Communicative contract analysis: an approach to popular music analysis

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Communicative contract analysis constructs an analytic methodology, taking musical semiotics as a theoretical basis, to look at the ways in which pieces of popular music define themselves generically, and how they make reference to other genres. By taking the different components of a sound as referential to parent genres or foreign genres, one can tease out these references in hybrid musical forms. The method is then applied to three contemporary works, The Kaiser Chiefs' *Ruby*, Hadouken!'s *That Boy, That Girl* and Bjork's *Joga*, and the pertinent issues raised in these works are discussed.

1. TRADITIONAL ANALYSIS AND POPULAR MUSIC

Analysis methods are traditional; they are tools to describe the dialogue that a communicative method has with a particular tradition. (This definition of communication will be expanded upon.) Where the object is authored, analytical tools are designed to describe the methods the author employs to construct identity in line with a specific tradition; this fundamentally limits the application of 'traditional' analysis (Western harmonically based, i.e. classical analysis) to the modes of identity creation employed by works in the 'popular music' tradition. The fact that 'traditional musicology refuses to acknowledge popular culture' (McClary and Walser 1990: 280) can be seen semantically. 'Traditional' modes of analysis are moulded to the development of styles through which pieces generate identity in the classical tradition and when applied to popular music, the tools (not built for the purpose) are incapable of the task:

> Traditional musical analysis is a terminology slanted by the needs and history of a particular music; classical music. (Middleton 2002: 104)

Using traditional methods to analyse popular music, by necessity of the technique, skews the analysis unhelpfully toward favouring harmonic and melodic development as the defining features of a work. They also leave out (or place lower in an analytical hierarchy) certain elements that are crucial to the generation of identity in popular music.

Starting with contemporary theories of communication (in order to address these issues) has led to the development of an analytical tool based on the idea of a 'common ground' that mediates communication between an author and an audience. The method itself, rooted in an attempt to produce a tool for popular music analysis in general, shows interesting uses in the analysis of hybridity/fusion and other modes of difference (and may well prove a useful tool for a composer who wishes to work with hybridity).

2. THEORETICAL BASIS

2.1. Semiotics and authorship

The semiotic theory of communication rests on the idea of the creation, in communication, of a 'neutral' (or 'trace'). The collection of influences on the part of the author (the poeitic) and the collection of influences on the part of the audience (the esthesic) are separate, and do not meet (Nattiez 1990: 17). Taken to its extreme, this theory negates the power of the author by claiming that the many interpretations of a text are so dependent on the esthesic that they do not have influence over the meaning taken from it by an audience. Barthes' claim that 'the text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination … the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author' (Barthes 1977: 148) suggests that authorial intent does not determine the reality of the text (its consumption). Rather, it is the mass of symbols in the mind of the audience – the *author* has lost *authority*.

In this (radical) conception one sees the audience taking an authorial position, using the neutral as a kind of mirror through which they create their own meaning. This absolutist theory of the (non-) transference of meaning alienates the author to the point of sterilisation, something which Iser addresses:

> The convergence of text and reader brings the literary work into existence, and this convergence can never be precisely pinpointed, but must always remain virtual, and it is not to be identified with the reality of the text or with the individual position of the reader. (Iser 1972)

As with Barthes, Iser suggests that the text exists at the point of its consumption. However, he suggests that the 'existence' of the work (its consumption or enunciation) cannot be associated with the neutral or the esthesic as fundamental control.

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2.2. Language games

Iser also mentions Sterne's conception of the literary text as 'something like an arena in which reader and author participate in a game of the imagination' (Iser 1972). This comparison to a game is a fruitful one; all communicative interaction can be compared to a game in that it requires (at least) two participants, who understand and are governed by a set of rules, to participate. (There may be several authors, but there is always only one audience member, even in a collective audience.) Wittgenstein's example of a 'language game' explains this in simple terms: We may imagine two men, (a) and (b). They are constructing a house and both men have different roles: (a) is building the house, (b) is fetching (a) the building blocks. Thus their 'language' game is governed by a set of rules; when (a) calls out the block he needs, (b) will fetch it. Providing they both understand the coding system that is used to label the blocks, then (a) calling out and (b) fetching will reach the required result. The blocks may be called breeze-block, brick, tile, slate, slab; they may just as well be called 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5. As long as the coding is agreed upon (consciously or unconsciously) the 'game' will proceed 'correctly' (Wittgenstein 1958: 3e). In this paragraph we have seen exactly this in conscious action – '*We may imagine two men, (a) and (b)*' produces a reference code, which once agreed upon becomes part of the rules of the language game.

