A Social Semiotic Approach to Communication between Popular Songs and Listeners:

An Analysis of Responses to Six Extracts of Mark Knopfler Songs

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by
June Maxwell

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Introduction

Rationale. Popular songs are the most common form of popular music, and as such they are ubiquitous throughout the developed world where people spend considerable amounts of their time and money on them. Tagg (1999) notes that "the average citizen of the Western world hears three-and-a-half hours of music a day and spends an average of $75 a year on music" (1). We hear songs at home through television and radio, they are frequently piped into workplaces and shopping precincts, we hear them at airports, at the gym, wherever we go. The portability of CD and mp3 players ensures popular songs can be available anytime and anywhere. In short, they are an indispensable part of modern social life.

Moreover, Lull (1987) claims the influence of popular music in contemporary life is not limited to the time spent listening to it. "Consequences of music listening extend into virtually all time periods and contexts" (143). This extensive use of popular music renders it a central part of modern popular culture, and as Walser (1993) suggests, "popular culture is important because that is where most people get their 'entertainment' and information; it's where they find dominant definitions of themselves as well as alternatives, options to try on for size" (xiv).

Popular songs then are a pivotal part of social life and people have a close relationship with them. But what are the terms of this relationship? Tagg (2001b:online) calls for the development of popular music analysis as part of the academic process that will help us understand the communicative relationship between people and popular music. As the situation exists, he maintains that for all the ubiquity of popular songs in public life, their communicative functions are not yet well understood. "[W]e have yet to develop viable means of understanding how all that music in our mass media actually affects people" (online).

As Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) point out, all social activity is semiotic activity (36). So, when people listen to songs, this is also a semiotic

activity that carries with it its own influences. If we approach the popular song communication issue from a social semiotic perspective, rather than viewing music as a unilateral and independent entity transmitting sounds that 'affect people', we can see that song transmission and song reception can both be influential in contributing to it. This means that questions such as those that ask how music affects people, need reformulating. Jensen (1995) points the way forward on this. He has observed that "...mass communication does not reside in media organizations or their discourses, but in the social and cultural practices that constitute their production, transmission, and reception" (38).

Of these three practices, the latter (reception) appears to be least often documented in research studies concerned with popular music, which leads Moore (2001) to claim, "we do not know precisely why listeners interpret particular things in particular ways, nor according to what criteria" (218). Consequently, if researchers are to discover how popular songs and their listeners communicate, it is imperative to investigate exactly what role the listener plays in the social and cultural dynamics of their encounters with songs.

By situating the listener at the centre of the investigation we get closer to the heart of the matter. Booth (1981) makes this point by saying, "[w]e can understand the nature of the things songs say by inquiring into the nature of the response that song awakens in the listener" (14). Therefore, the best way of testing how popular songs and listeners communicate is to analyse listeners' responses to songs. And this is the main aim of this study.

To achieve this aim, the empirical part of this study which is set out as six individual case studies in Part II, includes results from a reception survey where a group of respondents were asked to listen and respond to extracts from six popular songs. Undertaking an analysis of this type of reception survey is an intricate process where a balance must be struck between what the song contributes and what the listener contributes to the communication, because as Jensen (1995) explains it "[t]he question focused by reception analysis, ... is not only what media do to audiences,

or what audiences do with media, but how media and audiences interact as agents of the life of signs in society" (4). The focus of the research in this study then will be on how songs and their listeners interact and on the conditions of that interaction. Specifically, I will examine the semiotic activity arising from songs and their listeners, the means of exchange of ideas at the centre of these encounters, and those processes that show us how communication is achieved.

Feld (1994) indicates that communication involving popular music is not a mere straightforward transfer of information. Rather, it includes a complex array of processes, "it is interactive, residing in dialectic relations between form and content, stream and information, code and message, culture and behaviour, production and reception, construction and interpretation" (78). What I describe throughout this thesis then is a series of these social processes that result from the meeting between a song and a listener.

Listeners' responses to songs are the only trace the communication process leaves behind, so documenting them empirically in this way is useful. As Jensen (1995) puts it, "*reception does not exist for the historical record,* unless it is reconstructed through the intervention of research" (126, original emphasis). Reception studies such as this will be beneficial if they can move towards an understanding of the communicative processes between songs and listeners and at the same time provide a viable means of preserving a systematic record of the results of this communication as evidence of the mass media culture of our time.

I can now turn to the review of the theories and literature that inspired this study and give an outline of the work of those key writers that forms the basis of my social semiotic approach to the investigation.

Literature Review

Useful traditional approaches. Tagg (1987:online) has noted that traditional musicologists have been slow to develop viable theories of music as a symbolic system. Certainly, musicologists like Nattiez 1990, Tarasti 1994, and Samuel 1995, have made valuable contributions to understanding the relation between music and semiotics but their analyses tend to be confined to one domain or genre, specifically, music of the 'classical' tradition. For example, Tarasti's work cited above uses as its source material the music of Beethoven and Debussy while Samuels considers the work of Mahler. Since the musical work of these composers are products of eras and musical practices far removed from our own, and the focus of this study is music used in contemporary practices, these musicological-based studies are useful to the extent that they offer information and opinions about generic communicative functions of musical structures, but perhaps less useful in addressing how these structures acquire meaning in modern social contexts.

A further concern about traditional approaches has been noted by Moore (2001) who argues that conventional theories where most of the focus falls on notated aspects of the music, cannot be so easily applied to the study of rock or popular music. He suggests that more attention should be paid to what is actually heard in the music, to what he calls the "virtual domains" of the "primary text" for instance, domains such as texture, timbre, sound manipulation, etc, "where rock can be at its most interesting" (18). Including these 'virtual domains' enables this investigation to incorporate into its enquiry any element within popular songs that has potential to communicate.

But, more than this, it is imperative as Tagg (2002) suggests, that traditional approaches to popular music studies should be re-designed so that the music is analysed in context. As the situation exists, he believes the "contextual metadiscourse [of music] is seen as the reserve of other disciplines" (online). Nevertheless, studies from other disciplines have been valuable to this study in building up a provisional analytical model. For instance, research from diverse areas of socio-musicology where writers like Frith (1983, 1996), Shepherd (1991), and Green, (1997), have

been very useful in providing the model with a sociological context that informs the meaning-making process in songs. And, in the field of psychology of music, writers like Budd (1985), Howe (1999), Gardner (1993), Storr (1997), Sloboda (1985), Juslin and Sloboda (2001), and others, have contributed much to the question of how humans perceive and understand music.

However, while taking an interdisciplinary perspective is essential to a subject as complex as popular song communication, no matter how helpful the perspectives from traditional sources and the peripheral disciplines are, they do not address the crux of the matter. What needs to be addressed is the semiotic activity between certain musical structures and the listener. Hitherto, there has been a lack of studies dealing specifically with this aspect of popular song reception, perhaps due to the absence of any systematically formulated analytical model that takes account of the social context of popular song use. As McClary and Walser (1990) assert, "...analytical methods [in popular music] are still tied to those aspects of music that can be fixed or accounted for in notation" (282).

Emergent model. Tagg's on-going work (1982a, 1987, 1999, 2001b and 2003) attempts to make good this deficit. His pioneering work provides a basis for a theory and method of popular music analysis in a social context. Tagg has established a research model that can be used by both musician and non-musician analysts, some parts of which have proved especially useful here, in particular, the setting up of the reception survey. In general, Tagg's theories and methods are designed to investigate the link between music and the meanings that audiences ascribe to them and he advocates a semiotic approach as a way of going about this research[1].

Primarily, Tagg (1999:1) is concerned to explicate popular music's "constant use in the everyday lives of ordinary people in industrialised society" where he argues it forms a "public expression and

[1] I have often cited Tagg's references that I obtained from the internet online. For these references I cannot supply page numbers because these are dependent on the choice of format the user adopts to view or to print the article out.

systematisation of the emotional and corporeal". Other writers like Cohen (1993), are also concerned with the value of music in social practice and she suggests that a focus "upon people and their musical practices and processes rather than upon structures, texts or products illuminates the ways in which music is used and the important role that it plays in everyday life and society generally" (127). Clearly, for the study of song communication, an overall approach is needed that can incorporate input from both the musicological and social dimensions.

Tagg's analytical model focuses on the musical dimension of songs, and songs are aggregates of multiple sound sources that consist of more than music. As Hodge (1985) cautions "[s]ong is a multi-semiotic form of discourse, consisting minimally of an interaction of words plus music, so the study of either in isolation will not be adequate" (121). Therefore, if Tagg's theoretical approach is to be adopted, it must be supplemented with additional theory and methods that can accommodate the analysis of these sound sources as well as song lyrics, which for some listeners may be their primary means of interpreting the song.

In order to construct such an analytical paradigm, one that is compatible with integrating lyrics and all other musical parameters of songs as well as the social practices that surround songs and bring these into the analytical frame, I have drawn on the work of theorists from musicology, social semiotics and linguistics.

In musicology, aside from the work of Tagg that I have already mentioned, I also often refer to theories advanced by Cooke (1959). I have found his work helpful in forming a substantial exegesis of musical structures and their potential for communication, especially in the semiotic sense that I pursue here. However, some aspects of Cooke's work have been critiqued and found wanting (see Cook and Dibben, 2001). The main criticisms are that he tends to imply that music directly expresses emotion, and in so doing, he by-passes its cultural mediation. Also, although Cooke's source material is mainly drawn from music of the Western art tradition, he often implies the concepts to which it pertains are universal. With these provisos, Cooke's work has nevertheless been informative to this study as a whole.

Social Semiotic Paradigm. In understanding how meaning from songs can be made in a social context, the theoretical work of Hodge and Kress (1988) has been important. They take as their object of study the process of semiosis (making meaning) as a social phenomenon and their work has allowed me to understand a complex set of interrelations between semiotic systems and how these systems are applied to meaning-making in all social practices.

Another social semiotician, van Leeuwen (1999), has tackled communication issues in speech, music and sound from a systemic-functional standpoint that he has built up around the work of the linguist Halliday (1978, 1985). I base much of this investigation on what van Leeuwen (1999:4) terms 'semiotic resources'. He uses this term (as I shall use it from now onwards) to represent methods of communicating (that are systematized to various degrees) within the domains of music, speech and sound that people can access in order to interpret (or express) messages. For example, in the domain of sound, he explains how "...a semiotics of sound should describe sound as a semiotic resource offering its users a rich array of semiotic choices, not as a rule book telling you what to do, or how to use sound correctly" (6). So, when they interpret songs, listeners may refer to more than one communication system and use their experience of communicating in everyday social contexts to arrive at an interpretation of all the music, sound and speech that is present in songs.

In this study, I hope to show some semiotic resources (from the range of semiotic resources) that listeners can call upon when they interpret songs. But, as van Leeuwen (1999) says, and as we will see later from the respondents' comments in Part II, depending on the context, the extent of choice regarding which resource the listener implements to interpret the song will vary. This is because if listeners conform to tradition, they are more likely to make choices that are conventional, in fact, some choices may become almost compulsory for them (8).

Multimodality. Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001:4) multimodal discourse theory of communication is the social semiotic theory that forms the

bedrock of this investigation. It is this theory that I draw on for the central premises of the thesis. The approach of these authors to the understanding of communication has been facilitated by their observations of modern social practices. In particular, they have reacted to the way in which mass media products are now "represented" by many systems or "modes" of communication simultaneously. So that what were traditionally presented in mono-modes, have evolved into multi-modal presentations. That is to say, where newspapers and magazines that were once only produced in black and white print are now full of colour photographs, where music videos mean popular songs use the visual mode as often as the aural. Moreover, the advent of digitization means the use of these multiple modes can now be controlled centrally in a one-stop-shop digitization process.

This situation has led Kress and van Leeuwen to collate a range of semiotic theories from different forms or modes of communication under one overarching theoretical framework and establish their multimodal theory of communication. This theory explains the rules behind separate communication systems and forms them into one system where "...common semiotic principles operate in and across different modes..." (2). They have therefore established a theory of a semiotic system that explains different ways of expressing and interpreting meaning but through the same semiotic principles whether this involves words, images or music or any other means of communication.

In this work, Kress and van Leeuwen treat expression and reception as equally active communication processes where "semiotic action is not confined to articulation: we treat interpretation as a semiotic action, and do not in principle make any categorical distinction between the two" (40). The consequence of applying this inclusive rule here is that the analysis of song reception can take on a more symmetrical structure with the semiotic features of the song and the interpretive work of the listener each having potential to influence responses to songs.

Taking a multimodal approach means that when analyzing song responses analysts should be alert to the possibility that listeners may interpret songs by using any number of communication systems or

semiotic resources they have available to them. By employing the same set of semiotic principles, listeners may interpret meanings through a song's musical features, through the semantic aspects of the lyrics, through any number of sounds produced by the instruments or the human voice, or by whichever other semiotic resources (s)he employs in the act of interpreting.

Visual Imagery. The empirical findings in this study will show that visual imagery is another of Moore's (2001:118) "virtual domains" that can have a potent communicative function and can influence listeners' reactions to songs without any trace of it showing up in musical notation. The fact that songs can create visual imagery is a reason Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) work in visual semiotics has been invaluable to this study, not only in supporting the concept of visual images in songs, but informing the multimodal communication system involved in song reception.

One related point arising from their work in visual semiotics that I observe throughout this thesis, is that the sign is not considered as the pre-existing conjunction of a signifier and a signified to be recognised and used as a united entity in the way that signs are usually defined in semiology. Rather, it is "a process of sign-making in which the stratum of the signifier and the stratum of the signified are relatively independent of each other" (7). Therefore, all the musical, lyrical and sonic structures I discuss from now on will be treated as semiotic signifiers that have *potential* for meaning, a means of suggesting a signified, rather than stating a signified outright.

Communicative functions. In Part II, when I investigate the semiotic features of the six reception survey songs and how the respondents have reacted to these, I draw on the concept of communicative functions originally devised in linguistics by both Jakobson (1960) and Halliday (1978, 1985).[2]

[2] Appendix 4 contains further details of each function and an example of their uses.

Jakobson (1960) pointed to six communicative functions in language: Referential (gives information); Expressive (provides emotive content); Imperative (issues commands); Phatic (creates relations); Metalingual (refers to interaction) and Poetic (foregrounds aesthetics). Although each function has a separate communicative role, all of them are likely to be present in every communication, but one will usually be more noticeable or will dominate the others. Halliday (1978, 1985) on the other hand, refers to three metafunctions: The Ideational (identifies objects or people and connects them); the Interpersonal (establishes relations between text and readers) and the Textual (coalesces all functions to form a text). These metafunctions derive from and sometimes overlap with Jakobson's (1960) communicative functions and like those, aspects of all three metafunctions are found in each communication event.

The analytical efficacy of these functions has already been tested by their application to other semiotic-based studies. For example, Middleton (1990) has successfully applied the notion of communicative functions to popular music. He argues that "popular songs offer positions to subjects" (251) on the basis of Jakobson's six functions. He suggests that depending on whichever one of the functions is most active in each instance, the music could invite the listener either to feel emotion, or to participate with it in a physical sense, or through an awareness of time, etc. (251).

In a study of music genres, Fabbri (1982:56-57) also refers to Jakobson's functions, using them to explain how the rules of genre are executed. He suggests that the type of music frequently used in films to create moods is often found to be music that accentuates the expressive function. While an emphasis or predominance of the imperative function, usually defines dance music and so on.

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) have adapted Halliday's metafunctions as part of their semiotic investigation into the visual mode where the functions are used as analytical devices to explicate relations between visual representations and the viewer.

Interpretation. The approach I adopt in order to analyse the responses made by the reception survey respondents is supported by the work of ethnomusicologist Feld (1994). In this essay Feld outlines his account of the complex procedures present in popular song reception and gives an explanation of the different and varied processes that audiences use to interpret popular songs, he calls these "interpretive moves" (86). Feld also adopts a social framework to explain how communication takes place between popular songs and listeners and considers the results to be "meaningful interpretation explicitly conceived as social activity" (77). The typology that Feld assigns to his notion of 'interpretive moves' provides my analysis with a systematic method of discussing in coherent groups those comments made by the reception survey respondents.

Finally, the musicologists, McClary and Walser (1990) have decried the lack of holistic approaches to music analysis and have suggested the following to future analysts. "If one can take a piece of music that provoked a reaction and then analyze it in a totalising way (laying it out as text, labelling its chords, tracing its semiotic parts, reducing it to its ideological agenda), then perhaps it won't bite" (286). If analysts are to take their advice and make a serious effort to find out how audiences interrelate with popular songs and the meanings that result from that relationship, it is crucial that we employ an approach that draws on a wide spectrum of investigative research in popular music. We must move beyond the musicological quest for what music 'means' and explore further the array of cognitive, sensory and social aspects involved in constructing that meaning. Approaching communication between songs and listeners from the series of related theories and methods outlined above while retaining the framework of one overarching multimodal theory of communication should achieve this goal.

Methods

To fulfil the study's main aim of explaining communication between songs and listeners, analysing the responses made to the six song-extracts by a group of respondents required a series of staged research activities. The next section explains these stages.

A reception survey was set up where respondents were invited to listen to six song-extracts and comment on them in any way they wished. In organizing this survey, I was guided by the example set by one of the rarely undertaken academic surveys of this kind, this is the recently published empirical work of Tagg and Clarinda (2003, Chapter 3:online) However, before I discuss the details of the reception survey procedures, I will explain the basis for my choice of songs.

Tagg and Clarinda reasoned that because it was "...still early days for the semiotics of mass media music, that it would be methodologically well advised for them to study widely accepted forms of music within Euro-North-American mass media culture" (online). I therefore set out to choose songs from the repertoire of the band Dire Straits (DS)[3] whose type of music is also "widely accepted" by the fact that it is regarded by popular music specialists as having a middle-of-the-road style and that it has been commercially successful in global terms.

In the 1980s Dire Straits were highly successful in the UK and they were immensely popular throughout Europe, the USA and many other parts of the world. Their album *Brothers in Arms* (1985) was one of the decade's biggest-selling albums in the world. It reached number 1 in the US charts and stayed there for nine weeks. It also spent three years in the UK charts. The group toured the world from 1985 to 1986 playing to packed stadiums, and because the shows were all sold-out, the performances were often broadcast on radio to meet the demand from those without tickets[4].

[3] The group often changed its band members on different albums, but the name of the lead guitarist, Mark Knopfler, who wrote, performed (and often produced) all the songs included in this project is synonymous with that of the group and I reflect this in my discussions of the songs.
[4] Information supplied by: music.lycos.com and MK News.com accessed on 8-7-04

In July 1985, DS performed three of their biggest hit songs (included in this study) at the Live Aid rock concert that took place in front of a packed Wembley stadium. The spectacular gig was televised for 14 straight hours to a global audience estimated at 1.5 billion people.

The type of songs the group is renowned for tend to straddle genres from easy listening, folk, Celtic, country, country-rock, pop and rock. They are then what Lull (1987) claims the music business would call 'crossover artists' (160). The wide appeal and familiarity of Dire Straits songs then suggests that this is the type of music that fits Tagg and Clarinda's criterion for music that is "widely accepted" by large heterogeneous groups of listeners as typical of popular songs in Western culture.

One further reason makes this group's music appropriate for this study. They started recording in the year 1979 but 1985 saw the height of their popularity and it was also the mid eighties that heralded additional methods of popular music transmission, for example it was around then that the cable television channel MTV started broadcasting popular music over 24 hours in the UK. Also, with the 1983 technological advances in sound production that included the digital synthesizer and the recording techniques of the Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) system, the decade ushered in new ways of producing music; it was as Eiche (1987) calls it "...the birth of a new era in music" (47). Many of the songs this group recorded incorporated these newly introduced ways of making music.

This same wave of technology also brought new ways for audiences to receive music. The introduction of the music video added a visual dimension to what hitherto had been strictly aural communication and DS was one of the first British groups to release a music video. They are also closely associated with the first batch of popular music to be available on CD, which at the time was another novel way of consuming music.

It is because this group were in the vanguard of musician-performers who embraced technological advances and an array of novel ways of

producing and presenting popular music and because their music appealed to millions of people and the fact that it is still frequently played today, that these songs provide appropriate source material for the study of communication through popular songs.

Tagg and Clarinda excluded music they assumed would be immediately identifiable by respondents because their aims were to associate meanings to musical structures without benefit of the respondents' knowledge of the music. But, my aims were to seek evidence for ways that songs and people communicate, so for my study, it was appropriate to include songs that were likely to be familiar as well as songs that were not likely to be recognized. In relation to this point, the songs chosen are now approaching twenty years old and since those who took part in the survey were drawn from age groups ranging from 20s to 70s, it is likely that some of them would remember them (or know them) and others would not.

The six survey songs chosen included two from the *Brothers in Arms* (1985) album. Song 1, the single 'Brothers in Arms' (BA), and Song 5, the hit single 'Money for Nothing' (MN), which were both successful the world over. Song 2, 'Romeo and Juliet' (RJ), which comes from the album *Making Movies* (1980) also had global chart success.

A further two songs are taken from the *Communique* (1979) album. These were not released as singles and the album had only moderate success, selling around 3 million or so copies. These were, Song 3, 'Angel of Mercy' (AM) and Song 4, 'Portobello Belle' (PB). Song 6, 'Irish Boy' (IB), comes from a track from the album *Cal* (1984), which is a soundtrack to a film of the same name. This is a Mark Knopfler solo album and not a Dire Straits release. The film was not a particular box office success and the track was not released as a single. These three songs then were not likely to be known to the survey respondents.

Once the six songs were chosen, I was able to follow some of the procedures set out in the empirical work of Tagg and Clarinda (2003), to arrange the reception survey.

Reception Survey. Tagg and Clarinda presented their respondents with ten short extracts of music in quick succession with only a few seconds break between each piece. They explain the purpose of this was "obtaining the greatest possible immediacy of reaction to the music". However, they were only able to analyse responses to four of these pieces in depth. I had significantly fewer respondents and so included six song-extracts, but I followed their example and limited each extract to approximately one minute in length, although some are a little longer or shorter so that they are not cut off mid-sentence or mid musical phrase.

To include a wider range of the songs' communicative features, I also endeavoured to achieve as they advise "variation in mood and character between the pieces" choosing six songs apparently different in characteristics. Also, the short extracts were drawn from different sections of the songs to vary their stylistic features and reduce any repetition that might have occurred if, for instance, I had drawn the extracts only from the introductions to the six songs.

The extracts were compiled onto a mini disc in a recording studio leaving a two- to three-second gap between them and including a gradual fade-out and fade-in of each extract. When this was done I documented the principal musical dimensions that I could identify in each song-extract, as follows: 1) Its structure 2) Its key signature 3) The beats per minute and tempo 4) The instrumentation present 5) The vocal expressions and 6) The lyrics. To make some of these observations I enlisted the help of a professional musician[5].

Since many of these survey procedures were adapted from those designed specifically for the Tagg and Clarinda's study, I thought it important to conduct a short pilot survey to test them for suitability for this study. The pilot took place in the winter of 2001 on the island of Jersey. I recruited 18 respondents (nine male, nine female) from a class of mature students at a local college where I taught. They were all in their early to mid-twenties and they were studying Banking Compliance Procedures at the college. When the survey took place all the

[5] This was Haruko Noritomi, a well-known a classical celloist in Japan (with the advantage of perfect pitch)

respondents were located together in a classroom. I played the song extracts to them on a central music system and asked them to complete the following task, worded as it is here [6].

> There are six short extracts of popular songs on the disc. Please listen to them and if you can, visualise a screen in front of you. According to the song, write down whatever you imagine is happening on the screen. Don't worry about using complete sentences. You can comment on any aspect of the extract you wish, the music, the lyrics, instruments, vocals, or any attitudes, moods or meanings the songs conveys to you.

Many obstacles were encountered in the pilot test. The multi-tasking of listening to the music, visualising action on a screen and writing down responses in a short space of time was onerous for some respondents. Despite my assurances before the survey began that it was not a test, many of them thought the aims were to identify their musical abilities and were anxious to give the 'right' answers. Others thought it was to determine what kind of music they liked so they were keen to express their preferences for some songs and not for others. They often interrupted their listening to ask me questions while the songs were still playing and so missed out on listening to some parts of them. These interruptions also disturbed other respondents.

On collecting the written responses, I found some were quite long narratives, and others were indecipherable or incoherent and I was not able to go back to the respondents to clarify them.

As a method of identifying strengths and weaknesses in the survey procedures, the pilot proved invaluable. By witnessing the procedure in practice, I learned that I had to make the initial instruction clearer, and make the task of listening easier by not asking respondents to visualize a screen. Tagg and Clarinda's study was based on film music, so the inclusion of a screen was not appropriate in this instance. Further, as researcher, I had to take over the writing task to make sure I could read the respondents' comments back.

[6] This is similar to what Tagg & Clarinda use in their study but it is also part of the method that Tagg advocated during his course on music semiotics at the University of Liverpool in the summer of 2002.

Main Survey. The main survey was also conducted in Jersey during the following summer (2002). To keep the volume of responses manageable at the analysis stage, participants were limited to fifty. The respondents were recruited from the largest employer in Jersey, an international bank (where I worked). Some were co-employees, from senior executives to cleaners and others were customers of the bank. My selection criteria were non-random and somewhat purposive. The advantage of Jersey's cosmopolitan population enabled me to select respondents from 14 different nationalities, which would give me the opportunity to test the consistency of responses across these cultural boundaries. I also chose respondents who had different types of musical experience to discover if that made a difference to how they responded to the songs.

I kept the ratio of men and women equal, but I decided this time to make sure the respondents' ages varied. This was because the pilot respondents' age group was the same, and this might have influenced their responses in one direction. I therefore chose respondents on the basis of their mixed ages, mixed nationalities and mixed musical experiences. So, the sample did not directly correspond with known distributions in the Jersey population.

Some of the respondents' personal details, e.g, name, age group, any pertinent musical experience etc, were recorded onto a Respondent Profile Chart as Example 1 below shows (see Appendix 1).

ID	*Sex*	*Age Group*	*Nationality*	*Musical Experience*
1	M	30	Portuguese	Part-time guitarist
2	F	20	British	----

Example 1

Although the respondents came from different parts of the world, each of them was working in Jersey's predominately Western environment and culture. Therefore, although they all brought different cultural influences to bear on the reception of the songs, they all understood and had direct experience of the English language and how popular songs are used in a Western environment. All the respondents were also fluent enough in

English to understand the instructions I gave them in the survey and to answer the questions competently.

To obviate the type of concerns that were felt by the pilot respondents about being tested, and to help put the main survey respondents at ease, I changed the wording of the instruction. I made it less formal but kept it as clear as possible to ensure they knew exactly what was required of them. I was guided in this by Lull's (1987) opinion that amongst other things, popular musicians are loved "for their ability to 'speak' to their audiences" (11). So, for the instruction given in the main survey I used the vernacular term 'say' to explain the kind of communication I was trying to get at between song and listener. I had explained the procedure to each of the respondents when they were registered for the survey, but immediately before it began, I read out the following instruction to them again:

> I'd like to record your responses to some songs. It doesn't matter if you know the songs or not, or whether you like them or not, I would just like to know what these songs say to you. You can comment on any aspect of the songs that you want and I'll write your comments down, but I won't have time to write down long sentences. There are six songs in all and you'll hear a part of each one with a few seconds gap between them. You can start to speak whenever you want.

I used this same wording with each respondent.

The changes I made between the pilot and the main survey meant that these respondents only had to think about the songs; that is to say, they had nothing to imagine on a screen or to write down. However, although they were not asked to visualize, we will see from the responses they made that they often did. The above instruction was the only information about the songs the respondents were given.

To come as close as possible to a leisure-listening situation, a quiet and comfortable hotel lounge was used as a venue. These conditions did not correspond exactly with either an ordinary domestic or social situation where popular songs are usually heard, but there were certain advantages. The hotel venue meant there were no distractions and the respondents could focus on the songs. The survey therefore combined

the benefits of a structured laboratory-type of experiment as well as a relaxed informal interview because it was conducted in an open-response or free-induction format and the respondents were allowed to comment freely in their own words[7].

The respondents undertook the reception survey one at a time on different days, so they were not influenced by each other's answers. To help respondents talk about the songs, I played two well-known ones first. They had a choice of listening to the songs wearing headphones or through a music system and all of them opted to listen through the headphones. I therefore instructed them how to operate the mini disc player and advised them that they could stop the disc between songs if they wanted in order to gather their thoughts. Many of them found this useful; some stopped to speak after each song, others waited till the end of the six extracts before speaking. Therefore some respondents' reactions to the songs were immediate and others delayed making any comments until they had heard all six songs, but this brief delay did not appear to affect how they responded to the songs.

The results of the pilot indicated that I should include hitherto unanticipated questions into the main survey. For instance, in the pilot only two respondents made a cursory and general comment about the lyrics of the songs and this was an unexpected result. In the main survey therefore after the respondents had finished listening to the songs, they were asked the following questions.

1) 'How important are lyrics to songs; very, quite, or not at all'?

Also, in the pilot, a pattern began to emerge (especially in response to two of the songs) that hinted that some of the comments respondents were making, were gender-related. This led me to include the following question in the main survey.

2) 'Do you think any of these songs are more applicable to male or female listeners, if so which ones'?

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[7] I rejected the option of multiple-choice questions on the same basis as Tagg and Clarinda (2003:online) rejected them, that is, that they restrict response options.

In the pilot, some respondents mentioned that they were familiar with some of the songs. This next question therefore was included in order to be clear about how many respondents may be basing their comments on their prior knowledge of the songs, rather than on this one hearing of the extracts.

3) 'Are you familiar with any of the songs'?

Response data. The way respondents reacted or responded to each song-extract was usually with a series of comments, such as 'happy song' 'good guitar', and so on, with only occasional longer sentences. The fact that most of their comments were brief appears a clear indication that they were complying with what I had told them at the beginning of the survey about not having time to write down long sentences. But, they may also have been due to the fact that they were all wearing headphones at the time, undertaking a survey and not engaged with me the way they would have been in a more typical two-way conversation with a friend.

All the respondents' comments were sorted out into the words or short phrases they used, omitting any vocalized pauses or filler-words like 'er', 'um' etc. These were regarded as the respondents' 'salient comments' and were typed into a table, with a separate sheet for each song (see Appendix 2). This included, the song title: respondent identification numbers (ID) 1 to 50 and the number of salient comments each respondent made.. The highest number of these comments given to any song from any one respondent was six, therefore for each respondent six separate fields were created for each song, as shown in Example 2 below.

ID	*Responses to Song x*					
1	mountains	swooping guitar	depth	relaxed	travelling	very visual
2	associations	imagery	deep voice	good guitar		

Example 2

To undertake the analysis, I grouped these words and phrases made by the respondents along with similar words and phrases that other

respondents used in response to the same extract. For example, I might have grouped together a salient comment of 'happy' from one respondent with the salient comment of 'cheerful' that came from another respondent in order to discuss them in relation to the song's mood through what Tagg and Clarinda, (2003:online) refer to as a "response-type". This method of sorting gave me sets of data to work with in the form of groups of comments that I could discuss in relation to whatever semiotic activity was at issue.

There were now two sets of data in table formats, the respondents' profiles, age, music experience, etc, and the groups of salient comments they gave to each song. The identification number of each respondent enabled the cross-relation of each comment back to the respondents' profiles. It provided information on whether one song elicited more comments from females or those in the 30s age group, or of French nationality, etc. Where any such respondent-group made the same comment in significant numbers this is often discussed as an issue in the case studies in Part II.

Documentation of semiotic features in the song extracts. Until the reception survey was complete, I had not identified or documented any semiotic features of the songs other than those general features, such as tempo, key, etc discussed above. This is because, those signifiers in the songs I eventually identified as significant and relevant to the responses were suggested by a triangulation made up of 1) the salient comments of the respondents, 2) the theories outlined in Part 1, and 3) my own investigative work in putting these together.

Although I do not in the main use musical notation as a basis for analysis, from time to time, I have used simplified musical examples to explain certain semiotic aspects of the music. The purpose of these examples is to highlight (for readers with or without notational expertise), those particular stylistic or semiotic features that are discussed in the written text.

Organisation of Thesis

The central argument of my thesis is presented in two related and equally significant parts. Part 1, contains the theories and analytical methods I employ in the study. From this part a theoretical position emerges that communication at the interface between songs and people is constituted and influenced by social, cultural and physiological imperatives. In Part 11 this position is tested by examining the comments of a group of respondents who listened to the six songs in a reception survey, and by discussing those comments in light of the theories advocated in Part 1.

Part 1

Chapter One - Media, Modes and Popular Songs

This chapter is organized in three sections. The first section explains the structural aspects of songs; it suggests that what constitutes their textual dimension is a combination of the sounds of physical media and the application of certain modes as communication systems. It explains the way different modes can be interpreted either through a set of formalized rules or by the use of less formal semiotic resources. It also explains the communicative capacity of the different media that are used in songs and their potential to relate to the listener in various ways. At the end of this section I touch on the interpretation of songs as multi-modal representations where the listener is more likely to get the gist of the song as one comprehensive signifier, rather than perceive each medium or mode as a discrete signifying entity.

In the next section I look more closely at the musical dimension of songs, and explain how the separate elements that each have their own special expressive abilities give music its specificity and its ability to signify and relate to the listeners' social, cultural and physiological environments in special ways.

The last section of this chapter concentrates on how the media and modes of songs are transformed as they are used in everyday life; and

how understanding and relating to music and songs in their coded forms is part of everyday social practices for most people.

Chapter Two - Perspective

This chapter is able to develop my theoretical position further by suggesting that particular configurations of the media and modes in a song's textual make-up will predispose it to signify a certain perspective, so the listener is likely to hear the song from one point of view. To strengthen this argument, I present several examples of different possible orientations that songs can present and show how these orientations can affect the way listeners hear songs. I also look separately at listeners as active interpretive agents, and how certain listening practices they occupy in everyday social situations can also influence their perspective as they listen to songs. Finally, I suggest how the positions of the song and the listener reconcile in order for any response to the song to be made.

Chapter Three - Interpretive Processes

Having discussed the song and its internal features in detail in the preceding two chapters, this chapter now puts the weight of the investigation behind the complex and varied procedures that listener's undertake as they interpret songs. It shows how the many and various social dimensions of the lives of listeners are brought to bear in their interpretations; how what they know and the subjects they talk about, are all relevant when they make meaning from songs. I demonstrate the different processes that listeners go through and the different moves they undertake, sorting, evaluating and generally conceptualizing songs in order to make sense of them and arrive at meaning.

Part II

In this part, I bring together all the theories and methods discussed in Part 1. These are now used as analytical devices, as tools for the job of analysing all those salient comments that have been made to the six survey song-extracts as well as examining the semiotic features I identify in the songs. I discuss the responses to each song as part of a separate

case study and show how different aspects of the social semiotic position I adopt relate to song communication in an individual way.

In a brief end discussion and conclusion to Part 11, I am able to identify some trends in responding, by highlighting sets of similar comments that respondents make to certain signifiers even though they are heard in different songs.

The findings of the study are then summed up in a conclusion.

Part I

Theoretical Overview

CHAPTER ONE

Media and Modes and Popular Songs

Introduction

As a first step in the exploration of communication between songs and listeners, I investigate the structure of songs as semiotic texts, examining those elements that act as signifiers; these are the song's media and modes, the properties that constitute the communicative framework of popular songs.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first outlines working definitions of a medium and a mode and explores the attributes of each, (noting differences and overlaps between them). The central part of the chapter moves on to explore the function of the modes in more depth, especially the music mode, including all its separate dimensions; how these dimensions function singly and collectively. In the final part, I give some pertinent examples of the use of media and modes in social practices; how social acts and the everyday use of songs transform them, and the extent to which audiences understand and agree on the coding conventions inherent in all the structural aspects of songs.

Before embarking on the discussion, I want to reiterate my adoption of van Leeuwen's (1999) term 'semiotic resources'. I employ this term frequently throughout the thesis and when I use it, I refer to any system within a range of systems that people use to communicate.

Defining the Medium and the Mode[1]

Mode. My working definition of a mode is a system of communication that operates according to a set of socially-generated rules. Although modes of communication in everyday life encompass systems as diverse as braille and semaphore, in this discussion about popular songs, I am concerned primarily with the modes of music and language.

As a consequence of its regular and widespread use, a mode of communication becomes stable, leading to its formalization and a more comprehensive set of rules. For instance, we could say that due to the continual employment of the mode of language, its grammatical rules have become so highly developed that language has spawned more deeply defined versions of itself, such as oral speech and writing. The mode of music has also reached a highly developed level and perhaps has deeper levels in the form of genres and styles. Sometimes these two modes work together to produce a subsidiary mode, for example, when language and music fuse to produce singing.

Therefore the mode itself is an abstract concept, and one which is reliant on specific instances of the application of its rules to define its meaning in each instance. The more frequently and widely a mode of communication is used in one certain way, the more definitive a statement it will make about what it communicates each time; eventually, the more agreement there will be on its meaning.

Medium. My working definition of a medium, is any material or physical channel that is used to articulate the mode. For example, music uses instruments as the media through which it communicates and singing uses the human voice in the same way. And different media produce different sonic qualities so the same mode may be articulated through different media. For instance, in the mode of music, the same melody could be played on a violin or a piano with different sonic effects. And language (as lyrics) can be sung simply through the medium of the voice or through the

[1] I base my definitions of the terms 'medium' and 'mode' on the way both terms are used and defined by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001:28) with the qualification that the definitions and explanations I use here are more tightly focused to apply to communication through popular songs.

combined media of the voice, the microphone and the compact disc incorporating all the different effects of each medium.

Modal rules. The sounds of music and the sounds of speech are fundamental to songs, but as van Leeuwen (1999:167) observes, the way we manipulate sound as a semiotic resource in our day-to-day communication means that it is being "designed" rather than simply recorded. A pertinent example is the contemporary practice of designing one's own melody as a personal ringtone for a mobile phone. Our practice of designing sound in this way extends to popular songs where electro-acoustic compositions are continually evolving in new directions. This allows sound to move from semiotic resource towards modal status. But the meanings of designed sounds have not reached a level of stability that provides them with a set of agreed, formalized and recognized modal rules.

In this case, where few formal rules of the mode exist, there are two outcomes. Those who produce and interpret sounds may not agree on what the sounds communicate. At the same time, this lack of consensus provides flexibility for listeners to experiment with their meanings. Therefore, the rules and meanings attached to some modes used in songs like language and music have enjoyed long periods of stability whereas the rules and meanings of emerging modes like that of designed sound may exist for some time in an indeterminate state before they stabilise.

The way different people apply different degrees of knowledge to the rules of the two main communication systems of language and music may or may not affect the way they understand and respond to songs. This will be especially true in different social and cultural communities where the modal rules of communication systems develop at different paces and where the range of media used may acquire different communicative values. In the following discussions, I examine how song listeners can make use of some of the modal rules used in songs.

Everyday human interaction exposes most people to the modes of music and language, and the majority of us are able to use language competently and effectively without understanding or reflecting upon how its grammar

works at a syntactic or modal rule level. Similarly, most music listeners have the competence to detect structural changes such as repetition of themes; or they may notice key changes; or follow pitch contours or identify aspects of tension and resolution. In order to judge these differences, it follows that song listeners use the modal rules of both language and music as a basis for their interpretations, whether they are consciously aware of these modal rules or not. As Nicholas Cook (1990) points out "it is not necessary [for listeners] to have a reflective (that is, 'theoretical') knowledge of the patterns of grouping and hierarchical organization that are appropriate to a given musical style, essential though an understanding of these may be in terms of production" (83).

Therefore, using the modal rules in a more intuitive sense does not necessarily imply a deficit in knowledge about them. Music listeners may apply rules consciously and rigidly or use them unwittingly just as they do in language, without ever reflecting on how they work. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) put it this way: "That is not to say, of course, that the ordinary person in everyday situations is not entirely aware of differences [expressed in the mode]; it is to say that for her or him they do not have modal import" (60).

Tagg (2002) confirms that most listeners without knowledge of the formal rules in the mode of music are able to distinguish between different musical sounds and structures. He divides musical expertise into two domains; 'knowledge *in* music' which derives from what he calls 'constructional competence', that is, the ability to make music, (this may or may not include expertise in music theory and its terminology). On the other hand, 'knowledge *about* music' includes a 'receptional competence' that he believes confers a degree of musicality on most listeners (whatever their music-making ability) and he believes this skill as he outlines it below, ought to be acknowledged, although generally it is not.

> [M]usicality seems to apply only to those who perform as vocalists, or who play an instrument, or can decipher musical notation. ...the widespread and empirically verifiable ability to distinguish between, say, two different types of detective story after hearing no more than two seconds of instrumental music does not seem to qualify the majority of our population as musical. (2002:online).

These reception skills then make it possible for listeners to receive the messages of the music mode regardless of their level of knowledge about how the music is constructed. According to Tagg (2001a), music's "...communicative power is just as dependent on receptional competence among the non-muso majority as it is on the constructional competence of the muso minority" (online). But, not all non-musos will have an equal level of receptional competence and this fact has pertinence for the reception survey. For example, according to the number of hours the survey respondents spent listening to popular songs, some would have gained more experience in this social practice than others. These discrepancies in their listening experience could make them more or less aware of the songs' semiotic features. In turn this could influence their receptional competence and ultimately how they interpret the six survey songs.

According to the definition I gave of them earlier, (p26), the medium and the mode are both semiotic resources at the disposal of anyone who uses popular songs as a means of communication. Therefore, separating out the different communicative characteristics of these two resources is necessary to enable identification of those semiotic features in the songs the respondents may have reacted to during the reception survey. Over the next few pages, I will point to distinctions between the medium and the mode through song elements that are pertinent to the six song extracts in the survey.

Guitar. The first signifying element is provided by the foremost musical instrument played in the six songs, the guitar, and shows the communicative features of the instrument as a medium. However, although I am using a tactical separation of medium and mode as a practical analytical tool, the way the sonic qualities of the guitar communicate as medium and the way its stylistic features communicate as mode are not always amenable to such separation, especially when the guitar is interpreted as an integral part of the whole song.

As a medium, the guitar can signify through a wide variety of its material properties. First, different types of guitar exist: Spanish; acoustic, electric,

dobro, etc. Each one of these may be made of wood, metal or a combination of both. Depending on the material substance used in its manufacture, each guitar will be able to produce a distinct sound. Similarly, the different shapes of its body and neck also contribute to the quality of its sounds. Its strings may be made of nylon or steel and these can be played with the fingers or a plectrum or other devices fashioned for the purpose of producing different sounds. The inclusion of any one of these different-sounding materials or a combination of them, could add a distinct layer of semiotic value to the guitar's message as a medium and would ultimately affect the way it communicates as part of the song and as a semiotic text. Finally, we will see in Part II, how the modern process of electronic amplification affects the guitar as medium in myriad ways.

In contrast, the guitar's function as part of the music mode lies in the idiomatic way it contributes to music. It can act as part of the rhythm, it can supply the lead melody, or it can provide the bass, etc. When guitarists make decisions as to what sound or style is appropriate in a certain context, that is, whether a reggae or heavy rock style is called for, to deliver this sound or this style, they must implement the formal rules of the guitar-playing mode.

The words of a guitarist bear this out. "We were working on a Spanish-sounding song that reminded me of a Western film, so without hesitation I put the guitar to the treble setting (rather than the bass); turned up the reverb; used a bit of vibrato and just strummed chords over the top, because that's what was needed".[2] Here we can see that as well as affecting the guitar as medium, amplification techniques are influential in how it is used as a mode.

According to the above guitarist's description, guitar playing is defined as a separate mode through a set of its own production rules. He also makes it clear that guitarists like him who produce this type of music, observe these modal rules. However, although the guitarist implements them, according to Tagg's (2001a) view of receptional competence, in order to hear the 'Spanish-sounding song' that results, it is not necessary for audiences to

[2] Personal communication – 2 September 2003

know these modal rules the guitarist uses, only to recognise the effects of them in the music. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) put it another way. Although both expression and reception rest on knowledge "what the articulator needs to know differs from what the interpreter needs to know" (41).

The guitar therefore provides an excellent example of how one musical instrument can function as both medium and mode; how these functions are intimately connected, and how attributes of both fuse in communication. I will demonstrate an example of this integration more fully in the discussion of Song 2. The point to make here is that although the guitar may communicate different messages to the listener, the semiotic analyst's task of accurately identifying which of its messages contributes to which response, perhaps out of the many different responses the listener has made, is a complex and challenging task. But, as we shall see in the responses to the survey, this is a task that is illuminated by the responses themselves.

Voice. The second signifying feature highlighting the distinctions between medium and mode is also relevant to five of the survey song extracts. It concerns the quality of the singer's voice. Simon Frith (1987b) has outlined the importance of the singing voice in songs by claiming that what listeners primarily respond to is the voice, "...whether we understand the words or not, whether we already know the singer or not, ... it is the voice – not the lyrics – to which we immediately respond" (145). Acknowledging this importance, I want to outline how the voice functions as a medium; how it is beginning to function as a mode of communication in its own right; and how the listener responds to both of these functions.

As a medium, the precise physical construction of the whole vocal apparatus, including the lungs, larynx, mouth, etc, determines the tonal quality of the voice, just as the shape and size of the guitar determine the range and quality of its sounds. This range of vocal parameters influences whether our voices will be loud, squeaky, gravely, and so on, and defines the significance of each message channelled through the voice as a medium.

The voice as a mode of communication is a more complex phenomenon and not yet fully elaborated as a mode. But because of the fluidity of both systems, the voice as mode cannot be entirely divorced from its capacity as a medium. Nevertheless, we can identify some of its modal attributes.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) state that "[v]oice quality is yet another semiotic resource which has not developed into a mode" (81). This means that no systematic approach to the distinctions in voice quality has yet been formalized. But, through this next example, I would like to show firstly how some aspects of voice quality are beginning to move towards modal status and also to show how the respondents in the survey would be able to engage with voice quality as a semiotic resource and use it as a viable means of interpretation.

Sundberg (1982) and subsequently Protopapasa and Lieberman (1996:online), have shown that non-linguistic information about a speaker's emotional state is conveyed in the phonation of their voice by means of several acoustic characteristics. These characteristics can be observed as patterns caused by the rate of vibration in the vocal cords, a type of measurement called 'phonation frequency'. Sundberg's (1982) findings show that these patterns can vary within wide limits "...without encroaching on the information in the linguistic contents of a sentence" and that listeners are able to detect these changes (138).

These findings are significant in two ways. First, for those people who interpret the results of phonation frequency in a professional capacity, it is a recognised means of emotional expression with a set of formal rules; in short, it is considered a mode. Second, any of this study's respondents who have little or no knowledge of any of these formal or modal rules that govern phonation and possibly only a moderate knowledge of the English language, will nevertheless be able to make use of the different kinds of phonation as a semiotic resource (within the five extracts that contain lyrics) and thereby discriminate a range of different emotions in the singer's vocal content. There are many other ways that listeners can employ voice quality as a means of interpretation and I shall demonstrate these within the analysis in Part II.

For the moment, to conclude this section on media and modes, and how both of these concepts function as semiotic resources in communication between songs and listeners, I turn the discussion to how listeners engage with and respond to media and modes as the textual framework from which songs are built.

