

“I can say what I want to”

*An audiovisual reading of the identities of
Miley Cyrus*

Veronica Gyiring Kval



Masters thesis

Department of Musicology

University of Oslo

Spring 2016

“I can say what I want to”

*An audiovisual reading of the identities of
Miley Cyrus*

Veronica Gyiring Kval



Masters thesis

Department of Musicology

University of Oslo

Spring 2016

© Veronica Gyiring Kval

2016

“I can say what I want to”: An audiovisual reading of the identities of Miley Cyrus.

Veronica Gyiring Kval

<http://www.duo.uio.no/>

Trykk: Reprosentralen, Universitetet i Oslo

IV

Summary

This masters thesis focuses on constructed identities, with its main focus being Miley Cyrus. The topic of constructed identities is relevant in the field of popular musicology, as well as in other fields of research within the humanities. My primary thesis question is:

How is Miley Cyrus constructed and how can she be understood through audiovisual readings of four of her music videos?

In this thesis I discuss previous research done within this field, by scholars such as McClary, Butler, Hawkins and Scott, to name a few.

My primary method for this thesis is audiovisual analysis, and I apply this method to four selected music videos.

My findings base themselves on my own readings, and are presented in schematics, as well as in the discussion. Here I categorise the findings in four chapters; “Identity”, “Videos”, “To be a pop star; all you need to change is who you are” and “Pop Constructions: Why they matter”. Here I have determined that Miley Cyrus, through the course of the four analysed music videos, possesses two constructed pop identities. I outline the basis for each identity, and compare them to each other. I also focus on how constructed identities are a big part of the pop music industry, and how female artists, such as Miley Cyrus, can be argued to be a product of the male-dominated industry. As gender and gender norms are to a large degree present in all aspects of our lives, this also becomes an important point when discussing the identities of Miley Cyrus, and how she complies to, and breaks with, heteronormativity throughout her career.

Acknowledgements

This master thesis would not have been completed without the support and help of several people, who have my gratitude and deserve some acknowledgment.

First of all, a thank you to my supervisor, the highly regarded Professor Stan Hawkins at the Department of Musicology. You have done a remarkable job in terms of challenging and inspiring me to perform to my very best. Your genuine interest, effort and much appreciated patience have meant a great deal to me throughout the process of writing this thesis.

Thanks is also due to all professors and academic staff at the Department of Musicology. I believe that a personal thanks to Kai Arne Hansen is in order as well. Thank you for taking time to meet with me and discuss topics that have proven relevant in this thesis, particularly on such short notice.

A special shoutout to my mother, Vigdis, and my family as a whole. Your love and support, has meant a great deal to me.

Thanks to my closest friends for uplifting words and cheers through the course of my writing. You have helped make my days brighter, and for that I am eternally grateful.

Finally, this thesis could not have been completed without the love and support from my partner, Joakim. Thank you for putting up with all my craziness, and your uplifting words when facing several walls in the writing of this thesis.

Oslo, 17.04.2016

Veronica Gyiring Kval

Index

Summary	V
Acknowledgements	VII
Index.....	IX
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Actuality – relevance	1
1.2 Background.....	2
1.3 Thesis questions, scientific concepts and limitations.	3
1.4 Structure of the thesis	4
2 Theory	6
2.1 The importance of gender.....	6
2.1.1 Gender and sex	6
2.1.2 Gender in music	9
2.1.3 Heteronormative issues	12
2.1.4 Feminism in critical musicology	13
2.2 Constructing identity	16
2.2.1 Image	16
2.2.2 Personal narratives	18
2.2.3 Subjectivity vs. Identity.....	19
2.2.4 Hyperembodiment.....	21
2.3 Audiovisuality	24
2.3.1 The Rise of Music Video	24
2.3.2 The Role of Music Videos	25
2.3.3 Analysing music video	26
2.3.4 Narratives	27
2.4 The Music Industry.....	28
2.4.1 Producers’ roles.....	29
2.4.2 Teenage popstars	30
2.4.3 Marketability	31
2.4.4 Creating controversy	33
2.5 Pop Music	35
2.5.1 Ballads.....	35

2.5.2	Party/dance songs	36
2.6	Summary.....	37
3	Methods.....	39
3.1	Musicological methods.....	39
3.1.1	Audiovisual analysis	41
3.1.2	Masking method.....	43
3.2	Research Approach.....	44
3.2.1	Choice of objects.....	44
3.2.2	Analytic processes.....	45
3.3	Demands of scientific research.....	46
3.3.1	Validity.....	46
3.3.2	Reliability.....	47
3.3.3	Verifiability	48
3.3.4	Situational reflection	48
3.4	Critical perspectives.....	49
3.5	Summary.....	50
4	Analysis and readings.....	51
4.1	‘Party in the USA’	51
4.1.1	Audiovisual analysis	51
4.1.2	Reading.....	53
4.2	‘When I Look at You’	56
4.2.1	Audiovisual analysis	56
4.2.2	Reading.....	58
4.3	‘We Can’t Stop’	61
4.3.1	Audiovisual analysis	61
4.3.2	Reading.....	64
4.4	‘Wrecking Ball’	67
4.4.1	Audiovisual analysis	67
4.4.2	Reading.....	70
5	Discussion	74
5.1	Identity.....	74
5.1.1	“I’m not a girl, not yet a woman”: Gender and sexuality.....	74
5.1.2	Image Construction	80

5.1.3	Persona	83
5.1.4	Subjectivity.....	85
5.2	Videos.....	87
5.2.1	Pop Music Videos	87
5.2.2	Hyperembodiment.....	90
5.3	“To be a pop star, all you need to change is who you are”	92
5.3.1	Heteronormative excursions.....	92
5.3.2	“I can’t be tamed”.....	98
5.3.3	Money talks	101
5.4	Pop Constructions: Why they matter.....	106
5.5	Summary.....	111
6	Conclusion.....	112
	Bibliography.....	117
	Appendixes.....	121

1 Introduction

1.1 Actuality – relevance

How ‘real’ are our pop idols? To what extent are they genuine and authentic? What are the features of their performance that fans buy into? These are just some of the questions popular musicologists have been discussing for some time now. As people who are interested in and affected by music we get feelings of joy or excitement, as well as other emotions, from our musical experiences. However, it becomes problematic, as the questions above imply, when we know that much of what we see, hear and think about our pop idols is a construction. Simply, they are moulded and shaped to fit our pre-existing notions of what is good and cool, whilst appearing natural and normal. And when an artist fits the mould both they and the music industry that shapes them, has the potential to make vast amounts of money.

We know that pop music is shaped by social, cultural and political conditions; it is about patterns in consumption and production (Hawkins, 2002, p.2). When music becomes marketable, particularly on a multi-billion-dollar scale, it is easy to presume that the balance between artistic authenticity and the economic desires of an industry quickly shifts towards the latter. With this in mind it is clear that pop music is heavily reliant on the context in which it was made and consumed, in order to be able to reach out to vast audiences that relate to the product that is being sold. This means that in the quest for greater and greater revenues there is nothing that cannot be changed in order to meet the demands for income, not even the core of the artist in question. Throughout modern pop history we can see many examples of artists complying to such changes, ranging from gender and sexuality, to message and looks. These kinds of changes are particularly applicable for female artists.

Discussing the construction of identity has a long tradition in popular musicology. As exemplified above, who you are is potentially changeable and fluid. It is a constant process of assimilation and adaptation. This is very much the case for artists as well. They create stage personas, revamp images and continuously place themselves in a social context. This means that they can construct their identity, either as a genuine representation of themselves or to reflect the market desires, so that they are able to sell their music and identity. Even such fundamental elements of yourself as sexuality and gender are potentially reinvented or reinterpreted. Again, this particularly affects female artists of the pop genre.

In musicology, reflecting on an artist and their creative context is determined by numerous factors that refer to the relationship of the artist to their audience. Not least, this is also about how the artists perceive their fans. Essentially, changes in an artist's identity heavily rely on how they, or their management, perceive themselves in relation to others and how they believe others perceive them in turn (Hawkins, 2002, p.12). Therefore, the construction of a pop identity is an exchange of perceptions in a continuous loop from artist and audience.

Within the interdisciplinary field of popular musicology, it is relevant to discuss concepts like construction of identity in relation to current pop artists. Through our contemporary performers, we see our own lives, reflecting our society and context. One artist that appears highly relevant in such a setting is Miley Cyrus. As one of the world's bestselling, young female artists, she has very clearly undergone drastic changes in her identity. This thesis takes a close look at some of the key elements to her visual and conceptual makeover, from her breakout solo-hits from the EP *The Times of Our Lives* to the platinum selling singles from the album *Bangerz*. At the core of the thesis is an analysis and a discussion of these key elements.

1.2 Background

For some time now popular musicologists have discussed construction of identity, which consists of a large amount of concepts (Scott, 2009). These discussions have focused on topics such as masculinity and femininity, gender as a performative social construct, sexuality as something fluid and the body as a tool for communication, marketing and portrayals of normativity. This thesis builds upon the decades of research done by other scholars in the field of musicology, and seeks to understand a contemporary artist and social context through their theoretical and methodical approaches.

One of the earlier examples of musicological research into the connection between identity and music can be seen in Frith and McRobbie's work on teenybop and cockrock, discussing the apparent gendered understanding of these genres (1991). Similarly, McClary's work on femininity in music represents an early part of a multi-decade discourse in the field (2002). These earlier works are still relevant, due to their adaptability, and establish the connection between constructed identities and views on gender and sexuality.

This connection is further reinforced through work from the 90's that discusses queer aesthetics, differences and 'otherness', as done by scholars like Solie and Koestenbaum (Solie, 1993; Koestenbaum, 1994). This brings in perspectives that or not simply in the field of masculinity and femininity, but creates a discourse around gender and sexuality itself, opening up to a more fluid and diverse understanding of both concepts. This can also be seen in the sociological discussions of gender that were ongoing in the same timeframe, represented by scholars such as Butler (2007). Such new perspectives are discernible in musicological studies by Scott, Hawkins, Dickinson, Mayhew and Richardson & Gorbman (Dickinson, 2009; Hawkins, 2002; 2009a; 2009b; 2013; 2016; Mayhew, 2009; Richardson & Gorbman, 2013; Scott 2009).

In recent years, there has also emerged relevant work in the field from Norwegian popular musicologists, such as Ålvik, Askerøi and Hansen (Askerøi, 2013; Hansen, 2015; Ålvik, 2013). Their works have focused primarily on topics dealing with authenticity, sonic markers and female representations in popular music, and thus combines an understanding of gender and musical science. Building on numerous scholars' work, I seek to reinforce musicology's relevance for understanding important aspects of our own lives and music in its own right.

1.3 Thesis questions, scientific concepts and limitations.

The construction of identities has a long tradition in musicology, as a way of understanding the changes that performative artists undergo throughout their careers, for a variety of reasons and in many different ways. By understanding how artists are constructed we can understand something about society and ourselves. Based on this it becomes relevant to discuss the nature of constructed identities and the elements they consist of. Therefore, this thesis poses the following question: How is Miley Cyrus constructed and how can she be understood through audiovisual readings of four of her music videos?

In addition, I approach a range of other questions. What constitutes a pop identity and how can it be constructed? In what way do normative perceptions of gender and sexuality affect the portrayal of identity in Miley Cyrus? Are the identities of pop stars of their own creation, or are they primarily the product of the music industry and commercial demands?

During this thesis, I will explore a variety of theoretical concepts and terms, with a view to in-depth discussions. The primary focus falls on identity, which in this thesis is dealt with through a combination of multiple elements, such as image, persona, gender and sex. A central premise is the employment of the term identity, a fluid perception that means that identities are subject to change, either consciously constructed or naturally evolved.

A second term that is highly relevant is gender. In this study, I differentiate between gender and sex, where gender is a social construct and sex is biologically given. Some would suggest differentiating between biological and social gender, but I find it more clearly separated and understandable by having a similar differentiation between sex and gender.

I have chosen to concentrate mainly on music videos, with a single methodological approach. By only considering four videos, I have recourse to greater detail, as well as having research objects that reflect two different stages of Miley Cyrus' career, in a way that enables interesting comparisons. Similarly, I have not discussed every possible aspect that can make up an identity, but rather I have focused on those deemed most relevant both in the field of popular musicology and with regards to Miley Cyrus. I will further explain both my understanding of the terms mentioned above, and my reasoning for the projects structure, in later chapters.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of six chapters. In the first chapter, I account for the relevance and actuality of the thesis. I also lay the basis for my background in popular musicology and the background for research of this nature in an interdisciplinary context. In this chapter I also present my research questions, the build-up of this project and how I limit my focus. Towards the end, I present the structure of the thesis.

The second chapter shows my theoretical foundation. Here I account for several important terms and how they assist me in my research on the identities of Miley Cyrus. In order to be able to shed light on how her identities are constructed, and the processes that have led her to where she is today, I must first determine what the underlying concepts that constitute constructed identities are. In order, the chapter presents views on gender and identity, as scientific concepts. Further, it focuses on audiovisuality, which combines music and video. I

later discuss perspectives on the music industry and pop music as a genre. The chapter concludes with a summary.

The third chapter shows my chosen methodological approach. It details how my project is rooted within the field of popular musicology, and my choices regarding my research objects. Further on I go on to describe my analytic process, and the demands of scientific research. Finally, in this chapter I take a critical look at my own research and try to acknowledge any possible shortcomings, before summarising.

Chapter four consists of my audiovisual analysis and readings of the chosen music videos. Here I present my schematics of each audiovisual analysis, one for each music video, and a complementing reading, which shows some relevant perspectives of the video. The chapter does not have a summary, but each individual reading does have conclusory thoughts.

Chapter five contains the main discussion in the thesis, where I review my findings and discuss them in light of theory. This chapter has been divided into four subchapters, where the first discusses how the identities of Miley Cyrus are presented. The second subchapter discusses how the music videos are made to reinforce industry expectations, and its role in constructing Miley's pop identities. In the third subchapter I discuss how perspectives on gender, provocation and marketability affects the construction of identity, based on my findings and continues the discussions from the previous two subchapters, but also aims to look at what the case of Miley Cyrus can say about larger perspectives on constructed identities. In the fourth subchapter I raise the issues from this entire chapter and connect them to wider debates in popular musicology and society, arguing the relevance of such research on a larger scale than this thesis. Finally, the chapter ends with a summary.

The thesis ends with chapter six, which contains my conclusory thoughts. Here I bring up the thesis research questions, and attempt to answer them based on my research and findings, as well as the discussions and perspectives presented during the thesis.

In the appendix, I have enclosed the written lyrics for the four songs, whose videos I analyse.

2 Theory

In this chapter, I will discuss research and theory that relates to a variety of topics that are relevant to analysing the construction of identity in musicians and artists. By discussing the topics that I have chosen, it is possible to acknowledge some pre-existing thoughts and previous research into this field. In addition, it is possible to explain what I deem relevant and to establish clearer definitions of some of the key concepts.

I will first discuss views on gender, both in society and in music. Further, I will consider aspects of heteronormativity and feminism, to outline my later discussion on the role of gender in the creation of pop music identities. I will then focus on what constitutes an identity, primarily connected to how artists can influence and construct their own as performers. To approach this issue, it is relevant to discuss image, personal narratives, subjectivity and hyperembodiment. These are concepts are highly relevant for discussion on both internal and external identity.

After outlining the concept of identity, I will turn to audiovisuality as a way to understand and analyse how artists portray themselves, particularly in music videos. Here it is relevant to discuss both the role of music videos and the narratives they create. In extension of audiovisuality, I will discuss the music industry and its influence on artists. Here I discuss producers and marketability, in addition to discussing young artists and how the industry relies on controversy to sell records.

Towards the end of this chapter I will briefly outline a few key elements of the pop genre, in relation to my data, which is presented in chapter 4. Finally, the chapter ends with a summary, to concisely describe the essential elements of my theory and of previous research.

2.1 The importance of gender

2.1.1 Gender and sex

Whether one likes it or not, gender and gender roles are integral to our daily lives. By being born male or female, one faces different expectations from society solely based on your gender (Schiefloe, 2010, p.159). If we are to explore this, we will first need to determine the different ways in which we can categorize genders and how we can classify them within

systems of categorization. In addition to understanding these different ways of viewing gender, we must understand that views about any topic are affected by the complex context in which we find ourselves. In other words, any concept of social structure can be viewed in a perspective of temporality, where different contexts create different understandings of a topic, both progressively and regressively (Hawkins, 2016, p.4-5).

To conceptualize gender, it is worth starting with a definition of ‘biological gender’.

Biological gender is the gender with which you were born and have corresponding genitalia (Butler, 2007, p.144-150). In other words, the traditional understanding of a person being either male or female, based on their hormones and chromosomes, which correspond visually with having female or male genitalia. This process of dividing people into two categories has had a strong influence on society. Even though society at large has developed and changed in progressive ways in many aspects, this binary understanding of gender is still dominant.

When we are born, our biological gender determines whether we get blue or pink walls in our room, or whether we get to wear dresses or pants. From this we can see that the development of our assumed gender starts early due to being treated differently simply based on our gender (Schiefloe, 2010, p.271). Essentially, gender is viewed as defining for what kind of person we are expected to become, which is biologically pre-determined.

An alternative way to understanding gender is to define gender as a process of social and personal construction, rather than biological pre-determination. You do not possess a gender, you in fact become one. The ‘becoming’ of a gender is linked to a process of becoming naturalized within the different categories of gender (Butler, 2007, p.95). Judith Butler writes:

If one ‘is’ a woman, that is surely not all one is; the term fails to be exhaustive, not because a pregendered ‘person’ transcends the specific paraphernalia of its gender, but because gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities (2007, p.4).

What we can read from this is that a binary system of placing people in two categories purely based on their external genitalia, might not be the best system for determining genders (Butler, 2007, p.144-146). Essentially, people can be perceived to be more than their biologically given gender. This means that such a person can feel affected by gender roles of

varying nature. This can also lead to a feeling of opposition to gender roles, as these are constricting.

Gender roles are sets of norms that an individual faces based on their socially accepted gender, which traditionally has been bound to a biological gender (Schieffloe, 2010, p.197). This creates a framework for actions and choices an individual can make without facing social sanctions, which in many cases, particularly for people who do not identify with their biological gender, can be highly limiting. Even to people who feel comfortable with identifying as their biological gender it is possible to feel limited by these expectations. Traditionally, it has created different social roles between men and women.

If one perceives gender as something that is not predetermined, but constructed and therefore open to changes, the division of gender into the two categories of male and female can be challenging. If both genders face different expectations, a person that identifies in both categories, such as a naturally born female identifying herself as male, may feel pressured from two different sets of gender role expectations (Butler, 2007, p.144-146). Essentially the expectations are limiting a person and defining them in a way that may feel restrictive and difficult to live up to.

These roles are ubiquitous in the music industry as well. Where men have dominated rock, women have been limited mostly to pop. However, men have had more room for branching out. Men have to a larger degree been present in pop, than women have in rock. This is similar to how men have had a greater multitude of roles to play as musicians, where successful women to a larger extent have had to emulate male behaviour or be reduced to 'eye-candy' (Frith & McRobbie, 1991, p.373-374). In recent decades these norms have been changing, due to pressure from both audiences and artists (Hawkins, 2016, p.6).

Relevant in this context is to discuss the difference between gender and sex. All people are born with a sex (Butler, 2007, p.9). The question of what differentiates sex from gender becomes an important one when discussing personal choices and the construction of identity. If a person does in fact have a gender, one needs to determine how this is affected by what the person is said to be (Butler, 2007, p.10). In terms of gender, the question Butler raises is whether one has it or one is it (2007, p.10). In other words, in what way a person's biological gender defines who they are or who they want to be. Basically the distinction between 'being' and 'having' your gender.

Where gender is a social construct, your sex is determined by the X and Y chromosomes present at your time of birth (Butler, 2007, p.144-150). Butler writes: “The category of sex belongs to a system of compulsory heterosexuality that clearly operates through a system of compulsory sexual reproduction”. (2007, p.150). Because of this, sex can therefore be seen as an analytic attribute of a human, instead of a meaningful description of personal attributes (Butler, 2007, p.150). Essentially, you belong to a category due to your biological make-up, but it does not define you. If sex is viewed as indivisibly connected to gender, this means that the distinctions between sex and gender are rendered useless. Due to this, Butler claims that gender should not be conceived as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pre-given sex (2007, p.8-10).

Your biological sex is therefore largely not open for interpretation. With gender however, the lines are a bit more blurred, and no longer a part of a binary and heteronormative system. According to Simone de Beauvoir one is not born a woman, one becomes one (Butler, 2007, p.150). But how does one become a gender? Gender could be seen as way of culturally interpreting a body (Butler, 2007, p.152). With this in mind, gender is also reliant on the cultural and geographical context surrounding the individual in question. Further, gender should not be seen as a stable identity. It should rather be seen as a “stylized repetition of acts”, open to changing contexts (Butler, 2007, p.191). This means that gender can be seen as performative and a part of the individual’s ability to perform their gender. Butler writes: “Genders can be neither true or false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived. As credible bearers of those attributes, however, genders can also be rendered thoroughly and radically incredible.” (2007, p.193).

Therefore, according to Butler, one is born with a sex, but gender is something much more fluid that may change over time. My use of the word gender in this thesis is based on such an understanding. The basis for discussion is therefore a view that gender is socially constructed, changeable and potentially fluid. This perspective can also be seen quite clearly in much of modern pop music.

2.1.2 Gender in music

The act of recording music, as we know it today, has been present in the music industry since the early 1940s. Despite being present, women have had a limited role in the industry.

Women have dominated in the role as pop singers, but have still been devaluated. The female

contribution to music has been as non-creative performers, simply being the figurehead of a creative process. This limitation on what women are supposed to do has led to a further devaluation of their actual contributions. This has in many ways been similar to the general devaluation of women's contributions to society and the workforce (Mayhew, 2009, p.150).

This traditional understanding of female artists, as devaluated creative contributors, has been challenged in recent times, but has a long history of defining the music industry. Throughout time there has been gender segregation in all occupations, and occupations such as musician, song-writer or producer are not exceptions (Mayhew, 2009, p.150). Therefore, female musicians, women who have chosen to create music and play music as their profession, have been scrutinised in the music industry. An example of the dominant position of men in this industry is still perceivable in the role of the management, producers and songwriters, which are roles that still are dominated by men. As it is, there is a clear relationship between the artist themselves, and their producer and musical author. Female artists who have a male producer are often put under scrutiny in relation to the role of the producer and the issue of musical control (Mayhew, 2009, p.152). In other words, female artists may appear individual and independent, but may still be affected by the patriarchal structures of the music industry.

Sara Cohen writes that there is no natural connection between pop music and gender. By this she means that the music itself does not require a specific gender for the artist, nor does it depend on strict gender norms. She further claims that pop music actually provides the musicians and audience a means of musically constructing and performing gender, in a potentially fluid way (2001, p.240). This fits with the understanding of gender as fluid and performative as proposed in chapter 2.1.1. Gender performance refers to how we act gender, and how masculinity or femininity is 'done'. Performing gender can be exemplified as the act of living up to pre-existing notions of actions, visual appearance and other traditional portrayals of gender. However, such a performance could also be used to challenge existing notions, for example by a female artist performing traditionally male stereotypes.

One perspective of gender in music, is that gender is not a fixed category. This is made clear by popular musicians' ability to construct and perform gender, potentially by portraying a gender other than their biological one. The artist's performances and music videos are reliant on showing their sexuality and their gendered identity. Their performances are not as limited by cultural conventions of gender and gender identity, but they may contribute to construct new expectations to gender. (Hawkins, 2009a, p.105). As an example of performing gender,

we may look at the genderplay of Prince. Prince is known for blurring the lines between categories such as black/white or male/female (Hawkins & Niblock, 2011, p.40). In various parts of his career he has portrayed himself as either hypermasculine or quite androgynous, as well as challenging ethnic expectations. By doing this he expands upon his potential for performing gender and ethnicity, but also creates debate around how society views and understands these issues.

The pop music industry has always preoccupied itself with the concept of difference. The same can be argued in relation to the field of musicology. As Ruth Solie was one of the first to reference difference in relation to musicology, her work “Musicology and Difference” naturally becomes of importance (1993). One of the earliest scholars to problematize difference in relation to gender and gendered bodies, was Susan McClary in the early 1990’s. She then brought feminism and a gendered discourse into music and musicology on the whole (2002). Difference is often portrayed through what is known as genderplay, which can be understood as performing genders in a multitude of ways, independently of your own. In this term I include androgyny, transsexualism or transvestitism, drag or queering, as examples of genderplay. The preoccupation with difference has particularly radicalized and have been dominated by male behaviour in the popular music scene (Hawkins, 2009a, p.17). In order to show difference, it is first important to know how to categorize ‘us’ in order to put this up against ‘the Others’.

The pop industry itself blurs the lines of traditional conventions in order to create new spaces for defining identities in order to create new markets. Therefore, when an artist understands the power of imagery in marketing, they are free to play around with ethnic ambiguousness and androgyny. In the beginning of the 1980s when artists such as Prince started using genderplay in his performances, he underlined the ambiguity that was disruption of the conventional codes of masculinity (Hawkins & Niblock, 2011, p.35). In playing with the boundaries of masculinity and femininity, Prince had, according to Stan Hawkins and Sarah Niblock “systematically obfuscated boundaries between the subject (the reader of the image) and object (himself), and in doing so has thoroughly problematized all notions of genre in popular music.” (2011, p.37). Another example of such behaviour is Annie Lennox, who as a woman has portrayed herself in an androgynous way. In other words, when a pop artist plays around with notions of difference in their performances, they create the distinction of ‘us’, the artist themselves up against ‘the Others the audience. This can be used to create a distance,

not necessarily pushing the listener away, but merely distinguishing the artist from their audience.

The 'reality' of gender is created through sustained social performances. This suggests that gender is not expressive, but performative (Butler, 2007, p.192). If this is the case, then the notion of a true masculinity or femininity are all part of the strategy that hides gender's performative character. When using queerness as a tool for musicians to assert their personae, gender needs to be seen as a concept which allows the multiplicity of voices in a culture to be understood. The act of queering can be understood as a performance that "encourages queer viewing" (Hawkins & Richardson, 2007, p.15). Queering focuses on performing gender in a way that might break with normative and traditional views on gender. This is important when trying to understand the function of gender in music (Hawkins, 2009a, p.104). Gender is a category that embodies social difference, and is constructed through relations between men and women, women and women, and men and men (Cohen, 2001, p.230). Artists construct or perform gender through rock or pop music, amongst other genres. These performances are influenced by social or cultural context, such as traditional gender roles and gender identity. Music therefore contributes to how we think about men and women, and how they should or should not act or behave (Cohen, 2001, p.231).

2.1.3 Heteronormative issues

As with gender, sexuality has historically been connected to a traditional understanding of male and female and the relationship between the two. Where gender traditionally has had two categories, male and female, sexuality has had one socially accepted category, heterosexuality. However, if one is to accept the notion that multiple genders exist and that gender is fluid, sexuality must also follow such patterns. This means that sexuality is not uniquely heterosexual, but has a variety of possible natures (Butler, 2007, p.40-41).

As with gender, discussions of sexuality hinge on the conflict between traditional social conventions and the right and possibility for individuals to define themselves in a way that they experience as fulfilling and reflective of themselves. Alternate sexual orientations, such as homosexuality or bisexuality, have become more prominent in recent years and have had a relatively long tradition in the music industry (Hawkins, 2016, p.65-66). Both as a creative outlet, or a way of living out your actual sexuality in a more socially accepted way, and as a way for the industry to create interest and make an artist seem either relatable or

controversial. In this case it is relevant to distinguish between genuinely non-hetero artists and artists that queer to create an image. An example of queering to create an image can be found in an artist such as Beyoncé, who invokes both queer visual and lyrical aspects, particularly in her song 'If I Were a Boy', whilst keeping with a heterosexual persona (Hawkins, 2016, p.164-166).