2.3. 'Successful' communication[1]

Comparing this concept of communication with the semiotic model outlined above, one sees that for communication to be 'successful' (for the neutral level to be 'correctly' interpreted) there must be a set of rules upon which author and audience both draw. Of course, at the beginning of a communicative interaction both parties do not agree at length on the significance of all symbols – so what is the code and from where is it derived? The code is language, it is derived from tradition – though one might say convention, tradition is a better word as it implies historicity, unconscious agreement.

The rules that must be shared to ensure communicative 'success' are defined by an episteme. The episteme, shared by audience and author, mediates the poeitic and esthesic realms in order to shape textual construction in a manner that it may be consumed:

> The sign, or words, need a community with shared assumptions to confer them with meaning; conversely, a social group needs signs in order to know itself as a community. (Loomba 1998: 35)

It is always important to note that tradition (the formulation of the 'rules') is not an essentiality or inevitability, but a development of codes by and through human society, and according to many factors. Foucault comments that:

> Truth is undoubtedly the type of error that cannot be refuted because it was hardened into an unalterable form by the long baking process of history. (Foucault 1977: 144)

2.4. The Uniqueness Paradox

The idea of the experiential horizon as a mode of shaping perception by creating categories of similarity and difference comes from semiology. Its central idea is that, upon encountering something new, we relate it to previous experience in order to make sense of it (in order to place it in the correct structure of symbols). Barthes suggests that the creative act is the stringing together of existing texts:

> We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' message (the message of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture. (Barthes 1977: 146)

Macheray takes this a step further when he suggests that the text is 'not created by an intention (objective or subjective); it is produced under determinate conditions' (Macheray 1978: 78). Not only is the 'material' of the text a quotation of a cultural source, but everything surrounding its creation (the activities of its creation) are themselves cultural quotations.

We may term the 'experiental horizon' mode of recognition as a kind of 'paradigmatic identification'; it has much in common with Derrida's idea that all that we experience is related by categories of difference. This is the *uniqueness paradox*; in order for something to be unique, it must be similar to something. An object maintains two major categories of difference. Upon encountering a table, for example, we categorise it as 'a table' and as 'this table':

(1) ***A*** table – part of a broad category of objects sharing a deep structure, and thus its difference from 'all of things'.
(2) ***This*** table – its difference from other members of this group and thus its individuality or uniqueness.

One can see this in Foucault's description of *Herkunft*:

[1]It is important to draw attention to the use of words such as 'successful' and 'correct' in reference to the interpretation of meaning. These are to indicate that the audience took the meaning from the communication intended by the author; these terms are, unfortunately, rather loaded. It is not a value judgement on types of *pleasure* taken from the consumption of a text. For example, two people enjoying a piano work may take from it two different types of pleasure, one understanding the harmonic invention and the structural intricacies, another because it reminds them of a loved one who also enjoyed that piece. Though one might say that the former is a more 'correct' interpretation of the work's meaning, one may not assume that the latter is a lesser form of enjoyment, since the text exists *only in its enunciation*.

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> *Herkunft* is the equivalent of stock or *descent*; it is the ancient affiliation to a group, sustained by the bonds of blood, tradition, or social class … Far from being a category of resemblance, this origin allows the sorting out of different traits. (Foucault 1977: 145)

In summary:

(1) The text exists at the moment of enunciation (consumption) and cannot be associated with the neutral as overriding control.
(2) The esthesic produces the reality of the text (at its consumption), but by the assumption of a shared episteme the author can predict where the text will be placed in the audience's experiental horizon.
(3) This episteme is the set of rules (or perhaps connotations) that unite author and audience in the communicative act.

When two parties enter into communication, they unconsciously coalesce in abiding by a set of rules (or rather are forced to abide by rules set out by the episteme); this is the communicative contract.

2.5. A definition of communication

One can then construct a definition of communication (from the authorial perspective) as creating the aforementioned 'tissue of quotations' (structures of symbols) in expectation of a shared episteme. We can define any act of manipulating sets of symbols in expectation of an audience's response (formulated by tradition) as an act of communication (not limited to verbal, but visual art, music, dancing, gardening, furniture design, cuisine, etc.). Thus this mode of analysis rests on looking at how the author anticipates audience response through the modes of difference within the text.