Responding. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) claim that semiotic resources can make meaning "in any and every sign, at every level, and in any mode" (4), and this is evidenced in the two examples above. However, although the majority of humankind as song listeners and competent users of modes can comprehend meanings in every mode at every level almost spontaneously, we cannot with the same rapidity explain the process of that comprehension. Moreover, the fact that the reception survey respondents were given a very short time to listen to the songs, makes it especially likely that there was no time to formulate a response that takes account of the effects of each medium and mode, even if they were aware of the kind of separate effects I have been highlighting above. In fact, according to Stefani's (1987) account of how listeners assimilate melody, we can assume that in ordinary circumstances, listeners do not usually differentiate so meticulously between musical elements.

> People always operate on *major units*, not on simple elements such as notes, intervals, single durations, etc; and, their segmentations are the opposite of the grammatical categories of composers and theorists (period, phrase, etc); above all, they do not care at all about respecting the integrity of the work. (1987:25, original emphasis).

In other words, listeners are not likely to ponder reflexively on the semiotic organization of songs even if they have the specialist knowledge or 'constructional competence' to do so. Therefore, although every respondent in the survey is likely to recognise the effects of all the modes they hear in songs, (according to their individual cultural dispositions) when they give their verbal accounts of these effects in the survey, their responses are unlikely to detail the separate functions of all the modes and media. Rather, they are more likely to comment on the overall message expressed by what Stefani above calls its 'major units', rather than pinpointing exactly what medium or mode contributed to this message.

As support for this argument, I draw on Halliday's (1994) account of listeners' recollections in the parallel mode of speech. He maintains that when listeners are asked to recall what someone has just said, they will ordinarily offer a paraphrase, something true to the meaning or the gist "but not by any means true to the wording" (53). This is because focusing such attention on the mode of speech is a specialist skill that has to be learnt. If this assertion holds true in the language mode, then it is reasonable to assume where multiple modes are being expressed simultaneously as they are in songs, ordinary listeners are unlikely to have professional or extensive knowledge of all these modes and report on them separately. Consequently, Halliday's proposition would also obtain in explaining how people respond to songs, that is, by getting the gist of them and describing what they mean.

In fact, most people might respond to the medium or the mode in what Kress and van Leeuwen (1996:6) call 'an apt and plausible fashion'. An event recorded by Tagg (2001a:online) serves to illustrate their point. He recounts an incident where a student attempts to describe the music she hears, and while he, as a professional user of the music mode, describes the music as an 'leggiero arpeggiated figure', the student describes it as, 'the tiptoe bass'. She uses different terminology to that of Tagg but she is using an 'apt and plausible' linguistic resource that helps her describe the sonic phenomenon she hears. Once again we can see that elements of both medium (the bass) and mode (music) are responsible for the communication, and (perhaps unusually) the girl acknowledges the influence of the medium by naming the instrument, but the overall message she interprets, that is, the paraphrase or the gist she offers as a response, is the sensation of 'tiptoe-ing'.

Having outlined basic differences and similarities between medium and mode, I progress from here to investigate the main modes of songs in more depth, specifically as elements of a musical communication system.

The Modes of Music and Lyrics

The preceding discussion highlighted the differences and the relations between the media and modes; how they function and how they are drawn on and used as semiotic resources in song communication. In this section, I focus in more detail on the modes of music and lyrics; review their separate elements and how each is used as a semiotic resource with communicative potential.

I will also examine how these elements are supplemented, enhanced or qualified by other elements from the same or different modes; and how these two intricate and complex modes are constructed and deployed in communication between the song and the listener. Of course, the modes can only function when they are channelled through the media of instruments and the human voice and within all the following discussions, I will allude to the influence of different media.

Music. To achieve a working comprehension of the structural definition of music, I refer to the musicologist, Cooke (1959). Cooke believes there are three main dimensions in music; time, pitch, and volume. He claims that all musical works are built out of the tensions set up in these three dimensions. Further, the three dimensions are coloured by what he calls two 'characterising agents', 'tone-colour' (timbre), and texture. These dimensions then, are what Cooke believes constitute "the whole apparatus of musical expression" (34). For my purposes here, I will treat timbre and texture as equally significant dimensions and treat volume as an integral aspect of the others.

Since there are innumerable permutations of these musical dimensions, what I can reasonably provide here is an overview of each one, highlighting their special attributes; describing how they would generally function in a song either individually or in combination with others; and each one's potential for relating to the listener. Essentially, this is an exploration of what songs, as van Leeuwen (1999:35) has it, "present and represent".

Time and Rhythm. This discussion reviews time as part of a song's integral structure and the special communicative features it acquires in its musical configuration as rhythm.

> [T]ime functions in music as in life: it is a dimension in which things occur in succession. Hence in music it expresses the speed and rhythm of feelings and events – in other words, the state of metal, emotional, or physical *animation.*" (Cooke, 1959:97, original emphasis).

Tempo (the Italian word for time) refers to the underlying pace or speed at which music is performed (Tagg 1996:online). The tempo of music is marked and measured by pulses occurring at regular intervals. The 'downbeat' is a strongly accented pulse, which occurs on the first note or pulse in each measure (van Leeuwen, 1999:39). The 'offbeat' is the unstressed pulse(s).

Any beat can be made more prominent than the beats surrounding it by giving it some form of emphasis. This can be done by means of increased volume, syncopation, or altering the duration for which the note is held, or any combination of these (Cooke, 1959:98).

It is the stressing of some beats (and not others) and regularly repeating this pattern that produces the sensation of a rhythm. Listeners interact with rhythms in two ways. First they relate the series of stressed and unstressed beats to each other, and second, they relate these beats back to themselves, and they do this in the following ways.

Listeners' perceptions of structured time in music are aided by the fact that the range of the beats within the European metronome equates almost exactly with the human pulse range (the heart rate), that is, from a slow of 40 beats per minute (bpm) to a fast of around 200 bpm (Tagg, 1996:online), and most human activities are confined to this time range. As if to underline this connection, Stock (2003:48), claims that the music played in contemporary dance clubs has increased in bpm from circa 120 in the 1980s to circa 136 in 2003 to accommodate the quickened heartbeat of Ecstasy users. But, it could be argued there are also other cultural phenomena at work in this varied use of tempo. Nevertheless, as well as

structuring the way music moves through space, rhythms can remind listeners of their own human rhythms, in fact according to Tagg (1996) such a correlation may be deliberate.

> The general rule seems to be that the more music is used in connection with bodily movements (dancing, working, marching, etc.), the greater the probability there is for regular tempo, metre and periodicity to be in evidence. (1996:online).

Familiarity with the rhythmic forces in music that animate human activities like marching or dancing could influence listeners' desires to participate in these energetic movements and activities themselves. For example, Toynbee (2000) suggests that the "on-beat pulse" is at the core of a whole family of dance styles (144), and if the listener is familiar with making use of these rhythms in this way, then their desire to dance may be greater.

Conversely, when there is only a faint pulse and notes are sustained, even though the same period of time passes, time is less obviously marked and not specifically brought to the listeners' attention. When notes are of a longer duration, they, "take their time" (Cooke, 1959:37), and when they linger in this way they are indicative of a distinct lack of activity. Long notes then would be more conducive to meditative states and be suggestive of any situation where minimal movement or negligible physical energy is needed.

Toynbee (2000) proposes the effect of rhythm on people is immediate because it arises from the coincidence of the two sensory channels that convey it: the sound waves as their rhythmic accents, durations and intervals are absorbed and felt by the body and also by the aural sense through the ear as it hears its pulses. He argues that this potent combination of sensory awareness gives rhythm a "plenary force" (143). In which case, the effects of tempo might be physically pervasive.

A further connection between musical rhythms and human experience is the fact that notes are grouped into measured phrases in the same way as words are grouped into sentences in language. And, both sentences in language and musical phrases tend to correspond to human breathing

patterns that match lung capacity, somewhere between two and ten seconds long. Musical time then has many dimensions that correlate to a physical dimension, or what Tagg (1999) calls the "bio-acoustic" codes of music (17).

A slight pause or change in tempo can break up musical phrases and distinctively mark their boundaries. But, if the breaks are weak, this allows the music to retain a sense of flow (van Leeuwen, 1999:42) and once again, the passing of time will be less obviously marked, especially if the notes are long in duration as described above.

But, not every rhythm in music is likely to equate with somatic parallels. Even if it did, according to Middleton, (1990:227) the point we must bear in mind is the amount and the kind of mediation involved. Tagg (1996:online) claims that in some rock genres musical timing may be stylised in such a way as to attempt to subvert an everyday sense of clock time. And, in the practice of syncopation, musicians can deliberately miss beats or come in early by half a beat (or as much as two beats) in order to anticipate a strong beat and thereby alter the regularity of the musical pulse. As these syncopated beats work counter to the metronomic beat, they simultaneously sever the relationship between musical rhythms and physical rhythms.

We can see this practice in overt action in the modern trend of 'scratching' and 'sampling' that also lay down established rhythms only to deliberately subvert them and create new rhythms in the process. Therefore, music rhythms and bodily rhythms do not always coincide. Listeners are nevertheless able to guess the type of activity music indicates merely by its tempo, although perhaps not specifically, but generally, it could indicate to them whether they ought to 'dance', 'contemplate' or 'march'.

Musical time can exert other influences on its listeners, including as suggested by Cooke above, emotional effects. Since people experience different emotions at different levels of animation, Cooke (1959) has argued that the effect of tempo on emotional expression in music is all-important in how listeners perceive that emotion. He explains it thus. "The difference in

tempo could equate to the intensity of the emotion, for example, [depending on the tempo] the emotion of 'joy' expressed by certain tonal tensions could be tumultuous, easy going or serene" (99).

Tagg (1993) states that there are few universally understood aspects of musical expression and that "[a]ll evaluative and affective musical symbols are culturally specific... only extremely general bio-acoustic types of connotation can be considered as musical 'universals' "(online). These 'bio-acoustics' then establish no more than extremely general connections between musical structures and the human body. The organisation of music in time is a cultural practice that structures music's movement in rhythmic patterns. And different cultures structure music in different rhythmic patterns. Therefore, although some human rhythms correlate to music's rhythms in a way that is universal or bio-acoustic, attitudes toward rhythms may differ in different cultures, and may even differ within the same culture. The salient point is that musical organisation, including these rhythmic structures, usually requires a prior social and cultural context before it can be understood or otherwise invested with meaning.

Pitch and Melody. Musical pitch is variation in sound produced by vibrations. The more rapidly the object producing the sound vibrates (including the voice), the higher the pitch it will produce. A pitch pattern in a song relates to the way the sound moves up or down and these patterns can be written and read as musical notation (by those who have the expertise to do so). This notation is part of the formal and structural grammar of the music mode.

Patterns of pitch can be used to represent human action. For example van Leeuwen (1999:93) explains that although sound cannot represent people or things, it can be used to represent their activities. We have already seen how the structuring of musical beats as timed rhythms can mirror the pace and pattern of human rhythms, now we can examine some ways in which fluctuations in pitch movements can represent human actions.

Cooke (1959) provides useful descriptions of how patterns of rising and falling pitch movements in music have come to symbolize the 'ups and

downs', of the physical world. And, he explains that these patterns not only express a sense of up and down, for instance a rising pitch can also recall anything that goes 'out' or 'away' and a falling pitch can suggest anything that comes 'in' or 'back' (103). He claims that for centuries European composers have unanimously accepted such symbolization "some of them violently revolutionary in other respects" (25), yet they have acknowledged these associations without reservation. And this, Cooke maintains, has proved the only unchanging aspect of music (25). So some of the expressive effects of changing pitch movement work by analogy to this up-down symbolism. In view of their recurring use in tradition, we can assume that most listeners would equate rising and falling pitch patterns to the spatial dimensions Cooke describes, and hear them as familiar expressions of movement.

These parallels are broad, therefore, interpretation and responses to such pitch movement will be general, specificity being contingent on contextual circumstances and other co-signifiers. For example, although Cooke (1959) believes that a rising or falling pitch could express a rising or falling vitality in a given emotional context (104), van Leeuwen (1999) suggests a rising pitch pattern in one context may specifically suggest 'anger' or 'excitement' whereas, in another it could evoke 'energy' or 'power' (94). This is not to say an ascending pitch pattern will always mean 'anger' or 'power'. But, both Cooke and van Leeuwen's work suggest there will always be a degree of consistency of response where listeners' interpretations are likely to be in the same broad area, so that generally speaking, a rising pitch pattern is not likely to suggest calmness or indifference.

But, rising pitches do not all sound alike. One of their distinctions is the music's key signature. In general, the expressive quality of rising pitch (especially in a major key) is of an outgoing of emotion or a feeling of pleasure. Its effect can be active, assertive, affirmative, aggressive, striving, protesting or aspiring. On the other hand, a rise in a minor key can express an outgoing feeling of pain or a strong heroic self-assertion against impending tragedy. A fall in the major expresses an incoming feeling of pleasure, whereas a fall in the minor, is of an incoming of emotion, relaxed, yielding, passive, assenting, welcoming, accepting or enduring (Cooke,

1959:111). In short, the general rule is that falling notes are yielding back towards the pull of the tonic key, and rising ones are asserting themselves against that pull.

Expressions of both rising and falling pitch are also dependent on their rhythmic and dynamic contexts as well as many other factors (which will be discussed later). Equally, the concepts of pleasure or pain are not expressed only by means of the major or minor system, but again, require the qualifying use of at least volume and tempo. Further, and most significantly, the effects of any one of these musical features may be sufficient to either underline and strengthen the effects of another, or to weaken it and cancel out its effects (Cooke, 1959:95).

Another aspect of musical pitch is its correlation to pitch in the language mode. For example, the pitch movement in musical phrases sometimes resembles intonation patterns in verbal sentences. In fact, Middleton (1990) suggests that "listeners interpret sung melodies with reference to known verbal intonational archetypes" (230). When the pitch rises at the end of a phrase, this suggests (as it might in a sentence), the phrase is unfinished and the listener may expect the music to continue. In Western music, when a melody falls, or returns to the 'tonic', (the key in which the music is written), this may provide a sense of 'resolution'. The result is that it indicates finality or closure (van Leeuwen,1999:98). So, the pattern of the pitch within each separate line of a song can either return to the tonic and finish off its musical statement, or end on a note other than the tonic and provide a sense of continuity, "reaching out to the next line for its continuation or completion" (100).

The fluctuating pattern (or contour) produced by a varying pitch level over time constitutes a melody, which according to Stefani (1987:23) is 'singable music', but Tagg (1996) ascribes a longer definition to it.

> A melody is generally a singable line (cantando), ie, contained within a singable pitch range, stretching over durations lasting no longer than one breath and consisting of tone beats sounded at a humanly reproducible rate. (1996:online).

Stefani (1987) also describes how melodies rather than being formed randomly, are built by a 'patchwork' combination of existing musical motives' "...like a speech made of commonplaces, or a mosaic of fragments, or a collage of themes of literary units which are already known..."(21). This familiarity coupled with the singability of melodies makes it understandable why Stefani believes they are "that dimension of music which everyone can easily appropriate in many way with the voice by singing, whistling or putting words to it; with the body by dancing, marching, etc." (21).

Fonagy and Magdics (1972) found that the melodies from a group of various European nations expressed the same emotions and attitudes in the same way (302). This finding suggests that there is a reasonable possibility that a group of listeners from various European countries, (like the survey respondents) may also understand the different melodies of the six survey songs in the same way.

In relation to melody, van Leeuwen (1999) observes that as well as evoking emotions, melodies may actually 'touch' their listeners (97). So, melody can be said to have an interactive capacity, one that would contribute to a continuing relationship between the song and the listener. He explains the attributes of melodies in this way. "[M]elodies do not only 'express tenderness', they also and at the same time *caress*, they do not only 'express scorn', they also and at the same time *mock*, they do not only 'express longing', they also and at the same time *plead...*" (97, original emphasis).

The two dimensions reviewed so far, time and pitch, can qualify and strengthen a melody. This can be seen clearly in the legato-staccato antithesis that dictates how long a note is sustained (Cooke, 1959:37). For instance, a melody expressed in a quick staccato format, could sound like a series of short attacking 'stabs' that would make the melody sound what van Leeuwen (1999:109) describes as "disjunctive". If, at the same time we added volume to that melody, it could stand for anything that suggests energy, boldness or force simply because more energy is needed to produce these sounds. In contrast, melodies expressed in a slow, legato format can

be heard as flowing or "connective" and these could bring a sense of smoothness to the music.

Texture and Timbre. Whereas time and pitch refer to different incidents of sound, the dimensions of texture and timbre refer to different qualities of sound. Cooke (1959) argues that the two main dimensions, time and pitch, discussed above are characterized by the influence of what he calls the two vitalizing agents of music that is, timbre and texture. He asserts that it is through these two dimensions that generations of composers have stamped their individuality on music (94). The one distinguishing feature that both these sonic qualities foreground is one of 'materiality', a feature that permeates all other dimensions of music. In this discussion, I want to explain how the materiality of these two interrelated dimensions heard as varying degrees of substance, could impact on listeners. First, texture.

Middleton (1990) regards popular music as a "multiple layer system, (melody, bass, accompaniment, riffs, rhythm section, backing vocals, call and response, and so on)" (269). It is this layering that provides a musical texture or a sense of the music's sonic depth and quality.

Along the same lines, Moore (1993) defines music texture as "the presence of and relationships between identifiable strands of sound in music" (106). It is both the combination and separation of instruments and voices in these strands that provide the sensation of a musical texture. What is obvious from the following comments by Moore is that these discrete strands provide another way of relating the listener to sounds. "Most rock also attempts a sense of musical 'depth' (the illusory sense that some sounds originate at a greater distance than others)..."(106). So the listener hears the sounds at varying degrees of distance from each other creating the impression of the music having lesser or greater depth.

In studio recordings, the engineer would usually stratify the textural strands to provide this same impression of degrees of depth, usually with bass and snare providing the foundation; a mixture of instruments filling the body, and any voices on top. If an instrument can "shoot through" the texture it shows it is thin or empty. In the 1980s (when most of the songs

in this study were recorded), the tendency was to increase the presence of stylistic devices in order to fill out the texture (Moore, 1993:108). Consequently, different textual qualities provide potential for the music to communicate in different ways.

Tagg (1999) describes another way of filling the texture. He explains how romantic stringed underscores, the so-called 'string pads', can pad holes in the musical spaces to produce the effect of a homogeneous, thick and viscous sonic texture and by a subsequent inference of what he calls, "haptic synaesthesia", which will produce in the listener, sensations of luxury, comfort and smoothness (25).

These accounts of texture I have given so far, suggest there are a range of semiotic values associated with texture and the degree of substance that is heard in the music. In this case a thin texture could be judged negatively as barren or emotionless, or positively as light and airy. A thick texture could be judged positively as luxurious and sensual or negatively as busy and cluttered and they could both be judged anywhere in between these two positions. However, Shepherd (1987) suggests the sensation of texture may have even more primal significance for the listener.

> The texture, the grain, the tactile quality of sound brings the world into us and reminds us of the social relatedness of humanity. In touching us and stroking us it makes us aware of our very existence symbolically, it *is* our existence. (1987:158 original emphasis).

A sense of texture then is a desirable expressive quality in music, for listeners could hear it as representing a variety of concepts from that which is tactile, sensual, emotional or social.

Timbre. According to Moore's (1993), definition, timbre is "a note's tone colour, formed by the precise mix of overtones present in its sounding" (201). And Wilkie (1993) defines it as "the quality that permits the distinction between a flute and an oboe playing the same pitch at the same volume" (100). But Shepherd (1987) believes it is timbre more than any other feature that "appears to constitute the nature of sound itself" (158). Even though timbre does not show up in musical notation and Cooke

(1959) regards it as a mere "qualifying agent", Walser (1993) gives timbre an eminent role in relaying meaning.

> Of all musical features, timbre is least often analysed, but its significance can hardly be overstated. Scan across radio stations, and a fraction of a second will be sufficient time to identify the musical genre of each. Before any lyrics can be comprehended, before harmonic or rhythmic patterns are established, timbre instantly signals genre and affect (1993:41)

These descriptions of timbre mean that in common with texture, the harmonic qualities and tone colours of timbre have a perceived material substance. For example, an instrument can be heard as soft and warm like the woody tones of a cello, or a voice can be heard as hard and rasping, in fact Shepherd (1987:166) has discussed this very point at length in reference to the sonic features of Mick Jagger's voice.

Timbral features include a whole spectrum of distinctions which range from maximum to minimum in any one feature. Each timbre therefore is a combination of intricate sonic features and each one of these is articulated to a certain extent, that is to say, a sound is unlikely to be heard as either completely soft or completely warm, but a mixture of sounds with one or two of them predominating.

Timbre can reach out to the listener to make meaning in a special way. Van Leeuwen (1999) observes how it can do this. "The sound that results from tensing not only *is* tense, it also *means* 'tense' – and *makes* tense" (131, original emphasis). Likewise, the action of vibrato, "...literally and figuratively *trembles*" (134, original emphasis). So that tense and wavering timbres heard in a song would invite the listener to connect them to human states or situations that cause tenseness or physical trembling, like fear or emotion. Consequently, any timbral quality that made an instrument sound unwavering and steadfast, could prompt the listener to recall situations where related qualities like reliability, faithfulness, and so forth were present.

Both van Leeuwen (1999:134-137) and Shepherd (1987) argue that timbres in different voice qualities can signify gender positions. Shepherd notes the harsh and rasping features of the throat and mouth can be associated with

the male "hard rock" voice, whereas articulation through the resonance of the head and chest is more typical of female voices (165). Similarly, Hodge (1985:125) notes that males using high pitches can signify ambiguous gender classifications. These material differences in timbre then, can act as semiotic signals implying different gender status. And, for the listener, who or what is articulating these timbres may lead them to different meanings. For example, whether the timbre arises from fingers on instruments or from an electronically produced sound could have different semantic implications. Also, the many other signifiers that can be heard along with the timbre can qualify it in all the ways discussed so far.

Consequently, it is not only these timbral sounds that help the listener produce meaning from the song but what they know about these particular sounds and how they have heard them in other contexts that will have significant influence on their interpretations.

I can now move from the mode of music to the other principal mode in songs, the mode of language in the form of lyrics.

Lyrics. In the analysis of the responses to the six survey songs, I make the assumption that the lyrics were an influential aspect in the respondents' interpretations. This assumption is based on two factors. First, when respondents were asked: How important are lyrics to songs, 'Very', 'Quite' or 'Not at all'? Thirty-one (out of 50) of them answered 'Very'. Eleven said 'Quite'. And eight said 'Not at all'. Second, although only a few respondents in the survey made direct references to specific lyrics, there were many references made to themes and topics articulated by the lyrics.

Writers are also agreed on the importance of the relationship between song lyrics and the listener. For example, Frith (1987a) suggests that because instrumental hits remain unusual "...words are a reason why people buy records" (97), and elsewhere (1996) he says "...most people if asked what a song 'means' refer to the words" (158). Kruze (1999) too believes lyrics maintain a crucial connection between song and listeners because they "...can provide a powerful point of identification for listening subjects" (87). For many listeners, (who understand the language), lyrics can serve as a

principal way of understand songs, a point of identification and a method of immediate and personal participation with them.

Because they form an integral part of any song, for lyrics to be meaningful, Kruze (1999) insists that they must be interpreted within their musical setting (87) as do Burns and Lafrance (2002) who criticize non-musicological studies in popular music because they have a tendency to treat the meaning-making musical elements of lyrics as spoken language and by so doing sever them from their "musical environment" (29).

Lyrics do use all the grammatical aspects of spoken language, but, if a lyric analysis relied on the modal rules of speech, even taking into account the prosodic elements of speech, there would still be a limit to the extent that these modal rules could be applied to song lyrics. This is simply because in songs, lyrics are constructed and articulated in many different musical and poetic ways. They have also been shown to display a high degree of "redundancy". That is to say, Booth (1981) believes lyrics tend to be formulaic and are usually put together by borrowing lines from proverbs, other songs, slang, jingles, etc. (12). He has also suggested that lyrics appear to be 'genre-specific'. "In popular music in this country today, the habitual phrases of soul singers are recognizable to one audience, those of country-western to another, those of glossy pop to another" (11).

Lyrics then cannot be understood or analysed only by rules that have been developed for the modes of music or language. But, there is yet no consensus on what modal rules pertain specifically to the analysis of song lyrics and in the absence of an autonomous modal rule system, lyrics must borrow rules from other modes; chiefly language, but including music, vocalisations, narrative, etc. In turn, they must be treated by song writers, singers, listeners and semiotic analysts not as a single communication system, but as a semiotic resource that employs a combination of systems.

If we assume listeners interpret lyrics by referring to the rules of more than one communication system, we can better understand how lyrics communicate. This is where the communicative functions advocated by Jakobson (1960) and Halliday (1978) are useful to this thesis because they

apply to language and are also applicable to other modes active in song lyrics.

I therefore give below some examples from a range of semiotic resources that the survey respondents could have made use of while they responded to the lyrics of the five survey songs.

Vocalizations. In this section I argue that regardless of the semantic content of the words in the lyrics, the many ways in which they can be delivered, that is, the way they are vocalized could have an effect on the listener's interpretation of the song.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the voice as medium includes a sense of its own materiality, or as Barthes (1977) has famously referred to it, its 'grain'. He provides a locus for the grain in his 'geno-song' "...where the melody really works at the language – not at what it says but the voluptuousness of its sound-signifiers..."(182). By this account, the voice and the vocals are inextricable linked. On the same issue, when Laing (1985) questions the vocalisations in the delivery style of punk rock lyrics, he queries whether elements of the material, vocalized sound "exceed" the message and provide a different focus for the listener. He concludes (paraphrasing Barthes), "the sound 'in the service of representation' informs the listener of the most important part of the lyric message" (55). Both Laing and Barthes then are arguing that the semantic content does not stop at the words of the lyrics, and any meaning arising from them could extend into the way they are expressed and how they are vocalized.

To continue this line of argument, I take a point made by Middleton (1999:152). He believes lyrics are sometimes what he calls 'talismanic', that is, lyrics like 'awopbobaloobob alopbamboom' are not "overtly meaningful". And, Toynbee (2000) expresses a similar opinion about scat singing.

> In scat the singing voice becomes an almost pathological destroyer of meaning. Through the articulation of syllables (sometimes pseudo-words too), and a strong sense of phonetic idiom scat takes on the character of a *faux* language. Critically, though it is a meaningless language; its lexis is entirely fantastic, its syntax a strange parody of speech rhythms. Whereas, the singer of a song with lyrics is engaged to a greater or lesser extent with reference to the world, the scat singer abandons representation altogether. (2000:77).

However, although these two types of vocalising may appear to be "not meaningful", or to "abandon representation" in their linguistic sense, my contention would be that they both retain representation in a semiotic sense because they can be understood through language's communicative functions. Middleton (1990) himself hints at one way they can do this "...vocalizing is the most intimate, flexible and complex mode of articulation of the body, [it] is closely connected with the breath, (continuity of life; periodicity of organic processes)" (262). Barthes (1977) believed such aspects of vocalizing was the body speaking its own language, its own expression plane. In other words, vocalizations as signs, can point indexically to the body-articulate whose message is understood by all listeners through the expressive, the relational and the referential communicative functions irrespective of the lexical component of the lyrics.

Intonation. This is another aspect of lyrics that could affect their meaning in several different ways. For example, Cooke (1959) argues that the dimensions of time, volume and intervallic tensions that operate in music also operate in speech. "The *louder* a person speaks, the more *emphasis* he gives to what he is saying; the *quicker* he speaks, the more *animated* he is becoming, the *higher* his voice rises, the more he is *asserting* himself" (94, original emphasis). In songs then all these different ways of intoning one's voice could be incorporated into the expressive communicative function in the lyrics. As such, they provide another means, a further semiotic resource through which the lyrics can be expressed and interpreted.

Volosinov (2003) believes that intonation can only be understood in relation to the "value judgements" of social groups, and because of that, it "...establishes a firm link between verbal discourse and the extra-verbal context – genuine, living intonation moves verbal discourse beyond the border of the verbal..." (11). His view of intonation implies that to interpret the meanings behind the lyrics would necessitate listeners being aware of certain socio-cultural knowledge relating to how words are intoned in different social contexts. And, this view substantiates the claim that Kruze (1999) makes for vocalizations. She points out that many scholars fail to take into account how lyrics are vocalized "yet this is a key terrain upon

which the gendered struggle over signification in popular music takes place" (90).

We can see then interpretations based on intonation can be made instinctively and effectively by all listeners simply by relying on their own social and cultural experiences in the world, that is, even without reflexive knowledge of how intonation works as semiotic communication, but with plenty of experiential knowledge of its effects.

Narrative. This is the final semiotic feature discussed in this section that might affect the meaning of lyrics in any substantial way. Although narrative can be considered as a mode in its own right, for my purposes here, I will regard it as a subsidiary mode of communication in songs because lyrics and music both make use of the rules of narrative to relay actions in certain sequences. I will now explain in general terms one particular narrative rule that I will show in action in Part II. The rule originates from Barthes (1970) in the form of a code. He defined five semiotic codes that are interwoven into the narrative mode, one of which is the proairetic (or action) code. The purpose of this code is to refer to a state or a situation and at the same time to communicate that something is about to happen to change that state or situation (18). Silverman (1983) has described the proairetic code as "the 'glue' which makes certain that clusters of events will follow each other in a predictable order" (262).

In songs then this code is incorporated in words that have a cohesive effect, a simple example is a conjunction like 'because', or words like 'and then', words that ensure lyric lines connect to each other in a sequential way progressing the story along as they do, making the song into one comprehensible textual unit. I will demonstrate in Song 2, how this proairetic code is used in some of the song's stylistic features in the lyrics and how the guitar provides this same code in the music enabling the respondents to interpret the song as a narrative, that is, allowing them to hear it as a story unfolding in time.

To summarize this section on lyrics, we can see that they retain all the potency of the semantic content of words and can be interpreted through the multifarious rules of linguistic syntax and grammar. Besides this, vocalizations, intonation, nonsense lyrics, or half words may all be used as semiotic resources to interpret meaning from lyrics. Meanings can be made as a direct result of linguistic content or singers can communicate in a non-verbal fashion expressing meaning through sonic expressions in any of the ways I have described above without recourse to any words at all. Therefore, although song lyrics are a complex communication system, and despite the fact they have no overarching set of modal rules for listeners to follow, they remain a fruitful source of information, a means through which listeners can relate the song to their own experiences and in that way derive many different meanings from them.

I now move on to examine the use of media and modes in social practice; some of the ways they are coded and some examples of the ways in which listeners decipher these codes.

Media and Modes in Social Practice

The discussions in the first section of the chapter showed how particular characteristics of all the media and modes in songs can signify to the listener in particular ways. In this section, I set out to explore the continual development and transformation of these media and modes in songs and how these transformations take place through a range of social practices. I progress from there to investigate how certain coding conventions of the media and modes can be understood by larger or smaller groups of listeners. However, as Fabbri (1982) suggests, "[t]here are musical codes which, even more than linguistic ones, offer such a variety of combinations that the life of a man [sic] is not sufficient to achieve their complete analytical comprehension"(60). It is therefore not possible here to describe in detail all the multifarious types of coding conventions in songs including the musical, linguistic, sonic, etc. Instead, my aim in this section is to describe the coding of the media and modes in social practice in two distinct ways. I begin with an exposition of how media and modes are

transformed by their social use and follow that with how different social groups differentiate between coding conventions.

Transformation. Media and modes are the two communication systems that are integral to any song and any action that influences either one could affect how the song is perceived. For instance, Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) consider all social action as semiotic and that all semiotic actions change or transform that which they act upon (36). Therefore, each time a song is sung, or listened to, its media or modes may be re-arranged or transformed in some way and these changes will make a statement about the song. Stefani (1987) makes a similar point. "When singing or dancing or playing a melody, by the very fact of adjusting it to their voice or body or skill, people inevitably make an arrangement of it" (27). As socio-cultural groups make use of media and modes in these everyday ways and contexts, the ideas they attach to them will transform and evolve. As a result, through time, the medium or the mode's ability to communicate and notions of exactly what they communicate, will shift. I give some examples below to consolidate this point.

A song may go through a complex transformation every time it is played on different media. Whether the same recording is played through the medium of powerful speakers in an acoustically accurate auditorium or through headphones on a cheap CD player may alter its communicative function. Or, replacing the medium of a banjo with an electric guitar could transform the style of a country song into a rock song. The mode of language can be spoken as lyrics in a song, or the same words can combine with the mode of music and be sung. These actions would alter the mood of the song in different ways by providing a different semantic impact on the listener. It is these slight but numerous changes in media and modes that will gradually transform the song and its life in society, as well as changing listeners' attitude and responses to it.

How listeners of different ages and different cultures react to the messages of songs then may depend on precisely which semiotic resource they are responding to; how far the resource has been formalised and transformed in the listeners' culture at that time, and how far they, as listeners, have kept

abreast of these developments. Through the analysis of the responses, we will be able to trace the respondents' reactions to any medium or mode, to observe through their comments, the knowledge they have of it and whether there is any difference in how the various cultural or age groups respond to the same media and modes.

In the next part of the discussion, I investigate how a range of social practices lead to the generation, maintenance and interpretation of the coding conventions of the media and modes used in popular songs.

Coding conventions. I base my explanation of these social processes on the work of two scholars. One is Bernstein (1971), in particular, his explanation of the social use of linguistic codes, and the other is Fiske (1982). Fiske also draws on Bernstein's work on codes that is, he uses Bernstein's explication of "elaborated" and "restricted" codes in the social use of language. Fiske advocates the numbers of people who will agree about the meaning of any communication will vary according to the type of coding convention that is used to express it as well as how deeply entrenched that coding convention is in the public consciousness of their social group.

The first type of coding convention is what Fiske (1982) calls the "broadcast" code, which he defines as "one that is shared by members of a mass audience" (78). He explains that these types of code "stress the similarities amongst 'us' (the majority)" (78). As he points out below, mass communication requires the communicator to be in touch with the feelings and concerns of society because in any broadcast coding convention there is a continual exchange of commonly understood semiotic practices.

> [C]ontent is not just the subject matter of the message, it is also the way that the subject matter is handled. There are patterns of feelings, attitudes, values within a culture that are presented in its broadcast messages. These messages then re-enter the culture from which they originated, cultivating this pattern of thought and feeling. (1982:78).

An example of a broadcast code is useful here. I will use a model from the mode of music. As communication, this piece of music can be described as broadcast because its meaning would almost certainly be agreed by audiences all over the UK and beyond (in my personal experience from

Japan to Mexico) where, since 1858, it has a tradition of being played at church weddings. It comes from Wagner's (1848) opera, Lohengrin, and it is known as the Bridal March.

The organist at Liverpool's Metropolitan Cathedral says he plays the Bridal March frequently "the way it is traditionally played".[3] He believes in playing it this way he is faithful to the composer's intentions and the only deviation he makes from these is to play it a little louder than the 'softly' Wagner instructed and this deviation is "in order to give it a sense of fanfare and impact". Although Lohengrin is an elaborate musical composition, it is usually only one part of the entire opera that is recognisable as a broadcast code. This is the short leitmotif shown in Figure 1 that forms part of the melody and is known to millions of people who refer to it colloquially as

Here comes the Bride...

Figure 1

Wager's organisation of these notes in this structured time sequence results in a specific short melodic phrase, one that is so well-established as a coded signifier in the mode of music that if the same notes were played on say, a violin, or even sung by an ordinary person, listeners would undoubtedly recognize the social practice related to it. Thus, this piece of music and the social use it has served over the years epitomizes how communicative significance in songs is informed by social and cultural practices.

These observations on the Bridal March can help us to expand on the notion of transformation in both media and modes that I discussed earlier, (p52). It was emphasised in that discussion that although the media and modes of songs are transformed each time they are used, these changes are usually slight and gradual and take place over lengthy periods. To underline this point, I quote Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) who predict there would be "outrage" if transformative action is "too sudden, too great,

[3] Personal communication - 20 May 2003

or too revealing" (40). I will use the Bridal March again as evidence of this theory.

If the musical parameters of the Bridal March were adjusted so that the organist suddenly played the piece faster, slower or quieter than usual, he anticipates there would be a particular reaction from the congregation. "It would receive a hostile reception. They would think it was weird, and they would feel betrayed". In other words, what would take place would be a violation of this particular coding convention. The abruptness of the transformation would be a clear infringement of what Fiske (1982:78) referred to as 'the way the subject matter is handled'. Consequently, the unexpected and hasty change would serve to disturb the conventional attitudes and values that people attach to this melody and all it represents for them.

In contrast to broadcast codes, if less well-known coding conventions are used, then possibilities for diverse interpretations are greater. This is shown clearly in the second of Fiske's examples, the "narrowcast" code. This is "aimed at a defined, limited audience: usually one which has decided to learn the codes involved...they do not rely on a shared communal experience, but on a common educational or intellectual experience" (78). Narrowcast communication stresses "the difference between 'us' (the users of the code) and 'them' (the laymen, the lowbrows)" (78). Applying this notion to the music mode, definitive meanings attached to any coded representation in a narrowcast format would only be possible for a limited number of listeners, those who would be able to understand or relate to it, and therefore assign the same meaning(s) to it.

For instance in jazz, where the piano, bass and drums usually provide the foundational chord progression, other musicians, say, on saxophone can adopt these basic chords, pick out notes and perform melodic improvisations over them. Or, in scatting, by using the voice as instrument to do the same. The semiotic significance here is that the type of transformative action jazz musicians make as they negotiate established coding conventions and experiment with interesting circumventions of them, would be admired as skill and application of technique. The results of

the improvisations then are narrowcast codes, shared only by a small jazz-appreciation community comprising experienced aficionados who understand them. To listeners not familiar with jazz, the improvisations, as one jazz musician attests "would just sound like lots of notes that don't really mean a lot".[4] The meanings arising from these narrowcast jazz codes then could not be readily agreed by large social formations.

Although the meanings of narrowcast communication like jazz is recognised and agreed by a minority of music-listening audiences, jazz is nevertheless using conventional coding. This is evidenced by the fact that all the musical dimensions are configured to express the music in a certain way (the jazz way). As Sargeant (1959) says "...even at its freest, it is remarkable how often it [jazz] exhibits characteristic, measurable elements" (82). However, because jazz coding constitutes narrowcast communication, it does not mean there is anything inherently cryptic about jazz music itself, that is, if jazz received the same exposure as other types of music, it is likely that these coding conventions would become equally familiar and equally accessible (Baker, 1990:108). In other words, jazz would become broadcast communication and then huge swathes of the population would be able to agree its meanings.

The terms broadcast and narrowcast are at opposite ends of a spectrum of communication in terms of the numbers of people that would interpret a message in the same way, but there are many points in between these two positions and some semiotic representations may be made up of both broadcast and narrowcast codes. To provide an example here I step outside the text of popular songs and into their contexts. The use of the image of Mark Knopfler's renowned National guitar on the album sleeve of *'Brothers in Arms'* (1985) signals a broadcast message because millions of people would recognise the instrument as a guitar and they would know from their experience of other guitars what it is capable of as a musical instrument. But, along with its image, are specific meanings and messages signalled by this particular guitar, which might include elements of its history; its associations with the artist; or any aspects of its particular timbre, and so on. These meanings would be communicated to fewer people because fewer

[4] Personal communication – 23 May 2003

people would be familiar with the traits of this one guitar. In which case, the image is coded in both broadcast and narrowcast fashion.

Sometimes the coding conventions of some songs appear to work against social norms and in that way they challenge those who uphold them. But we will see that even codes that are atypical must also conform to convention in order to oppose it. The lyrics of punk songs provide an example.

Laing (1985:29) showed that for a time in the 1970s, an "overwhelming number" of the lyrics of punk rock songs contained issues concerning "social and political comment". He explains that similar issues had been included in song lyrics before the punk era but says at other times these issues had been treated in a "different manner" The punk lyrics involved several unusual coding conventions. One of these was the subject matter, which often included "royalty" and "the police". Another was their choice of vocabulary (including swear words). And, as Laing points out, instead of the irony or plaintiveness of other protests songs, say the songs of someone like Dylan, the punk lyrics were delivered with "ranting" vocals (29).

The salient point I wish to draw from this example is that according to Dick Hebdidge (1979), even a lyrical style as alien to established society as punk, must include "[s]ome of the preferred meanings and interpretations, those favoured by and transmitted through the authorized channels of mass communication..." (cited in Laing, 1985:31). In other words, there was nothing esoteric about the way the punks messages were expressed. To articulate their radical message, they had to employ conventional and broadcast coding. Their subject matter, vocabulary and their ranting delivery may have been radical in the context of the popular song, but the messages were communicated in a broadcast format.. From the numerous discussions thus far on the voice as medium and its power of vocal expression, we can see that the act of ranting itself, regardless of any words would be widely and easily understood.

Therefore, the more frequently the same coding conventions are used, and the further the musical product that articulates them is disseminated, the

more widely these coding conventions become known. Subsequently, the more people will agree about their meanings. Thus, to more and more listeners, codes and their social meanings become inextricably linked.

This completes the review of how media and modes are used in social practices.

Conclusion

In the first section of this chapter, I defined media and modes as forming the basic constituents of communication systems employed by both songs and their listeners. By explicating their modal rules, I showed how listeners can engage with them to interpret songs. I also showed that interpretive methods can vary depending on the listener's knowledge and musical expertise which may range from rudimentary or intuitive through to professional and specialist.

In the second section, I examined separate elements of music and lyrics individually and collectively and the communicative potential that comes into play when these modes are utilized. Throughout these discussions I have been insistent that all the musical and lyrical elements of songs are representations invested with potential for meaning only. These potentials derive from a combination of each element's history as a signifier, that is, the uses it has served in other contexts, as well as the way it is presented in its current context.

In the last section, I discussed the way media and modes are employed and transformed in a range of social practices as well as how coding conventions are understood by large or small groups of listeners. We saw that agreement on interpretations (regardless of what that agreement states), is contingent upon the frequency of use of these coding conventions along with the extent of dissemination of the musical product.

Thus, communication between media and modes and the listener does not occur outright and at once. Rather, it is a complex interchange between the

coding conventions that are active at all stages and within all dimensions of the song. These conventions are then met with the amount and type of experience listeners bring to bear on them and communication will be contingent on all these factors.

CHAPTER TWO

Perspective

Introduction

In this chapter I continue to focus on the more structural or textual aspects of songs and examine the different ways in which a perspective is produced by the song. In the first section, I will argue that perspective can arise from the many ways songs can signify a point-of-view through different orientations, for example in the way they address listeners or the way their musical elements are organized. But, in the second section, I also move the discussion towards the listener and give some examples of the different ways in which listeners approach song reception, for example the context-dependent listening positions they occupy while listening to songs and show how these positions also have potential to influence perspective. The central premise of the chapter then, is that perspective is neither single nor fixed, it is a fluid and shifting outlook that emerges through a continuous process of negotiation between the song and listeners.

Song Orientations

In the following section, I investigate how a song's structure and content can provide it with a certain semiotic orientation that has potential to alter the listener's perspective. Although I use several different headings to explain some of the specific ways in which these orientations work, we will see that there is a trace of a common semiotic principle in all of them. The range of terms I use below show that this type of communication takes place in various ways but it always results in the listener making sensory, cognitive or even emotional connections and associations.

Provenance is a semiotic resource suggested by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001). It relates to Barthes' (1977) notion of 'myth'. It is activated when persuasive ideas and "versions of events" about people, places or cultures likely to be known from former contexts are imported into communication and presented in a new context (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001:72-73). In songs, provenance works in the same way, indicating ideas about places, people and social customs that listeners decide about based on their own

knowledge of these same places and practices. So, the possibility of provenance affecting listeners' perspectives relies on shared knowledge; knowledge articulated by the song and knowledge possessed by the listener. For example, a song can signal its provenance through musical features like the inclusion of certain instruments or its musical styles, even through a feature like the singer's accent. In turn, the listener registers provenance through what (s)he knows about these instruments and styles, or who speaks with that kind of accent, and so on.

Kress and van Leeuwen have pointed towards one important aspect of provenance. Those semiotic features that articulate it do not do so neutrally, that is, the manner in which these features are expressed will always attach either negative or positive values to the information they convey about the provenance of the song. But, these values are "...never explicitly formulated, they are evoked" (73). So any signifier that gives information about the song's provenance will do so tacitly. But this lack of definition would not hinder the listener's perception of provenance because, "[p]eople think they know what is meant, despite the vagueness, and despite the fact that they would probably not be able to put that knowledge into words" (73).

As well as places and customs, provenance can also indicate where things come from within our bodies and thereby signal values associated with these physical places. So the listener's perspective could vary depending on whether the voice of the singer emanates from deep in the diaphragm (that might indicate strength or passion) or from the throat outwards (that might indicate superficiality or weakness). In other words, provenance will confirm or reinforce what listeners believe they already know about where things come from and any ideas and value judgements they make through provenance will depend on the extent of their knowledge.

Provenance is a feature in many of the six survey songs but the responses to Song 6 in particular reveal how the respondents were able to connect and associate the music to places, people and practices associated with one country through a sense of provenance, thereby demonstrating its effect on their perspective.

Metonymy. In semiotic studies, metonymy is interchangeable with *synecdoche* (Chandler,2002:online). It means the evocation of the whole through a part. Because it points to connections, substitutions and associations, metonymy activates the indexical aspect of signs and the relationship imputed from it is one of contiguity; referring one entity to a related or associated entity. Perceiving these metonymic relationships allows song listeners to construct a perspective incrementally by means of a sequence of connections. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) make the position of metonymy clearer in this example.

> When we think of a Picasso, we are not just thinking of a work of art alone, in and of itself. We think of it in terms of its relation to the artist, that is his conception of art, his technique... We act with reverence towards a Picasso, even a sketch he made as a teen-ager, because of its relation to the artist. (1980:39)

Similarly, when we think of a song we may relate it to those who perform it; their musical expertise, or we might think of its genre in relation to our own musical taste, etc, and build up a perspective related to these connections.

We will see from the analysis of responses in Part II, that the songs' metonymic associations to social practices and musical styles frequently have an impact on the respondents' perspective. But, once again, the extent to which any listener can make these metonymic connections through styles will depend on how well (s)he understands the styles where the metonymy is encoded. Moore (1993) describes style as "...a virtual quality, which has no material existence except in the minds of listeners" (171). So, to form metonymic associations through styles, audiences must be conversant with a range of them. Assuming they are, then styles provide an effective way of employing metonymy and a way of relating one song to another, one artist to another and so on and a way of supplying the listener with a range of perspectives.

This series of connections is what Moore (2001) implies when he claims that musicians import external musical styles into their songs, to suggest a sense of homage to that imported style, or the artist associated with it (201). So musicians can quote themselves and listeners can then make metonymic

connections about them in this way. The practice of using metonymy like this and importing fragments of established styles into new musical compositions is widespread and it demonstrates how well musicians recognize the extent of their audiences' knowledge of these musical styles and how listeners can be encouraged to view the song in light of these connections.

Tagg (1999) talks about how listeners can identify styles through features he calls "style indicators". These are musical structures constant or typical of a 'home' musical style, in other words "the '*compositional norms*' of any given style" (27, original emphasis). Any musical structure in a home style that refers to an external style by way of a musical quote, he terms 'genre synecdoche'. Because these indicators allude not only to the totality of the imported style but "to the rest of the culture to which that 'foreign' style belongs" (19), they provide a metonymic means for the audience to relate the song to external concepts and simultaneously shift their perspective.