In the field of musicology, sexuality was first discussed in relation to music in the 1970s, in connection to discussions about Bob Marley (See Hawkins and Niblock, 2011, p.59). This was fully problematized by Frith & McRobbie, in their discursive text about 'cockrock' and 'teenybop' (1991). It is very difficult to separate gender identity among popular musicians from politics, and the same applies to separating an artist's sexuality from their identity (Hawkins and Niblock, 2011, p.61). As pop artists are always in the spotlight, controversy regarding their sexual identity will always occur. However, if the artist themselves wishes to address this or not, staging of sexual identities are part of what signifies subjectivity in the pop industry (Hawkins, 2009a, p.95). Social relations are strongly regulated by the patriarchal structures of power found in Western culture. This in turn strongly affects how we see gender and sexuality in popular music today. As Stan Hawkins argues, heteronormativity constitutes the norms of heterosexual male representation in pop music (2002, p.13). In this way, heteronormativity constitutes the norms of all heterosexual representations in pop music, not just male.

If we are to concur with Butler, gender is acquired in connection with a person's identity (2007, p.23). Sexuality, in connection with gender, will then be closely linked to a person's identity. The essence of an understanding of both sexuality and gender, in combination, therefore forms the basis of any discussion of identity, both given and constructed.

2.1.4 Feminism in critical musicology

Traditional gender roles contain social expectations of how an individual act, regardless of how we define gender. Even with a fluid understanding of gender, one is still subject to social scrutiny, which is culturally based in traditional gender. Both historically and contemporarily, individuals and groups of people have criticised such genders roles for being limiting and restrictive. Those in opposition to gender roles have historically been defined as feminists (Holst, 2009, p.30-39). Feminism can simply be defined as opposition to restrictive gender roles that limit an individual in what they can or cannot do based on the cultural expectations

they face. Examples of this can be found in types of work being associated with a specific gender, or leader roles being traditionally male.

Debates regarding contemporary feminism divide scholars, and the wish to remove the negativity and weakness linked to the term 'feminine' is of utmost importance amongst women and non-biologically female feminists. Mostly, feminism has been based on the assumption that there is an existing identity only understood through the category of biological women (Butler, 2007, p.2). However, in recent times it has become clear that the very subject of woman can no longer be understood by objective and absolute terms (Butler, 2007, p.2). Therefore, feminism is also relevant for trans-people and males wanting gender equality.

Over time feminism has in some cases sought to become related to struggles against racial oppression, and it has been important for feminists to resist against the notion of patriarchy (Butler, 2007, p.48). This brings us back to how societies were built on men's status in the patriarchal societies. Butler claims that contemporary feminism concerns itself with questions of female identity and masculinist oppressions (2007, p.19). This does not mean that feminism is just for women. All people can relate to struggles concerning race, patriarchy and equality (Butler, 2007, p.18).

When linking feminism to concepts of gender and sex, it is potentially problematic to classify people in two sexes or genders. There are groups of people who do not fit into those two categories because their bodies or personalities are too complex to be placed within a rigid binary system (Välimäki, 2013, p.373). Linking this to music however, it is clear that all music has the opportunity to be seen as transgendered, depending on the voice you choose to listen for (Välimäki, 2013, p.377). Simply, the singer being male does not mean that a song's first person narrative is male. As with all aspects of modern life, the 'meaning' of the word feminine has changed over time. However, historically, the term feminine has been linked to what is 'weak' or abnormal, especially in music composition. If something was considered masculine, it was that which could be connected to the objective and the more rational within the musical discourses. Therefore, at the other end of the scale, we would find the feminine; the weaker and more abnormal parts of the music (McClary, 2002, p.10).

As feminists choose to fight for equality for all people, regardless of biological gender, feminism has also found a foothold within the LGBTIQ culture. In today's gender normative

society, it is important to find one's voice, both physically and mentally. When questioning the terms such as feminine and masculine, this presents an issue. The development of gender begins early on in a child's life, and influences musical development. Traditionally this has divided genres by gender, all of which have been highly heteronormative, but also creates different roles for women and men to grow into. Where men have been encouraged to be sexually aggressive and quite brazen, women have been pigeonholed into singing about romance and have passivity towards sexuality. For both genders, regardless of genre, women have been viewed as sexual objects, to be attained by more aggressive men (Frith & McRobbie, 1991, p.374-375). Regardless of how they choose to present themselves, women in the music industry have typically been assumed to be publicly available. Women on stage have been perceived as sexual commodities, regardless of their physical appearances (McClary, 2002, p.151).

As women might be at an advantage regarding how they alter their appearances with make-up and the like, women making themselves 'less feminine' are in fact less scrutinised than men making themselves 'more feminine' (Hawkins, 2009b, p.199). Women choosing to cut their hair short will still be viewed as less feminine than women with long hair. The same applies to men with short hair being seen as more masculine than men with long hair (Koestenbaum, 1994, p.3). This way of minimizing femininity is a way for women in the music industry to be taken more seriously, as downplaying that which makes them feminine is considered parts of making them more masculine (McClary, 2002, p.152-153). One of feminism's main goals have been to emphasise that biology does not determine how women and men act or think (Cohen, 2001 p.230). Essentially, this means that both men and women should be free to make individual choices regardless of their gender and instead basing it on personal preferences. However, within the music industry, many genres are still linked to patriarchal structures. In order for a woman in the genre of rock to obtain some sort of authenticity, she might result to downplay what McClary calls the "phallic backbeat" (2002, p.154). However, this often results in her music to be considered stereotypically feminine, and thus linking this to the negativity and weakness associated with this term (McClary, 2002, p.154). This is possible to apply to all aspects of the music industry, as stereotypically 'female' musicians tend to be scrutinised and under the supposed control of male producers and managers, in ways that are different to male musicians.

Because women and men are treated differently from the outset, this affects the development of one's identity. When a biological female is met with different and almost impossible standards for her to be valued in society purely based on her being a woman, it is not unheard of that she would therefore choose to keep her femininity hidden whilst accentuating that which makes her more masculine. By doing so she places herself closer to the standards set by society for men (Hawkins, 2009b, p.199). Often one can find that it is more socially acceptable to be a man, and the masculine is appreciated more than the feminine (Schieffloe, 2010, p.271). When researching gender and gender roles, it is closely linked to the political and cultural intersections where it is produced. Because of this, it will eventually become impossible to separate gender from other intersections (Butler, 2007, p.5).

Based on this discussion, I will employ the word feminism in such a way as to describe an opposition to oppressive structures, that limit artists, based on gender. This can also be viewed in connection to an understanding of heteronormativity as a dominating standard of viewing men and women, with uneven balances of power and influence. This will be relevant when I later discuss how a pop artist may challenge existing notions of gender and sexuality.

2.2 Constructing identity

2.2.1 Image

Each individual possesses their own identity, which can be strengthened by being included in a group. Identity is often constituted by perceiving oneself in relation to others, and by this, seeing oneself as different from others (Hawkins, 2002, p.12). A person's identity is also heavily reliant on image, persona and subjectivity. I will now portray and discuss these concepts and relate them to the construction of an identity.

Whether a person wishes to underline or counteract their biological sex, gender identity is undoubtedly developed at an early age. An individual will both have a personal identity and a social identity. The personal identity consists of how we see ourselves as individuals, which may change at various points in a lifetime, but bases itself on a core understanding of yourself. A social identity can change with age, and is dependent on those we surround ourselves with. Basically we use our social identity to identify ourselves within the boundaries of a group (Schieffloe, 2010, p.271).

When finding an individual image, or the person we want the world to see, we do this to fit in to a group or a genre. We get confirmation of our image by surrounding ourselves with people who share similar identity markers as we do (Schiefloe, 2010, p.271). In relation to pop music however, “the pop identity is imitative of its historical, political and social grounding, where musical genres are constantly negotiable” (Hawkins, 2009a, p.66). Essentially, we can understand image as a fluid and changeable construction of oneself. This can be viewed in connection to the understanding of gender and gender fluidity from chapter 2.1.

Image is linked to pictures, and with that the picture one wishes to show the world. As mentioned previously, when we grow up we try to change our image to fit in with a wanted group or style. As pop artists construct their image, it is done in order to relate to audiences, and making the audiences identify with the artist. Pop artists are very much a product of the music industry; a product the industry wishes to make money off of. In order to do this, the artist must have the ‘correct look’ and needs to resonate with the target audience (Frith, 2001, p.35).

An example of how image can be created in an artist is evident their vocal style. Often, the pop voice relies on imaginative forms and dramatized patterns of relationships. The pop voice is a recorded construction that distinguishes itself from a live voice. The recorded voice is therefore a trademark of the artist themselves, and with that, a mediator of identity construction (Hawkins, 2009a, p.142). The artist can create a distinct sound, that is recognizable and can therefore can be a trademark, containing ‘sonic markers’ (Askerøi, 2013, p.16). With the technological advantages we have in the music industry today, an artist’s voice is easily edited to create a sound that is fitting for the market. An example of both the technological innovations and the connection between an artist and a distinct sound can be found in the artist Cher and her use of the vocoder (Dickinson, 2009, p.163-178). This is part of a larger discussion about authenticity and authorship, in creation of identity, that will be discussed later. Similar to the sonic markers that come from recognizable voices, the visual aspect of an artist is important when creating an image. The artist becomes recognizable when auditive and visual aspects come together, creating a rounded image of who the artist is supposed to be.

2.2.2 Personal narratives

The term persona describes the role or a character portrayed by an artist. Therefore, the persona is closely linked to constructed image, which is quite essential for a performing artist (Hawkins, 2009a, p.39). The recording studio is often perceived as the site where an artist's persona is initially created. When the record company or manager working with an artist have decided on the image they want associated with their name, the search for the artist with the 'correct' image begins. Alternatively, an artist with a marketable image may present itself externally but still fit the standards that are desired. By arousing curiosity and trying to create an image as relatable or appealing to the audiences, the pop artist tries to construct an original persona for themselves (Hawkins, 2009a, p.39). As Hawkins writes: "The pop persona is projected in an exaggerated guise of self-deprecation, 'sincerity', self-send-up, intense emotional outpourings, and so on." (2009a, p.39). In other words, the artist must appear human and empathic.

There are artists, such as the late David Bowie, who throughout their careers continuously adopt new stage personas. Seeing as the artists' music is read partly through perceptions of their public persona, when artists continually change their personas, it is difficult for viewers or critics to determine what is the 'real' artist (Goodwin, 1992, p.111). With artists who started their career when they were very young, such as Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake, or in our case Miley Cyrus, we can see that they change their personas as they grow older, for a variety of reason. It is also quite usual for artists to take on a persona whilst appearing in a music video, again raising the question of what is the 'real' artist (Goodwin, 1992, p.110-113). This shows that some changes in personal narratives are based on the real life events of the artist, whilst others happen independently of their real lives and are based on market interests and marketability, which I will come back to in chapter 2.4.

Vocal production is integral to an artists' persona. Different ways of vocal performances will create different reactions, either making the artist seem more unattainable or more relatable. Essentially, the artist may appear more or less like a normal person, with different outcomes and possibilities (Dickinson, 2009, p.166). In addition, the artist's relatability this is also connected to the sonic markers mentioned in chapter 2.2.1.

One way of creating a distinct persona is through creating controversy, the function of which will be discussed to a larger extent later on. However, the effect of for example shock or

surprise in performances of female artists also has a foothold in the creation of persona. Artists such as Madonna have toyed with the boundaries of women in pop music, both through visual aspects, live performances and use of vocals in studio produced records. In some cases, the artist may be restricted by such personas, due to the continuous expectations for further controversy. In other words, a controversial artist needs to continuously upstage herself in the eyes of critics and their audience. Alternatively, the artist must break with a given persona, again opening themselves for criticism (Goodwin, 1992, p.111).

When an audience is exposed to multiple personas from a single artist it creates a question of authenticity, or how 'real' the artist is (Goodwin, 1992, p.111). In musicology this creates a challenge, due to the lack of certainty of what aspects of an artist are genuine and objectively real, and what aspects are products of a construction created to sell records and build a reputation. Essentially, the artist could be understood to continuously be in a state of performing a persona, which results in the artist not being a reliable source for verification. Therefore, understanding an artist, both from their perspective and from an academic perspective is a question of subjectivity.

2.2.3 Subjectivity vs. Identity

Subjectivity can be described as how one understands and perceives an artist, based on the information and context one encounters the artist in (Hawkins, 2009a, p.38). When speaking of subjectivity in relation to music, one speaks of what is personal for the artist or musician. The artists' music is mostly read through perceptions of their public persona (Goodwin, 1992, p.111). This is through their music videos, their studio and stage performances or interviews made by the artist. Essentially, any insight into their life and persona. To understand what lies behind any pop subjectivity, it is relevant to connect the persona and image of the artist to the one objective element of the same artist: the body.

The body has turned into the pop artist's greatest virtue (Hawkins, 2009a, p.67-69). In pop music, conventions are smudged in order to create new spaces for defining viewer's identities that promoters may use to develop new markets. Promotional materials will always be an important factor in how an artist is received by the spectators (Hawkins and Niblock, 2011, p.35-36). It is relevant to discuss how much of an artist's persona is personal, and what is constructed by promoters and the record company. In all accounts, pop subjectivity is reliant on being seen by the fans, the press and the public at large. The connections between an artist

on a stage and what we judge to be the artist's private sphere, becomes our perceived view of the artist's subjectivity. This creates uncertainty about the space between the public perspective and the private sphere. Essentially, the distance between what we see in interviews and in stage performances and who we perceive to be the 'real person' (Hawkins, 2009a, p.69).

Subjectivity is closely aligned to performativity, which can be understood as the way artists perceive how they in turn are perceived by their audience (Hawkins, 2009a, p.65). Both of these concepts are closely knit to the artist's own awareness of themselves as a performed act (Hawkins and Niblock, 2011, p.35). In addition, performativity can be understood as the internalization of repeated performances, either of gender or style, to such an extent that they appear and feel natural. Performativity is therefore connected to the concept of authenticity. Music is sold on the basis of the pop artist's sound, but also their identity. It can therefore be argued that music helps model identity whilst at the same time bringing people together and shaping subjectivities (Hawkins and Niblock, 2011, p.51). At the same time an artist can construct an identity based on how they both wish to be perceived and how they believe they are perceived, with potential for fame, economic gain and artistic freedom. It also can be deeply personal, based on a genuine desire to be desired, liked and appreciated. One way to reflect on such performativity is to look at how an artist uses their body (Hawkins, 2009a, p.65). They can define their social space through choices of clothes, accentuation of physical attributes and focus in visual media such as music videos. This makes the body an extension of the creative expression, adding to the auditive. It further creates an inevitable connection between the artist, their body and their perceived identity. After all, people often identify themselves with their own bodies, and by extension others with their bodies (Hawkins, 2002, p.17-18).

It is relevant to distinguish between subjectivity and identity. Whereas subjectivity focuses on how perceptions of an artist are coming from an audience and affected by context, identity refers to how the artist perceives him- or herself. Identity can also be affected by context, in the sense that the artists themselves wish to be perceived in specific ways, whilst subjectivity is how the audience in fact perceives them. Essentially, subjectivity is the audience's perception of the artist, whilst identity is the artist's internal perception and how they wish to be perceived externally. The concept of performativity becomes relevant due to the ongoing process back and forth between how an artist perceives themselves and wishes to be

perceived, and the audience's perception. Therefore, the artist is prone to have a personal idea about who and what they are, which affects the audience, which in turn reflects back on the artist in a continuous give and take.

Based on this blurred distinction it is relevant to see the two terms, subjectivity and identity, in connection as they continuously affect each other. However, I find it relevant to distinguish between them in some situations. Therefore, I use the word 'subjectivity' to describe the external perceptions of an artist, and 'identity' to describe how the artist appears to view themselves, albeit from my external perspective.

2.2.4 Hyperembodiment

With regard to artists using their body, this is affected by cultural standards, gender roles and social expectations, which we have discussed earlier. However, the music industry and the pop genre has a long tradition of both challenging and enhancing social views of the body. An example of this focus is the concept of hyperembodiment.

Hyperembodiment is visualisation of the artist's body in order to make the automatic connection between an artist and their body, as a near-perfect object (Hawkins, 2013, p.466). This view of the artist as a desirable object, which can be retouched digitally or in other ways enhanced to create an image or evoke a particular mood, connects the visual and the auditive. The artist can perform their body in connection to the music they are performing, creating a double stimuli and also creating a performance on multiple levels (Hawkins, 2013, p.466-67).

Hyperembodiment, a major aspect of pop music videos, depends on the pre-existing expectations of a body-fixated culture. Pop artists are shown in music videos with perfect bodies, edited down to the last detail, making them appear more than 'natural'. This body fixation is nothing new, but seems to escalate alongside with the technological advancements in the field of videography. With this, the opportunities to re-touch or gloss over bodies and faces seem to be endless. In other words, with technology the artist becomes less real in visual representations (Hawkins, 2013, p.467-68).

Pop videos are assembled as aesthetically pleasing for the viewer, making them glossy productions depicting artists as more than human. The artist and the producer of the music video are reliant on making a video that people will want to watch, therefore music videos also often show the demands put on an artist by the music industry (Hawkins, 2013, p.466-

467). Pop artists are viewed in terms of desire and identification. Music videos therefore show both the pressure laid on a pop artist by the music industry, and the pressure put on them by society. Thus, the use of hyperembodiment in music videos gives the viewer a sense of the obsession with a specific way of presenting oneself, and the decisions made by the director (Hawkins, 2013, p.481).

Most pop videos do in fact rely on showing the pop artists through a gendered and sexualised display. Often this display is centred around an idolization of physical perfection. With the ability to digitally change and enhance parts of the artists visible in the videos, achieving physical perfection in music videos is not impossible. Using Rihanna's "Umbrella" as an example, Hawkins argues that "Highly constructed pop videos, like pop songs, tend to be contentious for many, and Rihanna is one in a long line of female artists at the onset of the twenty-first century whose act steadily meets the eyes of a porn-fixated culture" (2013, p.469). In other words, music videos reflect views on both gender, sexuality and what is deemed 'normal' and desirable.

Digitally enhanced bodies on screen can be interpreted as manifestations of the mind transcending the body. The slender body shape, light eyes and straight nose is the image that sells. When addressing the display of bodies in music videos, Hawkins points out that: "Above all, the visibility of the artist's body is intended to encourage multiple viewings, its fetishistic appeal being culturally specific and based on many variants of the gaze, not least of all the director." (2013, p.468). With this he makes the claim that a music video is made so that it will be watched over and over again, and will reach a broad spectre of audiences. The use of hyperembodiment in music videos can also become a product of sound production working its way in to the viewers' or listeners' gaze (Ibid, p.469).

Whilst employing a close reading of a music video, one can observe how an artist chooses to set the mood for their stage persona. Therefore, in pop videos, the artist is on display and so is their body. Analysis of performance in music videos relies on recognizing the virtual representations of gender and sexuality (Hawkins, 2013, p.466). In music videos what we see are digitalized bodies, edited down to the very last detail. Magnification of an artist's features, airbrushing a body, accentuating the colour of their eyes, or making them hypersexualised are all possible tools of hyperembodiment.

This way of displaying the body has dominated the music video, which has been a major part of the music industry from the 1980's. However, when applying this to several case studies, Kai Arne Hansen argues that this way of showing fetishistic images of female bodies, whilst at the same time showing this as portrayals of females and femininity in such a way that it plays on stereotypes and exaggerations, is not unlike what we saw in films and cinema's during the 1930s (2015, p.5).

As theorized by Laura Mulvey in the 1970s, the 'gaze' also becomes important when looking at female representations in videos (1975). Using her definitions of the gaze, there are three different ways of using this in videos. The first being the gaze of the camera itself. By extension, in music videos, this is the gaze of the director of the video in question. Historically, this has been the gaze of a white, heterosexual males (Ibid, p.837). The second way the gaze can be perceived is that of the audience watching the video. However, this also affects the person being viewed, as their subjectivity as a person is linked to how they feel that other people perceive them (Ibid, p.841). The third way of using the gaze as a strategic tool when making films or music videos, is the gaze that connects the characters present in the video. This helps reinforce the relationship between the different characters shown on screen (Ibid, p.843).

A music video can simply be a set of images, or a complicated narrative, that goes alongside the song it is based around. Almost any musical feature can be reflected in the music video image. People and objects in the video seem to inhabit their own world, a combination of what is real and what is imaginary (Vernallis, 2004, p.156). Sound and image are not to be confused with the ear and the eye. The ear carries information and sensations only some of which are specifically auditive, the eye carries information and sensations only some of which can be considered visual (Chion, 1994, p.137). Music video exists within a range of social relationships, and is a set of cultural practices, has historical, intertextual and intermedial ties with other cultural forms. Music video, on the whole, is consumed by different social groups for different reasons and in specific ways (Grossberg, 2000, p.185).

2.3 Audiovisuality

2.3.1 The Rise of Music Video

Audiovisuality bases itself on the connection between the auditive and the visual in music as a media. The most common format for such a connection in popular music is the music video. In the 1980s, MTV appeared as a music channel reaching hundreds of thousands of people at the same time. Even though visually striking performances have existed for hundreds of years, music video quickly became one of the most important media an artist had access to. The rise of MTV made sure that a music video had the opportunity to reach millions of people across borders (Hawkins and Richardson, 2007, p.2). Music videos come in all shapes and sizes, and the narrative of the music video is mostly up to its creator and producer. However, they are often created to reflect contemporary society and topics within the popular music industry (Vernallis, 2004, p.1). The context we place the music video in will therefore always be the society in which it was created. This results in pop videos today being glossy productions created simply as a means to appeal to the viewers (Hawkins, 2013, p.467).

The history of technology plays its part when speaking of music videos. As the rise of modern media technology is often based on the separation of sound and image, music video has a way of breaking the barriers that separate sound and image, whilst trying to create its own combined media. (Berland, 2000, p.26). The rise of talkies and the record industry also helped pave the way for music video. In the beginning of the 1980s you could not make a hit record and become famous across international borders without making a music video (Berland, 2000, p.32).

Music videos hit a low point in the 2000s due to budget cuts and the market decrease. However, in the 2010s, music videos are back and stronger than ever. Previously, music videos could only be seen on TV-channels such as MTV, which resulted in there sometimes being a limit as to what the artists could show in their videos. Now, with internet pages such as YouTube, music videos require less 'censorship' than previously (Vernallis, 2013, p.207-208). This lack of censorship enables artists and producers to be even more daring in what they choose to show in music videos. The music video therefore presents a possibility for authenticity through closeness to the audience and lack of 'filters'.

2.3.2 The Role of Music Videos

Originally used as a promotional device, the music video has become a marketable product in its own right. For the viewer, experiencing images in the comfort of their own homes will create a different way of viewing the images rather than if they were to view them in a public setting. Because we now are able to see music videos whenever and wherever we are, the video can even become more important than the song itself (Hawkins and Richardson, 2007 p.3).

When making music, a single can exist without a music video. The same is not true the other way around. The music video simply cannot exist without the music. Music video draws the viewer's attention to the song and away from it at the same time. Therefore, the music video itself is a genre that is based on a paradox (Berland, 2000, p.25). Electronic reproduction has made it possible to move images or sound across the barriers of time or space. Because of this, the contemporary image tends to present itself as representing that which it replaces; the social context of music itself. Because of music video, the integrated music/film/television industry now reasserts its global and domestic powers. With this it also asserts its power to enter a space: anyone's space (Berland, 2000, p.27).

In music videos, music, image and lyrics each possess their own language in regards to time, space narrativity, affect and activity. Therefore, music videos must fulfil competing demands of showcasing the star whilst at the same time reflecting the lyrics of the song and underscoring the music (Vernallis, 2004, p.4). Pop music is rarely teleological, and the same goes for pop music videos. Therefore, the videos tend to mimic the concerns of pop music, which are generally a consideration of a topic rather than an enactment of it. If the music video is made to draw attention to the music to which it was made, it makes sense that the image would not carry a full story or a plot (Vernallis, 2004, p.17).

Pop videos deal with creativity at the same time as productivity, and there is a critical relationship to the genre of pop music. As the prime incentive for making a music video is selling the artists music, such videos have helped the industry market the artist and have helped the viewers get closer to pop artists (Hawkins, 2002, p.36-37). As Jody Berland points out, music and television holds enormous power over us with its ability to offer music to anyone in the presence of a television or with access to the internet (2000, p.25-26). The music industry surrounds itself with marketability and technological advances simply for the

purpose of selling music through the pop artist. The producer's ability to edit any aspects of a music video before it is released to the public shows just how important the 'correct look' is for the artist and the industry itself. To understand the effect of music videos as musical multimedia, it is relevant to look at how it can be analysed.

2.3.3 Analysing music video

There are numerous ways of attempting an analysis of musical multimedia. When watching a video, the visual aspects often dominate our attention as viewers. Often television absorbs the musical aspects in to the visuals almost flawlessly. However, when watching a music video, the viewers' attention is simultaneously drawn to multiple sources of information, both auditive and visual (Berland, 2000, p.25). Whilst making a music video, the musician will ultimately play a version of themselves in the video, if they appear. Thus the image of the musician becomes more important, and the music itself is potentially left behind (Berland, 2000, p.37).

Audiovisual analysis strives towards an understanding of how music and sound combines with the use of images. Seeing as we are more drawn to the images than the music whilst viewing musical multimedia, categorizing the sound has proven to be more difficult than the images (Auslander, 2013, p.609). Audiovisual analysis leads the analysts into a process of stripping away old layers of their own perception, in order to properly analyse music videos (Chion, 1994, p.186).

There are several challenges we meet while attempting to analyse music videos. One such challenge is how to combine the musical and visual aspects of the video, both simultaneously and separately (Walser, 2002, p.157). This challenge is present in both initial and later experiences of a music video, where it is difficult to experience it as both a visual stimulus, with visual standards of storytelling, and an auditive stimulus, created independently of the video. Because the song is created before the video, it represents a different part of the creative process for the artist, whilst the video often represents market interests to a larger degree. However, the music video may be a more complete media, due to the possibility of multiple layers of storytelling (Vernallis, 2004, p.3-4). When creating a video for a pre-existing song it is possible for the producer and artist to expand upon the message or theme of the song, in the visuals. This creates a more fulfilling product.

Analysing such complex multimedia is highly dependent on being able to recognize the visual aspects, one of which is gender, as a 'parcel for entertainment' (Hawkins, 2013, p.466).

Because pop artists are constantly faced with the need to market themselves, the use of an artist's body is a frequent element of music videos. This can both be used to convey established ideas about gender and sex, but also to challenge them through unorthodox portrayals of bodies. Essentially, the artist can use their body to reflect or rebel against social ideals, and by this creating a visual image of their artistry (Hawkins, 2013, p.467). Similarly, because of the audience's ability to relate to an artist, any music video with the artist in it has the potential for creating a narrative, because it relates to being human.

2.3.4 Narratives

Music videos function to communicate the pop artist to the public, presenting a wide range of types from abstract videos to videos that convey a story. However, most music videos tend to avoid the Aristotelian narratives found in other videos. The Aristotelian definition of narratives is centred around characters with pre-defined personality traits, goals, and a sense of agency encountering obstacles (Vernallis, 2004, p.3) In order for the music video not to overshadow the song itself, many music video makers choose to create a hint of a story and not a complete narrative. This lack of a complete narrative is due to several reasons. Firstly, it is due to the genre's multimedia nature. Typically, the music video follows the songs format, and it tends to be non-sequentially directed. The second reason is because of the lack of appropriateness and acceptability of narrative film devices. Lastly, it is necessary to be able to sell the song with the help of the music video, and therefore the song's format is foregrounded in the videos layers (Vernallis, 2004, p.3-6). In other words, music video is a limited genre for storytelling. When watching a music video, the music itself becomes more of a backdrop than anything else. The music therefore ensures the narrative continuity even though it is the visual aspects of the music video the viewer might remember (McClary, 2002, p.161).