3. METHODOLOGY

This analysis, taking at its centre the predictive possibilities inherent in the idea of the deep structure, must begin by deciding where the deep structure of a work lies, and outlining the paradigm and its axis. Highly specific categories belong themselves to less defined, more abstract (or open) categories. For example, popular song belongs to the paradigm 'song', which also contains lieder, folk song, etc. For the most part, works will not question assumptions as to what constitutes 'song', or indeed 'music'. However, since they might, and in order to leave this analysis method in a position of capability for this eventuality, they are mentioned here.[2]

Communication *(as opposed to natural and unauthored)*[3]

Paradigm: The manipulation of structures of symbols by an author into a form which produces meaning for an audience.

Music *(part of the communication paradigm and opposed to painting, gardening, etc.)*

Paradigm: The music consists of organised sounds and silence, with at least some determined sound.[4]

Song *(part of the music paradigm and opposed to instrumental music)*

Paradigm: The aural work has the voice as dominating influence for most of the work.

Popular song *(part of the song paradigm and opposed to lieder, folk song, etc.)*

Popular song consists of a more defined set of parameters than the above (as one drills deeper, necessarily the paradigm becomes less abstract). It is on this paradigmatic axis that the bulk of the analysis will take place.

Paradigm:

> **Dominant presence**: Vocals (for the most part), lead instrument (occasionally). Singing in a style complementing the tonality, with a large amount of syncopation.
> **Length:** c.3 to 5 minutes.
> **Instrumentation:** Any Western instrument, particularly those associated with the development of rock and roll. Synthesizers, and jazz-associated brass instruments are also common.
> **Time signature:** 4/4
> **Speed:** Between c.75 bpm and c. 125 bpm.
> **Harmony:** Rooted in equal-tempered major, minor and modal constructions. Little modulation.

[2]Initial conceptions of this hierarchy of categories struggled to include 'art' as a heading itself, before its eventual omission. Art is very much defined by an episteme (Oriental tea-making ceremonies, for example), and even by an individual. One can say 'in our episteme, music is considered art', but the category of art is very difficult to pin down, and more importantly unnecessary in the analysis. Some communicative forms are considered art (music, painting, sculpture, literature, poetry, certain types of photography), some aren't (gardening, journalism, computer game design), and some sit in a kind of grey area (fashion, product design, cuisine). The idea of what art is in a particular episteme, and importantly what status is ascribed to the artist, may help to answer other questions, such as why someone is led to create a work that is considered 'art'; however, that's material for another paper.

[3]Though this raises questions; for example, is a natural park unauthored?

[4]Cage's *4′33″* would seem to question this assumption. However, this work operates less as a piece of music and more as a reflection on the paradigm of concert going (whose axis remains completely intact, apart from the existence of determined sound). If there is nothing determined, there is no author, thus no communication and audience. Cage authored the entire *4′33″* experience.

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Rhythm:

Non-harmonic iterative presence: Drums (or synthesised drums).
Harmonic iterative presence: Rhythm guitar, bass guitar, rhythmic keyboard playing, rhythmic synthesizer, etc.
Structure: A close variant of *intro verse chorus verse chorus bridge chorus chorus*.
Production style, technology and its transparency: Highly compressed with little dynamic variation. Vocals dominant in the mix. Often mimics an 'idealised' live sound. Though this is heavily processed, it is also 'transparent'; one notices the individual instruments and hears what they are playing without being conscious of the production technique. In contrast, there are instances where production technology is used stylistically and could be called 'opaque'.[5]
Non-musical sounds: There are many examples of non-musical sounds in pop works; often these are used to present narrative, working as a kind of prologue, epilogue or interlude. Their absence may be considered an *intact* paradigmatic axis, their inclusion can be described as development or substitution and will always recontextualise the listening experience.[6]

Notes on timbral presences

The idea of certain timbral presences in popular music ties together a number of the above parameters; technology, instrumentation, non-musical sounds, rhythm and instrumentation – even harmony, potentially. A timbral presence may be thought of as a musical sound that can't be described as belonging to a 'normal' instrument, and its uses can often be closely tied to a development of technology. For example, the use of scratching in hip hop or the use of (often mimetic) acousmatic sounds as rhythmic creation in glitch music is tied to the technologies of turntables and sampling, respectively. If possible these should be placed in an existing category; for example one would place turntables into the category of *non-harmonic iterative presence* and *instrument* as scratching is a rhythmic device and the turntable an instrument. The samples in glitch music are a little more complicated; they could be mimetic, rhythmic, etc.