As well as styles, metonymy can work through musical structures that connect the listener to non-musical sounds and concepts by imitating them. For example, using the rippling sounds of a musical arpeggio to imitate the rippling of a babbling brook can guide the listener metonymically towards that external concept and as they connect the musical concept to the non-musical, perspective shifts. Tagg (1999) terms these stylistic devices "anaphones" (24). There are three types of anaphone. 'Sonic' anaphones mimic the non-musical like the example above of the rippling brook. 'Tactile' anaphones help listeners to connect their thoughts to sensations of touch like roughness or softness. 'Kinetic' anaphones evoke sensations of motion, so when listeners interact with a kinetic anaphone the metonymic connections they make will relate to activities like flying or running (24-25) and these connections provide a point of departure for a listening perspective.

A song can exhibit metonymy by using indexical signs that instruct the listener to connect some of its features to others. One way of doing this is explained by Middleton (1990) in his discussion of the semiotic principle of vectors. In music, vectors form part of a "processual continuum" where he

claims (following Eco, 1977, 240-1) that not only do musical events have vectorial qualities relating forward through expectation or backward through memory but "their sense depends not just on their characteristics and modes of combination...but also on their direction" (1990:219). So a musical vector could trigger a memory of another musical event or the anticipation of one. The aural connections that these musical vectors inspire lead the listener to make metonymic links.

In Song 4 a vector operates by pointing not only to other parts of the music in the song, but, appears to direct the listener outside the aural dimension to facilitate her-his perspective in terms of a visual image.

Metonymic associations are easy for listeners to make in and between songs as long as they understand both the musical concept and its metonymic connection because as Kress (1993) states "...in any society most communication takes place in pre-existing networks which bring together both the individual participants and the groups of which they are members in relatively stable configurations" (179). The presence of metonymy in songs then would be especially effective at opening up a perspective for those listeners who belong to one social group, say, those who are fans of an artist(s) or those who have extensive knowledge of certain musical styles and the artists who use them. In other words, metonymy is likely to be a key communicative feature whether the song's coding is broadcast or narrowcast.

The purpose of some semiotic codes in songs is to activate the reverse of metonymy, that is, instead of connecting musical elements, their purpose is to separate them. This happens ...ien parts of a song are divided by notional frames constituted by the use of features like silent pauses or a cymbal crash that would signal to the listener the music is entering a new phase. Tagg (1999:23) has referred to the semiotic codes that separate musical phrases in this way as "episodic markers". So different elements of the song can be perceived separately and possibly from a different perspective. - Consequently, for as long as these semiotic markers are absent, the listener's perspective is likely to remain the same.

Intertextuality. Where metonymy tends to be implicit and mainly relies on the listener to make connections, intertextual references tend to be explicit, eg. overtly importing musical or lyrical references from one musical context to another. I will use the term here to refer to the method of importing well-known linguistic expressions and phrases into the lyrics of songs to show the influence these can have on the listener's perspective.

The post-structuralist writer Kristeva (1980) has suggested that "every text is from the outset under the jurisdiction of other discourses which impose a universe on it" (69). In song lyrics, these other discourses could take the form of frequently used phrases that have become codified as lyric units. This method of lyric construction has been used in songs for generations handed down from the oral tradition and when these coded phrases are inserted into new compositions they "...carry with them echoes and overtones from the dim past whence they came" (Lord, 1960:65). Intertextuality then gives the listener a wider frame of reference.

We will see in Part II that intertextuality in the songs also includes linguistic references from words and phrases used in everyday conversations, thereby providing the listener with points of linguistic reference not only from musical domains but from the extra-musical too. For now, I discuss how semiotic features can suggest perspective in two distinct ways. First by relating the musical sounds to each other through their proximity or distance. Second, by relating the sounds through their proximity or distance to the listener.

Aural perspective. How a song's aural environment is constructed may be conducive to one perspective or another. For example, van Leeuwen (1999) describes how sound can be used so that listeners can imagine themselves placed at certain distances in relation to its source. " [S]ound is dynamic: it can move us *towards* or *away from* a certain position, it can *change* our relation to what we hear" (18, original emphasis). When sounds are organized in this way, what is activated is a sense of aural perspective. When the recording engineer at the mixing desk isolates the channel containing one of the song's elements, say the singer's voice, and gives it more volume, the other elements will be heard as middle- or background

accompaniment to the voice simply because they are relatively quieter and can be heard as further away. In this process, a sonic and spatial hierarchy is created and whatever is foregrounded becomes more distinctive to the listener and therefore a more prominent signifier (14-15).

One way of organizing sounds in this way is to use reverberation or 'reverb'. Reverberation as it occurs naturally consists in the reflection of sounds off hard surfaces (especially if they are at complex angles to one another as they exist in buildings like churches), thereby prolonging and lengthening the sound (Wilkie, 1993:85). Employing artificial reverb on instruments then can prompt a sense of wide-open space in the listener's mind, as Wilkie explains.

> Most people are able to associate particular lengths of reverberation with rooms of varying sizes. Thus, the degree of reverberation on a recording is important in suggesting the characteristics of the recording venue to the listener. (1993:85).

Used as a perspectival positioning device, reverb could suggest to the listener a sense of remove; the feeling that people, places or objects are far away and by extension this far-off positioning could result in a feeling of nostalgia for those same people, places and objects. Contrastingly, the reverb could be constricted or "drowned out" from the sound of other instruments, with the result that it makes the aural space feel "crowded and close" (Tagg, 1994:online), and listeners would feel almost a part of the surrounding sound.

Van Leeuwen (1999:28) claims this type of "immersion" in music provides the opposite of perspective; it is "wrap-around sound". He explains that low frequency sounds like those of the bass can carry further and they can fill spaces more completely. "They are also harder to tie to a particular spot and seem to come from everywhere at once" (28). So the type of perspective listeners experience in immersion is one of involvement; instead of being at some distance from the sound event, there is no perceptible division between them and the sound source. In fact, van Leeuwen (1999:29) quotes Schafer (1977) who says in these conditions the listener is "at the centre of the sound, massaged by it, flooded by it" (118).

Acoustics in different spaces can create various listener perspectives naturally, and it is common for songs to imitate these acoustic spaces in order to create an artificial listener environment. This is despite the fact that the type of relationship between sound and listener that some studio acoustics can create would be highly improbable in a more natural setting (van Leeuwen, 1999:21). However, listeners' previous experiences in real acoustic environments may make it more likely they will react the same way to these artificially created acoustic spaces.

Another method of creating a spatial orientation can be provided through what Schafer (1994) calls a "soundscape".

Soundscapes. Schafer differentiates between two types of soundscape, 'hifi' and 'lofi'. He claims in hifi soundscapes individual sounds can be identified because the ambient noise is low, whereas amongst a lofi soundscape, such as that of an urban environment, which could include traffic, machinery, musak and general noise, each sound becomes enmeshed into one mass of sound in which individual sounds are indistinguishable (71). By utilizing either a 'hifi' or a 'lofi' environment, or a mixture of the two, the song would have potential to guide listeners to a perspective related to that environment.

Tagg (1994) also discusses soundscapes and suggests that artists may arrange musical forms into particular soundscapes; if listeners inhabit that same soundscape they "will find themselves in musically and acoustically familiar surroundings" (online). The manufactured presence of these different soundscapes in the music of songs then, would immediately provide a perspectival backdrop for the listening process. If the music included an abundance of reverb to create a feeling of space; the addition of a slow tempo could then suggest a sense of repose; and if the number of instruments were minimized so that the timbre of each one could be picked out individually as in a hifi soundscape, the cumulative effect of such a musical idyll might recall pastoral peace, contentment, and so on. And, the song could reverse the perspective with lots of instruments, fast tempo and

the musical activity of a lofi scoundscape which in turn could suggest the closeness and bustle of urban life.

How this spatial positioning affects the listener's judgement of the song is dependent upon each one's different life experiences of these sound environments, how recognisable each environment is to each listener and exactly what other semiotic resources each listener brings to each soundscape.

All these techniques for the spatial organization of musical sounds draw the listener into a perspective based on proximity and distance. And this same sense could affect how the listener hears the lyrics of the song and influence any relationship they create between her and the singer. The work of the anthropologist Hall (1969) explains how creating and maintaining relationships with others can be based on such spatial positioning.

Hall reveals how people in all kinds of cultures exist in various spatial 'bubbles' that allow them to maintain certain distances from each other in certain contexts. For example, one of the barometers of this distance is the voice. Although the use of these distances is culture-specific, they can be divided into four spatial dimensions: intimate, personal, social and public. Van Leeuwen (1999) suggests that a sense of each of these distances is relevant to our experiences of spatial dimensions experienced in everyday living. For example, he suggests that listeners' reactions to the distances we hear in music are grounded in our experiences of "the distances we keep from different kinds of people, places and things in everyday life" (12).

Hall's (1969) notion of distance parameters operates slightly differently to that of aural perspective, in that it "applies to single sounds, while perspective applies to simultaneous sounds and has relative rather than absolute levels" (Van Leeuwen, 1999:24). Nevertheless, utilizing various qualities of the singing voice (or the voice of instruments) with studio microphone recording techniques and situating the singing voice at various imaginary distances relative to the listener can generate a whole series of relationships. For example, listeners are likely to hear a soft voice that

sings up-close into the mike to be within 'intimate' distance of them, just as they would in a confidential dialogue.

Giving an accentuated volume to the vocal channel in the recording mix can achieve this relational sense of intimacy. In his analysis of the Abba hit song, 'Fernando', Tagg (2000) discusses a type of vocal line stereo channel localization that creates a dualism between what is melody and what is accompaniment and this technique results in situating listener in relation to singer. He explains "...this dualism not only implies that the singer is the central 'reference point' of the piece but also that she has had her mouth placed nearer the listener's ear..."(48)

A relaxed or casual voice mixed slightly further away could be heard to occupy a more informal social distance. At the other extreme, the loud, high or tense voice that is mixed far back could signal either public formality or the fact that the person is so far from the listener they need to project their voice to a shout in order to be heard (van Leeuwen, 1999:24). In this way, specific and judicious use of voice quality coupled with recording techniques can engender various relationships between the listener and the sound source and encourage a perspective based on these relationships.

From an analytical standpoint, a question for the semiotician in relation to these spatial positions, in a paraphrase of van Leeuwen (1999:13) is, which sound(s) does the song position close to the listener and why?

Visual Images. Till now I have outlined ways in which semiotic features in songs can suggest to listeners how to perceive and interpret the song according to certain orientations, that is, how the song can foster a listening perspective. This is a line of enquiry that has been suggested by the way the respondents have described the six survey songs in their responses. However, we will see that the responses also indicate that listeners' reactions to the genres and moods, etc, that they describe in their responses are frequently constructed in visual terms. Consequently, I want to suggest that some of the communicative features addressed so far, for example those that encourage the listener to make connections, perceive

relationships, etc, can also apply to the visual images that listeners experience while they listen to the song. This is particularly relevant to Song 4 where visual imagery played a significant role in establishing the respondents' perspectives.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) claim that the same semiotic principles can work across all modes "though differently realized in different semiotic modes" (3). I want to demonstrate this point by showing how modes and semiotic features that are active elsewhere are also active in visual images. These authors have established certain semiotic principles in the field of visual semiotics and I will now apply some of these to song communication.

We have already seen how the concept of metonymy can create links that connect different parts of the song to each other and how these connections can also allude to a whole range of social and cultural phenomena, both intra- and extra-musical. It is my argument that the listener-viewer's visual images are produced by similar metonymic connections and that listeners can respond to such indexical signs by 'looking' at the visual description these signs point to. For example, when the song creates a rural or urban soundscape, listener-viewers could not only hear the soundscape but they could imagine themselves within that soundscape in a visual image.

I would especially like to show how the semiotic notion of vectors already discussed briefly in relation to metonymy (p62) above also operates in visual semiotics. Vectors can work in two ways in songs. They can operate as we have seen, by connecting one part of the song to another but in visual semiotics, vectors are notional constructs that form virtual links through "transactional schemata" in which there is usually an "actor" and a "goal", the actor acting upon the goal, (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996:40-44). I want to suggest that in a song, certain musical features acting as indexical signs, can serve as the actor and the visual image they point the listener towards is the goal. In this way, vectors connect listeners to the image by creating the impulse to 'view' whatever the song signifies. I will demonstrate this point more fully in Song 4.

It follows then that other principles from visual semiotics might also be active in the visual image summoned up by the song. For example, in a film or a photograph, "[a] depicted person may address viewers directly, by looking at the camera" (41). In songs the imperative is reversed, the music or the lyrics can persuade (or in some cases even instruct) the listener-viewer to 'look' at whatever the song describes. In the visual, camera techniques like the close-up or distant shot can place the viewer further or nearer to the depicted object (12), and we have seen how something similar works in aural perspective. But this also means that the music can place the listener-viewer nearer or further away from their visual scene.

Where an object is placed in a visual text, and how it relates to other objects in the text, that is, whether it is central, (with all the power the centre can imply in Western societies), or marginal, can give it a degree of "information value". Similarly, how the visual object stands apart from other objects in its peripheral surroundings or the way it attracts the viewer's attention can give it "salience" (183). It is quite simple for song lyrics to position the characters of the song in one position or another which would result in the same degree of information value and salience in the listener-viewer's visual image.

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) argue that visual structures can "represent participants in terms of their more generalized and more or less stable and timeless essence..." (79). For example, when objects are assembled in a syntagm, this implies they are "judged to be members of the same class and are to be read as such" (81). This is relevant here insofar as those objects that are grouped together in a song by their implied position in the aural hierarchy, or simply by their presence in the song, will also be grouped together in visual images. This point is demonstrated in Song 4.

The last aspect of perspective I want to discuss is that of the song's credibility. In other words, the degree or extent that a song can gesture towards a sense of the real or genuine, how it does this and the effect this has on the listener's perspective.

Modality [1]. Van Leeuwen (1999) claims that "...the question of truth plays a role in every kind of communication" (158). Since the reception survey produced a substantial volume of responses concerning the moods of the songs, then a pertinent question to pose here, is - through what means of communicating truth did the songs convince the respondents of these moods? The semiotic theory of modality, one which Eco (1977) has described as the "theory of the lie" (7), can help to address this question.

In *Social Semiotics*, (1988), Hodge and Kress adapt the linguistic concept of modality and apply it across all modes of communication. They argue that modality is a matter of "affinity" with a system that either asserts truth statements or challenges them, and results in a high or low affinity with the system (a high or low modality) (123). Consequently, the authors claim that terms like 'truth' and 'reality' are dubious terms, mediated by rival sign-makers and "...they are not objective absolutes to which anyone can appeal but premises created and exploited by specific competing groups" (121). Whichever premise holds sway in the song, will be that which has potential to affect the listener's perspective and the authenticity of its mood.

Further, Middleton (1990) maintains that songs tend to "...produce 'orientations' toward reality..." (254), and they can do this in several ways. First, semiotic modality has roots in language's modal auxiliaries like 'may' or 'might' that express degrees of intention or permission, reliability and so on. Where songs with lyrics convey moods, the lyrics can help the listener define the emotion in the mood precisely through words, because lyrics (as language) incorporate their own modal system.

We have already seen how music can represent non-musical sounds through the concept of anaphones, (p63) that add to the song's apparent authenticity by directly mimicking a sound, a sensual concept or movement. And moods can appear authentic in much the same way, simply because as consumers of popular film culture, song audiences in the Western world also have experience of music that is continually matched to film scenes where certain moods are involved. In this way the music comes

[1] Professional musicians will be familiar with the term 'modality' that refers to a type of tonal vocabulary in music, but the use of the word here is in a semiotic context only.

to conventionally signify the mood even when it is separated from the image. Van Leeuwen (1999) claims that the continued existence of what is generally referred to as 'mood music' renders it familiar to everyone who has been exposed to Hollywood films and television commercials even though this knowledge is more intuitive than reflexive (164). I will now review how some of this mood music is constructed and how aspects of modality pervade it.

Van Leeuwen (1999) describes how musical features can be styled so that listeners are likely to ascribe a truth-value to music according to the degree of its stylization. As an example, he cites pitch range. "Maximally reduced pitch range negates human emotion. It is used for instance, to present or represent the sacred in ritual chanting or drones, and in the presentation of machine speech..." (172-178). So, in appropriate circumstances, a pitch pattern that is styled as melodically very flat, could be used to represent a mood that has a non-human or alien aspect to it.

Moreover, van Leeuwen stresses that because musical representation is necessarily abstract it is not always necessary for contemporary sound designers of mood music to reflect maximum fidelity to sounds in the external world. In fact, they tend to "...move away from naturalistic recording and seek to combine relatively abstract representation, representation of essential qualities, with emotive effect..." (165). To communicate a sense of a genuine emotion or mood then, music need only represent a mood's general characteristics.

And, it is this abstract or generic sense of a mood that makes any musical representation all the more 'real', all the more convincing because as van Leeuwen's work shows, "[t]he more the articulation of a representation is reduced in all its aspects, the more abstract modality, abstract truth value, *increases*" (177, original emphasis). To depict persuasive moods then, what music-makers provide are ambiences and atmospheres that are plausible and convincing in their contexts.

Adopting a social semiotic approach facilitates an understanding of how different audiences would perceive different moods. In social semiotics,

truth is a result of the meaning-making process of semiosis, and as such any one truth belongs to a particular social group, arising from the values and beliefs of that group (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996:159). Therefore, in order to satisfy their audiences, representations in popular songs that express moods must equate with what their audiences acknowledge as appropriate to certain people, places or situations. The credibility of the song's mood then depends on the listener's social group and cultural disposition, emphasising yet again, how social significance is crucial to musical interpretation.

In all probability, listeners can judge a song's perspective from the mood they hear it express depending on their experiences of mood music in other contexts. What counts above all, is that the representation is convincing and true to the situation and true to that listener's definition of what counts as true.

Semiotic modality works to influence perspective in the moods of popular songs because it foregrounds the content of the representation rather than how the content is signified and the more invisible or less obvious the modality is, the more neutral or transparent the mood will appear; the more convincing its effects will be and the more influence modality will exert on perspective.

I now move on to review the different approaches to listening that can contribute to perspective.

Listening Practices

Although the semiotic features of songs can suggest a perspectival viewpoint, that viewpoint can only be effective in direct proportion to how far the listener engages with the song, that is to say, how she attends to it within the context of each listening situation. Therefore, no matter how strongly the song's semiotic features favour one perspective, the range of possible listening contexts also have potential to influence the listener's perspective in various ways. Below, I discuss examples of listening situations and review some of the listening positions listeners can occupy.

Feld (1994:83) suggests that our experiences of living in different sonic environments, at home, the office, etc, has taught us which sounds we must attend to and which sounds we can ignore. He believes the same is true of our musical experiences; we know how we ought to listen to music at a rock concert, or how we should listen to the same music at home. Our continual encounters with music then means that each time we listen we bring to the listening process knowledge from other listening contexts.

In this way, we build up our expertise in how to listen and gain a cumulative and interactive experience about when and how to engage in sonic communication. "[E]ach experience in listening necessarily connotes prior, contemporary and future listenings. Engagement reproduces one's sense of meaningful pattern and experience" (83). Each listener is then implicated in the communication process on an experiential axis, listening with accumulated experiences that differ with each person, or as Feld has it, "as a socially and historically situated being, not just the bearer of organs that receive and respond to stimuli" (84). Keeping this theory in mind, some listening practices and contexts can now be outlined.

Ubiquitous listening. Kassabian (2002) argues that audiences in the industrialized world have developed ways of listening that are direct results of the omnipresence of music in our daily lives. She believes that this "ubiquitous music" has taught us a way of listening where we listen to music in tandem with other activities and proposes the term "ubiquitous listening" for this practice (138). Her view that most music is being heard as a "secondary activity" (131) is supported by recent research undertaken by Sloboda and O'Neill (2001). They found that "listening to music as a main activity accounted for only a small percentage (2 percent) of all [listening] episodes" (418). They reported that the times people said they listened to music was when the listening was accompanied by other activities, for example, during personal maintenance, like washing, cooking, eating, shopping, etc, or during travel, either in their own car or by public transport, and during active leisure, like dancing in clubs, etc. (418).

The salient question here is that if the ubiquitous presence of music in contemporary Western society makes it so familiar that listeners apply this distracted or "ubiquitous listening" to it as a normative way of listening, how does this affect their perspective in regard to the interpretation of songs?

We might be able to get closer to an answer to this question if we consider the implications in Kassabian's use of the word 'secondary'. Listening to music while we cook, wash or dance, need not mean that the listening is less prioritised as the word 'secondary' implies. In fact, listening can be 'primary', in the sense that the act of listening might be the activity to which the listener directs most of their concentration even though they are engaged in another activity. In the process of hearing a song, listening priorities are constantly shifting, and thus perspective is also constantly shifting.

Adequate Listening. Where Kassabian has emphasised a pervasive strategy of unfocused listening, Stockfelt (1997) concentrates on the matter of appropriateness in listening. He claims that listeners can be influenced by the context, their relation to the music, or any other activities they are involved in at the same time (132). Further, he suggests different ways of listening that listeners can employ in different situations.

> Today, when a vast spectrum of musical styles are an available, nearly unavoidable part of everyday life, and when the same piece of music can exist in a number of widely differentiated listening situations, each listener has a great repertoire of modes of listening that correspond to the great repertoire of styles of music and listening situations in the everyday soundscape. (1997:132).

Stockfelt proposes there are what he terms 'genre-normative' listening situations (136) that prompt the type of listening strategy listeners adopt. During these listening situations, the song's genre and the listening strategy as well as the context of the listening event, all inform one another, so any perspective the listener adopts, may depend on the degree of integration between these three aspects. Stockfelt describes the practice of adapting one's listening in this way as "adequate listening" where the word 'adequate' does not describe a "better" way of listening, rather it is the manner

developed by the listener to "...listen for what is relevant to the genre in the music, for what is adequate to understanding according to the specific genre's comprehensible context" (137).

Looked at this way, 'adequate listening' means that if respondents immediately consign a genre to any of the six survey songs, what they know about that genre might indicate to them how to listen to the remainder of the song. For example, they would know whether this was a song that people usually participate in by singing along to, or by dancing, or whether this type of music is frequently used to provide a certain ambience, etc. In other words, listeners learn from their experience of different music genres how to listen to music in a way that is appropriate to the demands of its genre, appropriate to the listening situation, appropriate to the assessment of the song, and what listening is possible according to parallel activities. Consequently, 'adequate listening' prompts adequate responding.

Kassabian (2002) states the following about 'adequate listening'. "If one assumes a conscious, analytical listening position in relation to ubiquitous musics, one will necessarily come away judging them as bad because the listening mode was not adequate to the music" (121). The next example addresses this point and at the same time it illustrates a further issue concerning the interdependency of listening and perspective.

The dissemination of popular songs cuts across cultural boundaries and the type of listening that is genre-normative in one culture might not be in another because listening perspectives for different genres will tend to be culturally dependent. For example, while analyzing mass music in a specific social context, Robin Ballinger (1999) found that certain rhythm and blues ballads usually heard in the USA and enjoyed by many women, are usually "...condemned as pabulum" that is to say, the song genre is not regarded as having a social impact and it therefore receives little critical analysis (66). These songs then could be described as 'ubiquitous music'. However, Ballinger showed that large groups of "working-class" women in Trinidad attributed a substantial degree of social significance to the musical and vocal qualities of these same songs, listening to them carefully and sometimes even writing the lyrics down. In other words, these women hear

these songs from a different social perspective, in fact, they even relate to the female vocalists as "peers and trusted voices for counsel" (67). For these women this type of involved listening and this type of personal perspective they adopted was 'genre-normative' in relation to these ballads.

Middleton (1990) has made the following observation on this subject. "Even the seemingly most overcoded ('banal', 'functional') popular song performance can be taken aesthetically, if, predominant attention is paid to its unique features" (257). He continues to argue that those who criticise popular songs for "...sacrificing aesthetic to commercial or functional values thus miss the point" (257). And that point is that there is no pure, aesthetic value operating free of social relations. As I will argue in the following chapter, appraisals of songs include aesthetic, functional and many other evaluations.

Middleton's argument brings to light one more relevant aspect of 'genre-normative' listening. Listeners may recognise what is 'genre-normative' but not execute a 'genre-normative' response. That is to say, they may well understand what is an appropriate way to listen (and respond) to certain music in certain circumstances, but for many reasons they do not listen (or respond) in that way themselves. This position is also clearly demonstrated by the results of the reception survey where the responses show that because this was an 'experimental' listening context respondents were listening attentively to songs that elsewhere they may have listened to distractedly. All six survey songs, but Song 3 in particular, provides an example of how listeners can understand what is appropriate 'genre-normative' listening (and responding) in different listening contexts, yet not appropriate for an academic survey.

Abductive Listening. We can see then that the different perspectives listeners take can be influenced by whatever listening stance they occupy. This is especially true if they are convinced there is an important message in the song but cannot respond to it because no matter how they listen, they cannot de-code the message. In these cases, they can use what Eco

(1977) calls 'rough coding' (135-136)[3], which allows them to produce a potential reading of the song's codes. Eco's employment of the word 'rough' implies that such a process would result in a makeshift perspective. Following Eco, Toynbee (2000:141) has applied the term "abductive reception" to this type of listening-interpreting-responding strategy. Listeners then can intuitively infer a perspective from which to judge the song grounded on their previous experience in de-coding similar musical texts.

We can therefore assume then that no matter how some survey respondents might have listened to the six extracts, if they were unsure of any of the semiotic codes, they could have reverted to this type of abductive listening in order to respond to the song. To use an example from the reading of signs in general, Kress (1993) notes that where the circumstances of production are unknown, this fact pushes ordinary readers, (in this case, ordinary listeners), into 'common-sense' readings (listening), where

> the category of 'ordinary reader' is not defined by an individual's qualification as a reader – though that is a significant factor – but by the fact that the reading is done in ordinary circumstances. (1993:178).

Although the dispositions and listening stances of the respondents at the time of the reception survey are irrecoverable, from what Kress notes above, we can assume because of the academic context of the survey, the respondents may have listened more attentively than usual to the six songs, but they would nevertheless have applied ordinary circumstance listening strategies to them, that is, they were not using analytical techniques or critically appraising the songs in any professional capacity. This also applies to those respondents who were more experienced in either listening or producing music and who possessed the expertise to undertake a more critical reading of the songs, but did not, because an analytical listening stance was not required.

[3] This is based on Peirce's (1992) notion of 'abduction'.

Conclusion

I have given some examples of how certain textual configurations of songs have potential to determine how listeners hear the song. This may be especially true when there are multiple signifiers in the song suggesting the same message, as when all the musical instruments impose a particular soundscape on the listener, one strengthening the other. In such a situation, the potential for the song to construct a perspective is optimal.

I have also shown that the act of listening itself can be used as a semiotic resource to adjust one's listening to different genres or to different social or cultural priorities or situations, all of which produce their own perspectives.

From all the foregoing discussions, it is clear that the perspective upon which a listener bases his-her interpretation is not an entirely prescribed activity because the song's semiotic signifiers only display potential for meaning; they do not fully specify the song (as sign). To use Korzybski's (1933) aphorism "the map is not the territory". Neither is adopting a perspective an entirely subjective activity because we have seen how the song's orientations can exert a substantial influence on listening perspective.

When the communicative properties of song and listener come together and are drawn into reception as the song unfolds, it is at this interface where the song's signifiers and the listener's disposition meet that perspective is continually negotiated. As the song's orientations shift, perspective is decided through this continuous interplay between all these changing positions. However, to make responses possible, at some point, the listener must settle on a perspective even if it is only temporary and her-his responses will be based on this reconciled viewpoint. It is when perspective is established meaning is actualised and a response can follow, that is to say, it is the "...total 'mix' that matters in the end" (van Leeuwen, 1999:9).

CHAPTER THREE

Interpretive Processes

Introduction

In the preceding two chapters I have looked closely at the structural elements of songs. In Chapter 1, I have examined the textual fabric of songs in detail by looking at the function of their media and modes. Within these discussions, I have also alluded to how listeners relate to these textual elements, especially how they regularly engage with them as communicative features of songs. In Chapter 2, I showed how the particular organization of these textual structures could suggest to listeners a perspective from which they could understand and judge the song. But, in this chapter, I now shift the emphasis from the textual aspects and throw the investigative spotlight onto the active role of listeners by focusing squarely on the different kinds of interpretive work they undertake and explaining the many and diverse ways in which they can contribute to song communication.

Feld (1994) has proposed a way of understanding song reception that gives some structure and cogency to this notion of interpretive work. He does this by explaining how listeners employ certain interpretive strategies that allow them to channel their responses into defined areas of signification. From now on, I borrow and make use of Feld's concept and his term "interpretive moves" (86) (without the quotations) to examine the interpretive action of listeners and to provide a structural framework from which to address the various groups of respondents' comments given in the reception survey.

Overall, the thrust of this chapter is to argue for the contribution that interpretation makes to communication. I will show how the listener arrives at meaning by outlining the basis of his-her interpretive moves, whether they are founded on conventional practices or on the independent and heuristic manner in which (s)he engages with the semiotic features of the

song. I will show how all of these moves interrelate, and how they are all-important in shaping meaning in different ways.

Interpretive Moves

For each song in the survey, there was a tendency for the responses to fall into several main areas of signification (although in each song there were variations in the volume in each area). Feld (1994) who tackles meanings in musical communication with an emphasis on the listener's role in reception, calls this channelling of responses 'interpretive moves' (83). He believes that when listeners encounter popular songs, an interpretation of them proceeds from what is a simultaneously musical and extramusical experience. Interpretive moves are possible because interpretation involves the discovery of familiar patterns and is driven by our prior experience and interaction with symbolic products (86). Interpretive moves then are not the responses *per se*, they are the interpretive processes listeners engage in to achieve their responses, the various means through which listeners reconcile their listening with their knowledge[1].

Feld lists general types of interpretive moves that permit the listener to respond in various ways, these are: "...locating, categorizing, associating, reflecting on and evaluating the work through various aspects of experience" (86). These moves need not be discrete; in fact we will see they mostly take place in combination. Interpretive moves then are not single events producing meaning but fluid and shifting processes where the listener's experience and knowledge continually flit in and out of focus in relation to the ongoing perception of the sound event. "Meaning, then, is momentary changeable and emergent, in flux as our interpretive moves are unravelled and crystallized" (88).

There is no specific order to interpretive moves, they do not pertain to specific genres or groups of listeners, neither are they equally proportionate to each listening event, but they involve "certain dimensions of

[1] Since the survey participants were asked to provide verbal responses to the songs, I have concentrated here on verbal interpretive moves. However, we will see in the analysis of the responses, that the respondents are aware that interpretive moves often involve responses other than verbal, for example singing or dancing.

communicative action. Recognition of certain features of code, genre, stylization, and performance..." (89). In short, interpretive moves are how listeners would work out the meaning of a song.

Working out meaning is a process that requires the listener to actively engage with the song. As Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) claim, "...semiotic products and events themselves always have both representational and interactive meanings, even though one or the other may dominate in specific cases" (102). In the last two chapters, I have touched on how the representational and interactive positions can prevail at different times and in different instance and we will now see in more detail how one of these positions may hold sway, or how each position can strengthen or weaken the other.

I now want to work retrospectively from the most frequent types of responses made in the reception survey to trace the interpretive routes respondents may have taken to reach these responses. The first type of move concerns the use of discourse. This is a principal semiotic resource that each listener brings with him-her to the song.

Discourse. When listeners refer to their broad knowledge and experience as a basis for understanding songs, they instigate a complex conceptual undertaking that draws not only on what they know, but what they believe others know, common knowledge that everyone (within their socio-cultural domain) would share. It is in this sense of shared knowledge that I want to discuss discourse and how it can inform interpretive processes. First, I will clarify my use of the term.

My working definition of discourse follows from the definition applied to it by Kress and van Leewen (2001) where they define it as "...socially constructed knowledges of (some aspect of) reality" (4). This is knowledge gained socially and experientially through the business of everyday living. So, if we take a familiar song discourse like 'unrequited love', this would include knowledge in the form of how people feel when their loved one rejects them, the usual reasons people are rejected, how to overcome such rejection, and so on.

Although the authors propose that their concept of discourse as knowledge exists independently of any one genre or any one mode, they also maintain that "discourses can only be realised in semiotic modes which have developed the means for realising them" (5). This becomes obvious if we consider the difficult (if not impossible) job of interpreting a discourse like 'unrequited love' through the music mode alone, without recourse to any lyrics. The music, as we have seen in the last chapter, could provide a convincing ambient background mood, but the discourse could only be fully realised by the lyrics that would detail the circumstances in each case. To get a clearer picture of how listeners make interpretive moves by drawing on discourse as a semiotic resource, it is useful here to briefly discuss where and how discourses originate and how they are used in general.

As with all forms of signification, discourses arise and develop in a social context. These contexts may be global, confined to cultural institutions or small local groups. Consequently, listeners acquire their knowledge according to the social formations their lives and their personal circumstances afford them. For example, if a person is a fan of one artist, (s)he is likely to have substantial knowledge of the area of music that artist performs. On the other hand, becoming familiar with the discourses of a social group could be unintentional. Fiske (1992) makes this clear when he explains, "if colleagues at work or at school are constantly talking about a particular program, band, team or performer, many people become drawn into fandom as a means of joining that particular social group" (38).

As a result of this everyday social interaction, when an artist is hugely successful, (like Michael Jackson), and the socially-constructed discourse(s) about him are publicly accessible to consumers of mass media dispersed materials, there would be no need to join any special group to share this knowledge, it would be part of a global discourse familiar to millions of people. In instances like these when discourses are well-known and fully established, they almost become 'common sense' and are subject to what Bourdieu calls 'genesis amnesia' (cited in Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001:11), meaning that audiences may have no conscious memory of how they first

acquired the knowledge. In this case, discourses may be interpreted in a non-reflective way.

It is because discourses comprise socially-constructed knowledge that there can be many versions of the same discourse, and that these versions are ever-shifting. The result of this means as Horner (1999) suggests, "...there are always a range of discourses and discursive positions on which we may draw, including those clearly current and those, dominant in the past, which have since faded from prominence" (27). In popular songs, discourses are articulated as themes, that of 'love' and 'war' being principal amongst them. But as Horner says above, there are always a range of discursive positions from which these themes will be presented. Some aspects of the discourse might be emphasized, for example the love discourse can manifest itself as happiness, pain, or even desire. And Dylan posits a version of the war discourse with the help of a contemplative mood in 'With God on our Side' (1963), emphasising the futility of war, but in 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic' (1861), the rousing marching beat helps that song to emphasise the aspects of solidarity, divine glory and nobility that are also part of the war discourse. Song 1 of the reception survey, 'Brothers in Arms' also relays the war discourse and it does so by including both its noble and futile aspects.

The availability of alternative discourses allows listeners to refer to those that are most appropriate or convenient for them in the circumstances, that is to say "appropriate to the interests of the communication situation in which they find themselves" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001:21). The same authors suggest that the meanings of certain discourses may be "more readily 'received' in one mode rather than another" (30). Applying this point to the interpretation of popular songs, means that when listeners draw on discourses like happiness or grief, that is to say, a discourse that is abstract, inexplicit or one that is perhaps regarded as somewhat ineffable, then that discourse may be 'more readily received' through the less definitive mode of music because its expressive qualities have not been pinned down by the words.

In light of the above point, it is clear that when listeners interpret discourses articulated by the music mode alone, in general, their responses could be expected to be more variable, that is, presented in less definitive clusters. This is because as Shepherd (1991) asserts, "...music objectifies social processes less than most other symbolic modes" (81). The subsequent responses listeners make to the song are likely to include a variety of interpretations of the same discourse. But we will see in Song 6 of the survey that musical signifiers can also be so closely related to their signified that responses indicating certain discourses may be less variable and in fact can sometimes have a high uniformity of agreement.

Looking at the findings of reception studies in other media can also help to elucidate how song listeners employ discourses to help them make their interpretive moves. Morley (1986) has shown how different levels of knowledge affect audiences' interpretations of television programmes. He found that before audiences could interpret the programme material they had to be competent in certain forms of knowledge and cultural conventions that "constitute the ground (or framework) within or on which particular propositions can be made" (44). He also posited a hypothetical viewer who was able to make different readings in different contexts because he was "crossed by a number of discourses" (44). He explained it like this.

> [It] was *he*, the particular person (who represents a specific combination of/intersection of such discourses), who makes the readings, not the discourses which 'speak' to him in any simple sense. Rather, they provide him with the cultural repertoire of resources with which he works. (1986:43, original emphasis).

We can infer from this quote that a discursive interpretive move would be contingent on two main factors: First, the way the discourse is articulated and second, the way the discourse is reconciled with the listener's own knowledge, which as we have seen, may be different for each person according to the social group or culture to which they belong. When an audience is made up of different age groups and cultures as the audience of respondents in the reception survey, the question of whether the same range of discourses was accessible to all the participants, or whether they drew on different versions of the same discourse or different discourses altogether, will have further implications for their responses.

Incorporating the listener's experience into how discourses are used in interpretive moves substantiates Horner's (1999) claim that discourses are "a site for and means of negotiating conflicting and shifting representations and constructions of experience" (26). In other words, interpreting a song through one's experience of discourses becomes like Hebdige's (1979) concept of a 'symbolic fit' (113), that is, a mixture of what the song expresses and what is relevant to or can be understood by the listener.

We can see, then, that discourses as socially-constructed knowledge will form the backbone of the themes that songs are built upon. To the listener, they will constitute what the song means, what it is all about. But, like all other semiotic features in the songs how a discourse is interpreted depends on how the song articulates it and each listener's understanding of it as well as the context in which it is heard.

Discourse as talk. Used in another sense, the term 'discourse' also includes the more literal definition of the word as it is understood in everyday English, that is, (according to the OED), 'communication of thought by speech'. Here, the term applies in particular when popular songs are the subject of conversation. Feld (1994) claims that when people talk "to each other, to themselves, or to music analysts" (92) they often employ the same range of interpretive moves discussed above. So, with this in mind, we can move from discourse as knowledge, to discourse as concrete verbal exchanges when people are engaged in talk about music and songs, and examine how this talk can affect the way listeners interpret them.

When listeners hear a song, they not only assess its internal features but they will include in that assessment, the ways the song (or similar songs) are discussed either informally by themselves or their friends or formally by professional song pundits. As Horner (1999) suggests "...the discourse used to describe popular music has material consequences for how that music is produced, the forms it takes, how it is experienced, and its meanings" (18).

Again, we can look to studies in the medium of television as a pointer to how people's talk influences their opinions on mass media products. In Richardson and Corner's (1986) study on viewers' interpretive accounts of a TV programme, they concluded the following.

> For it seems clear to us that when respondents talk about the programme material they do so by drawing upon framings, categories and attitudes formed by their routine participation in talk about television. (1986:507).

Popular songs constitute a substantial part of television programmes, eg, Top of the Pops, Pop Idol, etc, and people are likely to talk about songs as part of this kind of televised material. But, they are also likely to talk about songs as part of their involvement in myriad other activities. If so, the 'frames, categories and attitudes' they draw on when they come to interpret the songs should derive partly from this routine participation in talk.

But the degree to which such talk will influence listeners interpretations will depend on the amount of time they spend talking about songs and the kind of talk they use, as well as their experience and time invested in listening to popular songs. Fairclough (1989) believes that to conceptualize language use in terms of the strategies individuals use to achieve intentions understates "the extent to which people are caught up in, constrained by, and indeed derive their individual identities from social conventions..."(9). In other words, the way we speak about songs may be what we have learned from the way we have heard other people speaking about them because "people do act strategically in certain circumstances and use conventions rather than simply following them; but in other circumstances they do simply follow them" (9).

The result is that as part of listeners' interpretive moves, we could expect their comments about songs to include speech articulated in a way that may be strategic and personal to the individual, but it may also be relatively conventional in the way Fairclough describes.

Up till now, I have been stressing the active participation of the listener. And, we can see from the explanation of different interpretive moves that this participation is variable. As an example of this variability, we can see

that interpretive moves that include conventional discourses are not always the results of deliberate attempts at interpretation. In fact, Feld (1994) suggests that interpretive moves involving talk are "attempts to recreate, specify, momentarily fix, or give order to emergent recognitions of the events that take place so rapidly and intuitively when we experience musical sounds" (93).

This level of intricacy involved in listening and interpreting emphasises the position I advocated earlier that when responding to multimodal texts like songs, listeners are likely to offer only the gist or a general impression of the message communicated. The ability to respond in a way that is more reasoned (as was expected of the survey participants) has even more significance when we consider they were from different cultures, of different ages with different experiences in music and so on. Further, they had to apprehend what they heard in the songs' multimodal representations with their media, modes and discourses and to compress their own thoughts, feelings and knowledge about these semiotic features into a few words in a language that may not have been their own. Adopting a conventional way of talking is one way of reducing the complexity of this task. It is also why when Feld (1994) observes that when people say,

> 'I really can't say but, do you know what I mean?' They are not necessarily tongue-tied, inarticulate, or unable to speak. They are caught in a moment of interpretive time, trying to force awareness to words (1994:92-93).

And when they say, " 'it's different from...' or 'It's a kind of...' or ' It sort of reminds me of...' ", what they are doing is preparing "discourse frames" (92). It is likely that what listeners opt to slot into these 'discourse frames' are familiar and conventional ways of expressing themselves.

I now turn to consider what was a frequent interpretive move made by respondents in the reception survey. This is what Feld (1994:86) calls 'categorical', where listeners categorize or classify the music in their verbal responses to it.

Categorizing. To categorize or to classify any entity, the classifier must consider it as part of a wider reference frame. For a song, the wider

reference point of categorization is the genre. In other words, the song is graded according to a set of genre rules. To get an understanding of these rules we can look to Fabbri (1982). First, he defines a musical genre as "a set of musical events (real or possible) whose course is governed by a definitive set of socially accepted rules" (52) and he regards the rules as semiotic codes relating the expression of the music to its content. But, he claims these semiotic rules need not refer only to the musical or verbal elements of the song, instead they may also refer to external codes from the wider context that frames the "musical event" (56).

Therefore, to undertake an interpretive move that categorizes a song, listeners need access not only to the semiotic codes in the music, but access to those codes that pertain to the music's external context, codes that according to Brackett, (2002) create a connection between "...musical styles, producers, musicians and consumers" (66).

Although this categorizing procedure is undertaken according to genre rules, it extends beyond the song into the listener's experiences of discourses, social practices, knowledge of performers, etc. This makes it easy to understand why Walser (1993) concludes that "[g]enres are never sui generis; they are developed, sustained and re-formed by people, who bring a variety of histories and interest to their encounters with generic texts" (27).

In order to make a categorical interpretive move then, listeners would need a good understanding of existing genres and the ability to recognize characteristics in the song that would allow them to fit into these genres. They can as Horner (1999) maintains, invent new genre categories but, "not out of thin air" (28). Instead new categories must be fashioned from existing categories. His opinion is matched with Fabbri's (1982) claim about genres. "A new genre is not born in an empty space but in a musical system that is already structured" (60). So, listeners need (and we will see that they usually have) experience of what characteristics a songs needs for it to belong in a genre.

When listeners categorize in this way, and fashion new signs from existing signs, with each categorization the boundaries of the sign shift. And as we saw in Chapter 1, (p52), any interaction with a song produces a transformation of it. Each categorization then performs transformational work leading to the song's continuing diachronic development as a genre-type.

One source of information about song categories that listeners can draw on is how songs are marketed and the categories that are accorded to them by commercial record companies and distribution outlets. Another is the categorizing of songs that takes place by commentators on radio and television who continually assign ostensible categories to songs through their opinions or by organising programmes in music genres, like the 'country hour' or the 'rock slot', etc. Then there are music critics who work for newspapers, magazine, fanzines, etc, who usually allot genres to any songs they discuss. Additionally, there is the influence of friends and family who continually compartmentalize songs according to a whole range of social and cultural criteria including those already mentioned.

All these experience-driven categorizations might establish trends that listeners follow when it comes to their own classifications of songs, as Horner (1999) discovered. "I have found that when I ask students to describe a song they have already read about, their descriptions usually echo what they have read" (23). Therefore, social experience of how songs are classified elsewhere, at other times by other people and institutions must influence how the listener eventually categorizes a song into a genre as part of an interpretive move.

A further interpretive move that Feld (1994:83) mentions is that of 'evaluating'. And, this too was popular in the reception survey as a means of responding.

Evaluating. Making an evaluation of a song is another complex interpretive move, where as Middleton (1990) claims, many "schemes of value" operate and where there are "...many networks of knowledge and practice, linked to different cultural contexts, social functions, modes of agency and discursive

position" (254). I will review evaluative moves by examining some of these schemes of value.

An evaluation of a song may result in or be in response to the musical skill and expertise the listener hears in the song. These skills may be those that are regarded as appropriate for its genre, in which case evaluation and genre categorization combine in one interpretive move. But, evaluations may also differ according to the evaluator's experiences of songs. In some cases, experience would provide specialist knowledge of aspects of song production and give some listeners the opportunity to evaluate the song according to its technical merits. It could be argued that having experience in such formal aspects of music might provide that person with a measure of cultural capital[2] or a more authoritative opinion from which to make these aesthetic evaluations in the way that Brackett (1995) proposes.

> [T]he ability to bestow aesthetic distance on any object has begun to mark those with cultural capital more than the willingness either to gaze upon legitimate art objects or to be familiar with them. (1995:160).

But as we have seen from many discussions up till now and as we shall see from the song responses, as a result of listeners' individual experiences and the socio-cultural positions they occupy, the interpretations of all respondents whether they have knowledge of music construction or not, are subject to the conventions associated with those social positions. Consequently, although there are different ways of evaluating songs, these ways are all influenced and constrained by social conditions.

Lewis (1987), who advocates the concept of 'taste cultures' claims that although there are always a few idiosyncratic choices, in general, these are 'window dressing', because as listeners to music, we usually enjoy "the same music listened to by other people we like or identify with" (200). He contends the reason for this is that music can reflect the values and norms of social groups and social classes to which people belong.

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[2] A knowledge and familiarity with styles and genres that are socially valued and that confer prestige on those who have mastered them (Bourdieu, 1986).

And Middleton (1990) believes although there is ideological pressure influencing personal taste in music, it is not produced through a simple ideology, nor is it reducible to economic or class forces, instead

> it is the articulation and inflection of a multitude of lines of force, associated with different sites, audiences, media, production apparatuses and discourses, together creating the changing positions available to us on the map of pleasure. (1990:248-9)

There may also be some power-relations at work in these 'lines of force'. For example the way that audiences like and dislike can be linked to commercial imperatives so that record sales are not left to chance. As Tagg (1999) argues.

> [M]usic might be generally thought of as a matter of personal taste, ...and thereby seemingly unquantifiable [but] ...it should be remembered that quantification (charts, sales, box office figures, etc) is the name of much of the game in the music business and that such quantification relies on many individuals finding the same sorts of meaning in the same sorts of musical structure. (1999:32).

But whether audiences will take a liking to any song may not be so easily predictable. Because no matter how much a song is favoured in one place, at one time, evaluative opinions for it can change.

