watching this video, the spectator is more likely to savor the wit at an emotional distance, storing the images for reprocessing in private fantasies to come.

Eddy Grant's "Romancing the Stone" pits sound against image to design a narrative (the raw material for a romantic daydream) that can be read from multiple points of view. While Grant, a black reggae singer, dominates the sound with his performance, the visuals focus on a white female magazine photographer working on chic shots so that she can afford to fly back to her romance-starved, machete

wielding, hip-swinging third world lover in vacation land. Each is a subject of the other's art and fantasies: from his humble shack, he sings to her about how much he misses her; in her urban studio his photograph is displayed like a trophy. He sends her a post card that carries, not only the refrain from his lyrics, but also his moving image carefully packaged and framed. Later it appears in her studio next to his photograph—a moving audiovisual reminder, like a video clip displayed on an Advent, of his talent and appeal and a strong incentive for her to buy a plane ticket as soon as possible (in fact, her paycheck is magically transformed into a ticket by means of a dissolve). Depending on whether one focuses on the music or the photography, the fantasy could be interpreted as a product either of the man or the woman, the black or the white, the colonized Third World which provides the raw talent and lush natural resources or the prosperous colonizer who develops and consumes them. Though at first we only hear him and see her, the visuals intercut between the white woman working in the city (coping with traffic and sexism) and the black man waiting in the tropics—a reversal of traditional sex roles, but a demystification of political-economic realities, particularly in the music industry (where black music is produced, packaged and sold by whites) and in the movies (where "Romancing the Stone" is the title song of a film that uses the third world as a background for romantic adventures of whites, a typical ploy of Hollywood thrillers). While the surface romance may evoke a daring fantasy of miscegenation and sexual reversals, the underlying politics tell the same old story of commercial exploitation. In this mini-romance, the contrapuntal use of sound and image reveals an ideological subtext; yet by allowing more possibilities for spectator identification, it enhances rather than subverts the marketing strategy of selling reggae to American consumers.

Videos Dominated by Dreamlike Visuals

Those rock videos that are dominated by dreamlike visuals seem to make the richest use of the medium—a judgment widely held by reviewers writing for pop magazines devoted to the art (*Record, Cream, Video, Optical Music,* etc.). Some video clips like Duran Duran's "Reflex," Peter Gabriel's "Shock the Monkey," and Depeche Mode's "Everything Counts" create effects that evoke works by some of the most advanced independent film-makers, such as the rich multilayered imagery of Pat O'Neill. Such connections could presumably cultivate a more receptive audience for independent films, but it's also possible for those avant-garde conventions (that extend backward to Surrealism and Dada) to become co-opted.

The video clips that I find most revealing are those that comment self-reflexively on how rock video works, particularly in its relation to the spectator's private fantasies and dreams. Though we have already noted this tendency in performance-dominated videos like "Mental Hopscotch," "99 Luftballoons" and "The Heart of Rock 'n Roll" and in the narrative-centered "Romancing the Stone," it tends to be developed more fully in clips dominated by visuals and in those that make a balanced use of all three components.

One scene from Duran Duran's "Reflex" is particularly emblematic. We watch an audience watching a movie screen on which appears a giant wave. When it crashes, it breaks free from the screen and invades the audience's space, completely engulfing the spectators. This tidal wave, an archetype from nightmares and anxiety dreams, evokes rock video, whose images carried by the air waves break out of the television set to penetrate the private space of our consciousness and lives.

The process of internalizing media images from movies and television and combining them with private memories to generate new fantasies and dreams is dramatized in Cyndi Lauper's "Time after Time"—a process that is facilitated by repeated exposure, as the song title implies. The clip opens with Cyndi watching a Bette Davis movie on television while her lover sleeps beside her. Certain images from this woman's picture evoke personal associations from the singer's past, which are recombined to form a romantic fantasy that sharply contrasts in visual style and tone with the banal setting of the framing situation.

