Genre, whatever else it might be, is first and foremost about categorisation, about sorting cultural products into discrete groupings based on similarities and common properties. Moreover, this act of categorisation is always purposeful. In other words, this process is done for a specific reason, whether that reason is socio-economic, cultural or academic. In the first place, from an industrial standpoint, genre performs specific economic functions in so far as it works to organise the financing, production and marketing of cultural products so as to ensure maximum return from investment. For consumers, genre is one of the principal ways of choosing which products to buy in the first place and also perhaps the key marker of taste – a means of expressing likes and dislikes and identifying and communicating with like-minded people. In academic discourse, the concept of genre is multi-functional. For not only are the socio-economic and cultural aspects of genre a focus of analysis across a number of disciplines, but the notion of genre is also mobilised as a way of rationalising the study of popular culture; defining the parameters of a form; as a model of textual explication; and as a way of theorising how those texts are understood in the process of consuming them. Indeed, it is precisely this multifunctionality that leads to the idea that genre is a kind of conceptual golden thread, seemingly capable of describing the whole process of creating, selling and consuming cultural products as well as providing a critical framework through which both this process and individual texts can be interpreted and explained. And it is precisely this standard view of genre that becomes destabilised when we consider music video, for its role as a secondary product...
femininity, or whatever, in a given text is 'unique' or if it is a prevalent feature of similar texts.

Andrew Tudor suggests two models for working within genre study; on the one hand to work inward to the text in applying a set of pre-determined criteria in order to identify and sort generic groupings, or, on the other, to work outwards from the text and produce categories on the basis of the formal, stylistic and aesthetic evidence it provides. It is this latter approach that we pursue below to identify and discuss four principal generic configurations of the music video categories we have termed: pseudo-documentary; art music video; narrative; and staged performance. However, while offering a way of managing, organising and interrogating a vast number of videos, we want to stress from the outset that both this process of categorisation and the categories themselves are not intended as reductive or finite entities. Quite the contrary, we argue that genre operates in complex ways in relation to music video. Defining and delineating genres of music is not a straightforward task in itself and, furthermore, individual genres of music video, those that grow out of formal, stylistic and aesthetic evidence, do not map onto music genres in a straightforward fashion. Indeed, since genres of music video cut across genres of music, attempts to discuss, say, the 'rap video' or the 'rock video' are at best reductive and at worst acutely flawed. Moreover, although some music genres may privilege a particular type of video, any given music video may have, and often does have, far more in common with a video which promotes a song from another music genre than with others of its own. It is the intention of what follows, therefore, not only to point out the limitations of work which falls into this trap, but more importantly to directly address the various generic formations that characterise music video and the complex ways in which they interact with genres of music.

Very little work exists that has attempted to use genre as a way of understanding music video. This is both surprising and predictable. It is surprising in so far as generic analysis of other forms of popular culture has played a central role in understanding not only their formal and stylistic properties and economic functions, but also the pleasures they afford their audiences. The study of both film and television, not to mention literature, would be unthinkable without it. As such, one might have expected that music video would have been approached in the same way. The lack of genre-based work in music video is, however, entirely predictable for a number of reasons. Firstly, as discussed in the introduction, academic criticism of music video has often been subsumed within accounts of MTV, or, more precisely, accounts of MTV which stress its postmodern formal and aesthetic properties. For instance, John
Fiske argues that the ‘rock video or MTV’ is broadcast television’s ‘only original art form’. Whatever else one may make of such a claim, it is, of course, the conjunctive ‘or’ which concerns us here in so far as it works to erase the distinctions between medium, form and content, between music videos and the TV channel(s) that broadcasts them. Simply put, the music video becomes conflated, and confused, with the context of its distribution. This critical slippery page not only tends to mask differences between individual music videos and the different generic structures of video, but also diverts critical attention away from the form and content of music videos themselves and shifts it towards the formal analysis of MTV as a putatively distinctive postmodern televisial phenomenon. One further implication of such rhetorical manoeuvres is that the apparent postmodernism of MTV is often too easily simply mapped onto music video itself. Here, all music videos become classed as postmodern forms of visual culture on the basis of merely appearing on MTV. This universalising way of understanding music video not only seems at odds with the postmodernist analysis which produces it, but again works to divert attention away from analysis of the videos themselves rooting it instead in the fragmented structure of MTV and its self-reflexive, ironic and parodic textual strategies. Moreover, even when critics such as E. Ann Kaplan or Andrew Goodwin stress the difference between the music video and music television, in the end, they still only discuss music videos in the context of MTV. At a general level this serves to situate the term ‘music video’ as a generic label in its own right. In other words, the distinctive formal properties of the music video - short films which feature the song they are designed to promote - are mobilised as generic markers to distinguish it from other kinds of video and other kinds of film and television. But even at its most specific music video becomes classed as a genre of television - a genre typified by fragmentation, reflexivity, non-linearity and so forth. Either way, the result of this equation is a body of work which is predicated on the interdependence of music video and music television, a notion that perhaps described the situation at the time when most of this work was written but which certainly does not adequately account for the present moment.

Indeed, it is no longer necessary, nor useful, to equate music video with MTV. The situation in which a single music channel broadcast predetermined videos interspersed with advertisements to an undifferentiated audience has, since the mid-1980s, given way to much more diverse ways of distributing and accessing music video. The conditions governing access to music video and the way they are watched have fundamentally changed. The decision is no longer simply whether or not to watch MTV; but rather a choice has to be made of which video to access, when to watch it, and on what platform. And this choice is almost entirely organised generically, that is to say, the broadcasting, selling and streaming of music videos is very often based on their subdivision along music genre lines. So, not only is music television itself now almost entirely organised generically through forms of branded narrowcasting, but sites such as Apple’s iTunes use generic groupings as one of the principal means of organising their content and offering search/browse facilities to their users. Given this, to continue to see the term ‘music video’ as a sufficient generic label, or to study music video merely as a specific form of television programming, is, at best, reductive and, at worst, out of step with the ways in which music videos are now distributed, accessed, ‘owned’ and watched.