As part of the transformation process a song goes through, a song that audiences enjoyed at one time may eventually become a victim of its own success when it is aired incessantly on TV and radio. In these instances listeners' appetites for it may rapidly diminish. Or the reverse may be true, a song can endure revival after revival without public opinion for it ever wavering. Listeners' opinions about songs then are not predictable because they are built on the shifting sands of these 'lines of force' and because in the words of Fiske (1998), "the production of meaning/pleasure occurs in the consumption as well as the production of the cultural commodity..."(1998, 508).

But within the parameters their social and cultural dispositions impose upon them, listeners may still assert some personal preferences for music in the way that Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) describe. They believe that taste is not simply a matter of conforming to social norms, rather, that

"...personal identification with a shared, social taste is not a passive process ... but as active a process as learning to express yourself in a new language" (71). So when we state what we like or dislike in music, we accept these musical expressions as part of our identity and that may also include identifying with certain social formations associated with this type of music.

Like other interpretive moves, aesthetic evaluations are not undertaken in isolation. When Crafts, Cavicchi and Keil's, (1993), Music in Everyday Life Project, asked respondents what role music played in their lives and what music was all about for them, their replies included the following: "It washes away the trials and tribulations of the day" (174); "It can make you cry, and then other times it can really perk you up" (163); "It just takes my mind away from other things" (103).

In much the same way, when respondents of the survey in this study gave their preferences for the song as they often did, despite being advised that "it doesn't matter whether you like the songs or not" (Introduction, p18), included in that composite interpretive move was not only an aesthetic appraisal of its quality as a piece of art, but an evaluation of its functional qualities and its capacity to gratify their sensory desires. In relation to this point Frith (1998) says, "the popular consumer too makes different sorts of demand (more or less aesthetic, more or less functional)" (583).

These practical evaluations may be encouraged by the modern-day availability of songs, for example, via the use of personal CD and mp3 players, etc. This availability makes a song's utility a significant feature for consumers. If a song does not suit the exigencies of the occasion dictated by the end user, it is easily replaced or shut off, because as Lull (1987) claims "...except for music programmed on the radio, music is under the control of the user" (147). It is this dispensability that may encourage listeners to evaluate songs on a basis of utility where they are matched to the purpose of the listening event; a party, a romantic setting, etc, or according to whether they can provide the physical or sensory enrichment listeners often desire (as outlined above). So aesthetic evaluations and evaluation based on practicalities or functions will often combine, just as Middleton suggests (p78). We see this complex type of interpretive move

taking place in Song 4 of the survey where the responses reveal aesthetic and practical or functional judgements in one move.

Evaluative moves might also merge with discursive moves. As Kress and van Leeuwen (2001:77) claim, there may be discourses behind all acts of evaluation. These are likely to be discourses as knowledge that reflect commonly held opinions, as well as conventional ways of talking about what makes for 'a good song' or 'a good singing voice'. As Horner (1999) describes, "[o]ne's views and experience of music are never really 'one's own' but come from existing language and material conditions" (27).

Whether the evaluator is a song producer, record shop assistant or a respondent in an academic survey, the schemes of value reviewed here are built on a range of knowledge and experience and the personal disposition of the evaluator. Evaluation therefore not only combines with other interpretive moves but, all interpretive moves are inter-dependent. They are also dependent on the listener's knowledge and understanding especially concerning the song's semiotic codes; their modes; the influence of their orientations; the semiotic features of metonymy, modality, intertextuality, and so on. Any one of these features could inform an interpretive process and all interpretive processes inform responses to songs.

In sum, although making an interpretive move to evaluate popular songs is undertaken in the presence of 'lines of force' and within the confines of social and cultural proprieties, making this type of move helps listeners to delineate their own subjectivity and identity. By engaging in aesthetic appraisals of music, they can assert themselves as agents with capacity to make cognitive and emotional choices.

Turning now to a different kind of interpretive move, I will discuss a way of interpreting songs that is fundamental to all others, one that allows us to formulate our cognitive and sensory perception into meaning by means of metaphoric conceptualisation. I explain this move by referring to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) theory that the terms on which we think and act, that is, our conceptual system of understanding, is based on metaphor. I adapt their theory to the process of interpreting songs to explain how metaphor is

used by listeners to consolidate the multiple communicative modes of songs into meaning(s).

Metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) believe that our everyday actions, that is, our physical and social experiences, are metaphorically structured; one concept being understood in terms of another. They claim that in our interaction with our external environment, simple spatial orientations like 'up-down', 'front-back', 'active-passive', 'central-peripheral', etc, are grounded in our sense of the corporeal. The way people adopt these orientations may vary from culture to culture, but the major ones are common to all cultures (56). The spatial orientations that music produces then, like its up-down pitch variations, could also gesture in a metaphorical sense towards physical orientations.

The notion of metaphoric representation is not uncommon in other literature. A related idea from Kress and van Leewuen (2001) proposes the term 'experiential meaning potential', as an explanation of how signifiers exhibit potential for meaning by referring listeners to their own experiences. They maintain that using these methods of referral allow us to extend our own experiences metaphorically and in the same way to grasp the metaphorical extensions that are made by others (10). And Feld (1994) advances a similar idea. "In the simplest sense what takes place in the experience of a piece of music is the working of some features of momentary experience into the context of prior and plausible experiences to interpret what is going on" (86).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) maintain there are "systematic correlates between our emotions (like happiness) and our sensory-motor experiences...[and these correlates] form the basis of orientational metaphorical concepts, such as HAPPY IS UP" (58, original emphasis). In fact, according to them, happiness and health and all the attributes that generally determine what is good for a person are 'UP' (16). We can infer from this that by the same system of analogy, musical dimensions,

especially pitch, that connote a sense of 'up' would usually give rise to more positive interpretations[3].

The relationship between physical bodies and musical structures provides a good example of how the metaphoric conceptual system operates in general and how when making meaning, listeners can draw on their own physical frames of reference to serve as metaphoric analogies. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) confirm this connection in the following statement.

> A semiotics which is intended to be adequate to a description of the multimodal world will need to be conscious of forms of meaning-making which are founded as much on the physiology of humans as bodily beings, ...as on humans as social actors. (2001:28).

This notion of our interpretive processes tending toward metaphoric analogies with a corporeal basis is reinforced by what we learned in Chapter 1, (p40), from Cooke (1959), who argued that composers of music have been unanimous in using these same spatial orientations as symbols of expressive effects in music. And, the idea is also reminiscent of Gardner's (1993) 'kinesthetic' intelligence where conceptual processes are driven and guided by physical sensations. The repeated use of the same paradigm appears to confirm that these spatial perspectives are widely accepted as a way of interpreting and realizing meaning.

The discussions on 'tempo and 'pitch' in Chapter 1 (p36 and 39), demonstrated how music can mimic human actions like marching and dancing. It can even imitate in an onomatopoeic way, non-musical sounds like rippling water. Again, the method by which these connections are possible is through metaphoric conceptualisation. This allows us to compare the attributes of one musical feature with the attributes of another (musical or not) and thereby come to an understanding that is familiar to us. Feld (1994) puts it this way. "It is in this sense that we might speak of music as a metaphoric process, a special way of experiencing, knowing, and feeling value, identity and coherence" (91). Consequently, music becomes a

[3] Of course there are instances where signifiers like a descending pitch pattern will be present in what is otherwise a '*happy*' or 'positive' song. But, these may be more the exception than the rule. The bio-acoustic' impulse that supports metaphoric analogies like these is a strong one. Plus, a descending pitch does not usually signify in isolation, and wherever it is present, concomitant signifiers will either strengthen it or modify it in some way.

metaphoric representation of actions or sounds, "as this note is to that note, as tonic is to dominant, as ascent is to descent, as accent is to weak beat (and so on), so X is to Y" (Middleton, 1990:223).

The discussion on interpretive moves based on discourses showed how the verbal discourses people engage in when they talk about songs can influence their understanding of the song. And much of this talk about songs (like talk about anything else) is expressed through metaphors. Feld (1994) believes the metaphoric comparisons we use in our speech are helpful when it comes to making meaning in music because "[m]etaphors involve the instantaneous recognition that things are simultaneously alike and unlike. And when most people talk about music, like and unlike is what they talk about" (92). Those respondents who commented 'it's like...' in their responses, validate Feld's point.

Feld also suggests how we talk about music may prepare us to understand the music itself, "speech about music represents an attempt to construct a metaphoric discourse to signify awareness of the more fundamental metaphoric discourse that music communicates in its own right" (93).

Apart from the music in songs, our interpretive moves must take note of lyrics and it is here that metaphor is evident in its linguistic form. For some people, lyrics are a key element in understanding the overall meaning of the song, and a brief glance at the lyrics in the six survey song-extracts reveals how pervasive metaphor is in these lyrics.

But, Fairclough (1989) shows that as well as using metaphors in our vocabularies, we also use a metaphoric method to understand all verbal discourses. He observed that it is not only what listeners hear in verbal utterances, but what they have heard previously that influences how they make meaning from words "...you do not simply 'decode' an utterance, you arrive at an interpretation through an active process of matching features of the utterance at various levels with representations you have stored in your long-term memory" (10-11). It is this matching of features, the compare and contrast interpretive move that leads to our eventual understanding of the lyrics.

In any interpretive move, people seek to use references that are familiar and reliable as points of departure. Using metaphor allows them to compare and contrast mode with mode, experience with experience. "[W]e always attend to form in terms of familiarity or strangeness, features which are socially constituted through experiences of sounds as structures rooted in our listening histories" (Feld, 1994:85). Metaphors then provide an eminently suitable semiotic resource on which to base our interpretive moves.

Songs can be easy for listeners to interpret. There are many instances when the listener's experience will allow her to predict what is coming next. As Eco (1977) has said, interactional behaviour is based on redundancy rules because "if people had to listen to...every expression they received, analysing them item by item, communication would be a pretty tiring activity" (136). But, there are other instances where meaning is only hinted at, implied rather than stated outright (eg, in the notion of provenance). In both these positions, when song meanings are either overt or covert, to paraphrase Kress and van Leeuwen (2001:73) we must either grasp the metaphors or remember every individual instance of communication separately. This means we would have to re-learn everything on which we base our understanding. Instead metaphors provide short-cuts, tried and tested paths of recognition to which we can defer.

The next interpretive move brings to light once again the issue of power relations inherent in songs but in this case, the balance of power shifts in favour of the listener.

Apart from the social pressures on listeners that we have seen can affect responses like genre typing, verbal expressions, aesthetic evaluations, and so on, we also saw in the Song Orientations section of Chapter 2, that through its style of presentation, a song can express a perspective that might direct the interpretation one way. All these influences on listeners' interpretations can lead to what Hall (1980) calls a 'preferred reading' (134). That is to say, in these cases, listeners would be more inclined to interpret the song based on its dominant representational features.

In the next discussion I expand on this issue, but in so doing I will show how listeners can challenge the presence of power in the representational dimension of the song. I will argue the point by focusing on the making of meaning in order to promote subordinate interests. This is achieved by using what Fiske (1998:509) calls 'popular cultural capital', which is "not a singular concept, but [sic] is open to a variety of articulations, but it always exists in a stance of resistance to the forces of domination" (509). 'Popular cultural capital' also works through ideology, because as Hall (1980) points out, there are resistive alternative ideologies that empower people. He provides an example of this in his notion of 'oppositional' coding that takes places when receivers of the code (in our case song listeners)

> decode the message in a *globally* contrary way. He/she detotalizes the message in the preferred code in order to re-totalize the message within some alternative framework of reference (211, original emphasis).

I will use the notions of 'popular cultural capital' and 'oppositional coding' to explain how songs and their meanings can be appropriated by audiences.

Song Appropriation. First, I refer to the discussion in Chapter 2, (p76) about 'genre-normative' listening. In this instance, the listener accepts or conforms to the dominant representational aspects of the song that signify its genre. But the case of the Trinidadian women (Chapter 2, p77), shows how 'preferred readings' can be challenged. By imposing their own values onto these ballads, by utilizing these songs to serve their own needs, these women assert their own ideological power over them and in so doing demonstrate how the interactive dimension of communication can in some instances come to govern meaning. I will also demonstrate this type of interpretive move in Song 5 of the survey.

Another method of appropriation is for listeners to use the song to their own advantage, deploying it to serve purposes its composer(s) may not have intended it to serve. For example, because the BBC adopted Puccini's (1858-1924) 'Nessun Dorma' (1990) as the official theme tune for the 1990 World Cup, ever since, the song and the event have become linked. The

intervention of the media and an active audience thus proposed alternative meanings for this aria.

We can also see the influences of audiences in the old, parochial Scottish ballad, Auld Lang Syne (c.1799). This song is appropriated by audiences worldwide when it is regularly and collectively sung as an international anthem to welcome each new year, despite the fact that the lyrics are in a narrowcast code and all but a few words of it are usually completely mysterious to most people outside of Scotland. But, by taking charge of the song, audiences all over the world impose their own interpretations on it and in this particular instance, they transform the song's narrowcast coding into broadcast meanings.

More pertinently, one of the songs used in the reception survey of this study ('Brothers in Arms'), was appropriated for a short time by various groups of freedom fighters around the world, each exploiting its meaning potential to serve their own cause. We can still see vestiges of these meanings in some of the comments that respondents made to this song in the survey.

Appropriation then serves the contextual situation of each listening event. These are instances where the interactive capacity dominates and the song's meanings are entirely at the behest of its users. When listeners exert this type of listener power in opposition to song orientations, or to commercial interests that promote the 'preferred reading', the instant transformation of a song appears to be quite acceptable.

The practice of appropriation demonstrates quite clearly that when people make meaning from music they not only do so with reference to its styles and structures but in reference to the myriad social contexts where those styles and structures are put to use.

Inter-dependence of interpretive moves. Throughout the foregoing discussions, I have argued that to make sense of songs and to make any interpretive move, listeners rely on knowledge that is multi-dimensional and incorporates *inter alia* the modal rules of music and language; social discourses; knowledge of semiotic codes; social and cultural practices and

physiological parallels, etc. Therefore, to valorize one of these as providing a more direct or natural experience of songs or one that is somehow more meaningful than others, omits to acknowledge that even what we consider as our individual experiences of music and songs are subject to social and cultural forces.

In a multimodal theory of communication, there can be no one process that results in a path to the 'true' meaning of songs, none that is more isomorphically correlated, or more homologically sound. Nor is there any process that is unmediated by social forces. Instead, whether the moves are deliberately worked out or arrived at intuitively, they are made in socially-driven conditions. The social framework that music is built upon ensures there will always be some consistency of meaning within socio-cultural communities who share the same music. The same mediating influences that ensure there is diversity in meanings, also ensure that although we can attach personal significance to any song, we will always be able to share its wider meanings with others.

In Chapter 1, (p40), I gave examples of this through the work of van Leeuwen (1999) and Cooke (1959), and demonstrated when meaning is made from human interaction with the dimensions of music, those meanings are likely to remain within certain broad areas and are not endlessly variable. And the analysis of the responses will endorse this view through the level of consistency in the song responses.

The social and cultural forces that influence interpretation should bring a consistency of agreement when a group that shares one culture respond to them. And Tagg (1999) shows how consistency of agreement is a way of legitimizing meaning resulting from music. He believes that since 'intersubjectivity' is an approved criterion for the validation of observed findings in the field social sciences, then in the field of music where there is significant inter-subjective agreement on any aspect of a song, for instance, he claims that "[i]f different people within the same culture, feel or react to the same music in a similar way, it cannot be considered polysemic" (8). The more people agree on the meanings of music, the more readily we may trace the source of these meanings to their social bases.

Conclusion

To posit the final part of my theoretical argument, in this chapter, I have suggested the listener can take disparate routes to arrive at the meanings they allocate to songs. I examined the range of interpretive moves they can use to do this, including classifying, associating, evaluating and so on.

I have often stressed the significance of socio-cultural factors on interpretation and how these frequently mean that listeners follow conventional ways of making meaning, for instance by the use of familiar discourses or by designating genre categories, and so on. These moves are often dependent on the listeners' experiences in music and in social life. Listeners must use the semiotic resources made available to them through their experience, as well as what their social dispositions and the contextual situations of listening contribute. But, the metaphoric system of analogy that helps us to perceive and understand songs is a conceptual system all listeners all have in common, and this makes it a fundamental principle in the process of meaning making.

I have shown that for all the persuasive representations that guide and prompt listeners towards meaning, there remains an element of choice in interpretive moves and to demonstrate this I gave examples of instances where listeners can act independently to the extent of resisting any singular viewpoint that is advocated by the song, and even commandeer the song's meaning for their own purposes.

Conclusion to Part I

In this first part of the thesis I have addressed communication between song and listener by outlining all my theoretical premises. In Chapter 1, I have discussed the structural dimensions of songs and separated out their textual features into media and modes and showed the potential each possess to signify to the listener in a special way.

I have then elaborated on this argument in Chapter 2 by demonstrating the various influences these textual parameters may exert in communication and shown how certain configurations of media and modes can encourage listeners to hear songs from the viewpoint the song has set up. But, at this stage, I have started to bring in the active aspect of listening and counter-posed these possibilities with how song meanings can also be influenced by the listener and his-her choice of listening stance.

In this last chapter of Part I, I have further developed the reception side of the theoretical model by concentrating on the continual tension between what the song represents and what the listener brings to it in the form of interpretive work. I have shown how a range of different interpretive moves can provide the listener with a way of resolving this tension and making meaning.

Altogether, the three chapters in this part of the study establish a theoretical paradigm of communication between song and listener that shows how such communication is tentative in all its aspects. It shows that song communication is wide open to the influences of socio-cultural forces and even physiological influences, and it shows how these influences can be wielded both by the song and its ever-present potential to activate certain responses and by the power of interaction at the listener's discretion.

We can now proceed to test this theoretical position in practice by investigating in Part II to what extent both the comments of respondents and the semiotic features of the songs, confirm this position.

Introduction

This part of the dissertation concentrates on the analytical side of the investigation. Here, I incorporate the theories and methods advocated till now within an analysis of the responses that were made to the six song-extracts during the reception survey. I have kept the format of analysis as uniform as possible.

Since only 50 respondents were involved in the survey, this number did not necessitate the use of statistical tables to quantify the findings. Further, dividing words from responses into categorical groups for statistical purposes is fraught with difficulties because their semantic content often applies to more than one category of interpretation.

Nevertheless, a quantitative aspect of the response data is achieved. This is possible because the 'salient comments' are grouped along with words of similar meanings into *response-types* according to certain thematic issues or interpretive moves. For example, the comment of 'happy' may be grouped along with a comment of 'cheerful'. In this way, we can confirm trends and patterns from the response-types. These are then correlated to semiotic features in the song-extracts, that according to related points of theory outlined throughout Part 1, may have been influential in producing them.

In general, the analytical discussions start off with large groups of comments that represent a response-type and these are followed by discussions of smaller groups of comments. But, in some cases, I felt it necessary to discuss certain issues first, and these issues may not always have produced the largest number of responses. So, in each of the case studies, discussions usually start with an issue that raised the highest number of responses, but there are exceptions.

The significance of any response-type is usually only discussed once over the six case studies, although I may allude to it from time to time elsewhere. Also,

response-types are usually constituted from groups of comments, but because my sample of respondents is small, now and again, I also discuss a theoretical point through one single comment that I regard as a response-type.

When discussing the response-types, I have tried to use the most frequent comment given by the respondents themselves as a heading for that discussion. Otherwise, they are discussed under the heading of a particular interpretive move, or a heading that I have chosen as appropriate for that issue.

When I refer to any comment made by a respondent, I do so in 'single quotes'. To differentiate words that I want to emphasise within the text, I make use of *italics*. Often, more than one respondent used the same word to describe a song. In these cases, I indicate how many respondents used that word by a multiplication sign 'x' followed by the number eg, 'happy' (x3).

When I discuss 'responses', I refer in general either to the totality of responses given as salient comments or more than different comments made by one or more respondents. Otherwise, when I discuss individual comments, I usually name them specifically, in this way: 'two respondents said, 'deep voice'.

Although within the thesis I discuss the entire number of responses that were made to the six song-extracts, I defer the discussions of some comments until the final section of Part II. Organizing the analysis of the responses in this way gives me the opportunity to discuss groups of response-types that apply to more than one song in this separate and final section.

The analysis of these comments provide an opportunity to observe how different points of the social semiotics I been advocating, applies to the various response-types that arose in the survey.

We can now move on to the first case study.

Part II

Case Studies:

Analysis of Six Song-Extracts and their Responses

Song 1

'Brothers in Arms' (BA)

Dire Straits, (1996) [1985] *Brothers in Arms (CD)*

The song-extract starts at 4.01 and lasts till 5.42. At 1.41 seconds, this is the longest extract of all the songs. The extra length here is necessary so that a section of the song with lyrics as well as part of the long guitar instrumental (that was a promotional feature of this song) could be included. The extract begins at the fourth verse near the end of the song. It recalls a soldier's last words, as he lies dying on a battlefield.

Now the sun's gone to hell (heaven) [1]
Moon riding high
Let me bid you farewell
Every man has to die
But it's written in the starlight
And every line in your palm
We are fools to make war on our brothers in arms

The most common interpretive move the respondents made in respect of this song resulted in a large group of comments relating the song to different 'moods', one respondent merely noting it was 'moody'. But, although different descriptions are given of the main mood, we shall see that these descriptions share a general characteristic that gestures towards the melancholic.

In suggesting how the moods and the many associations connected to them may have been formed, I would like to draw particular attention to the feature of semiotic modality because this song is what Hodge and Kress (1988) would call 'densely modalized' (264). In order for the concept of modality to be effective, it must draw on and refer to one single social definition of reality, as the authors put it, "[t]he sanction of modality ultimately has its source in the agreement of a group of people" (147). How

[1] It is not entirely clear whether the final word of this line is heaven or hell as the word is not fully articulated and sources are ambiguous about it. As well as this, Knopfler often changes words of songs from performance to performance. If it is heaven, then the pronunciation is **he**-aven, easily heard as 'hell', (rhyming with 'farewell').

modality is 'sanctioned' here is by the extent to which the majority of respondents were agreed on the definitiveness of the song's mood(s).

I will attempt to show how the feature of modality has been used in various ways, showing how it accentuates the expressive features of the song, how it helps to communicate the sense of emotion the respondents reported and ultimately, how the respondents have engaged with this feature and heard the mood(s) as convincing. In particular the responses single out two main signifiers, namely, the guitar and the voice quality. We will see that these two musical elements use modality in special ways to bring a sense of emotional veracity to the song and strengthen the effectiveness of the other signifiers that contribute to the respondents' impression of the moods.

I will examine the different comments in groups starting with the largest groups and moving to the smaller. I use the most commonly given word used by the respondents as a heading for each group. The first group is the 'sad' mood.

Sad mood

Eighteen respondents thought the song was 'sad' and for nine of them this word was their first comment. Two people mentioned feeling sad themselves, one woman (No.46), reported 'the music made me tearful". And, on meeting respondent (No.23, a Russian woman), a few hours after her participation in the survey, she confided that she was still finding it difficult to shake off the sad feeling that enveloped her on hearing this song.[2]

Twelve others had a gloomy impression of the song. They reported it as: 'depressing' (x4), 'melancholic' (x4), 'morbid' and 'sorrowful'. Another heard 'hopelessness' in it. One respondent experienced a type of synaesthesia or used colour as a semiotic resource and said that the song sounded 'grey' (a colour associated with sadness in some cultures).

[2] Whether music can arouse the same emotion in the listener as it represents in the song has for some time been a debated issue in the area of aesthetics of music (see Cooke, 1959, Hindemith, 1961, Kivy, 1990 and Sloboda, 1991). But, this debate is outside the scope of this study.

The respondents making the 'sad' comments came from British, Russian, French, Australian, Indonesian and Cypriot cultural backgrounds. This appears to confirm Frith's (1996) assertion below.

> We may not all have attended music schools, but we have all been to the movies; we may not be able to tell the difference between a major and a minor chord, but we do know when a piece turns sad. (1996:109).

The same response from various nationalities shows the wide scale of cultural agreement about what constitutes a sad mood. And, there may be more than the influence of Hollywood instigating these opinions. For instance, given the fact that Knopfler is a famous guitarist, it is not surprising that half of the extract is taken up with a solo performance showcasing the guitar. Consequently, having this degree of salience makes it reasonable to assume that the guitar absorbed much of the respondents' attention and many respondents' comments suggest it played a specific role in contributing to the sad mood. In fact there were eleven various comments concerning the presence of the guitar (which I will detail as appropriate). I begin by investigating its presence in the opening phrase.

As the music begins at 4.01, the volume is fairly quiet, and although there is a bass guitar present, according to these comments, 'good guitar' (x5,) 'electric guitar' (x2), 'guitar carries sound', 'skilled guitar', and 'nice guitar', it is the lead guitar the respondents notice. The tempo is around 80 bpm. The song's key signature as one respondent observed is a 'minor key', which has been used for centuries in Western culture to accompany sad situations depicted in films or to enhance sadness in song lyrics. As Figure 2 shows, the pitch descends in definitive steps.

4.01 Guitar

Bass

Figure 2

Rather than a gradual falling pitch, we can see the pattern here is terraced, recalling a decisive stepping down that could suggest to the respondents the impression of a purposeful descent. This downward motion could also recall a depletion in physical energy in the way Tagg (1993) describes.

> Bearing in mind the relative tension involved in producing high and low pitches, a descending phrase will ...entail a process from high to low tension (vocal chords, strings, lips), from faster to slower vibrations and, by analogy, from more to less energy. (1993:online).

The combination of signifiers, that is, the quiet volume together with the slow and descending melody in a minor key, (which Cooke (1959:133) claims has been much used to express 'incoming emotion' or 'yielding to grief') provides an experiential meaning potential (Chapter 3, p96), that could relate to the respondents' own experiences when they move slowly, lowly or lack energy and help to trigger their impressions of sadness.

Two respondents commented on a sense of 'depth' heard in the extract which could connect with the 'profound[ness]' (x2), others perceived in the mood. It could also be related to other semiotic features, like the lyric line, 'the sun's gone to hell' which fosters a sense of the low feeling which is stressed and repeated throughout the extract, especially in the voice which was heard as 'deep voice' (x2). Cooke (1959) says that because the normal pitch range of music is expressed within the gamut of the human voice, the lower reaches of this range [that are heard in many features here] can evoke notions of darkness, heaviness, etc (110). Therefore, up to this point there is a whole group of semiotic features in this song, the lyrics, the slow tempo, the falling pitch, the lack of vitality and the feeling of depth, the respondents could utilize to help them relate the extract to a 'sad' mood.

Some respondents also connected the sadness with expressions of emotion, with comments like, 'moving' (x3), 'emotional (x2) and 'very emotional'. Van Leeuwen (1998) says that the emotional power of music allows its listeners to realize in an emotional way what are essentially non-emotional meanings. In this case we could point to the ideological discourse of war as an example of the non-emotional. He believes listeners can then become bound to these meanings and identify with them and that the process is all

the more effective "if we are denied access to conscious knowledge of just what it is that we are emotionally identifying with" (online). And, as discussed at various points in the study so far, most respondents are not likely to ponder in a reflective or analytical sense exactly what features of the song arouse these emotions or mood(s). However, one respondent did say, 'emotional guitar', so again we can look to the guitar's performance, this time for its emotional content.

First, as the pitch of the guitar falls in the descending opening phrase (Figure 2), it emits a slight vibrato or trembling sound. Because vibrato sounds tremble (Chapter 1, p45), they can be used to represent the emotional states that make humans tremble. Also, people can feel vibrations, so they can feel this sadness. This subtle stylistic effect then adds a touch of dramatic value to the song and, as it happens as soon as the extract opens, it exaggerates its sad feel at once.

The respondent who felt tearful and the one who said 'weepy' could also be reacting to the general distortion in the guitar's timbre (for which this Les Paul guitar is renowned). The timbre provides an overall choked effect that persists throughout the extract. And, in some places (0.57, 5.07, 5.30 and 5.32), the guitar inserts short (less than one second), subtle and intermittent plucks and blips that in other circumstances might be reminiscent of the sound of water droplets, but, in these circumstances they could recall falling tears.

Moreover, the 'swooping guitar' one respondent noticed, appears to create a resemblance between a musical structure and a physiological state. From Figure 3 below, we can see how the instrument's wide fluctuation in pitch is, to use van Leeuwen's (1998:online) term, 'iconic of a physiological process'.

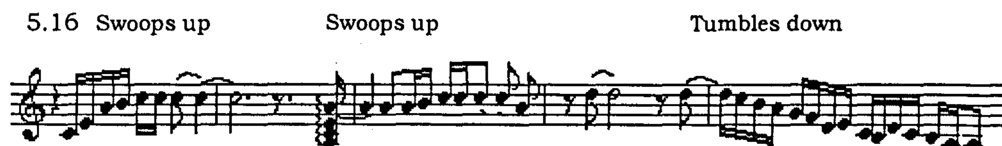

Figure 3

Starting at around 5.16, as the guitar swoops smoothly up an octave (from C to C, then from C to D) and then falls jerkily down, (from D to A), it produces a pattern indicative of human sobbing, where people make these same emotional swoops, first, inhaling large intakes of breath upwards, and then expelling them in short, jerky, pants downwards.

Sloboda and Juslin (2001) note the effects of these iconic relationships between music and human gestures are often to "mediate moment-to-moment changes in emotional experience as a piece of music unfolds" (94).

This emotional 'swooping' of the guitar could also render the music as some respondents heard it, as 'overpowering music' or 'very atmospheric', because the melismatic bending of the guitar strings as performed here has the effect of squeezing the optimum in expression out of them. The sense of being on the verge, or at the height of emotional expression like this, as if any moment something will break down, is also reminiscent of physical and uncontrolled emotional hysteria, extremes of pitch being analogous to extremes of emotion. Walser (1993) has made a related observation concerning the distorted sound of human screaming. "[T]he human body produces aural distortion through excessive power. Human screams and shouts are usually accompanied by vocal distortion" (42). Thus, both the shape of the guitar's pitch rises and falls as well as the tone colour of its distorted timbre, permit its sounds to resemble human cries.

In music generally, Cooke (1959) claims that thick textures have been conventionally associated with emotional emphasis (with spare texture associated with emotional understatement) (112). The different timbres of the instruments and the polyrhythms provided by both the instrumental and human vocals do endow this extract with a thick texture which is perceivable through its variability as each musical strand of texture subtly fades in and out of the extract. I will now explore the texture's construction in detail illustrating how the respondents described it, and how their descriptions reflect the sense of emotion communicated.

To begin with, one respondent commented on the 'good bass'. At 4.48, when the singing pauses, the bass notes although backgrounded, are heard

clearly and they add a full, round timbre and low pitch to the texture. The very fact that they are intermittent sounds makes them noticeable. Also, the different, interjectional rhythms of the guitar and their distorted and blurred timbre add a separate strand of texture, which could account for the 'heavy-metally' response (distortion in guitar is often associated with this style). Another signifier of texture is found deep within the aural background space. It is the constant and lengthy chords played on the keyboard (or synthesizer). Rather than progress, the two main, A minor and D minor chords merely alternate and are heard by one respondent as 'monochords on the organ', and others as 'smooth chords', 'a synthesized sound' and 'buzzing'. These chords add a flat or foundational layer to the texture.

The voice quality also adds to the texture. First, the rhythm created by the stressed and unstressed syllables of the words in the lyrics is foregrounded in the first half of the extract, but this rhythm relinquishes its figure position to the rhythm of the guitar for the final half. There are changes in the voice quality at various points, which are evidenced by comments from three respondents. These come about because as the verse opens, the vocal delivery gradually devolves from its initial rasping sound, (or as the first of these respondents has it, the 'harsh' sound that grates on the ear), to a softer tone, heard as a 'soft rustic voice' near the end of the verse where it relaxes into the 'purring' sound that another respondent heard. These different responses to the voice are also explained by Van Leeuwen's (1999) comments that "[a] voice is never only high or low, or only soft or loud, or only tense or lax, but the way these features are combined" (129), and these vocal changes help to provide variances in the textural mix.

It is then this rich confluence of rhythms and all the different timbres that combine to bring a thick materiality and sense of texture to the song, which as Cooke claims above, adds to its emotional emphasis.

Returning to the voice quality we can see that it also brings authenticity to the sadness. As one respondent noted, 'the voice is not strong enough'. Tagg (2001a) advises that while analysing semiotic properties in voice quality, the analyst should ask: "What sort of person in what state of mind

would use that kind of voice" (online). The person in the song is a soldier and he is in a state of dying. The material quality of the singer's voice, that is, its weak or 'not strong enough' quality, reconciles with the sense of dying in the song. The articulatory or expressive conditions including variations of pitch needed for the voice to produce song are therefore minimized. For instance, as Stefani (1987) notes, the singing voice is one which dwells on "...vowels and semi-vowels, keeping the sound on the same pitch for a syllable or more (23). According to these criteria, the staccato delivery of the vocals lack the sense of flow needed for singing, in fact the singer barely sings, as one respondent commented, the voice is 'moaning'. This coarse materiality in the voice then could be an attempt to emulate the sounds of a dying man.

Otherwise, the voice quality could be a stylistic device that marks a type of authenticity of performance. Van Leeuwen (1999) says the rough voice "... is the vocal equivalent of the 'weatherbeaten face' or the 'battered leather jacket' " (132). So such a 'harsh' voice could be heard as expressing the genuine but well-worn article. Moore (2001) has called such stylistic features 'authenticity of expression' where a performer "succeeds in conveying the impression that his/her utterance is one of integrity, that it represents an attempt to communicate in an unmediated form with an audience" (200). This is a further example of how the voice communicates semantic content as both medium and mode.

Respondents who heard 'suffering' and the 'voice moaning' attribute a sense of pain or anguish to the sadness. This feeling of suffering can be heard specifically in two harmonic collisions (at 5.02 and 5.36) that discordantly crunch together to give the effect of a stab of pain. The one that occurs at 5.02 is shown in Figure 4 below. The crunch is produced by two main effects: 1) A disturbed rhythmic pattern that happens in the second bar just after the 4th beat. Here we can hear the 1st beat of the next bar come in a little too early. 2) At the same place, (indicated by the arrows), the guitar strikes the E (of an A minor chord) while the organ retains the sustained D minor chord and these two chords are not harmonically congruent.

5.02 Guitar crunch

Organ

Figure 4

These two effects then result in the discordant crunches that enhance the sense of physical pain or profound mental anguish and would give rise to the 'suffering' and 'moaning' analogies offered by these two respondents.

Other responses associated the extract with the idea of dying, which is frequently related to sadness. 'Dying' (x3) 'death', 'funereal' and 'lament'. Some of these comments could easily have been reactions to the lyrics of 'every man has to die'. But, there are other semiotic features that orient the listener towards the impression of dying and we can now turn to a few of these.

One respondent said the song, 'sounds monotonous'. The monotony arises from the fact that every vocal line in the extract either contains many repetitions of the same note or rises or falls in small intervals. Cooke (1959) explains how musical repetition can be linked to the concept of dying. Where one single note is repeated, especially at a slow tempo, there is little sense of any outgoing or incoming emotion, instead "only of a monotonous deadness" (109). He believes this is why this type of repetition is used in the music of funeral marches.

The lyrics produce another sense of dying. Except for the concluding line, the verse in the extract is made up of very short sentences and Tagg (1999:18) has shown that musical phrase lengths relate to the capacity of the human lungs to hold them. Consequently, the music's imitation of a lack of energy, together with the short phrases, conveys a sense that the song's protagonist (the dying soldier) has only enough breath left to utter these few words and therefore makes the dying scene more realistic.

Although no one mentioned the unremitting drumbeat, I believe it could have added semiotic significance to the mood of sadness and dying. Apart from some short fills at 5.14, 5.25 and 5.37, the rhythmic accompaniment of the drum is persistent and unvarying. This is not unusual in itself, what makes it special here is the technique the drummer uses to produce a clear and distinctive timbre[2]. We could say that it is operating like a sonic anaphone producing the effect of the incessant ticking of a clock signifying that time (and life) are ebbing away.

Further, the slow tempo at which the beat proceeds, adds to its potential meaning. As can be understood from the lyrics, the song is primarily concerned with the military and death, and in films, the sound of a ceremonious monadic snare drumbeat is often present either before or during a battle (or accompanying a walk to the guillotine). This is part of the Hollywood version of a 'military death' or 'dying' discourse that most respondents could draw on from their experience of films. Arguably then, the slow, monotone and minimally animated drumbeat and its connection to death, funerals and the military, could have further encouraged the respondents' impression of dying and the overall sad mood.

Certain words in the lyrics also contribute to the sadness. The comments of, 'last goodbye' (x2), 'goodbye', 'finale', 'parting', 'the end', 'end of something', could have been triggered by the 'let me bid you farewell' lyric. When such words are spoken coupled with a falling pitch, the sense of finality is enhanced and this could be easily construed as a sad event.

The following sets of respondents' comments although fewer, nevertheless express definable moods.

Sad, but hopeful mood

The comments in this group are related to the sad group but they demonstrate the respondents may have been interacting with a wider range of semiotic resources which enabled their perspective to shift while they

[2] This technique, which is not the usual 'rimshot', requires minimum action on the part of the drummer and creates a distinctive timbre. Instead of hitting the edge of the drum with the top third of the stick, the sound is achieved by the thick end of the stick placed across the centre of the drum membrane and raised and lowered against the rim.

made meaning from the song. Eco (1977) (following Peirce) states, "[w]hen hearing music, the hearer would grasp more than the single meaning of each sound but a combinational quality of its contextual meaning" (132). The following comments show this wider contextual understanding: 'sad, not too sad', 'sad but hopeful', 'slow but uptempo', 'sad yet hopeful' and 'sad but happy'. Clearly, the interactive dimension comes to the fore here and perhaps a more reflective interpretative move has provided these respondents with an alternative interpretation of the song and produced comments that not only relate to the concept of sadness, but are infused with hope that offsets the sadness.

To understand the basis for the alternative meaning, we can refer back to Figure 3 and read the performance of the guitar in another way. The almost heroic efforts it makes at 5.16, and again at 5.22 and 5.25 to transcend the range of moribund conditions surrounding it could be construed as the concept of *hope*. Cooke (1959) explains that if the pitch rises in the minor, (as it does here), it can provide "a strong heroic self-assertion against impending tragedy" (106). This point is especially relevant if the guitar is considered as a surrogate voice for the dying soldier which is hinted at in the comments of 'lyrical guitar' and 'guitar in dialogue'. Here the comments of, 'gutsy', 'uplifting', and 'passionate' fit the attitude the guitar projects in these heroic rises which lead to the impression of hope. With a touch of genre synecdoche, the slight drum fills at 5.14, 5.25 and 5.37, inject some rock or general animation and a little more energy into the overall *gravitas* heard in the song and these too make it sound a little more hopeful.

It is common for popular songs, especially those with a strong narrative element, to use formulaic pairing devices from two extremes. For example, Booth (1981) has remarked that antithesis in songs is standard practice where "one pole prepares for the other..." (12). However, in this song these effects all seem somewhat exaggerated and make for exactly the type of balanced configuration the 'sad but hopeful' responses show in their respondents' assessments of the mood. Thus, the pitch soars to extreme highs as well as plunges to extreme lows, the formal and stoical lyrics are delivered in speech that is "constrained" (van Leeuwen, 1999:150), while the guitar is unbounded and emotional, the *calamity of war* theme is coupled

with a *brotherhood of man* theme, and so on. There is a continual contrapuntal conversation, a constantly active ideational function between all the song's semiotic features helping the above respondents to balance the message of despair with one of optimism. The song's multiple signifiers then represent a conflict of emotions that veer from a sense of 'hopelessness' to a sense of 'hopeful', and the respondents in this group acknowledge these two positions.

Relaxing mood

Nine respondents heard the song as 'relaxing'. Others described it in terms of, 'gentle rhythm', 'mellow', 'sedate', 'subdued' and 'calmness'. These responses relate closely to those in the 'sad' group, because of the many physiological processes both states have in common. For example in 'mood music', both 'sad' and 'relaxing' moods are usually accompanied by slow, quiet, and low music. But there are other semiotic features in the song that encourage a sense of relaxation. With the quiet volume, there is little indication of musical attack and this is reflected in how the chords are noted as 'smooth'. Even though the guitar provides ample ornamentation, the slow tempo and especially the uneventful drumbeat keep the song anchored to repetition and lack of any abrupt change in the melody.

The response of 'absorb yourself into it' is understandable if we remember that falling pitch can induce a sense of surrender and assent (Chapter 1, p41). The fact that the pitch is "yielding back to the 'gravitational' pull of the tonic" (Cooke, 1959:105), may also encourage the listener's desire to *let go*.

Although the melody is made slightly heavy and brought down by the noticeable presence of the bass and much of the musical action happening at a low register, the upward and outward rises in the pitch (at 5.16, 5.22 and 5.25) could also relate to relaxation. This could be achieved through Tagg's (1999) concept of the kinetic anaphone where the music can be heard as analogous to body movement. This would work by the upward motion giving the listener a feel of expansion, of stretching out, especially when accompanied by abundant reverb as it is here. And, this sense of a deliberate effort used to go up, makes the feeling of coming down more effectively relaxing, like taking a few steps back before jumping. This then,

is where both experiential meaning potential and metaphoric conceptualisation could help the respondents conclude an overall sense of relaxation.

Romantic mood

Five respondents thought the song sounded 'romantic' and one said 'in love'. There were also romantic images and associations like a 'lake at night', 'beach', 'moon', 'moonlight' and 'sunsets'. The lyrics that comment on the 'moon' and 'starlight' may have prompted these notions of romance. Also, in the opening phrase the guitar once again calls into service the semiotic device of genre synecdoche as it is stylistically manipulated to sound like a lower stringed instrument, possibly a cello. This is relevant if we remember that in music, one of the most conventional signifiers for both sad and romantic moods is what synthesizers label the *string pad*. As Tagg (1999:25) puts it, "[v]iscous string pads act as sonic emulsifiers in many a voluptuous Hollywood love scene". And, it is because strings are particularly good at producing vibrato sounds that they are universally used to "pull the heartstrings" (van Leeuwen, 1999:135). The response of 'broken-hearted' is also associated with romance and can cross-reference with the sad mood.

None of the respondents who mentioned the 'romantic' mood included a 'sad' response in their comments. It is possible the two Greek and the one Maori respondent who made some of these 'romantic' comments were bringing different cultural discourses associated with romance to bear on their responses or they were focused on different semiotic features of the song. Also, because some of the respondents were not native English speakers, their listening strategies may have been to pay more attention to the music than the lyrics. In which case, the softening voice quality along with the relaxing element in the melody could have influenced the notion of romance.

The extract was also heard to be 'like a serenade'. Because the extract includes a long guitar solo, it could be conceived as being sung in the stereotypical way Western audiences conceive serenades, that is, by a sole

male accompanying himself on guitar, plus, Cooke (1959:93) maintains that serenades are often sung in a minor key.

Related to the 'romantic' mood is the response of 'sentimental'. Van Leeuwen (1998:online), claims the 'sentimental' is associated with the smallest intervals possible in Western tonality. Although the song does not use the whole spectrum of the chromatic scale, the vocal melody both ascends and descends in small intervallic steps.

Contemplative mood

This group incorporates comments of, 'thought provoking', 'questioning', 'the instrumental makes you think', 'contemplation', 'strong lyrics' and 'moral to the story'. This mood could have been evoked through several means, but I would like to show how a combination of lyric content and lyric delivery plus musical phrasing was most likely to influence these responses.

First, some music forces what it has to say on its listeners by making them strain their ears to hear what is being said (Cooke, 1959:96). This song, in particular its quiet volume and the singer's unclear diction, does exactly this. Second, unlike songs from the same album and the other four songs with lyrics used in the survey, the lyrics here contain no colloquial expressions, they are recited in a formal register with no linguistic contractions. This level of formality produces a clear signal that the song's theme is serious and in response to these features, an 'adequate listening' strategy (Chapter 2, p76) would demand the listener's full attention.

Next, Dave Laing (1985) claims that in popular songs there are usually two sets of people addressed by the 'I' in the lyrics. 1) An internal addressee – the person in the song they ostensibly address and 2) The external addressee – the audience (63). This feature is exploited in this song where its point-of-view is made inclusive by the subtle oscillations of the personal pronouns from one line, 'let *me* bid *you*' to another, '*we* are fools to make war on *our* brothers'. Through this subtle change (turning 'me' into 'we' and 'your' into 'our'), ideational and interpersonal functions are fused and listeners are conscripted into the army of brothers. Consequently, the final

philosophical statement of the lyrics encompasses *we-our* opinions. These alternations in modes of address implicitly change the listener's perspective. In this way, the idealistic tenor of the lyrics, together with the subject-object assimilation, draws the listener into the song's 'contemplative' spirit of enquiry.

In the case of descending melodies, as van Leeuwen (1998:online) has said "the music aims to relax, to incite the listeners to share their thoughts and feelings". Likewise, according to Tagg's (2003:online) observations on melodies this verse does not have those characteristics that listeners can easily reproduce. It is made up of a series of short stand-alone phrases, most of them lasting just under two seconds with a 'declamation trait' to them. Thus, listeners would find it difficult to assimilate this kind of verse as one of Stefani's "major units" of music (Chapter 1, 33) and this would make it difficult for them to sing along with it. Also, because both the music and lyric phrases in the verse are "disjunctive" (Chapter 1, p42), the rather staccato delivery and the use of the present tense in the lyrics encourages listeners to hear them as relaying short philosophical statements, almost like the patterns of rhetoric in a speech. In which case, it may appear to listeners a little awkward for them to intercept these lines to participate vocally in this song. The song therefore prompts more contemplation than participation.

We can see then that the conglomeration of the semiotic features noted above is tantamount to instructing the respondents to act as silent interlocutors, to attend to the words and music of the song and 'contemplate' them. Clearly the respondents making the above comments have accepted or gone along with this instruction.

The air of meditation in this 'contemplative' mood leads me to include the two comments of 'prayer' and 'praying' and one of 'the organ makes for a hymn-like quality' under this heading. This religious feel could be attributed to several factors. The frequent use of the suspended 4th (sus4) chord (that adds a fourth note to the chord) is often heard in church and so makes the song sound *churchy*. And, for these respondents, the sound of the organ in the background may also have recalled a church environment.

The ambiguity surrounding the addressee of the lyrics could mean the conversation going on is between the soldier-singer and his band of brothers. Or, considering the confidential nature of the dialogue, (where the singer is placed close to the listener's ear (Chapter 2, p69), and the deathbed scene, the conversation could be assumed as these two respondents have it, to be between the soldier-singer and God in a 'prayer'.

One respondent thought the song displayed a 'false importance'. This response typifies a striking attitude this song conveys through many of its more *formal* aspects. This is reflected in many of the comments in the 'contemplative' group. First, in order to deliver the line "bid you farewell" realistically, and achieve the projection it requires, the voice must be slightly tense as it is here. Second, this outward projection combined with the unusual wording, gives the line a touch of theatrical drama. This is a clear example of Jakobson's (1960) poetic function that foregrounds the song's aesthetic features and at the same time announces that an 'adequate listening' stance is a contemplative and appreciative one.