It is interesting to note the development of a paradigmatic element through a certain genre. For example, the original use of 'scratching' in its association with DJ'ing and hip hop would be a development on the paradigmatic axis of *non-harmonic iterative presence, instrument* and *transparency of technology*. The presence of the technology (turntable) moves from being transparent – *the reproduction of sound* – to opaque – *an instrument capable of producing its own sounds, which are used rhythmically*. These elements become ubiquitous to the point that their inclusion becomes an intact paradigmatic axis. Once they become defining of a genre they can be used as substitutions on the paradigmatic axis of other styles, for example the scratching in *Dance Lesson No.2* from Karl Denson's jazz/funk album of the same name. Here the scratching is used as a synecdoche to refer to the 'coolness' of the hip hop genre. It is interesting to note the recent release of Izotope's *Vinyl* VST plug-in which can be used to create all the 'unwanted' noise from record players including scratches, dust, electrical hum and warp – sounds which the progression of technology has strived to eliminate in an attempt to become completely transparent.

There are also examples of timbral presences which do not fit into any of the above categories; a discussion of this will occur later.

Subgenres (modes of difference) within the Popular Song paradigm

The genres (paradigms) that are subgenres of popular music create their identity through substitutions on the paradigmatic axis of popular song; predominantly instrumentation (and timbral presences), rhythmic creation and speed. For example:

Indie Song *(part of the popular song paradigm and opposed to heavy metal song, hip hop song, etc.):*
Where a parameter is not mentioned, paradigmatic axis is unaltered from popular song.

Instrumentation: Guitar, bass, (acoustic) drums, (male) lead vocals, some vocal harmonies (not many).
Rhythm: Rhythmic guitar playing, conventional drumming, rhythmic bass guitar.

Once one has mapped the paradigmatic axis of the deep structure, one then compares the song in question to this and decides one of three ways in which the parameters are treated:

[5]Much of Daft Punk's work features very noticeable examples of filtering, compression and even pitch correction. There are also works (such as Belle and Sebastian's *Tigermilk*) where 'lack' of production 'quality' is used stylistically. Furthermore, there are examples where this lack of production quality is a direct consequence of a lack of means to produce 'well' yet becomes an integral part of the aesthetic; for example, Cody ChesnuTT's *My Women, My Guitars*. Cody refused a major record deal because it came with the proviso of a studio re-recording of his entire 'badly' produced album.

[6]Nas's *One Mic* uses the noises of police sirens in the chorus to imply a narrative (which also creates a kind of rhythmic counterpoint). Midnight Starr's *Curious* uses footsteps, street sounds and speech to narrate a story of a man and woman meeting in the street.

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Intact: The axis exists exactly as described by the deep structure (a direct 'quotation' from the parent genre or deep structure).
Developed: The elements on the paradigmatic axis are altered (a modified 'quotation' from the parent genre or deep structure).
Substituted: The elements on the paradigmatic axis are substituted by an otherness in order to reference a different genre, culture, etc. (a quotation from another genre which is *used as a quotation*).

This method is comparable to a sieve, the intact parameters can simply be ignored and the parameters left in the 'sieve' (the developments and substitutions) are those to be discussed.

4. ANALYSIS IN PRACTICE

4.1. The Kaiser Chiefs' *Ruby*

Appendix A contains an analysis of the Kaiser Chiefs' *Ruby* (2007). The analysis, along the above lines, shows us little more than that the work perfectly fits into the expectation of the deep structure of an indie song. Within the song there exists no otherness, no evocation of an 'outside' genre, no attempt to push at the edges of the parameters on the paradigmatic axis. This may well explain the decision to release it as the first single from the Kaiser Chiefs' second album. By doggedly sticking to the precise expectations of the genre it stands in no danger of alienating any audience by evoking otherness or development/invention on the expectations of a form. The song is perfectly designed for the chart success it achieved (number one in the UK singles and download chart); by not substituting/developing any criteria on the paradigmatic axis the song will not jeopardise its marketability to the greatest number of people possible.

Though this method may tell us something of the appeal (or marketability) of *Ruby*, it adds little to the musical discussion of it as all it can do is point out the similarity of *Ruby* to the deep structure of an indie song. A more fruitful use of this analysis method is to look at works that have more elements that are developed or substituted and the questions that arise as a consequence. The two following analyses demonstrate the way that this method can be used not only to analyse works, but to also tease out pertinent issues for further discussion.[7]

4.2. Bjork's *Joga*

Appendix B contains an analysis of Bjork's *Joga*, from her album *Homogenic*.