A key element in the connection between a music video and the performing artist is the concept of personal narrativity. Essentially, elements from an individual video can be part of an overarching understanding of the artist's life, creating a larger narrative. This kind of personal narrative suggests a reconstitution of identity, through reflection and revision (Hawkins & Richardson, 2007, p.4). This further establishes that identities are performative, in that they are developed and renegotiated through multiple instances of representation of the

self. It also adds a new layer of communication, combining both the message and the format the artist wishes to convey, either of which can resonate with the audience.

Films teach us to assume that we gain information as the narrative progresses. When most music videos do not have a complete narrative, there is less information to be gained. Music video also works within the same assumptions as films, but at the same time it works against it by being progressively unpredictable, and by contradicting that which has already been shown (Vernallis, 2004, p.42). Music videos distance the viewer in a number of ways, and though they do not contain fully wrought stories, they keep our attention towards the characters in the video, who they are and what they might do next (Vernallis, 2004, p.47). Without a narrative, many music videos hinge on a question of place. Basically what it means to go from one location to another in the video. This usually corresponds to the music and the lyrics (Vernallis, 2004, p.88). On the whole, music video image will gain from holding back information and making the viewer slightly unsure about what the story was all about (Vernallis, 2004, p.17). One way of interpreting this is that music videos leaves a lot to the audience, who can interpret freely. This leaves room for a larger audience to be 'satisfied', due to the lack of complete storytelling. Satisfied consumers are key to creating a basis for marketability and the music industry (Richardson & Gorbman, 2013, p.20-24).

2.4 The Music Industry

A record company's core activity is 'star-making'. Always reliant on supply and demand, the industry itself is made up of artists wanting to market and sell themselves as products, and managers and producers standing behind them looking for ways to make the most money. (Frith, 2001, p.35). This in turn creates a potential conflict between the artist themselves, and the music industry. As the industry is reliant on making the most money out of the artist, the performer may therefore become simply another product. Furthermore, if the pop artist is not willing to conform to the sets of rules and norms proposed by their manager or producer, they might simply be dropped from the label and disappear from the industry completely. Thus giving the producers and managers much power over the artist, and might therefore 'scare' the artist into complying so that they do not become a 'one-hit wonder'.

2.4.1 Producers' roles

There is a definite connection between the role of producer and the role of musical author. Often female performers are put under scrutiny in relation to the role of the producer (Mayhew, 2009, p.152). This is due to the fact that women have often been devalued in the music industry. Women have only had access to the role of singers, and not as producers or creators. On the whole, it is quite rare for female singer to contribute much to the composition of their performed work (McClary, 2002, p.153).

In music, as well as the visual arts or other creative fields, there has long been gender segregation in terms of artistic work or value (Mayhew, 2009, p.150). Throughout time, the role of the producer has become almost synonymous with an authoritative position. The female performer's position as a valued artist is therefore closely tied to the relationship with her producer (Mayhew, 2009, p.152). Performers who are given credit for writing their own songs, usually stand a better chance of being evaluated favourably in terms of their musical status. However, women in our culture have often been thought of as incapable of understanding music, therefore, historically women have lacked the authenticity required in order for them to establish some sort of authorship of their music (McClary, 2002, p.154). Thus the question of authorship has become an important one in the music industry. Female artists in the industry who have become leading musical forces have had the persona of a singer/songwriter, thus maintaining the role of author as well as singer. In the genre of rock, collaborative work is an accepted practice. When it comes to female solo artists however, this is often viewed as creatively suspect (Mayhew, 2009, p.152-153). Essentially, the artist is less genuine if they do not singlehandedly write their own music. However, there have been many obstacles for women wanting to work in the music industry. Many women have been denied the training required for a person to work within the production industry of music. Also, women have typically been assumed to be incapable of sustained creative activity, such as composition, direction or production (McClary, 2002, p.18).

Female composers do in fact create somewhat of a paradox in the music industry. On the one hand they are discouraged from creating their own material, whilst on the other being devaluated and scrutinised for not taking part in the creative processes if they do not do it. It is a classic Catch-22, where female artists are supposed to both be in complete control of their careers and at the same time relinquish control to their managers and producers (McClary, 2002, p.154).

Musical creativity has a clear link to who is in control. However, even if performers are given song-writing credit, this is part of the collaborative work mentioned earlier, and might not be a good thing for the singer at all. Collaboration with other producers, often male, performers or writers could undermine a female artist's musical credibility. A female performer is supposed to be able to do it all, and not receive any help in doing so. If not, she will be devalued as an artist (Mayhew, 2009, p.155). If the artist is seen to have some kind of input into the technical aspects of the recording process, or even having a say in who should be hired as a producer, this will help boost the artists' musical credibility. Better yet, if the artist is capable of producing her own music, she will gain significant credibility (Mayhew, 2009, p.155).

In the recording studio, male performers have had to take part in just as many collaboration as female performers. However, women are generally weakened through the existing assumptions that concern the abilities and creative roles of women in the music industry. Typically, women have been discouraged from even learning about this type of technology. Centuries of gender division in labour fields such as art or music will bear down on any female performer (McClary, 2002, p.138). Ultimately, all female performers are subject to the historical and patriarchal construction of the artist, which reflects similar structures in society at large. This is because authenticity has been modelled on a specific male subject, and the female subject is therefore always facing an impossible challenge of living up to the standards. Women, who choose the music industry and performing as their long time career, will always have to negotiate this construction in the media and in their working lives (Mayhew, 2009, p.159).

2.4.2 Teenage popstars

For some artists, their entire working lives are in the music industry. They may be discovered as children or teenagers, and carefully built up to be musical sensations at young ages, often portrayed as prodigies. In these cases, particularly with young female artists, the artist is often connected to a supporting group of guiding producers and grown-up songwriters. Here the artist builds a reputation based on a silent partner, who creates the songs and expressions that the artist portrays (Mayhew, 2009, p.153).

But even teenage prodigies will grow up, creating a necessity for growth in their music and their constructed identity. In some cases, this would represent a break with the established

working relationships to producers and songwriters, with the artist wanting to become more independent. In other cases, however, it creates a context of an artist's adulthood being carefully constructed by their silent partners. In the case of young, female artists this could also be a process of submission to male expertise, in an industry dominated by patriarchal structures (Mayhew, 2009, p.154). Essentially, the young, female artist is moulded and shaped by 'superior' male counterparts.

Constructing female, teenage artists in such a way creates a potential for marketability. The producers can reach out to both old and new fans, by building on a pre-existing image to create a new, more adult, image for the artist. For example, this can be done by embracing darker and edgier themes, changing the artist's visual appearance and making the artist more relatable to an older audience (Mayhew, 2009, p.154). In some cases, a core of the audience will be going through a similar process of growing up in their own lives. This enforces the artist's position as a trendsetter, making them relatable and referable. Examples of the connections between artists and their audiences can be seen in Frith and McRobbie's discussion on 'cockrock' and 'teenybop'. They claim that there is a distinction between the male rock artists and the female pop artists who convey different messages to their audiences. Where the rock audience is predominantly male, the rock artists display sexually aggressive behaviour that objectifies women. At the same time pop singers are predominantly female, and convey messages of romance and stories of women who only desire a male partner to make their lives complete, to their audiences of young women (1991, p.373-381). Through their position as trendsetters the artist help shape the attitudes of their audiences, and as we see, the standards for men and women are vastly different.

As younger audiences have gotten more relevant to the music industry, so have teenage popstars become more influential. The commercial potential in young adults is a source of revenue for the industry, making teenage popstars focused on bringing in young fans and maintaining relevance for older fans. Essentially, the popstar must resonate with old and new audiences, whilst being a profitable source of income (Frith, 2001, p.35).

2.4.3 Marketability

The key element to an artist's relevance to the music industry is their marketability, or their ability to make money (Frith, 2001, p.35). There are multiple elements that make an artist

marketable and financially interesting for a record company. One such element is how 'real' and relatable the artist appears to their audience.

In popular music studies, the term 'authenticity' is one of the most central terms. The term identifies and defines what is thought to be good, real and original. Therefore, authenticity has been thoroughly problematized and applied to that which is non-commercial in terms of pure artistry (Hawkins & Niblock, 2011, p.15). However, pop music is mass-produced, disposable and replaceable. Thus, in pop music, 'authenticity' is just another commodity. It is easily marketed and purchased. Whether a performer is perceived authentic depends in large parts on the receiver (Hawkins & Niblock, 2011, p.17). Even though the artist might seem real, most of what we see of artists on stage or in music videos is in fact constructed (Ålvik, 2013, p.44)

The pop music industry is undoubtedly reliant on demand. If there is no demand for the music, the music would cease to exist. If there was no market for selling pop music, the industry would then try to adapt to the new demands from the viewers and listeners (Frith, 2001, p.30). Basically, the music industry is based on a supply and demand relationship, with the musicians bringing the supply, and the consumers making up the side of demand (Frith, 2001, p.33). A record company's core activity is star-making, focusing on selling records. They focus on making the artist fit a star-image and personality (Frith, 2001, p.35). Essentially, they want an artist on their books that is sure to sell records.

With this in mind, it is clear that the record company puts a lot of thought into the artists' appearances and image. In the 1950s with segregation laws still in play in the US, the image that sold was clean-cut, white, pretty young people. In the last sixty years, this image has not changed as much as we might think. The pop artist is still predominantly clean-cut, white, young and pretty, but potentially with a little more of an 'edge'. This becomes visually clear in music videos, which are dominated by bodies on display. The parameters of music video convey much about traditions and conventions, and in many cases they objectify the female (Hawkins, 2013, p.467). Thus, music videos help reinforce traditional stereotypes and social conventions.

Due to its wide reach and accessibility music video is one of the most important marketing tools the music industry has. Or as Berland puts it "You can't make a hit record, become known, make money on music, cross national borders or be heard across your own, without

making a video.” (2002, p.31). This provides television and other media with enormous power. Power over music, and power over us through music. Not in the least by determining what is worthy of airtime and attention. The music industry, and media, can therefore create an artist that seems genuine, has the right look and sound and be sure of income. The only thing missing might be the what makes the audience interested.

2.4.4 Creating controversy

If an artist is genuinely struggling for attention, or the producers need some press, one of the easiest ways to be noticed is by creating controversy. Being controversial is basically breaking with the norms set by society for either men or women. The definition of what is controversial has changed through time, what was thought of as controversial in the 1970s is no longer the same. The concept of controversy also changes with the genre of music. For example, controversy in punk is quite different from controversy in generic pop, girl/boy bands or in rock (Hawkins, 2009a, p.70).

In pop music there are several different ways to be controversial. Gender-bending, dandyism and sexual ambiguity are just some of the ways worth mentioning. Breaking with the visual expectations of beauty and gender is another. It is quite acceptable if a male artist performs topless in a video, but if a female artist attempts the same she is scrutinised for it. The pop music industry is dominated by bodies on display, but still tries to censor itself by leaving some parts to the imagination (Hawkins, 2009a, p.70).

Creating controversy has to do with breaking the norms given by society. Regarding gender, it is clear that untraditional displays and gendered performances easily will create attention and discussion, primarily for breaking with gender normativity. If we work within the parameters of gender normativity being based on the binary gender system of males and females, it becomes controversial if you portray gender in a non-binary way (Butler, 2007, p.xxi-xxiii). Similarly, breaking with heteronormativity and traditional views on male and female sexuality can further create controversy, for example by a female artist being sexually aggressive.

During the 1980s Madonna and Prince were the frontrunners of gender disruption in the music industry. Madonna parodied and exaggerated almost all female stereotypes you could think of. From her virtuous look in ‘Like a Virgin’, to her committing adultery in ‘Bad Girl’, Madonna seemed to do it all. Her video ‘Justify My Love’ was even banned from MTV and

other music channels due to its controversial nature. Madonna was therefore one of the first pop artists to bring sexual identity experimentation into her music videos (Hawkins & Niblock, 2011, p.27-28.)

Another video that was banned from MTV due to its controversial nature was 'I want to break free' by Queen. Released in 1984, this video was perhaps even more controversial than Madonna's 'Justify my love'. In the video, the band-members start out dressed as women from a well-known British television show, 'Coronation Street'. As the video progresses the band members alternate between being dressed in drag and dressed plainly as men. In today's music industry it will take more than men dressed in drag, or people committing adultery to get the video banned or censored (Hawkins, 2009a, p.70). And even if they were banned, in today's technological age, the video would find its way to the masses through channels such as YouTube.

Pop music has a link to art-based institutions which has helped shape the marketing of pop music and pop music identities (Hawkins, 2009a, p.33). Therefore, it is also true that television has helped shape the norms we now associate with pop identification (Hawkins, 2009a, p.40). Many artists and bands throughout time have tried to challenge stereotypes. As we have seen through the punk genre of popular music, fashion and clothing have proven to be an important tool in the creation of controversy (Hawkins, 2009a, p.43). At the beginning of the 2000s, a new trend of controversy had reached the popular music scene. It seemed as if the token for those in the music industry who did not want to conform to normative representations had become 'queering' (Hawkins, 2009a, p.95). As Hawkins depicts it: "Queerness, as a category of identity, takes its own convoluted route. For any proclaimed queer representation renders problematic subjectivity of the persona who plays out different gendered roles". (2009a, p.96). Essentially, it becomes difficult to know what is a performance and what is 'genuine', creating uncertainty regarding the artist's authenticity.

Pop music has undoubtedly been imbricated in the narratives from gender roles. MTV has played its part in reinforcing gender stereotypes since the early 1980s. Music videos framing body types along the lines of gender, race and sexuality, have proven themselves to be instructive in means of a gendered display of appearances (Hawkins, 2009a, p.100). As the 'self' defines 'the Other', bending norms will redefine straightness on its own grounds (Hawkins, 2009a, p.105). In the pop music industry, the destabilizing of gender norms

through queering, dandying or hyperembodiment, presents an opportunity to reflect on difference and opposition (Hawkins, 2009a, p.108).

2.5 Pop Music

The importance of the record studio in making music is unchangeable for the pop music industry. The complex technology involved in the recording and performing process of pop music constitutes what is perceived as ‘good’ music. (Mayhew, 2009, p.155). Pop has been said to be entertainment, superficial, disposable and primarily targeted at young girls, who are prone to being ‘suckered’ by the marketers (Hawkins & Niblock, 2011, p.18). As MTV was promoted in the early 1980s as a prime televisual platform for promoting pop songs and pop music, pop stars owe much of their success to MTV. This platform for promoting bodies, also helped raise questions concerning the objectification of men and women in new cultural spaces (Hawkins, 2009a, p.105). I will here discuss two types of pop songs; the ballad and the party, or dance, songs.

2.5.1 Ballads

Originally, the ballad was a narrative folk song. Although it is still used as such today, at the end of the 19th century, ballad had become the description for a sentimental song (Frith, 2001, p.102). In today’s music industry, the ballad is characterized by its slow tempo along with its sentimental lyrics. The genre of pop ballad does not just include love songs, but also country songs, Irish songs or songs about ‘Mother’ (Frith, 2001, p.102). In essence, the ballad concerns itself with feelings of love, either romantic or platonic, in either happy or sad circumstances. During the late twentieth century, ballads had become instrumental for marketing films (Frith, 2001, p.104).

A key part of a pop ballad, particularly love ballads, is the emotional connection the listener has to the song. The emotion conveyed in the song is meant to be relatable for the audience, meaning that it generally deals with emotions that are easily accessible. For example, the feeling of heartbreak, which most people can relate to (Frith, 2001, p.104). To ensure this kind of relatability, songs are often written in quite general or open terms, creating room for individual interpretation.

An element of such interpretation is the concept of taste, or what we deem to be good. Frith connects this with sense of morality, essentially what is right and what is wrong (Askerøi, 2013, p.89-90). This enables the audience to largely view pop music as more than a preferential choice, and more like an extension of what you think is proper and socially acceptable. This is done by having sonic markers that are recognizable, either by artist, genre or emotions.

Evoking empathy in the listener is something all music sets out to do, but ballads particularly so. By using ballads as an emotional connection between the artist and their audience, the listener can feel like they have insight into the life and struggles of an artist and relating it to their own lives. This makes the artist seem more authentic (Hawkins & Niblock, 2011, p.17). Through this the artist can further establish a personal narrative, by appearing vulnerable and close to their audience, through sharing emotional songs. In other words, a ballad can make the artist more relatable and approachable, regardless of whether or not the song in fact is autobiographical.

2.5.2 Party/dance songs

With ballads being characterized by their slow tempo and sentimental lyrics, party and dance songs can be said to include the opposite. All music evokes moods. Dance and party music is typically trying to evoke a mood in which the listener feels the urge to go dance and have a good time. As is common with the popular music genre, the lyrics are repetitive and looped in such a way that they burn their way into your brain and stays there. Prime examples of artists delivering this kind of music is Beyoncé or Lady Gaga (Vernallis, 2013, p.186).

The repetitive nature of the music keeps the listener in the moment rather than driving us forward (Vernallis, 2013, p.46-47). This shows the nature of the dance music's ability to evoke a mood of good times and the listeners wish to get up and dance. With this in mind one can deduce that a dance songs motif is quite clear. The song is not trying to create a narrative or make the listener picture a whole story of events. It simply helps the listeners lose themselves in the moment with no thoughts of the past or the future. The song only exists in the presence. However, party pop songs may contain hints of narratives, but these can be often understood as superficial and shallow. There may be characters or stories in the songs, but these are mostly there to make the song relatable and will normally revolve around positive, light themes (Vernallis, 2013, p.3-4).

The key element is a mixture of relatability, authenticity and positive potential. To the music industry, such songs are important in order to create the idolization they want for their artists. Just as with hyperembodiment, the artist must seem both authentic and relatable whilst simultaneously being larger than life (Hawkins, 2013, p.470). Essentially, the pop artist must be both human and superhuman, to be relatable and someone the audience looks up to at the same time. It can be viewed as the old stereotype of someone you would want to be or be with. By having this dual role, the artist easily becomes influential to their audience.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter I have discussed both what constitutes a gender, how gender functions in the music industry and outlined the dominating view of heteronormativity. In this process I have established a definition of gender as a social construct and feminism as opposition to restrictive gender roles and patriarchal structures. These definitions will be the basis my later discussion of these topics.

Further, I have considered different elements that, in their combination, contribute to an understanding of identity. I have looked at image, personal narratives and hyperembodiment as elements that define and affect an artist's identity. In addition, I have discussed the relationship between artist and audience, through the connections between subjectivity and identity. In total, this gives us an understanding of how identity can be constructed and changed, in a fluid way.

I have also examined the relationship between auditive and visual communication, through audiovisuality. Here I have mainly focused on the music videos, as this is the relevant type of musical multimedia in this thesis. I have both discussed the merits of music videos and the historical background they have. This makes it easier to later understand the context in which music videos are created.

Additionally, I have outlined some perspectives on the music industry, with regard to how music and artists are created, produced and directed. Here I have focused on how the industry requires marketability to achieve profit, making the artist a replaceable product. I have also discussed in particular how this affects teenage popstars and how artists, particularly the young ones, rely on controversy as a way to obtain the spotlight.

Finally, I have briefly visited various aspects of the pop genre, with focus on ballads and party songs, as these are relevant for my research and readings. This gives me the foundation for further analysis and understanding of my source material and the artist in question.

3 Methods

3.1 Musicological methods

In Nicholas Cook's opinion, research in musicology comprises two fields; the first being the internal structure of music and the second being the context of musical creation (2004, p.3). In both cases the purpose of musicology is to gain understanding of music, as a creative construction and outlet for human creativity. Such research can create opportunities for further creativity or greater insight into existing cultural expressions.

When undertaking research, one is both working towards quality of content and of process, to ensure that the research is both relevant and valid. Researchers therefore strive to systematically gain greater understanding, through analysis of data. Essentially, researchers in musicology are looking for meaning, both in the music itself and in the creative process. This room for discussion about what is meaningful, and for whom it is meaningful, is the basis of knowledge is and how you find truthful knowledge (Cook, 2004; Hawkins, 2002; Moore, 2007; Richardson & Gorbman, 2013; Scott, 2009).

Implementing research within popular musicology involves an extensive search for interpretations that are true to the music in question. Notions of truthfulness are different in classical and art-based musicology, where research often centres around notation, structures and similar topics that it is possible to identify as objectively true. My thesis is grounded in a view of critical musicology, sometimes called 'new musicology', which aims to understand meaning in music on the terms of the music regardless of whether or not it can be notated (Scott, 2009, p.2; Hawkins, 2002, p.25-28). This form of critical musicology focuses on topics that are both relevant in music and in society, such as sexuality, gender and identity (Scott, 2009, p.3; Hawkins, 2002, p.26). However, it differs from sociological studies of either these topics or of music, in the focus on the music itself and the creative context, rather than on the societal aspects of culture. Based on this critical musicological background it becomes relevant to discuss how identity and other topics appear in popular music, both with regards to its musical expression, and the context in which both creator and audience understands it.

Critical musicology is widely regarded as an interdisciplinary field of research, which draws on both theoretical and methodical approaches from other disciplines (Scott, 2009, p.2;

Hawkins, 2002, p.26; Hawkins, 2012, p.3). Musicologists can therefore use methods from other disciplines, such as social anthropology, sociology and gender studies. This means that theories and methods for such fields are relevant and potentially transferrable, but still relying on adaptation to the field of musicology. A pluralistic approach is therefore able to focus on attitudes and concerns of our culture, and by studying music as a cultural expression we can gain access to greater understanding of ourselves and our social contexts (Hawkins, 2002, p.26).

A key element of this interdisciplinary understanding of musicology is the potential for intertextuality. Relevant discourse from other fields can form the basis for research in musicology, and our understanding of music can be said to rely on understanding the multiple layers of meaning in both pop music and lyrics (Hawkins, 2002, p.27). Intertextuality allows us to have common references and influences, where for example a reference to gender in specific ways can refer to contemporary discourse about gender. Without understanding the different ways in which gender be both referred and discussed we would not be able to discern meaning from lyrics.

Musicology can entail qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative research bases itself on broader knowledge from multiple units, and focuses on patterns and connections. Data can generally be portrayed in numbers and through statistics. Essentially, it explains phenomena and the connections between them, by quantifying them (Tjora, 2012). On the other hand, qualitative research normally focuses on phenomena that are more subjective in that they focus on things like feelings, experiences, interpretations and thoughts. The key purpose of such research is to gain greater understanding of the human condition (Nilssen, 2012). Where the goal of the statistically inclined quantitative research is to make generalized conclusions, qualitative research is focused on less measurable, and more interpretive, phenomena (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Because qualitative research does not aspire to find generalized knowledge, it is important to make sure that it remains valid, both with regards to its description of reality and the discussions it portrays (Thagaard, 2009). Seeing as the focus is on subjective phenomena, there exists a great variety of possible interpretations and the researcher cannot find a universal or absolutely true interpretation. This creates a focus on the relationship between researchers and their research objects, because the knowledge comes from that interpretive relationship. Based on this, it is highly important to be aware of what the researcher brings to

the research, affecting how one interprets and understands the material and information in the data (Tjora, 2012).

A central element in this relationship, between researcher and research objects, is based upon an application of hermeneutics. Due to the lack of objective interpretations and readings of popular music, it is highly relevant to focus on how the researcher is to approach their analysis and interpretation (Hawkins, 2002, p.1-2). Hermeneutics in popular musicology can be understood as how you are to approach music to understand it on its own terms and how to decipher and interpret it in ways that reflects the music. In other words, how you ‘read’ it (Hawkins, 2002, p.2). This means that popular musicology has a critical and empirical element to it, where the goal is to understand music and the context in which it is created. Essentially, as researchers we can understand music as an expression of existing social phenomena, but also as a creative arena for new social phenomena (Williams, 2011, p.17). This forms a hermeneutic circle, where the researcher and the research objects influence each other.

In my study so far I have attempted to argue for the basis for my interpretations, my gathering of data, and making it possible for others to gain insight into the process of my research. It is important to me that the analysis of my research objects, which is the basis for my later discussion, is as transparent and available as possible. As such, I have chosen to use a qualitative and comparative approach with audiovisual analysis as my method.

3.1.1 Audiovisual analysis

As I have suggested so far, audiovisual analysis is often interpretive, and applies to any musical multimedia than involves sound and video. Researchers in this field should attempt to avoid any symbolizing interpretations of a psychoanalytic, psychological, social or political nature. An interpretation may of course follow, but then it should be based on the findings from the analysis, not the other way around (Chion, 1994, p.197-198). The goal of an audiovisual analysis is to understand how a film or a sequence from a film works when combining sound and image. Therefore, the researcher is preoccupied with questions such as “What do I see?” and “What do I hear?” (Chion, 2013a, 2013b; Richardson & Gorbman, 2013, p.6-7). These questions are heavily influenced by the researcher’s ability to recognize and understand intertextuality. Essentially, any audiovisual analysis is based in both an interdisciplinary and an intertextual approach, where it is necessary to have knowledge about

discourse from other fields to fully understand the context and content of audiovisual multimedia (Hawkins, 2002, p.25-27).

In conducting any sort of audiovisual analysis, there are several key elements that must be present at the outset. First, one should itemize the different audio elements present in the film or music video. In this one should also characterize the general quality of the sound and its consistency. The consistency of a soundtrack is linked to the degree of interaction between the different audio elements present. Second, one should locate the key points of synchronization, mainly points that are crucial for meaning or dynamics. When performing an audiovisual analysis, one will often find it illuminating to compare the ways that sound and image behave. Here one may choose to look at speed, materials and how each element plays its part in figuration and narration (Chion, 1994, p.190-192). In my research, presented in chapter 4, I look at the build-up of the songs, their thematic topics, and the interplay between the visual and the auditive elements of the music videos. To do this I have applied the theory from Chion and Hawkins & Richardson, with slight modifications, to suit my research objectiveness (Chion, 1994; Hawkins & Richardson, 2007).

According to Michel Chion, there are two ways of performing audiovisual analysis (1994). One being the masking method, the other being what he refers to as “forced marriage”. To use the latter approach, one must first decide on a segment of a movie or a music video. One also requires the help of others, as this is not a method one can apply alone. One takes the chosen sequence, and then gather diverse kinds of music that will accompany the images. The research participants must not have heard the original sound accompanying the images prior to this experiment. The participants are shown the sequence several different times, each time accompanied by a different musical track. By observing the kinds of music the image resists and the musical cues it yields to, then one can see the image in all its potential signification. At the end of the experiment, one reveals the original sound that belongs to the chosen sequence, potentially creating an instant effect. The participants then become conscious of the relationship imbedded in the audiovisual context. The people participating in the experiment will, for a few seconds, become aware of the incompatibility of the elements sound and image (Chion, 1994, p.188-189; Vernallis, 2004, p.202-203). Data is then based on the reflections of the participants.

This way of understanding sound and visual stimulation as connected is further theorized by Vernallis. She claims that visual and auditive can complement or contrast, when shown in a

music video (2004, p.175-179). This is particularly the case in music videos, where diegetic sounds can be part of the audiovisual. For example, a car can make sounds that either build a narrative or interrupt the auditive by being intrusive (Vernallis, 2013, p.438-439). Seeing and hearing the interaction between such elements can create persuasiveness, or authenticity, in a music video. However, this perspective requires that sound and visuals are experienced in connection, and must be understood as a complex whole.

3.1.2 Masking method

Another way of performing an audiovisual analysis, is the masking method (Chion, 1994; Vernallis, 2004). This method is based on the possibility for experiencing music videos as music and video separately, before combining the two. The method requires discipline and humility, and one must take measures to distance oneself from one's sensory influences. The masking method gives you the opportunity to hear the sound as it is, and not hidden or morphed by the images you see. Similarly, one can experience the video as a video, without auditive distraction. When using this method one watches the chosen music video several times, in different ways. One watches it without sound, listens without the images, and sometimes one watches and listens to the whole video.