This same process—involving movies, fantasies and dreams, all mediated through video—is elaborated in Roger Waters's "5:01 AM, The Pros and Cons of Hitchhiking." Opening with movie images from *Shane,* the clip then

turns to shots of a woman cruising in a convertible, picking up a handsome blonde hitchhiker. The lyrics reveals that she is an Encino housewife pursuing a romantic fantasy—one that was repressed in *Shane* (where the pioneer housewife never acted on her sexual attraction to the roving gunfighter played by blond Alan Ladd) but liberated in *The Wild One* (a film that is evoked in the clip, not through authentic footage, but through reprocessed lookalike images and whose rolling stone hero, clad in black leather, is associated with Jack Palance, the gunfighter villain whom we see blown away in one of the excerpts from *Shane*). Again, as in "Romancing the Stone," we are presented with a dual point of view—the male singer telling the story and the Encino housewife whose fantasies seem to control the visuals. Yet as the clip progresses, other dreamlike visuals disrupt the narrative—particularly images of a man flying across a cloudy sky. The dual perspective is revealed in the ending when we see a man and a woman asleep in bed, where they have both been reprocessing media images in their respective dreams.

Omnipresence of the Spectator

This self-reflexive attention to the viewing process foregrounds another characteristic of television that is exaggerated on MTV—the omnipresence of the spectator. One video clip that plays with this dimension is "Tell Her About It," where performer Billy Joel is introduced by Ed Sullivan (really an impersonator) for his historic TV debut on "The Toast of the Town" while Rodney Dangerfield (the real comedian in a guest appearance) waits in the wings. The spectator is depicted not only through the live audience in the theater where Joel is singing, but also through diverse TV viewers who watch (or don't watch) his performance in a variety of period contexts, which provide settings for mininarratives eventually involving Joel, whose live presence (like Duran Duran's tidal wave) invades their life space: a neighborhood bar, a family room, a sorority house, a TV studio, and even a Soviet spaceship. In contrast to "The Heart of Rock 'n Roll," here it is the TV spectator rather than the performer whose living continuity with the historic past is dramatized.

Through constant reminders that, at any moment of broadcasting, someone is watching, in television, unlike cinema, the spectator is made to seem omnipresent.[7] This sense is particularly strong in live television, where the omnipresence of the spectator is highlighted as a distinguishing feature of primary value. Live television departs from the basic film-making model (film crew and actors shooting on a closed set) by frequently granting a place for the spectator in the studio or on camera, as we see in game shows and comedy-variety programs like "The Johnny Carson Show" and "Saturday Night Live." The "live" component survives even in the reruns where we viewers are made to feel that we belong to a live audience responding to living legends like John Belushi. As with the historical footage of live concerts on MTV, "live" is redefined; no longer restricted to the recording or transmission, it becomes associated with whatever occupies the present consciousness of the spectator. It's as if by watching television, the spectator gains the divine power of granting life to whoever or whatever appears on screen. The viewer can extend the TV life of Phil Donahue and Joan Collins or kill them off in a season. Of course, it's really the networks and advertisers that decide what's on the screen, but the audience is constantly told that it is their viewing (and buying) habits that control those decisions.

This feeling of the spectator's omnipresence is cultivated even on shows that are taped or filmed. Canned laughter is used on situation comedy series, and viewers are directly addressed in the second person in commercials, on news and sports shows, on children's programs like "Sesame Street" and "Nickelodeon," and by virtually all video jockeys on MTV.

Instead of stressing the changeovers from one VJ to another, which would accentuate them as TV personalities and create the effect of separate programs (as occurs on some music radio stations), MTV makes the transitions subtle. The name of the next VJ is announced along with the upcoming performers and news for the next half hour segment. Sometimes the new VJ is first heard in a voice-over at the end of a station ID before being seen on screen. Other times both VJ's chat together on camera at the end of the connecting station break. Despite the diversity in their age, sex, personality and style, it's as if the main function of

these VJ's, who also double as newscasters, is to maintain a continuous live presence that creates the illusion of an on-going dialogue with the audience. On MTV the omnipresence of the VJ helps to strengthen the omnipresence of the spectator.