This use of genre, however, points us towards the second main reason why there has been little work which uses the concept to theorise music video. This has to do with the relationship between genres of popular music - precisely those genres used to brand channels and organise web searches - and genres of music video. Unlike other forms of popular culture, the music video is first and foremost a promotional tool, that is to say, a way of marketing another product which itself already operates and is understood generically. For instance, Kaplan argues that ‘selling the record is the base-line, that will control the “look” of the video being made for sale of the song and its record’. Similarly, Carol Vernallis argues that:

As such, it is tempting to simply equate the genre of music video with the genre of music it is designed to promote. And, indeed, this is what many critics have done and continue to do. However, while this common-sense approach works well for choosing which video to watch, it tells us very little about the videos themselves. Simply transposing categories derived from elsewhere onto music video is neither the only way of identifying generic types nor the most instructive. For despite the integral relationship between music videos and the songs they promote, genres of music neither map onto genres of music video nor, pace Vernallis, necessarily govern the look of any given video. In other words, although genre works as a ‘framework of signs in relation to which difference and variation can be both produced on the one hand and read and understood on the other, music genres do not provide such a framework for the production or consumption of music videos’. Quite the contrary. The videos which accompany the songs comprising any one musical genre can display striking formal and aesthetic variation. By the same token, videos for songs from quite different music genres often have far more in common with each other than with those from within the same music genre.
MUSIC VIDEO AND THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION

Imani Perry’s essay on the image and identity of women in hip hop is a good example of the kind of work which slips from discussion of musical genres to genres of video as if the two sets of texts entertain specific and identifiable relations with each other determined by the same generic label. She argues that in hip hop videos of the late 1990s:

every time you turned on BET or MTV there was a disturbing music video. Black men rapped surrounded by dozens of black and Latina women dressed in swimsuits, or scantily clad in some other fashion. Video after video was the same, each one more objectifying than the next. Some were in strip clubs, some at the pool, beach, hotel rooms, but the recurrent theme was dozens of half-naked women. 12

While it is undoubtedly true that many videos which promote hip hop music do contain these elements either in isolation or combination, it nevertheless remains the case that many others do not. For instance, the videos for Kanye West’s THROUGH THE WIRE (2003), Tupac Shakur’s RUNNING (DYING TO LIVE) (2004) and Talib Kweli’s I TRY (2004) feature neither half-naked women nor the locations Perry discusses. 13 Viewing the same question from the other end, Trace Adkins’ HONKY TONK BADONKADONK (2005) and Travis Tritt’s THE GIRL’S GONE WILD (2004) evince all of Perry’s ingredients of the hip hop video – the club, the beach, a pool and plenty of scantily clad women – but they are, of course, videos designed to promote country songs. As such, while any given music video can mobilise the iconography of the musical genre of the song it promotes, it is not impelled to do so. Moreover, even if it does, this does not define the generic configurations which structure music videos. And it is precisely to these generic structures that we now want to turn.

FOUR GENRES OF MUSIC VIDEO

Perhaps the most well-known work that looks at ‘types of music video’ is E. Ann Kaplan’s Rocking Around The Clock. Kaplan identifies five basic types of video on MTV, all of which, she argues, deploy techniques more usually associated with the avant-garde, but which are distinguished on the basis of their ‘ideological imaginary’. 14 So even while, for Kaplan, the technical and formal strategies of MTV videos are seen to generally embody postmodernism, she identifies differences in terms of the way certain common thematic structures are articulated across her five categories. The romantic type, for example, is defined by ‘the overall nostalgic, sentimental and yearning quality’ and ‘plays out the pain of separation’. 15 For Kaplan, videos of this type ‘idealize parent-child relationships, manifesting pre-Oedipal, bisexual yearnings in the urge to merge with the loved one and recapture infant mother-child closeness’. 16 By contrast, in what Kaplan terms nihilist videos, 17 the love theme turns from a relatively mild narcissism and a focus on the pain of separation, to sadism, masochism, androgyne, and hetroeroticism; while the anti-authority theme moves from mere unresolved Oedipal conflicts to explicit, hate, nihilism, anarchy, destruction. 18

However, while Kaplan’s psychoanalytically derived typology of music video does allow her to discuss the ways in which certain videos of the 1980s construct different social and political modes of address, her typology cannot be used to understand the generic configuration of those videos. In other words, while it continues to serve as a model for interpreting music videos, it cannot adequately categorise them in terms of common content, style and technique, that is to say, in terms of the kinds of criteria central to the process of genre-building.

While Kaplan’s work is perhaps the most cited attempt to classify music video, the overwhelming majority of work that has tried to define and discuss genres of music video has, in one way or another, followed the Aristotelian model of identifying the essential categories of the form and then articulating both the qualities inherent to each category and the differences which mark them as distinct from other categories. Joan D. Lynch, for example, argues that ‘three basic structures [of music video] can be identified. The most common one by far, with multiple variations, is centered on the performance itself. There are also narrative videos and videos which are strongly influenced by experimental film’. 19 Similarly, Steve Jones identifies three narrative forms of music video: mimetic narrative (the representation of concert performance), analog narrative (non-concert performance of the song intercut with other material), and digital narrative (impossible performance or no performance whatsoever). 20

It is Joe Goss’s discussion of ‘popular formulas and emerging genres’, however, that sets out perhaps the most useful approach for thinking about the ways in which generic structures operate in music video. 21 Although he begins by distinguishing between the ‘conceptual video’ and the ‘performance video’, which he sees as ‘the two most basic formal possibilities in music videos’, thus replaying the same logic as Lynch and Jones, he nevertheless goes on to offer a much more fine-grained account of what he calls the distinct formulas which exist within and in between his two principal forms. 22 Indeed, he identifies six central genres of music video all of which are defined in terms of their relationship to the display of performance: (1) the anti-performance piece; videos which do not contain performance of the song; (2) pseudo-reflexive performance videos which display the process of video production; (3) the
performance documentary – videos which contain vérité documentary footage of onstage performance and/or off-stage activity; (4) the special effects extravaganza – videos in which human performance is overshadowed by spectacular imagery; (5) the song and dance number – videos which focus on the physical abilities of the dancing performer(s) and the vocal presentation of the song, usually through lip-synching techniques; and (6) the enhanced performance – videos which blend performance elements with other visual elements, a blend justified through either associational, narrative or abstract forms of motivation.22 The advantage of these categories is that they are derived inductively on the basis of historically contingent similarities and differences between numerous instances of the same form. In other words, even though performance is common to all of Gow’s categories (even in its absence), it is precisely the different ways in which performance is represented that is deployed as a marker of generic difference. Moreover, Gow’s framework resists the essentialism of other attempts to define genres of music video and, ironically, even his own notion of ‘basic categories’.