In some ways the song manages to evoke a sense of detachment between itself and the respondents. I explain this by referring to Fiske's (1992) observation that the commodities of popular culture do not usually have the status of uniquely crafted art work of the more official culture and are therefore "open to the productive reworking, rewriting, completing and to participation in a way that a completed art-object is not" (47). In contrast, this song does not extend any invitation for its listeners to participate with it in any co-productive capacity as many popular songs do. Rather, it subordinates them to the text. And, by standing aloof in this way, the song mimics one of official culture's art objects that apparently need no completion by an audience.

This concludes the discussions of the song's moods. I can now turn to the remainder of responses that deal with other aspects of the extract.

Guitar in dialogue. I should first like to discuss a small but significant group of comments that put the guitar in the position of co-narrator of the song in

both an ideational and interpersonal sense that is, addressing both internal and external addressees. These are, 'lyrical guitar', 'emotional guitar', 'sad guitar' and 'guitar in dialogue'.

These respondents appear to ascribe human qualities to the guitar. Those making them may be aware of the antiphonal relationship set up between the singer and the guitar and how they both share the narration of the song. As I discussed earlier, the pitch fluctuation of the vocal melody is minimal with a variation of only small intervallic steps and Booth (1981) claims that, "[v]erse that is very highly patterned with musical sound of its own may clash with the music of its tune" (7). The musical element in these vocals is therefore kept minimal, highlighting instead the melody in the music between the lyric lines. For instance at "let me bid you farewell", the vocal delivery remains constricted to its almost monotone delivery while the other instruments (led by the guitar) perform musical ornamentation around them.

At the end of each vocal line, for example at "starlight", the guitar extends the pitch of the vocal statement upwards and at the word "palm", it extends it downwards. It is almost as if the guitar is choreographed to fit the message of the vocals where every note complements and completes the other's narration. The two comments of 'I love the preciseness in the guitar' and 'guitar obligato' appear to hold this same opinion about the guitar's performance, that is, that it is almost stage-managed (even though they express it in different terminology). This management of the song's instrumental narrative mode exemplifies an observation by Middleton (1990) "...the often noted importance of 'vocalized tone' is only part of a wider development in which 'instrumental' and 'vocal' modes meet on some intermediate ground..." (264). Here, the vocals and the instrumental modes meet on the ground of shared narration.

I stated in Chapter 3 (p85) that moods which are not quite specific states-of-mind, or considered beyond words are perhaps better conveyed through the mode of music than the more concrete mode of language. The 'guitar in dialogue' then, as it assumes the principal role of narrator in the second half undertakes the articulation of the song's discourse, that is, it continues

to tell the story but in musical terms, and in this way it communicates a series of related although somewhat indistinct moods, feelings and attitudes.

Memories. This song is well-known. 18 respondents were familiar with both the song and the video released at the same time, as well as the Live Aid concert where it was performed as the response of 'rock concert' testifies. The final set of responses then, are predicated on memories. Those who remembered it expressed their taste for it in the following way: 'I like this song', 'I like this', 'a favourite of mine'. Only one said: 'I don't like it'. Of those who were not familiar with the song, their evaluative comments were positive: 'well produced', 'simple', 'lovely', 'lovely instrumental', 'nice tune'.

Finally, five respondents thought the song sounded 'nostalgic', as well as, 'distant' (x2) and one associated it with 'horizons'. Slow and long notes are difficult to sustain acoustically if there is no reverb and as we saw in Chapter 2 (p66), the presence of reverb can evoke a sense of longing or nostalgia. Plus, the organ is far back in the textural mix, and the distant sound of its chords enhance the far-off feeling. A sense of nostalgia or longing can also evoke contemplation.

There were scenes from WW2 in the video that accompanied the album and other respondents who were familiar with the song recalled these scenes as well as their own personal associations with the song. The following comments then relate to both the song and its video images: 'WW2', ''war', 'soldiers', 'conflict', 'imagery', 'very visual' and 'video'. One respondent noted the 'image of a guitarist on solo'. The video did show Knopfler performing a guitar solo on a cliff edge like an altruistic beacon of virtue. Moore (2001) notes, "[i]n rock originality seems to be prized as a mark of self-expression, supposedly unencumbered by meditative forces, as exemplified by the virtuoso guitar solo" (182). This ostensibly unmediated image that the respondent remembers, could be another attempt to represent the genuine, sincere or pacifist sentiments pervading the song.

Two respondents connected the song with the 'IRA', and 'Vietnam'. At the time of its release these were familiar discourses surrounding this song.

The responses then are clearly reactions to the song's war theme but what might have encouraged the association with a type of freedom fighting is the fact that at the height of Dire Straits fame, the typical and very familiar image of Knopfler at concerts and performances was of him wearing headbands (exactly as he does in the video). And, headgear like this is sometimes reminiscent of guerrilla leaders or freedom fighters. There was also a comment of 'mountains'. This word is not mentioned in the extract but at the beginning of the song. Therefore, this comment, plus the comments of 'personal memories' (x2), 'very familiar' (x2), 'I've heard this before', and 'associations', show that some responses are a direct result of personal memories of the song and they relate to the respondents' experience of it from another time.

Conclusion

The effects of semiotic modality communicated by this song produced recognizable and thus convincing emotion because respondents could not only hear it in the music, they could vicariously experience it through the main instrumental signifier – the guitar, through its tearful plucks, its emotional sweeps and its painful crunches.

Although there was an extremely high consistency of responses to the moods of the song, the number of different moods displays a diversity that opposes and tests any single meaning. Comments like, 'dying', 'goodbye', etc, show that the definitive statements in the lyrics guide some of the respondents' interpretations of moods. At the same time, the variety in comments like 'sad', 'relaxing' and 'contemplative', could be taken as evidence that the song has failed to impose a definite mood on the respondents.

Taking all the responses together highlights how effective the song was in constructing a 'sad' perspective but the 'sad but hopeful' comments also provide examples of how the respondents have had significant input into constructing their own perspectives. Therefore, although there were some areas of divergence, for example 'sad' vs 'romantic', overall, the responses show a strong convergence of agreement about the level and the type of communication going on.

Song 2

'Romeo and Juliet' (RJ)

Dire Straits (1996) [1980] *Making Movies* (CD)

Introduction

This song is 5.50 minutes long and the extract starts from the beginning and lasts until 1.06. It is structured in ten separate sections in which the singer switches in and out of different voices to act various parts; Romeo, Juliet and the narrator. The song title recalls Shakespeare's play and the extract mimics the famous balcony scene. The guitar introduction and the first two verses (shown below), are used to set the scene. All three character-voices can be heard in the following lyrics of the extract.

A lovestruck Romeo sing a street-suss serenade
Laying everybody low with a love-song that he made
Finds a streetlight, steps out of the shade
And says something like: you and me babe - how about it?

Juliet says, hey it's Romeo, - you nearly gave me an 'art attack
He's underneath the window, she's singing, - hey-la my boyfriend's back
You shouldn't come around here, singing up to people like that
Anyway, what ya gonna do about it?

The responses to this song fall into two or three response-types that reflect the respondents' interpretive moves. I will use these same groups to formulate the analysis.

First, this song was remembered by many survey respondents whose comments include: '(very) familiar song' (x3), 'memories' (x3), 'Britain in the 70s', '80s nostalgia', 'I know this song', 'personal nostalgia', 'well-known' and 'nostalgic'. We will see that this familiarity helps to provoke other responses, but also that the song's obvious memorability appears to arise from some of its characteristics that are heard as 'special'. Therefore, in the first discussion, I

would like to show how some of this song's idiosyncratic features create an individual identity for it that respondents notice and remember.

Next, I discuss two large groups of response-types that categorize the song in two ways: 1) into a Mood and 2) into a Genre. The final discussion concentrates on evaluative interpretive moves that reveal trends in taste related to gender.

Special Song

To begin, this group of comments note that the song: 'stands out as special', 'special song', 'special guitar', 'brilliantly crafted', 'got character', 'beautiful song' and 'unique sound'. These respondents attribute a specificity or sense of uniqueness to the song, which I will address by examining other comments that also show three particular areas of signification or hooks. A hook is "a musical or lyrical phrase that stands out or is easily remembered" (Burns, 1987:1). An effective hook then would make a song sound 'special' as well as memorable, as Middleton (1999) suggests, "when a 'hook' comes round again, or when a recollected riff returns, something in excess of mere continuity, mere groove, is inscribed in the listener's consciousness" (143). I will examine three hooks that respondents mention. 1) Performance of the guitar. 2) Delivery of the lyrics. 3) A gesture from the singer. In that process, I will attempt to show how some of these semiotic features may have helped to make the song memorable for many of the respondents. I begin by reviewing the performance of the guitar.

Guitar Performance. The song is initiated for the first ten seconds or so with a solo performance from the guitar as it plays a simple and 'melodic' line. 15 respondents comment on it including: 'guitar is the main feature' and 'guitar lead'. Shortly afterwards, a quiet piano blends unobtrusively with the guitar, then, these two instruments are joined by the rhythmic accompaniment of a snare drum and bass guitar. These are also commented on: 'noticeable drum and bass' and 'I like the bass', but no one mentioned the piano.

It is this prominent and isolated positioning of the guitar in the introduction that confers a communicative value to it, making it one of the song's principal signifiers. Hennion (1983) points to this significance in the way he regards the introduction as one of the most important elements of a popular song. This is how he describes it.

> In a few bars, this serves both as a signal to the listener, enabling him to recognise the song immediately and as a foretaste, making him want to listen to the rest. The 'intro' reveals enough to suggest the mood: sound, rhythm, type, etc. It conceals enough to stimulate the appetite without blunting it. The object is to use fragments which characterise the rest of the song: a few bars of the tune, a chord, a mixture of timbres, a rhythmic pattern. (1983:165).

The introduction from .00 to .22, amounts to a short melodic phrase played in a 4/4 time signature, repeated four times over the first eight bars. This phrase could be called a *riff,* that is to say, a simple musical phrase repeated over and over, often with a strong or syncopated rhythm. I will now show how this guitar riff defines a large part of the song's 'special' identity.

The riff is in two sections (over two bars). Its chord progression goes from F major to C major in the first bar, then in the second bar, the same melody is repeated a little lower in B flat and C major. The fourth beat of the first bar links to the first beat of the second bar. It does this by means of special musical ornamentation, which as one musically-experienced respondent noticed contains an 'arpeggio in guitar'. The extent of the ornamentation is different each time the riff is repeated but especially noticeable when the riff is played for the second and fourth time. Figure 5 illustrates how the melodic contour created by the arpeggio, weaves the two sections of the riff together.

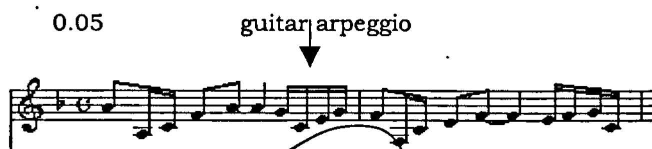

Figure 5

In this way, the guitar and the riff enhance each other's significance. According to the following comments; 'steel guitar', 'good dobro guitar', 'metallic guitar', 'light guitar', 'banjo-feel', 'banjo', 'banjo sound', 'nice nylon-stringed guitar' and 'sounds like an old instrument, a lyre', it is therefore not only the style of the riff that creates a 'special' identity for the song, it may have been equally recognisable due to this famous steel-bodied National guitar whose 'unique sound' is easily distinguishable from other guitars.

It is the 'dobro' sound of this particular guitar, that is to say, its 'steel' or 'metallic' materiality and the 'light' sensation that these create that makes an impression on these respondents. What they are describing is a timbre, that elusive sonic quality that straddles definitions and distinctions between the medium and the mode. Since there is no modal system for classifying timbre, it is inevitable that linguistic descriptions of this sonic communication will vary slightly with each respondent; nevertheless, these comments have considerable semantic consistency in the descriptions of this timbre.

In agreement with Hennion's remarks (above), about the significance of the introduction, I would suggest that right from the start, it is the distinct timbre of this guitar that integrates with the strategically positioned arpeggio and signifies the song's 'special' character to the respondents.

Perhaps the reason no respondent mentioned the piano is because when it accompanies the guitar, the pianist's touch is so subtle it would be difficult after only a brief hearing to disentangle the light guitar sounds from the equally light piano sounds. Also, the piano plays only occasional high notes and the bass plays only occasional low notes, as a result, they surround and at the same time enhance the sounds of the guitar and reinforce its role as the main signifier.

The guitar also has a separate textual communicative function. In order to take on the role of narrator as well as both the Romeo and Juliet characters, the singer's voice quality is in a state of constant change. This has the effect

of fragmenting the song into separate sections of narrative. The guitar (with the piano for support) is louder and therefore more noticeable at the end of each lyric line. It is because these momentary musical interjections from the guitar share the same timbral quality as the introductory riff, their intermittent refrains function like echoes of themselves and allow the song to constantly refer intra-textually to its other parts. Stefani (1987) claims that such short musical motives tend "...to work as a part for the whole, as a sample and a signal" (26). The guitar therefore acts as a cohesive device helping listeners link separate musical sections of narrative to each other as the story develops.

In Chapter 2 (p63) I discussed the concept of vectors in music as virtual constructs that can signify direction. The timbral sounds of this guitar that are dispersed throughout the extract like a paper trail can be regarded as a musical vector. They signify in both directions; retrospectively by recalling the introductory riff and forward in anticipation of its return. An observation by Tarasti (1994) is relevant here.

> What happens in music corresponds to theatrical communication: a musical theme-actant might disappear from the score at moments when its opposing theme occurs in another register, but it does not disappear from the listener's mind even when the 'opposing' themes occur. (1994:115).

The opposing themes that occur in this song are those of the voices of the actors and the narrator. And even though the initial riff "disappears", the guitar's distinctive timbre helps the listener to retain its sound and its melody in their minds, as Tarasti implies above.

One respondent thought the song was 'catchy – not sure why'. Eco (1986) may provide the answer. He claims that even if a song is for the most part mundane, whatever breaks its monotony is heard as something special. "The destiny of a beautiful song is thus to be all very ugly, except for one little, humble, marvellous central moment, which must die out at once, so that when it returns it will be hailed by the most intense ovation ever heard" (189). If we adopt Eco's view, then perhaps the interjection of this guitar timbre at

various points throughout the 437 words of this 'beautiful song' is what helps to make it 'catchy' and memorable.

Also, it is possible that when the timbre of an instrument is responsible for a substantial part of the song's message in this way, the quality of the sound needs to be continually re-affirmed as it is here. Gracyk (1996) makes this point claiming when timbre is the basis for the expressive quality in a piece of music, its impact on the listener relies on a direct experience of it rather than a memory of it because "memories of timbres 'fade' after a moment, becoming more imprecise with the passage of time" (60).

As a semiotic medium, the guitar serves as an introductory feature announcing the song's characteristics as 'light' etc. As part of the music mode, its timbral and melodic qualities provide a unifying element to the whole song and bring sound cohesion and musical integrity to it.

We can now explore the second hook that respondents note.

Second hook. The lyrics in verse 2, line 4, provide the second hook. Three respondents remark on it picking up on its two halves separately: 'You and me babe' and 'how about it?' (x2). Hennion (1983) explains that words that make up hook lines are selected for the way they "ring" as well as being reservoirs of what counts as socially significant. "These unexpected metaphorical turns of phrase interrupt the unfolding of the text, giving one a shiver of pleasure..." (179). The hook lyric in the extract is a direct address to Juliet. It has two semiotic features that make it effective as a hook. First, the words in the first half are spoken and in the second part they are sung and the main difference between them is their intonation (Chapter 1, p49). As Volosinov (2003) says, "[i]n intonation, discourse comes directly into contact with life. And it is in intonation above all that the speaker comes into contact with the listener or listeners – intonation is social par excellence" (11).

The intonation from the spoken part "you and me babe" to the sung part "how about it" forms a rhetorical device that helps the words in the second part 'ring'. Because the same words can be heard in everyday conversation, they are not intoned with a sense of the poetic. Rather, their sexually suggestive intonation helps them to venture beyond the musically artistic to function as a sexual proposition. And, spoken like this, 'how about it' would be recognisable to audiences familiar with Western culture as part of a *sex* discourse, a crude chat-up line often used by men to women.

Second, the song includes many pauses that are an integral part of its format which I suggested at the start is that of a play. But, at .39 there are deliberate pauses in the verbal delivery just before the hook line, as well as between its two halves. These pauses silently create a measure of anticipation and at the same time physically isolate the second half of the line - 'how about it', framing it and making it stand out.

Because this hook line forms part of a wider rhyming scheme within the whole song, it is possible to confirm how it works as a hook. For example, another line, "when you gonna realise – it's just that the time was wrong", follows roughly the same rhyming pattern, that is to say, it too, is delivered in two halves. But, this line does not work as a hook and for exactly the same reasons the first one does. There are more syllables in its second half which make the phrase less snappy; these words are also less familiar than 'how about it' as an everyday expression; the intonation of these words has no sexual connotations; finally, the pauses are shorter and do not frame the words as noticeably. By confirming what is absent from this line, we confirm what is present in 'you and me babe' and 'how about it' as a hook line and what makes it memorable and function as a hook.

Third Hook. Two respondents noted what I want to suggest is the third hook. One said: 'I remember the fingerclick' and another said: 'a snap of the fingers'. It is after the word "company" heard in the complete song that the singer snaps his fingers. Since this is not part of the extract, these comments can only be a

result of the respondents' memories of the whole song. To implement this hook, the singer uses his body as a medium of expression, perhaps as Burns (1987) points out below, to communicate a sense of spontaneity, or a reckless attitude as befits the lyrics at this point.

> A number of devices are used to give the impression of spontaneity, an impression which may or may not be accurate. Improvisation, apparent accident and departure from the 'expected' text can all create moments of distinctiveness in a record. (1987:15).

As the references to it show, the fingersnap is a well-known gesture connected with this song. When RJ is performed at concerts, audiences expect this snap and wait for it in anticipation. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) suggest that, "[e]ven unintended or unwanted transformations can become signifiers" (95). How the fingersnap got to be included in the original recording of the song is irrelevant. We can see from the comments made about it that it forms another coded signifier associated with the song, marking one more of its 'special' stylistic features and helping the respondents to remember it.

Next, I deal with a large group of salient comments that reflect *categorical* interpretive moves and show how the song is being categorized in many different ways.

Categorizing in terms of Mood

Happy. Ten respondents described the song as 'happy'. Others said, 'makes me feel happy', 'cheery' and 'cheerful' and some used the descriptions of 'upbeat' (x3) and 'up tempo'. In 'Brothers in Arms', comments of 'low' and 'slow' appeared to be related to the low and slow music. Here, the pitch contour of the main riff is only moderately undulating or wavy, in other words, it is neither predominantly ascending nor descending. The tempo is a steady 90bpm, which is medium, that is, neither particularly quick nor slow. In this case, these two main musical elements could be heard to signify neutrality. This lack of definition permits both tempo and pitch to be easily qualified one way or another by other semiotic features. Thus, in order to discover what

makes these respondents describe the song as 'happy', etc, we must look at other signifiers.

In analysing this group of responses, I want to argue as I have done previously (Chapter 2 and 3) that listeners are often prone to conceptualise the non-physical in terms of the physical. Also, that they often confer a meaning potential onto sounds according to what we do with our bodies or how we feel with our emotions when we produce these sounds. I base this argument on Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) notion that in order to make meaning, people tend to make correlations between their emotions and their sensory-motor experiences.

In Chapter 3 (p96), I suggested that the allegoric correspondence to the concept of 'happy' could be anything that conveys the concept of *up*. Here, the 'light guitar' touch which is reflected in the comments of, 'guitar picking' and 'plucky guitar', together with the 'metallic' materiality of the instrument, lends an aural impression of weightlessness to the sonic quality. In fact, the touch of all the musicians on their instruments is delicate. The piano is playing softly on the upper chords; the drummer conjures up a wispy metallic rhythm through an occasional light tap on the high-hat. But, in at least two places, (.45 and .56) a soft touch on the cymbal sprays out an even lighter metallic *tisshh* sound that permeates the whole sonic environment. These delicate touches communicate a sense of buoyancy, which gives an impression of concepts that convey elevation, reflected in comments like, 'light' (x3), 'bubbly' (x2) and 'bubbles'. In other words, this song creates a light- (as opposed to heavy-) metal sound.

Although the timbre of the steel guitar is clear, it is not piercingly sharp. It is not heard as jagged or cold, rather it is heard as 'warm' (x2) and evaluated as a 'nice feel' and 'nice'. All such comments in this group give the song a mood that is predominantly, as one respondent says, 'positive', and by metaphoric analogy, (at least according to Western culture) respondents can conceptualize these 'positive' but not-quite definitive musical messages into more clearly

delineated concepts. These include: 'sunshine' (x2), 'summer', 'spring', 'flowers in the sun', 'holidays', 'Italy' and 'celebrating'.

The singer's voice might also contribute to the 'happy' mood. Although we cannot see him, we can hear from his voice that he is clearly smiling or laughing as he sings, especially in the second verse where he mimics Juliet. This feature adds a touch of humour heard as 'tongue-in-cheek' and 'mickey-taking' as well as 'fun' to the song. The informality of the language and the 'funny lyrics' also reinforce the voice's humour and render the song as a 'funky ballad' and predominantly 'happy'.

Categorizing in terms of Genre

Love Song. The next set of classifications: 'Love song' (x3), 'lively love song', 'love theme', and 'a couple in love', 'youth' and 'young people', may have been encouraged by the song's title, 'Romeo and Juliet' because this phrase constitutes a popular discourse that represents the archetypal love story between two young people. Also, the guitar as one respondent noted, shares a little of the resonance of an instrument from an older age, 'a lyre'; an instrument that a minstrel in times past may have used to accompany a song to his sweetheart in a balcony love scene as Romeo is doing. Respondents may also have been influenced by the word "lovestruck" in the lyrics. The addition of the vernacular or 'slang' expressions in the lyrics adds a contemporary feel to the 'love theme' and results in the song being described as a 'modern love story' (x2), 'modern' (x2), 'streetwise couple', 'streetwise' and 'modern rendition of old theme'.

However, the music has no slow legato strings (often associated with love or romance in many cultures), and the theme of the song is not as tragic as the original story. Therefore, the description of 'tragic love story' may be relying more on what this respondent knows about the original play. Further, the same respondent said 'West Side Story' (a film with a tragic love story). But, although the film was an adaptation of the original play and the song does

contain an intertextual reference to it, this reference is not heard within the extract. This is evidence as Jensen (1995) suggests, of "... the complex structure of interrelations that exist between single literary works or media products" (120), and the comments made, make these interrelations explicit.

But, there could also be another inconspicuous reason for the 'tragic love story' comment. If we look at the song in another way, we can see it does communicate an aspect of tragedy. According to Eco (1986), indicators of humour and tragedy show that they both violate universal behavioural rules. The difference between them as he explains it, is "what is typical of the tragic, before, during and after the enactment of the violation of the rule, is the long examination of the rule" (271). And, in the lyrics of the whole song, Romeo continually examines Juliet's violation of the rules of personal relationships.

Classic. Three respondents categorized the song another way, describing it as: 'classic love song', 'this is a classic' and 'classic'. Middleton (1990) confirms that "the value and meaning of popular songs can only be partly assessed on the basis of any single version; their subsequent life 'in tradition' must also be taken into account" (136). Today, radio DJs and record buffs join these respondents by regarding this song as a popular music classic. Therefore, not only is it a reference to previous literary art, and subsequent versions of that art (namely West Side Story), it is now itself, recognised as a piece of popular music art, a 'classic', that is to say, a song of high quality that has an enduring appeal. The collective perception of this song then has shifted, categorized retrospectively as a 'classic'.

This re-categorizing, demonstrates that the status of popular songs cannot remain separate from social and cultural practices. Their value is at the mercy of the vagaries of fashion and fluctuating tastes. This is shown in Vološinov's (2003) claim. "[T]he 'artistic' in its total integrity is not located in the artifact and not located in the separately considered psyches of creator and contemplator; it encompasses all three of these factors" (6), highlighting the multi-faceted nature of art evaluation.

The 'classic' label also accentuates the song's 'special' character noted in the first response cluster. Laing (1990) claims that, "[n]o single recording of a Cole Porter song exhausts its potential, whereas the Who's recording of 'My Generation', or Jerry Lee Lewis's record of 'High School Confidential' does precisely that. In each case it becomes impossible to disentangle the song from the recording of it" (327). And, so it is with this song, respondents who regard it as 'classic' or 'special' confirm it as a *one-off* recording.

One respondent who thought this was a 'classic love song', also thought there was a mis-match between the lyrics and the music: 'words are incongruent to tune'. Her comments could be based on the notion that lyrics are genre-specific (Chapter 1, p47), the evaluation being that such informal lyrics are not appropriate to a 'classic' song.

Story. Four respondents categorized the song as a story: 'story-teller', 'more a narrative than a song', 'this is a story' and 'nice story'. There are many 'story' features to the song, some of which I will now detail. This is a story (or a play) with two characters and one narrator but only one performer. Therefore, Knopfler (the performer) must move the action along by switching roles and the song must include devices that allow him to do this.

First, it contains Barthes' (1970) proairetic code (Chapter 1, p50) whose function is to gel the story together. The code is deployed through the intermittent guitar strums clearly heard all the way through the extract at 25, 28, 31, 34, 36, 48, 50, and 56. These strums separate the vocal parts and relieve the monotony of the verses by providing a musical space between each sentence. The strums do not produce final cadences, so they also provide continuity and perhaps slight suspense, and the listener anticipates more action is to follow and is encouraged to listen out for it. Used in this way, the guitar's function is almost that of a Greek chorus of classical theatre, wending in and out of the scene to lend another voice to the narration and keep the story going. Moreover, the emphasis of the strums on the second beat,

imitates human intonation when speakers emphasize the second word in the story-telling phrase of - and *then.*

At one part of the song, (.44), the tempo and pitch pattern of these strums is especially significant because they serve a double function. As shown in Figure 6, there is a definitive one, two, three, four strums, downwards, then a final and louder fifth strum of longer duration. These happen immediately after Romeo speaks, so they allow space for the singer's transition from Romeo's character back to that of narrator. They also act like a proclamation that heralds Juliet's character onto the scene.

.44

Figure 6

The next narrative device is reported speech and this is a common story-telling technique. In the extract, the performer as narrator continually punctuates the song by reporting the speech of one character, then another. For example, he reports Romeo's 'you and me babe', then returns to narrator before reporting Juliet's 'hey, its Romeo' then goes back to narrator, before reporting Juliet again with 'hey, la my boyfriends back', and so forth. The third story-telling device is achieved by the singer modulating his voice with subtle oscillations in character. With this type of transition, he can take on the diverse roles in rapid succession. The last line where he imitates Juliet could have been sung without the impersonation, but its addition gives the song a high modality and brings another semiotic touch of realism to it. In the main, it is these three semiotic features in the extract that enable the respondents to hear the song as a 'story'.

The comments discussed next, represent an evaluative response-type and they all focus on the issue of taste. They provide some evidence that many of the song's features that incorporate the interpersonal communicative function, are

setting up a perspective that could influence the point-of-view of some respondents.

Evaluative Moves

From the six songs, this song generated the most positive comments regarding the respondents' personal expressions of taste, these were: 'I love this' (x3), 'I like this' (x2), 'love this song', 'I like this a lot', 'great song', 'my favourite', 'fantastic', 'brings tears to my eyes'. These comments only came from male participants and they were striking because of the enthusiasm with which the men made them. For instance, the respondent who said 'it brings tears to my eyes' was a man in his fifties, who was indeed visibly moved as soon as the song began. In fact, all these men made their comments as soon as they heard the opening riff. In contrast, the only woman to comment in terms of taste said: 'I don't like this', while another woman respondent judged it as, 'not inspired'.

An unofficial biography of Knopfler quotes a television script-writer as saying, "Romeo and Juliet I find is the song that has a great effect on men. Nearly all the men I know go gooey over Romeo and Juliet" (Cox, cited in Palmer, 1991:210). This indicates that the finding that men like this song more than women is not confined to this study. But, the more relevant question is, why should this song appeal to these male respondents more than the females ones?

Perspective. The men who said they liked the song, knew it, and according to the comments they made, they were obviously familiar with its subject matter, (for this reason, I refer now and again to the lyrics of the complete song). The lyrics state that Romeo (despite more than seven verses of pleading), which is perhaps responsible for the song being described as 'an appeal', is rejected by his former girlfriend (Juliet) in mocking and dismissive language. The sentiments that he goes on to express, may have a meaning potential that is actualised by the evocation of male listeners' memories of similar situations. Hearing an extract of the song then could induce a visceral empathy for Romeo

by reminding these male respondents of their own feelings or experiences. This is possible because Booth (1981) explains that, "[i]n a song where the singer addresses a second person (saying in all probability, 'I love you'), the audience identifies with the speaking voice" (16). Although either sex can do this, in this instance, these male respondents may have been those who adopted the perspective of Romeo and personally identified with his plight.

As one respondent noted by the comment of 'slang', the language of the song is replete with informal colloquialisms, like, "laying everybody low" and "street-suss". Trudgill (1974) showed that in line with social attitudes towards the behaviour of men and women, men were more favourably disposed to "non-standard, low-status speech forms" (98) and the use of the vernacular and colloquialisms were connected to notions of masculinity (98). There have also been recent studies that support this view (see for example Mayor) (1996:65). It is tempting to pursue this difference in language use between the sexes as an explanation of why men would find this song more appealing than women. But, language use attributed solely to gender differences has also been refuted (O'Barr and Atkins, 1998; Eckert and McConnell-Ginett, 1992; Bergvall, V, Bing, J and Freed, A, 1996). I would therefore like to propose another view regarding the use of the 'slang'.

This is a song, and its main *raison d'etre* is to signify to its listeners in a certain way. The use of the vernacular does signal informality but, as a special communicative effect that accords with the overall sense of informality in the song. The 'slang' therefore strengthens its modality and makes Romeo's situation sound more plausible and need not refer to gender at all.

The music too has a sense of informality, that is, it lacks weighty stylistic features. It has no sense of the hectic activity and loudness that can be found in some rocks styles, instead, the timbre of the steel overtones of the National provides an uncluttered, minimalist clarity, which is almost sensual. The light timbre in the gentle melody provides an example of van Leeuwen's (1999:97) observation that melody can have a palpable quality (Chapter 1, p42). This

also fits well with Tagg's (1999:24) notion of tactile anaphones, where music can be perceived as non-musical phenomena or experiences. The guitar's performance achieves this palpable quality and creates a soothing aural caress that finds its object in the self-pitying person articulated by the lyrics (and whoever identifies with them), as the quote below indicates.

> [M]usical associations or 'prevailing discourses' in a culture are both established and maintained through their use as a 'thread' out of which we might fashion or construct aspects of the self and the expression of emotional states associated with the self (Sloboda and O'Neill, 2001:425).

The sole fact that more than nine verses of the song concern Romeo, while Juliet is given less than one, is indicative of the significance the song gives to Romeo's point-of-view. The song presents a version of the relationship between the two protagonists entirely from the male perspective. Some of its features then, either privilege, attract or construct listener-subjects who identify with Romeo and in this case they happen to be male respondents.

Woman's song. The issue of taste and musical preferences takes a new turn with the next group of salient comments. These arise from descriptions of the song given in answers to one of the questions posed after the survey was complete, namely;

Are any of these songs likely to be enjoyed more by men or by women?

It is clear from responses discussed earlier that many men liked this song, and, although some women described it in a positive way, as 'happy', etc, they showed no personal preference for it. This position is further complicated by the fact that ten respondents (seven men and three women) thought the song was likely to be enjoyed more by women, four of the men describing the song as, 'a woman's song' (Appendix 5).

Such opinions are understandable if we take into consideration what Frith (1987b) points out. This is, that certain categories imposed onto popular music perhaps by sections of the music industry, have the effect of defining the

very character of whoever or whatever they are representing, so that they create people rather than express them.

> [W]omen's music... is interesting not as music which somehow expresses 'women', but as music which seeks to define them, just as 'black music' works to set up a very particular notion of what 'blackness' is. (1987b:136).

And, what is defined as women's music is clearly assumed to be the music women enjoy (and men do not). In reference to Tagg's (1999) remarks (Chapter 3, p93) about the commercial advantage of the quantifiable aspects of taste, this practice of defining music as women's (or men's) music could have commercial benefits for its producers in establishing these niche markets.

Male-female categorizations from respondents can then be understood to result from the myths and conventionally held discourses about what constitutes male or female tastes in music and we can see from these responses that both sexes are equally susceptible to the influence of these discourses.

Gender divisions. Although the men who said, 'I love this song', etc, demonstrate that those opinions that state this is a 'woman's song', may be the result of acquiescing to the influence of dominant discourses (that women enjoy that which is emotional and associated with love), there are plausible explanations why both men and women may persist in them. These are made clear by two related observations. First, Frith (1987b) observes that love songs are important to people because they need them "...to give shape and voice to emotions that otherwise cannot be expressed without embarrassment or incoherence" (141) and Shepherd (1987) observes that

> men cannot ultimately deny the relational and emotional because they have a very real need of it. As a result, the relational and emotional is downgraded to a second-class status – something vaguely undesirable and intimately associated with women. (1987:154).

Together, these views suggest that why men might find songs like this one appealing is because like everyone else, they need them for by-proxy communication. They might also explain why male respondents say the song

is appealing because it has a 'good dobro guitar' or it is 'brilliantly crafted', and so on, in order to maintain what they regard as a gender division and preserve their apparent masculine identity. That is to say, rather than admit to enjoying the song for its emotional or affective value which is associated with women in many gender discourses, they distance themselves from these views by referring to its other attributes.

Taste has been shown by Bourdieu (1986) to correlate to education, social class and family background. So, why some respondents expressed such a strong preference for the song may lie in their social status. And elsewhere Bourdieu (1993) has shown that in matters of taste, the further up the social hierarchy, the more socially constituted differences between male and female decrease and men do not hesitate to express dispositions in matters of taste "...which elsewhere would be regarded as 'effeminate' " (383). Although this variable is outside the scope of this study, the quote indicates (as does the discussion in Chapter 3, p92), that social identities and social background may govern taste more than specious gender divisions.

But, we also saw in Chapter 3, (p94) that gratificational uses of songs are included in evaluations and how listeners are inclined to like a song that provides them with physical or sensory pleasure. The guitar's 'light' and 'warm' soothing qualities may fulfil this functional aspect for these male respondents. The fact that one respondent said the song 'must be played at full volume', indicates he wants to achieve the maximum sensory benefit from its sonic effects.

Ultimately then, those who expressed a liking for this song are more likely to have adopted the perspective of Romeo and in this way they may be able to explore their own relationships and feelings through his. Others who took a different perspective may not have identified to the same extent with Romeo's situation or they related more closely to other aspects of the song, or they may just like it (or not) for many other reasons.

Conclusion

Although there was a strong consistency of agreement in the responses, they also reveal some variety in the interpretations. First, many respondents reacted to the song and their memories of it through three of its main hooks. These hooks were generated from numerous features and combined to signal a positive, and happy feel to the song. The verbal clichés and the music's light touch corroborated the song's sense of informality. The music and the lyrics locate the song in the contemporary, where the vernacular language affirms its down-to-earth quality. All of these features signify to the respondents through a sense of everyday reality and help to make the song feel 'special' to the respondents and thus memorable.

The song fuses a contemporary discourse of unrequited love with aspects of the original story and respondents have reacted to this fusion by interpreting it as a 'modern' though 'tragic' love story.

Being evaluated as a 'classic', shows the song has been re-appraised so that its value has been transformed through time. The transformation might work both ways, because it could also be argued that the affective attributes of 'Romeo and Juliet' had a transforming effect on some of these male respondents, those who expressed a particular liking for it.

Song 3

'Angel of Mercy' (AM)

Dire Straits. (1996),[1979] *Communique* (CD)

This short extract begins at 3.08 and lasts for one minute until 4.08. It forms part of the song's coda and includes the chorus sung twice, followed by a lively guitar solo. The lyrics the extract includes are given below.

Angel of mercy, angel delight, gimme my reward in heaven tonight
And if I give up my sword, won't you gimme the right
Angel of mercy, give me heaven tonight

Angel of mercy, angel delight, gimme my reward in heaven tonight
And if I give up my sword, won't you gimme the right
Angel of Mercy, give me heaven tonight

Yeah,	*Angel of Mercy*
Yeah, baby, yeah	*Whoooh....*

The interpretive moves made by respondents to this song are divided into three areas, two of which involve categorizing. In relation to the first of these I discuss the way the respondents have defined the song's genre using a range of terms and with reference to discourses and social practices that inform their knowledge of the genre in different ways.

Next, I discuss how they have categorized the song in terms of its mood and demonstrate the influence of three communicative functions that appear to inform this mood; the Expressive, Interpersonal and the Imperative. My aim is to show how the combination of these functions is especially effective in inviting the listener to participate in the song.

The last discussion focuses on a group of evaluative comments that highlight two issues. These are, an issue of taste as it relates to the mood of the song,

and how some of the respondents were able to evaluate aspects of the song through narrowcast codes.

Categorizing in terms of Genre

Eleven respondents thought this was a 'country' song; nine said, 'Country & Western', while others said, 'country style', 'country rock sound', 'Western', 'honky-tonk, 'R&B country', 'country blues' and 'R&B progression'. One explanation for such a variety of names for this music might come from Malone's (1985) belief that country music defies a precise definition and "...no term (not even Country) has ever successfully encapsulated its essence" (1). In other words, the genre is a hybrid that is constantly changing in its constitution and complexity, consequently, the descriptions given to it by audiences are also prone to change.

The comments of 'honky-tonk', given by an older respondent (No.36) point in a particularly pertinent way to the development of the 'country' genre. 'Honky-tonk' can be counted as a sub-genre of country music that reached the height of its popularity during the 1940s (Malone, 1985:458). That being the case, a respondent of this age may be more likely to be familiar with this term to refer to the whole of the 'country' genre.

Malone claims that as the 'honky-tonk' style began to lose its popularity there was a desire to find an appealing image for 'country' music, one that would attract wider audiences and provide a binding metaphor for the music (407). This metaphor was found in the 'Western' image. In fact, the respondent who said 'Wild West' and the other eight who said 'cowboys' show that audiences worldwide have linked this enduring image to 'country' music ever since. Also, the wearing of cowboy clothes and the using of cowboy names have all become part of the country scene for performers and followers alike (394), Subsequently, the term 'Country and Western' that nine respondents use, has come to describe the music that frequently accompanies and relates to these cowboy images and practices.

I shall say more about these terms throughout the analysis, but the fact that these different descriptions were given reflects the continuing transformation of genres in general and the 'country' genre in particular.

We can now look more closely at the specific stylistic elements that may have prompted the respondents to connect this music to the 'country' genre and how they associate these styles with the different but interrelated terms they use in their descriptions of the music

Styles. Those elements of style I discuss in this section are those mentioned by the respondents. The element pertaining to style that they mention more than any other, is the guitar.

> The guitar has always played a primary role in the composition, performance, and image of country music. (Ross, 2003:133).

As the following comments clearly show, the guitar is a prominent signifier in the extract. 'Guitar at forefront', 'good guitar lead', 'improvised guitar on top', 'guitar lead', 'guitar priority', 'loud guitar', 'high pitched guitar', 'electric guitar', 'brilliant guitar solo', 'great guitaring', 'good guitarist', 'nice guitar instrumental' and 'guitar talking'.

A steel guitar was once the main indicator of the country style (Malone, 1985, Tagg, 1999, Ross 2003). But, by 1976 the steel guitar had fallen out of favour. It therefore does not enjoy the same prominence in country music today. Instead, Ross (2003) claims the one type of guitar that has become a contemporary staple for both country and blues musicians is the Fender (both Telecaster and Stratocaster) (142). The lead guitar on this extract is a 1961 Fender Stratocaster. There is also a 12-string Burns-Baldwin rhythm guitar present (also a popular choice of guitar for 'country' music) but because the lead guitar is positioned centrally in the aural space and by its solo performance, (which occupies almost all of the second half of the extract), it becomes the track's most conspicuous instrument. I will therefore briefly review the styles played by the lead guitar.

Tagg (1999) explains how glissando sounds and slide techniques employed predominantly in the US South "were slowly but surely incorporated in the C&W mainstream, ending up as style indicators of country music" (7). (Noticeably, Tagg also uses the term 'C&W' interchangeably with 'country' to describe the music). The lead guitar in the extract does produce some of these glissando sounds but I also want to point to some of the different techniques it has used to boldly signpost the country genre to the respondents. I begin by looking at some of the musical characteristics that Ross (2003:142) cites as typical of a 'standard country' style.

The lead guitar employs a pentatonic scale. Played in the minor, this scale is often favoured by rock musicians. But, played as it is here in G major, it is what country guitar players frequently use as a basis for their riffs and solos (Ross, 2003:147). This scale then is one of the stylistic techniques that help to unite the mixture of styles in the 'country rock sound' one respondent hears. But, this same comment also serves as an example of how a listener without Tagg's (2001a) 'constructional competence' (Chapter 1, p28) or other expertise in the music mode apart from that of an ordinary listener, can not only distinguish timbres, but, through what Tagg calls a 'receptional competence' can with ease apprehend the merging of the 'country' and rock styles.

A *pick-up* on a guitar is a device that electronically directs the sound from the strings to the amplifier. The bass pick-up produces a defining aural timbre that is often used in country music, but the same chords played further down on the treble pick-up, produces a more metallic or bright timbre and this is usually indicative of 'R&B' or even 'honky-tonk' styles (Ross, 2003:143). The guitarist's selection of pick-ups then becomes a way of employing genre synecdoche, of importing different stylistic devices into one song and merging style with style. It is also another way the guitar and its function as both medium and mode are transformed in their day-to-day use.

Ross claims the 'twang' so often associated with country guitar playing can be attributed directly to the specific tone of the treble pick-up on Fender guitars (142-143). Specific examples of these twangs can be heard in the extract at 3.25 and 3.38.

The string-bending heard throughout the extract is a common feature in all guitar playing, but, as Ross comments below, it is also a stylistic variable typical of country songs.

> The electric guitar often imitates the steel guitar, especially in ensembles that do not have one, and to incorporate the authenticity required to successfully represent the music as country. In order to achieve this, string bends are fundamental and necessary. (2003: 147)

But, he also says that the methods behind the bends are not all the same (146). The bending of strings is a feature at one point in the extract (between 3.44 and 3.50), shown as Figure 7 below. We will see through this feature how the merging of the 'country', 'R&B' and 'Western' stylistic aspects give the 'country' genre its hybrid status.

First, the strings are bent repeatedly and as they do so they produce what is known as a typical country 'semitone slide' (146). Second, as the key signature is G major, an F sharp would be expected, but the guitarist uses F natural (shown by the arrows) and this technique gives the short riff its 'R&B' feel, especially since there is a louder dynamic shift on this one *blue* note[1]. Finally, although the song is played in 4/4 time, at this point the rhythm changes from a four-beat to a three-beat sequence. This temporary alteration in rhythm throws a spotlight on these notes and a repeated return to the same three notes produces a sensation that the music is looping back on itself. In Song 1, I suggested that certain guitar swooping techniques were iconic of a physiological process. In the same vein, we could say this looping technique is iconic of a cultural practice, a simulacrum of the type of lassoing motion we might hear accompanying a scene in a 'Western' movie.

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[1] A slight drop of pitch on the third, seventh, and sometimes the fifth tone of the scale, common in blues and jazz (newtojazz.com (accessed on 14-4-04)

Figure 7

Mixing aspects of different styles into one song in this way is indicative of Dire Straits whose whole repertoire of songs is based on a predominantly crossover format. The mixture of styles also makes this group of diverse but interrelated descriptions of the music understandable.

Lyrics. We can also look to the lyrics for stylistic indicators of the 'country' genre. Because respondents found the guitar to be such a prominent signifier, it may also have influenced their interpretation of the lyrics. Brackett (2002) confirms this. "[M]usical style also plays an important role in how we interpret the lyrics, and hence the meaning of the song" (76). Malone (1985) claims that lyrics of country songs tend to have a down-home or pastoral emphasis and more often than not, honky-tonk lyrics recall bars, drinking and generally having a good time (154). However, there is nothing particularly pastoral or any mention of drinking or bars in this chorus (or indeed the whole song). Further, none of the words in the extract make any references whatsoever to 'cowboys', the 'West' or anything else the respondents have commented on as being associated with the 'country' genre. Therefore, in this sense the lyrics contravene Booth's (1981), claim that lyrics tend to be genre-specific (Chapter 1,p47). A brief content analysis undertaken on some internet sites[2] that list 'country', 'honky-tonk' or 'R&B' song lyrics, did not produce any of the words or phrases used in this chorus, for example *mercy, reward* and *sword.* This is not to say these words are never used in these music styles. However, the word 'angel' is quite frequent, in particular it is present in the famous 'Wild Side of Life' (1952) song as a 'honky-tonk' angel. In a genre synecdoche sense then this one word might have been sufficient to suggest and open up for the

[2] thesonglyrics.com; members.aol.com; goodwinmusic.com (accessed on 4-7-2003)

respondents associations to the remainder of the 'country' and 'honky-tonk' genres.

Upon hearing the word 'angel', the respondents might have employed a 'ubiquitious' listening strategy (Chapter 2, p75) in relation to the remainder of the song, that is, they may not have paid close attention to the rest of the lyrics simply because they assumed them to be typical of 'country'. A following remark from Gombrich (1987) emphasises this point. "The greater the probability of a symbol's occurrence in any given situation, the smaller will be its information content. Where we can anticipate we need not listen" (205). The 'country' genre in the lyrics then may have been anticipated rather than heard.

However, there are other indicators in the lyrics that we can look to for the 'country' connection. The discussions in Chapter 1, (p48), revealed that vocalizations can be equally important in communicating meaning. And Frith (1996) maintains that the rules governing the sounds of genre are significant in deciding not only what words can be sung, but the way these words can be sung. "[R]ock sung in, say, an upper-class English accent doesn't just sound unconvincing in terms of character, it also sounds wrong as a noise" (176). There is one stylistic feature in the way these lyrics are sung that may have helped the respondents recollect notions of the 'country' genre.

Some words are enunciated with a Southern US drawl. The vowel sounds /e/ in the word *mercy* and /a/ in *reward*, are both lengthened and drawn out with a somewhat exaggerated nasality that is typical of the drawling pronunciation associated with some states in the Southern US. Coincidently, these sounds also resemble the long drawn-out twangs produced by the guitar. Mayor (1996) has shown that speakers of English are able to apply a linguistic repertoire to social acts "to signal their shifting attitudes and identities and to achieve particular goals" (55). Therefore, by building into the song an impression of a Southern US accent, its metonymic connections with the 'country' genre and identity are enhanced.

The respondents are able to use this pronunciation as a semiotic resource because (as I have argued throughout Part I), when a mode of communication is not entirely formalized, that is to say, in the absence of a formal modal system, then voice quality can be made to mean on the basis of provenance and on the basis of experiential meaning potential (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001:82). The inclusion of this specific accent then could address both the 'American' and 'USA' comments in these two ways. First through provenance, that is a reference to the place the respondents understand the accent to come from and further, the place's association to the country genre. Second, a listener's experience of hearing this accent connected to this genre in other contexts could influence its connection in this context.