When an audience is seen, heard or addressed on screen, it signifies for the individual spectator both the object of identification and the Other with whom he or she is temporarily bonded. The TV spectator has a dual role: first, as an individual viewer/listener absorbing images and sounds into one's own consciousness and memory, usually in the privacy of one's own home or bed; and second, as a member of a mass audience or community (McLuhan's "global village") who share common associations, desires and ideological assumptions. In unifying private and public identities, this dual role facilitates the integrated functioning of two complementary actions—both of which are well illustrated in the specific video clips already discussed: (1) the internalizing of TV images into one's own fantasy life, incorporating them into a private reservoir of dream images; (2) the positioning of the spectator in the public marketplace where one becomes an active consumer purchasing products one has been trained by television to desire, thereby contributing to the capitalist economy. Because of advertising's control over television, the private action is made to serve the public goal of internalizing consumerist desires. Nowhere is this co-option more apparent than on MTV.

Presence/Absence of the TV Receiver

Since the TV spectator appears omnipresent, it is the presence or absence of the TV set, the basic receiving apparatus, that is all important. As a receiver, the TV set functions for the spectator in a dual capacity: both as an object of desire and as an object of identification. If you don't have one, you are left out of the community. If you don't have one, your dreams, fantasies and life will be impoverished. If you don't have one, you won't recognize the names and faces of culture heroes that populate mass-circulation magazines like *People* and *Star* and that pop up in conversations. In order to enter the mass culture and its marketing system, you must invest in this basic equipment that promises, not merely temporary admittance to another world, but a dramatic change in you and your world forever. Like buying a Barbie doll, the purchase of a TV set begets other purchases. Once you own and become the basic receiver, you are trained to desire everything it has to offer—as big a screen as possible, color as well as black-and-white, a stereo hook-up, remote control, all of the commercial, PBS and cable stations available, a VCR, and eventually 3-D, high definition and digital television. As in the automotive industry, obsolescence and rapid technological improvement are made to seem inevitable.

Once you possess a TV set, you have unlimited access to the images and sounds it receives. Yet the programming structure with its varied repetitions is designed to create a withholding or suspension that increases your viewing time by intensifying desire. You find yourself waiting for your favorite clip on MTV, waiting for a particular movie to appear on cable or commercial stations, waiting for the particular guest you want to see on the Johnny Carson show, waiting for the sports or weather or whatever news feature will reveal the information you seek, waiting for an instant replay of a dramatic moment in sports, waiting for the reruns of a show that you missed, waiting for the next episode in the soap or miniseries you're faithfully following, waiting for the cable station to reach your neighborhood, or even waiting for your favorite commercial ("Where's the beef?") to explicitly articulate the mechanism of withholding.

When the spectator is not watching television, then he or she, whether out in the world or at home, is still affected by the TV images already internalized. That's when the *fort/da* game really pays off for the sponsoring institution. In the public marketplace, the spectator becomes a consumer looking for the beef—following the cues of point-of-purchase advertising to find and buy the videos, records, T-shirts, soft drinks, and toys promoted on television. In private, the spectator becomes a daydreamer, driving on the freeway listening to songs on the radio or seeing billboards that trigger associations with TV images already programmed into the brain; or by night, a dreamer, reprocessing those TV images into visions of the future. In order to understand

the impact that television can have on dreams, it's necessary to know more about the process of dreaming.

Speculations on the Dream Connection

The most compelling dream models that have emerged from recent neurophysiological and psychological studies suggest that dreams are an evolutionary medium that mediates between biological programming and cultural imprinting. More specifically, the Hobson-McCarley Activation-Synthesis model assumes that the rapid firing of giant cells in the primitive brainstem activates the dream by generating signals within the brain; the rhythm, frequency and duration of the dream are biologically determined.[8] The forebrain then selects images from the memory to "fit" the internally generated random signals; this synthetic process (about which little is known) is probably a function of the right-brain hemisphere (that takes a synthetic or gestalt approach rather than an analytic one to problem solving) and also the site for the psychological level of the dream.[9] The images selected from the memory and recombined in new ways carry the cultural imprinting.