There are potential challenges to using the method. One of the possible difficulties is listening in the right conditions. When only listening to the music one should ideally listen to this in a completely dead sound environment without any outside sounds disturbing or distorting the sound (Chion, 1994, p.187-188). Similarly, it might be challenging to view the video without visual interruptions.

The method provides the researcher with the opportunity to see different elements of the video as it is, untainted from the meshing of different elements from the audio, and the other way around. Often when discovering the musical elements and the visual elements separately, this will help the researcher keep their listening and viewing open, and they are able to observe the surprises of audiovisual encounters. As the audiovisual contract never creates a total fusion of the different elements, the masking method helps the researcher to keep the two elements separate whilst at the same time they create a combination. (Chion, 1994, p.185-190).

The method and approach of watching a music video multiple times can provide the researcher with a good knowledge of the video. The data, from the analysis, helps the researcher make assumptions regarding the artist's persona and identity based on what they see and hear in the video. However, if the researcher only watches one music video made by an artist, they do not have any grounds to say whether or not this video is the exception that proves the rule in this artist's career, or if this is a recurring trend with the artist. Essentially, to gain a broader understanding of the artist, one could gain from having a larger selection of research objects and using a comparative approach to discussing one's findings.

3.2 Research Approach

3.2.1 Choice of objects

My selection of research objects is based around the theory of strategic selection (Thagaard, 2009). The theory is based around the presumption that some sources of information are better qualified to give insight into the topics I want to discuss. Essentially, I choose criteria for selection that I believe will help answer the research questions that are the basis of this project.

The selection was based on a few criteria that were important to give qualitative and comparative insight. Primarily, the songs had to have music videos. Secondly, the music videos had to portray Miley Cyrus. Furthermore, I wanted to compare multiple styles of song; pop-ballads and pop-party songs, and wanting a comparative approach I needed two of each style. It was also important that the videos represented different stages in her career as an independent artist. This excluded songs and videos from her time as a Disney star, under the name Hannah Montana. Based on these criteria two albums appeared more relevant, due to the timeframe, the fact that both albums had hit songs in the styles desired, and the convenient fact that she underwent a makeover in her visual image between these albums.

Based on this I ended up with these four videos: 'Party in The USA', 'When I Look at You', 'We Can't Stop' and 'Wrecking Ball'. The first two are from the EP *Time of Our Lives*, from 2009. The latter two are from the album *Bangerz*, from 2013. 'Party in The USA' and 'We Can't Stop' represent party-pop songs, and 'When I Look at You' and 'Wrecking Ball' represent love ballads. These four videos provide me with material to perform an analysis,

and opening up for a discussion of Miley Cyrus' persona and identity. The complete analysis will be presented in Chapter 4.

3.2.2 Analytic processes

My readings can be understood as process of interpretation, based on a hermeneutic understanding of the research objects. I have attempted to interpret them based on their own premises, by reading into them things that appear relevant. This means that I have not begun analysing the music videos with a pre-existing notion of what I have been looking for. The only pre-existing topic has been the overarching topic of constructed identity. Topics, like gender and sexuality, have therefore become relevant only after viewing the videos. In essence, the music videos have largely determined what has been relevant to analyse and discuss. This approach is based in an understanding of musicology as a critical, interdisciplinary science, where the goal is to understand music on its own terms, with potential for constructive criticism (Scott, 2009, p.7). Popular musicology aims to say something about the music and the creative context, unlike cultural sociology, which studies the social meanings of cultural expressions rather than the expressions themselves. In my approach, I have attempted to both understand the music videos as musical multimedia, and discuss the context in which they were created.

The basis for my analysis, once having selected my research objects, was the model proposed by Hawkins and Richardson in their article, "Remodelling Britney Spears: Matters of intoxication and meditation" (2007, p.19-22). The schematic creates different spaces for the different elements of the masked audiovisual analysis, connecting time, lyrics, musical and visual aspects. It was important to me that the analysis was presented precisely, and that the descriptions of both musical and visual aspects are non-leading and minimally affected by my personal opinions.

The schematics have four columns; "time", "cues in lyrics", "musical cues" and "visual action". Applying the masking method, I started by dividing the song into segments in the first column. The intro gets its own part, the following verse gets its own part, and so on. After noting the different times in the video when verse goes over in chorus and the like, I listened to the lyrics and wrote down the lyrics at the different times in the video. Later, I listened to the music and the instruments present in each segment and put what I heard into the schematics. Finally, I looked at the video without sound. Here I looked at the visual

aspects present at the video at the times I have noted in the previous part of the schematics. After looking at all the parts of the video separately, I looked at the music video as a complete musical multimedia, how the visual affects the auditive, and the other way around.

In having undertaken research utilizing this method previously, I have experienced a number of challenges in terms of analysis. I have therefore been conscious of my use of language and the effect that has on the written analysis, which can influence the reader and lead to a potentially problematic portrayal of data. To counter these potential issues, I have evaluated my own analysis multiple times, and gone through my descriptions with the goal of removing elements that do not have a strict basis in either the visual or musical cues.

Each schematic has been reworked multiple times, to better reflect the content in a non-leading fashion. I also ended up including a non-schematic analysis of each song, where I connect elements of the videos to the theoretical concepts that I have deemed relevant for this project. I have done this to make my personal analysis transparent and to make it possible for the reader to understand where I come from with regards to the later discussions.

3.3 Demands of scientific research

3.3.1 Validity

Validity is connected to how the research undertaken addresses the hypothesis. In other words, validity is about how a method is suitable to examine that which is being examined (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). It is therefore important that one have researched one's method, research questions and approach to ensure validity. When choosing to research constructed identities and gender, it was apparent for me that I would need to use audiovisual analysis to determine how an artist is constructed, due to the visual aspects of these concepts.

In a project such as this, both internal and external validity is important. Internal validity is focused on whether or not there is a logical connection between that which is described and the explanations that are given. In the case of this project, internal validity is concerning the logical connections between my data and my analysis, giving basis for my discussion and conclusions. In other words, there needs to be a connection between the theory presented in the beginning of the thesis, and the data presented later on. It is therefore important that I use the theory presented in my audiovisual analysis and later discussion.

External validity is linked to whether or not the analysis I use can be transferred to other projects. Namely, is my analysis transferrable to other artist or music videos? Thus making it relevant beyond this study. Due to this project being based in qualitative research it is generally not transferrable, but it can be argued that it has a “theoretical transferability” (Thagaard, 2009). This means that some findings, parts of my approach and the way of conducting research could be relevant beyond this project. However, it is important to note that it is not my personal analysis and my findings that are transferrable, but the approach I used to get there and the general elements of the project with regards to discussing the central topics.

To ensure validity in a project such as this, it is important that the theoretical terms presented are relevant. In the theory part of this thesis I have accounted for and operationalized central terms and concepts connected to constructed identities. Whilst performing my audiovisual analysis I make use of these terms whilst pinpointing aspects of the videos that show constructed identity.

3.3.2 Reliability

Reliability has to do with credibility and reliability in relations to the research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The reliability of research is linked to how transparent the scientific analysis is. In some studies, such as this one, it is logical that the data is visible to the reader so that it is available for external inspection at a later point. Sometimes, it is possible for the research object to read through the findings and give their own input on the findings. In a thesis such as this it is impossible for me to allow the object of my research, namely Miley Cyrus, to inspect my findings and give her own opinion on whether or not they are reliable. Alternatively, one can argue that in a study such as this, the opinions of the artist in question would be less than credible, due to personal interests.

With regard to reliability it is important to be sensitive to the elements present that might weaken my findings. Whilst performing an analysis such as audiovisual analysis, a certain subjectivity is expected, it is after all my eyes and ears that are used to perform the analysis. In order to be as objective as possible I attempted to put my personal feelings for both the genre and the artist in question behind me whilst analysing. However, there are contextual aspects that are impossible to leave behind whilst performing an analysis such as this. I am a product of my gender, age and the Western society in which I was born and currently reside.

At the same time, it is important to not go in to an analysis such as this with your mind set on an outcome. If you do, you might end up omitting findings that contradict your wanted outcome. With regards to this, it has been highly relevant that the schematics are transparent, making it possible for others to inspect the basis for my personal analysis.

3.3.3 Verifiability

Verifiability is about how research can be recreated so that the findings from the research can be controlled and tested. In social sciences, like musicology and unlike the natural sciences, this is difficult to achieve (Cohen et al, 2011). Due to the subjectivity involved, the context which surrounds both research objects and researcher, it is obvious that others may look at the same data and draw different conclusions than I have. To make up for the lack of possible recreation, it is important that the project has high standards of validity and reliability, as well as being conscious of the researcher's subjectivity and context. A large degree of transparency makes the project more reliable, and makes external criticism possible.

3.3.4 Situational reflection

A reflection on the situational context and subjectivity of the researcher is a key element in qualitative research (Neumann & Neumann, 2012). This is particularly the case in critical musicology, where the both the researcher and the research objects are affected by various contexts (Hawkins, 2002, p.2-8). As a researcher I am not a neutral or objective spectator that can completely distance myself from the research objects. In addition, music is not created independently of context, making it a mirror of tradition. Simply put, I have the potential to greatly affect the research process, both in structure and in handling of data (Dalen, 2011). As a researcher I can affect the research by determining what is relevant and important, particularly in combination with deciding the focus of the project (Neumann & Neumann, 2012). Essentially, I have affected the research from the start, by choosing a topic I find interesting, research questions that I feel it is possible and relevant to answer, and by selecting research objects and analysing them (Dalen, 2011). Both the way I find data and what I look for in it is potentially affected my subjective perspectives (Thagaard, 2009). Even though I am aware of my potential influence, it is not possible to make sure that I do not affect the research in a negative way, but by being aware of the situational context in which I work it is possible for others to evaluate the data.

The basis for this project stems from my personal interest, both for the topic of constructed identity and female representations in the music industry. As a student of musicology it is both an interesting and relevant topic, and one that I find to be underrepresented in the field. Within research on constructed identities in music, I find it intriguing to write about a contemporary artist that is both a trendsetter and a product of her social surroundings. I also find it interesting, from a personal point of view, to research an active female artist, that is outspoken, controversial and young. These elements do of course represent potential challenges to the reliability of my research, due to potential bias. At the same time, my personal interest and enthusiasm also brings pre-existing knowledge about both artist and topic, making it possible to view both elements from a variety of perspectives, both as an enthusiast and a researcher. For me, it has been important to maintain both an enthusiasm and a professional distance, whilst conducting the research.

3.4 Critical perspectives

Given that my project is about investigating numerous constructed identities and gender representations, found in the music videos of Miley Cyrus, each of the concepts I posit can be understood differently; for the artist can be viewed in different perspectives, and admittedly others may come to different conclusions than I do. There are multiple elements that are open to criticism.

One such potential point of criticism is the angle and focus on constructed identities, both with regards to it being a relevant topic and how one views it. Some may find it a less relevant field of study and others may disagree on my choice of theory to base it on. Similarly, one may disagree about views on gender or sexuality, or other individual parts of my chapter on theory. However, I believe I have presented my chosen theory in a fair way, making the case for its relevance and validity in the discussion of constructed identities (Auslander, 2013; Cohen, 2001; Frith, 2001; Frith & McRobbie, 1991; Hawkins, 2002; 2013; 2016; Hawkins & Niblock, 2011; Hawkins & Richardson, 2007; McClary, 2002; Välimäki, 2013).¹

Another potential point of criticism is my choice of method, and particularly my selection of research objects. One may find four individual videos to be too small of a sample to draw

¹ In addition to the referenced scholars in this thesis, there exists works by Whitely, Jarman-Ivens, Fast, Warwick, and others, that is highly relevant in this field.

conclusions about an artist, and one may disagree with the choice of each video. Similarly, it is possible to disagree with the use of audiovisual analysis as the method of discussing construction.

With regards to both my analysis, in schematics and otherwise, and discussions, it is possible to come to different conclusions or find different elements in the source material than I have done. To counter this, I have been focused on transparency and openness to other opinions, without removing my own perspectives completely.

3.5 Summary

In this chapter I have presented both theoretical approaches to musicological research, and described the process surrounding my own research. I have discussed critical musicology as an interdisciplinary field, depending on intertextuality. Further I have discussed different approaches to doing research, how to interpret musical texts, and how to perform audiovisual analysis, with particular focus to my chosen method for this project; the masking method.

I have discussed how I have both chosen a topic, research objects and conducted my research. This is based in an understanding of the demands of scientific research, based on validity, reliability and a situational reflection. In addition, I have reflected upon the potential critical views on my project, to create transparency and show how I have taken steps to reduce potential shortcomings.



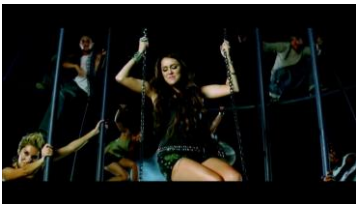

The chapter as a whole, outlines both theoretical and methodological approaches to research, as well as describing my researching process.


4 Analysis and readings

4.1 'Party in the USA'

4.1.1 Audiovisual analysis

Time code/form	Cues in lyrics	Musical cues	Visual action
00.00-00.09 	Instrumental intro	The intro consists of a single guitar playing broken chords	We see what appears to be a drive-in theatre, with several vintage cars parked. We see people exiting their cars, and the intro ends with Miley exiting her car.
00.10-00.45  	“I hopped off the plane at LAX” “Welcome to the land of fame, excess, whoa!”	During the first verse the guitar continues to play the same chords as during the intro, now accompanied by drums. During some parts of this verse, Miley's vocals are accompanied by other voices.	Accompanied by four other girls, we see Miley making her way through the cars towards the back of a pickup truck. When she sings the line “Look to my right and then I see the Hollywood-sign” they stop and Miley makes a gesture pointing to her side.
00.46-1.09 	“So I put my hands up” “And now I'm gonna be OK”	During the first chorus the guitar changes its sound, whilst the drums continue on as previously. A deep electric bass is also added to the mix, creating a contrast to Miley's and the back-up vocals.	The entire chorus shows Miley with the four other girls on the back of the pickup truck, at the end of the verse we see Miley picking up an old-looking microphone, and uses it to deliver her lyrics throughout the chorus. Whilst the chorus is going on, the focus of the video is expanded, we see all the other people in the video dancing and singing along.
1.10-1.44 	“Get to the club in my taxi cab” “It's definitely not a Nashville party”	During the first lines of the second verse the vocals are accompanied by the guitar only. The guitar has gone back to playing broken chords with a metallic sound to it. Further on in the verse the drums come back in, playing the	During the first part of the second verse we see Miley standing against a metal wall, singing directly to the camera. During the second part of this verse the focus stays with Miley. Although we can see her walking in front of other people, they are out of focus. As she delivers the line “who's that

		<p>same steady beat as before. During the last lines of the verse “and the Britney song was on” the guitar is removed, and only the drums are left with the vocals and back-up vocals.</p>	<p>chick who’s rockin’ kicks” we see the camera moving down to her feet, and she kicks the sand with her boots. The images switch between her in front of the wall, her walking along the crowd, and her standing alone. When singing “Cause all I see are stilettos, I guess I never get the memo”, the focus shifts to her feet again, and the viewer is reminded that she’s wearing boots. Just as she delivers the last lines of the second verse “and the Britney song was on”, we see a huge American flag getting rolled down from a wall.</p>
<p>1.45-2.09</p> 	<p>“So I put my hands up”</p> <p>“Moving my hips like yeah!”</p>	<p>Musically the second chorus appears to be identical to the first.</p>	<p>Miley is now shown in front of the American flag. She appears to be on a stage, and her microphone from earlier is now on a stand on the middle of the stage. This part of the video gives the viewer more of a concert feeling than previously. There are no other people shown during this chorus, and it is just Miley, her microphone and the flag.</p>
<p>2.10-2.29</p> 	<p>“Feel like hoppin’ on a flight”</p> <p>“The DJ plays my song and I feel alright”</p>	<p>The drums carry on as they did in the chorus, the guitar is removed from the bridge, and back-up vocals are creating a wall of chords in the background of Miley’s vocals.</p>	<p>During the bridge the visual scenery has completely changed. It is darker out, and it appears to be night. Miley is surrounded by girls and guys in what appears to be a large metal ‘cage’ in a playground. Miley is in the middle standing on a swing.</p>
<p>2.30-3.21</p> 	<p>“So I put my hands up”</p> <p>“The butterflies fly away”</p>	<p>During this double chorus the instrumentation remains unchanged from the previous two. The drums are still clearer and sharper than during the verses and bridge, the electric bass slides from note to note giving the whole sound a darker contrast to the vocals. The song ends with Miley not singing but shouting the last line</p>	<p>Now we see Miley back on a stage with the American flag as the background. This time she is accompanied by the four girls that accompanied her during the first verse and chorus. This time we see the crowd’s hands reaching towards Miley and the stage, and it definitely reminds the viewer of a live concert. As this song ends in a double chorus, the images change just as the second chorus begins. We see the four girls exiting the stage, and Miley is left alone in the spotlight.</p>

		<p>“it’s a party in the USA!”</p>	<p>During the second chorus, the images change between Miley alone on stage, her in the ‘cage’, and generally people partying and having a good time. As the song ends with the last line being shouted, the focus returns to Miley on front of the American flag with her microphone, singing directly to the camera.</p>
---	--	-----------------------------------	--

4.1.2 Reading

The music video aims to emulate a typical teenage party situated at a drive-in theatre, fitting the pop-party song sound. Whilst listening to the lyrics however, it becomes clear that this song is about leaving home for the first time, and trying to fit in at a new place with new people.

In the video we see Miley Cyrus as the main character. In the intro we see her exiting a car, and as her vocals begin she is at the drive-in, leaning up against said car. The verse begins, and she sings about recently having gotten off of a plane at the airport in Los Angeles. She sings about arriving in a new town for the first time, and how she is unsure of whether or not she will fit in. During this first verse she makes several references to fame and Hollywood. In the video she actually makes a physical gesture when talking about seeing the Hollywood sign. As we see Miley leaning against a car we see a full body shot of her in her strappy shirt showing a bra and wearing short shorts. The full body shot is not showing her in an overly sexualised way, but is providing the viewer with an overview of the setting of the video, and of Miley as the main character.

The verse is driven by a steel-guitar and generic drum loop, and is unchanged until the chorus. Miley is clearly showcased as the focal point during this verse, which we can see by the camera showing her almost the entire time. Although the instruments may appear to the listener as quite natural, it is clear that the vocals have been polished and autotuned. There are few close-ups of Miley during this verse, but in the few instances of close-up shots there is focus on her feet, showing her boots. As the verse transitions into chorus, we see Miley accompanied by four girls running towards the back plane of a parked pickup truck.

The chorus is performed in the video on the plane of the previously mentioned truck. Here the focus again falls on Miley, and we see her surrounded by the four girls. They are all dancing, singing and having a good time. Although the lyrics from the chorus says “moving my hips like yeah”, Miley is not overly sexualised whilst doing this. The camera keeps its distance, and we see her swaying her hips, but not in a particularly seductive way. In fact, the camera zooms out whilst Miley is swaying her hips. What the viewer sees is everybody present at or around the pickup truck at the time of the chorus.

Moving on to the second verse, Miley is alone whilst singing directly to the camera. As the visual action of the video accompanies the lyrics, she sings about how hard it is to be here without her girls. We see Miley walking to the same place as she walked in the first verse, this time she is not accompanied by the four girls, and all the people in the background of the video are out of focus. Here we see a reference being made to Miley being in fact a girl, and her wanting to surround herself with girlfriends. At a later point in this verse she sings about how all the other girls in Los Angeles are wearing stilettos, contrasting with her own boots. As she delivers these lines, she simultaneously rolls her eyes at the camera, further emphasizing her difference. Where the first verse focuses on uncertainty about fitting in, the second verse shows that she does not really want to, and would rather stand out. This is relatable to wanting to find one’s own identity, and trying to fit into a group. Shown in the visual action, Miley is shown both alone and at the centre of the viewer’s attention. This part of the video also helps underline the connection between the visual and the auditive in a music video. In this case the video reinforces the message of the song.

During the second chorus, Miley is still shown to be on her own. However, she is now shown on a stage with a huge American flag behind her. As the video was made to showcase Miley as a more grown-up pop artist, the use of the American flag as a back drop provides her with a ‘wholesome girl next-door’-vibe. This serves to make her relatable and likeable. As the bridge begins, the scenery of the video changes, and suddenly it is night-time. Here she sings about how much she misses her hometown, but what stops her from jumping on a plane and going back home is when the DJ plays ‘her song’ at the party. In other words, she gets caught up in the moment, leaving worries behind. This reflects the outline of a classic party/dance pop song. Miley herself references how songs can bring specific emotions with the listener, and as long as she has music everything is going to be alright. There is also an intertextual element here with the very obvious reference to other popular musicians. In addition, with regards to

intertextuality, the entire music video is a reference to John Travolta's scene from "Grease" where he sings 'Sandy'.





The last choruses start out with her being on stage as if she is performing her song in front of a live audience. This time, however, she is once again surrounded by the four girls from earlier. The last two choruses alternate between showing Miley performing on stage, and showing her dancing and having a good time with other boys and girls. This music video does not have a complete narrative, but hints at one as the video progresses. The lyrics help drive the song forwards into a halfway narrative story for the viewer.

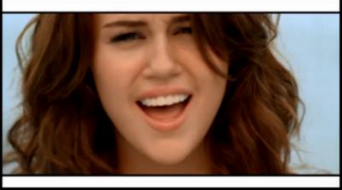



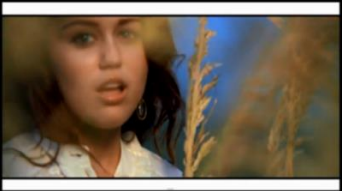
The music video, in its entirety, brings up elements of intertextuality, discussions about identity and growing up, whilst portraying Miley Cyrus as a female performer, both visually and audibly. Her portrayal is not particularly sexual, nor exaggerated, but her role in the semi-narrative serves to display her as the queen bee of the group, with both boys and girls revolving around her. The use of intertextuality, where she references other artists and places in relation to feelings of excitement, creates a feeling of relatability as these are feelings the audience may have towards the same people and places. This is done through authenticity and with placing the artist in a context that is both relatable to an audience and informative with regards to learning about the artist.




Setting herself apart from the other girls, Miley is shown to be different. This serves to establish her as different to 'the Others', both as a misfit and as more independent. This enhances the role of 'girl next door', by making her approachable and unapproachable at the same time. Visually she is presented wearing boots, short-shorts and a tank top, which can be viewed as normal whilst still showing a fair amount of skin. She is accentuated as white, due to contrasting backgrounds, young, and feminine and pretty. This is reflected both in the visuals and in the lyrics, where she sings about being young, leaving home for the first time, referencing how other girls look and comparing them to herself, and describing her physical movements. This shows that body is an important tool in this music video, and in the portrayal of Miley as a young, female artist.

4.2 'When I Look at You'

4.2.1 Audiovisual analysis

Time code/form	Cues in lyrics	Musical cues	Visual action
00.00-00.24 	Instrumental	Slow drums holding a steady beat, with a synth playing slow melodic tones.	We see Mileys face appearing in front of the video, a male character appears on a bridge, and Miley on the bridge with a piano.
00.25-00.55 	“Everybody needs inspiration” “Cause there is no guarantee, that this life is easy”	During this first verse the drums are still keeping a steady beat in the background, whilst the synth is now playing long chords, creating a background sound with the drums. The vocals appear to be far away, and in the last part of the verse the vocals come more to the front in the mix, and the music also gets a little more prominent.	At the beginning of the verse we see a close up of Miley whilst she delivers the lyrics “everybody needs inspiration, everybody needs a song”. As she sings the second line the image moves over to the male character, creating a hint to him being the inspiration. During the rest of this verse the images cuts between her and the male character. As the music grows more prominent, the image fades to a close up of her face.
00.56-1.39  	“Yeah, when my world is falling apart...” “When the waves are flooding the shore, and I can’t find my way home anymore, that’s when I look at you”	The chorus is a little more up-beat than the verse, and both vocals and the instruments mirror this in their more prominent presence. The vocals still appear to be far away, with a hint of an echo added to the mix. As the chorus slows down again, and Miley sings the last “when I look at you”, both instruments and vocal are brought back down, creating a smooth transition to the next verse.	During the first part of the chorus the images alternate between several images of Miley singing to the camera. She does not make direct eye contact until she sings “when I look at you” for the first time. Just as the second part of the chorus begins, the image cuts to the male character again, dropping another hint about Miley looking at him. As she sings the second part of the chorus starting with “when the waves are flooding the shore” we see Miley playing the grand piano by the shore, and during the next part when she sings about not finding her way home, we see her in a garden outside a house.

<p>1.40-2.08</p>  	<p>“I see forgiveness...”</p> <p>“And I know I’m not alone”</p>	<p>The instrumentation is virtually the same as in the first verse, the difference being in the vocals during the last two lines of the verse. As she delivers the lines “right there where I belong, and I know I’m not alone” a second voice is added and with this the lines are vocally underlined as if they were to be more important than the rest of the verse.</p>	<p>Once again we see different images of Miley with the grand piano as she sings this second verse. Once again there is hinting at the male character being the main focus for the lyrics, as the image cuts to him after her singing “I see the truth”. During the second part of the verse we can see Miley and the male character walking slowly towards each other, and it climaxes as she delivers the last line “and I know I’m not alone” as we can see them in an embracing hug.</p>
<p>2.09-2.49</p>  	<p>“Yeah, when my world is falling apart...”</p> <p>“When there’s no light to break up the dark, that’s when I look at you”</p>	<p>There is added a bit more guitar to this chorus, along with more prominent back-up vocals. All in all, this chorus keeps a higher volume than the previous, and keeps with the constant crescendo kept throughout the song.</p>	<p>As she sings about the darkness and not finding the light we see Miley with the grand piano at a dark beach and in the dark forest. The backgrounds of the images are dark and it appears to be thunder and lightning. When she once again delivers the phrase “that’s when I look at you” the images change to a sunny background with the male character throwing rose petals over her as she laughs. During the remainder of the chorus we see Miley in different positions with the grand piano, and it cuts back to the male character at the end of the chorus once again.</p>
<p>2.50-3.15</p> 	<p>“You appear just like a dream to me”</p> <p>“Don’t you know, you’re beautiful?”</p>	<p>The first part of the bridge appears to be almost completely stripped for instruments, and as the vocals carry a steady crescendo, so does the instruments, building up to the next part with a guitar-solo.</p>	<p>During this part of the video we once again see Miley in different locations we have seen earlier. Only once during this part do we see something other than Miley in focus. This being the male character just after she has delivered the first line.</p>

<p>3.16-3.23</p> 	<p>Instrumental</p>	<p>This short instrumental consists of the drums playing a steady beat, whilst the guitar plays a short solo beginning with tones from the melody, then changing over to a string of descending notes.</p>	
<p>3.24-3.55</p> 	<p>“When the waves are flooding the shore...”</p>	<p>The steady crescendo as finally reached its final destination, and the instrumentation sound even fuller during this last chorus.</p>	<p>Once again we see Miley in different locations. She is mostly shown alone, but in some parts we see her sitting at the bridge by the grand piano with the male character.</p>
<p>3.56-4.10</p> 	<p>“You appear just like a dream to me”</p>	<p>The instrumentation is having a decrescendo at this point, and just before the last words of the song, “a dream to me”, they stop and fade out from their last beat. Mileys vocals are in keep with the instrumentation, and during the last words, she appears to fade out as well.</p>	<p>Just as the music and vocals fade out, so does the video. When Miley delivers her last line we can see her making eye contact with the camera, and as the video fades to an image of the grand piano alone on the bridge, we can see her face becoming see-through until she is gone, and the piano is the last image shown.</p>

4.2.2 Reading

When the synth and drums start this song, we see Miley sitting by a grand piano, and a male character walking down a pier. Straight from the beginning we can tell that this song has a slow tempo, and it can be classified as a pop ballad. The first thing we see is the relationship between the characters in the video. There are only two characters, one portrayed by Miley, the other portrayed by a male actor.