While Gow’s intervention certainly represents one of the most sophisticated attempts to map genres of music video, its over-dependence on performance as the modulating variable produces its own limitations. In the first place, it works to separate very similar videos into different generic groups. For instance, a song and dance number may be almost identical to an enhanced performance video and there may be little difference between a pseudo-reflexive performance video and a performance documentary. More importantly, however, the enhanced performance video, Gow’s largest grouping, containing more than half of the videos studied, serves to elide the often significant differences between videos of this type. As such, we want to offer our own four genres of music video – pseudo-documentary, art music video, narrative video, and staged performance – not only as a way of rethinking Gow’s work and hooking it up with that of Lynch and Jones, but also as a way of addressing the much neglected relationship between music video and discourses of authenticity. Indeed, this is not just an exercise in drawing lines in different places, nor is it simply about offering different criteria for the establishment and definition of generic categories. Nor, for that matter, is it only about ‘finding’ generic structures within music video. While the process necessarily entails aspects of all three, just as important, for us, are the ways in which genres of music video function to legitimate both performance and performer. And it is worth bearing in mind, as Simon Frith argues, that the key economic function of a music video is to promote not the individual song but rather the artist or band who performs it.23 For perhaps what emerges most powerfully from this kind of analysis is the inextricable linkage between genres of music video and the range of ways any given artist or band’s appeal to authenticity can be sanctioned. In other words, like all discussions of genre the categories of music video we set out below are descriptive in so far as they provide a cognitive map of what one might expect to see in any given video depending on the category to which it belongs. But these categories are also analytic precisely to the extent that those same generic structures also contain within them models of authentication, models which may be activated differently in relationship to different performers or genres of music but which are nevertheless always activated.

(1) Pseudo-Documentary Music Video

This genre of music video deploys the aesthetics of documentary realism to portray the working life of the band or artist and, as such, functions to legitimate them as skilled, professional, musicians. So, while videos in this category are not documentaries proper, as much as they are primarily advertisements, pseudo-documentary videos nevertheless do use the stylistic devices associated with forms of documentary film – especially, though not exclusively, those related to cinéma-vérité – to capture the artists in their ‘natural’ environment, in other words, the artists doing the job of being musicians, performers, stars and so forth. As such, what Trinh T. Minh-ha calls documentary’s ‘set of persuasive techniques’ – the sense of witnessing naked reality occurring despite, not because of, the presence of the camera; the inclusion of grainy, often black and white, film stock, and the use of a shaky hand-held camera communicating immediacy and authenticity – create a documentary effect.24 What they all do, in one way or another, is utilise the now familiar aesthetics of documentary style to present an illusion of privileged access to the performers and their day-to-day working lives, that is to say, access to aspects of the performers’ work and lives that are normally restricted, inaccessible or private.

This documenting of apparent privileged access is realised in a number of ways. Most obvious, perhaps, is the recording of the artist(s) performing live to an audience. So, for example, Toby Keith’s GET DRUNK AND BE SOMEBODY (2006) simply shows Keith and his band performing the song live, on stage in a large auditorium, intercut with footage of the crowd dancing, drinking, cheering and singing along. The video opens with a crane shot which sweeps over the crowd and establishes the ‘liveness’ of the performance. Thereafter, the video is structured around shots of Keith singing and dancing, images of his band playing their instruments, long-shots of the stage show from the rear of the venue, and shots of the audience either en masse from above, from a roving hand-held camera, or from the vantage point of the performers. Although the video presents its events in real time in so far as it begins with the commencement of the song and ends with the applause which follows it, the performance is not experienced simply as if the spectator were a member of the audience. Quite the contrary in fact, for we are not only afforded multiple vantage points from the crowd – front- and back-row views which offer different perspectives
on the same event – but also points of access not available to the live audience – flying over the crowd towards the stage or on-stage with the performers looking outwards. Taken together, what we get is a focus on the fact of the performance both in terms of the production of the music – the instruments and voices which produce the sounds, the microphones, wires and other equipment which amplify those sounds, and, of course, the style and skill of the musicians who play the instruments and use the equipment – and the context in which it is performed and experienced. In other words, _get drunk and be somebody_ not only depicts Keith and his band as able live performers but also demonstrates that their work is appreciated by a large and enthusiastic audience.

This sense of privileged access, however, can be established in a number of other ways, as indeed the work of being an artist is not solely confined to live performance. Other videos in this category take the audience into the recording and rehearsal studios, backstage, on the road, and into a range of other working and ‘private’ contexts. For instance, _Metallica’s nothing else matters_ (1992) documents the recording of the song in the studio. So where Keith’s video represents the spectacle of large-scale live performance, _nothing else matters_ represents the ordinary, day-to-day working life of Metallica. The opening shots of the video show the processes of preparing to record the song: equipment arrives at the studio and is unloaded; guitars are tuned; microphones are adjusted; and tape is fed onto the spools of the recorder. With the introduction of the first lyrics, the video shifts gear and presents the band in the process of recording the song intercut with footage of them relaxing between takes. What we get is not only a sense of ‘a day in the recording studio’ but also a focus on the technical and creative context of the production of the music. Time and again the conjunction of equipment and performance is emphasised in close-up: fingers move sliders on the mixing desk and form chords on guitar frets; hands strum guitar strings and adjust headphones; feet pound drum pedals; and mouths sing into microphones guarded by pop shields. This conjunction of the technology of music and human artistry serves to authenticate the band as skilled, professional musicians at work in one of their ‘natural environments’ – the recording studio.

_Crows-N-Roses’s Paradise City_ (1988) stands as an exemplar of the pseudo-documentary genre of music video in that it not only presents a number of ‘natural environments’ which the band inhabit but also employs a range of documentary techniques to do so. While the video is structured around the live performance of the song, it nevertheless features documentary footage of other aspects of the life of a working band. The video begins before the performance starts. A hand-held pan shows the empty stadium in grainy black and white. A short montage sequence follows, also shot in black and white and with a shaky vérité camera, which shows the crew setting up and