This model has significant implications for the study of television and movies since these two mass media play a key role in the imprinting process, supplementing the dreamer's ordinary experience with thousands of prefabricated moving visual images that are directly absorbed into the cultural dreampool and influencing both the form and content of dream texts. Since these two media have appeared fairly recently in the history of western civilization and since certain nations with advanced technology and imperialist tendencies (most predominantly the USA) have specialized in producing texts that could be exported (even via satellite) to other parts of the world, movies and television have the potential to render dreams more similar all over the planet, a tendency that could have far-reaching political and evolutionary implications. (This issue is brilliantly explored on film by Nicholas Roeg in *The Man Who Fell to Earth* and in literature by Manuel Puig in *Betrayed by Rita Hayworth* and *Kiss of Spider Woman,* which is now being made into a movie.)

The strong impact of the media on dreams is based partly on the phenomenological similarities between dreaming and the viewing of the movies and television: the visual primacy of these experiences; their spatial and temporal discontinuity; the double identity of the spectator as passive voyeur and active participant; the physical comfort and partial immobility of the spectator; the abrupt shift to a different physical and psychic state and to the forgetting of most of the images when the lights go on, the tube goes off, or one awakens from the dream; the two-way process of adaptation, involving the use of dreams as a creative source for artists generating movies and videos and the incorporation of media images into the dreams of viewers; the regressive nature of these fictions which arouse pleasure by fulfilling repressed infantile wishes and needs; the guilty feelings evoked by excessive indulgence in these idle pastimes that substitute for constructive work; and the combination of private and communal roles in these experiences which pass for personal pleasures while serving deeper cultural, ideological or evolutionary goals.

While considerable work has been done on dream and film,[10] very little has been written on dream and television.[11] Yet this relationship is particularly important since dreamers start watching the tube from infancy and since television contributes more images to the cultural dreampool than any other medium. While I am in no way denying the important and unique connections between film and dream, I am interested here in exploring the unique similarities between dream and television.

What is particularly fascinating to me and central to my argument is that the main similarities between dream and television which are *not* shared by film are precisely the same characteristics that are exaggerated on MTV: unlimited access, structural discontinuity, decentering, structural reliance on memory retrieval, live transmission and the omnipresence of the spectator. Most of these characteristics have been widely written about by television historians and theorists; what I am interested in briefly suggesting here is their connection with MTV and dreams.

Unlimited Access

While the frequency and length of dreams are biologically determined (a REM period occurs around every 90 minutes and lasts

about 20 minutes, making the daily average dreamtime approximately 90 minutes), one can increase the amount of time spent dreaming on any given night by extending the hours of sleep or by taking catnaps throughout the day. The amount of time that can be spent daydreaming is, of course, unlimited.

A similar unlimited access is offered, not by cinema, but by "The tube of plenty," forcing the individual spectator to monitor his or her own time devoted to TV viewing. This temptation is dramatized by the 24-hour availability of rock videos on MTV—a feature that is prominently emphasized in all of the promotional spots for the station.

Structural Discontinuity

All TV viewing is marked by a structural discontinuity caused by frequent interruptions by commercials, station breaks and channel-switching. These frequent ruptures are exaggerated on MTV where there is no long program to interrupt, merely a chain of brief segments, all featuring spatial and temporal discontinuity.

Such structural discontinuity evokes a comparison with dreams, which are similarly marked by abrupt scene shifts which Allan Hobson has linked to the bursts of rapid eye movements (REM's) and firings of brain cells that trigger and accompany dreams.