[7]The analyses of the works are contained in appendices, whereas the pertinent issues raised in them are included in the main body of the paper.

4.2.1. Is sound possible?

A question that arises out of this analysis is the idea of sound source. Is it possible to have sourceless noise? Returning to the idea of the turntable becoming instrumental, once the scratching sound is established as the product of human interaction with a turntable there is an implication of gesture. With many other instruments there will be implications of gesture due to an audience's knowledge of an instrument as the source of sound; synthesis is now common enough that the usual sounds produced by synthesisers ('pure' waves based on square, sine and triangle/saw patterns) are also gestural, or imply a source. What about other sounds; for example the high pedal in the last chorus/outro of *Joga* (or the high-frequency hissing sound used in Bjork's *All is Full of Love*)? Can one perceive sound as 'outside' production; can a sound be heard and not attributed to a source?

As a sign of external reference, one can consider them to reference electronic music or electroacoustic music. However, do they have other significances; mimetic (onomatopoeic) for example? Other issues that need to be analysed are types of panning (static and motional), multi-tracking of voices, etc., that are all made possible by technology, and could be considered opaque instances of technology.

4.2.2. The Bjork paradigm

Joga makes a huge number of substitutions and developments on the paradigmatic axis whilst retaining identity with popular song, which should be impossible. In a sense, Bjork is her own paradigm. What is expected of Bjork is substitution and developments, too many intact axes would mark a song out as not Bjork-like. As a case in point one may look at *It's Oh So Quiet*; a conventional, upbeat swing-like song that was Bjork's most commercially successful single, yet omitted from the fan-elected track listing of her *Best of* album. Could it be that by not making the expected substitutions and references (particularly from electronic and contemporary classical) that the song actually endangered its status as part of the paradigm 'Bjork song'?

Recently she has gone even further; *Medulla* made so many paradigmatic axial exchanges with contemporary 'art' (contemporary classical) music that it caused conflictions on the audience's own experiental horizon who tried to place it in both (and therefore neither):

> I find it difficult to listen to; I don't know whether to listen to it as pop music or as contemporary classical music. (Hargreaves 2004, personal communication)

4.3. Hadouken!'s *That Boy, That Girl*

Appendix C contains an analysis of Hadouken!'s *That Boy, That Girl*. It is apparent from this analysis that

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That Boy, That Girl does not define itself as an indie song by allying itself to the indie music deep structure. Its predominant parameters on the paradigmatic axis have much more in common with the grime (UK hip hop) deep structure of which synthesised bass, synthesised drums and rapped vocals are defining features.

However, for the public at large (and for the band themselves) they are defined as an indie band. Their mySpace page defines themselves as predominantly indie influenced, they are often played on MTV2 (a channel dedicated to rock and indie music rather than MTV Base, its sister 'urban' channel). They are also lauded by NME, who are the major publication dedicated to indie music. Beccy Lindon wrote that 'Hadouken! see themselves primarily as an indie act with a predominantly indie fan base and are quick to distance themselves from the current grime landscape' (Lindon 2007).

James, the lead vocalist, keeps a blog[8] where he writes about different topics (predominantly musical). He describes the grime elements he uses in the music not as a genre definition but a tribute:

> Grime production is in my blood. If something like *That Boy That Girl*, listens as an ironic pastiche of Grime, then this is disheartening to me, because if anything it was intended to be a nod, to pay homage to the genre that I am massive fan of. (James 2007)

He also takes care to note the fact that he may not be as good an MC as that which would be enjoyed by grime 'purists'.

> I have no problem with anyone on the underground who hates the music for what it is. If you think its shit then it is shit. My flows can't compete with the Grime boys (and girls) who have established themselves with years of experience and graft on the pirate circuit. I haven't had that and I never will. It will feel diluted to a purist's ears. (James 2007)

In the comments accompanying a live clip of *That Boy, That Girl* (hosted on YouTube), the debate continues. When one user posts a comment that 'aint he a wigger?[9] jus dun work' (smartalec247 2007), another user leaps to his defence opining:

> he aint a wigger at all what u talking about? He's full on indie (collins89 2007)

There is a duality in the reception of this work. That people call James a wigger, or attack the music as a poor example of grime, shows that people place it within that paradigm. However, that these attacks are rebuked, and that many people (including themselves) claim that they are in fact indie shows that in many minds they are allied with this paradigm. This is a conundrum. Hilary Putnam, talking about defining things by a category of properties, points out that objects can still maintain a particular identity even when a major property has been altered from the deep structure:

