“Cotextuality and Cosubjectivity in Cover Art Videos: Manipulations of Genre, Style, and Musical Expression”

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Research Objectives

1. Subversion, Alteration, and Ironic Commentary
   - To explore how artists:
     • subvert and alter thematic messages
     • create ironic commentary on thematic messages in cover versions of popular songs.

2. Analysis of Performative Gestures
   - To examine covering vocal, instrumental, and performative gestures in relation to the original song and video.

3. Interpretation of Dialogue through Cotextuality and Cosubjectivity
   - To demonstrate the dynamic interplay between the original and cover videos, revealing emergent themes: gender, sexuality, dominance and subordination.

Species of Covers
(Mosser, 2008)

- Nobly humorous
- Obviously humorous
- Straightforward statement
- Undermined by context
- Undermined by changed context
- Different significance
- Audible significance
- New product
- Not entirely a new product

Performative Gestures in Cover and Original Videos

Species of Covers
(Mosser, 2008)

- Vary in terms of tempo, melody, instrumentation, lyrics
- Varies in melody, instrumentation, and lyrics
- Extends and develops original statement
- Extends and develops original statement

Reduplication
- Attempt to provide an exact copy
- Exact copy of music, lyrics, many gestures
- Studio-performance
- Studio-performance

- Audible exact to the base song
- Audibly identical

Figure 1: an example of gestural reduplication in Robyn’s studio reduplication of her original video for “Konichiwa Bitches” fits the criteria of Kurt Mosser’s reduplication “species” (2-3)

Figure 3: “Sensual Seduction”, Verse 1, “I’m gonna get mine before he gets his”, more powerful vocals in a higher register than the original, more authoritative stance

Figure 5: “Konichiwa”, Verse 1, “Thrilla’ in my nilla’, you’ll be killer bee stung”, voice doubled, original video gestures to bee’s “stinger” while Robyn gestures to her lower abdomen in studio version

Figure 7: Introduction, acoustic instrumentation vs. industrial/futuristic electronic effects of the original, use of Britney as highly sexualized to capture viewers’ attention

Figure 9: Chorus 2, “Womanizer”, percussion, yelping, instrumental pause to place emphasis on the word as opposed to the elaborate instrumentation of the original, use of Britney’s choreography to place even more emphasis

Figure 10: Final version of Chorus and breakdown, “Womanizer” in cover replaces “I know just what you are...” in original, multiple female voices replaced by single male voice, elaborate instrumentation replaced by a lack of instrumentation, use of Britney facing lead singer, blowing a kiss

Figure 11: “Sensual” shot illustrates cotextuality (see table left) - stylistic and material interaction - and cosubjectivity (see table below) - thematic messages and the interaction of “persona” and presence

Figure 12: Strong use of the original video contributes to cotextuality - the viewer is reminded of materials from the original song – yet supports high cosubjectivity because of the strong presence of the original “persona”