In categorising the extract as 'country', etc, the respondents have based their interpretations on a series of guitar styles, discourses, and an accent in the lyrics. Altogether the notion of the 'country' genre was formed from what Kress (1993:189) calls the 'micro histories' of the production of the sign.

Categorizing in Terms of Mood

The comments grouped under this heading are either those that define a mood or those that closely relate to that mood in some way. The first large group of comments could be said to share a sense of optimism: 'happy' (x5), 'happy group', 'party' (x3), 'party atmosphere' (x2), 'party scene', 'feel-good factor' (x2), 'fun' (x2), 'jolly' (2), 'good feeling', 'optimistic', 'good time', 'good atmosphere', 'living it up', 'up-beat' (x4), 'up-tempo', 'quick tempo' and 'very quick'. Such a large number of responses agreeing on a similar mood suggest that respondents are engaging with broadcast codes. I would now like to investigate how communication was achieved using these codes.

At around 125bpm, the extract is 'up-beat' and as discussed in Chapter 1, p36, by metaphoric analogy, a quick tempo (as long as the co-presence of other signifiers point in the same direction) can contribute to notions of anything

that is 'happy' and positive. To discover what these other signifiers are, I focus first on two comments of 'harmonies' and 'chorus'.

Voices. These two comments are most likely to refer to the additional voices that can be heard coming in just after the main vocal, almost like an echo effect. Although the voices are audible, they are faint, far off and unclear, perhaps prompting the comment of 'blurred'. But, because they are loud enough to be heard, they add a layer of sonic texture to the song, encouraging respondents to hear it as 'busy' (x2) and 'clutter'. Therefore, despite being compositionally backgrounded, and indistinct, the voices form a salient feature of the musical text. The six respondents who said 'party', appear to recognise that these voices provide the same type of sounds, noises and general buzz that one could hear when entering the scene of a party or any kind of social event. In turn, this sense of a 'party' atmosphere could trigger the other comments of, 'people', 'young people', 'group of people', 'crowd' and 'Saturday night out'.

The subtle presence of the extra voices then makes the mood credible and give the song what van Leeuwen (1999) calls a 'naturalistic modality', which he says is "based on a criterion of verisimilitude... what one might hear if present at the represented event..." (181), in this case a 'party'. Elsewhere, van Leeuwen (1998) argues that in polyphonic music, subordinated voices are not equal to the dominant voice and they are not melodically meaningful in isolation – they only become meaningful in relation to the dominant voice (online). And so it is with these voices; listeners are not meant to hear them clearly. Their function is to occupy the background space. Therefore, listeners are aurally situated in the middle of this musical atmosphere complete with the background hum of these voices creating a surrounding ambience. In this way the song has enticed the respondents into the 'party' mood. Therefore, although the voices are not positioned centrally, at least not in the sense of their loudness, they retain salience in the sense of their information value.

Using the respondents' comments, I can now illustrate how the aural perspective that has been created locates them within a 'happy' environment and thereby enhances the 'happy' mood. In approximating a 'busy' soundscape, listeners are placed close to the 'group of people' and the 'noisy' and 'loud' music through an amalgam of semiotic features. The sounds cannot be heard to emanate from a sole source or position, listeners are surrounded by them and thereby become part of the event. Some thought they could be 'watching a band' and it is a 'live band'. This is because they are *immersed* (Chapter 2, p66), within the type of soundscape where a live performance would be appropriate.

Such positioning of the listener provides several *ways in* to the song. The respondents can take part in it by feeling part of it. According to the testimonies of listeners in Chapter 3, (p94), one of the values they attributed to any song was how it could be used to simulate a mood or to regulate their own mood, and this aspect of functionality was an important criterion in their liking of a song. Keeping these opinions in mind, this song's expressive function (articulating feelings or attitudes) appears to provide a mood or an atmosphere that listeners can participate in and enjoy. It is active in the apparently spontaneous calls of "yea baby, yeah", and "whoooh" that all have a 'good-time' vibe about them.

The principal communication in these exhortations is for the listener to participate in some capacity, or as two respondents have it, to 'singalong'. By using these half-words, exclamations, etc, the song relegates formality. And, this makes the listener's job of singing along easier, because it is not necessary for them to know the precise words, these vocals tell them that proper sentences or even proper words are not needed. Instead, the emphasis is on inviting the listener into the 'good-time', and any apt and plausible vocal sound will suffice to participate in the 'fun' (x2).

These calls have semiotic relevance to the listener in another way. The singer is also a listener and his calls of "yea" etc could be taken as his verbal response

to his own music. The survey respondents listened to the song in isolation and it is possible they could look to these expressions as a cue for their own interpretations. The influence of these calls did not inform their external responses, that is, respondents did not call out 'yea' themselves, but it might have informed their interpretative processes and the meaning they assigned to the song.

This same point can be made in relation to the comments of the Russian woman (No. 23) who says she 'didn't understand the words'. But, her other comments indicate she knew it was a 'happy' song and that she was meant to 'singalong' with it. This shows that she may have applied the type of rough de-coding or abductive reception (discussed in Chapter 2, p78) to the lyrical component of the song. Because she and many other respondents deduce the song to be 'happy, etc, it shows that they are interacting with broadcast codes in signifiers like these vocal expressions.

The 'happy' or 'party' ambience is also supported by the way the guitar is played. In some places it sounds completely unrestrained. For example, the short musical phrase at 3.59 to 4.02, sums up the essence of the 'party' mood. Figure 8 shows how the lead guitar performs a playful but semi-frenzied lick, what Ross (2003) calls a 'rapid-fire arpeggio' (141), with dense musical activity where lots of notes roll out in quick succession.

3.59

Figure 8

The message communicated here is that the instrument is being played to its full potential, that it is pushed to its optimum of sonic expression, where there are no inhibiting factors to curb it.

Good-time discourse. The 'happy', 'singalong' and 'party' mood all form part of a 'good-time' discourse and although the next response-type is not strictly a mood, the respondents appear to be drawing on this same discourse to produce them. 'Pub' (x4), 'in the pub' (x3), 'in the background at the pub', 'its like in the pub', 'bar' (x3), 'in a bar', 'bar and beer', 'drunk' (x2), 'sing this when drunk', 'drinking' (x2), 'drinking song', 'people drinking' and 'beer'.

All these remarks cross-reference the general buzz and the 'party' atmosphere. They also appear to hark back to the 'honky-tonk' tradition, which Malone (1985) claims employed 'good-time' lyrics and a culture nurtured by Prohibition repeal and therefore strongly associated with drinking and bars. Specifically, small, dingy bars with dance floors and neon lights, in fact he claims that drinking, dancing and socializing is still described as 'honky-tonking' (458 and 153). One respondent's remark of 'sawdust' appears appropriate here, as does the comment on the 'slurred voice'. The 'loud guitar' comment also indicates as Ross (2003) suggests, that this type of music is usually played loudly so that it can be heard above the general din usually going on in the type of establishments where it is played (142). As part of the country genre therefore, notions of 'drinking' and 'the pub' describe elements of a certain lifestyle where this type of music is central.

Dancing. We now come to responses that also relate to the 'party' mood but which reflect the influence of the imperative communicative function (whose purpose is to influence behaviour). A total of 26 responses refer in some way to some type of dancing, starting with, 'dancing' (x4), 'people dancing' (x4), 'dance music' (x2), 'knees-up' (x2) and 'dance-floor'. If we consider that "Country music is played predominantly on the beat"... (Ross, 2003:137), then a dancing mood or the urge to dance would be a rational interpretive move in response to this 'up-beat', definitive rhythm that is foregrounded with a tempo of 125bpm which is just fast enough to dance to and to make definitive dance movements.

From the next group of respondents' comments, we see clear evidence of the imperative function, that is to say, we can see how the song's tempo, its definitive rhythm and its melodic contour have potential to signal the respondents' action. 'Toe-tapping' (x2), 'foot-tapping (x2), 'get up and dance to', 'makes me want to dance', 'makes you want to dance', 'to dance to' and 'get up and join in'. For these respondents, the urge to dance created by this configuration of musical features appears to be quite compelling.

Frith (1996) calls dance the "aesthetic foundation of appreciation" (142). He sees dancing as not only a way of listening to a song, also another 'way into' the song, that is to say, a way of participating with it that is both cognitive and physical.

> Dance matters not just as a way of expressing music but as a way of listening to it, a way into the music *in its unfolding* – which is why dancing to music is both a way of losing oneself in it, physically, and a way of thinking about it...(1996:142, original emphasis).

And dancing may be even more than participation, it may form part of a listener's interpretation of the song, a physical or rhythmic definition of what the song means, what it is. A related notion implicit in a further comment from Frith (1987b), is that as well as a 'way in' to the music, for some listeners, dancing may also provide a *way out.*

> The pleasures of dance and disco; clubs and parties provide a setting, a society, which seems to be defined only by the time-scale of the music (the beats per minute), which escapes the real time passing outside (1987b:142).

By surrendering themselves completely to the music, as both listeners and dancers, listeners can shift the focus of the music's relationship with their external environment, like that of 'in the pub', to that of its relationship with their physical gratification, like 'makes me want to dance'.

This large group of responses not only refers to dancing in general, but seven respondents specifically said 'line-dancing'. Line-dancing is a social activity conventionally connected with 'cowboys', which is made plain from Needam's

(2002) comments describing the outfits of line-dancers, "Cowboy boots are *de rigeur* for the evening's attire" (83). A further connection between this attire and the 'cowboy' image is made in the simple comment of 'jeans'. The tempo of the extract provides a clear and definite beat eminently suitable for line-dancing, and the presence of many other 'country' and 'cowboy' signifiers make the metonymic connection stronger. For example, the presence of a definitive beat was also a necessary accompaniment to 'honky-tonk' music. "[T]here had to be, for both the dancer and the passive listener, a steady and insistent beat which could be felt even if the lyrics could not be understood" (Malone, 1985:154).

By providing these definitive and conventional dance rhythms, the song has potential to fulfil further functional criteria. As part of a collaborative venture between song and listener, the music can help listeners to project social and physical definitions of themselves as 'cowboys' and 'line-dancers'. Consequently, the communicative potential indicated by these comments is not only that which connects music to listener; it is also that which connects listener to the world.

As we saw in Chapter 2, p76, listening stances can be signalled by listening conventions attached to a perceived genre. Adequate listening occurs "...when one listens to music according to the exigencies of a given social situation and according to the predominant sociocultural conventions of the subculture to which the music belongs" (Stockfelt, 1997:137). If we follow Stockfelt's line of reasoning, then we could assume that this set of 'dancing' responses may have been triggered by the respondents' ideas about what is 'genre-normative' in the context of listening to 'country' songs. In that case, the comment of 'dancing' and especially 'line-dancing' acts as an example of a 'genre-normative' response to this extract. Wanting to dance is an adequate or rational response to a song where the clear beat becomes motivational and signals an imperative to dance. Unlike the responses to the extract of Song 1, (BA), this extract was not heard to invite contemplation. Rather, (for this group of respondents), it requests or in some places almost demands action, in particular, dancing more

specifically, 'line-dancing' as part of the 'good-time' mood and 'country' genre it represents.

Evaluative moves

The extract of Song 1 (BA), although it was heard as 'sad', was also judged as 'lovely' and 'a nice tune', etc, that is to say on the whole its evaluations were positive. Whereas, this apparently 'happy' song, apart from comments of 'great', groovy' and 'good instrumental', has yielded mostly negative evaluations beginning with, 'don't like it' and 'I don't like this', followed by a group of other evaluative comments: 'irritating' (x2), 'monotonous', 'aggressive', 'a bit annoying', 'not my cup of tea', 'empty really' and 'not keen of this'. Not only was this extract reported as 'happy', etc, the 'bio-acoustic' dance imperative and its participative elements made it functional, that is to say, an otherwise desirable attribute for listeners in the right circumstances and listening situation. Yet, it did not please many respondents. We can therefore assume that the contrasting 'sad' mood reported for the extract to Song 1 (BA), and the apparently 'happy' mood reported for this extract do not (according to this group of respondents), operate as sole indicators of a songs' appeal.

Narrowcast codes. Although I have argued that most of this song is communicating its mood through broadcast codes, three particular evaluative comments point to narrowcast communication. These are: 'something sexual about this', 'sexual' and 'sexy'. To discuss these comments, a brief synopsis of the complete song is needed. In this instance then, I will break with the usual analysis format and offer a brief review of elements outside the extract.

The lyrics in the whole song are made up of child-like lyrics ("cross your heart and spit"), delivered with child-like intonation which forms a constant plea for sex through a series of metaphors ('give me heaven tonight'). The narrative that develops as the song progresses hints that a sexual encounter takes place. This narrative is partly articulated by the guitar's mischievous style of play in certain places (eg. at 2.52) and partly by the singer's vocal calls ('hmmm', etc at 2.27 and 2.34). One reading of the song then could be that this is the sexual

fantasy of an adolescent boy, played out in different modes; the lyrics, the music of the guitar and the vocal expressions.

With this context in mind, we can now look again at the guitar riff heard in the extract at 3.59 to 4.02 in Figure 8 (now Figure 9) because it may influence these three 'sexual' responses. The riff consists of a series of guitar stabs. These are achieved by plucking one string of the chord, and allowing the other strings to resonate when the fingers are taken away from them, a technique that guitarists call *pull offs*. Going back to constantly stab at this one string and then releasing the others, (seven times in a few seconds) builds a tension that appears to desperately require resolution as the same phrase is repeated over and over. On the 7th repeat, the riff leaps six intervallic positions from G to D (shown by the arrow) before resolving.

Figure 9

In her discussions of sexuality in the music of Beethoven, McClary (1991) argues that some tonal procedures strive to delay gratification until finally delivering a payoff in a "...violent release of pent-up tensions – in what is technically called the 'climax', which is quite clearly to be experienced as metaphorical ejaculation" (cited in Frith, 1996: 103). The resemblance between McClary's explanation of the Beethoven piece and my explanation of this guitar riff, is clear, especially since when the riff in the extract reaches its 'climax', it is followed by the vocal exclamation of "whooh".

The fact that the guitar riff can serve both the 'party' atmosphere and the sexual metaphor, appears conceivable if we consider this point made by Sloboda (1985).

> Musical reference is special because the music 'makes sense' even if the reference is not appreciated by a listener. A referential passage nearly always serves a double function: it points to an external event, but it also forms part of the thematic structure of the piece as a whole. It is a well-formed segment of the music quite independently of its reference, and one art of composition consists precisely in finding passages which are capable of serving this double function. (1985:60).

If the respondents had heard the many additional signifiers in the first part of the song, these 'sexual' comments would be easier to trace. But, since none of them knew the song, their responses are only based on the short excerpt they heard in the survey. Nevertheless, the extract has produced these three comments and they show that insinuations of the 'sexual' coding remain within it. It is possible they arise directly through the metaphorical analogy in the lyrics of 'give me heaven tonight', even if that is so, the 'sexual' implications may also be (perhaps even subliminally) interpreted through this guitar riff.

Finally, Durant (1984) has discussed ways of disguising swear words in the lyrics of 1960s songs that made them more acceptable for public broadcasts he noted that, "ways of concealing words and idioms against censorship...have a history in a variety of symbolic conventions..."(187). It strikes me that these three responses may have uncovered an implicit 'sexual' narrative camouflaged by the metaphor of a 1979 'country' song perhaps for similar (risk of censorship) reasons.

Conclusion

Establishing the genre in this extract was all-important for the respondents in deciding its meanings and their responses and reactions to it. But although they appeared to comprehend the genre quickly, that is to say, they were able to give these responses without hesitation, we can see from the discussions in Part I that ascertaining a genre requires interrelated and complex interpretive processes, as Brackett (2002) attests in the quote below.

> [G]enres are not defined by characteristics of musical style alone but also by performance rituals, visual appearance, the types of social and ideological connotations associated with them...(2002, 67).

This observation is borne out in all the responses to this song extract. The consensus of a 'country' genre was shown to arise from a complex amalgam of the respondents' engagement with many semiotic features. For example, although there were important signifiers heard in the lyrics, principal amongst these was the medium of the Fender guitar, including its positioning; its particular timbre and its genre-specific stylistic indicators.

The widely held notions concerning the discourse of the 'cowboy' that are apparently tied to this genre, added to the respondents' impression of 'Western' heard in the song. The inclusion of certain social practices in the comments, specifically 'line-dancing' further enhanced the genre link.

It is also clear from the responses that to suggest a song's mood, a semiotic feature, like that of the indistinct voices heard in the extract, need not be loud, foregrounded or obvious in order for it to communicate information because these backgrounded voices were undoubtedly effective in contributing to the 'happy group' and 'party' atmosphere that many respondents interpreted.

With the imperative function working over both the language and music modes, the respondents recognised the extract was almost literally imploring them to join in with it, either by 'dancing' or to 'singalong'.

In sum, in order to respond to this song, the respondents appeared to engage with its textual coding conventions and connect these to a range of social practices and discourses, drawing on notions of provenance in the process. As Frith (1996) states "...it is the extra-musical information which enables us to hear the music as *specifically* meaningful" (112, original emphasis).

Song 4

'Portobello Belle' (PB)

Dire Straits. (1996), [1979]. *Communique* (CD)

The extract begins at 0.00 and ends at 1.15. It includes the short musical introduction, the first verse and a bridge. The song describes a girl as she walks down the street. These are the lyrics included in the extract.

Bella Donna's on the high street
Her breasts upon the offbeat
And the stalls are just a side-shows
Victoriana's old clothes
And yes her jeans are tight now
She gotta travel light now
She's gotta turn up all her roots now
She got a turn up for the boots now

Yea, she thinks she's tough
She ain't no English rose
But the blind singer
He's seen enough and he knows
Yes, an, do a song about a long-gone Irish girl
Ah, but - I got one for you - Portobello Belle

A significant number of responses to this song were made up of visual images of the girl in the song's title, Portobello Belle. Evidence of this is seen in the following responses: 'strong imagery' (x2), "strong image of Bella Donna', very visual', 'image of a girl', 'image of the girl travelling', 'vivid image' and 'picture of a girl'. Although the respondents do also categorize, evaluate and associate the song in the various ways that I have been describing as interpretive moves, in a significant number of interpretations (at least 36 out of a total of 132), the emphasis in the responses is on visual imagery. Moreover, other responses connect and refer to these images, making it clear that the respondents were experiencing the song in visual as well as aural terms. The major part of the analysis therefore is devoted to these visual descriptions, although in the final

section I do discuss a group of responses that evaluate the song in relation to taste.

Respondents allude to at least four visual representations of Portobello Belle, but one of these is the most prominent. The main discussion then centres on this prominent image and the semiotic features that appear to contribute to it, namely, the rhythmic pattern of the music, the lyrics, and the voice quality in the vocal delivery. In describing the visual images, I identify each one by an epithet used by one of the respondents. I begin with the most prevalent image.

Come-on Girl

All the come-on girl responses have sexual overtones, for example: 'common girl', 'come-on girl', 'girl on the street', 'hard girl' and 'prostitute'. This image appears to have been constructed from the cumulative effect of different signifiers all contributing to one portrait of Portobello Belle, so it is to these signifiers I now turn.

Demeanour. One respondent noted the girl's name as 'Bella Donna'. The lyric "Bella Donna's on the High Street" immediately converts the eponymous Portobello Belle into 'Bella Donna'. The Italian words can be translated into English as Beautiful Lady, or Pretty Woman. However, the name can also be heard as Belladonna, the plant that yields the chemical substance otherwise known as Deadly Nightshade. At once, this gives the girl's character an ambiguous nature. For instance, she is a pretty woman, but she might also be a deadly woman. From the same lyric 'Bella Donna's on the High Street' the preposition 'on' invests the sentence with discursive knowledge linked to British culture where the phrase 'on the street' can be associated with a 'come-on girl'.

Two respondents mention 'heavy make-up', one of these being the same respondent who said 'prostitute', which again appears to reinforce a cultural and stereotypical discourse that girls of low repute are inclined to wear heavy make-up.

The 'prostitute' response and the 'come-on girl' image may have been equally influenced by other lyrics. For instance, in the line 'She gotta turn up all her roots, now', the word 'roots' may be an oblique reference to the tell-tale roots of dyed hair. And, taken with the line that follows, 'she got a turn-up for the boots, now', these two aspects of Bella Donna's demeanour, unkempt, dyed hair and turned-up boots, are again associated in Western cultural discourse with the appearance and attire of prostitutes. This connection is made explicit in the very successful 1990 film *'Pretty Woman'*, where Julia Roberts plays the part of a prostitute with false hair and wears long boots with turn-ups. Respondents who were familiar with this film could have connected the two pretty woman images.

Swaying motion. The 'come-on girl' responses and their images may also be linked to the sense of the girl's motion that eight respondents noted. Four commented on her 'walking', others said she was, 'travelling', 'a drifter', 'going away', 'girl moving in slow motion', and 'a girl on a journey'. Some of these comments could be inferred from the lyric 'travel light'. But, I want to show how the meaning potential in the music suggests not only a sense of motion but one particular physical motion that relates to the 'come-on girl' image.

At the beginning of the extract, the guitar plays solo for two seconds and establishes a short melodic riff over two bars (the fourth beat of the first bar is syncopated with the first beat of the second bar). The riff is shown below in Figure 10. There are two distinguishing features about this riff. First, the song is played in 4/4 time with a heavier accent on the first and third beats. However, an extra short and light beat is dropped in slightly before the third beat (shown by the arrows) and this gives the riff a slight *swing* feel. Second, the pitch repeatedly rises slightly and then drops back, making for what musicologists describe as an 'arched pitch contour'. Together, these two features appear to enhance the feeling that the music is swaying from side to side.

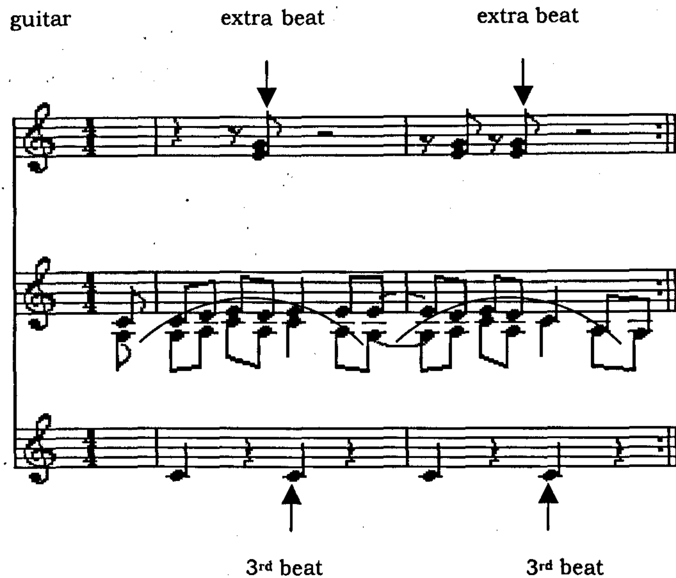

Figure 10

With its insistent beat and apparent swaying motion, this riff suggests a specific type of movement. For instance, Ostwald (1973) believes undulating sounds that vary in pitch the way these do, can "suggest purposeful movement and insistence" (27). The slight pitch fluctuation coupled with a pace of 114 bpm, does make this music sound purposeful, almost like a march, but not quite, because as Laing (1985:61) has pointed out, the rhythm of marching is usually a monadic 1,1,1,1 and unsyncopated. Whereas, here, the rhythmic pattern is **1**,2,^{3}**3**,4. Therefore, the rhythm is too regular and deliberate to suggest a slow pedestrian amble like a stroll, but I will show how it can be related to one particular style of female 'walking', in fact, a sexually provocative swagger, that may help identify a connection to the respondents' 'come-on girl' image.

Females have wider pelvises than men and a higher fat distribution on their hips (one respondent noted that Bella Donna was 'plump'), and this gives them a characteristic sway when they walk. Middleton (1990) claims that, "[r]hythms are registered differently by different bodies according to resonances and activities; thus the music's effects are activated by body-strategies as

much as the reverse" (97). It could be argued then that the relevant body-strategy activated by this riff appears to match that of a female body in a swaying motion. Therefore, interacting with the meaning potential of the opening riff, the respondents would be able to compare it to their own experiences of how bodies move and apply this knowledge to the 'come-on girl' image. The riff exploits this potential and since it is repeated all the way through the extract, it facilitates the respondents' construction of these images. Also, the lyric "her breasts upon the offbeat" draws attention to the movement of Bella Donna's breasts and add a sexual dimension to her swaying image.

Attitude. Some responses like, 'tough', 'aggressive' and 'fiesty', express attitudes that these respondents might relate to the image of a 'come-on girl'. so, I will examine how these two types of responses might connect.

From the word 'jeans' onwards, the added presence of the bass, and the drums and piano provide a thicker musical texture, so that there is now more substance to the overall depth of the song. The addition of these instruments gives the riff an even more exaggerated swaying motion. Slightly higher and lighter notes on the piano help to enhance the lighter beat of the guitar strum. And the fuller and lower notes of the bass help to enhance the heavier down-beat guitar strum. The presence of the heavier bass is noticed by the respondents because two of them comment on it. One says, the 'bass is too heavy' and the other, 'simple bass lines'. This emphasis on the variable stress on the two beats now contrasts them even more, so that rather than swaying, the rhythm now appears to almost heave from one note to the next, giving the girl's walk (including the movement of her breasts) a sense of deliberation. It is this deliberate heave fostered by deeper musical texture that I believe now fills Bella Donna's walk with the type of 'tough', etc attitude suggested above.

What makes it possible for them to hear this attitude is the fact that to paraphrase van Leeuwen (1999:97), melodies can express strutting, but they can also at the same time strut, and this riff struts. In fact, it is reminiscent of

another melody that struts, in the song 'Night Fever' (1977), from the film *'Saturday Night Fever'* (1977) where John Travolta struts down the street.

One respondent thought the extract had a 'monotonous beat', another two said it was 'repetitive', others said it was 'boring' and 'just dull'. Although the riff is reinforced at one stage, fundamentally all the way through the extract the same guitar riff is repeated. Therefore, apart from some musical ornamentation by the piano, the music has little in the way of harmonic development, it appears the role of the other instruments is merely to support this guitar riff and to some respondents this could make for 'repetitive' and 'monotonous' music.

However, Tagg (1995 and 2003:online) has noted that accompaniment, despite notions of its supporting role can sometimes be just as important as melody in communicating the music's message, sometimes even more so. This riff's presence and structure certainly adds semiotic value, it provides a kinetic framework incessantly reminding the listener of the provocative manner in which Portobello Belle is apparently walking. And the respondents who noted that, 'it makes you listen to the lyrics' as well as 'clever lyrics', 'lots of words' and 'light-hearted lyrics' prove how effective the riff is in working in conjunction with the lyrics to position the listener's perspective so that (s)he is focused on the description of the girl as she walks down the street, all the while mentally conjuring up the visual scene.

Visual Perspective. Thus far, the responses show how the respondents could have constructed their images by engaging with certain aspects of two modes, the language in the lyrics and certain musical structures. I now want to show how a combination of signifiers appear to be able to shape their imagery. At the line 'and the stalls are just a side shows' the words are used to create what Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) have called a "pictorial framing device" (225). Since the lyrics position the stalls at the side of Bella Donna, she is compositionally placed in the middle of the visual image. Therefore at this point she becomes the image's central signifier (with all the status the centre

can imply – the stalls are *just* side shows), and this positioning has further semiotic significance, which I will come to later.

At one point in the song (.25-.27), a whole range of semiotic features come together to dramatically reinforce the imagery and the two respondents who specifically mentioned Bella Donna's 'jeans' have apprehended this feature. It happens during the line "and yes, her jeans are tight, now". First, there is a vocal and musical emphasis on the word 'jeans' and the singer's voice quality tenses, that is, it narrows and tightens together with an accentuated intonation around the words "jeans are tight, now". The emphasis is more noticeable on the offbeat, which is the fourth beat of the bar. This has the effect of making the following first beat, the one that has hitherto been the strong beat, sound weaker.

Also taking place here is what Tagg (1999:27) calls an 'episodic marker' (Chapter 2, p64), which is a way of musically signalling something different is about to happen. The marker is made up of a drumbeat, bass and electric piano that are introduced at this point by means of a cymbal crash and an increase in the overall dynamic, from quiet to loud.

Further, there is a key change from C on "and yes her" to F on "jeans are tight now". This key change takes place in other lines as well but here the louder volume makes it more noticeable.

All these communicative features happen simultaneously. Therefore, aberrations in rhythm, dynamics and key change, act as one communicative feature and immediately draw the listener's attention to the tight jeans. For these two seconds, the emphatic sounds of music, lyrics and vocal quality form a potent combined signifier. They take on the quality of a vector, that is, a connecting device that acts as an indexical sign (Chapter 2, p63), which immediately links or points the listener directly to the image and functions like a camera zoom-in to that part of Bella Donna's anatomy. The respondents are therefore guided, if not coerced, by the musical imperative that commands

them to *look* at Bella Donna's tight jeans. Through its very vividness, the image is then able to assume the role of narrator and speak for itself.

Many popular songs evoke imagery, but this song demonstrates how visual scenes can sometimes be overtly facilitated. Here, the song's semiotic features direct the respondents to a definitive image; an image that is made even more definitive by a close-up.

The respondents may also have been encouraged in the construction of the 'come-on girl' image by the sense of intimacy brought about by the vector altering the listener-viewer's perspective. Until now, the story-teller has been placed within what could be called (following Hall, 1969), 'close social distance' to the listener, a perceived relationship created by the singer's voice being positioned up close to the microphone and therefore ostensibly closer to the listener's ear. However, at .25-27, the indexical vector makes the distance somewhat more intimate as the listener is placed closer still, but this time not aurally and not to the singer, but visually, to the image of the tight jeans.

The fact that many responses resulted in this prominent 'come-on girl' image of Bella Donna may also be due to what Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) call "subjective management" of the image (136). This means that the listener can see the image from only one point of view because the song only cites some parts of Bella Donna. This also involves the technique of metonymy, where only a part of the signified is cited, but through that part listeners then have access via metonymic links to the whole set of signifiers that relate to that part. It is precisely the dislocative effect of the specifics; breasts, jeans, hair, boots, what Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) refer to as "possessive attributes" (49), that provide the respondents here with an opportunity to construct their own complete portrait of Bella Donna, exactly as they have done.

In visual semiotics, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) call this type of viewing "detachment" where the image is presented as "although this person is part of our world, someone like you and me, we nevertheless offer his or her image to

you as an object for dispassionate reflection" (144). The meaning potential in many of this song's signifiers however, guide these respondents' dispassionate reflections towards a perspective that results in this set of visual images.

One respondent's comment of the single word 'now' illuminates how lyric signifiers are also working to direct the visual perspective of the listener-viewers, this time through their spatial positioning, and further promote the girl's image. Starting with the line, "and yes her jeans are tight, now" the grammatical device of deixis is introduced. These are words that can point the listener to a specific place or time. In this case the word 'now' is repeated four times at the end of four consecutive lines, making it so salient that the respondent above comments on that word alone and another says 'too much rhyming'.

The word 'now' has high semiotic modality, which ensures the communication is made more real or definitive. Here, the visual scene is brought to life or made more real for the respondents by enticing them to share the same space and time as the visual action. The respondents then encounter the image in the present, in the here and 'now'. Hence, they are able to say, 'I see a girl', and 'there's a picture of a girl', etc, in the present tense, because they are seeing her 'now'.

There is no mention in the lyrics of *people*, but several responses of, 'people looking at a girl', 'crowd looking' and 'people looking', together with the number of respondents who mentioned imagery, indicate many of them were *watching* Bella Donna. This impression of watching confirms the 'come-on girl' image as a voyeuristic one. One aspect of the image itself, which is suggested by an observation from Middleton (1990), appears to actively encourage the voyeurism. He notes that the voice as we commonly understand its significance, is the profoundest mark of the human and this is because, "[a]n unsounding human body is a rupture in the sensuousness of existence" (262). Since this is a song, the only way Bella Donna could address the listener is through her voice. But, she is given no voice, thus, she is dehumanised. No

direct interactional relationship between Bella Donna and the listener is possible.

By remaining voiceless she cannot detract from her role as mere object of voyeurism and the respondents can safely observe her and offer their opinions of her without the threat of being observed in return. Bella Donna can neither look nor speak back, as Finn (1985) suggests, "[i]n the world of the voyeur, there is no dialogue, no relationship, no speech and no response" (cited in Shepherd, 1987:155). The sensation of voyeurism adds to the already erotically charged ambience of this song and could well have motivated the 'come-on girl' responses.

The sexual implication in the come-on girl' image is supported by two responses of 'sexy' and 'like the Flake advert'. To address these we can look to one semiotic feature active across two modes. It can be observed in how the music and lyrics are separated and given salience (Chapter 2, p71). It happens in the form of a slight pause that serves to separate the sentence, "I got one for you – Portobello Belle", off from the rest of the chorus. The separation makes the line noteworthy and the information it offers the listener is the sexual insinuation implied by the double-entendre, which for some respondents would be unmistakable. To ensure the effect, the voice quality is replete with gutteral innuendo, the singer-narrator himself lasciviously flirting with Portobello Belle's image (see Kruse's comment Chapter 1, p50). This type of intonation then could have encouraged both the 'come-on girl' and the 'sexy' responses.

When the visual mode of photography was introduced, Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) claim that people were fascinated by it and through it they could "participate in the power of de-contextualization, and learn about the power of appearances, of judging people, places and things by what they *look* like" (91, original emphasis). This is exactly what the respondents have done here with their construction of a 'come-on girl' image. Bella Donna's character is denigrated and debased on the grounds of her appearance and other semiotic

features including the sexually suggestive vocalizations encourage the degradation even further.

Different Perspectives

Van Leeuwen (1999) and Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), claim that in the business of meaning-making, it is the ultimate mix of signifiers that matter. In this case, the predominant image of the 'come-on girl' is not allowed to prevail as the only possible interpretation of the song. As the following responses show, each respondent has interacted with the meaning potentials of the semiotic signifiers in various ways. Some respondents have resisted the more dominant image of Bella Donna and as a result its force is counteracted with other images. We can now turn to these other depictions that sketch different images but which nevertheless connect with each other and to the dominant 'come-on girl' caricature in some way.

Eleanor Rigby. Responses of 'solitude', 'alone', 'someone like Eleanor Rigby', 'a woman alone', could have resulted simply because Bella Donna is placed in the visual frame alone. Connected to these is the comment of 'homeless person' which could have been prompted by the lyrics, 'She gotta turn up all her roots, now', which again functions as an indexical sign gesturing towards Bella Donna's immigrant status, she is uprooted, or 'homeless'. If she is 'homeless', she might be on the move, in other words 'travelling', 'walking', and most probably 'alone'. Other responses of 'buskers', 'money cap' 'about a loser' and 'streets of London' (x2), appear to be drawing on discourses that state how the financial status of uprooted people like Bella Donna who often end up 'on the street', gives them a sense of pathetic vulnerability, similar to the loneliness and exclusion of the 'Eleanor Rigby' character.

Eleanor Rigby's plight is therefore a sad one and some responses reflect this sense of sadness by saying 'despite the speed, it sounds sad', 'sad' and 'makes me feel sad', or 'melancholic solo voice'. There is a slight emotional wavering in the singer's voice at the word 'girl', which could suggest the narrator himself (as the 'blind singer' who's 'seen enough') is moved by the scene. Plus,

responses of 'heavy guitar with blues behind it', 'it's weighty', (and the repeated use of the word 'heavy' (x5)), appear to return to the influence of what I have previously described as the heaving of the persistent riff, it is a heavy riff because the stress on the first and third beats is a heavy stress and by metaphoric analogy this feeling of heaviness could add to the respondents' sense of sadness.

Both the 'come-on girl' and the 'Eleanor Rigby' images are supported by the lyrics in the line 'Victoriana's old clothes'. These lyrics colour the environment within the visual frame where Bella Donna is centrally situated as a deprived or second-hand environment. Visualizing her in these 'scruffy' surroundings is part of the conceptual process that helps the respondents to classify her (Chapter 2, p71). First, by her (sexually)-used status, second, by her down-at-heel financial status. They may infer a sense of used goods from her very name, 'Portobello Belle' because the Portobello Road the song describes is a London street with a famous second-hand clothes market which some respondents might have known. It is full of eccentrics and many street musicians, including the well-known 'blind singer' that one respondent mentioned. (Cohen and Greenwood, 1981).

Irish Girl. A separate image of Bella Donna is the 'Irish Girl' image offered by three respondents. Another saw Bella Donna as having 'long, red hair and freckles', perhaps as an outward physical sign of her Irishness. This group of responses reconcile with another group that all mention either the music or the instruments. For instance, 'country' (x2), 'C&W', 'slight country feel', 'folk feel' and 'folky'. Taking all these descriptions with some of the previous ones like 'common girl', 'small feisty girl', and omitting the sexual overtones that lead to the image of the 'come-on girl', leaves the impression of a rustic girl, one without pretensions who simply lacks social graces and big-city elegance and other such discourses regarding people associated with the 'folk or 'country' music genre; especially since some respondents thought the song was 'comfortable', 'easy listening' or had 'nothing offensive'. The 'Irish Girl' responses could also link to the respondents' descriptions of Knopfler's

National guitar as 'a banjo sound', or 'like a mandolin' and 'acoustic guitar'. Even the comment of, 'picked guitar pattern' could fit the sense of country style music that I am grafting onto the Irish girl image.

Traveller. Other respondents offered a different portrayal of Bella Donna. Those who said, 'A girl with a rucksack', 'image of a girl travelling' and 'travelling', and 'scruffy' could simply envisage her as a backpacker. Another who notes a 'road scene' supports this idea.

Rock chick. The rebellious and idiosyncratic nature of the 'rock chick' response could have been prompted by the reinforced riff that from the word *jeans* onward carves a slight sense of defiance into the music, because the beat and the pace of the rhythm reveal this music is neither shy nor timid. In this case, the 'rock chick' image might also cross-reference the 'tough', 'aggressive' and 'feisty' responses.

Story. All these images are assisted in their construction by the song's particular narrative format. For example, six respondents heard the song as a type of 'story' and it does have some stylistic aspects that suggest a story is being told. First, the vocal delivery is in so-called *sprechgesang,* as one respondent said 'the vocals are speaking rather than singing', in other words they are somewhat disjunctive and lack the melodic flow of song; one short line being delivered after another.. This vocal delivery might not be conducive to singing, but it does emphasise the process of narrative because it develops the story line (and images) incrementally. One line builds on another with the same short melodic statement from the guitar between each line acting as a proairetic code, just as the guitar strums do in Song 2 (RJ). Second, Portobello Belle is referred to in the third person which is the way with stories. Third, the song has an omniscient narrator in the form of a 'blind singer' who 'knows'.

However, there is little development in the narrative and the action is all relayed in the present tense, when most stories are identified by their re-telling in the past tense. Therefore the song does not appear to completely fulfil the

criteria for an aural story. Rather, it transpires as a musical and verbal snapshot of a 'road scene' and as such its interpretation relies on exactly the type of visual images all the above responses have supplied.

The different images of Bella Donna from these latter perspectives challenge her former seedier 'come-on girl' image. Interestingly, the seedy image is one that was offered by British respondents only. The significance of this finding is not whether Bella Donna is *meant* to be interpreted as a woman of licentious morals, or some hobo bag lady, or whether any of the respondents got the meaning of the song right, there is no right meaning. The germane point concerns the respondents' knowledge of and use of semiotic codes in all the signifiers in the song as well as their knowledge of the cultural discourses articulated through them. For instance, despite a good command of English, a French respondent understood the song to be about a 'pregnant woman' and the Russian respondent made comments of 'summer' and 'flowers' which were inconsistent with any of the other responses.

Most overseas respondents would not have access to the same cultural discourses inherent in the lyrics of this song, for example 'I got one for you', or 'on the street', etc, which in this context, as the responses show, amount to broadcast semiotic codes for most British respondents. Without access to these discourses, the overseas respondents were not able to grasp certain meaning potentials in the lyrics. Therefore, although the music and other signifiers played a part in creating and strengthening the 'come-on girl' image of Bella Donna, this lack of cultural knowledge may have prevented the non-British respondents, from constructing the same type of portrait.

Finally, some of the evaluative comments and responses regarding taste in this song are somewhat anomalous compared to the other songs and I will address these now.

Evaluating

Out of the six songs, Portobello Belle received the least number of responses (132). And, from these, seven respondents felt they could say nothing about the song and said only 'no comment' or 'no response'. Others appeared to struggle to find anything at all to say about it and responded with the following remarks 'Indifferent to this', 'Nothing', 'Not much response to this', 'Not much to say', 'Not much to say about this', 'Don't know what to make of this'. I would like to explore some of the reasons this song may have caused this apparent reticence in these respondents.

According to Stefani's (1987) criteria for melody (Chapter 1, p41), Portobello Belle is not the type of song that is easy for listeners to singalong with. Unlike some of the other survey songs it has no verbal or musical hooks that make it sound 'catchy'. Further, there is little or no significant musical development, the responses of 'repetitive' and 'monotonous' bear this out.

Until now, a sense of a mood has been the most frequent response to all the songs in the survey, that is to say, respondents have most often reacted to the affective attributes in the songs, which accords with what Cooke (1959) has to say. "[T]hose who have found music expressive of anything at all (the majority of mankind) have found it expressive of emotions (12). However, apart from a few brief comments relating to sadness, there were no other moods reported for this extract. This is not to say that the song is not effective in signifying to the respondents. Some of those who said 'no comment' did go on to make some comments. And, the vivid descriptions given of the girl in so many of the other responses confirm respondents were interpreting this signification.

For many respondents, Portobello Belle was not an appealing song because the evaluations also included distinct expressions of dislike: 'don't really like it', 'I don't like it', 'don't like that' and 'don't like this'. These respondents came to their decisions quickly, for example, the extract was just one minute long but before it ended some respondents had had enough, saying: 'I want to turn this off' and 'I'd push the fast forward'. We might get an indication of what causes

this type of reaction by posing questions like, 'what are the special capabilities *of music for uses that are not made of other media"? (Lull,1987:142). And the* answer might lie in music's specific interactive capacity.

Middleton (1990) indicates the importance of this function when he suggests that in assessing categories of value in a song we can ask whether the phatic function is performing its culturally prescribed task by "...creating solidarity, dulling awareness of everyday problems, constituting a special world (perhaps a liminal one, perhaps one of ecstasy, trance or 'heightened consciousness')? (253)

My suggestion is that the representational dimension of this song is so compelling in signifying images, that it leaves fewer opportunities for listeners to participate or to be gratified by the song in other ways. For example, in the ways in which the respondents in the Music in Daily Life project report on other songs: 'it perks you up', 'it makes you cry' (Chapter 3, p94). Whereas, Portobello Belle's evaluations of 'it doesn't move me', 'this doesn't say much to me' and 'does nothing for me', indicates it did not fulfil this phatic function. And the desire to 'push the fast forward' illustrates that in today's plethora of musical choice how easily songs are dispensed with if they fail to provide this gratifying element.

As a final contribution to understanding these evaluative comments, we can consider the following statement by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001). "To speak of 'meaning' is to recognize openly that something is shared; to speak of 'taste' is to negate this (71). It is possible then that by simply saying 'no comment' or 'I don't like it', without assigning any kind of meaning to the song, that some respondents were distancing themselves from it. Saying, something like: 'It does nothing for me' or 'I want to turn this off', allows them to sidestep interpretation and not openly share in any meaning.

Conclusion

The responses to this song clearly demonstrate the multimodal aspect of song communication, and reveal the respondents' aural and visual experiences as a result of it. The fact that so many respondents formed images of Portobello Belle indicates the song's orientation was persuasively directing the listener-viewer towards the visual perspective. The representational dimension of the song directed them not only to a visual image, but one prevailing image, specifically the 'come-on girl' image. The image was formed from a range of musical, lyrical and other signifiers that appeared to work together and suggest *inter alia* physical actions, an attitude, status, etc, and thereby contribute to the construction of one main image.

But, there was also variability in the responses, particularly that between the predominant image and the less pejorative images of Portobello Belle. Despite the persuasive elements in the song urging one image, some respondents executed the interactive dimension of the communication and were able to construct their own versions of Portobello Belle by viewing her from a different perspective.

There was no overall mood established for this song. It was difficult to sing or dance to, to feel emotional about. Neither was it associated with any particular genre. Respondents did not know it, so there were no memories. On the whole apart from its visual images, it was difficult for respondents to interpret.

The evaluative responses show that as a song, Portobello Belle is not successful. But, the many responses indicating images show that it is nevertheless successful as a semiotic text, which highlights a point made by Kress (1993).

> All texts equally code the ideological positions of their producers. The everyday, innocent and innocuous, the mundane text is as ideologically saturated as a text which wears its ideological constitution overtly. (1993:174).

The ideological message in Portobello Belle sanctions judging people by appearances and may even perpetuate sexist and stereotypical depictions of women, in which case it might reflect some of the typical attitudes prevailing in the 1970s/80s. This fact becomes more significant when we remember what Walser (1993:xiv) had to say about popular culture (Introduction, p1), that it is where most people get their information and entertainment.

Song 5

'Money for Nothing' (MN)

Dire Straits. (1996) [1985]. *Brothers in Arms* (CD)

This extract begins at 0.25 and lasts till 1.33. It includes the second half of the song's long introduction and the first verse. The song presents a factory worker's critique of rock stars and a sardonic attack on MTV, which ironically was the phenomenon that propelled its success.

Now look at them yo-yos that's the way you do it
You play the guitar on the MTV
That ain't wworkin' - that's the way you do it
Money for nothin' and your chicks for free
Now that ain't workin', that's the way you do it
Lemme tell ya, them guys ain't dumb
Maybe get a blister on your little finger
Maybe get a blister on your thumb

'Money for Nothing' was the highest selling single from the 1985 album *Brothers in Arms.* It was released amidst a background of emerging technologies in the popular music field and was therefore able to benefit from advances like CD digital recording, the MIDI system's ability to integrate multiple synthesizers and the advent of the music video and MTV. At that time, it sold more copies than any other single in the UK, USA, Europe and other countries in the world. It is no surprise therefore that 36 out of the 50 respondents were already familiar with the song. Consequently, almost a third of the responses included the personal memories of the respondents, in general these were: 'memories' (x3), 'personal associations', 'brings back memories', 'recognizable', '(very) famous song' (x2), 'very familiar' (x2), 'I know this'. The particular memories are shown throughout the analysis. All the respondents' memories are likely to include features of the whole song that are not necessarily present in this extract.

But, this level of familiarity has a disadvantage. For example, some respondents thought the constant airplay the song received in the 1980s and beyond had interfered with their original perception of it, causing their subsequent evaluations of it to shift. For this reason, many of them found it difficult to appraise the song anew and responded instead with their memories, in the process making responses like, 'I've heard this too much' and 'I've been saturated by this'. This type of reaction effectively illustrates an argument made by Brackett (1995).

> Questions of aesthetic value are intimately linked not only to an individual's song's reception history, but as well to historical shifts in the prestige of various codes articulated by a text; and these shifts may fluctuate inversely to the initial dissemination of a recording, as an initially popular style saturates the musical soundscape, thereby eventually creating a sense of 'overcoding'. (1995, 73).

