

Semiotics of the New Commercial Music Paradigm

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Abstract : This presentation will address how the statistical analysis of digitized popular music influences the music creation and emotionally manipulates consumers. Furthermore, it will deal with semiological aspect of uniformization of musical taste in order to predict the potential revenues generated by popular music sales. In the USA, we live in an age where most of the popular music (i.e. music that generates substantial revenue) has been digitized. It is safe to say that almost everything that was produced in last 10 years is already digitized (either available on iTunes, Spotify, YouTube, or some other platform). Depending on marketing viability and its potential to generate additional revenue most of the "older" music is still being digitized. Once the music gets turned into a digital audio file, it can be computer-analyzed in all kinds of respects, and the similar goes for the lyrics because they also exist as a digital text file, to which any kind of N Capture-kind of analysis may be applied. So, by employing statistical examination of different popular music metrics such as tempo, form, pronouns, introduction length, song length, archetypes, subject matter, and repetition of title, the commercial result may be predicted. Polyphonic HMI (Human Media Interface) introduced the concept of the hit song science computer program in 2003. The company asserted that machine learning could create a music profile to predict hit songs from its audio features. Thus, it has been established that a successful pop song must include: 100 bpm or more; an 8 second intro; use the pronoun 'you' within 20 seconds of the start of the song; hit the bridge middle 8 between 2 minutes and 2 minutes 30 seconds; average 7 repetitions of the title; create some expectations and fill that expectation in the title. For the country song: 100 bpm or less for a male artist; 14-second intro; uses the pronoun 'you' within the first 20 seconds of the intro; has a bridge middle 8 between 2 minutes and 2 minutes 30 seconds; has 7 repetitions of title; creates an expectation, fulfills it in 60 seconds. This approach to commercial popular music minimizes the human influence when it comes to which "artist" a record label is going to sign and market. Twenty years ago, music experts in the A&R (Artists and Repertoire) departments of the record labels were making personal aesthetic judgments based on their extensive experience in the music industry. Now, the computer music analyzing programs, are replacing them in an attempt to minimize investment risk of the panicking record labels, in an environment where nobody can predict the future of the recording industry. The impact on the consumers taste through the narrow bottleneck of the above mentioned music selection by the record labels, created some very peculiar effects not only on the taste of popular music consumers, but also the creative chops of the music artists as well. What is the meaning of this semiological shift is the main focus of this research and paper presentation.

Keywords : music, semiology, commercial, taste

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