the band members both rehearsing for the gig and relaxing before it. With the introduction of the song’s lyrics the video cuts to colour footage of the performance proper. Images of the band on stage are cut together with shots of the audience. Indeed, the presence of the crowd is signalled in one hand-held whip-pan which takes us from a medium close-up of Axl Rose, the band’s singer, to a long shot of the stadium now heaving with thousands of people. As the video continues, moreover, footage of the live performance is intercut with montage sequences comprised of images of the band at work, images which apparently capture the reality of ‘life on the road’. As with Toby Keith’s _get drunk and be somebody_, the performance footage combines shots of the band performing on the stage with images of the crowd’s response to that performance. However, unlike Keith’s video, these sequences are, in fact, taken from two separate performances, the first in New Jersey’s Meadowlands Stadium and the second at the Castle Donington race track in the UK. While the former is shot in colour and the latter in black and white, they are, nevertheless, held together by the montage sequences which narrativise the journey from one venue to the other. Even though this narrative is not, strictly speaking, linear inasmuch as the video cuts backwards and forwards between the two events, the story it tells is not simply about the fact of live performance but more complexly about the experience of being in a rock band. And the montage sequences play a crucial role in the construction of this narrative. For what they present is the offstage life of the band, the ‘down-and-dirty’ reality of hotel rooms, tour buses, bars and ‘girls’. We follow the band backstage and offstage and get to see them half-asleep in bed, drinking, smoking, practising in hospitality tents, boarding a plane, meeting fans, walking down the street, signing autographs, and, in one case, even signing someone’s denim jacket as he stands urinating. Given all this _Paradise City_ emerges as a particularly interesting version of the pseudo-documentary music video in so far as it not only documents the fact of live performance and the skill and musicianship of the band, but also affords its audience apparently privileged access to the pleasures and pressures of the life of the rock star. Indeed, while this category of video in general is concerned with offering a sense of the putative realities of the working artist, whether on stage, in rehearsal, recording in the studio, or simply living the life of a popular musician, _Paradise City_ is exemplary both in terms of the way it mobilises a number of these contexts in a single video and in its exploitation of documentary aesthetics.

Art Music Video

If the pseudo-documentary video establishes its authenticity by apparently depicting the ‘real life’ of professional musicians, then the art video claims legitimacy by appealing to notions of art and aesthetics. In other words, while
the videos in the pseudo-documentary genre are concerned with capturing the skill and creativity of the artist(s) producing, recording and performing music, in this category the video itself operates as a site of creative expression which variously works as an aesthetic complement to the song or vice versa for artistic consideration. This is not to say, however, that what we term here "the art music video" can, or for that matter should, simply be equated with video art. Even though there is an identifiable relationship between the two forms in terms of textual strategies and aesthetic techniques, the very fact that the art music video is a music video inevitably sets them apart. While the work of video artists such as Robert Wilson, Douglas Gordon, Nam June Paik and Sam Taylor-Wood, for example, is motivated exclusively by artistic concerns and exhibited within, and for, the art world, music videos, whatever their motivation, are always produced and exhibited within a commercial context precisely because, in the last instance, they are designed to advertise and sell another product. By the same token, the value judgement that informs discussions of video art – the idea that a work has some kind of social, cultural or political significance that sets it apart from other artefacts which are not art – cannot necessarily be transposed into discussions of music video. Put simply, in naming a genre of music video 'art' we are not suggesting that the videos in this category are in any way better or more worthy than those in other genres but, rather, that they deploy formal and aesthetic techniques associated with artistic practices. Indeed, the art music video stands in relationship to video art just as pseudo-documentary video stands in relationship to documentary, inasmuch as while the latter assimilates the techniques of documentary to produce a documentary effect, the former adopts artistic techniques to produce an artistic effect. In short, as the increasing co-option of music video into the art world attests, the art music video may in some cases also be an art work but it nevertheless remains the case that it is first and foremost a promotional video. Indeed, it is important not to confuse the generic description of 'art music video' with discussions of the art of the music video. While generic analysis is concerned with mapping similar properties across large numbers of works, discussions of art usually focus on either individual texts or the body of work of an individual artist or specific movement. Given this distinction, it is not an individual video's artistic value that justifies its inclusion in this category, but rather its use of the techniques and practices of the art world.

One way of thinking about this distinction is to consider R.E.M.'s video, *What's the Frequency, Kenneth?* (1994). On one reading, the video seems to display the generic markers of the pseudo-documentary in that it depicts the band performing the song in a rehearsal room surrounded by microphones, amps, instruments and other tools of the musical trade. However, unlike with pseudo-documentary, the video does not work as a visual demonstration of the musicianship and artistry of the band, nor does it give us privileged access to their working and/or private life. Indeed, nor does it even gesture towards constructing a sense of the reality of the situation and performance. Despite its content, this is not a video about the band at all but rather about the visual experience of light, colour, movement and sound. The video's anti-realism is signalled from the opening shot which introduces its three principal aesthetic tactics – tactics which combine to force the spectator to notice its artifice. So, not only is this opening shot deliberately poorly framed and exposed, but there is a stark disjunction between the image track and the sound track. In other words, what one might expect to be an establishing shot is rendered immediately unreliable and ambiguous. The band's lead singer is positioned centrally behind a microphone but is framed only from the neck down resulting in the intentional obfuscation of both identity and personality. *Verisimilitude* is further undermined at the level of the image itself, an image which is not only bathed in blue light but, in oscillating between over- and underexposure, also constantly flickers and threatens to bleach out into total whiteness. As the video continues, moreover, images slip in and out of negative, primary colours flood the scene and saturate the image, and the illusion of reality is further denied through the use of canted angles, 'bad' framing, and out of focus photography. In addition, bursts of white light intermittently fill the screen serving to remind the viewer of both the flatness of the screen and the provisionality of the realistic image. One result of this is the decoupling of image and sound, or more precisely of the present of the performance of the song and the song itself. While this is initially signalled by the absence of the band and images of idle instruments, in later shots lip-synching is out of kilter with what we hear and sounds of guitars are accompanied by images of drums. Perhaps most importantly, however, the increasing abstraction of the video into formalism and colour-field experimentation serves to recast the band's performance as part of the video's overall aesthetic performance. This not only operates to deconstruct and expose the artificial processes through which authenticity is constructed in certain pseudo-documentary videos but also establishes its own aesthetic authenticity precisely on this basis. Indeed, many of the aesthetic techniques evidenced in the video can be directly associated with forms of experimental cinema and in particular with structural film. As David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson argue, structural film is about challenging form, especially the realist principles of dominant narrative cinema. They note that, 'structural films were often called "anti-illusionist" because they drew attention to the ways in which the medium transforms the object filmed' to the extent that 'the viewer becomes sharply aware of the act of viewing'. In the case of *What's the Frequency, Kenneth?* the abstract use of iridescent colour and the mis-framing of the object progressively direct attention away from the act of performance towards the material properties of the video itself.

