

“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)

Major Interpretation	Robyn's "Sensual Seduction"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extends, develops, augments the base song • Varies in any terms of: tempo, melody, instrumentation, lyrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Extends and develops original statement ✓ Varies in melody, instrumentation, and lyrics

Reduplication	Robyn's "Konichiwa Bitches"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to provide an exact copy • "Live" performance • Audibly exact to the base song 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Exact copy of music, lyrics, many gestures ✓ Studio performance ✓ 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)

Performative Gestures in Cover and Original Videos



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 4: "Sensual Seduction", Verse 1, "I'm gonna take it slow", stronger, more exaggerated melismatic vocal passage on "slow", use of seductive back-up dancer



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

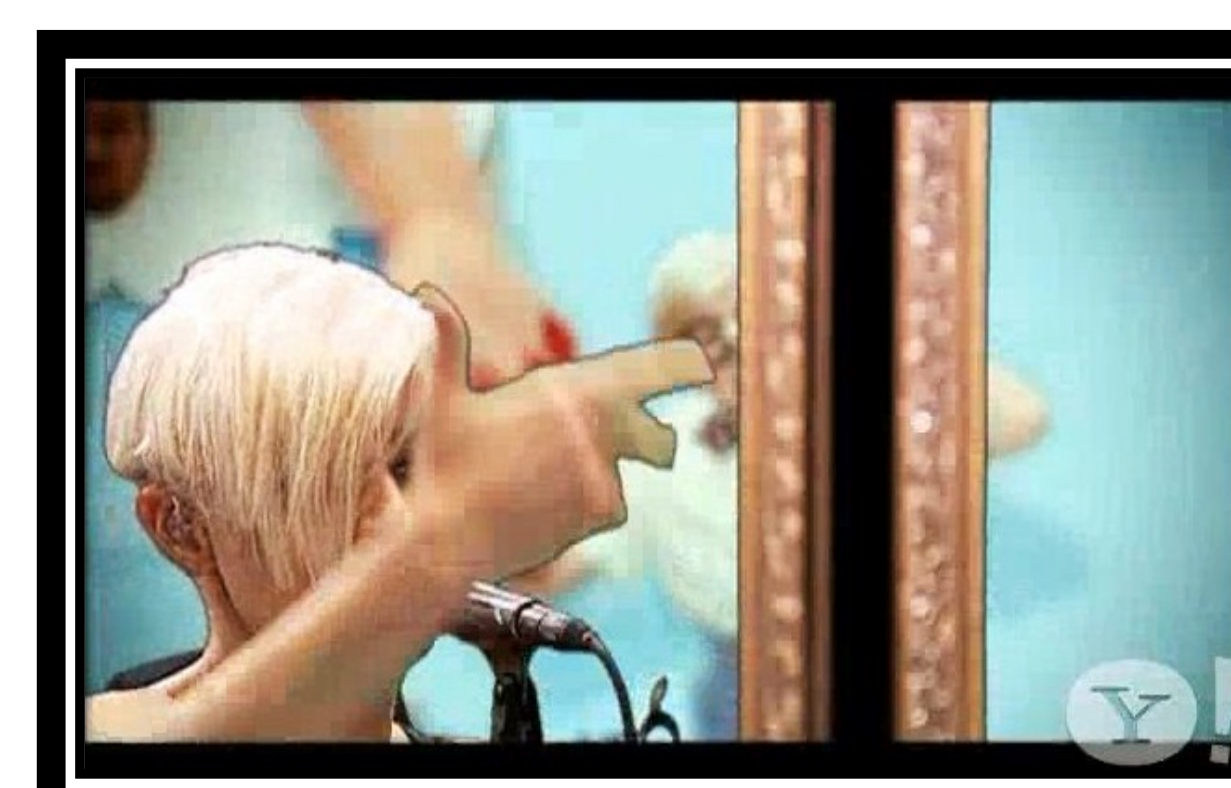


Figure 6: "Konichiwa", B section of Verse 1, "Count you out, like a mathematician", accented eighth note pattern in all parts to represent "counting", duplication of hand gesture

Cotextuality and Cosubjectivity in Cover and Original Videos (Lori A. Burns)