Notwithstanding the effects of overcoding, the main semiotic features I discuss in relation to the interpretive moves are the issue of perspective and the different ways it is established. To do this, the responses are divided into three main groups. The first reflects how the song's mood is characterized by media technology that advertises its connection to the 1980s, giving it an outdated perspective. The second shows how the perspective that frames the respondents' interpretations is expressed retrospectively. The third is an example of how some features of the song signal a masculine perspective while some respondents unwittingly negate this, and produce their own. First, the mood.

Energetic Mood

Many respondents noted the song's mood as 'energetic', (x3), 'energy' (x2), 'lively', (x4) 'loud', (x3), 'aggressive beat', 'aggressive', 'strong and powerful', 'power', 'authoritative', 'controlled', 'has impact', 'gets emotions and blood running' and 'powerful'. To investigate where they might have derived this sense of 'energy', I begin by examining the introduction from the start of the extract to the point where the lyrics begin (around 1.03).

Once again, the guitar is the instrument respondents mention most frequently in their comments: 'air guitar', (x3), 'guitar priority', 'guitar exploited', 'good guitar', 'stabbing guitar riff', 'sexy guitar lick', 'harsh guitar line' and 'good riffs', and we will see that the guitar is showcased in these first few introductory bars. This particular guitar is a 1984 re-issue of a 1950s Les Paul standard (the same guitar used in Song 1 (BA)), and is renowned for the distorted[1] sounds it can produce. In this song, the distortion creates a fuzzy and unclear timbre that is made more noticeable by the guitar's flamboyant entrance into the song.

Just before the guitar enters at .25, the synthesizer, or as one respondent has it, the 'buzzy synth' plays one long, sustained chord (perhaps the 'simple chords' mentioned) that builds up to a 'loud' crescendo. Over this synth, the guitar enters, plays just three tantalizing notes and then withdraws. What is significant about these notes in terms of 'energy' is that Tagg (1994:online) has noted connections between the sounds of motorbikes and those of distorted guitar. Taken as an example of sonic anaphones then, these three notes could be said to imitate the short sonic bursts made by a motorbike as its throttle revs up and gets ready for action.

However, at this same point, the 'energetic' mood can be attributed to more than the performance of the guitar. For example, by the repeated use of the word 'strong', the respondents have noticed the contribution of 'power' that emanates from the drums: 'strong rhythm', 'a lot of drums', 'good drums', 'stronger accompaniment than melody', 'heavy drum beat' and 'strong drum behind'. In producing these first few notes the guitar is accompanied by the drums and the continuing long chords on the synth. But from .29 onwards, it is the intensifying volume of the drums and synthesizer, together with the drummer's use of the whole drumkit that ostentatiously batters its way into an episodic marker to announce the 12-second solo performance from the guitar

[1] When guitarists refer to 'distortion', they mean what is technically called harmonic distortion. This is what happens when a musical device is asked to create a signal bigger than its capacity to bear it. As the signal becomes too big for the device's boundaries, the top and bottom of the sound get clipped off. This changes the shape of the waveform, and makes it sound 'distorted'. (Derived from mindspring.com. Accessed on 20-3-03).

that follows (.36 to .48). The sense of 'energy' the drums and synth build up is continued in the guitar solo.

Not only does the guitar produce a distorted timbre, but during this 12-second solo, it too plays sustained chords, so that its distinctive timbral quality is prolonged. Walser (1993) explains this sound's connection to 'energy' by claiming that a heavily distorted guitar signal can be held indefinitely with no loss of power. Therefore, because in our everyday experience of the world, we know that to sustain anything takes effort, this distorted guitar timbre together with the sustained chords could be what suggests the sense of 'strong and powerful' the respondents hear "not only through its distorted timbre but also through this temporal display of unflagging capacity for emission" (42).

So we could say the connection to the 'energetic' mood is metaphoric, but, it may also be stylistic because there are many style indicators that point to an 'energetic' or 'powerful' mood through genre synecdoche. First, the rhythm of the extract is produced by the forceful stress on the second and fourth beats, the back-beat, which is also called as one respondent notes the 'rock beat', and leads to another comment of '80s rock'. So the song's 'strong rhythm' on the back-beat is a style indicator of the rock genre. Second, I have already quoted Walser (1993:41) in Chapter 1 (p45) as saying that before any other semiotic features can be established or comprehended, the feature of timbre can immediately signal genre and this guitar's distorted timbre pervades the whole song from the first few seconds. Further, Walser (1993) says that, "[a]nytime this sound [extremely distorted electric guitar] is musically dominant, the song is arguably either metal or hard rock" (41). The salient point is that both heavy metal and rock are two categories of music frequently associated with 'authoritative', 'aggressive' or 'energetic' moods (Frith and McRobbie, 1978).

Another style indicator that adds to the 'energetic' mood is revealed by the responses of 'sexy' (x3), 'sexy guitar lick' and 'raunchy'. The heavy emphasis on the backbeat produces the recurring thrust and withdrawal of the 'stabbing guitar riff', and this together with the general feeling of effort and energy could

recall sexual activity. This 'raunchy' aspect could also arise from the relatively low tones provided by the throbbing bass and dampened drum sounds because Tagg and Collins (2001b) assert that "biologically, low sounds affect lower regions of the body more than higher sounds" (online), so the respondent who says that 'the bass drives you' could refer to the more 'sexy' drive of these low bass and drum sounds.

Finally, the guitar sounds are supplemented with the stylistic device of reverb and according to Walser (1993), this could exaggerate the sense of the music's 'power'. "[R]everb and echo units as well as sophisticated overdubbing techniques...can expand aural space, making the music's power seem to extend indefinitely" (43). All these stylistic effects taken together with the timbre combine to fortify the song's 'energetic' mood.

I will now review some lyric signifiers that follow on from the introduction to investigate their contribution to the same mood.

The 128bpm 'upbeat tempo' sustained by the song also enables what the respondents call its 'fast vocal lines' to have the 'impact' they hear in the song. And this type of vocal delivery complements the sense of the 'rock beat' they also hear in the music. Tagg's (1986) observation that "[t]he dominant character of vocal delivery in rock is one of effort and urgency" (online), can then apply to the lyrics of this song.

The same impression of effort is also recalled in the way some of the words are emphasised. For example, we have already seen in Song 1 (BA) and will see in Song 6 (IB) how sustaining or holding a note or a chord is often tied to expressions of affect. Just as the long synthesizer and guitar chords discussed above resulted in a sense of 'power', the exaggerated delivery of some of these words adds a feeling of effort to its presentation. For example, the pronunciation of the consonant, or semi-vowel sound of /w/ in the word "wwworking" is overstated and drawn out to create a phonetic representation of the concept of work, that is to say, to imitate the physical effort that work

requires. But this is not an emotional affect, it is a stylistic effect articulated by the voice and it gives the song its 'controlled' feel which makes the oral representation of "wwwork" sound deliberate and emphasises the sense of 'energy' that pervades the song. Consequently, the song is not only *about* work, it is a performance *of* work.

Also, the vocals in this song are enunciated clearly and this together with what is heard as their 'fast vocal lines' intone the lyrics with animation (I refer here to Cooke's point in Chapter 1, p49). What could partly contribute to this effect is the slightly higher-pitched and more resonant voice of Sting that joins Knopfler on the third repeat of the words "that's the way you do it". Sting's voice raises what has been heard in other songs as the 'deep' vocal tones of Knopfler's voice and this addition makes the whole song sound (as four respondents noted) more 'lively'.

Overall, the song evinces a comprehensive show of strength by a range of semiotic features that include a 'stabbing guitar riff' with a distorted timbre; loud, sustained and 'simple chords' on the synth; an unrelenting 'strong rhythm'; a 'pulsating bass line' and 'lively' vocals[2]. The way all these features synergize, supplies the persistent 'energetic' mood respondents report in their responses.

The next set of interpretive moves shows how some of the same features that help to create the mood are also responsible for the way respondents make associations with 1980s technology and culture.

Associations

I have already stated that many respondents found it difficult to comment on this song because they had heard it too much, so that for them it has become 'overcoded' in the way Brackett describes on p182. Further, Feld (1994)

[2] These same features generate many responses of: 'Toe-tapping' (x3), 'foot-tapping' (x2), 'definite dancing music', 'movement', 'good dance music', 'makes you want to dance', 'people dancing' and 'I want to dance'. But, I have already discussed the connection between the imperative function of a quick tempo and definitive rhythms with the urge to dance in Song 3 (AM) and there is no need to elaborate further on it here.

maintains that, "[g]iven the possibilities for very redundant codes in music, it is often the case that interpretive action moves elsewhere..." (91). This reasoning explains why the interpretive moves of some respondents are focused on the semiotic features that lead to the song's 'energetic' and 'powerful' mood or on its lyrics that lead to the gist of the song as 'commercialization', 'consumerism', 'easy money', 'rock stars' and 'rock music industry' and also why the responses of others are more concerned with this next group of responses that concentrate on social and cultural factors that surrounded the song at the time of its release.

Rather than categorizing the song by its genre, as they have done with other songs in the survey, that is, as a 'rock song', 'love song' or 'country song', respondents have defined this song more by its era: '80s' (x2), '1985', '80s rock', '80s sound' and '80s song'. In other words, the song is defined less in terms of how it fits into a musical category, and more in terms of how it fits into the culture and practices of a point in time. For example, the responses of 'digital technology', 'new technology' and 'first CDs' (x2), direct the respondents' definitions of the song away from musical features indicating its genre and onto those aspects of it that are associated with its production and development in music reception in general. An observation by Théberge (2001) supports this view.

> Technology is also an environment in which we experience and think about music; it is a set of practices in which we engage in making and listening to musical sounds; and it is an element in the discourses that we use in sharing and evaluating our experiences, defining, in the process, what music is and can be (2001:3).

These '80s' references then refer to the respondents' memories of the song and to the technology with which the song loudly declares its allegiance, including the special use of synthesizer mixing and the distorted guitar sounds that were fashionable in much of 1980s music.

The theatrical style of the introduction may also have prompted one respondent's memory of the 'Live Aid' event as well as a 'rock concert', that is

to say, an event where synthesizers and distorted guitar sounds build up the suspense and excitement in the crowd as they await the star's appearance on stage. The fact that the guitar's arrival into the song is preceded by such a fanfare could signal to listeners that it too possesses star quality and this type of acclaimed presence could help listeners connect it metonymically to Knopfer's renowned guitarist status that circulated as a well-known discourse in the popular music world of '1985'.

This song signifies through technological devices and linguistic effects that are specifically defined and connected to the 1980s, and this could explain why there have been few if any, cover versions of it done by other artists. It is therefore another one-off song that has not developed outside of its original recording. Instead of transforming, it is frozen in its time, like 'Romeo and Juliet' and many other songs typical of the rock genre, one that four of these respondents look back on 'nostalgically'. Its meanings today then are dependent as much on its historical location as on its communicative semiotic features. This sense of nostalgia or retrospective outlook is heightened in the next set of responses.

Video. Although the respondents did not watch the video in the survey, Abt (1987:99) points out that music video has the ability to prompt viewers' recall of specific visual images from memory every time they hear the song. And we can see this view borne out in these responses, even at twenty years distance, each of them referring to the video either generally or specifically: 'The video' (x5), 'MTV' (x5), 'headbands', 'neon colours', 'production line', 'stick figures' and 'virtual reality'. These specific images then are not the type of image that is constructed as part of a visual interpretation of the music, as they were in Song 4. Instead, they are constituted from respondents' memories of what they have already seen in the video, because like 'neon colours', they are all aspects featured within it. So perhaps as Temple (1984) states below, the video is serving as a proxy interpretation.

> A good popular song can mean different things at different times to different people. This kind of social resonance is heavily narrowed down by the imposition of one interpretation through the video which accompanies the release of a single. People tend to think of the video when they hear the song, and the constant process of change, which listening or dancing to music entails, is stopped in its tracks. (Temple, 1984:71, quoted in Abt, 1987:100).

Respondents may be using their memories of this video in the same way that I explained that listeners can use Feld's (1994) 'discourse frames' (Chapter 3, p89), into which to slot their interpretations. Temple's idea that the song and video converge as one semiotic entity and signify from a visual perspective is made clear by one respondent (No. 29), who although he is listening to a song, responds with the remark, 'I know this video'.

Abt's (1987) research shows how music videos are a source of communication for those who buy them as well as an important topic of conversation amongst popular song consumers. "Music videos give record buyers something special to think about and talk about, to visualize, recall and to make 'personal connections' with" (108). And, we saw in Chapter 3, (p88), how talk about songs on TV could influence the reception of them at other times and how audiences make use of TV programmes as a way of repeating and perpetuating some well-known discourses connected with the music and the performers.

In this discursive context, the response of 'virtual reality' reflects one such possible topic of discussion not only for the 1980s but one that enables the video, the song and the Dire Straits group themselves to be discussed from a historical perspective as part of the development and continual reshaping of communication between popular songs and their listeners. It also demonstrates the wider reference frame that listeners interpretations encompass in song reception and the type of social and cultural practices they draw into song communication, just as Brackett (1995), claims. "Interpretation forms in the complex space between codes that may indicate genre, style, dialects, norms, and the 'extramusical' information that circulates about performers" (74).

I now move on to discuss the evaluative interpretive moves respondents made. Through this set of responses, I would like to illustrate one specific gender issue that has been pointed out by Cohen (2001) in the following way.

> Rock music is not male in any fixed or essential way but actively made as male through social practice and ideology, part of a continual process through which a variety of masculine roles and categories are defined, contested and transformed (231).

Evaluations

In a repeat of the findings of the pilot study, many respondents evaluated this song in relation to gender. For example, amongst the evaluations, five respondents (three men and two women) responded unsolicited, that this was: 'male music', 'a guy's song', 'men's talk', 'talking to guys' and 'men's music'. Since two of these responses mention 'talk', we can look to lyric signifiers in order to ascertain what was indicative of this male perspective.

The language in the extract is replete with slang, for example, 'aint', 'lemme tell ya', 'them yoyos', and so on. As discussed in Song 2 (RJ), the vernacular is commonly associated with what is considered as masculine. Also, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1998) note that "[i]t is also generally accepted that vernacular variants function to establish solidarity" (487). In which case, the 'talking to guys' response appears particularly apposite.

The advice the song gives "that's the way you do it, you play the guitar..." to get your "chicks for free" is presumably advice for men. So we can see at a glance the song has an indirect mode of address working through the expressive function. This is one of the semiotic features that provide it with a male perspective. Consequently, rather than addressing women, the song refers to them, (as 'chicks'), and as a retail and sexual commodity because they are to be had "for free". Some related comments from Kruze (1999) confirm that this attitude is typical of music videos of the same era. "In the 1980s, the music videos aired on MTV and other video outlets were notable for the degree to which they objectified women" (92). The culture of the *lad* that was

prominent in the UK in the 1980s may also be responsible for the 'men's talk' and the somewhat sexist attitude prevalent in these lyrics.

Women then, are apparently denied an opportunity for reciprocity or identification with the song. However (as in the case of Song 2), there are another group of responses that complicate this gender issue. Starting with the evaluations of three women who said it was a 'good song' (x2) and 'great' and other responses that reflect respondents' taste with nine women saying: 'I like it' (x2), 'I like this song' (x2), 'I like this' (x2), 'macho, but I like it', 'I love this song' and 'this is my favourite'. Whereas, only three men commented: 'I like this one', 'I like it' and 'I like that song'. There were two negative comments with one man saying 'not a favourite' and a woman saying that it was 'not deep'. Apart from these and in direct contrast to Song 2, it was the women who were effusive in the manner in which they expressed their liking for the song, for example, often expressing their preferences for it ahead of any other response and while making their responses, nudging the female researcher in a show of solidarity of women's taste.

To understand how these preferences arise, we could put the lyrics to one side and consider an observation by Middleton (1990) who claims that separating the lyrics from the music could explain this apparent contradiction. "[I]t is probably the possibility of music/lyric *dis*continuity that explains how some women can hear 'cock rock' as sexually liberating" (238, original emphasis). I should like to posit an alternative view that accounts for the female respondents liking for this song, (similar to the one I advanced in Song 2).

Focusing on differences in language use between men and women and accepting that women may ignore or discount these lyrics in order to like the song, we ignore the semiotic and aesthetic relevance of the communicative functions in the language mode and how these are used to effect (see discussion in Song 2, p140). Deborah Cameron (1998) explains why it is important to consider the type of communicative strategy that language users can employ in a gendered context. "As active producers rather than passive

reproducers of gendered behaviour, men and women may use their awareness of the gendered meanings that attach to particular ways of speaking and acting to produce a variety of effects" (272).

This song is a representation, it represents a 'production line' philosophy about 'rock stars'. It has been compiled by multiple producers, including; writer, recording engineer, record company, performer, and so on. And, their remit as Cameron suggests, is to 'produce a variety of effects' which helps two respondents to hear it as 'catchy'. As an artistic component of the song, the 'guys' talk' is part of its intrinsic character, as was the 'streetsuss' language in Song 2. Moreover, as Middleton (1990) says, "[l]isteners can also enjoy performances with which they are ideologically out of sympathy" (263). It is possible then for both men and women to enjoy the song for its linguistic merit whether approving of its sentiments or not.

Moreover, we have already seen in other songs how the vocalizations of lyrics and their intonation are significant in determining meaning, likewise, it is the disdainful intonation in this song's expressions like "them yoyos" and the vocal 'huh' (at 1.03) that helps to produce the 'critical', 'cynical' and 'mocking attitude' the respondents report. The intonation in the language mode then adds to the song's portrayal of the factory worker who voices these contemptuous opinions by creating this persona for him; the music creates the 'aggressive' mood and the video produces his 'macho' image that complements them. What makes it clear that this is a representation, is that as a song, 'Money for Nothing' refutes the opinions of the factory worker because the 'energetic' performance created by the musicians, dismisses his claim that playing the guitar "aint wwworking".

The respondents that suggest this is 'male music' may be influenced by the fact that they know from their experience of the song that it is produced by an all-male group of musicians. Their responses may also be based upon what they know about the lyrics of other rock genres that conventionally include 'aggressive' or misogynistic attitudes and the discourses that frequently bind

rock music with masculinity (Chapple and Garofalo, 1978, Frith and McRobbie, 1978). Further, they may be aware of the many masculine practices that surround the rock genre.

> [W]hen one considers the many presentations of rock performers by record companies and the media, one notes how this [masculinist] idea is assumed and naturalised. The everyday practices of the music industry thus produce rock as a masculinist tradition. (Leonard, 2000:64).

But, because rock is usually produced and performed by men does not exclude women from enjoying it. The opinions of the female respondents who state 'this is my favourite', etc, fly in the face of these 'male music' opinions and these gendered notions of the music are encouraged by the representational dimension of the song (which is overtly masculine). The female responses of this kind show that female listeners can challenge these 'men's music' notions simply by declaring their preferences for the song. But, the fact that some women respondents offered their opinions abashedly show that preferences that challenge the conventional status quo are still made intrepidly, for example, the woman who noted: 'its macho, but I like it' perhaps believes that she is breaking some socio-cultural taboo on the type of music that women ought not to like. She clearly recognises the masculinist ideology and gender notions the song produces, but refuses to let this representation exclude her from a relationship with the song.

In fact, her response might also be sexual, because the 'I like it' qualifier, might show that she likes it *because* it is 'macho'. Notions of male gender, plus a sense of 'energy' and 'power' and the thrusting guitar licks, also provide a male sexual dimension to the song. This merges with the notions of the female sexuality in responses like the one above. So that during the reception of this song there may be both gender and sexual positions vying for recognition. This appears to be what Frith and McRobbie (1978) are getting at when they say "sexuality is constituted in the very act of consumption" (389).

Finally, Cohen (2001) sums up the results of this group of responses in a way I have been reiterating throughout this thesis, that is, to say, "[m]usical meaning

is not located solely within musical texts but is created through the interaction of listeners with such texts and influenced by the specific listening practices, events and contexts involved" (237).

Conclusion

The majority of respondents had heard this song many times before and their familiarity with hearing it and speaking about it in the past may have influenced what they had to say about it in this instance.

The most repeated type of response was one that referred to the song's mood of 'energy' and 'power' which appeared to be signalled through an amalgam of its timbral qualities, its loudness, its quick tempo and its stylistic features.

Although their memories of the video were strongly evoked, respondents were not confined to the perspectives created by the video images to form their interpretations. For example, the 'stick figure' images remembered from the video did not exhibit the aspects of 'power' and 'energy' the respondents heard in the song, whereas the sounds and styles of the guitar, drums and synth produced by the aural representation did. The video images then cannot be considered influential in the sense of the 'energetic' mood, but if we note what Abt (1987) has to say about how video directors strive to make their videos ..."exotic, powerful, tough, sexy, cool, unique" (103), we can see that the respondents' memories of the video of 'Money for Nothing' ticks most of these boxes.

The evaluations of the 'guy's song' and the responses confirming that more female than male respondents said they liked it, appear to contradict one another and show that popular songs provide an easily accessible platform for men and women where definitions of gender and sexuality can be continually redefined through song reception.

Song 6

'Irish Boy' (IB)

Knopfler, M. (1996) [1984]. *Cal.* (CD, Film Soundtrack).

Irish Boy is an instrumental piece taken from the original soundtrack to the 1984 film, *Cal.* The extract used here begins around the middle of the track at 1.06 and lasts until 2.20.

None of the respondents had heard this music or seen the film before. Nevertheless, Irish Boy led all six extracts in the number of overall salient comments it generated (204). Although the track has no lyrics, the high volume of responses also had strong homogeneity with many respondents using the same word, 'Irish' as a salient comment. In fact all but nine respondents connected the music to something 'Irish' or 'Celtic', making comments like 'leprechauns' and the 'Corrs'. I would therefore like to demonstrate how the semiotic feature of provenance Chapter 2, (p60) is foregrounded in all this song's signifiers and how its influence is manifest in most of the respondents' interpretive moves that form one overarching 'Irish' discourse. Because provenance is not a systematized mode of communication, it is expressed and interpreted in many different ways but its influence has given substance to the notion of 'Irish' through three main areas that I will discuss under the headings of Genre, Imagery and Mood.

Genre

A striking number of respondents (22) offered an identical one-word description of the music: 'Irish', one saying 'totally Irish'. Also, this word was frequently the first word respondents used, making the description of the music unambiguous. As well as 'Irish', there were comments of 'Celtic' (x10), 'Gaelic' (x2), 'traditional' (x2), 'folk', 'modern folk', 'very folky' and 'ethnic'. We can see then that in relation to a music genre, the respondents make connections between terms like 'Celtic', 'Irish' and 'folk'. The extent of agreement on these genres is what I will investigate first, especially the

relation between the terms; how the song might have signified them and how they are all associated with the 'Irish' discourse.

Chapman (1994), finds it hard to defend the existence of a genre called 'Celtic' on musical grounds because he believes the social practices behind the term are somewhat fictitious. He maintains that other than enthusiastic outsiders, there is a scarcity of real people involved in the production of so-called 'Celtic' music. He argues that the "Celts in a British context, simply form the largest regiment in the phantom army of 'folk' who are the notional makers of 'folk' music" (42). Likewise, Dorson (1968) has said that the only social context for 'folk' or 'Celtic' music today is the recording studio, media performances or specialist gatherings.

> 'Folk' music now exists, as a genre, recorded, performed, published, sung and listened to, in the nearly complete absence of any 'folk' to provide the full social context that once (in whatever arguable and murky sense) might have existed; ...'Celtic' music is going the same way, and has always been closely related to 'folk' music in these respects. (1968: cited in Chapman, 1994:42).

The notion of a contemporary rural community making music in a tradition associated with the 'Celtic' or 'folk' genres then, is built more on sentiment than reality. However, although this music may signify a long-lost putative 'folk' or 'Celtic' lifestyle, its 'Irish' dimension means it is neither quaint nor unusual music. In fact, by its very familiarity across all the respondents' cultures and according to Toynbee's (2000) definition of the term, it could be considered as "mainstream" music. "A mainstream is a formation that brings together large numbers of people from diverse social groups and across large geographical areas in common affiliation to a musical style" (150). This is exactly the effect such music has on these respondents. In semiotic terms it is their recognition of the 'Irish' provenance that affiliates them.

The same sense of provenance also provides a way of connecting the 'Celtic', 'ethnic' and 'Irish' dimensions together in the following way. Until now, we have seen how for some listeners, song lyrics or dancing can provide an entry point into the music, a way of participating with it. In this case, the notion of

provenance provides another way in for listeners, another way of participating. This time, the participation is not only with the music, provenance provides a means of participating in the lifestyle or culture the music represents by signifying these 'Irish' and 'ethnic' concepts respondents recognize. For instance, Chapman (1994) believes that 'traditional' music "...provides an entry into practices and sentiments of ethnic belonging" (36). Similarly, Frith (1987b) maintains that in London's Irish pubs "...'traditional' Irish folk songs are still the most powerful way to make people feel Irish and consider what their 'Irishness' means" (141).

And these suggestions obtain whether the person is 'Irish' or has any connections with Ireland or not. The 'Irish' genre is one that attracts large audiences worldwide. With 'Irish' pubs in almost every large city in the world, 'Irish' music can belong to anybody, anywhere. As Ballinger (1999) says, "[r]ather than the politics of music being strongly associated with a place, racial identity, or national origin, music once associated with distinct places is being taken up by musicians and audiences in many locations – and for many different reasons" (65). And one of the reasons that 'Irish' music might be taken up in this way may be as a link to these 'Celtic' or 'folk' traditions.

In the right circumstances and context and, by the consumption of these 'Irish' symbolic products e.g, in an 'Irish' pub listening to 'Irish' songs, the listener can participate in the song's 'Irish' identity. We could say then in this case, the song appropriates the person and this shows (as we saw in Song 2, RJ), how songs not only become transformed by their use in social practice but how they can exert a degree of transformation on their listeners.

Having looked at the link between the genre terms, I can now examine some musical features of the track that might have encouraged the respondents to produce their 'Irish' responses.

Instruments. Although there is no flute on the track, ten respondents said 'flute', as well as 'predominant flute' 'I like the flute' and 'flute-like

instrument'. Two identified the instrument as a 'penny whistle' while another said 'whistle'. Four respondents said 'pan pipes' and another six simply noted 'pipes'. The instrument they all refer to is the penny whistle (known in Ireland as a tin whistle), and frequently used in Irish traditional music[1]. In fact, all types of whistles and flutes are commonly used within the Irish music tradition, so they could be said to be representative of it. This fact alone then, explains the numerous comments of 'Irish' to describe this music.

However, for the majority of respondents who are ordinary listeners, that is, not musicians, or with particular experience in music, the timbres of the whistle, the flute and the pan pipes are close enough for them to hear them as one in the same instrument, so that 'flute' and 'pan pipes' are apt and plausible responses to this musical sound.

The reason the whistle is more noticeable than the other instruments is because the channelling effect of the mixing desk has isolated its audio signal from the other instruments and made it louder and thus a more salient signifier. This has created an aural hierarchy where the whistle can stand out against the surrounding music. Because it has this prominence and because it is the instrument expressing the main melody, this makes it likely that the perspective from which listeners judge the song will be that indicated by the whistle. Consequently, being the most pervasive instrument on the track, any meanings the respondents assign to the track are likely to be significantly influenced by the whistle's performance.

The foregrounding position that separates the whistle in this way draws attention to its materiality. It is one particular aspect of this materiality that respondents have grasped and made a common denominator. This can be seen in the comments of 'a bit chilling', 'haunting', 'airy' and 'wistful'. It is therefore the way the whistle communicates as a medium, that is, the sonic qualities in its distinct timbre that evokes this ethereal or other-worldly feel the respondents observe.

[1] Information provided by tinet.ie and geocities.com. Accessed on 17-4-02

There is also a set of uilleann pipes played on the track. These are native to Ireland and like the whistle, the flute and pan pipes, they have a long association with traditional Irish music[2]. The uilleann pipe sound is somewhat different from the sound of the Highland bagpipes; their timbre is not quite as shrill. Further, the uilleann pipes are usually played indoors in a sitting position with a bag attached to one arm and inflated with bellows, (hence the name uilleann, meaning 'elbow' in Irish Gaelic). On the track they are positioned very far back in the recording mix. If any of the respondents had been familiar with them, it would be possible to recognize them, but being this faint, it is doubtful that any respondent would have enough experience or knowledge of this medium to identify it accurately, especially when they only heard one brief section of the music.

It is possible therefore that the four respondents who said 'pipes' actually meant the type of 'pan pipes' referred to by other respondents, which corresponds more closely to the timbre of the whistle and not these uilleann pipes. This is not to deny that the sound of these pipes influenced even at a non-salient or subliminal level, the 'Irish' feel of the music. Further, two respondents said 'flute and pipes beautiful' and 'I like the pipes and flute' which suggests at least two of them were able to distinguish both instruments.

Although most respondents do not identify the penny whistle precisely, the names they give are all correctly identified as wind instruments that have an association with 'traditional' music. For instance, one respondent said, 'don't know the instruments' but was able to distinguish the music as 'Gaelic'. This shows that the knowledge of the instruments they are relying upon is knowledge of how the instruments sound and what these sounds mean, as the next set of comments indicate: 'Irish sound', 'sounds Irish', 'Celtic sound', 'pipe sounds' and 'Irish sounding'. It is therefore the timbres of the media, especially that heard in the whistle (perhaps supported by the distinct but

[2] Aniar.com. Access on 13-03-02

distant timbre of the uilleann pipes) that helps respondents to identify the 'Irish' genre.

I would now like to discuss, perhaps as another aspect of 'adequate listening', the expectations that listeners have of the instruments they are likely to hear in relation to the implied 'Irish' genre. Frith (1987) has suggested that certain instruments can be immediately associated with geographical locations. "Accordians played a certain way mean France, bamboo flutes, China..." (148). The respondents might then think that certain instruments are playing this 'Irish' music. I show below some salient comments that highlight how the presence of some instruments on this track might have encouraged these expectations.

One respondent thought he heard a 'violin', but there is no violin in this excerpt. However, we can understand why this type of response is made if we consider Chapman's (1994) suggestion that "[a]n unlikely combination of banjo, penny whistle, violin and acoustic guitar has come to seem for many, to characterise Irish 'traditional' music" (38). This point shows that once listeners identify the genre as 'Irish' they might then anticipate certain instruments to be present. Therefore, as the respondents have noted the predominant presence of the 'penny whistle', this recognition might create their expectations of the presence of other instruments. There are connections here with responses to Song 3 (AM), where some respondents anticipated certain 'country' lyrics because the music genre was identified as 'country'. A clearer indication of this idea is shown in several other comments.

Although the Polish respondent (No.29) identified the music as 'Irish', he also thought he heard a 'kobza'. The kobza is a fretted stringed instrument, made of wood and played with a plectrum. It was a favourite instrument of the Ukrainian Cossacks where it was widely played by the rural populations. It remains familiar as a folk instrument in the Balkan regions and has historical associations with rural or folk music, but has now been replaced

with the guitar or mandolin[3]. The fact that the kobza has associations with traditional, rural or folk music means it fits well with the array of traditional instruments mentioned. Nevertheless, there is no kobza on the track, the only stringed instrument is the guitar. But, this respondent's knowledge about the type of instruments he usually hears producing 'traditional' music, might have encouraged him to expect to hear a kobza.

And identifying the instruments present, may also encourage expectations of what instruments are not present. For example, the music teacher (No. 12) heard a 'progressively heavier beat', and one musically-experienced respondent said 'I didn't like the drums in the middle'. But, these are the only two respondents who mentioned the drums. This is unusual because the drums are fairly loud and foregrounded; after the penny whistle, they are probably the loudest and most salient musical element on the track. Throughout the extract, the snare drum is continually hit, and at 1.55, the tom-tom and snare provide a drum fill that is especially loud. But, percussive instruments like drums are not within the combination of traditional 'Irish' instruments outlined above and this could be why their significance is not reflected in the responses as much as the 'flute' or 'pipes', they are not anticipated to be in this classification of 'Irish' instruments and therefore go almost unnoticed.

The guitar provides a final example of listeners' expectations. It acts as accompaniment to the whistle all the way through, and now and again, for example at 1.28 it has fleeting prominence. But, this is an electric guitar, and it has neither the acoustic or banjo sound that Chapman states are indicative of 'Irish' music. Therefore, despite its presence, this is the only extract out of the six where the electric guitar (and Knopfler's famous guitar playing) although in places clearly audible, was not mentioned at all. We could say then that respondents who immediately identified the genre and employed an 'adequate listening' strategy were influenced in their

[3] Home.att.net Accessed on 12-3-02

expectations of what instruments they did hear and what instruments they did not hear.

We can now turn to examine whether the musical arrangements or the styles in which the instruments are played could also contribute to the 'Irish' genre.

Styles. Tagg (1989) asserts that "certain aspects of musical melody and stylistic aspects used with film or televisual material include their own semiotic effects, even if they are heard in isolation" (online). One of the aspects Tagg cites is the pentatonic scale, which is the scale used on this track. He notes that the pentatonic scale is typical of folk or Celtic music. Most respondents would not have enough knowledge of music to name this scale, but just as they have done with the instruments, having heard it played at other times, they may recognise this particular arrangement of sounds experientially.

Another stylistic effect is the little decorative semiquaver triplets played by the whistle shown by the arrows in Figure 11. These too are idiomatically Irish (Tagg, 1995:online). They are played in quick succession and give the music the special kind of ornamentation that helps the respondents associate it to the predominant 'Irish' genre.

Figure 11

Where a track has no lyrics like this one, such stylistic features are crucial in suggesting the music's genre along with all the associations to that genre these features make available to the listener. And the more often these features are used and recognized, the more integrated signifier and signified become. As Terence Hawkes (1977) has suggested, it is our common sense

that leads us to routinely identify sign and thing, representation with what it represents.

> Saussure points out that native speakers tend to assume a necessary 'fitness', an unquestionable 'identity' between signifier and signified, between 'the sound image' made by the word 'tree' and the concept of an actual tree. This assumption is the basis of language's aesthetic function (1977:70).

The 'Irish' assumptions made by the respondents here may also be based on an aesthetic function but, in this instance, it is the aesthetics of the music, that is, the timbre of the instruments; as well as the musical scale and the semiquaver triplets played by the whistle that are so conventionally established in what they signify that this sonic arrangement and its 'Irish' meaning are almost inseparable, like the word *tree* and its concept.

Other instruments inserted stylistic markers too, but did so in support of a different style. For example, in the final section of the track from 1.56 to the end, the melodic pattern is the same as it is in the opening section from 1.06 to 1.28, but here, the drums are no longer confined to their former quieter rim taps. From 1.56 onwards they contemporise the traditional feel of the music by injecting into it a more noticeable and stronger beat reminiscent of rock. At the same time, where in the first section up till 1.28, the presence of the whistle and pipes have reinforced the tune's Celticness, at that point, the guitar momentarily increases in loudness and makes a transitory change in positioning from background to foreground so injecting a degree of electrification into the track's overall timbre. These two changes in style hinted at by the guitar and plainly declared by the drums form episodic markers, musical gestures that indicate the music is about to change course and this at once nudges the style across the genre border from what was heard as 'traditional' and 'folk' into what is also heard as 'modern folk'.

On the whole we can see that it has been the complement of instruments along with the stylistic effects of the melody that cohere to form the song's textual function, one that continually articulates the overall 'Irish' discourse. To confirm this, we can undertake what Tagg (1999:38) calls a 'hypothetical

substitution' using just one element of the textual function. For instance, if we imagine a trombone instead of a 'penny whistle', even if it were to play the same melody with the same stylistic features, it could be argued that the immediate effect for ordinary listeners would be that the notion of Irishness would shatter. The substitution would reveal the influence of the whistle's timbre and reaffirm its conventionality in signalling 'Irish' music.

Imagery

Some respondents accurately described the music as 'film music' (x3), 'film or TV track', 'film' and specifically 'end of film', and 'end of a movie'. Although the extract comes from part of a film soundtrack, none of the respondents knew this before they heard the music in the survey. Nevertheless, these six responses correctly identify the track's connection with a film. The question is, how did they know? The answer is partly indicated in the one-word comments from another five respondents who merely mention 'Titanic' (meaning the 1997 film of the same name). The answer then is that the respondents' experiences of Hollywood films may have taught them to connect certain images and events with certain musical structures. Tagg (1982b) explains the phenomenon.

> Time and time again the average listener/viewer has heard particular sorts of music in conjunction with particular sorts of visual message. Thanks to this repeated audiovisual learning process, the listener/viewer has acquired sufficient codal competence to connect certain musical structures with certain paramusical fields of association..."(1982b: online).

Additionally, the film 'Titanic' shares several similarities with the music on this track. First, one of its protagonists was an Irishman; and the music on its soundtrack used the pentatonic scale; it also used a 'flute-like instrument' producing similar timbres to play the main melody and ornamented with similar stylistic markers of Irishness like the semiquaver triple notes in Figure 10. So, as the 'Titanic' comments show, most of the respondents have probably heard music exhibiting these features tied to images of Irishness many times before. And these stylistic features work like 'genre synecdoche' alluding to other music and other 'Irish' connections.

The music is also as one respondent noticed, 'like an advert'. In other words, she recognises that this is the sort of music that could accompany a piece of persuasive film music.

In a film, the visual object is usually viewed at the same time as the soundtrack is heard, allowing the signified to be defined synchronously by both image and musical sound. However, on a record where there is only music, before a scene can be visualized, the listener must wait until it has been painted by the music as it unfolds in time, each note providing a context for the next. Halliday (1994) explains how this process takes place.

> [W]hen one is listening, the text reaches one dynamically: it happens, by travelling through the air. So the listener is predisposed to take a dynamic view of what it means; behind it is a film, not a picture. (1994:66).

In songs without lyrics then, where the music alone directs the listener to visual scenes, what is envisaged cannot be as localized or definitive as those we saw constructed by respondents in Song 4, (PB) with the help of the lyrics. There, the modes of language and vocals were able to point the listener to a person in one place and at one time. Whereas, here, although these respondents are quite definite about the provenance of the music, at the same time, they allude to a wide range of 'scenic' concepts that include general phenomena: 'water' (x2), 'open spaces', 'landscapes', 'countryside', 'fields', 'lakes', 'desert', 'sand, 'sea', 'blue sky', 'birds', 'misty hills', 'mist', 'grey mist', 'sea and sun'. But the scenes become more closely associated with Ireland by the specificity of the colour green in the following comments: 'green' (x3), green fields' (x2), 'green hills (x2).

What helps the respondents construct these images is a feature we saw in Song 1 (BA). When long slow notes such as those produced by the whistle all the way through this track are coupled with abundant reverb and the pitch moves up and away as if rippling outwards, the effect is to further elongate the sounds. Here, that same technique triggers images of expanse and an 'open space' feel of nature and helps the respondents to recall general and

diverse nature scenes like these. This is the type of connection Tagg (2000) discusses in his analysis of *Fernando the Flute.*

> Sustained chords played in slow or senza misura tempo are often used in film and television contexts to conjure up a general feeling of calm in large open spaces, but they need to be combined with some sort of 'ethnic' melody instrument if the folksy character of these large outdoor spaces is to be established at the same time. (2000:online).

The 'folksy character' of this music has already been confirmed by the earlier responses.

Moving from general images to more definitive ones, I want to look closely at how this next set have been evoked and how they are invested with the prevailing 'Irish' discourse (even though it is only implied). Cooke (1959) suggests that music can represent physical objects "by the symbolization of a purely visual thing, such as lightning, clouds or mountains, using sounds which have an effect on the ear similar to that which the appearance of the object has on the eye" (3). If the music on this track simulated visuals in the way Cooke describes, the abundance of responses that mention, 'mountains' (x6), 'rolling hills' (x6), 'highlands' (x3), 'hills (x4), 'cliffs' (x2) and ' 'rural hills', should have been the result of big, imposing or loud sounds. But, this music does not imitate visual objects in this way.

These responses then are not. connected to sonic representations in this metaphoric sense, although the undulating melody could be related in the sense of Tagg's (1999) concept of kinetic anaphones where the sound can be conceived as subjectivised movement of stationary objects "...the sort of movement the human hand makes when outlining rolling hills (pastoral undulation) gentle waves on the sea..." (25). It is more likely these responses indicate the visual links respondents make are formed on an associative level through their discursive knowledge and through provenance, that is, what respondents think they know about the 'Irish' and 'Celtic' places where these sounds originate. The connection is made even clearer in the large number of

comments that mention: 'Ireland' (x11), or 'Scotland' (x7) and the one Spanish respondent (No.16) who mentioned 'Galicia'.

One aspect these three regions share is their topography. Galicia is the Celtic region of Spain also known as 'green Spain' and it is characterised by 'rolling mountains'[6]. Ireland is often confused with Scotland because of their 'Celtic' and 'Gaelic' connections and their similar 'scenic' landscapes. It is what the respondents know about, or think they know about, these three places then, that transfigures these undulating sounds into images of 'rolling hills' that respondents know or assume are indigenous to these areas.

Mood

If we look again at the same section of music (from 1.06 to 1.28) shown in Figure 11, (now Figure 12 below) we can see that these same long, slow notes produce another effect, a musical atmosphere, or a mood that is heard in comments of 'longing', 'yearning' and 'pining'. Van Leeuwen (1999) explains that in Western music, a return to the tonic is a means for providing a sense of closure (98). In this section two out of three of the melodic lines are left harmonically open, that is they do not resolve to the tonic key. We can see from the illustration that the melody ascends in a similar pattern four times. The first time it goes up, it finishes on B at 1.11 but although it partly resolves here, (B is a key in the G major chord), the impression is that it sounds unfinished and some tension remains. In its second ascent, it stops on an A at 1.15-16 and here there is no sense of resolution at all. The third rise is a repeat of the first where at 1.22 the melody only partly resolves. Only in the last bar at 1.28, the melody comes to rest on G, the tonic, and this brings a sense of closure to the whole piece.

[6] www.tourspain.es (visited 12-3-02)

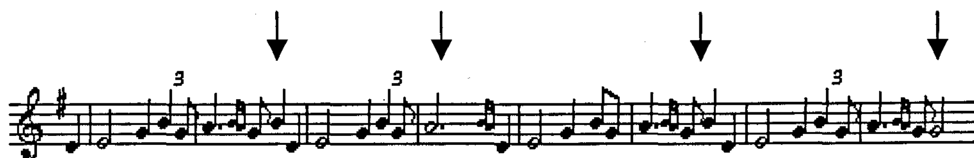

Figure 12

The fact that the main melody repeatedly reaches up and out in this way without resolving entices listeners to hear a sense of unfulfilment and this could give rise to the set of 'longing' responses. And this mood is heightened by other four comments that assign a 'nostalgic' ambience to the music, possibly enhanced by the 'scenic' and 'countryside' comments. Tagg (1982b) provides an historical context and possible reasons why people would feel nostalgic about this type of 'traditional' music.

> It was during the process of industrialisation that rural music 'naturally' lost its viability, as it was stripped of its relevant social functions and cultural context and ultimately left as a bare skeleton of sound structures capable of connoting little more than a general feeling of 'rurality', 'old times', 'lost innocence' (the sort of music 'we once had' and 'they still have' in the country). (1982b:online).

And this 'nostalgia' can also relate back to the notion of authenticity implicit in the 'Celtic' and 'folk' concepts. But, these same long, slow notes that conjure up a wide-open space feel may also be conducive to a meditative mood because they provide a large simulated space onto which to project one's 'pensive' thoughts and 'longings' and by creating such an introspective atmosphere, they result in comments of: 'relaxing' (x5), 'mellow' (x2), 'nice' (x2), 'peaceful', 'calm', 'tranquillity', 'nice music', 'quiet', 'laid back', 'nice and slow', 'sedate' 'simple', and 'looks inward'. However, according to Tagg's (1982b) observations below, it seems that this type of response from music that signifies nature in this way is only to be expected. "[W]e are still presented with outmoded stereotypes of musical misapprehension which

pound the same old emotional attitudes and patterns of behaviour into our heads ...that nature is peaceful, pastoral, ethnic or scenic" (online).

There are a further three comments that relate to this 'relaxing' mood. These are 'a dream', 'dreamy' and 'dreaming'. Stefani and Marconi (1992) have characterised the state of dreaming structurally in such musical terms as "slow movement" and "smooth articulation" with an "arched or waved pitch profile" scanning a large range, and phrase lengths well in excess of normal breathing (quoted in Tagg, 2003:online). All of these musical features can be observed in the musical phrase shown in Figure 12 that continues for 22 seconds without resolving (the average musical phrase lasting between two and ten seconds).

Also, the two authors have noted similarities with these characteristics and those of, "soft focus, large spaces; fluid gestures..." (quoted in Tagg, 2003:online). Again, we can see parallels between these features and those in this track, for example, two respondents heard the music as 'soft'. The 'soft' comments may come about due to the presence of the uilleann pipes. This is because although they can be heard, they are very far off and only just audible. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) maintain that an awareness of reality is usually clear, defined and in the foreground. Conversely, our perceptions of what is distant are usually associated with soft, blurred, background images, as in a fantasy (164). And, the faint sound of the pipes provides this type of 'soft' and 'dreamy' background. Consequently they also conjure a sense of 'nostalgia' for that which is distant, somewhat unclear or half-remembered as in 'a dream'.

I stated in Chapter 2 (p61) that when provenance is signified, it is never neutral, it is always invested with value. And we can see that this group of mood responses related to the nature images are all positive, that is, no one mentions any negative aspects of nature. As Tagg (1982b) observes, "[m]ood music collections seem to paint an overwhelmingly positive sonic picture of nature" (online). Further, this positive 'mood music' and the 'scenic' images

of nature that enhance it are so closely allied that they appear as unmediated, that is, they appear to signify the good and the positive *naturally.*

Hollywood may be partly responsible for the general impression that the country of 'Ireland' is bathed in a mood that is 'peaceful and 'relaxing', and every time they present this type of music along with positive and 'tranquil' images of Ireland, this discourse is reinforced and perpetuated. As a result of listeners' frequent exposure to this music and these images as one signified, the notion of a 'peaceful' Ireland has become entrenched in the collective Western psyche in a way which John Tagg (1988) has observed. (The Hawke passage I quoted above (p203) makes a similar point in relation to linguistic signifiers.)

> The signifier is treated as if it were identical with a pre-existent signified and... the reader's role is purely that of a consumer. Signifier and signified appear not only to unite, but the signifier seems to become transparent so that the concept seems to present itself, and the arbitrary sign is naturalized by a spurious identity between reference and referents, between the text and the world. (1988: 99, cited in Chandler, 2003: online).

This uniform agreement in identifying the predominantly positive aspects of the mood may be almost predictable in light of the music's stylistic features. And the extent of the mood's predictability may be justified on the grounds of the music's commercial viability because Tagg (1982b) claims that for mood music to be unequivocal and immediately identifiable, it must contain only standardised musical conventions, otherwise it would be unable to perform its main function. "[S]ince 'Musik Schnell gefunden' is one of the mood music companies' main selling arguments, 'interesting ambiguities' are out of the question"(online).