During the first verse we see that the visual focus is Miley, who is playing the piano. However, we can see the focus shifting to the male actor at strategical points that corresponds with the lyrics. Because of this, it is safe to assume he is the object to which Miley is singing. This fits neatly in with both heteronormative norms and gender roles, as Miley sings about how he is the inspiration that helps her get through her tough days, and how they fit together as a heterosexual couple. On the whole, the setup of portraying a couple in this video seems quite innocent, almost like ‘puppy love’. This is highly relatable to how female pop musicians portray love and romance, as discussed by Frith & McRobbie (1991).

The strategic shifting continues through the chorus, and when Miley delivers the title-line, ‘When I Look at You’, we see the camera directly focused on the male actor at the last word of the sentence. Here we also see the clear connection between the visual and lyrical aspects of a music video. The drums pick themselves up a bit in the chorus, and they help the song progress forward smoothly. An interesting cinematic choice worth noting is when Miley sings about the waves flooding the shore, the scenery changes, and she is suddenly at a sandy beach. Similarly, the next line is about how she cannot find her way home anymore, and the scenery has changed again, and she is now in front of a house.

Not much has changed visually nor musically as the second verse progresses on. Keeping true to the focus shifting, we see the second verse ending in Miley and the male actor in a tight embrace as the lyrics go “and I know I’m not alone”. Neatly mirroring the lyrics in the images, the scene is easily relatable, leaving little room for individual interpretation. Keeping true to the previously shown sceneries and visual aspects, the second chorus once again helps the video’s small narrative move forwards, whilst keeping the viewer locked in the moments shown on screen.

Moving on to the bridge, the scenery changes slightly, and we see Miley in what appears to be a field. However, as the background and basically anything but Miley’s face is out of focus, it does not seem really important where she is. In this video we see how the scenery changes according to the lyrics of the song, and how that creates smooth transitions in the visual scenery. During this bridge the focus of the images are even more preoccupied with showing Miley alone. With her stretching her arms and spinning around in the forest, the bridge could be interpreted as more of an inner monologue than the rest of the song.

A notable aspect when watching this video is how the male actor never looks at the camera. He only looks at Miley, or he looks down at the piano or sheet music. Miley however, almost only looks at the camera when she is shown on her own, and when she is shown with him she alternates between looking at the camera and looking at him. It is clear that Miley is the focal point of the video, with the actor being there to create a semi-narrative in the form of a love story. Similar to ‘Party in the USA’, Miley is not overly sexualised in this video. She is pictured in different strappy dresses throughout the video, pointing back to her being a girl. Even though she is running at the beach, her running reminds us nothing of Pamela Anderson in Baywatch, and the whole thing links back to the innocent teenage romance depicted.





The music video audibly and visually establishes Miley's situation as a young artist, with feelings of love and longing, in a 'PG13' way. Her romantic relationship is highly traditional, depicted to be heterosexual, but without a sexual aspect. Essentially, it becomes a romanticized relationship of pure feelings, that are highly in tune with social expectations of young girls. Similarly, she is visually presented as a feminine girl, wearing jewellery and make-up, in at times low-cut dresses, with long, flowing hair. However, this presentation is not overtly sexual, instead serving to establish her as a young woman, but without a visual sexuality. The most sexualised moment of the video is a kiss, between the two characters in the video, that can still be viewed as quite innocent.







A central element of the video worth considering is 'the gaze'. In this video we can see how Mulvey's three uses of the gaze are in fact present. As we have seen Miley as a typical 'girl next door' in this video, this is certainly affected by the director's gaze through the camera. There is also a certain amount of the audience's gaze present in the images as well. As Miley just broke with Disney Channel and is therefore possibly trying to create a new persona for herself, her current audience is likely the same as when she was performing as Hannah Montana. It is therefore relevant to note that the audience watching this video is possibly still picturing the pre-teen Hannah Montana, and therefore the gaze of the audience is linked to her still being a teenage pop star. Another striking use of the gaze in this video is the relationship between Miley and the male character. Where the male actor spends his time either looking down or at Miley, his gaze is either distant or fixated on her. Miley on the other hand has her gaze on him and the audience, through direct looks at the camera. This creates a bond between the artist and her audience, and reduces the male character to be dependent on Miley in his contribution to the narrative. This is all linked to Mulvey's descriptions of the gaze (1975, p.843)



In some ways she can arguably be viewed as empowered by this. It is her character and face that is important, whilst he is there to create a narrative for her. This is a stark contrast to the heteronormative love story that is conveyed, where the traditional romanticized view places her in subordination to him. Thus the video has a mixed message. In the story she depends on the male character, whilst in the visuals he is dependent on her to be relevant.





4.3 'We Can't Stop'

4.3.1 Audiovisual analysis

Time code/form	Cues in lyrics	Musical cues	Visual action
00.00-00.14 	Intro "It's our party"	This intro starts out with a synth steadily rising louder. There's a vocal line singing "ooh" over the computer changes male voice saying the lines over and over.	The first image we see is someone using large scissors to cut off an ankle monitor. We see a speaker lying on a bed. As a hand reaches over to up the volume on the speaker, the sound in the intro increases as well. Now we see Miley, and she is getting up to comb her hair.
00.15-00.36  	"Red cups and sweaty bodies everywhere" "Someone here might get some now"	The computer changed voice and other voices shouting accompanies Miley's vocals throughout this first verse. There's a drum set in the background playing a steady beat. The synth is still in the mix playing chord-like notes in a high octave. This creates a contrast to both Miley's vocals, and the low computer changed voice.	We see Miley lying on the floor. Then the image cuts to somewhere outside, and we see two people walking through the bushes. The image cuts to a candleholder equipped with lighters, and people roasting marshmallows on them. As Miley sings the line "someone here might get some now", the image cuts back to her lying on the bed curling her spine up towards the camera. During the remainder of this verse the images cut between Miley, someone creating a skull out of French-fries, and ends with a guy with two tongues.
00.37-00.48 	"So la da di da di" "Doing whatever we want"	The drums are still playing a steady beat, but during this pre-chorus the high octave synth is replaced by a low power-bass.	The pre-chorus begins with the French-fry skull being crushed and kicked, then it cuts to Miley in a pool, then there's Miley and other girls dancing and following the lyrics "doing whatever we want". During the last line "This is our house, these are our rules" the image cuts back to

			<p>Miley, singing to the camera this time.</p>
<p>00.49-1.13</p>  	<p>“And we can’t stop”</p> <p>“Can’t you see it’s we who own the night?”</p> <p>“We run things they don’t run we”</p>	<p>During the first part of the chorus the drums are removed, and we are left with a synth with a piano sound, creating a softer chorus than the pre-chorus. During the second part of the chorus the drums are back, accompanied by house-like beats from computer created guitar, bass and synth. Here the softer sound is gone, and it resembles a techno beat with a minimally changes vocal line.</p>	<p>During the first part of the chorus we see Miley in different poses, ending with her back on the bed curving her spine. Then it cuts to a hand cutting through a pair of plastic fingers and bubble-gum-pink goo seeps out. The second part of the chorus starts with four people dancing with giant teddy bears on their backs, making it look like the teddy bears are dancing themselves. The image then cuts to Miley wagging her finger to the camera whilst delivering the line “don’t take nothing from nobody”.</p>
<p>1.14-1.25</p> 	<p>“It’s our party”</p> <p>“We can kiss who we want, we can see who we want”</p>	<p>Here the instrumentation changes from the intro, adding an electric power-bass. Making the contrast between chorus and pre-verse smooth.</p>	<p>During this part the images change between a computer-animated face floating in the air and Miley doing random things whilst partying.</p>
<p>1.26-1.49</p>  	<p>“To my home-girls here”</p> <p>“Forget the haters, cause somebody loves yah”</p> <p>“We’re all so turned up here”</p>	<p>During the second verse the bass is removed, and we are back to drums playing a steady beat, with the synth playing notes in a high octave. Mileys vocals are still accompanied by the shouting and the computer changed voice that has followed us through the song thus far.</p>	<p>This verse starts with showing a bowl of alphabet-soup and pulling out a spoon with the word “twerk” on it. The image cuts to Miley with three other girls actually twerking. The first part of this verse ends with a taxidermied sheep with sunglasses standing in front of an eight-way mirror. Then we see Miley wearing a fur coat, carrying the sheep and dragging a taxidermied wolverine behind her. Then the image cuts to Miley in</p>

			<p>the pool holding a children's doll, and kissing said doll.</p>
<p>1.50-2.00</p> 	<p>“So la da di da di”</p> <p>“Dancing with Miley, doing whatever we want”</p>	<p>During this second pre-chorus the instrumentation is the same as the previous pre-chorus, and the electric power-bass playing the same note throughout this part creates a crescendo towards the chorus. Mileys vocals appear unchanged.</p>	<p>This pre-chorus consists of images of Miley and the other guests partying in the pool, then Miley and her guests partying inside the house.</p>
<p>2.01-2.25</p> 	<p>“And we can't stop”</p> <p>“We don't take nothing from nobody”</p>	<p>The first part of the chorus is once again musically softer than both pre-chorus and the rest of the chorus. Mileys vocals come stronger through the mix, and the shouting voices are just there as fillers through the breaks in the vocal line.</p>	<p>This chorus begins with images of smoke shooting out from between the legs of one of the guys at the party. Then it cuts over to an image of Miley, before an image of two people sleeping, the guy on top of the girls' stomach, sucking his thumb. The images of Miley and her guests appear to have been shot in slow motion.</p>
<p>2.26-2.37</p> 	<p>“It's our party”</p> <p>“It's our party we can say what we want”</p>	<p>This part of the song is the same as it's identical part at 1 minute 14 seconds in to the song.</p>	<p>Here we see images of the dancing bears from earlier, the floating head, and people partying.</p>
<p>2.38-3.00</p>  	<p>“It's our party”</p> <p>“It's my mouth I can say what I want to”</p>	<p>During this bridge almost all the instruments are removed except for the electric bass. The shouting voices are still there, and during this part of the song they are there to accentuate Mileys vocals by yelling out the same things as her as an echo. During the last part of the bridge there are no lyrics, Miley just sings yeah over and over again.</p>	<p>This bridge begins with showing Miley whacking a hole in a piñata and hotdogs coming out of it. The focus of the images stays with Miley, and when delivering the line “It's my mouth I can say what I want to” she sings directly to the camera. During the last part of the bridge we see Miley sitting on a rock with some other people looking out at the sunset, whilst</p>

			<p>turning back to the camera to say “yeah”.</p>
<p>3.01-3.33</p>   	<p>“And we can’t stop”</p> <p>“Can’t you see it’s we who own the night, can’t you see it’s we who ‘bout that life?”</p>	<p>During this last chorus Mileys regular chorus vocals are doubled by Miley singing over herself. The instrumentation is unchanged from the previous choruses, and this adds to the feeling of a house song with its repetitive music.</p>	<p>Here we see images of Miley play-fighting with another girl, and rolling around on the floor. As the video comes to an end we see the other guest have gone to sleep, and Miley walks among them, before lying down on the chest of one of the guys. Then it Cuts to Miley wide awake whilst grinding on a bed, and the video ends with Miley back on the rock looking at the sunset putting her arm around the girl with whom she previously play-fought. The image goes to black just after they all turn to the camera for one last pose.</p>

4.3.2 Reading

The first few seconds of the video is a visual intro without the song. We see a figure sitting on a bed, that later turns out to be Miley, using very large scissors to cut off an ankle monitor, potentially symbolizing either a newfound freedom or a form of rebellion. Alternatively, it can reference attitudes to a ‘home-alone’ party.

Further on in the intro we see Miley preparing for the day, or evening, by brushing her hair and putting in fake gold teeth. Visually she has gotten a makeover, compared to the two videos we have looked at in chapters 4.1 and 4.2. She has cut her hair short, and has acquired several visible tattoos. The lyrics have gotten a bit racier. Already in the first verse she is clearly talking about having sex as she delivers the line “someone here might get some now”, as she is lying on the bed arching her back and winking at the camera. Throughout the rest of the first verse the images change quite rapidly between various characters, from Miley applying lip balm, a female character eating a lollypop, to a guy with two tongues, to name a few examples.

During the pre-chorus the images keep shifting focus, and we see Miley and some other people in a pool and a French-fry-scully being created and destroyed. At the end of the pre-chorus the line “doing whatever we want” is delivered, and at this time in the video Miley is dancing with two other girls, smacking the butt of one of them whilst looking at the camera. This is a small part of what can be linked back to controversy and breaking norms, as Miley challenges both gender norms and heteronormativity at this point in the video. Not in the least, by appearing more sexually aggressive than a traditional female performer.

Moving on to the first chorus, we see Miley lying on a bed, legs spread as she mouths ‘oh’, and ‘whoa’ to the camera, bringing the focus once again back to sex and a sexualised Miley-character in this video. At the second part of the chorus however, the video tells another tale. Suddenly we see what appears to be dancing teddy bears. A closer look suggests that these are in fact not giant dancing teddy bears, but teddy bears strapped to the backs of dancing women. Just before delivering the last line of the chorus, we see Miley from above standing on all fours ‘semi-twerking’ up at the camera. The last line, “don’t take nothing from nobody”, is delivered from Miley lying on a bed looking straight at the camera, whilst wagging her finger, almost as if to say ‘these are the rules’. The part in the song linking the chorus over to the next verse is a computer generated voice and a computer generated face singing to the camera.

As the word ‘twerk’ is shown in the video through the media of alphabet soup, we see corresponding twerking happening in the next images. They take a different turn however at the second part of the verse. Now we see an eight-way mirror with a taxidermied sheep wearing sunglasses. Further on we see Miley carrying the sheep whilst dragging a taxidermied wolverine behind her, at the same time wearing a fur coat. This part of the video is linked to creating controversy as an artist, potentially also basing itself on showing various amounts of images with potentially absurd themes. As the verse ends she sings about how everyone is waiting in the bathroom, to get a line in the bathroom. A likely reference to doing drugs, at least recreationally, supported by the next image of the video: Miley lying in the pool with sunglasses on that have a chain with a black rectangle labelled “censored” on them. At the same time, we see her standing in the pool with a highly see-through swimsuit with black stars covering her nipples. This brings us back to a highly sexualised body on display.

In the second pre-chorus we see Miley dancing and having a good time with the other characters in the video. In previous videos, Miley has kept within the binary heteronormative

system. Here, however, she is seen grinding on and rubbing up against both guys and girls. During the chorus we once again see scattered images of party-guests. At the last line of the chorus however, the focus shifts back to Miley. She is in the pool, only hands, shoulders and head visible. This is enough to point to a hyperembodied Miley regardless. Her hair is impeccable, her lip-stick has no smudges, and her eyes are striking. Looking directly into the camera they appear to sparkle regardless of the dark background and lack of natural lights, and independently of head movement. The computer generated voice and face are leading the audience to the bridge, as we see more scattered images of people partying.

The first part of the bridge, the part with actual lyrics, consists of Miley hitting a piñata, hot dogs and pancakes falling out of it, one of the guys trying to smoke a hot dog, and more party-images. Just reading the lyrics, this reminds us of something a rebellious teenager would say to their parents. “It’s our house we can love who we want to. It’s my mouth I can say what I want to”. The emphasis on these lyrics point to a challenge of social norms, potentially linked to gender norms and heterosexuality, particularly when combined with the visual cues. During the remainder of the bridge Miley only has one word of lyrics “yeah”, and she sings it several times whilst the video shows her in different situations with the other characters. Visually she also combines gender-roles by wearing a beanie-hat typically worn by guys, with an attached black veil typically worn by women. Through the rest of the video we see Miley in various sexual poses with girls, snuggling up to the chest of a guy, grinding on a bed alone, and it ends with her putting her arm around one of the girls we have seen her with previously, casually, but just touching her boob as she reaches.


The music video clearly breaks with the earlier ones, particularly with regards to the portrayal of gender roles and sexuality. Miley can now be seen to be a more sexually aggressive, both towards other characters in the video and simply by being outspoken. She visually shows off more of her body, positioned in ways that accentuates her body parts, particularly legs and butt. This is emphasized further with the focus on ‘twerking’, a dance style that focuses on shaking your butt. In addition to presenting different attitudes to sexualised behaviour, the video also challenges previous visualisations of gender. Miley is portrayed as less traditionally feminine, with shorter hair, her use of ‘grills’ and body language, which is inspired by hip hop with its hand gestures and physical attitude. It is also the case for the other characters in this video that they are portrayed in less traditional ways, creating a sense of collective opposition to classic gender roles and stereotypes.




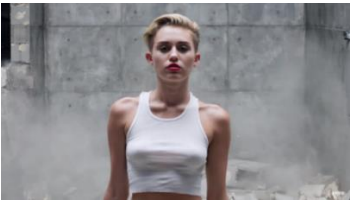


The video also seeks to establish Miley’s new image, which has drastically changed from the earlier ones. She now wears almost all-white clothes, has bleached hair and teeth and her make-up makes her appear whiter than previously. She has removed her nose-piercing and acquired several tattoos, which makes appear less feminine. However, she contrasts this with accentuating her body through tight-fitting clothes, or less clothes, and her lips with distinctly red lipstick. She is no longer a ‘girl next door’, but a more androgynous, sexualised woman. By changing her appearance, she is attempting to establish visual markers, much like sonic ones, that will make her instantly recognisable. Similarly, she tries to make ‘twerking’ a kind of trademark. This new direction of style is also audible. The music is less natural, more digital, reflecting influences from hip hop, R’n’B and other genres. This can also be seen visually, where she is shown to be ‘twerking’ with a group of African-American women. In this setting she clearly stands out, through her skin and clothes being exceptionally white. However, her relationship to these women is clearly that of a dance crew, making Miley appear to have ‘street cred’.





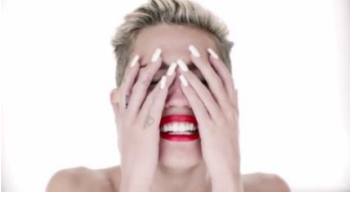

In total the music video represents a break with her old image, both visually and lyrically. She appears in opposition to traditional gender roles and heteronormative ideals, and she can be seen trying to establish herself as a more grown up artist, that is fiercely independent. An interesting element here is that even though she now appears less restricted, she still has a male manager, male songwriters and a male director for this song and video. In other words, it is possible to question whether the changes she has undergone are genuine, or a new type of constructed identity.





4.4 ‘Wrecking Ball’

4.4.1 Audiovisual analysis

Time code/form	Cues in Lyrics	Musical cues	Visual action
00.00-00.08 	Instrumental	Even beat played with synth, so much reverberation it almost sounds like an echo.	Close-up on Miley’s face, a single tear running down her cheek.
00.09-00.25	“We clawed, we chained our hearts in vain”	The even beat from the synth continues, it is pushed into the	Close-up on Miley’s face throughout the entire first verse, minimal

	<p>“We kissed, I fell under your spell”</p>	<p>background so that the vocals can come clearly through. This is the only instrument used in the verse.</p>	<p>movements from Miley whilst keeping constant eye contact with the camera/viewer.</p>
<p>00.26-00.42</p> 	<p>“Don’t you ever say, I just walked away”.</p> <p>“I will always want you”</p>	<p>The synth accompanying Miley’s vocals is a bit more prominent during this part of the song, and Miley’s vocals consists of both her normal vocals, and another set of vocals softly singing the same just an octave above Miley’s original vocals.</p>	<p>During the first part of this pre-chorus we see the same close-ups of Miley as previously, in the middle of this part this changes, and she also loses eye contact with the camera. We see her leaned up against a wall holding a sledgehammer and dragging it across the floor. At the end of the pre-chorus we get another close-up of Miley’s face just before the chorus.</p>
<p>00.43-1.02</p>  	<p>“I came in like a wrecking ball”</p> <p>“All I wanted was to break your walls”</p>	<p>The first five words of the chorus are just Miley’s voice, and when she utters the words “wrecking ball” there is a full band accompanying her. There are no hints in the music previously that would indicate that a full band would appear in the chorus, and because of this the chorus seems more aggressive than the first parts of the song.</p>	<p>As we see a more aggressive Miley, we also see that her previous emotions of sadness, showed by tears during the first verse, seem to have escalated to anger as the demolition begins. Not just the metaphorical walls are coming down, and at one point during the chorus we see Miley walking towards the camera as a wall has just come down, and the dust behind her makes us think about “rising again from the ashes”.</p>
<p>1.03-1.18</p>  	<p>“I put you high up in the sky”.</p> <p>“You let me burn, and now we’re ashes on the ground”</p>	<p>The full band is come from the sound-image, and we are again left with the synth. This time the synth is pushed even further back in the sound-image, seeing as Miley’s vocals are no longer the only vocals heard during the verse.</p>	<p>The close-ups of Miley’s face with constant eye contact are no longer the primary images, and we can see her doing a number of things during this verse. She is seen riding a wrecking ball, a close-up of her caressing the sledgehammer, and the second time she rides the wrecking ball during this verse she is naked.</p>

<p>1.19-1.33</p> 	<p>“Don’t you ever say, I just walked away”</p> <p>“I will always want you”</p>	<p>The synth is virtually unchanged from the previous pre-chorus, but the vocals are a little different. There are added more voices, and this creates a smoother transition to the chorus than previously.</p>	<p>There is more nakedness from Miley riding the wrecking ball, and her previous tender moment with the sledge hammer is topped by her this time licking it.</p>
<p>1.34-1.49</p> 	<p>“I came in like a wrecking ball”</p> <p>“All you ever did was wreck me”</p>	<p>The first part of the chorus is still <i>a Capella</i>, and instrumentally this chorus is identical to the previous one.</p>	<p>During this chorus it is no longer the wrecking ball doing the damage. The damage has been done, and we see Miley walking in the rubble.</p>
<p>1.50-2.10</p>  	<p>“I came in like a wrecking ball”</p> <p>“Left me crashing in a blazing fall”</p>	<p>During this part of the song we are provided with a double chorus with a different set of lyrics. The musical aspects of the chorus are mostly the same as previously, only in this chorus there are several sets of vocals filling in the sound image, and making this chorus sound fuller than the previous ones.</p>	<p>The wrecking ball is back during the visuals of this part of the chorus. It still does no damage to the walls, but Miley rides it nakedly whilst holding on to the chain on the wrecking ball. Near the end of this chorus the imagery changes, and Miley are back to singing directly to the camera whilst uttering the line “Yeah, you wrecked me”.</p>
<p>2.11-2.42</p>  	<p>“I never meant to start a war”</p> <p>“I guess I should have let you win”</p>	<p>The band is once again stripped from the sound image, and we are left with only synth and vocals. Previously the synth has played chords whilst alone with the vocals, but this time we can hear ascending and descending melodies. The instrumentation is no longer as aggressive as the choruses, and the vocal and instrumentation reflects the nakedness of the visuals during this video.</p>	<p>Miley is still not paying attention to the camera, but moves around in the ruins on screen. Even though Miley no longer keeps constant eye contact with the camera, we can see that at least once during each image of her in the ruins or riding the wrecking ball she looks directly at the camera. Almost as if to say, “I know you are watching”. During the very last part of this bridge Miley is once again standing in front of the camera dressed in white. She looks at the camera, but is crying, not singing to it.</p>

<p>2.43-2.51</p> 	<p>“Don’t you ever say, I just walked away”</p>	<p>Listening closely to this part of the song one can hear a very mild synth in the background of Mileys raw vocals.</p>	<p>Miley looks straight at the camera whilst delivering all the lyrics in the pre-chorus.</p>
<p>2.52-3.07</p> 	<p>“I came in like a wrecking ball”</p>	<p>During this chorus we once again hear the full band playing along. This part is different than the previous chorus, based on there being several sets of vocals during this part. This also makes the transition to the second part of the double chorus “easier” than the previous one.</p>	<p>In the beginning of this chorus we can see Miley standing in front of the last wall not torn down by either the wrecking ball or herself with the sledge hammer. As she delivers the words “wrecking ball”, she throws her arms into the wall, and just as they hit the wall, the image cuts to the wrecking ball going through a wall, creating the image that Miley ‘is’ the wrecking ball tearing down these walls.</p>
<p>3.08-3.33</p> 	<p>“I came in like a wrecking ball” “Yeah, I just closed my eyes and swung”</p>	<p>The full band is present during all parts of the double chorus, except for the last line. Mileys vocals and a soft synth is all that is left. With this we are reminded of how the song started, but there is also added emphasis on this line in particular.</p>	<p>The wrecking of the remaining scenery is pictured in this part of the video, both with the wrecking ball, and Miley with her sledge hammer. Once again the camera cuts to a close up of Mileys face whilst delivering the line “Yeah, you wrecked me”.</p>
<p>3.34-3.41</p> 	<p>Outro without vocals</p>	<p>When Miley is done singing the last chorus, all we can hear is a static outro, somewhat reminding us of an old LP.</p>	<p>We can see Miley lying in the ruins of what was torn down. The wrecking ball</p>

4.4.2 Reading

Beginning with a synthesized intro, we see a close up of Mileys face swaying gently from side to side. A lone tear runs down her right cheek. During the first part of the first verse all we see are close-ups of her face. And even though we see that she is crying, there is something almost overly perfect with how her face is shown. Her red lips creating sharp contrast to her exceedingly white skin and teeth, and blue eyes. Her visual appearance seems the same that is was during ‘We Can’t Stop’ and we can assume that her previous makeover

was meant for more than a single music video. The first pre-chorus shows the same face close-ups as previously. During the second part of the pre-chorus the images change, and we see Miley sitting with a sledgehammer across her shoulders, her walking with it, and back to the face close-ups.

As the music goes away in the first five syllables of the chorus, the contrast to the full band during the remainder of the chorus becomes even greater. In this part of the video we see Miley walking around the set whilst carrying the sledgehammer. Just as she delivers the line “all I wanted was to break your walls” a wrecking ball appears on camera smashing through an actual wall behind her.

As the second verse begins, the images change from the close-ups we saw previously. Now we see Miley riding on the wrecking ball whilst keeping constant eye contact with the camera, maintaining a connection with the audience. The second part of this verse begins with her biting her lip in a sensual way whilst still riding the wrecking ball. As the verse crosses over into pre-chorus we see Miley even more exposed, as she appears to be naked with her back to the camera, once again on the wrecking ball. The pre-chorus starts with a close-up of Mileys face and the chain of the wrecking ball, which she gently rubs her face on. The images change, and we see Miley licking the hammer and rubbing her hands up and down its handle, which clearly is a phallic metaphor.

During this first part of the double chorus we see her riding the wrecking ball faster than previously. Here the walls are even more broken, and she even plays an active part in the breaking herself, with the hammer. At one point we see her riding the wrecking ball again, this time she rubs the ball with her hand whilst looking at the camera. As previously in this video, the chorus ends with a close-up of Mileys face. As the bridge begins we see the wrecking ball (without Miley this time) breaking through a wall. The bridge begins with Miley lying in the rubble of destruction, several images of her in the rubble, and ending with a close-up of her face again. This time she is not singing to the camera, but rather standing there crying. Although she is crying, and her mascara is ever so slightly smudged under her eyes, she is still this otherworldly creation during these close-ups.

Another double chorus begins with the wrecking ball smashing through a wall. Whilst at the same time we see Miley hitting that wall from the front. During the bridge her demeanour seemed sadder than previously. Now it seems that sadness is swapped for anger as she is

pictured several times hitting the leftover walls and the rubble of destruction. During this video she is clad only in a white tank-top, and underpants with large boots, or she is completely naked, yet strategically covered up. She walks around in the rubble with dust flying everywhere, her clothes seem to be completely unstained and not affected by this at all. When delivering her final line of the song, at a close-up of her face, she seems to still be angry, but even now she still has perfect lips, eyes and hair. The video ends with the wrecking ball swinging across the screen, and it fades to black.