> The rapid eye movements themselves appeared to be generated by the activity of a group of giant cells in the pontine brain stem whose bursting discharge preceded the eye movements during REM sleep. Thus the possibility was raised that specific visual information might actually be generated within the brain. The giant cells not only may drive the eye movements but also may send information into the visual relay nucleus and cortex about the direction and speed of the eye movements. Since this information is highly non-ordered with respect to the external visual world, *scene shifts and dramatic changes in visual dream content might possibly be a function of the generating system* [ital. mine] rather than a censor's attempt to disguise the ideational meaning of 'dream thoughts.'[12]

Both Hobson and Vlada Petrić have compared this structural discontinuity of dreams to cinema: Hobson has charted structural analogies between film devices and dream processes,[13] and Petrić has prescribed the four "most effective cinematic techniques which can enhance the oneiric impact of a film and stimulate the neural activities similar to those occurring during dreaming": "camera movement through space (especially when combined with deep focus"; illogical and paradoxical combinations of objects, characters and settings (while . . . preserving the vivid representation of the photographed world"; "dynamic montage (with concentration on the close-up and subliminal condensation of brief shots"; and "dissolution of spatial and temporal continuity (especially by using 'jump-cuts')."[14] While these techniques can be used to single out certain film styles and auteurs for high praise, they are commonplace in music videos.

Decentering

The structural discontinuity of television creates a constant flow or decentered super-text. Viewers tend to watch television rather than specific programs. This decentering process is carried to an extreme on MTV, where the short commercial is the featured attraction. Though commercially determined, the sequencing of clips has a quality of randomness for the viewer; one sees whatever videos happen to appear on screen while one is watching.

One finds a similar decentering in dreaming, where all dreams on a single night tend to share the same themes, where the dreamer usually remembers specific images or scenes but no clear boundaries around individual dream texts, and where one never knows in advance which dreams or images will appear on the mindscreen. Individual texts of dream and television rarely receive the same degree of artistic status that is ordinarily attributed to film texts—a difference that is more a matter of structural presentation than of artistic merit.

One does not normally find decentering in film. It must be designed as a conscious artistic strategy as in the films of Godard, Makavejev and Alea, usually with the conscious political goal of breaking Hollywood's codes of representation to reveal and oppose the bourgeois ideology they carry. While bourgeois consumerism is also exposed in the decentering processes of television, it is not undermined, but, on the contrary, promoted.

Structural Reliance on Memory Retrieval

The Hobson-McCarley activation-synthesis model posits that while dreaming, the forebrain selects sense images from memory to fit signals about eye movement that are inter-

nally generated by the dreamer's own brain and attempts unsuccessfully to render "the series of shots as a continuous narrative."[15] In elaborating on this model, Hobson frequently uses an analogy with film which sometimes becomes strained:

> During waking, the brain is 'taking pictures': images are accepted at a rate of about 10–20 per second. Owing to the operation of the afferent image-efferent signal comparator process and visual blanking, we perceive the visual world as continuous and the visual field remains constant in space. *Our brains shoot, develop, and edit instantaneously* [ital. mine]. The individual images or the fused image (we know not which) are stored in memory (by unknown mechanisms). They can be called up with difficulty and are weakly perceptible in waking fantasy, but are more easily accessible and vividly perceptible in dreams.[16]

In cinema it is impossible "to shoot, develop, and edit instantaneously," but these mental processes are ordinary practice in live video, which suggests that television might provide a better model than cinema for how the human brain processes images during waking hours.

Earlier I argued that one of the most powerful aspects of music video is its programming of viewers to retrieve specific visual images from memory every time they hear a particular song. Although the triggering sounds of the song usually come from external sources like radio or television (unlike the internally generated signals in dreams), the music video fan has been taught to identify with the external receiving apparatus, so some degree of internalization occurs. This process of retrieving the prefabricated video images from memory may help train viewers to retrieve them more readily during REM sleep. In other words, the structural reliance on memory retrieval shared by MTV and dreams may give these music video images a privileged position within the cultural dreampool. The fact that so many rock video artists cultivate the explicit connection with dreams in their song titles and lyrics, in the visual style and images of their video clips, in their narrative themes and situations, and even in the names of some of the groups (like R.E.M., or the Revolving Paint Dream) suggests that they are seeking this position of power.