Cotextuality	Snoop Dogg's "Sensual"	Robyn's "Sensual"	Robyn's "Konichiwa"
Voice	Personal, communal	Personal, communal	Personal, authoritative
Lyrics	Male narrative describing female satisfaction in heterosexual relations	Female narrative demonstrating control of sexual satisfaction	Female challenge to male sexual desire and satisfaction
Instrumentation	Lead male (auto-tune, rap), synthesizer (strings, wind, percussion), keytar, talkbox	lead female (rap and melody), drum kit, electric drum kit, synthesizer	Lead female (rap), back-up female (doubling), back-up male, drum kit, electric drum kit, synthesizer
Form	A1, B, A2, C, A3, D, A4	Introduction, A1, interrupted by her own song →	Introduction, A1, B, C, A2, D, A3, A4
Vocal Style	Rap/Singing	Rap/Singing	Strictly Rap
a) Register, Range	a) Medium, small	a) Higher, larger	a) Medium, small
b) Rhythm	b) Strict	b) More flexible on melodic passages, accented on rap	b) Simple, accented
c) Melody	c) Smooth, legato, simple	c) Scalar, melismatic	c) Limited to accompaniment



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

	"Sensual Seduction"	"Konichiwa Bitches"
Cosubjectivity Theme	Snoop Dogg Female sexual satisfaction in heterosexual relations	Robyn Female sexual control, dominance and subordination
Stance	Men need to focus on pleasing female partners	Women can control their own sexual satisfaction in heterosexual relations
Degree and Nature of Use of Original	Strong, very strong during chorus, some use of sexualized back-up dancers	Very strong, especially at gestural moments
Dimensions	Original video occupies around 1/2 of screen	Original video occupies between 1/2 and 3/4 of the screen

Robyn's "medley" Cover Art Video of Snoop Dogg's "Sensual Seduction" and her own "Konichiwa Bitches"

Ironic Send-up	All American Rejects' "Womanizer"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subtly humorous • straightforward statement • undermined by context • different significance • new product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? obviously humorous ✓ straightforward statement ✓ undermined by changed context ✓ altered significance ? not entirely a new product

Parody	The All American Rejects' "Womanizer"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imitation, exaggeration of characteristics for comic effect • Mocks original style • Uses base song as a point of reference • Creates a distinct version • Extension of the ironic relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ imitates gestural, visual, musical characteristics for comic effect ✓ mocks original style ✓ base video is present ✓ creates a distinct version through variations ✓ extends irony through intense alterations of context



Figure 2: The strong use of humour and reference to the original video suggests the cover moves beyond the ironic send-up species



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, yelling, 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 8: Verse 1, "But I know who you are...", contrast of instrumentation, vocals are more subtle, use of Britney's sightline in original video to bring attention to lead in cover band



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

Cotextuality	Britney Spears' "Womanizer"	The All American Rejects' "Womanizer"
Voice	Personal, communal, semi-authoritative	Personal, communal, semi-authoritative
Lyrics	Female narrative regarding a womanizing boyfriend	Female narrative regarding a womanizing boyfriend
Instrumentation	Lead female, back-up female (compressed), synthesizer (sirens, industrial, compressed sounds), electric drum kit	Lead male, back-up male, Small accordion, acoustic/electric guitar, percussion: howling, homemade (shakers, bottles), tambourines
Form	A, B, A, B, C, B	A, B, A, B, C, D → "So Happy Together" 8 bars, B
Vocal Style	Singing/Use of Speech	Singing/Use of Speech
a) Register, Range	Sweet, simple, juvenile	Sweet, simple, juvenile
b) Rhythm	a) Medium, small	a) Medium, small
c) Melody	b) Strict, strong, repetitive	b) Freer, strong, repetitive
	c) Repetitive, conjunct	c) Repetitive, conjunct



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"

	Britney Spears	The All American Rejects
Cosubjectivity Theme	The manipulation of women in heterosexual relations	Undermine Britney's message without necessarily offering a new one through parody
Stance	Modern day men are womanizers	Undermine Britney's message without necessarily offering a new one through parody
Degree and Nature of Use of Original	Strong, mostly at highly sexualized moments in original to attract attention	Strong, mostly at highly sexualized moments in original to attract attention
Dimensions	Original video occupies around 1/2 of screen	Original video occupies around 1/2 of screen

The All American Rejects' Cover Art Video of Britney Spears' "Womanizer"