As mentioned previously, her makeover seems to have stuck with her, and her red lips appears to have become somewhat of a trademark. There are several different aspects of this video that points to a constructed change in Miley herself; her makeover being one of these. Another pretty obvious aspect is the fact that Miley here appears completely naked, and this is undoubtedly a sexualisation of her both as a woman and as an artist. Another thing that has changed from the previous videos to this one is that there are no other characters in this video. This functions to establish a personal narrative, that makes Miley relatable by dealing with feelings of love and heartache that everyone can experience.

Her new appearance shows a more androgynous Miley than previously, where it changes from scene to scene whether or not her femininity or androgyny is in focus. This often coincides with the scenes in which she can said to be portrayed in a sexualised way. Therefore, she appears more sexual when she is portrayed femininely, and less so when portrayed androgynously. Similarly, feminine focal points, such as her red lips and legs, that are potential visual markers, come into focus when portraying her in a sexualised way. Her androgyny is mainly visible through the lack of femininity, for example by showing her from the shoulders up. The other way the video portrays her androgyny is by having her showing her feminine body, carrying masculine items, such as a sledgehammer and wearing work boots. By doing this she appeals to different standards of gender roles at the same time.

A notable distinction from this music video and to the three others is that Miley is the only character shown. Although she sings to an unspecified person, who could be either male or female, she is the only relevant character. This can be seen as an example of how pop videos use hyperembodiment, forcing our attention to her body, as it is the only thing to look at. Due to this it is easy to notice the elongation of her legs, her flawless face, and her young and white body. In many ways this body focus, even when quite androgynous, serves to sexualise Miley.

The video portrays her in a variety of ways, from emotionally vulnerable to sexually aggressive towards inanimate objects, whilst singing to a non-gender specific love interest. This is in stark contrast to the previous ballad, 'When I Look at You', in that it does not contain a strictly heteronormative perspective. In addition, due to Miley's visual appearance it is possible to see the difference from the previously non-sexual romanticized views to the more sexualised ambiguity of this video. Similarly, this video implies a sexual nature in relationships, compared to the 'puppy love' from earlier.

In total the video presents a Miley that is less defined, more ambiguous and androgynous, which can be viewed as giving her more freedom to create artistic space. Alternatively, it can be viewed as a process of branding, or star-making, where she attempts to make herself relevant to new audiences, beyond that of her earlier teenage popstar life.

5 Discussion

In this chapter I will discuss my findings based on the material presented in the previous chapter, I will first discuss the different identities of Miley Cyrus. Then I will look at the role of music videos in constructing her pop identities. In the third subchapter I will connect the perspectives of the first two subchapters to more general perspectives on construction, pop identities and the role of the music industry. The fourth part asks questions of the relevance of constructed identities, both in popular musicology and social debate. In this I aim to show the relevance of scientific perspectives in the case of Miley Cyrus and her relevance to understanding these concepts in light of a contemporary artist. The chapter is shaped in such a way that it aims to begin close to the research material and my specific findings, and gradually elevate to a more generalised discussion and reflection.

5.1 Identity

In providing a close reading of the above four music videos, the issue of the body on display emerges as a prime point of consideration. However, knowing that these are pop videos, showcasing of the body is often done through the eyes of the director, who in most cases is male (Hawkins, 2013, p.466-67). As I argue, it is important to keep in mind whilst discussing these four videos that the Miley who is portrayed, may not reflect her on a personal level, hence my problematizing of ‘personal narrativity’.

In discussing these four videos in this chapter, I will refer to them as Video 1 (Party in The USA), Video 2 (When I Look at You), Video 3 (We Can’t Stop) and Video 4 (Wrecking Ball). I will further distinguish between an earlier Miley, connected to videos 1 and 2, and a current Miley, in videos 3 and 4, the objective being to establish the differences and likenesses between the two primary identities that she has in these videos, and to create room for comparison and later analysis on the process of changing identities.

5.1.1 “I’m not a girl, not yet a woman”: Gender and sexuality

In all the videos Miley Cyrus is portrayed as a woman. From this we can assume that she is a biological woman, and that her womanhood is of some importance. This is conveyed through her visual appearance. The early Miley, from videos 1 and 2, wears typically female clothing.

In video 1 she is shown in short shorts, a tank top and a pair of boots. We see Miley portrayed as a girl struggling to find her way in a new town and with new people. Here we see how the lyrics of the song together with the visuals create a visual image of Miley as a girl. An example of this is during the second verse when she delivers the line “Who’s that chick that’s rocking kicks?”, relating to her boots. In video 2 she is portrayed as a bit more ‘girly’ than in video 1, simply based on the fact that she is wearing dresses. The Miley we see portrayed in this video is one of a girl in love. Her portrayal as a girl is connected to her visual representation, namely her clothes, make-up and hair, and to her relationship with the other character in the video. Her physical gender is not covered up in either video, but is not overly accentuated either, it is just there.

Her attire normalises notions of biological gender. Showing Miley as a girl by wearing ‘gender appropriate clothing’ is an example of how she keeps within the norms of gender and portrayal of biological gender in these videos. This can be understood in connection to her recent break with Disney Channel, and that she still was at a point in her career where she was portrayed as a teen star to the general public. If we assume that keeping within the framework for portrayal of biological gender is in fact a way of accentuating one’s biological gender, then it can be stated that Miley does this in her first two videos. However, it does not strike us as vitally important that she is in fact a girl. It seems more important that she is a teenage pop star, regardless of gender. Living up to standards of gender in ways such as these can also be seen as a way of asserting naturalness or authenticity as an artist (Cohen, 2001). This is part of a larger discussion of identity and constructed identities that I will discuss later.

We have seen that Miley’s gender is never questioned in these two first videos, in fact, it is not much of an issue at all. If we are to believe Butler’s statement: “If one ‘is’ a woman, that is surely not all one is” (2007, p.4), we need to be under the assumption that a woman is not all that Miley Cyrus is. With this in mind, in video 1 she appears to struggle with topics that are true for both men and women, namely leaving home for the first time and fitting in with a new group. The same is true for video 2, where she is shown to be in a heteronormative relationship and in a state of infatuation. Neither of these two first videos are showing situations that are true only for girls. Although we do see the videos from a female perspective through Miley Cyrus. Therefore, Miley’s biological gender is not of utmost importance, but is present in how she is presented in videos 1 and 2. As argued previously, videos 1 and 2 show a Miley close to what we have come to know from her days as Hannah

Montana, whilst videos 3 and 4 show a more grown up and daring Miley. Therefore, in the first two videos we see a Miley that is a girl, and is also struggling with topics relatable for both guys and girls.

Further on in current portrayals of Miley, showing female gender is still prominent in videos 3 and 4. However, in these videos she does not wear 'gender appropriate' clothing. In video 3 she wears noticeably female clothes, however with a much larger focus on accentuating her physical features in a sexualised way. This is done through showing her in tight-fitting leggings and crop tops, amongst others. In addition, she is shown as nearly topless with her nipples strategically covered up in some of the pool scenes. If her biological gender was in fact not an issue here, her nipples would not need censoring and would be a non-issue. In this video she also wears a beanie-hat with an attached veil. This showcases some slight androgyny, or other forms of gender bending, by wearing a hat that is typically worn by men, with a veil typically worn by women (Butler, 2007, p. 144-146). In video 4 she is not wearing much more than a white tank top and white panties, and at several points in this video she is completely naked. Her gender is more ambiguous, with her femininity accentuated by her make-up, the use of nakedness and visual focus on her 'feminine' parts, contrasted with hints of androgyny. This is done through a non-gendered hairstyle, shots from the shoulders and up with less focus on make-up, and a general downplay of femininity. So even though there is not much focus on the physical norms, there are clear instances of where her gender plays a part. In video 4 there are no other characters that help show a gendered display in this video. The lyrics are ambiguous, and never specifically gendered. However, accentuating female body parts and the contours of her naked body helps show the viewer that her female gender is part of her gendered identity (Hawkins, 2009b, p.199). There are also hints of how Miley's new image in videos 3 and 4 is shown to include a more fluid gender representation than previously.

Miley is portrayed as a woman in all of the four videos, therefore, there is not much doubt connected to her biological gender. However, there are more ways of determining gender than just your genitalia. As stated previously, gender can be seen as a process of social and personal construction, and with this, linked to how you 'become' a gender (Butler, 2007, p. 95). With this in mind, it is unclear whether Miley has chosen to portray herself as a woman in these four videos, or if this is part of the social construction linked to biological gender. As there are several ways of portraying gender and femininity; there is no 'correct' answer here.

However, one way of portraying and understanding gender in music video, is through the eyes of the director. This can be linked back to the strategic use of the gaze as theorized earlier. We can therefore see how Miley's femininity is portrayed in these videos, and how much of it can relate back to how she is seen through the director's eyes (Mulvey, 1975, p.837). If we are to assume that all the Miley's we see in these videos are seen through the director's eyes and show her as a product of the patriarchal structures of the music industry. This assumption will be discussed later on. Based on the videos I have analysed and the examples shown, it is clear that gender is a key part of Miley Cyrus' identity, both at an earlier and the current stage of her career. Another important element of the videos is the portrayal of sexuality, in both Miley and other characters.

Sexuality has previously been understood through a traditional viewing of the relationship between two separate genders (Butler, 2007, p.40-41). This tells us that heterosexuality is the supposed norm. Questions regarding sexuality are to a large degree part of all aspects of everyday life. However, whether or not it becomes an important factor is very much in the eye of the beholder, as it were. With this as a starting point, assumptions can be made based on how Miley's sexuality is portrayed in the four videos in question, and what this means in terms of the construction regarding a pop artist.

In video 1, sexuality is not much of a theme, neither visually nor lyrically. Miley parties with both girls and boys, and is not shown to pay special attention to either gender. The only thing potentially linking to a portrayal of sexuality in this video is the focus on Miley missing her girlfriends at home, showing how heterosexual women often choose women to be their closest friends. Turning this around however, if she had said that she missed her boys at home, the discussion would be of another nature. The listener would then assume that she would in fact have a relationship of some kind with these boys, hinting at several sexual relationships. By stating that she is missing her girls however, we never question that this is more than a teenage girl missing her friends. She is shown doing several visual gestures that can be perceived as sexual, but this is generally downplayed. During one of these instances, at 00.52, the lyrics say "moving my hips like yeah" Miley does move her hips, but during this gesture the camera zooms out, and the focus is not entirely on the hip movement. This makes it appear less like an enticing dance move and more innocent. Not showing any type of sexuality or relationships in this video might be a conscious choice from the creators. By not making her supposed sexuality visual in this video, it is easier for more people to be able to

relate to both Miley and to her music, making her a marketable artist with the 'correct' image (Frith, 2001; Hawkins & Richardson, 2007; Vernallis, 2004). As with her portrayal of gender, this might be connected to her Disney Channel years, where focus on sexuality was downplayed. Although there are several people shown in video 1, there seems not be any love connection or a sexual connection between Miley and anyone else. In fact, she is only shown in close proximity to the four girls who follow her through most parts of the video. Had this been shown as anything other than girlfriends dancing and having a good time we would once again question Miley's heterosexuality. As this is never a topic in this video, it becomes that of an innocent teenage girl trying to make friends in a new city. As stated, this video show examples of how heteronormativity and sexuality is the norm, simply based on the fact that there is nothing in the video that clearly addresses this in one way or another (Hawkins, 2002, p.13). Thus, by not addressing or applying other sexualities in the video, it is made clear that the only sexuality 'valid' is heterosexuality.

In contrast, in video 2 there is a heteronormative relationship evident in the visual narrative. By having the male actor portrayed as her object of affection, this video shows Miley as a supposed heterosexual female in a heteronormative relationship, once again staying within the boundaries of what is expected of a female teenager (Frith & McRobbie, 1991, p.374-375). As there are only two characters shown in this video, there are never any questions of ambiguity linked to her sexual preferences. Lyrically it can be argued that there might be some amount of ambiguity linked to sexuality and sexual preferences. As the male character in this video is addressed through the lyrics as 'you', it becomes clear that a heteronormative relationship is being shown because he is in fact a 'he'. If they were to change this actor to an actress, the video would show a different kind of sexuality than the heteronormative sexuality currently shown. As it is, there is a male actor in this video, and the connections between the visual and the auditive help create a context for the viewer that is hard ignore or disagree with. As Carol Vernallis suggests; "the song and imagery show some overlapping traits" (2013, p.440). Therefore, lyrically the song may allow ambiguity regarding sexuality and sexual preferences, simply because it does not address this at all, but when watching the video, it becomes clear that the relationship spoken of in the lyrics is that between a boy and a girl. As the relationship is quite innocent and puppy love-like, it is never hinted at or portrayed as a sexual relationship. As the lyrics suggest, she is looking for the 'inspiration' to go on when times get tough. Throughout the video there is little focus on Miley's body, with most of the focus put into the interaction between the characters.

Undoubtedly, in the first two videos she is positioned within a heteronormative framework, in the sense that her image or sexuality does not upset or offend the viewers that have stayed with her since the Hannah Montana-days. Yet, in the latter two videos Miley's subjectivity is more fluid, and notably comfortable in the breaking of norms. All this points to a Miley who is portrayed so that she can appeal to the audiences, and shows an image that changes over time.

In video 3 Miley sings about both heterosexual and homosexual relationships. This is evident in the lyrics of the song which have a bearing on the visual aspects of the video. At different times, she is seen with both men and women, albeit it not in an overly sexual way. Although, at times, she is shown in a way that can be seen as a little too close to be called a casual friendship. For instance, at 03.07 in the video she is shown bending over in front of a girl, whilst making sure that their bodies are touching the whole time. Miley puts her hand over her mouth in a 'surprised' way, letting the viewer know that this was in fact not an accident at all. Here the hint of grinding on this unidentified female, positions Miley alongside an 'undefined sexual' preference. Just a couple of seconds later at 03.21, she snuggles up to the chest of a male character in the video, whilst kissing his chest and putting his hand around her. Here it is safe to assume that we see clear examples of Miley portraying, at the very least, bisexual tendencies in her videos. This shows us that she is comfortable with upsetting and playing with sexual norms. Whether or not this is a conscious choice on Miley's behalf, or if this is something that is created by the makers of the music videos is unclear at this point, and arguable irrelevant.

In video 4 Miley's sexuality is blatantly ambiguous. The lyrics simply reference a 'you', leaving it ungendered, and as there are no other characters in video 4, the context and the visual aspects of the video are all of Miley. So even though she is the singer in video 4, it is never made clear if the song is supposed to be understood from her perspective as a female or if someone else is the supposed 'story teller', nor to whom the song is directed. However, it is only natural to assume that the person delivering the lyrics is the 'story teller' of the song. Relatable to this form of personal narrative is what Hawkins and Richardson writes; "Personal narratives are performative" (2007, p.4). As we have seen much focus on Miley herself in this video, it can therefore be argued that this song is supposed to be read from her perspective

Regardless of Miley's sexual ambiguity in videos 3 and 4, it is clear that in these videos depict her sexuality more aggressive. In video 3 she is shown having sexually charged

interactions with multiple characters, for example at 03.07. In addition, she can be seen to have several sexual gestures whilst shown on her own, creating an image of a more aggressively sexual person. This can be seen at 00.23 and 00.50. Similarly, in video 4, she has scenes with sexualised imagery, such as her interactions with sledgehammer, as seen at 01.33, and her riding the wrecking ball, at 01.47. The change from the earlier Miley, who is largely non-sexualised and heteronormative, is noticeable in the current Miley, who at times is hypersexualised and distinctly non-heteronormative.

So far through the close reading of these four videos I have addressed the clear indicators of gender and sexuality. As stated, in videos 1 and 2, a sexuality is portrayed that fits neatly within the binary heteronormative system. In fact, we have seen nothing that would indicate that more than two sexualities and genders exist. In these two videos Miley keeps true to the traditional system. In the latter two videos, however, the portrayal of sexuality in Miley's videos have become less traditional and more controversial as her career progresses. This is exemplified through hinting at several diverse sexual relations and sexual preferences in video 3, and the ambiguity of both the lyrics and the visual aspects of video 4. Additionally, she appears to show a more fluid representation of her own gender (Cohen, 2001, p.240). Whether this portrayal is related to Miley growing as an artist, something personal for Miley Cyrus, or simply growing older, her portrayal of sexuality and gender in her performances and music videos has undoubtedly changed over time. Regardless of the degree of intentionality, the point remains the same: in these four videos Miley portrays different aspects of gender and sexuality that reveal the constructions that shape the character of Miley Cyrus, both earlier and currently.

5.1.2 Image Construction

In addition to gender and sexuality, a visual image is a key part of the pop identity. This can be understood in relation to how the artist wishes to be perceived by their audience, and by how the producers and the industry want the artist to appear. Based on the videos I have discussed it would appear that Miley's image has changed significantly from the two early videos. I will now discuss some of the elements that make up the different images of Miley, at these two stages in her career.

In videos 1 and 2 we see her portrayed as the typical 'girl next door'. Video 1 focuses on showcasing Miley as a star, but also showing her in situations with other people. It appears

that the goal is for Miley to be viewed as a relatable, genuine and approachable young girl. Showing her as the star while at the same time showing her in situations where she relates to other people, this video shows the contextual elements surrounding Miley both on and off stage at the current time (Frith & McRobbie, 1991). At the time this video was made, she was in fact a teenage girl trying to fit in as an artist and as a private person. By making the visual and lyrical elements of the video relatable to the public, this helps reinforce Miley's image. By making her music and visual appearances seem 'natural', her image relates to a number of people, and therefore her music and music videos will be bought and seen. To make her seem 'natural' the video surrounds her with people of a similar age, in a setting that is easily viewed as typically American, and presents her as down to earth. In video 2, the lyrics show a girl in love, and so does the images. She may appear natural to the viewers, because she seems to struggle with the same things as other teenagers, therefore she is relatable to the fans (Scott, 2009, p.16). In addition, her visual appearances are not exaggerated in terms of make-up or clothing, and she establishes a connection to the audience through her 'gaze' at the camera, and by extension the viewer (Mulvey, 1975, p.841). In both these videos Miley's image is meant to be that of a normal teenager, who just 'happens' to be a successful artist.

From these two early videos we can establish that her image is relatively normalized. However, based on the latter and current image, that is no longer the case. Her new image appears to be more distanced, more like a superstar, and a lot edgier than previously. In video 3 she sports a new look, deals with more adult topics and overall seems more separate from mainstream society. As we have seen in the previous subchapter, her take on both gender and sexuality has undergone drastic changes and she now appears at odds with several traditional social norms. In video 3 her image is shown to be more sexualised, in addition to creating a view of Miley as a rebellious, young adult, who parties, does drugs and flaunts her 'otherness' (Hawkins, 2009a, p.17). This is shown in scenes of the video, such as references to drug use at 01.43, the literal consumption of money at 00.27 and the combination of a fur coat and taxidermied sheep and wolverine at 01.36 and 01.40. All of these visualizations create a distance between Miley and her audience, opposed to the approachable earlier Miley, but she maintains a relatability to her audiences through party images and her 'gaze' (Mulvey, 1975). In addition, the party scenes and her 'otherness' helps reinforce the superstar element of her new image, making her seem larger than life.

For the sake of comparison, both video 1 and 3 show Miley in similar situations. She is shown partying, having a good time, and relating to the other characters shown in the videos. In video 3 she is also shown as the star, but at the same time she is shown in interactions with other people. However, the interactions shown in video 3 are a bit more physical than the interactions shown in video 1. This can be due to Miley growing older, and a way of changing one's image in music videos in order to appeal to a new crowd. In video 3 she is shown cuddling, grinding and play-wrestling with the other characters, whilst no close relations are shown in video 1. As she is seen in videos 1, 2 and 3 in situations with other people, in video 3 the situations are more of a 'grown-up nature', showing her more as a sexual being than previously. In this way she is shown as more controversial in video 3 than in the previous two. In video 1 her appearing on stage with the American flag as her backdrop show her more as a pop artist than the other videos, and this points to a commercialization of her as a product and as an artist in order to showcase her as possibly more of a star than she was at the time this video was released. What we see in videos 1 and 2 is that of a *teenage* pop star, and what we see in videos 3 and 4 is that of a pop star. She is no longer a teenager, and her videos show more grown up situations.

When she is shown alone in video 4, this shows her as more independent, but also as more vulnerable than previously. This vulnerability is shown in both the lyrics of the song, but also in her appearances in the video. Visually she is shown alone, crying, and during some points in the video as completely naked. This use of nakedness can be seen as a figurative way of showing her emotional nakedness and vulnerability as a focal point in this video. As a lot of the visual focus of this video are close-ups of Miley's face, we see how her facial expressions are used as visual signifiers of emotion.

All of this shows how Miley's image is portrayed to a large degree through her music videos, and how they can be seen as mirrors into the life of the artist. Knowing that authenticity is an issue in the popular music industry however, we cannot be sure that the image that is portrayed through music videos and stage appearances are in fact the real artist. However, looking at this from another point of view, knowing that the music industry uses authenticity as a way of selling the artist as a product, we can argue that nothing the artist shows the public is what can be seen as the 'real' artist, not just what is shown in music videos and stage performances. Therefore, it is arguable that everything the viewer sees in music videos and stage performances of an artist, is what the industry wants us to see. In fact, there is always a

distance between the artist we see on stage and the person that lies behind (Ålvik, 2013, p.45) With this in mind, the character that the artist plays whilst performing on stage or in a music video becomes highly important when discussing the constructions that make up an artist's identity.

5.1.3 Persona

In popular culture, a persona is part of the character a person portrays. With this in mind, a persona is essential for a performing artist as this is part of the package that makes up the artists' image and identity (Hawkins, 2009a, p.39). As stated, a sense of connection to the artists is part of what makes them sell. If an artist rapidly changes their persona, it becomes difficult to determine what the 'real' artist is (Goodwin, 1992, p.111). However, it is possible that, nothing of what we see of an artist can be argued to be the 'real' artist. Relating this to Miley Cyrus however, she is shown in the first two videos as relatable and within reach. In video 1, she even makes a lyrical point out of not being 'one of those girls'. Depicted in both lyrics and images, we see how she chooses boots over stilettos, and rolls her eyes in such a way that she almost looks down on girls wearing them. In this video she is arguably shown as the southern 'girl next door'.² This use of her heritage as a reference point, makes her seem more authentic and real, and at the same time this helps the listener believe that they are in some way close to the artist on a personal level. The same is seen in video 2. The focus is no longer on her southern heritage, but still she is shown as an approachable and 'normal' teenage girl. Her persona might therefore be seen as somewhat unrelated to her gender, and therefore both in opposition to, and underlining her gender at the same time.

There is little doubt that Miley Cyrus' persona has transformed over the years, however when discussing this topic, a certain amount of an artist's persona hinges on vocal performances. During Miley's four music videos her voice changes significantly. Setting the mood of a music video, the voice is very much part of what makes up the artist, and by having an easily recognizable voice, the audience will remember you the next time they hear one of your songs (Askerøi, 2013, p.16). In video 2 the echoed synth in the intro helps create a vulnerability to the song. The vocals seem to be a bit 'life-like', and the use of echo on her vocals help underline the vulnerability. In terms of vocal presentations, the build-up of this song energizes the entire mix. The clever use of crescendos and decrescendos help move the song forwards,

² Miley Cyrus was raised in Nashville before moving to LA permanently in 2005

and create more of a dynamic vocal presentation. At 1.22 in the video there is a subtle sliding in her vocals as she delivers the word 'home'. The fact that this is not edited out from the final mix makes her seem even more human (and relatable) to the listener, and is a clever choice in terms of approachability surrounding the artist and in terms of evoking emotions with the listener. In video 1, the vocals appear a bit more 'flat', but the voice remains the same in the two songs. The vocals of video 1 are in tune, and is keeping with the pitch of the song, although what appears to be over-editing might have stripped the voice of some of the emotion we hear in video 2. As the vocals of this song do not particularly evoke any emotion with the listener, it therefore helps us stay in the moment, the particular moment when this party is going on. In this way it keeps within the genre of party-pop songs, to which it belongs (Vernallis, 2013, p.46-47).

In the transition from the first to the latter videos, Miley's vocal performances alter significantly. On the whole, the vocal performances of video 3 are much more dynamic than they are in video 1. Although this voice is also altered and autotuned, it is not flat and appears 'more real'. All the small embellishments in the melody also helps create depth in the vocals. When listening to the vocals from video 4 the difference from the first two songs is striking. During the first verse, every breath Miley takes is audible. It almost sounds like her breaths are accentuated in order to create a more emotional vocal performance, and for the listener to hear the vulnerability portrayed by Miley during this song. Similar to video 2, there is a clever use of crescendos and decrescendos in this song. The *a capella* parts also help the listener to hear the supposed vulnerability surrounding Miley. As she delivers the final line "yeah, you wrecked me", at the end of the last word, a breath that reminds us of a sigh is audible. This accentuates the meaning of the lyrics and gives a nice ending to the song. The first two songs have a vocal that is recognizable with each other, and although being a good singer, it is the voice of a teenage girl. In the latter two videos her voice is almost unrecognizable, just as with her visual appearances. In this way, Miley Cyrus has undergone both a physical and a vocal makeover in the four years separating these songs.

When trying to determine what makes an artist's persona, their music and performances play an important part. An artist's music is to a large degree viewed through perceptions of their public persona, therefore part of the understanding of an artist is a question of their subjectivity (Goodwin, 1992, p.111). In accordance with Goodwin, it is possible that Miley Cyrus' public persona is linked to both her image and her subjectivity, both as a private

person and as an artist. However, at the same time keeping in mind that all we know about her personal sphere is what we see in her public portrayals in the media, in her music videos, at stage performances or through social media. Relating this to authenticity as well, we know that portrayals of an artist can hardly ever be seen as what is the 'true' artist, and therefore very little of what we know about the artist in question can be seen as much more than a persona created. However, how the audience sees the artist is a large part of their identities, particularly in regard to subjectivity.

5.1.4 Subjectivity

Any insight into the life and persona of the artist helps us determine aspects of their subjectivity and public persona, as argued by several popular musicologists (Goodwin, 1992; Richardson, 2013; Vernallis, 2013; Hawkins, 2016). As there is one objective element, connecting image and persona to the artist's body is part of the way we understand an artist's subjectivity. Promotional materials, such as music videos, will always play an important part in how the artist is received by spectators. As the primary goal in the music industry is to sell music, this is done by showing an artist's sound and identity at the same time. When we look at video 1, we hear how Miley's vocals are retouched, how the entire mix is glossed over. In this video she has an intertextual relationship to Jay Z and Britney Spears' music. We do not know if this is the case for the person that lies behind the portrayed artist, but as far as the viewer knows, this is in fact the case. As subjectivity suggests, this is linked to what the viewer believes to be personal for the artist in question. We are trying to determine what is personal for Miley Cyrus by looking at her through her music videos. In the videos in question we can see examples of this. In video 1 the narrative of the music video and the lyrics of the song depict a normal teenage girl struggling with issues relatable by all people. As subjectivity in musicians is related to how an artist is perceived by the public, promotional materials is a critical factor (Hawkins & Niblock, 2011, p.35-36).

In video 1, one obvious promotional material is how Miley is shown performing on stage with the American flag as her backdrop. This can be seen as a way of promoting Miley as the all-American girl she is made out to be in both videos 1 and 2. There is also promotional material in the beginning of video 1. We see Miley in a parking lot filled with classic American cars. If we were to look at this without the context of the rest of the video, it could be seen as a car-commercial. She also gains authenticity from the viewer in this video, as we hear her singing

“it’s definitely not a Nashville party”. By using this reference to her home town, the viewer is left with a feeling of knowing her.