Live Transmission and the Omnipresent Spectator

As the most solipsistic of forms, the dream takes place inside the spectator, who is by necessity omnipresent. In the live transmission of dreams, the protean dreamer functions, not only as spectator, but also as writer, director, star, supporting players, location, and technical apparatus.

We have already seen how the television viewer is made to feel omnipresent, particularly through conventions associated with live transmission. It is this very quality that fosters the kind of delusional experiences depicted in Martin Scorsese's film *King of Comedy*[17] and in Hubert Selby's novel *Requiem for a Dream* in which isolated viewers lose the boundaries between television images and their private fantasy projections. In a sense these characters cannibalize the world of television, transforming it into a solipsistic medium like dream.

Unlike movies and dreams which suspend one's normal waking experience by functioning as an alternate reality, television and radio, because they are not totally absorbing, only supplement one's ordinary life. TV viewers frequently do something else while watching. If that other activity happens to be daydreaming, a behavior stimulated by many programs and virtually all commercials, then it is easy for the two imaginary realms to be fused.

MTV tries to capture the best of both worlds. Like radio and ordinary television, it can provide a continuous sound track for partying, dancing, sex, or whatever you happen to be doing and brighten up a room with a flashy visual that can be glanced at whenever you get bored. Yet because of the visual intensity of most video clips, it also strives for the all-absorbing attention a spectator normally devotes to films and dreams. It's the omnipresent spectator, constantly addressed in the second person by the MTV VJ's, who decides which mode of viewing to adopt; but the very presence of both options makes it possible to watch the station for longer stretches at a time.

While exercising its powers of manipulation, MTV makes the spectator feel potent and decisive: he or she is the one who chooses which records, videos and products to buy; who picks which styles and behaviors to imitate; who hums the tunes; who memorizes the visuals; who decides when to look and when to listen; who switches the station on or off. Like all television, it trains the spectator to focus on one's personal powers of choice and reception while ignoring the remote sources

of transmission—the true Remote Control—whose ideological determinants and manipulative strategies remain mystified.

In this examination of MTV as a model for commercial television, I have focused on the medium's relationship both to ideology and to dream. The observations concerning ideology, for the most part, echo or lend support to arguments of others who have been writing on television. But the speculations on the connection with dreams open new paths that warrant further investigation. Perhaps most essential is the interaction between these two registers—the role of dream in internalizing and reprocessing the ideology transmitted through television, a process that is blatantly dramatized in music video on MTV. In the last sixty years we have witnessed how advertising has colonized the public airwaves, first on radio and then on television. Now, through the medium of music video, commercial interests may be extending their sway over the evolutionary medium of dreams.

NOTES

1. *Record* (July 1984), p. 41.

2. See, for example, "Rock Makers," *Video* (July 1984) by Noë Goldwasser, who writes: "The excitement in pop-music video is being generated by a handful of talented filmmakers working in the video-clip medium. People like Russell Mulcahy, Bob Giraldi, Tim Newman, and Tim Pope crank out clips by the hundreds and send them on their infectious way to MTV, *Night Tracks* and the like. This community of directors amounts to a video new wave which is forging the aesthetic basis of music video in much the same way as the French new wave in film—Godard, Resnais, Truffaut—changed our way of looking at movies 20 years ago. . . .

"No one better personifies the music video *auteur* than Tim Pope. . . . He could be called the Jean-Luc Godard of the video age because of his frenetic pace and constantly flowing fountainhead of new visual images. . . . The skinny 28-year old averages about two videos a week in his London studio, and is constantly turning down American groups who come over and throw money at him to make them stars on MTV Stateside." (pp. 81–82)

3. Such causes include the fact that television superseded the audio medium of radio, the neglect of sound and its potentialities both by film-makers and film theorists, and the dominance of vision over all other senses in dreams.

4. One of the few precursors of the new relationship between music and image is the "Memo from T" sequence performed by Mick Jagger in Cammell and Roeg's *Performance* (1970), a visionary rock film that was far ahead of its time.