> … a natural kind [deep structure] may have *abnormal members*. A green lemon is still a lemon – even if, owing to some abnormality, it never turns yellow. A three-legged tiger is still a tiger. Gold in the gaseous state is still gold. (Putnam 1970)

That Boy, That Girl is a more problematic example than the green lemon. It is as if the lemon has taken on all the properties of an orange, yet somehow retained identification as a lemon. This is possible by neglecting to consider the powerful influence of contextualisation. It is not quite true to say that music is an audible art form, to assume that any work can be completely removed from the effect that visuals may have upon it (especially in today's world of soundtracks, MTV, the Internet and music magazines). Music itself is always immersed in visual and textual media and can never be thought of as simply 'music in its own right'.

Music is never (and has never) been created in a vacuum where only audio exists – the idea of music existing without a visible performer (or as 'pure music') can only date back as far as the earliest phonographic techniques. In the short time since *Bohemian Rhapsody* the music video is seen as an intrinsic part of the music itself – no single would be released without a video as it would cut a large part of its publicity out. Furthermore, the media for dissemination of musical material is as much the Internet and television as radio. The Internet and television, as multimedia entities, mean that music is always surrounded by images (particularly of the performers, or of a *highly authored* appearance of the performers).

In the case of Hadouken! the video, though stylised, is essentially a video of a live performance. This serves to push home the fact that this is a band (the indie tradition) rather than a single MC personality, or a crew (group of MC's) who all at separate times might take the lead in a kind of ego warfare. The video, in addition, hints at indie presences that are *not there* musically. Throughout the video, the band's guitarist is seen to be playing. However, there is no identifiable guitar playing in the song up until the very end, when it may be heard, if indistinctly. The audience member might experience the synth sounds as distorted guitar through what Chion would call 'added value', the psychological phenomenon of the interpretation of certain sounds based on a visual contextualisation (Chion 1994).

Does this also represent an incredible power on the part of marketing strategies and capability – finding themselves unable to sell lemons, have they successfully sold their lemons as oranges? Not entirely; live clips of *That Boy, That Girl* present a very different realisation of the song. Live drums are the dominant non-harmonic iterative presence, rather than sequenced or electronic

[8]http://hadoukenblog.blogspot.com
[9]A portmanteau derived from 'white nigger' and used in a derogatory way.

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beats. A major part of the rhythm is created by the guitarist playing punchy distorted stabs. An analysis of the live version would show a deep structure much more like an indie song with the rapped vocals as a substitution from grime / hip hop.

Before a band is able to receive radio/television play of the record, they exist predominantly as a live band. The primary enunciation of the work will be its live realisation; at this stage, the stage when the band will start to get talked about in publications, it is easier to see why Hadouken! were placed in the indie category. Once adopted by these outlets, and once the audiences believe it to be an indie song, it would be very difficult to persuade them otherwise. To use the metaphor again; a vendor has been selling lemons for a long time. One day, he begins to sell lemons that seem to be more like oranges. However, he insists they are still lemons and the vast majority of the consumers insist that they are still lemons; also the hugely respected publication dedicated to lemons – for the sake of argument lets call it L*NME*O – insists that these are a very interesting new variant of lemon. With this amount of contextualisation that the product is a lemon, the audience member would experience it as such.

5. CONCLUSION

As an addition to the current repertoire of analysis methods, the discussion of external referents that this method provides is a useful addition for discussion of a work's stylistic aspects, particularly hybridity and fusion. It can be used to tease out particularly interesting questions about a work or artist. It also begins to bring into practice the discussion of certain issues such as timbre and transparency of production as stylistic techniques (as identity defining), which is an oft-overlooked but critical aspect of popular music. This 'paradigmatic' method would find excellent complementary uses with an existing neutral level approach as this would cover all angles of the semiotic structure of a work:

> Music … works by manipulating difference, both structurally – in terms of degrees of repetition, variation, and change – and semiotically, in terms of the dialogues coded into the polyphonies of both musical practice and repertory. (Middleton 2000: 60)

However, the method itself isn't yet conclusive. As one digs deeper into issues of conventionality and invention one finds more and more parameters: there are conventional ways of playing, conventional beat structures, conventional bar positions for chord changes, conventional vocal phrasing. The whole issue of lyrics isn't even touched on here.