It is not only colour and framing, however, that can be used in this way.
Other videos interrogate the illusion of three-dimensional space and the construction of movement within and through that space. The White Stripes’ "Seven Nation Army" (2001) not only explores the graphic potential of the shot through the use of a restricted colour palette and geometric patterning but also flaunts a single film technique—the tracking shot. In the end, what the video presents is an impossibly perpetual tracking shot through kaleidoscopic space, a space which is, of course, an illusion. The filmic illusion of movement is also explored in Spike's "Breath" (2005). The video opens with the image slowly emerging from the emulsion of a Polaroid photograph as it develops. Thereafter movement is realised through presentation of successive Polaroids which contain the next frame of the video. In this way the process by which the trick of seamless and smooth movement is created from still and discrete images is rendered visible and noticeable. Taken together these videos and others can be seen, at least in part, to be about the medium itself in so far as they focus attention onto the qualities and properties of the film/video through which representation is realised.

It is, of course, not just the formalism and aesthetic techniques associated with structuralist film and experimental cinema that identify videos in this genre. Indeed, music videos draw upon a whole range of artistic movements and practices. For instance, both Nick Cave and Kylie Minogue's "Where the Wild Roses Grow" (1993) and Dido's "Don't Leave Home" (2004) mobilise the story of Orpheus and, in particular, the style of its representation in Pre-Raphaelite painting. Videos such as Peter Gabriel's "Sledgehammer" (1986), Melaine G's "Word Up" (1999), The White Stripes' "Fell in Love with a Girl" (2002), Junior Senior's "Move Your Feet" (2004), Goldfrapp's "Strict Machine" (2004), A Perfect Circle's "Counting Bodies Like Sheep to the Rhythm of the War Drums" (2005), and the entire video work of the Gorillaz utilise the distinctive graphic language of animation, a language which, as Paul Wills argues, can reveal or invent worlds which enact themselves and offer alternative models of perception and experience, to produce specific artistic effects. Moreover, a whole host of videos take up the style, imagery and techniques of art movements in order to make, on the one hand, some kind of social, cultural or political statement, or, on the other, to comment on the big questions that have preoccupied the arts for centuries, questions relating to the human condition, death, beauty and so forth.

However, it is perhaps the imagery, techniques and style associated with forms of surrealist art which can most often be found in the art music video. Indeed, Jean D. Lynch argues that videos which "borrow the techniques" of Dada and Surrealism are "the most interesting." This borrowing can work in a number of ways. For instance, the incongruous imagery of Goldfrapp's "Number 1" (2005), which features the heads of dogs transplanted onto human bodies to make a point about the pet industry, can be traced back to the work of Marcel Duchamp via the photography of William Wegman. The surrealist potential of incongruity is approached differently in the Scissor Sisters' "Take Your Mama Out" (2004) as the dreamscapes of Dali and Magritte are combined with the absurd juxtapositions and bizarre misinterpretations of scale which characterise Terry Gilliam's trite sequence for Monty Python's Flying Circus (1969). Dali's influence can also be traced in the video for the Prodigy's "Breath" (1996), which, like many of his paintings, attempts to depict the unconscious and represent dreamwork. Indeed, the video deploys a series of dreamlike metamorphoses and monstrosities dragged from the subconscious in order to visualise the mechanics of dreamscape, or, more precisely, of a Freudian nightmare: hair grows out of walls; blood bubbles up through a sink; bugs, rats and crocodiles infect the scene; gravity is disengaged as people and objects float towards the ceiling; and throughout the video the band members violently lurch and convulse as if possessed.

The assimilation of surrealist techniques is, of course, only one way in which the 'art' of the art music video is instigated. Whether or not a video employs the anti-illusionist tactics of structural film, mimics the style of a particular art movement or art work, uses the artistic platform of music video to explore metaphysical questions, or simply operates as a unique aesthetic experience in its own right, the main point here is that videos in this genre invite one to engage with them as art works precisely in so far as they mobilise the now familiar forms, practices, strategies and tactics of the visual arts. Indeed, what defines this genre of video is, somewhat ironically, the desire for the uniqueness and individuality associated with works of art. Moreover, it is this desire, and the specific way it is evidenced in any given art video, that works to authenticate not only the aesthetic gestures of the video itself, but perhaps more crucially, the song and its performers. In short, as our culture constantly reminds us, art is a serious business performed by serious artists and discussed by serious people. In associating itself with the art world and co-opting its techniques, the art music video both claims legitimacy for popular music and seeks to install the performers of popular music as serious artists.

As the name suggests, the narrative video is defined by the fact that it tells a story. It can do this in a number of ways, but ways which nevertheless activate forms of visual narration that, on the one hand, variously illustrate, illuminate or extend the lyrical content of the song, or, on the other hand, function independently of it. A useful example of this is Tupac Shakur's "Brenda's got a baby" (1991), the lyrics of which tell the story of a twelve-year-old girl's pregnancy, abandonment of her baby, slide into drug-dealing and prostitution, and eventual murder at the hands of a client. The video which accompanies
the song is almost entirely motivated by the desire to illustrate the story of the song, a story which itself is narrated in a linear fashion with a clear beginning, middle and end. The video begins with a black screen containing the words, ‘based on a true story’, thus not only establishing the expectation of narrative but also claiming legitimacy for the pathos of the story which follows. As we fade into a shot of a young black girl, clutching a baby, walking down the street, the lyrics ‘I hear Brenda’s got a baby’ cue us to associate this character with the Brenda of the song.28 Thereafter, key moments in the lyrical development of Brenda’s story are narrated visually in a way which illustrates the song more or less literally. So, as Shakur’s vocals inform us that ‘her dad was a junkie’ we see a character fastening a tourniquet preparing to ‘shoot up’. Similarly, we are shown images of Brenda during childbirth, alone in a squalid bathroom, while Shakur raps ‘she had it solo, she had it on the bathroom floor’, and later as he tells us that, unable to cope, Brenda ‘threw him in the trash heap’ we see a shot of her dumping the swaddled baby into a garbage can. After being thrown out of home, getting robbed during a crack deal, and turning to prostitution to pay the rent, Brenda’s story ends with a shot of a newspaper heading ‘Prostitute Found Slain’, a denouement reinforced by the lyric, ‘prostitute found slain, and Brenda’s her name’. BRENDA’S GOT A BABY, then, simultaneously operates as a coherent visual narrative in its own right in so far as it contains a set of clearly defined characters existing in a plausible fictional diegesis and a set of events which bear upon those characters, and, in conjunction with the song, as a form of visual narration inasmuch as it illustrates the narrative arc of the lyrical story.