In video 2, Miley is filmed playing the piano. By using this in the video, the viewer is left with a perception that Miley plays her own music. Whether or not this is the case, we believe that this is something that Miley does, thus making the viewer believe they are close to her private sphere. However, in the case of this video it is important to note that this was used for the soundtrack to the movie “The Last Song”.³ Therefore, whether or not the music video was created to reflect the character Ronnie from the movie, or Miley Cyrus is a bit unclear. Regardless, by adding Miley supposedly playing the piano, she gains authenticity from the viewers because they are under the impression that she plays her own instruments. These two first videos may therefore have provided the viewer with a sense of recognition and identification. This can make the viewer believe they know something that is personal of the artist in question, and therefore becomes the perceived subjectivity linked to Miley Cyrus. When looking at the latter videos however, the promotional materials found in the videos have changed, and the same audience that identified with the earlier Miley might not feel the same towards the current Miley.

At the beginning of video 3 we see a loud speaker perched on a bed. By showing the logo of the speaker ‘Beats’, this shows the viewer that Miley, at least the Miley character portrayed in the video, chooses ‘Beats’ as her personal equipment. Later on in this video we see a table filled with lip balms. Miley uses one of the lip balms in the video, once again showing that ‘Miley’ would choose this brand. Showing the artist as a ‘real’ person helps the viewer believe they are closer to the artist. Giving the viewer this perceived glimpse into what they believe to be the artist’s personal sphere, helps provide the artist with perceived credibility and authenticity. At the same time, as all we see from the artist is public appearances, the viewer is left with a feeling of ‘believing’ in what they see. Therefore, if the viewer believes in what they see, they are more likely to perceive this is the truth and as something that is close to personal for the artist in question. These promotional materials are parts of how Miley looks and acts in her videos. Seeing as this is one of the only instances where the audience can feel close to the artist, by seeing Miley acting like ‘a real person’, the audience might feel a stronger connection to her as an artist, as she is ‘just like us’ (Hawkins, 2009a, p.69).

³ In this movie from 2010 Miley Cyrus starred as the lead actress in the role of Ronnie a piano prodigy

However, as Miley is made out to be larger than life in this video, the viewer might identify with her, but also look up to her in such a way that they might want to be like her.

In video 4 there are very few instances where the viewer gains insight to Miley's personal sphere. However, when she is shown several times as crying, this shows the viewer the vulnerability we have discussed earlier. Therefore, by showing Miley as emotional and distraught in this video, the viewer believes they are closer to Miley through her emotions. Basically, almost all people know what it is like to get their heart broken, therefore they can identify with what Miley is both singing and showing through the visuals in the video. Same as with the previous video, Miley appears to be out of reach in video 4. As she is shown vulnerable and figuratively and literally naked, this helps the identification process from the viewers. However, she is so high above us in terms of recognition, that we know that we can never reach her level. This also reinforces the new image of Miley Cyrus since the beginning of 2013. As she earlier was seen as approachable and down to earth, now she is very much out of reach.

By determining what can be said to be linked to an artist's subjectivity, a certain amount of insight into the artist in question is required. In this project, a primary interpretation of Miley Cyrus is portrayed in the four music videos. As such, perceptions of subjectivity in Miley are based upon the personae encountered in these videos. As I have attempted to point out, in all the four videos there is a sense of something that is personal, and something that supposedly gives us a glimpse into her personal life. As such, the artist's personal life helps the audience connect with the artist, and makes them believe that these things they do are of a personal nature, making them feel like a part of the artist's private sphere. This again creates strong notions of authenticity and mediation for the artist in question.

5.2 Videos

5.2.1 Pop Music Videos

Pop music videos are often made in such a way that they portray contemporary topics and will therefore always reflect the society in which they were created (Vernallis, 2004, p.1). Music videos were originally created to be shown on TV, and a certain sense of censorship was required. However, now that we have web pages such as YouTube, it seems impossible to be

able to censor everything (Vernallis, 2013, p.207-208). Music videos have become a marketable product in its own right. By showing pop artists as glossed over versions of themselves, music videos now help the music industry enforce the roles of gender and how they should be portrayed. At the same time, they mirror the high standards for beauty in the modern society.

Music videos have helped the industry market artists, and at the same time they have helped the viewers get closer to their idols (Hawkins & Richardson, 2007). This is comparable to what we have done through performing a close reading of Miley's four videos. By getting closer to the Miley we also feel we have gained the 'right' to make assumptions about her. In the first videos we saw a Miley marketed to sell records within the boundaries of traditional social norms. By showing her in dresses and in heterosexual relationships, she has been portrayed as a 'posterchild' for heteronormativity. This is basically the claim I have made for the earlier Miley's pop identity; as she has been portrayed as highly 'normal' and uncontroversial. In her later videos, she is shown as racier and more grown up. This can be seen as either a natural progression for a teenager growing up, or the music industry creating a new image for her to be able to ensure that she still is a marketable artist (Mayhew, 2009, p.154). In the last two videos we have also seen how she has challenged gender and social norms through controversial portrayals of gender and sexuality.

This is done through a variety of techniques. One example of such a technique is the use of metaphors and symbolism in Miley's videos. This helps create a stronger connection between the visual and the auditive in the videos. We can see examples of this in video 1 as the song is about a party in the USA. The beginning of the video shows Miley in a drive-in theatre, showing the viewer something that is very typical in the US. Further on we see the American flag as her backdrop as she performs on stage. Leaving the viewer with no doubt that she is an American, and that the party is in the USA. This makes her fit nicely with the ideals of the all-American girl.⁴ In this video we can also see how the visual images help create a context surrounding the song, so that it becomes clear that the narrative follows Miley. In video 2 there is also a connection between the lyrics of the song, and the images in the video. Miley sings about the waves flooding the shore, and the scenery of the video changes to her sitting at

⁴ Thus she possesses the qualities that are admired or typical of American girls. (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/all%E2%80%93American>)

a darkened beach. Same as with video 1, the context of the video and the visual images helps paint a picture of Miley's supposed narrative.

In videos 3 and 4, almost everything shown is connected to imagery. For instance, in video 3 at the beginning of the second verse we see a spoon showing the word 'twerk', and just a few seconds later we see Miley and some other girls twerking. At the very beginning of this video Miley is sitting on a bed and cutting off an ankle monitor with a large pair of scissors. This can symbolize a breaking of the rules, as it were, and a newfound freedom from norms and restrictions. As there are no other characters than Miley present in video 4, this video shows a lot of imagery and visual and lyrical metaphors, to create a narrative. Lyrically the song is about a wrecking ball of a person trying to break someone's walls. Naturally, people cannot be wrecking balls, this is therefore an obvious metaphor. Here the wrecking ball symbolizes something or someone coming in hard with no regards for the repercussions of their actions. This is also shown in the visuals with the wrecking ball crashing into and breaking walls. Further on the lyrics depict an emotional person feeling vulnerable and figuratively naked. In the visuals this is taken one step further, as Miley is literally naked whilst performing parts of this video. Therefore, it is arguable that the visual images of a music video help create context and narratives within the video.

In all the four music videos I have studied, I have considered the many ways in which Miley is portrayed. However, it is important to remember that a lot of the construction of a pop artist in a music video relies a great deal on what happens 'behind the scenes'. Both in terms of directing and producing the music video itself, and in how the song is put together. We have also seen how Miley has changed from videos 1 and 2 to videos 3 and 4. As the body is the only objective aspect we have of an artist, the changes in the videos reveal a change in how Miley is portrayed (Hawkins, 2009a, p.67-69). This is done through a strategic shift in production techniques. The use of the 'gaze' has become more prominent in the sense that it appears to be more directly aimed at showing Miley and her new pop identity. Similarly, the narratives have changed, now focusing on a more gendered and adult perspective. The use of intertextuality and imagery has changed to show more of a superstar.

Miley's music videos have helped her move forwards as an artist, appeal to a new and more grown up crowd, and have created controversy regarding her integrity, authenticity and womanhood. This is connected to the two pop identities we have seen through her career. The first pop identity that portrayed Miley as approachable and down to earth is no longer present,

and the new pop identity shown in videos 3 and 4, as the current identity, show how Miley has changed in order to remain a sellable artist. Whether or not this is done consciously by Miley herself, or has been carefully orchestrated by the music industry, music videos have undoubtedly helped Miley progress as an artist.

5.2.2 Hyperembodiment

Hyperembodiment is a major aspect of pop music videos and plays on pre-existing notions of the body-fixated culture in which we currently live (Hawkins, 2013; Hansen, 2015). Pop videos are made to be aesthetically pleasing to the viewer, and by showing the artists body as beyond perfect, this also shows the demands put on an artist by society or the music industry (Hawkins, 2013, p.466). Magnifications of an artist's features are a major part of hyperembodiment, and we can see multiple examples of this in Miley's videos, particularly the latter two, where she is pictured with flawless, white skin and teeth, perfect make-up and striking eyes.

In video 1 Miley is shown in her short shorts and tank top, accompanied by cowboy boots. Even though she is dancing and having a good time with the other people in the video, her hair never falls out of place. Her wavy brown hair falls down to her waist, parts of it carefully placed over her shoulders, the rest down her back. The hair also strategically covers her cleavage and making her less sexualised at the same time as accentuating her 'girl next door'-look. At 1.28 in the video, Miley is standing in front of a wall of sheet metal, the camera zooms in at her face as she rolls her eyes at the camera. Here the viewer gets a closer look at her perfectly made up face and accentuated eyes. This look in her eyes can also be related back to the use of the 'gaze', as she does in fact create a connection with the audiences whilst singing (Mulvey, 1975). This can also be seen as a strategic move, as she is speaking directly to the audience through the camera whilst talking about not fitting in, and wanting to stay outside of what is considered 'normal'. The same accentuated eyes and use of the 'gaze' can be seen in video 2 at 1.08 just as she delivers the title line 'When I Look at You'. Here we see her looking directly at the camera whilst smiling. This creates a slight ambiguity in regards to who 'you' are. In this way the viewer is able to put themselves in the song, and imagine themselves as the object of her affection. Although she is not overly sexualised in the first two videos, we have still seen examples of hyperembodiment. Moving on to videos 3 and 4

however, we can now see examples of hypersexualisation and ‘larger than life’ hyperembodiment.

At 01.08 in video 3 she is standing face forwards on an exercise bike. Wearing a white crop-top and white leggings, her red lips stand out as a contrast against her white clothes, skin and hair. The African-American guy dancing behind her also helps accentuate this contrast, making her an even whiter shade of pale. As she stretches her right arm behind her head she elongates herself. This fits nicely with the standards of beauty, focused on women who are models with long legs that seem to go on forever. Her height is also ‘faked’ by the fact that she is standing on a bike, making her look taller than the guy behind her. At 01.46 in the video another example presented with her lying in the pool, her arms and head on the edge, making them the only visible parts. Her blue eyes neatly framed by her eye make-up, her face flawless and her red lips striking. Her golden nail polish also helps the framing of her face. We see so little and so much at the same time. She looks so innocent and at the same time highly sexualised. This type of hypersexualisation is relatable to how pop artist often is made to reflect the standards of beauty and sexuality found in society. At 02.59, she is standing alone inside the house. She is now wearing what appears to be a white body suit, cut down in the front to create more of a cleavage. As she stands there with her legs slightly crossed, we see the camera zooming out creating a full body shot. She is stroking her collarbone ever so slightly, and lifting her right leg. This creates the illusion of an hourglass figure, and helps with the staging of society’s standards of beauty.

There are examples of this attempt at ‘flawlessness’ in the beginning of video 4 up till 00.41 in the video, where the images changes. In the close ups of her face she is shown beyond perfect. Another example of this is at 02.21, where Miley is lying in the rubble slightly tilting towards the left. She lifts her leg in such a way that the viewer sees her whole body, with her butt as the focal point. Her skin and body creates a contrast to the dirty rubble underneath her, making her, if possible, even whiter. Another point in the bridge, at 02.29, the camera is moving upwards from her feet, showing her long legs only. As there are examples of accentuated body parts in all of the four videos, these are clear examples of hyperembodiment.

All of this shows how Miley is portrayed in her music videos, and at times hypersexualised. The connection between hyperembodiment and hypersexualisation can be understood as a way of making Miley highly desirable and an object of the gaze. This makes facilitates

marketing her for a more adult audience and reinforcing the impression that she is unattainable and yet the audience would like to be with her and be her at the same time. This portrayal therefore secures her status as a superstar. However, we do not know how much of a say Miley has had in her own portrayal, as we know she is a part of the male dominated music industry.

5.3 “To be a pop star, all you need to change is who you are”

5.3.1 Heteronormative excursions

Heteronormativity frames the norms found in most popular music, and whether an artist addresses this publicly or stages this through sexual identity-on-display the relevance of subjectivity in pop music is paramount (Hawkins, 2009a, p.95). In her first videos Miley emphasises the norms of heteronormativity by being shown in heterosexual situations and relationships. Depicted in these roles, she partakes in heteronormative society. This is linked to her visual subjectivity as a musician, and I want to argue that this might therefore not be what can be understood as the ‘true’ Miley. However, when she later breaks with this, as we have seen in videos 3 and 4, this can either be seen as a personal sexual preference, or as a way of creating her pop identity as a more diverse artist. Thus, with breaking with or challenging heteronormativity through her videos, we might either assume that this is her new take on gender and sexuality, as a way of flaunting her ‘otherness’ so that she might relate to an extended audience with her references to the LGBTIQ community, or that she is simply finding new ways of showcasing her body in a less restrictive manner.

Regardless of personal choices or a constructed artistic persona, this way of showcasing the body and an artist in new ways, is a way of creating controversy in the music industry and society at large. Early in Miley’s career, when she was shown as a teen idol, she fit neatly in the general gender norms, later on she has been seen taking a stand against these norms by being more fluid in her portrayals of sexuality and sexual preferences (Cohen, 2001, p.240). As music videos have proven themselves to be instructive in means of a gendered display of appearances, Miley uses this medium as a way of launching her own controversy and a possibility for her to distance herself from the norm and a possible wish to stand out from the

crowd. In these four videos, we have seen a Miley-character that is both breaking with and is reinforcing the social norms.

In videos 1 and 2 her femininity is normalised. In this way she panders to the music industry, and society at large, reinforcing assumptions based on the binary system of portraying gender. Also, when keeping true to the social expectations of gender and gender norms, she falls within the framework of a female teenager trying to make her way in the music industry (Frith & McRobbie, 1991). By performing gender in the visual aspects of her music videos, her sex can both be strengthened and undermined at the same time. As she is the clear focal point of all the videos, hers is the body on display. As the pop music industry is completely reliant of showing gendered identities in music videos, the artist's performances are not limited by cultural expectations of gender and gender identity (Hawkins, 2009a, p.105). Therefore, her later challenging with and breaking of social norms, might be closer to what is seen as 'natural' in music videos.

In video 3 at 1.50, we see Miley in the pool with a plastic doll. She's holding the doll on her hip just like you would hold a baby, and at the end of this scene she starts kissing and licking the lips of the doll. In this scene she sexualises both an inanimate object and herself.

Sexualising oneself in this way is not that controversial, however, sexualising the doll is. This doll can be seen as a symbol of a child-like innocence, and Miley shatters this illusion by making it an object of 'sexual desire'. The same can be seen in video 4 when she is shown licking and kissing the sledge hammer. This sledgehammer is a clear phallic symbol, but still just a sledgehammer. This can loosely be seen as an intertextual element in regard to Peter Gabriel's use of the sledgehammer as a metaphor. In these two videos we therefore see Miley breaking with heteronormativity through the sexualisation of inanimate objects. As stated previously, the sledgehammer can be seen as a phallic-substitution. It can also be seen as Miley breaking the walls of heteronormativity by making inanimate objects sexual in her videos.

Her earlier videos seem more influenced by the binary conventions of gender and heteronormativity, whilst her later videos are connected to a more fluid understanding of gender and sexuality. In the later videos we have seen a Miley that is opposing the standards of gender, sexuality and heteronormativity, by doing so she is breaking with the identity of the 'old Miley' and the framework of teenage pop stars (Frith & McRobbie, 1991). She now appears more fluid in terms of gender representation, and seems somewhat androgynous. This

portrayal seen in videos 3 and 4 might be seen as a way of portraying new expectations of gender, or a Miley that is wanting to break free from gender conventions and female stereotypes.

Traditionally, those who have opposed gender roles and have vocalized a wish for breaking with patriarchal societies and creating a more equal society, have been defined as feminists (Holst, 2009, p.30-39). As we have seen in the four videos, Miley has opposed gender roles. She has acted in a way that both accentuates and undermines her biological gender at the same time. She has also broken with and challenged heteronormativity and become more fluid in her gender representations.

In videos 1 and 2 Miley follows the course of the narratives, regardless of her gender. In video 1 she is not shown to pay specific attention to either gender, and in video 2 we see her in a relationship with the male character. In video 3 we see and hear a Miley that is making more of a vocal statement for equality. This is done through the lyrics “It’s our party we can love who we want, we can kiss who we want, we can see who we want.” amongst other examples, and through her being shown in close relations to both men and women. In video 4 there are no other characters, and the lyrics are quite ambiguous. Therefore, it is hard to argue that this video or song portrays only feminist point of views. By appearing naked, Miley both undermines and accentuates feminism in this video. Her nakedness can be understood as a ploy for marketability, or as Miley claiming ownership of her own body. Looking at these videos, we have laid the basis for the claim that Miley shows feminist views through her music. However, as this definition of feminism is rather wide, her assumed feminism might just be a promotional tool. The lyrics of video 3 also points out how they are “shaking it like they’re at a strip club”. Historically strip club performances have been seen as derogative to women and feminism. Building on the assumption that Miley is in fact a feminist, her use of this can be seen as wanting to take something that has previously been considered as negative, and trying to change it into something liberating and positive for women (McClary, 1991, p.150).

Given that this claim is solely based on visual and lyrical aspects of the music videos, several elements of the videos seem contradictory. One obvious aspect is the fact that Miley has not been credited for taking part in the creation of any of these videos. Therefore, this supposed feminism might be simply a result of the music industry’s power to create and alter pop artist’s through their videos and visual performances. There are contradictory aspects to this

claim in all the videos. In video 1 she is not shown as a fighter for equality or equal rights, she is simply a girl having a good time with her friends. Same as with video 2, the visual narratives of the video show nothing more and nothing less than a girl in love. This way of creating narratives in videos is also part of the construction that makes up an artist (Hawkins & Richardson, 2007, p.4). In videos 3 and 4 a more grown up Miley is shown. Arguably, this is based on natural causes, as Miley has in fact grown in the years that separate these videos. Although we see lyrical aspects in which Miley might vocalize a fight for equality, this might also be part of her current pop identity, as opposed to her previous identity seen in videos 1 and 2. In video 3 the lyrics are clear, “this is our house, these are our rules”. However, by appearing almost topless, her nipples are barely covered, Miley succumbs to existing notions that state that women’s nipples are something that should remain hidden to the public. Yet, in video 4 Miley is naked. Feminists fight for equality; so why should not a woman be able to appear naked in front of cameras without being scrutinised? In doing this she objectifies herself in a way that contravenes many feminist point of views.

Even with these contradictory aspects of her videos, we can see hints of feminism in all of them. From a feminist perspective, she is not scrutinised or looked down on in either of her four videos simply due to her being a biological female. However, it can be argued that even though she shows signs of sexual ambiguity and androgyny in all of her videos, she is still perceived as quite feminine.

As there is often a form of weakness connected to the term ‘feminine’, women in the music industry consciously downplaying their femininity may be seen as challengers of the gender norms, or as women who will be judged by the standards set in terms of their biological gender. From a feminist perspective, Miley breaking with sexual norms can be seen as a portrayal of personal sexuality, or Miley simply being a sexual being. As previously stated, we do not have personal insight to Mileys thoughts and feelings, and when looking at her from the outside we do not know if her portrayals of sexuality or feminist-friendly views are simply based on a wish to separate herself from the crowd, or a wish to break with marked-friendly images shown in her early videos. Regardless, lyrical fights for equality, a new set of ‘rules’, and how she portrays sexuality and gender are all parts of how Miley shows herself to the world. What this shows us is a girl comfortable with breaking norms and standards set by society, and might point to an artist that is interested in making a name for herself through shock and awe.

Regardless of Miley's personal choices, she is prone to breaking with gender norms in her latter two videos, and I have argued how this is rendered visible. Opposing gender roles, and to a large extent breaking with them, is part of a popular musicians' arsenal for constructing their identities. It is evident in these videos that Miley both accentuates that which makes her feminine and that which makes her masculine: undoubtedly a feminist stance is immanent in any discussion surrounding these videos. Another way of challenging the gender norms is to challenge the visual representations of gender. In pop music this can be done in several ways, for instance through the act of queering.

So, to what extent does Miley Cyrus's performances queer gender? Earlier on I have stated that queering is a part of an artists created persona, and that queering in a lot of ways represents the politics of a performance that encourages queer viewing (Hawkins & Richardson, 2007, p.15). As a point of clarification, it is important to note that queering in pop performances should not directly be linked to an artist's sexual preferences, and is therefore not necessarily related to their personal preferences. In other words, queering is not necessarily related to an artist's sexuality, and is more a tool for challenging the visual representations of gender. Often queering can be seen as a breaking with the binary systems of portrayed sexuality, and is often used as a strategy for the disruption of supposed gender norms.

In the first two videos I have discussed, we encounter a Miley who does not challenge or break specific gender or social norms, which would suggest that queering is not much of a topic in these videos. It should be noted that in video 2, the male character in the video might be part of a queer 'gaze', and might be there to appeal to both heterosexual women and to homosexual men. Regardless, queering is not a huge part of videos 1 and 2. For arguments sake, the lack of visual queering seen in videos 1 and 2 helps underline the point made previously, that over time Miley's videos have become progressively more daring and controversial with regards to portrayal of gender, sexuality and a gendered identity. However, this lack of queering in videos might just as easily be a conscious choice as visual queering. As it is, it is not like queering in videos was 'invented' after the release of videos 1 and 2. Therefore, arguably, the lack of queering in videos 1 and 2 is very much a conscious choice done by the directors and editors of the videos in question. Lack of queering might be just as effective in terms of showing a gendered identity as visual queering. As queering shows an artist comfortable with breaking the heteronormative standards set by society, lack of

queering shows an artist comfortable with staying within the norms. It may also be argued that at the time videos 1 and 2 were released, Miley had no 'need' for queering in her performances. By this I mean that she was portrayed in such a way that her audience was teenagers who did not necessarily view Miley in light of an open sexuality and portrayals of 'otherness' in gendered performances.

Often women with short hair is seen as more androgynous than women with long hair, this helps her in ways of queering. Therefore, after her makeover in 2013, Miley appeared more androgynous than previously. Through her video performances she therefore makes herself desirable to both sexes, appealing to both the heterosexual communities and the homo- and bisexual communities. Thus making herself marketable and attractive to a broader audience than previously. In video 3 sexual ambiguity is a prevalent in the lyrics as in the visuals. In the lyrics we can read that "we can love who we want to", and "we can kiss who we want to", in the visual aspects of this video we can see how both men and women appear as her objects of desire. Here she puts herself in situations where she seems sexually attracted to both men and women. Whether this is a strategic choice or part of a personal sexual preference, is irrelevant. Regardless, this is a way of showing queering in music videos. This is similar to aspects of video 4 when she shows ambiguity and hints of androgyny. When an artist appears naked in a music video, this is to a large extent a personal choice. By doing so in video 4 however, Miley lets herself become a focus of desire amongst both men and women. Although not all women might find her sexually attractive, there are other factors that make her desirable to both heterosexual and homosexual women in this video. As she is pictured flawless and untainted, heterosexual men watching this video might be left with a feeling of wanting or longing, and women might want to be her, same as with homosexual men, or homosexual women might want to be with her in the same way as heterosexual men would. As the lyrics in video 4 does not specify the gender of her love interest, she also speaks to the queer audience through her ambiguity.

Miley is playing a character in this video, as with all music videos. In this video she is shown to portray aspects of a construction worker. This is visually shown by the wrecking ball and her use of a sledgehammer in the video. Traditionally this is not an occupation that is filled with a lot of women. With this in mind, Miley Cyrus challenges the outlines for what is acceptable or 'proper' for a young woman to do. In this way Miley therefore shows that she can do most anything that men can do, and that biological sex should not stop anyone from

attempting to do such 'gendered' activities. Here I have pinpointed examples which point to a use of queering in Miley's music videos. This will help us further on in discussing the make-ups of her constructed persona.

As Hawkins suggests; "Queering does not involve just gender, but involves all semiotic structures at large" (2016, p.1). Regardless of whether queering is in fact a personal choice or a way of constructing herself in order to appeal to a broader market, the effect is still the same. Miley is no longer a visual part of the heteronormative binary system, and people feeling restricted by the system might feel a sense of recognition or belonging when watching her videos. Undoubtedly, the use of queering helps an artist reach a broader audience, and helps them create a more fluid sexuality and gender identity. This in turn helps the artist in playing with and breaking with gender and social norms in order for them to create their stage personas. As we have seen in videos 1 and 2, queering and 'otherness' related to a gendered performance have not been much of a topic. This also shows us that the pop identity Miley possessed during the course of these two videos did in fact comply to heteronormative standards of gender and sexuality. When she in her later videos is prone to gender bending and a distinct 'otherness' in her performances, we can determine that she has changed her perceived identity, and that her current identity is racier and more sexualised than previously. As queering might seem provocative to a strictly straight audience, this is a way of adding controversy to your pop identity, and making people sit up and take notice.

5.3.2 "I can't be tamed"

The act of being provocative can be seen as a way to create controversy in its own right. By gradually changing her appearance and becoming more daring in her music videos, Miley uses provocation to market herself in the industry. Out of the four videos in question, video 3 can be argued to be the most controversial of them all. With Miley credited as the co-writer of this song, it is unclear whether or not she has had anything to say in the making of the music video. Regardless, it is interesting from a scientific point of view that Miley is credited as co-writer of this song, when this is the song and video that has shown a Miley prone to breaking with social and gender norms and creating controversy linked to her pop identity. As we know, women have a limited role in the music industry, therefore, when Miley is credited as co-writer of one of these songs, this is of significance. Although collaborations between female artists and male song-writers does create less authenticity for the female in question, it

points to a Miley that is active in her own career and in her own portrayals (Mayhew, 2009, p. 155). Therefore, knowing that she has taken an active part in the making of this song, this way of showing herself in videos and through music might be closer to what is arguably the 'real' Miley. As Miley is credited as co-writer of this song, and it is the only video used in this thesis that hints to drug use and other controversial aspects of Miley's life, this becomes an interesting point for discussion.

In the first videos she is not referring to drugs or drug use, but in her latter work she has been seen on stage apparently smoking weed, or hinting to the use of both ecstasy and cocaine in her lyrics. Here the question becomes whether or not Miley herself feels a stronger personal connection to this song, and therefore more of her own personal life and preferences are shown in this video. With this in mind, the provocative nature of both lyrics and images helps paint a picture of an artist using provocative measures to create controversy and making herself sellable and marketable for the music industry (Hawkins, 2009a, p.70).

However, if the release of these four videos had been reversed, it would have been videos 1 and 2 that we would consider as most controversial in terms of portrayals of gender and sexuality. Bearing this in mind, the controversy inherent in videos 3 and 4 is in fact based on an existing view of Miley's first two videos as the standard. If we did not have these four videos to compare to each other, the controversy found in the latter two videos would be based on different assumptions. As this supposed controversy is based on breaking with standards and norms, without this means of comparison, Miley's use of controversy would have to be based on how she breaks with norms set by society, and not the norms she once complied to.