What needs to be worked toward (along with the completion of modes of conventionality and external significance) is a collaborative analytical technique that takes communicative contract (paradigmatic) analysis, neutral level (syntagmatic) analysis and harmonic analysis to create a full realisation and discussion of a popular music work. This also needs to take into account external references of timbral presences, the significance of panning, a more developed syntagmatic approach to technological use, the significance of double-tracked voices / self-harmonisation. There are still a number of areas that require development but as more parameters are gradually brought into the discussion we approach a more holistic view of popular music.

A further use of this method would be to tease out such issues and question the social, political and/or economic significances of the substituted (or developed) parameters. A blatant example would be the use of a sitar in a Western rock song, the only role of which is to suggest Indian (Asian) culture to be *other*, an obvious orientalist practice. However, other situations may not be that extreme or blatant, but still show techniques of power, manifestations of cultural capital and its exchange and other signifiers of groups and processes of social differentiation. Thus the analysis method can take the analysis of popular music further than an exclusively aesthetic standpoint and contribute to sociological music studies.

APPENDIX A

The Kaiser Chiefs
Ruby

Communication

Paradigm intact

Music

Paradigm intact

Song

Paradigm intact

Popular song:

> **Dominant melodic presence:** Vocals (for the most part), lead instrument (occasionally). Occasional synthesizer lead line in unison with backing vocals. DEVELOPED
> **Length:** c.3 to 5 minutes. INTACT
> **Instrumentation (indie rock):** Guitar, bass, acoustic drums, lead vocals, some vocal harmonies (not many), occasional piano stabs, synthesizer lead line. DEVELOPED
> **Time signature:** 4/4 INTACT

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Speed: Between c.75 bpm and c. 125 bpm. INTACT
Harmony: Modal. INTACT
Rhythm:

Non-harmonic iterative presence: Live drums. INTACT
Harmonic iterative presence: Rhythm guitar, bass guitar. INTACT

Structure: {*intro*} {*verse*} {*chorus*} {*verse*} {*chorus*} {*bridge*} {*guitar solo*} {*chorus*}. INTACT
Production style, technology and its transparency: INTACT
Timbral presences: Absent. INTACT

Discussion of altered parameters

The use of piano and synthesizer accounts for the developed parameters in this work. They are always used sparingly. The piano stabs in the introduction occur only briefly and are mixed quietly. The synthesizer lead line is in unison with the backing vocal line (in a 'call and response' structure). The synthesizer sound, essentially a square wave, sounds similar to an electric guitar and could even be considered slightly mimetic.

APPENDIX B

Bjork
Joga

Communication

Paradigm intact

Music

Paradigm intact

Song

Paradigm intact

Popular song:

Dominant melodic presence: Vocals, contrapuntal strings, contrapuntal vocal melody at end, nothing in bridge. DEVELOPED
Length: c.3 to 5 minutes. INTACT
Instrumentation: Strings, synthesised 'drum' pattern, synthesised ostinato bass pattern, harmonically based non-instrumental sounds. SUBSTITUTED/DEVELOPED
Time signature: 4/4 INTACT
Speed: Between c.75 bpm and c. 125 bpm. INTACT
Harmony: Modal. INTACT
Rhythm:

Non-harmonic iterative presence: Sampled repetitive mimetic 'drum' track. DEVELOPED
Harmonic iterative presence: Contrapuntal strings. SUBSTITUTED/DEVELOPED. Ostinato bass pattern. INTACT

Structure: A close variant of {*intro*} {*verse*} {*chorus*} {*verse*} {*chorus*} {*bridge [instrumental]*} {*chorus*} {*outro*}. DEVELOPED
Production style, technology and its transparency: Processing features of drum track (especially equalisation, bit depth dithering, panning). DEVELOPED. Multi-tracking of vocals. INTACT
Timbral presences: The processing features of the drum track. The bridge is essentially a heavily produced rhythmic track that is semi-mimetic, contains some acousmatic sounds. DEVELOPED/SUBSTITUTED

Developed parameters

Instrumentation/harmonic iterative presence: The use of the bass ostinato figure as a harmonic (and rhythmic) underpinning of the chorus is an unusual feature in popular music.

Instrumentation/transparency of technology: At c.3.35 there is a high electronic sound pedal that occasionally features a glissando. This holds together the end of the last chorus and the outro.

Structure: The completely a-harmonic, a-melodic bridge is unusual. Though the bridge itself may be considered a substitution, this substitution as part of the structure is a development.