The intimate relationship between the narrative of the video and the lyrical content of the song that characterises BRENDA’S GOT A BABY is not an essential property of the narrative video genre however. Indeed, other videos in this category display a far looser connection between image track and song lyric, or even no connection at all. Both Limp Bizkit’s RE-ARRANGED (1999) and Audioslave’s SHOW ME HOW TO LIVE (2003), for example, articulate stories that bear no relationship to the lyrics of the songs whatsoever. In the case of the former, the video tells the story of the band’s incarceration for inciting a riot and we are shown scenes of the court case, the prison, and their ultimate execution. Unlike, say, Johnny Cash’s ‘Folsom Prison Blues’ (1968) and ‘25 Minutes to Go’ (1968), or Bruce Springsteen’s ‘Dead Man Walkin’’ (1995), the song’s lyrics are not about imprisonment and being on death row at all, but rather seem to be an expression of anger and pain felt in the aftermath of a failed relationship. The latter video presents its narrative through a combination of reworked footage from Richard C. Sarafian’s 1971 film Vanishing Point and newly shot footage of the band driving through a similar landscape in the now iconic white Challenger of the film. What in Vanishing Point was Kowalski’s (Barry Newman) road trip from Colorado to California, a trip which ends in his eventual death, becomes retold in SHOW ME HOW TO LIVE as Audioslave’s own nihilistic journey. Most importantly in this context, though, is that the song’s lyrical appeal to God for guidance has little, if in fact any, relationship to this existential narrative.

Most videos in this genre, however, fall somewhere between the literal narrativising of the story of the song, as in the case of BRENDA’S GOT A BABY, and the complete disjuncture between video narrative and lyrical narrative characteristic of both SHOW ME HOW TO LIVE and RE-ARRANGED. Indeed, most videos in this category combine un-narrativised shots of the band performing the song, shots which literally emphasise and/or visualise aspects of the lyrical content of the song, and a fictional diegesis that often works as an amplification of the story of the song which exceeds the limits of the lyrical narrative. Sara Evans’s SUDS IN THE BUCKET (2004), for example, cuts between either non-narrativised or only partly narrativised shots of the artist performing the song and narrative sequences which tell the story of a couple’s dismay when, to the delight of the local gossips, their young daughter elopes one morning leaving the ‘suds in the bucket and the washing hanging out on the line’.29 While many of the images are directly motivated by the song in the sense that they can be seen as literal visualisations of the lyrics, this does not hold for all of the video’s narrative. Indeed, the fictional diegesis of the video regularly exceeds the story of the song by providing plot details not present in the lyrics. For instance, during the song’s instrumental break and third chorus the images do not proceed from the lyrics but rather amplify the narrative by showing us events from the young lovers’ story – events which are not part of the song. Moreover, the end of the video seems to reinterpret the lyrics in suggesting not only that the young girl was Evans herself but also that, having married her ‘prince’ and started a family, the story repeats itself in the next generation in relation to their own daughter.30

SUDS IN THE BUCKET is an exemplar of the narrative video which combines performance footage with narrative sequences that Britney Spears’s EVERYTIME (2004) is a good example of a video which adopts a somewhat different approach. For this video eschews performance in favour of a more or less self-contained linear narrative. Indeed, the few shots in which Spears is seen lip-synching to the lyrics are not separated from the fictional diegesis but incorporated within it. Furthermore, the video’s narrative does not simply illustrate the lyrics of the song, or necessarily even amplify them, but, more complexly, it recasts them through their visual narration and, in doing so, affects their meaning. In other words, it takes what are relatively ambiguous lyrics about apologising to a lover and asking for forgiveness and anchors them in a much more specific tale of jealousy, desperation and, ultimately, suicide.

Narrative music video, then, can tell a story in a range of different ways and draw upon a host of different techniques to do so. Some are more or less literal
visualisations of the lyrics, some move between images of performance and the fictional world of the story, and others present a far more unitary and self-contained diegesis. Either way, however, the use of narrative in music video is overwhelmingly deployed to authenticate an image of the performer(s). In other words, the kind of stories told, the locations in which they are set, the characters they contain, and the style in which they are shot, work to confer legitimacy not only on the sentiments of the individual song, but more importantly on the place of the performer within the genre of popular music in which they work. So, whether it is the gangsta wisdom of Tupac Shakur, the rock rebellion of Audioslave and Limp Bizkit, Sara Evans' small-town country sensibility, or Britney Spears' pop-pathos, the narrative of the video positions the performer(s) within the symbolic landscape associated with specific musical genres.

(Staged Performance Music Video)

Unlike the other genres of music video which tend, albeit in different ways, to efface the commercial imperatives of the form, the staged performance video both embraces its promotional function and turns it into a virtue. So these videos do not offer an image of apparently unfettered reality, neither do they claim aesthetic legitimacy by appealing to traditions of art making, nor do they seek to tell a story. Quite the contrary, the principal defining characteristic of videos in this category is that they exploit a performance that is explicitly staged for the production of the video, that is to say, the performance of the song they depict is designed for the video and only takes place at all in order that it can be filmed. The performance, therefore, is always rendered as artificial: performers address the camera directly, often lip-synching into its lens; troupes of dancers perform choreographed routines in incongruous locations; action is removed from the real world and transplanted to studios and sets; and even space and time become ambiguous as linearity and verisimilitude are eschewed in favour of the sheer spectacle of the performance. Moreover, the artificiality of its performance is not only clearly signalled to the audience by the video itself, but its pleasures are bound up precisely with the invitation to watch the artists perform for the camera, and, by extension, for us. Indeed, through the choreographed display of song and dance, the staged performance video is often, though not necessarily, a self-conscious attempt to enhance the enjoyment of the song by both showcasing the image and skills of the artist it promotes and, in revelling in the possibilities of its own artificiality, by offering the viewer pleasures which are specific to the form — that is, of course, the pleasures specific to music video.