5. Nick Browne, "The Political Economy of the Television (Super) Text," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, 9, 3 (Summer 1984).

6. Unlike credits that appear at the end of a film, these data do not inform the viewer whom to credit for the artistic achievement (for example, the name of the director never appears on the rock video clip); the information is provided solely to increase the likelihood of the sale.

7. Of course, there is also a place for the spectator in cinema, as current work on suture, spectators-in-the-text, and self-reflexiveness have shown; one can even find instances of direct address throughout the history of film. Yet these cinematic practices are not so direct as the on-screen presence of TV studio audiences nor as ubiquitous as the use of direct address on television.

8. J. A. Hobson and R. W. McCarley, "The brain as a dream state generator: An Activation-synthesis hypothesis of the dream process," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 134 (1977), 1335–1348. Hobson has also presented this model in relation to film studies in "Film and the Physiology of Dreaming Sleep: the Brain as Camera-Projector," *Dreamworks*, I, 1 (Spring 1980), 9–25; and in his reply to Raymond Durgnat's "The Hunting of the Dream Snark"), *Dreamworks*, II, 1 (Fall 1981), 83–86; and in "Dream Image and Substrate: Bergman's Films and the Psychology of Sleep," in *Film and Dreams: An Approach to Bergman*, ed. by Vlada Petrić (South Salem, N.Y.: Redgrave Publishing Co., 1981), 75–95.

9. An excellent survey of the issue of involvement of the right brain hemisphere is provided by Bruce Kawin in "Right-Hemisphere Processing in Dreams and Films," *Dreamworks*, II, 1 (Fall 1981), 13–17.

10. In the psychoanalytic context, the relationship between film and dream has received considerable attention in the line of discourse derived from Lacan and Metz, most prominently in *The Imaginary Signifier*. Still within the psychoanalytic context, but deviating from Metz on important issues are Robert Eberwein's *Film and the Dream Screen* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1984) and Gay Lynn Studlar's *Visual Pleasure and the Masochistic Aesthetic: The Von Sternberg/Dietrich Paramount Cycle*, Unpub. dissertation, USC, 1984 (a selection from which will appear in Volume II of *Movies and Methods*, ed. by Bill Nichols, U. of Calif. Press). Vlada Petrić's *Film and Dreams: An Approach to Bergman* is a collection of essays, some of which (including Petrić's work and mine) draw on the neurobiological models. This perspective is also represented in several essays (including ones by Petrić, Hobson, Durgnat, Kawin and me) appearing in *Dreamworks*, an interdisciplinary quarterly on the relation between dream and the arts.

11. The two key works on this topic are Peter H. Wood's "Television as Dream" in *Television: The Critical View*, ed. by Horace Newcomb (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 517–535, and "Reality and Television: an Interview with Dr. Edmund Carpenter," *Television Quarterly*, X, 1 (Fall 1972), 42–46. Works that have attempted a three-way comparison usually focus on cinema at the expense of television, arguing that the comparison between film and dream is more interesting (see Raymond Durgnat, "The Hunting of the Dream-Snark," *Dreamworks*, II, 1, Fall 1981, 76–82) or more fruitful in generating formal similarities (see Vlada Petrić's "A Theoretical-Historical Survey: Film and Dreams," in *Film and Dreams*, pp. 1–48.)

12. Hobson, "Film and the Physiology of Dreaming Sleep," p. 14.

13. Ibid., 23.

14. Petrić, "A Theoretical-Historical Survey," p. 23.

15. Hobson, ibid., p. 24.

16. Ibid., 23–24.

17. For an excellent analysis of what this film reveals about television, see Beverle Houston's "*King of Comedy:* A Crisis of Substitution," *Framework*, 24 (Spring 1984), 74–92.

BACK ISSUES FILM MAGAZINES

The former publisher of Film Comment is selling his vast personal collection of film magazines, priced way below retail. Long SASE brings giant list of titles from the 50s till now.

Austin Lamont
279 Franklin Street
Newton MA 02158