Contentious parameters

Dominant melodic presence/instrumentation/harmonic iterative presence: The use of strings is not at all uncommon in all kinds of popular music. However, their usage here (and particularly the more contrapuntal part of the work such as the chorus) is significantly different to the usual block chord harmony following techniques generally employed. This could be considered a development of the expectations of popular music, it could also be considered a substitution of the expectations of classical music.

Non-harmonic iterative presence/production style, technique and transparency/non-musical sounds: The

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rhythmic track used in *Joga* could be considered a development of the paradigmatic axis. Its synthesised sounds are essentially mimetic of acoustic drum sounds and the usage of synthesised drums is common in popular music. The processing techniques used (such as overt panning, filtering and bit-depth reduction) could be considered development also. However, the entirety of the above could also be put under the bracket of substitution, referencing electronica.

APPENDIX C

Hadouken!
That Boy, That Girl

Communication

Paradigm intact

Music

Paradigm intact

Song

Paradigm intact

Popular song:

Dominant melodic presence: Vocals (for the most part), lead instrument occasionally. INTACT
Length: c. 3 to 5 minutes. INTACT
Instrumentation: See below
Time Signature: 4/4 INTACT
Speed: c. 133–134 bpm. DEVELOPED/SUBSTITUTED
Harmony: Rooted in equal-tempered major, minor and modal constructions. Little modulation. INTACT
Rhythm: See below
Structure: See below. DEVELOPED
Production style, technology and its transparency: INTACT
Timbral presences: None. INTACT

Indie song:

Instrumentation: Male rapped (or shouted) vocals, deep synthesizer-provided iterative rhythmic and modal base, occasional synthesis (square wave) lead, sample electronic (or heavily processed) drum loop, guitars (occasional). SUBSTITUTED
Rhythm:

Non-harmonic iterative presence: Sampled repeated drum loop. SUBSTITUTED

Non-harmonic iterative presence: Low syncopated synthesised sounds. SUBSTITUTED

Developed parameters

Structure:
That Boy, That Girl operates on an unusual structural principle for popular music. Rather than a specific verse-chorus framework, it has three different sets of musical material, each of which last for eight bars. It also has five different sets of lyrical material, again lasting eight bars. Throughout the song the different sections are matched to each other, and the song becomes an exploration of the methods of matching the different sets to one another.

Labelling of lyrical content:

Lyrical content	Label
That boy's a Hoxton Hero, Skinny fit jeans and dressed in pink, How he dresses I care zero, As long as he don't steal my drink. That girl's an Indie Cindy, Lego haircut and polka-dot dress, I don't care if she thinks she's indie, How she's different is anyone's guess.	**A**
You've got your skin tights, colours on the floor, With all your white lines, every slut and whore, All the band boys in your specs and sneakers, We got your back, now it's time to blow the speaker,	**B**
I went to a rave and it got real moody, How can a screwface have a good time? Was he deprived of his mother's boobie? I doubt he's lived a life of grime, I went to a gig but nobody danced, Everybody was far too cool, All the kiddies they just stood there, Is it the same at their public school?	**C**
I stay hard like metal, You could never merk me, Dirty like skettle, I kill germs like dettol, Get mucky, But I will never settle.	**D**
I'm an indie limey, Yeah but I like it grimey, And I rave with a grin, I'm not too cool for the next big thing, I dont wanna fuck about, I wanna good time and that's why I'm out, And you look silly,	**Ai (metre and delivery similar to A)**
When you put on your best mySpace pout (Instrumental section)	**Z**

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Labelling of musical content:

Dominant musical content	Label
Square wave, portamento up and down an octave	**1**
Brash synthesised bass syncopated minor 3rd pattern	**2**
Brash synthesised bass syncopated minor 3rd pattern with rising melodic phrase (square wave)	**2i**
Brash synthesised bass syncopated major 2nd pattern	**3**

Structural analysis of *That Boy, That Girl*:

Z1
A1
B2
C3
A2i
Z3
B2
Z2i
Z1+3
a2i
A3
B2i
B2
Z2
Z2i
Z2

Developed parameters

Structure: The highly unconventional structure is a development on the paradigmatic axis.

Substituted parameters

Speed: The faster tempo is a substitution, a synecdoche to evoke a connection to the 'New Rave' movement, which harks back to 1990s rave culture.

Instrumentation/rhythm: The substitution on the parameters are substitution from the paradigmatic axis of grime music, yet as they replace fundamental defining features of indie music can they be considered to be as simple as synecdoche.

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