One of the most obvious ways in which the staged performance video signals its artificiality is by locating the action in a studio, and more specifically, against either a plain background or within a highly stylised, often architectural, studio space. Despite coming from a range of musical genres, Destiny's Child's BOOTYLICIOUS (2001), JXL's remix of Elvis Presley's A LITTLE LESS CONVERSATION (2002), Jet's ARE YOU GONNA BE MY GIRL? (2003), Justin Timberlake's ROCK YOUR BODY (2003), Shania Twain's UP (2003), Kelis's TRICK ME (2004), The Strokes's REPTILIA (2004), Snoop Dogg and Pharrell Williams's DROP IT LIKE IT'S HOT (2004), Kanye West's GOLD DIGGER (2005) and Kylie Minogue's I BELIEVE IN YOU (2005) all stage their performance in either a more or less empty space abstracted from the real world and with few, if any, props. Indeed, Snoop and Williams's DROP IT LIKE IT'S HOT exemplifies many of the features of this kind of video. The overwhelming majority of the action takes place in the empty space of a brilliant infinity cove or against the equally abstract void created by a totally black background. Moreover, even the few props that are used — for instance, a glass of iced water, an ashtray, a scooter, a boat, a Rolls Royce — are also abstracted from the real world and re-staged in the monochrome emptiness of the video's space. Indeed, the staged nature of the video and the performance is reinforced by the impossible presence of a boat out of water and the gravity-defying angle of a parked car. The hyper-stylisation of the video's design strategy also characterises the performances within it. The video is organised around shots of Snoop and Williams, either individually or together, lip-synching to the words of the song, shots of them dancing, often with other dancers, and close-ups of the props which are sometimes directly related to the lyrics, but sometimes, as in the case of the dice and the scooter, are not. Indeed, it is in the orchestration of these three principal components that the video both reveals and celebrates its artificiality. For the video makes it clear that what we are watching is certainly not a recording of a single performance of the song but, quite the contrary, a complex montage of a number of performances and parts of performances. The transition between shots is motivated less by the demands of linearity and continuity than by a desire to put its performers, and an image of their lifestyle, on display. So, in terms of costume, it is not simply the range of different outfits that Williams and Snoop wear in the video that is notable, it is also the promiscuity of the changes between outfits that signals both the fractured nature of the performance and the blatant promotion of the Snoop Dogg brand. And it is not just the clothing that does this, for a significant number of the props are either related to Snoop's biography, as in the case of the drugs and the Crips' 'flag', or, as with the skateboard, the scooter and the sneakers, to official Snoop Dogg or Pharrell Williams merchandising and product lines. Crucially, however, the whole performance is delivered for, or more precisely to, the camera, thus acknowledging not only that its purpose is to be filmed but also that the viewing of the performance is necessarily deferred. In other words, in its stylised presentation of song and dance, motifs of Snoop's gangsta image, and
references to Williams' association with skateboarding culture, the video, as well as its audience, is always acutely aware of both its own artificial and promotional function.

Staging the performance in the abstracted space of the studio is only one way in which the deliberate artifice associated with this genre of music video is made apparent. Other videos in this category locate their performances on what is clearly a set, that is to say, a plausible location designed and constructed solely for the purpose of shooting the video. Yet others use real locations – common ones are the beach, the street, mansions, garages, underground car parks, rooftops, and so on – to stage 'real' performances, performances that are out of kilter with the environment in which they are set. Either way, these videos do not stage their action, which is usually geared around the presentation of choreographed song and dance, in a natural environment or an environment built to look like a natural environment but in which, in the normal course of things, one would not expect to encounter such events. In short, when on the beach, parking your car, or just walking down the street, it is not common to see troupes of professional dancers performing in unison while someone sings a song. So, in the first instance, artificiality is signalled by the dissonance between the location of the performance and the nature of the performance itself precisely in so far as, in the last instance, this conjunction is self-evidently illogical and implausible. 

Destiny's Child's 'LOVE MY BREATH' (2004) is a particularly interesting example of the way this kind of music video explores the creative potential afforded by the embrace of the artificial and illogical not only through the disjunction of setting and performance but by the very impossibility of that performance as well. On one level the video can be seen as a version of what Gow calls the 'song and dance number' in that it showcases 'the dancing talents of singers and supporting casts' in presenting the group lip-synching to the lyrics 'while physically expressing the rhythm qualities of music through energetic and patterned motions'. However, this in itself tells us little about the complexity of the way in which elements of song and dance are staged. Set in deserted city streets at night, the video begins with a backward tracking shot of the three members of the group walking in exaggerated step directly towards the camera. This shot not only establishes the space and time in which the action will take place but also sets up an image of the 'authentic' Destiny's Child, one which clearly draws on the history of their own representation both in previous music videos and in other forms of media as well. This is important in the context of this video because the next two shots introduce two other trios of dancers who, albeit dressed and styled very differently, are also clearly played by the members of Destiny's Child. Indeed, the video proceeds to present its song and dance as a stand-off between these two ersatz groups as each attempts to out-dance the other. As such, it is not just the mismatch between the location and the action that signals the artifice of the scenario, but its impossibility is reinforced as both the performance and performers are doubled through a combination of cross-cutting techniques and visual effects. Tripled, in fact, for the video ends with the return of the authentic Destiny's Child in a demonstration of their superiority and confirmation that the other two groups could only ever be Destiny's Child mangled. In this way, then, by activating such an illogical conceit, the video not only affords the audience access to three different song and dance performances by the group but ultimately works to make clear that there is only one genuine Destiny's Child.

The staged performance video is thus just that – a performance explicitly staged for the purpose of producing a music video. Unlike the other genres discussed above it does not attempt to either pass itself off as something else or, partly or entirely, disperse its promotional and commercial functions. Nevertheless, in a similar, though distinct, manner it does perform a number of legitimating functions. Most obviously, it directs attention to and works to legitimate the multiple skills of the performers it promotes. Often these will be the skills of song and dance and the vocal and physical attributes this involves. However, they may also be less palpable skills such as the ability to look a certain way or embody certain ideals or beliefs. For these videos allow their performers the opportunity to play out, and play with, an image of themselves and are, in the end, really only about exploring the possibilities of that image in relation to the musical genre which frames it. Indeed, what all of these videos do is stage a performance which authenticates an image of the performer that pre-dates the video in the sense that it has already been constructed and circulated through a range of mediated channels, but which is, nevertheless, confirmed and extended through the video.