However, despite the music's orientation towards a positive perspective, some respondents have taken advantage of the subjective element in metaphorical conceptualizing and also identified a darker mood in the music. In this way, some of them have identified the Ireland that is actually depicted in the narrative of the film, that is to say, the country epitomized by Northern

Ireland's beleaguered and troubled streets or the disquiet in the heart of the 'Irish Boy', which was a predominant theme of the film. This different mood is found in the heavier or negative comments of 'sad', 'lament', 'mournful', 'sad quality', 'sad story', 'melancholic', 'bit depressing'. Here then is a hint of a different version of the 'Irish' discourse, one that is more in keeping with the story the film told. To estimate how this mood is generated, we can consider Figure 12 once more.

The whistle's repeated surges upward and outward could also be perceived metaphorically as escapes. This is especially true considering Middleton's (1990) observation that, "[a]n instrumental or vocal solo will usually be heard as an 'I'... "(238). And, if the whistle is a surrogate Irish Boy, then he fails in his attempts to escape his confinement because time and time again the whistle falls back down to the pitch level of the other instruments and comes to rest where it started. This musical representation of repeated failure to reach a goal could be conceived as a 'sad' mood.

Conclusion

The high consistency in the responses shows the degree to which a group of respondents with diverse social backgrounds, nationalities and musical experiences are agreed on musical representations of Irishness. In some cases this could be as Frith (1996) maintains that "...virtually all instrumental music has some sort of associated verbal description, even if only in its title" (108). This track certainly has a descriptive title that supports the narrative and images in the film but the respondents were not aware of this when they heard the music. Further, it was heard divorced from its original context. Yet, these respondents were still able to clearly identify it as 'Irish', and 'film music'.

They were able to do this because the music consisted of a certain group of instruments and styles and these opened a gateway to a globally pervasive

'Irish' discourse that respondents understood. These responses then confirm the existence of 'Irish' music as a genre or style and they confirm this music as typical of it.

The 'Irish' discourse depicted in the responses is an exaggerated version of the country of Ireland and its culture, one that incorporates even the tragic incident of the 'Titanic', making the representation almost a caricature. Nevertheless, this is an agreed identity, a version of Irishness that from Indonesia to Portugal has been de-coded and understood, confirming how signifiers like the semiquaver triplets shout out their signified.

The 'scenic' visual images of nature the respondents interpreted from the music, act like respondents' confirmation to themselves of what they know and understand of 'Ireland'. Since there was no dissent from these opinions, the modality of the song was therefore high, the respondents were convinced; this is how things really are, almost as if the country of Ireland itself is the composer of this music. Even without the mode of language, respondents were able to interpret definitive scenes and landscapes, even the colour green, through the mode of music alone. This highlights the extent of the social and cultural influence of the discourses they brought with them to the reception process.

But, this music does not *mean* 'Irish' any more than it means 'green', otherwise we could argue that it means 'kobza' or 'rolling hills'. The 'Irish' and 'green' meanings are attributed to it by the respondents' from their engagement with the meaning potential in the semiotic features in the music; from how they have compared and contrasted the information articulated by the song with what they know about Irishness and its connections to the colour green.

End Discussion

The six separate case studies have each dealt with responses to a particular song-extract. As I explained in the Introduction to Part II, in general, the analysis of the responses was organized so that certain groups of comments aligned to certain semiotic features in the song in question. However, sometimes, respondents made the same comments about different songs, for example comments about the singer's voice cropped up in four of the songs. Some of these comments are dealt with specifically in individual case studies, but here I would like to give a general overview of these comments and the patterns of responding that emerge from them. It is to this discussion that I now turn.

A typical response pattern was for respondents with musical experience to comment on the overall signature style of the Dire Straits group across the six songs. For example, Song 1 (BA) was thought to be 'typical Knopfler', while Song 2 (RJ) was heard as 'DS formula' and 'related to BA'. And even though all the respondents said they had not heard them before the survey, Song 3 (AM) was recognized as having a 'DS sound' and 'typical DS' and Song 4 (PB) was heard as 'standard DS'. Respondents were also able to relate the music to other artists they associated with similar styles or genres. In Song 1 (BA) and Song 4 (PB), the artist was 'Dylan'; in Song 2 (RJ) it was 'Tom Petty' and 'Springsteen'; in Song 6 (IB) it was the 'Corrs'.

Many respondents with a variety of musical backgrounds commented on elements of the same styles or genres that ran through different songs. Respondent No. 48, said that Song 5 (MN), was 'Identifiable with DS' and one of the older respondents (No. 37 in the 70s age group) with no particular experience in listening or making music, thought that Song 4 (PB), 'sounds like the others'. But more definitively, they named aspects of style common to different songs in the following ways.

It was in Song 3 (AM) that many respondents heard a predominantly 'country' style related to 'cowboys' and the 'West', but they also related other song-extracts to this style. Song 1 (BA) was identified as 'Spaghetti Western', 'Country & Western' and 'cowboy'; three respondents thought the

style of Song 2 (RJ) was 'Country & Western'; and in Song 4 (PB), the same style is reflected in responses like 'country', 'Country & Western', and 'slight country feel'. They also commented on an aspect of a 'folk' style they heard over all the songs except Song 5 (MN). The style was sometimes named as 'folk', or 'slightly folky', a 'folk-type song' or in the case of Song 6 (IB), it was 'very folky'.

All categories of respondents then, whether they had any particular experience of music or not, were able to identify aspects of style, structure or shared compositional or performance characteristics over these six songs.

Guitar. They also typically picked out certain instruments in the six songs in particular, (in five songs) they commented on the guitar and how it was played. Comments like: 'good guitar', 'great guitaring', 'skilled guitar', and so on were given to every song except Song 6 (IB). The respondents might have been swayed in these evaluative comments by their knowledge of the well-known discourse about Knopfler that suggests he is a 'great' guitarist. But, the fact that the guitar is commented upon so much may also be due to the recording techniques that place it in the aural foreground of the recording mix so that in all five songs it is the most salient or noticeable instrument. This core positioning is commented upon by some of the more musically-experienced listeners who say that the guitar is 'exploited, or 'given priority' or 'at the forefront', and so on.

Busking. Related to style, is the notion of 'busking' which was common to Song 2 (RJ) ('busker' (x2), 'busking', and 'reminds me of a busker'), and Song 4 (PB) ('buskers'). These two songs foreground guitar-playing and singing with the presence of any other instruments backgrounded, making the song sound as though it is performed by one man with a guitar. These responses might be encouraged by the mention in the lyrics in Song 2 of "street-suss", "street light" and in Song 4 of 'High Street'. We could argue that the presence of man and guitar coupled with mentions of 'streets' creates a certain visual backdrop, where both the soundscape and the images of street musicians or buskers are appropriate.

Both of these songs also have a strong narrative element. Song 4 (PB) had six different comments mentioning 'story' and Song 2 (RJ) had seven similar comments like: 'story-teller', 'this is a story' and so on. Song 2 is where Romeo apparently "made [up]" the song on the spot. This is akin to practices typical of the oral tradition, where entertaining stories are composed *in situ* with formulaic rhyming and rhythmic devices that facilitate their recall so they can be performed in public (Lord, 1960). This same practice of telling stories in public as songs has been handed down through generations from the ancient rhapsodes, minstrels and troubadours, to its modern 'busking' version.

Provenance. I have already discussed the concept of provenance in Chapter 2 and then showed how it related in particular to Song 6 (IB). But in other songs too, there was a tendency for respondents to comment upon the place they thought the music originated, even though the identity of the place was not always unanimously agreed. For example, the Greek respondent heard Song 4 (PB) as 'American' whereas a Canadian respondent heard it as 'English'. Song 5 (MN) communicated 'American stars and stripes' to the respondent from New Zealand and 'America' to a British respondent, whereas, the same song is identified as 'European' and 'British' by the Russian respondent. Song 2 (RJ) reminded the Greek respondent of 'Italy', and the Maori respondent of the 'USA'. Even the predominantly agreed 'Ireland' in Song 6, (IB) was also heard as 'Scotland'.

Of course many of these responses might also refer to the singer's use of language and accent. As we saw in Song 3 (AM), the singer's adopted Southern USA accent was an influential aspect in determining the song's 'country' genre. Trudgill (1983) explains how it was once common for British singers to adopt 'American' accents in their performances. Although this practice was less frequent by the 1980s, Trudgill does cite Dire Straits as performers who often used grammatical features associated with certain dialects in the USA (147). An example of this can be heard in Song 2 (RJ), where Knopfler habitually drops the third person *s*, (Romeo "*sing* a streetsuss serenade"). But, a Spanish respondent heard a specifically 'British accent' in this song, which could refer more to the use of its British slang words.

Consequently, although respondents hear a mixture of predominantly 'American' and 'British' influences in both the music and lyrics of the six songs, whichever one they identify appears to be dependent on their own cultural backgrounds, and in each case their opinions are probably influenced by the respondents' knowledge of the provenance they hear in the song's signifiers.

Voice. In four of the five songs with lyrics, Knopfler's voice attracted comments. These included 'deep voice' 'soft rustic voice' in Song 1 (BA), to the 'gutteral', 'rough', 'unusual' and 'irritating voice' in Song 2 (RJ). In Song 3 (AM) it was heard as 'gravelly voice' and 'slurred voice' and in Song 4 (PB), the voice was heard as 'different voice', distinct voice', 'hard voice'. Once again the influence of discourses and what respondents know about older ideals that suggest what singing voices ought to sound like might inform these remarks. Van Leeuwen (1999) has noted that in professional performances of the past attention focused on musical form which meant that singing voices usually conformed to "a single ideal of articulatory beauty" where vocal styles had to be "impersonal" (127). Traces of this notion of the 'ideal' together with contemporary social experiences of what peers and authoritative institutions consider appropriate for singing voices, might have some bearing on respondents' evaluations of this voice quality and influence their judgements of this 'unusual' voice.

Respondents may also be interpreting the voice in relation to a perceived genre or mood. For example, the respondent who said in Song 1 (BA) the mood was 'romantic' also said 'voice too harsh for the music'. And in Song 2 (RJ), which was predominantly thought of as a 'love song', one respondent thought 'voice and music don't match'. These respondents appear to believe that the voice transgresses some genre or stylistic rule where the materiality of the voice should match the materiality or the mood of the music.

The notion that the voice ought to suit the genre is further strengthened by responses to Song 5 (MN) where I argued that Knopfler's voice was more animated because it was supplemented by the voice of Sting. In that song no respondent made a comment on the voice except one who said the

'vocals suit the music'. And this trend occurs again in Song 4 (PB), where one respondent said the 'voice matches on this'. This same type of genre-specific comparisons are made about the lyrics in Song 2 (RJ), where a respondent remarked that 'words are incongruent to tune', and in song 4 (PB) where one respondent said the 'words and music jar with each other'.

Sunshine. A recurring salient comment made in all six songs was the word 'sunshine' and its related concepts. One way of accounting for this trend is through an observation made by Tagg (1979). He suggests that 'consonance' in songs is often accompanied by connotations of hope, happiness, light and sunrise (170). The presence of consonance (agreement, harmony, the blending of pleasing sounds, etc) in the six survey songs was not likely to be accounted for by most respondents in such musicological terms as 'consonance' or even 'harmony', but it might be represented in terms of the song's general characteristics or its mood. Indeed, we will see that the happier the respondents judged the mood of the song, the more frequently they reported 'sunshine' as a response. But, as we have seen, a song need not signify only one mood. The mood of a song at any point within it can be compromised, enhanced or otherwise altered by different signifiers. And when the mood is modified in this way, so too are the 'sunshine' comments.. We can see some examples of these below.

Song 2 (RJ) produced a large group of 'happy' comments and also included 'sunshine' (x2), 'spring', 'flowers in the sun', 'summer', 'holidays' and 'warm'. Whereas, Song 6 (IB), was thought to have a more 'relaxing' and 'mellow' mood and produced just one mention of 'sea and sun'. Similarly, Song 5 (MN) was also thought to be 'happy' but this was countered with a somewhat 'aggressive' and distorted tone in the guitar and included just two 'sunshine' and 'sunny' responses. To the Russian respondent (who may not have understood the nuances in the lyrics), the music of Song 4 prompted the response of 'summer' and 'flowers'.

Although there was a most definitive 'happy' mood heard in Song 3 (AM), that song-extract only yielded one response of 'sunshine'. But, the type of visual environment the song evoked was predominantly indoors, specifically 'in the pub'. And, in the predominantly 'sad' Song 1 (BA), one that had

aspects of dissonance in its guitar crunches, there was one comment of 'spring' and several that included 'hope'. It is as if by listening hard, these respondents were able to observe the just perceptible buds of optimism that came peeping through the 'sad' mood in this song.

Songs and Cars. Respondents often made comments about the songs that referred to travelling in their cars. For example in Song 1 (BA), they said, 'car journey' and 'travelling'. In Song 2 (RJ), two respondents said that this was a 'car song' and 'to listen to in the car'. Song 4 (MN) was related to 'fast driving' (x2), and the 'open road', and heard as 'car music'. The research of Sloboda and O'Neill (2001:421) I alluded to in Chapter 2 (p75) found that one of the places most people listen to their favourite music was in transit while driving in their cars. Consequently, it can be assumed that these are evaluative comments showing that these respondents liked these songs enough to imagine that they would play them while driving.

Another common response-type of 'toe- or foot-tapping' occurred in two songs, Song 3 (AM) and Song 5 (MN). But, I have already discussed this response in these two songs in relation to the presence of certain rhythms and an 'uptempo' beat.

By identifying common response-types across all the songs, this discussion has been useful in highlighting two aspects of reception. First, the general competence of listeners by the way they are able to pick out stylistic similarities that traverse the six songs, whether they are familiar with these songs or not or have any particular musical experience or not. Second, it also begins to mark trends in response patterns, like those of consonance and sunshine, music and driving.

Conclusion to Part II

From the End Discussion in the previous section, we can see that there are certain patterns of response-types emerging over the responses to the six song-extracts. I will sum up these trends here and point to their relevance to song communication as well as the pertinent points arising from the survey findings.

The most common response-type the respondents made was to identify genres, styles and moods. Although the words they used varied according to their nationality, age and musical experience, none of them had any hesitation in classifying the songs in this way. This trend is made clear by the one exception to the pattern, Song 4 (PB). The fact respondents were hesitant in responding to this song, shows up in responses that include comments like, 'don't know what to make of this'. Respondents' perception of the song was often stated in visual terms so it was clear that communication was not impeded. But, unusually, they did not designate any particular genre nor assign any definitive mood to it and it was this omission that disrupted their more usual pattern of responding. But it also helped to identify the more typical response pattern.

Another response pattern was for respondents to evaluate the songs. Like all the responses, I am not able to quantify these evaluative comments because as I already discussed throughout Chapter 3, the response-types I assigned to the clusters of respondents' comments, relate closely to the interpretive moves that respondents made and these moves were shown to be not mutually exclusive. So there were aspects of evaluation, categorizing, associating, etc in each interpretive move and thus in many of the responses.

In the three songs respondents knew (Song 1, BA, Song 2 RJ and Song 5 MN), their responses always included comments about their memories and personal experiences of the songs. At once, this shows that it was not only the textual dimensions of songs that were signifying to them, what signified

just as clearly, were the social associations the song had built up around it and the imprint that these associations had left upon the song.

In the main there was strong convergence in response patterns. That is, although there was variability in responses, there were no extreme opinions. For example, the mood in Song 1 (BA) was reported as predominantly 'sad' and although it was also reported as 'a bit depressing', or 'melancholic', no respondent commented that it was 'happy'. So, although there was variability in responses, these were confined to broad areas of agreement.

Whether this convergence is a result of the orientation of the song, or the particular disposition of listeners and the discursive knowledge they bring with them to the interpretation, bears in an important way on the social aspect of communication between songs and listeners and this is an issue that I will reflect on further when I form the conclusion to the dissertation as a whole.

Conclusion

Part of my rationale for conducting this study rested on the fact that we do not yet fully understand the communicative relationship between popular songs and their listeners. We know communication happens because people are able to respond to songs in consistent ways, and through the efforts of some scholars, we are just beginning to identify and document the precise means and processes whereby songs signify and listeners interpret. The midway approach taken in the reception survey between a laboratory-type experiment and the informal interviews yielded rich response material that contributes to the explanation of how communication between songs and their listeners takes place.

In this concluding discussion, I will consolidate some of the principal points I have made throughout the thesis to determine how far I have been able to illuminate the relationship between songs and listeners, that is to say, how far this social semiotic model has been able to address the question of song communication. To do so I will briefly review the three separate theoretical chapters as well as the results of the reception survey to show the extent to which the evidence in Part II bears out the general hypothesis built up in Part I. I will then review the position we have reached in understanding the issue of popular song communication and how far we still have to go.

I began the investigation in Chapter 1 by looking at communication from the side of the song. I found there are two invariable elements through which all song communication takes place. The first of these is the media, that is, the physical channels of communication in the form of musical instruments or the human voice. The second is the modes, that is, the communicating systems through which any means of signifying is organized. An explanation of the media and modes was fundamental to building the argument relating to the contribution made to communication by the song.

Media. Even the small selection of song-extracts used in this study shows the types of media used in songs are immensely variable and that their individual semiotic properties can signify in multiple and diverse ways. The frequency with which the media were mentioned in the respondents' comments in the reception survey, testifies to the influence they exert in song communication. In particular it was the timbre emanating from the media, a sense of material substance that had a strong influence on respondents' interpretations of the six songs. In Song 2 (RJ), it was the timbre of the National guitar that contributed substantially to the overall 'light' impression the respondents had of that song. In Song 3 (AM), the Fender's timbre helped the song signal the 'country' genre, whereas in Song 5 (MN), the Les Paul's distorted timbre supported the song's mood of 'energy' and 'power'. The timbre of other instruments was also important. In Song 1 (BA) and in Song 5 (MN), the sense of materiality contributed by the bass and drums was especially significant and in Song 6 (IB), the specific 'airy' and 'wistful' materiality of the penny whistle appeared to coincide with the types of landscape images of Ireland respondents reported.

Respondents were not always able to correctly identify the media by name, but in these cases they used apt and plausible descriptions. For example only two respondents correctly identified the penny whistle in Song 6 (IB), but many of them correctly identified it as a wind instrument that 'sounds like a flute'.

Modes. Although I identified that modes exist at different levels of formalization, the results of the reception survey showed there is no obvious demarcation between the formal modes or more informal semiotic resources that listeners use to interpret songs, even when they have musical experience.

Both formal modes of communication like the lyrics and informal semiotic resources like the use of voice quality, provided equally viable methods for respondents to convert the meaning potential in the song's signifiers into actualized meanings. And, all the respondents whether musically experienced or not, appeared just as susceptible to interpreting the modes through

cognitive, sensory or emotional means, especially when they identified the song's mood. As the End Discussion of Part II showed, most respondents were able to identify genres and styles from guitar playing techniques to narrative or story-telling techniques.

The communicative functions of the modes that were explicated in Chapter 1, were interpreted by respondents with an urge to dance, to contemplate, to visualize, and so on. And they had little difficulty in de-coding the six songs, not only through obvious and foregrounded codes like those produced by the guitar, but through more subtle codes like the presence of the uillean pipes in Song 6 (IB) or the extra voices in Song 3 (AM). There was also evidence from the way respondents understood that Song 2 (RJ) had now changed its popular song status to become a 'classic' that they understood the transformation process that songs go through.

The only apparent difference between respondents in interpreting the modes, was that those with musical experience were able to identify musical elements in a more formal sense, for example by making comments like 'arpeggio in guitar'. This means that in the case of popular song reception, all listeners, (providing they are within a familiar musical culture), can be considered competent interpreters of songs, even though as van Leeuwen (1999) says, they "do not always know what it is they know" (164). And, the most significant difference in the use of modes of communication between listeners with musical experience and those without, is chiefly one of terminology.

In Chapter 2, I advanced the central argument by looking at how the media and modes are constructed into certain song configurations where they can not only signify, but signify from one perspective. The fact that there was a high consistency of agreement in all the six survey songs, demonstrates the effectiveness of these configurations in signalling perspective. This was especially evident in the responses to three songs. In Song 6 (IB) where the 'Irish' perspective was so convincing that it was almost unanimously accepted; in Song 3 (AM) where there was no doubt that this song articulated all aspects

of the 'country' genre; and the male preferences for Song 2 (RJ) indicated that they had aligned themselves with the male perspective advocated by the song's style of representation.

But in this chapter, I began to take the contribution of the listener into more consideration and suggested that perspective can be altered by various factors including certain listening dispositions as well as the social and cultural positions of listeners. We then saw in the results of the survey that even though a song usually advances one prevailing perspective, listeners do not always acquiesce to it, in fact in four of the case studies, we saw how they can sometimes refute a song's perspective in different ways. In Song 5 (MN) women's preferences for it swept aside the male perspective of the song. In Song 4 (PB), many respondents painted an alternative portrait to the predominant 'come-on girl' one the song advanced, and some respondents found Song 1 (BA) to be 'romantic' rather than 'sad'.

As part of the perspective argument, I also suggested there were 'genre-normative' listening stances that could alter perspective and hence listeners responses. In Part II this was borne out by the responses to some of the songs. Certain comments like 'air guitar', 'toe-tapping' or 'singalong' made it clear that respondents understood what response would be 'genre-normative' for these songs. But, they only mentioned these actions, that is to say, they did not execute them, no one sang or played air guitar during the survey. Therefore, the 'genre-normative' listening the respondents adopted meant either they were not as openly receptive to the song as they might have been in other circumstances, or more likely, because they understood that a verbal response was the appropriate response in the context of an academic survey. It was not necessary then for them to be in the actual social venue of the pub, their cars or in a dance club, for them to comprehend what was an appropriate response or indeed socially significant for these songs in other venues.

In Chapter 3, I gave a more detailed explanation of the listener's active role as an interpretive agent. Here, I outlined the importance of factors from the

listener's background and context. These included how the discourses concerning all aspects of life that they accumulate, even how they talk, can be brought into service as semiotic resources when they attempt to make meaning from songs. The discourses that the respondents brought with them to the reception survey were evident in responses like 'line-dancing', 'Vietnam', 'tragic love story' that were not part of the songs themselves but added to them by respondents in order for them to make meaning. This type of response again highlights the interactive contribution made to the communication by the listener and shows that listeners also partly *produce* the song just as much as they *receive* it.

The response patterns of the interpretive moves delineated in this chapter were then later shown in the End Discussion to be accurate in the way that respondents categorized, evaluated and otherwise interpreted the song in these ways. One of these moves was the metaphoric conceptualization process. This was confirmed by the way respondents continually compared aspects of the survey songs to other phenomena, for example, the correlation between songs that were heard as 'uptempo' and the identification of their moods as 'happy', as well as the comparison of 'sunshine' with happiness discussed earlier and many other such comparisons made throughout the six songs.

In this same chapter I also showed how as part of an interpretive move, listeners could interact with the song by asserting their evaluations and personal preferences, and no response more exemplifies this than the comment of 'its macho, but I like it'. In this way then, respondents brought all their social and cultural background knowledge and experience to bear on the interpretation of the survey songs and added their own contributions to their meanings so that communication was co-produced each time.

So where do these findings take us in understanding communication between popular songs and listeners? We can perhaps sum up the position by a quote from Feld (1994). "All musical sound structures are socially structured in two senses: they exist through social construction, and they acquire meaning

through social interpretation" (85). The strengths of the thesis are that through the analysis of both the song-extracts and the reception survey response patterns, it has been able to arrive at some explanations that clarify and delineate the communicative processes at work in and between these two positions. By undertaking this type of dual analysis of songs and responses to them, I have been able to posit viable accounts of how a song's specific construction, its semiotic content and its presentation fuse with the individual disposition and circumstances surrounding each listener during its reception and show how this leads to different processes of communication.

On the side of listeners, we have seen throughout that meaning can only result from any song when they engage with its potential for meaning found within its conglomeration of signifiers, whether they find these in the modes of music, the words or the many 'virtual' modes operating in songs. We have seen how the openness of signifiers in songs can facilitate the freedom and variability of their interpretations, for example, in the way survey respondents were able to envisage different images of Portobello Belle. Also, the way respondents with different genders were able to give different interpretations of 'Romeo and Juliet' and 'Money for Nothing'.

Against this, on the side of the song, we have seen that despite exerting an interactive capacity, respondents' interpretations are not always arrived at independently. It was clear from some responses that the song's orientation may have suggested, guided and facilitated the respondents' perspectives even their visual imagery. The consistent trends and patterns of responding in extracts like 'Irish Boy' and 'Angel of Mercy' highlighted the strengths such orientations and the representational dimension of the song can exert. So that respondents were in these cases encouraged and perhaps even compelled to make conventional responses to these songs.

It is then the tension between the two sides of reception that emphasise the signifier-signified divide and shows that song communication is always a

mutual exchange of semiotic work taking place on a multi-imodal level on both sides.

Even within the confines of a small sample of respondents and short extracts from six popular songs, what I hope I have demonstrated in this work then, is what a social semiotic approach and the multimodal discourse theory of communication can contribute to the question of song communication. Because of the innumerable variables involved, this type of communication can never be entirely predictable; nevertheless, this thesis can now present some solid premises to base a firm understanding of it.

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Appendix 1

Respondents' Profiles

ID	Sex	Age Group	Nationality	Musical Experience
1	M	30	Portuguese	Part-time guitarist
2	F	20	British	
3	F	40	British	Folk musician
4	M	30	British	Record Producer
5	M	30	Gk Cypriot	Recording-Sound Engineer
6	M	30	Irish	
7	M	40	British	
8	F	40	British	
9	M	20	Canadian	
10	M	20	Australian	
11	M	40	British	DS enthusiast
12	M	30	British	School music teacher
13	F	40	British	
14	M	50	British	
15	M	20	Spanish	
16	M	30	Spanish	DS enthusiast
17	M	20	Indonesian	
18	F	30	British	
19	F	40	British	
20	F	40	British	
21	M	40	British	
22	F	40	British	
23	F	30	Russian	
24	M	20	Canadian	Part-time pianist
25	F	30	French	
26	F	20	French	
27	F	30	French	
28	M	30	British	Guitar player in rock group
29	M	20	Polish	Popular music enthusiast
30	M	30	Greek	
31	M	40	Maori NZ	
32	F	30	British	
33	F	30	British	
34	M	40	British	
35	F	20	Gk Cypriot	
36	M	70	British	
37	F	70	British	
38	F	20	Irish	
39	F	30	British	
40	F	40	British	
41	M	50	British	
42	F	40	Zimbabwean	Heavy metal enthusiast
43	M	20	British	
44	F	20	British	
45	F	30	British	Former orchestral flutist
46	F	40	British	
47	F	20	British	Popular music singer
48	M	30	British	
49	M	30	British	Amateur guitarist
50	F	30	British	

Appendix 2

Responses to Song-Extracts

Song 1 – 'Brothers in Arms'

1	mountains	swooping guitar	depth	relaxed	travelling	typical Knopfler
2	associations	imagery	deep voice	good guitar	very visual	
3	discordant	buzzing	depressing	electric guitar		
4	slow ballad	sad yet hopeful	gentle rhythm	priority guitar head		very emotional
5	weepy	sorrowful	moody	slow but uptempo	mono chords on organ	
6	good guitar	deep voice	skilled guitar			
7	distant	horizons	sad			
8	Spaghetti Western		film track	conflict	hopelessness	
9	mellow	ballad	the end	soft rustic voice		
10	calmness	relaxation	goodbye	sadness	grey	strong lyrics
11	lovely	nostalgic	prayer	melancholic	unique sound	
12	sad	lake at night	moon	smooth chords	guitar in dialogue	
13	gutsy	lovely instrumentals				
14	relaxing	synthesised sound		guitar carries sounds		I like this
15	nostalgic	sad but happy				
16	well produced	relaxed	sad	not too sad		
17	funereal	sad	last goodbye	praying		
18	moonlight	romantic	like a serenade			
19	sad	broken hearted	suffering			
20	beach	emotional guitar	parting	sad		
21	distant	sad	contemplation			
22	sad song	moving	soldiers	Vietnam		
23	sad	melancholic	thought provoking		profound	
24	Dylanesque	sedate	nice guitar	relaxing	the video	voice moaning
25	sad	emotional	lament			
26	sad	war	IRA	good guitar		
27	Rock concert	finale	sad	I've heard this before		
28	WW2	guitar obligato	passionate	got depth		
29	nostalgic	sad but hopeful	moving	very familiar		
30	simple	car journey	voice too harsh for music		romantic	
31	sunsets	romantic				
32	relaxing	bit depressing	good guitar	very atmospheric		
33	nostalgic	sad	hopeful			
34	sad	voice not strong enough		overpowering music		unique style
35	romantic	nostalgic	nice tune	in love		
36	depressing	I don't like it				
37	C&W	cowboy	sounds monotonous			
38	sad	guitar sounds heavy-metally				
39	morbid	dying	end of something	sad guitar	questioning	
40	love the preciseness of the guitar		a favourite of mine		uplifting	very familiar
41	sentimental	relaxing	vocals purring	lyrical guitar	moving	romantic
42	personal memories		profound			
43	death	I like this song	good guitar	the instrumental makes you think		
44	emotional	absorb yourself into it		image of guitarist on solo		
45	melancholy	minor key	electric guitar	a bit depressing		
46	melancholy	the music made me tearful		emotional guitar		
47	folk	good bass	last goodbye	sad	dying	
48	sad	subdued	dying			
49	relaxing	moral to story	organ makes for hymn-like quality		false importance	
50	personal memories		relaxation			

Song 2 - 'Romeo and Juliet'

1	Britain in 70s	warm	special song		how about it	
2	happy	up-tempo	love song	reminds me of a busker		
3	story-teller	up-beat	guitar picking	melodic	I like the bass	slang
4	plucky guitar	slightly folky	DS formula	banjo sound	related to BA	
5	steel guitar	cheerful	busking	noticeable drums and bass		
6	happy feeling	I like this	positive			
7	holidays	bubbles	80s nostalgia	I like it		
8	light	bubbly	West Side Story	tragic love story	modern	
9	funky ballad					
10	love this song	happy	bubbly	you and me babe	memories	
11	I love this	happy	must be played at full volume		guitar is the main feature	
12	America	happy	arpeggio in guitar			
13	light	nice				
14	I love this	fantastic	brings tears to my eyes		nostalgic	
15	I like this a lot	I remember the fingerclick				
16	love song	tongue in cheek	well known	British accent		
17	couple in love	flowers in the sun				
18	memories	this is a story	unique sound			
19	busker	an appeal				
20	Streetwise couple	how about it				
21	nice story	familiar				
22	folk-type song	I don't like this				
23	happy song					
24	C&W	banjo	Tom Petty	gutteral voice	Springstein	
25	summer	celebrating	warm			
26	modern love story					
27	music and voice don't match		not inspired			
28	I love this	brilliantly crafted	got character	nice nylon stringed guitar		
29	great song	metallic guitar	a snap of the fingers		classic	
30	C&W	USA				
31	guitar lead	Italy				
32	happy	I know this song	familiar song	fun		
33	youth	unusual voice				
34	more a narrative than a song		good dobro guitar		nice feel	
35	car song					
36	C&W	young people				
37	modern love story		rough voice			
38	lively love song	makes me feel happy				
39	light	happy	streetwise			
40	love song	personal nostalgia				
41	banjo-feel	stands out as special		beautiful song		
42	classic love song	sunshine	words incongruent to tune			
43	this is a classic		mickey-taking		funny lyrics	I like this
44	to listen to in the car		upbeat			
45	special guitar	catchy – not sure why				
46	Spring					
47	busker	cheery	love theme			
48	very familiar	happy	upbeat	light guitar	memories	
49	my favourite	modern rendition of old theme		sounds like an old instrument (lyre)		
50	sunshine	happy	modern			

Song 3 – 'Angel of Mercy'

1	in the pub	dancing	Saturday night out		great	watching a band
2	country style	people dancing	cowboys			
3	makes you want to dance		guitar lead	foot-tapping	gravelly voice	
4	happy	harmonies	drunk	country	guitar priority	R&B progression
5	toe-tapping	DS sound	C&W	up-tempo	R&B country	melodic
6	happy	feel good	foot-tapping	singalong		
7	cowboys	country	busy	irritating	clutter	monotonous
8	living it up	drinking song	knees up	country	bar	cowboys
9	up-beat	groovy	optimistic	electric guitar		
10	people	crowd	line-dancing	happy	great guitaring	
11	country	blurred	brilliant guitar solo		typical DS	chorus
12	country blues	improvised guitar on top		in a bar	group of people	fun
13	C&W	don't like this				
14	good guitar lead	happy group				
15	noisy	don't like it				
16	fun	good feeling	people dancing			
17	country	line-dancing	party atmosphere	good time		
18	pub	country	line-dancing			
19	happy	jolly				
20	dancefloor					
21	feel good factor	dancing	party scene	drinking		
22	aggressive	young people				
23	pub	singalong	happy	people drinking	busy	
24	up-beat	live band	C&W	line-dancing	high pitched guitar	
25	cowboys	C&W	USA	Western		
26	Country	pub	drinking			
27	party	dancing	line-dancing			
28	noisy	sexy	slurred voice	scruffy		
29	country	cowboys	bar and beer	good atmosphere	Wild West	
30	C&W	line-dancing	cowboys			
31	party	country or folk				
32	C&W	toe-tapping	cowboys	American	people dancing	bar
33	irritating	loud				
34	party	upbeat	people dancing			
35	dancing	party atmosphere	country	pub	jeans	
36	loud guitar	honky-tonk				
37	dance music	a bit annoying	very quick			
38	country	dancing	to dance to			
39	guitar talking	sexual	its like the pub			
40	to get up and dance to					
41	country rock sound		Western	not keen on this		
42	in a pub	knees up	something sexual about this			
43	good instrumental		guitar at forefront			
44	in the background at the pub		doesn't demand too much attention		dance music	
45	upbeat	quick tempo	C&W	sawdust		
46	makes me want to dance		jolly	sunshine	good guitarist	
47	C&W	line-dancing	bar	cowboys	get up and join in	
48	country	not my cup of tea				
49	empty really	sing this when drunk				
50	in the pub	drunk	beer	nice guitar instrumental		

Song 4 - 'Portobello Belle'

1	buskers	scruffy	streets of London	people looking	money cap	
2	no response	don't really like it				
3	descriptive	come-on girl	strong imagery	heavy guitar lead with blues behind it		
4	acoustic guitar	folky	simple bass lines	nothing offensive	comfortable	
5	girl walking	like a mandolin	distinctive guitar	standard DS		
6	small feisty girl	image of the girl travelling				
7	no response	repetitive	monotonous			
8	road scene	there's a picture of girl		girl with a rucksack		
9	no response	narrator telling story		jeans		
10	solitude	a woman alone	it's weighty	heavy	different voice	
11	indifferent to this	girl walking	clever lyrics	blind singer		
12	picked guitar pattern		melancholic solo voice		despite the speed it sounds sad	
13	country	doesn't move me	hard voice			
14	no response	easy listening	distinct voice			
15	nothing					
16	sad	biographical	crowd looking			
17	'image of a girl'	story-teller				
18	no comment					
19	girl going away	slight banjo sound				
20	a prostitute	plump girl	heavy make-up			
21	walking	blonde with heavy make-up				
22	vivid image	rock chic	like flake advert	hard girl		
23	girl moving in slow motion		summer	flowers		
24	a woman with long red hear and freckles			people looking at a girl		I don't like it
25	not much response to this					
26	about a woman who is pregnant					
27	not much to say	woman walking	Irish girl	Bella Donna		
28	I see a tough, aggressive girl		vocals speaking the story rather than singing			very visual
29	about an Irish girl	she's wearing jeans		heavy guitar	Dylan	
30	girl on a journey	C&W	American	voice matches music on this		
31	no comment					
32	words and music jar with each other		boring			
33	no comment					
34	bass is too heavy	strong image of Bella Donna		a story		
35	country	just dull				
36	strong imagery	lots of words				
37	no comment	sounds like the others				
38	don't know what to make of this		sexy			
39	girl on the street	homeless person				
40	song with a story					
41	repetitive	slight country feel		a bit dated		
42	makes me feel sad		about a loser			
43	light-hearted lyrics		not much to say about this			
44	this doesn't say much to me		it makes you listen to the lyrics			
45	don't like that	too much rhyming		I want to turn it off		
46	does nothing for me		I'd push the fast forward			
47	Irish girl	common girl	I can see a girl		a drifter	
48	folk feel	a story				
49	story	someone like Eleanor Rigby		Streets of London		
50	travelling	alone				

Song 5 – 'Money for Nothing'

1	energy	80s sound	sexy guitar lick	pulsating bass line		fast driving
2	memories	the video	MTV	strong drum behind		
3	upbeat tempo	buzzy synth	strong rhythm			
4	standard R&B	heavy drum beat	guitar priority	rock beat	has impact	
5	video	1985	Live Aid	first CDs		
6	up-tempo	happy	the video			
7	fun	movement	sunny	raunchy	talking to guys	
8	lively	sunshine	energetic	uplifting		
9	up-beat	rock music industry		the video	commercialisation	
10	energy	power	authoritative	controlled	good guitar	
11	must be played loud		guitar exploited			
12	car music	stabbing guitar riff		simple chords	fast vocal lines	open road
13	great	good dance music		I like this		
14	I like this one	toe-tapping	air guitar	happy	very familiar	
15	lively	I like it				
16	critical	first CDs	not a favourite			
17	virtual reality	men's music	memories			
18	male music	catchy	foot-tapping	I like this		
19	happy	lively	macho but I like it			
20	rock stars	new technology				
21	disco	men's talk				
22	MTV	consumerism	I've been saturated by this		good song	I like it
23	toe-tapping	British	crowds	European		
24	stick figures	the video	MTV	memories	neon colours	
25	toe-tapping					
26	MTV	80s song	the video	very famous song		
27	rock concert	powerful	loud			
28	car song	cynical	vocals suit music	80s		
29	I know this video		digital technology		famous song	
30	energetic	loud				
31	American stars and stripes		air guitar			
32	80s	nostalgic	personal memories			
33	nostalgic	I've heard this too much				
34	production line	nostalgic				
35	good song	loud	fast driving			
36	about MTV	aggressive				
37	a lot of drums					
38	I like this	energetic	busy			
39	I love this song	a guy's song	good time	not deep	recognisable	
40	mocking attitude					
41	I like that song	strong and powerful				
42	I know this	party music	great		sexy	
43	uplifting	makes you want to dance		lively	foot-tapping music	
44	personal nostalgia		brings back memories		air guitar	
45	aggressive beat	harsh guitar line	stronger accompaniment than melody			
46	definite dancing music		good drums	gets emotions and blood running		sexy
47	easy money	I like this song				
48	headbands	80s rock	identifiable with DS		personal associations	
49	catchy	good riffs				
50	this is my favourite		people dancing	sexy		

Song 6 – 'Irish Boy'

1	rolling hills	Celtic	landscapes	green	Ireland	
2	flute	Irish	hills	countryside	Titanic	Celtic
3	folk	Irish	rolling hills	film or TV track	Scotland	violin
4	modern folk	flute	mellow	lament	Corrs	looks inward
5	totally Irish	flute	grey mist	Ireland	mournful	
6	Irish	cliffs	sea	green hills	fields	pipes
7	Irish	wistful	nostalgic	yearning		
8	Irish	rolling hills	leprechauns	nostalgic	ethnic	whistle
9	soft	mellow	flute	hills	pan pipes	Ireland
10	Irish	Ireland	flute	airy	open spaces	birds
11	mood music	flute	film	sea and sun		
12	Irish sound	misty hills	laid back	pipe sounds	progressively heavier beat	
13	Irish	pipes	Celtic	water	tranquillity	lakes
14	Irish	mountains	Ireland	water		
15	relaxing	mountains	green	Celtic		
16	Celtic	Galicia	mountains	mist	nostalgia	
17	Irish	flute	end of a movie	cliffs		
18	Scotland	haunting	a bit chilling			
19	sad	Irish	rolling hills			
20	Titanic	pipes	rolling hills	Scotland	Celtic	
21	a dream	pensive	flute	Irish		
22	Irish	longing	pining			
23	sand	desert	blue sky			
24	sedate	flute	Ireland	green fields	mountains	
25	Ireland	green	peaceful	quiet		
26	Irish	flute				
27	Titanic	sad story	end of film			
28	nice	major key	sad quality	melancholic		
29	Titanic	Irish	Kobza	dreaming	Celtic	
30	Ireland	pipes	Scotland	film music	scenic	
31	Irish	mountains				
32	relaxing	pan pipes	mood music	Irish		
33	Irish	Titanic	flute-like instrument			
34	Celtic	highlands	relaxing	Scotland		
35	nostalgic	film music	mountains			
36	Irish	hills	I like the flute			
37	nice and slow	calm	sounds Irish	penny whistle	green hills	
38	soft music	flute and pipes beautiful				
39	film music	traditional	Irish	Scotland		
40	nice music	Celtic	Ireland			
41	very folky	predominant flute	highlands			
42	Scotland	highlands				
43	Irish-sounding		nice pan pipes			
44	Celtic sound	relaxing	I like the pipes and flute		Irish	
45	I like the pipes	very Celtic	rural hills	relaxing	didn't like the drums in the middle	
46	Gaelic music	don't know the instruments		green fields	hills	
47	Ireland	pan pipes	like an advert			
48	Irish	pipes	Gaelic	nice		
49	traditional	bit depressing	penny whistle			
50	Irish	Ireland	simple	dreamy		

Appendix 3

Survey Questions and Answers

How important are lyrics to songs? Very, (V), Quite (Q), Not at all (N)

Answers

ID	Sex	Age	Nationality	Musical Experience	Lyrics
1	M	30	Portuguese	Part-time guitarist	V
2	F	20	British		V
3	F	40	British	Folk musician	V
4	M	30	British	Record Producer	Q
5	M	30	Gk Cypriot	Recording-Sound Engineer	V
6	M	30	Irish		Q
7	M	40	British		V
8	F	40	British		V
9	M	20	Canadian		Q
10	M	20	Australian		V
11	M	40	British	DS enthusiast	N
12	M	30	British	School music teacher	Q
13	F	40	British		V
14	M	50	British		V
15	M	20	Spanish		V
16	M	30	Spanish	DS enthusiast	N
17	M	20	Indonesian		V
18	F	30	British		V
19	F	40	British		V
20	F	40	British		N
21	M	40	British		V
22	F	40	British		V
23	F	30	Russian		Q
24	M	20	Canadian	Part-time pianist	Q
25	F	30	French		N
26	F	20	French		V
27	F	30	French		V
28	M	30	British	Guitar player in rock group	V
29	M	20	Polish	Popular music enthusiast	Q
30	M	30	Greek		N
31	M	40	Maori NZ		N
32	F	30	British		V
33	F	30	British		Q
34	M	40	British	Guitar enthusiast	V
35	F	20	Gk Cypriot		N
36	M	70	British		V
37	F	70	British		V
38	F	20	Irish		V
39	F	30	British		V
40	F	40	British		V
41	M	50	British		V
42	F	40	Zimbabwean	Heavy metal enthusiast	N
43	M	20	British		V
44	F	20	British		V
45	F	30	British	Former orchestral flutist	Q
46	F	40	British		V
47	F	20	British	Popular music singer	V
48	M	30	British		Q
49	M	30	British	Amateur guitarist	Q
50	F	30	British		V

Are any of these songs more applicable to male or female listeners, if so which?

Answers

ID	Sex	Age	Nationality	Musical Experience	Male	Female	No
1	M	30	Portuguese	Part-time guitarist			-
2	F	20	British				-
3	F	40	British	Folk musician			-
4	M	30	British	Record Producer			-
5	M	30	Gk Cypriot	Recording-Sound Engineer	MN	RJ	
6	M	30	Irish				-
7	M	40	British		MN		
8	F	40	British		BA		
9	M	20	Canadian		MN		
10	M	20	Australian		MN		
11	M	40	British	DS enthusiast		RJ	
12	M	30	British	School music teacher			-
13	F	40	British				-
14	M	50	British		MN		
15	M	20	Spanish				-
16	M	30	Spanish	DS enthusiast	MN		
17	M	20	Indonesian		MN	IB	
18	F	30	British		MN		
19	F	40	British		MN		
20	F	40	British				-
21	M	40	British			IB	
22	F	40	British		BA/MN		
23	F	30	Russian				-
24	M	20	Canadian	Part-time pianist	BA/MN		
25	F	30	French			IB	
26	F	20	French		BA		
27	F	30	French				-
28	M	30	British	Guitar player in rock group			-
29	M	20	Polish	Popular music enthusiast			-
30	M	30	Greek				-
31	M	40	Maori NZ				-
32	F	30	British		BA	RJ	
33	F	30	British		MN		
34	M	40	British	Guitar enthusiast		RJ	
35	F	20	Gk Cypriot				-
36	M	70	British				-
37	F	70	British				-
38	F	20	Irish			RJ	
39	F	30	British		MN		
40	F	40	British			RJ	
41	M	50	British			RJ	
42	F	40	Zimbabwean	Heavy metal enthusiast			-
43	M	20	British			RJ	
44	F	20	British				-
45	F	30	British	Former orchestral flutist	MN		
46	F	40	British				-
47	F	20	British	Popular music singer	MN		
48	M	30	British			RJ	
49	M	30	British	Amateur guitarist		RJ	
50	F	30	British				-

Are you familiar with any of these songs, if so which ones? (F = Familiar)

ID	*Brothers in Arms*	*Romeo and Juliet*	*Money for Nothing*
1	F	F	F
2	F		F
3			
4	F	F	F
5	F	F	F
6			F
7		F	F
8			
9			F
10		F	
11	F	F	F
12	F	F	F
13			
14	F	F	F
15	F	F	
16		F	F
17			F
18		F	
19			
20			F
21		F	
22			F
23			
24	F		F
25			
26	F	F	F
27	F		
28	F	F	F
29	F	F	F
30			
31			
32	F	F	F
33			F
34	F	F	F
35			
36			
37			
38			
39			F
40	F	F	F
41		F	
42	F	F	F
43	F	F	F
44	F		F
45			
46			
47			F
48		F	F
49		F	
50			F

Appendix 4

Table of Communicative Functions

Halliday's Linguistic Metafunctions

(adapted from *Language as a Social Semiotic*, 1985)

Type	*Metafunction*	*Example*
Ideational	Creates connections between two or more objects in a text or relates by classification	This can be done in music through tonal tensions; in language through transitivity of verbs; in the visual through vectors, etc
Interpersonal	Creates connections between internal addresser and external addressee, or 3-ways between internal addresser, the object, and external addressee	Works through mode of address in language and visual. But the music of a song could modify both
Textual	Coalesces other two functions so that all components of the text cohere according to its context	If the organization of the song is disturbed, its message would completely alter

Jakobson's Six Linguistic Functions

(adapted from *Fundamentals of Language*, 1960)

Type	*Refers to*	*Function*	*Example*
Referential	Context	Imparting Information	They're playing that song
Emotive /Expressive	Addresser	Expressing feelings or attitudes	It's that poser, Robbie Williams
Imperative	Addressee	Influencing Behaviour	Put the volume down
Phatic	Contact	Establishing or maintaining social relationships	Catchy tune, isn't it?
Metalingual	Code	Referring to the nature of the interaction (eg, genre)	This was his second number one
Aesthetic /Poetic	Message	Foregrounding textual functions	If music be the food of love

Halliday (1978, 1985) and Jakobson (1960) advise that elements of each function are likely to be found in all three/six (meta)functions.