Hybridity and Authenticity

The four genres outlined above describe the formal and aesthetic features of a significant number of both historic and contemporary music videos. However, this is neither to say that they adequately describe every music video nor that the categories themselves, like any generic category, are not subject to change and revision. Nor, for that matter, do we wish to suggest that the boundaries between the various genres are always clearly defined. Indeed, genres of music video, and the edges between them, are every bit as contingent as those in film, literature and, of course, popular music itself. Moreover, many music videos can be described as generic hybrids, drawing from two or more categories in a more or less self-conscious way. For instance, the Prodigy's 'SMACK MY BITCH UP' (1997) uses restricted narration, a subjective camera, and deliberately shocking images – aesthetic techniques appropriated from forms of art, film and experimental cinema – to tell a disturbing story about one young
woman’s drunken night out and the culture of sex and violence of which she
is part. Similarly, Coldplay’s FIX YOU (2005) also combines, in approximately
equal parts, features of more than one generic category: the staged
performance and the pseudo-documentary. The first half of the video is set in the eerily
deserted streets of London and depicts Chris Martin, the band’s lead singer,
lip-synching to the song’s lyrics. As in many staged performance videos, the
direct address to the camera both explicitly acknowledges that the pro-filmic
performance is staged solely for the purpose of producing a video and implicitly
acknowledges the gaze of the intended audience. At about its midpoint,
however, the video shifts gear and changes genre. For the latter half of FIX YOU
operates as a recording of a live stadium performance inasmuch as it presents
shots of the band on stage, images of the audience, and, ultimately, a sound-
track that shifts from the studio-recorded track, which we hear for the majority
of the video, to Martin’s live vocal and the sound of the audience applauding
and singing along. Indeed, the combination of pseudo-documentary and narra-
tive which characterises Kanye West’s THROUGH THE WIRE (2003), the mixture
of staged performance and narrative diegesis which structures so many videos
that feature songs which form part of a movie soundtrack, as well as the political
critique of Eminem’s MOSH (2004), which not only integrates aspects of
staged performance, pseudo-documentary and narrative but does so through
a complex mix of 2D and 3D animation techniques, demonstrate that hybrid-
ity in music video can occur along multiple axes simultaneously. This kind
of hybridity, however, does not undermine either the conceptual constitution
or methodological efficacy of the four principal generic groupings: pseudo-
documentary, art, narrative and staged performance. Quite the contrary, this
generic schema not only enables one to categorise and analyse videos which
emerge as exemplars of their genre in relation to others of the same group but,
just as importantly, provides a conceptual map against which border disputes
are thrown into relief and patterns of hybridity can be charted.

Moreover, whether or not any individual video is singular or hybrid in
generic configuration, it nevertheless remains the case that it will always perform some function of legitimisation and authentication even if each genre
does it in a different way. In other words, (pseudo-documentary) videos tend
to privilege the skills of the working musician, the art video confers artistic
credibility on the performer, the narrative video situates the performer within
the iconographic landscape of the musical genre, and the staged performance
video reinforces the mediated image of the artist(s) it promotes. But even if,
generically speaking, hybrid videos are more complex, in the end they too work to situate performers within appropriate discourses of authenticity.

This is why genres of music video cannot, and should not, be either collapsed
into, or confused with, genres of music. For any one artist working in any one
musical genre can produce videos across a number of music video genres all of
which can, in their different ways, consolidate and extend the range of ways in
which that artist can be represented and legitimised. One only has to think of
the generic scope of the videos by artists such as Madonna, Michael Jackson,
Eminem, Christina Aguilera and Robbie Williams not to mention a host of
others, to realise that discourses of authenticity are no more tied to singular
musical genres than they are to any given genre of music video. Indeed, the
manufacture of authenticity in relationship to popular music is now far too
complex to be reduced to either consideration alone. One final example will
serve to illustrate this.

Arctic Monkeys are a British indie-rock band who achieved both commer-
cial success and considerable critical acclaim following the release of their first
single, ‘I Bet You Look Good on the Dancefloor’ in October 2005. Since that
time they have been hailed in America by Rolling Stone as ‘UK. Rock Kings’
and by NME in Britain as ‘our generation’s most important band’, as well as
winning a host of awards.32 One of the most notable aspects of the story which
attends Arctic Monkeys’s rapid ascent is the way in which the band apparently
bypassed the usual channels of public relations, marketing and promotion in
achieving their success, favouring instead word of mouth, internet com-
unication and the promotional activities of their fan base. Notwithstanding the
exaggerated nature of some of the reporting of these bottom-up activities,
what remains interesting is the ways in which discourses of rock authenticity
accrued around, and became anchored to, the band from below, that is to say,
not directly imposed by record companies and PR agencies. Given that the
band refused many of the routine means of promoting themselves, in particular
appearances on mainstream television shows, the videos which accompanied
the release of their first two singles became a crucial means of both confirm-
ing and consolidating their claims to authenticity. These videos are generically
and stylistically very different but nevertheless both work to sanction Arctic
Monkeys’s appeal to musical and political credibility by demonstrating that
they have not ‘sold out’. The first of these, I BET YOU LOOK GOOD ON THE
DANCEFLOOR (2005), works squarely within the pseudo-documentary genre to
establish the band’s musical credentials. The video is seemingly shot during the
recording of a performance of the song for transmission on a television show.
It not only deploys many of the conventions of this genre in cutting between
close-ups which emphasise the musicianship of the band and wider shots
which situate this performance in a suitably low-key studio space but also uses
the live soundtrack instead of the engineered version released as a single.
As such, the putative realism of the pseudo-documentary video is mobilised
to produce an image of Arctic Monkeys as an authentic live act who have no
need for lip-synching, make-up and other artificial devices in order to be taken
seriously. By contrast, their second video, WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN (2006),
establishes its legitimacy in relationship to the narrative video. Indeed, apart
from one brief incidental appearance, this video does not feature any of the band members at all, but rather offers itself up to be read as a serious piece of social critique. It depicts the story of the experience of a young prostitute at the mercy of her pimp. We are shown the squalor and privation which characterise her life and the pain and suffering which she feels. Clearly, when the sun goes down is making a quite different claim to the authentic than I bet you look good on the dancefloor, one which uses conventions of social-realist narrative to essay a political critique about the realities of contemporary urban life.

Taken together, then, both of these videos confer legitimacy on Arctic Monkeys as a serious indie-rock band, the former through the documentation of the realities of their working life and their musical skills, the latter through the association with a geographically specific musical scene, the band's home town, and a story about what it is like to live there. The main point here, however, is that two very different genres of music video perform an equally legitimate function for the same band in the musical genre in which they work. And it is this relationship between genre and the process of legitimating certain images as authentic which shifts the study of generic configurations of music video from being simply a taxonomic exercise into a much more complex intellectual question with potentially serious political implications. Indeed, this political dimension of genre is crucial in understanding music video's specific regimes of representation precisely in so far as the genres sketched here provide one of the key frameworks within which, and against which, formations of cultural identity take shape, become normalised, and, in some cases, are challenged.

**Notes**

13. Moreover, as we discuss in the second part of the book, videos which promote hip hop songs which do feature the elements Perry sets out do not necessarily do so in the same ways or have the same political implications.
21. Gow, 'Music Video as Communication'.
22. Gow, 'Music Video as Communication'.