Trying to put this into perspective, if we see the latter two videos as the only videos we have to look at, one might assume that how Miley is pictured in these videos is in fact the standard for 'naturalness' and she might not be seen as controversial at all. However, there are other ways of determining what can be seen as controversy in videos 3 and 4. In video 3 we see how the lyrics mirror the visual aspects of the video and vice versa. As we know nothing of Miley's sexual preferences other than what we see and hear in her videos, showing her as sexually intrigued by both men and women might not be that controversial in 2013. However, as society mostly base their views of sexuality on heteronormativity, showing several different sexual preferences is still part of controversy linked to heteronormativity in society at large. A clear sign of showing controversy as a woman is also the nakedness in video 4. As

she is not shown as naked in video 3, we are unsure if her nakedness is the exception that proves the rule, or if the clothed Miley is the exception. As it is, it is more socially accepted to appear clothed in front of an audience, and regardless of this is what she usually does, this is a way of showing controversy. Although she is strategically covered up, her nakedness becomes an important factor. Both as a visual metaphor for the nakedness depicted in the lyrics of the song, but also as a way of marketing Miley Cyrus. With this we have determined that controversy as a woman in the music industry can be seen in videos 3 and 4 even without videos 1 and 2 as a means of comparison. Although, by first complying to the norms, and later breaking them, this makes the audience perceive Miley as possibly more controversial than what she would have been without her earlier videos as a means of comparison (Hawkins, 2009a, p.70).

Miley has become prone to using several controversial measures in her performances. One such measure is twerking. After the Music Video Awards in 2013, she received much publicity for this act.⁵ Although she received mostly negative publicity at the time, twerking has become what we can see as one of Miley's trademarks. So much so that she even spells it out before doing it in video 3. This is connected to what we previously know about sonic markers, and this is therefore a type of 'visual marker' (Askerøi, 2013, p.16).

I have demonstrated how Miley's pop identity has changed over the course of these four videos, and that she has become prone to using provocation and controversy as a signifier of her current pop identity. Visually she has gone through her makeover, and we see her in a different social context than previously. Whether this is a part of her natural progression, or if this is part of the creation that is Miley Cyrus is not clear. Notwithstanding what might have prompted this change, we can see that in her later videos she is portrayed as a young woman. As we have seen nakedness, references to recreational drug use, and ambiguous sexualities, using shock and controversy has definitely become part of the construction of Miley Cyrus' current pop identity. Television and MTV have played an important part in the shaping of the norm of what we now know as pop identification (Hawkins, 2009a, p.43). Pop music has in all aspects been imbricated in the narratives from traditional social norms. Any pop artist who wishes to break with or challenge these norms, will therefore be considered somewhat controversial (Butler, 2007, p.xxi-xxiii). However, whether these types of controversial acts

⁵ During her stage performance at the 2013 Video Music Awards, Miley 'twerked' up against Robin Thicke.

are a part of what is 'natural' for Miley Cyrus to do, or simply a way for the music industry and Miley herself to keep making money, is uncertain.

5.3.3 Money talks

A record company bases itself on creating marketable artists through star-making (Frith, 2001, p.35). There are multiple elements that help make an artist marketable and financially interesting for a record company. One of the most important elements is how the artist appeals to the audience in question. Therefore, when attempting to market an artist, the industry needs to be aware of how the artist will be perceived, and how this in turn affects the artist themselves (Mulvey, 1975, p.841). At the beginning of her career Miley was marketed by Disney Channel as a teenage pop star. As she broke with Disney Channel, musically she was in a position where she could change her image and appeal. However, as we have seen in the earlier music videos, these portrayed an innocent teenage girl. Not very different from how she was portrayed when she starred as Hannah Montana. In the latter videos however, we see how Miley has grown into a young woman, and through this she has been shown to be able to resonate with both old and new audiences in order to remain a profitable source of income for the record company (Frith, 2001, p.35).

The pop industry has always been reliant on demand and supply. Rather than solely focusing on selling records, the industry has focused on making the artist in question fit a star-image and personality (Frith, 2001). The Miley shown in the earlier videos fitted with the image of a teenage pop star, and what was shown in means of sexuality and relationships was innocent 'puppy love'. However, as she has grown into a young woman we have seen her portrayed as more of a sexual being. In music videos, bodies are constantly on display, and by showing her as a woman rather than a girl, arguably, the industry plays its part in making Miley marketable for an older audience than previously.

When Miley Cyrus plays the part of supply for the music industry, we may consider her as an item or a product for sale. As the music industry is predominantly made up of men in power positions, a valid argument therefore becomes the fact that Miley Cyrus is a product of the patriarchal structures found in the industry. However, it is important to note that in order to be able to make it in the record industry, one needs to be able to market oneself in such a way that the public keeps buying their music. If Miley were to distance herself completely from the patriarchal figures of the industry, we can assume that she would not be as successful as

she is today. As we are unable to know whether or not Miley Cyrus could have reached the same amount of fame if she had done it without the help of the music industry, this is just a guesstimate at this point. But as we have seen in light of so-called ‘one hit wonders’⁶, we can say with a fair amount of certainty that if Miley was not a sellable product for the music industry, she would not have made it past her first hit as Hannah Montana⁷. Therefore, we can assume with some amount of certainty that Miley is somewhat of a product of the music industry, as it has helped her become the artist we see today.

However, knowing some of the context that have led Miley Cyrus to where she is today, we see that she has lived in the lime-light her whole life. Both with her career starting at Disney Channel in her pre-teens, but also with her father, Billy Ray Cyrus, being a known country artist.⁸ With this in mind, Miley has in fact been a part of the constructed world surrounding pop artists her whole life. If we assume that her upbringing in the music industry has led to where she is today, it is not unlikely that she has become used to portraying herself in a particular way in order to fit in in the music industry. In terms of how Miley herself plays a part in her construction, it may be easy to assume that she is simply a product of the music industry shaping and moulding her to fit within the brackets of what has proven itself to sell records. The music industry is therefore able to create an artist that seems genuine, has the right look and sound, thus being sure of income. In this way, the industry, through means of creating marketability, plays an important part in the construction and selling of an artists’ visible identity (Frith, 2001; Hawkins, 2009a).

A person’s image is shown through the person we want the world to see. In the case of an artist or a musician we know that the pop identity is reliant on a historical, political and social grounding (Hawkins, 2009a, p.66). Pop artists have always been a product of the music industry, and the construction of their image is done in the hopes of relating to an audience, and by this making them a product that the industry can make money off of (Frith, 2001). By using music videos as a primary means of showing an artist’s image, we see how the artist is shown in the videos as a way of marketing them and making them relatable to the public at large. Therefore, through means of marketability, Miley Cyrus have arguably been shaped by

⁶ The Cambridge Dictionary defines ‘one hit wonder’ as a singer or a group that only has one hit before returning to obscurity (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/one-hit-wonder>. 14.03.16)

⁷ Her first single as Hannah Montana was “The Best of Both Worlds”, which was released in 2006

⁸ Billy Ray Cyrus is known for his song “Achy Breaky Heart” from 1992, coincidentally the same year as Miley was born.

her upbringing in the industry, and by the industry wishing to keep her as a steady source of income.

In the first two videos Miley is portrayed in what could be perceived as a 'natural' way. This is potentially due to these videos being the first videos we have seen of her as a solo artist, and thus making them the apparent starting point of her constructed identity. However, this raises more questions than it answers. Not having intimate knowledge of the artist in question, we do not know what is in fact her 'true' image. All we can base this naturalness on is whether or not she seems authentic to the viewer. Authenticity is in fact one of the central terms in popular music studies. As pop music is disposable and replaceable, the term authenticity easily becomes just another commodity. Typically, authenticity identifies what is thought to be good, original and real (Hawkins & Niblock, 2011, p.15). With this in mind, authenticity is part of what the viewer sees as the 'real' artist. However, as authenticity is easily marketed and purchased in the popular music industry, the perception of an artist as authentic mostly depends on the receiver (Hawkins & Niblock, 2011, p.17). Therefore, whether or not Miley is seen as authentic and real, depends on the viewer in question. This is relatable to what Mulvey have said about the gaze, in that it can depend in large parts on how the character is viewed by the audience, and how this in turn will affect the character that is being viewed (Mulvey, 1975, p.841). In the Western, privileged world, Miley might seem natural. However, if these videos were seen by a teenager in a third-world country, she might not be relatable at all. Therefore, it is important to know your audience when creating an image for an artist.

As Miley started her career as a teenage pop star under the control of Disney Channel, her transition from young girl to young woman has been presented for the whole world to see. Thus making us question whether her transition into womanhood was in fact a natural transition, or just something orchestrated by the music industry in order to make her seem more approachable to the public. It is unclear if Miley herself has had much influence on choosing the way she was pictured as Hannah Montana and later on as well. Often we assume that female pop artists are closely linked to their producers and managers. When a female artist goes from teenage pop star, to a more grown up pop identity, as seen in Miley Cyrus, often we believe that she is shaped and moulded by an industry built on patriarchal structures (Mayhew, 2009, p.154). Therefore, the pop identity we have determined through close readings of videos 1 and 2, can be seen as a natural transition from Miley's days as Hannah

Montana. When she broke with Disney Channel and started making music under her own name, she might therefore have been constructed by the industry to appeal to much of the same audience as previously.

As the music industry is constantly dependent on a relationship between the buyer and the performer, constructions of authenticity is one of the ways the industry can make the artist relatable to the public (Dickinson, 2009, p.163-178). Therefore, when we perceive Miley Cyrus as natural and real, this can simply be a conscious choice from the industry in order to sell records by portraying Miley as approachable to the public. Turning this around however, seeing Miley in her later videos, retouched and glossed over, is this just a part of showing the public the different side of the constructed artist? Or is this simply a way to show Miley as unreachable and untouchable to the public? Although being shown naked in video 4 might provide the viewer with a sense of naturalness and vulnerability, one can never be sure how much of an artists' available image is in fact personal, and what is part of the persona they portray as part of their pop identity. We can see in these four videos how Miley's pop identity has changed over time, but in the latter videos it seems as though she might have reached a plateau.

A great deal of how an artist is portrayed has a lot to do with the record companies and recording studios. In the studios the sound that becomes a part of the artists' stage persona is made, created and altered at will. Different vocal performances will ultimately create different reactions with the listeners (Dickinson, 2009, p.166). There are examples of this kind of voice altering in all of the four videos. In video 1 we have heard how the instruments appear to be 'natural' but how the vocals appear altered and autotuned. All the different voices and vocal presentations present in these four videos helps the listener discover what 'is' Miley. The use of autotune and the focus on vocal performances from the producers and record companies help market the artist and create a vocal image that is familiar to the listener. If the listener feels some kind of familiarity to the artist, it is more likely that they will continue to listen to their music and to buy their records. This provides the record companies and the music industry with an artist they can continue to sell. Basically, this is all part of the marketing strategies surrounding the pop artist. This sense of familiarity and 'connection' to the artist is also linked to how the artist appeals to the public, and thus, how easy it is to make money off of the artist in question. The use of marketing tools differs from men to women, and often women are perceived to be less in control of their careers than men (McClary, 2002, p.153).

Women have historically had a limited role in the music industry; dominating in the roles of singers, but lacking in the creative aspects (Mayhew, 2009, p.150). Even though there is no natural connection between pop music and gender, there is undoubtedly fewer female producers and managers than there are singers. However, pop music as a genre does provide the musician with a means of performing and constructing gender (Cohen, 2001, p.240). In this way women and men in the industry are freer to cross the boundaries of gender restrictions than the 'average Joe'. Therefore, it has become more socially acceptable for artists in the music industry to play around with the boundaries of gender and sexuality than we see in everyday life. Gender disruption, queering and gender bending, to name a few, have therefore become a tool for artistic expression in the music industry. Although women in the industry might seem independent, it is likely that they are still affected by its patriarchal structures. Emma Mayhew suggests; "a female performer's positioning within the music industry is tied up with her relationship to the male producer's role" (2009, p.152). This is true for all portrayals of pop artist in their music videos. In videos 1 and 2 there is not much controversy shown one way or another. What these videos show is a girl comfortable with staying within the norms of society. As a girl in the music industry often appears to be dominated by the patriarchal structures, this shows us that a teenage pop star, such as Miley Cyrus in 2009, did comply to this.

Moving on to videos 3 and 4, we know that Miley herself is not credited for writing any other songs than 'We Can't Stop'. And even here she is just credited as co-writer. She is in fact one of seven writers credited in this song. She is also not credited in the directing and making of any of the four music videos in question. With this in mind, it can be argued that she herself had more of a say in how she was portrayed in video 3 as she was in fact one of the writers of this song. On the other hand, she is not credited in the making of the video, so her portrayal in this video can simply be her shown through the producers and directors eyes, and as a product of the male-dominated music industry. Therefore, when discussing the constructions that surround Miley at a later point, this will be taken into consideration.

When looking at video 3 in terms of representations of womanhood and a woman in the music industry, we can see how Miley show controversy as a woman, by making both men and women the objects of her supposed desire. She is also shown several different times grinding and spreading her legs on a bed. In all accounts this can be linked to a sexuality, and a wish to showcase Miley Cyrus as a sexual being. At the same time, she is depicted in such a way that

she is a flawless being. This shows the viewer that she is highly sexual, but at the same time, way out of your league. Here we can therefore assume that the fact that Miley is a woman is accentuated in this video in terms of sexualisation and focus on ‘feminine’ body parts. Her sexuality and womanhood is also shown in video 4 where she does in fact appear naked, and we see how the camera accentuates her femininity by focusing on previously mentioned ‘feminine’ body parts. As we know from a historical point of view women have several times shown off their naked bodies as a way of being heard in male dominated societies.⁹ Therefore, the nakedness shown in video 4 can be seen as a way for Miley to get her voice out there, and be heard through the male-dominated industry. It can also simply be a way for the music video in question to show Miley as a vulnerable, yet strong, female character. Appearing naked in a music video is not unheard of. As she is strategically covered up throughout video 4, it is also not directly socially distasteful. It is however easier to view the person shown in the video as overly sexualised and an object of desire when appearing naked, and the female body can be said to be viewed in a more sexualised way than the male body. Miley therefore creates controversy as a woman by showing her body in a non-sexualised and an overly sexualised way at the same time.

As stated, both in the music industry and in society at large, women and sexuality have traditionally been viewed through the binary heteronormative system. Therefore, we can see how Miley’s femininity and womanhood is portrayed in these four videos. The controversy in these four videos is therefore created by a woman showing herself as a sexual being, and showing herself as a woman with sexual urges not only connected to conventional heterosexuality. This fits neatly with Miley both portraying gender and sexuality in different ways, and an urge or a desire to break with and challenge all convention of what is expected of a woman, and a woman in the music industry. This also relates back to the new pop identity we have seen in Miley since her makeover in 2013.

5.4 Pop Constructions: Why they matter.

With regard to pop identities, why do they matter? As we know, artists who rapidly change their personas tend to be seen as less authentic than the ones who keep true to their ‘chosen’ persona. Miley Cyrus does not rapidly change her persona. It seems to have changed

⁹ An example of such women is Lady Godiva (http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/godiva_lady.shtml)

gradually with the help from the music industry in order to appeal to new and more grown up audiences. Therefore, Miley's supposed authenticity can be seen to be present in both her earlier pop identity, and her current identity as well. This comes down to the audience in question, and is part of 'knowing your audience' as discussed earlier. However, as it appears that in the pop music industry authenticity has become somewhat of a commodity, using this as a marketing tool seems like a logical choice (Hawkins & Niblock, 2011, p.17). This raises further questions regarding whether or not an artist can be genuine. When we know that most all of what we see of an artist is what they, and by extension the music industry, wants us to see, terms such as 'real', 'genuine' or 'authentic' might prove to be redundant. But does that matter? As a viewer or a fan we see the artist in light of the music industry and the context in which they appear, from the context of our own situation. When we see Miley Cyrus straight from her Hannah Montana days, she is still in the context of being a product of Disney Channel. However, when she later changes her pop identity, she no longer fits within the brackets of a 'teen-star'. As it is, Miley has only significantly changed her pop identity once. Should she not then be considered more authentic than artists such as Prince or Madonna who throughout their careers have rapidly changed their pop identities? Or are artists who continuously reinvent themselves at an advantage in terms of resonating with their audiences? (Goodwin, 1992, p.111). Knowing that Miley at an earlier stage in her career seemed normal and down to earth, why would that change just because she has changed her image? Now that she seems more like a superstar, and even 'out of this world', should this affect how we as viewers or fans perceive Miley as a person? But that is just the thing; do we really wish to see our idols as real people? It is a common saying that you should never meet your idols and in many ways this is true for peeking too far behind the curtains at artists and musicians as well. The person we build up in our minds might not be the person that lies behind the artist. Therefore, I will make the claim that if you look too closely at an artist, you might not like what you see.

Frequently, artists who create great music and have huge fan followings have been controversial both in artistic and personal choices. An artist who changes their genre, like Bob Dylan in 1965, or an artist who has outspoken political views, like Pink or the Dixie Chicks, can infuriate their own fans, due to differing opinions and thoughts. Similarly, an artist with a controversial private life, like Michael Jackson, could lose fans due to rumours or things not entirely relevant to the music. These aspects that are outside of the industry and the music has the potential to affect how we view the artist. Are we as fans able to overlook clear issues we

have with our role models, simply because we appreciate their music? Or do these aspects of their personalities strengthen their authenticity? When we see artists such as these, does this make us relate to the artist on another level even if we disagree with them? By knowing that our idols are people with desires and thoughts of their own, does this not make them relatable? Or if they have controversial private lives, like a string of broken marriages, does this give us room for a sense of superiority in knowing that even with all their money and fame, their lives are still not perfect? Regardless, should not the music speak for itself and be untainted by the artist's pop identity or even personal issues? As it is, we live in a golden age of technology. With this we are bombarded through social media and other channels, with images, interviews, stage performances and quotes taken out of context. Therefore, it might prove to be impossible to separate the artist's music from the visual melting pot that is the internet. This raises further a question for discussion. How are we part of the constructing and shaping of our generation's idols?

People have always looked up to artists and musicians as someone 'showing us the way'. In the 1960s we had the wave of 'Beatlemania' raging across the continents, in the 1970s we had 'disco-fever' and almost everyone wanted a white suit such as John Travolta in 'Saturday Night Fever'. In the 80s we saw huge stars such as Michael Jackson or Prince cling their way to stardom. And let's face it, who did not want a glove such as Michael Jackson, or did the 'moonwalk' in clubs or discotheques? This shows us that artists have a huge impact on society and their fans. They lead the way for a new wave of social norms or ideals, and we follow them. The alternative interpretation of this is that artists are not creators of cultural and social trends, but they were in the right place at the right time with the right sound and message. Essentially, do artists create or interpret? Do they create room for new opinions or do they fill rooms that have already been opened? When starting out as a so-called posterchild for heteronormativity and 'naturalness', Miley helped pave the way for a generation of pre-teens looking to find their own identity in this world. She appeared to reflect all that was good and 'normal' in the music industry, and in the world as a whole. Clearly, she has not created this sense of normality, but mirrors pre-existing ideas and opinions. When we know that the music industry is strictly male dominated, and that they use and sell artists in order to further their own careers, why should Miley Cyrus be the exception? Or any other young artist for that sake? We have seen the same reflected in artists such as Justin Bieber, Christina Aguilera and Britney Spears. They all started their careers as pre-teens, and received huge amounts of fame before having reached puberty. Growing up in the industry, has Miley helped shape the

new generation of millennials, or has she herself been shaped by this generation's standards and ideals? Due to the fact that millennials are widely regarded as more progressive and socially liberal than previous generations, we can see that this generation has a clear impact on artists, like Miley Cyrus. However, issues such as the rights trans-people and feminism have become widely more prominent in public discussion due to artists such as her filling a niche, or a creative room, that comes into existence. This generation has grown up with new technology and social media, and has preoccupied itself with topics such as 'difference', 'otherness' and open sexualities. Through her pop identity, Miley conveys all these topics and more. Therefore, is Miley really paving the way for a new generation of openness and otherness? Or is she simply a product of her age, social context and the Western world? In other words, could anyone with talent have filled the room Miley Cyrus currently occupies?

On social media channels such as Twitter, Miley is quite active, outspoken and to some extent blunt. In fact, she has 28,4 million followers on Twitter. This means that every time she writes a single word, millions of people have the possibility to see this at any time. With this rise of technology, and ability to reach several millions of people with just a click of a button, the whole concept of marketing and marketability has changed with all our new advances. If we weigh this against artists such as Freddie Mercury, Michael Jackson or even Elvis Presley, who knows how their careers might have progressed early on if they had the same technological possibilities as we do today? With Michael Jackson and Elvis being credited as the kings of their genres, how different would their careers have been if they had had the opportunity to reach millions of people with just a click of a button? Arguably, Michael Jackson did experience much of the computer technology we possess today, and to some extent it did him more harm than good. Therefore, when we see artists such as Miley Cyrus being able to pour out any and everything that comes to mind, do they not run the risk of antagonizing large amounts of their fans, due to the lack of filters and censorship?

At the beginning of her career Miley did in fact not openly offend anyone, by being less jagged and opinionated and by dealing with issues as non-topics. Nothing she did or said appeared to the public as controversial. Therefore, with her new image and identity, would the old saying "all publicity is good publicity" outweigh the possible repercussions of her actions? Arguably, prior to her makeover Miley was not as big of a star as she is today. We can see evidence of this in just how many people who decide to watch her videos, listen to her music, and generally gossip about her. On YouTube we can find all the four videos I have

looked at. On this note, 'Party in the USA' has close to two million views and 'When I Look at You' has more than 36 million. As a means of comparison, 'We Can't Stop' has a whopping 666 million views and 'Wrecking Ball' has close to an outstanding 830 million views. This goes to show how Miley's change of image definitely helped her progress as an artist and that she has reached a larger audience. Miley's new image is characterized, through the use of tools such as hyperembodiment, by an aspect of God-like appearances and 'otherness'. Here we can see a connection between the technological advances and the advancements of gender and body representations.

We can also see how technology has helped artists construct their vocal image. Fifty years ago, if an aspiring artist was off pitch that person would not reach a state of fame and publicity. Now, if they are off pitch, the record companies can easily alter and change the voices with autotune and other tools. This is similar to the use of Photoshop and retouching in pictures and videos. This is basically a voice-retouching. Which can be viewed in direct connection to the multiple ways of using hyperembodiment in music videos and stage performances. With this new tool available the record companies are also in possession of great power in terms of how they can make an artist sound. This is also part of the marketing techniques and marketability that surrounds the artist. If the record labels are looking for a specific sound and look, all these things can be altered and changed so that they can create their own image in connection with their brand. This also concerns the topic of authenticity. With all these possibilities for the industry to change and alter that which makes an artist stand out from the crowd, how are we as private people able to separate out the constructed from the genuine? As we have come to know and accept that all famous people seem to be retouched and glossed over, have we therefore become desensitized to the use of Photoshop and autotune? Although we might not be completely desensitized we have undoubtedly become more perceptive of this way of creating perfect images and voices. In this way we might already have come to terms with the fact that all we see in magazines and on TV is people constructed with one goal in mind; the ability to make money. This however creates a paradox for the millennial generation; preoccupying themselves with naturalness and openness, but still accepting that Photoshop and autotune is just the way things are done.

5.5 Summary

Throughout this chapter I have considered how Miley portrays gender and sexuality in four music videos. I have examined how the portrayals seem to change as Miley's career progresses and how in the latter videos she no longer portrays gender and sexuality in terms of the framework of heteronormativity and heterosexuality; she appears more fluid in terms of gender and sexuality.

Further I have discussed image, persona and subjectivity, and how these terms are reflected in how Miley is portrayed in these four videos. I have based this discussion on the previously outlined topics in chapter 2.2, and how these different aspects of visual appearances and context of the music videos make up most of what can be argued to be the basis for the construction of Miley's pop identity. This therefore shows a collaboration between several different elements when constructing pop personas.

I have briefly discussed how the music videos themselves are created and produced in such a way that reflects society, Miley's context in the different stages of her career and how hyperembodiment and other strategic tools help create the pop artist. Here I have discussed how different techniques and perspectives becomes important when trying to determine aspects of pop artists that are constructed through the use of audiovisual analysis as outlined in previous chapters as well. Moreover, I have explored the construction that *is* Miley Cyrus. To this end, I have focused on how breaking with and challenging norms may assist an artist in terms of how they perceive themselves, how an audience may perceive them and vice versa. I have further discussed how tools such as queering, creating controversy and provocation have aided Miley Cyrus in the transition from her previous pop identity to her current pop identity. I have also discussed how the music industry and how the term 'authenticity' is both problematic and paradoxical in regards to pop music and Miley Cyrus as an artist.

Finally, I consider Miley Cyrus and the construction of pop identities in light of other artists and society as a whole. I have here problematized authenticity, naturalness and 'otherness', and have seen Miley Cyrus in light of her generation. I have further discussed how Miley Cyrus might be both shaping and shaped by her generation and context.

6 Conclusion

The tradition of popular musicological research provides a background for understanding artists in their unique contexts. This can be applied to contemporary artists, such as Miley Cyrus, to work out her construction. At the beginning of this project I wished to explore the phenomenon of Miley Cyrus, and to further understand the modern situation for an artist that undergoes drastic changes in their identity. This brings together both a scientific tradition and a contemporary discourse with regards to a highly relevant artist in the public space. I have analysed four music videos to enlighten perspectives of interest. The videos are not definitive, in the sense that they provide absolute interpretations and answers, but still they present enough elements for discussion that they are relevant to saying something about Miley Cyrus and her pop identities. In this conclusion, I will focus on the common denominators in these music videos.

As I have discussed in my methodological chapter, my findings cannot be generalised. They are only reflections of my musicological, analytic reading of the four chosen videos. However, the findings can contribute to understanding wider trends and topics beyond this thesis, by relevance to public debate and the influence of artists.

In this thesis I have first laid the foundation for my assumptions by showing how aspects such as gender, sex, feminism and heteronormativity play a part in the creation of an artist's pop identity. I have also discussed the importance of heteronormativity and social norms, and how this influences artists when they are attempting to construct their image. Further, I have outlined the uses of image, personal narratives, subjectivity and hyperembodiment, and how these are important aspects in the creation of an artist. Here I have shown key aspects in constructing identities, and how other scholars have previously argued their importance.

My analysis, presented in schematics, and readings of the chosen music videos, pinpoints elements in Miley Cyrus' performances that portray the aspects mentioned in the previous paragraph. Her performances of gender and later rebellious attitudes to heteronormativity and gender roles reveal that her career has undergone drastic changes. This can easily be seen by comparing the early Miley of videos 1 and 2 to the current Miley, from videos 3 and 4. I have found that the early pop identity is quite similar to the identity present in her days as Hannah Montana, and this first identity is what I have called the 'posterchild for heteronormativity

and normalness'. The second pop identity of Miley Cyrus is one of a more grown-up nature, at times aggressively so. The latter two videos show how she challenges and breaks with social and gender norms in her videos, revealing a more daring and racy Miley. This Miley is direct, 'in-your-face' and appeals to a vastly different crowd than the earlier version.

Based on the theoretical perspectives, and the analysis of Miley Cyrus, it becomes clear that pop identities are subject to change. This means that they can be consciously, and intentionally, altered, and in that way made to fit with the interests of not only the artist in question but of the music industry and its economic interests. Simply put, there is nothing that cannot be adapted, removed or added, in the quest for fame and money. We can see this process happening with new views being portrayed in lyrics, new visual appearances enhanced and new sounds constructed, to change Miley Cyrus from a teenage popstar to an adult superstar.

Even if these changes are easily discernible, I have discovered that it is not that simple to explain their reasoning, nor their causes, in any definitive way. Artists, who are everyday people as well, can undergo dynamic and natural changes. However, we have seen that the music industry is driven by the wish for economic gain and growth, and previous research into pop identities reveal trends in how identities change, making it appear likely that such changes in famous performers are not in fact their own but rather a construction heavily influenced by the industry. This means that even an artist like Miley Cyrus, whose current identity relies on being independent and 'real', is affected by industry demands and standards.

This apparent independence and the underlying standards of the industry present a problematic aspect to popular music. We view our idols as real and genuine, but much of the evidence points to them primarily being figureheads of a multi-billion-dollar industry, that will on the one hand stop at nothing to make money and on the other change anything to meet popular demands. This means that anything we relate to as fans has a potential for being created not as a genuine expression but as something someone thinks you will buy.

Essentially, the industry is not profoundly interested in real people or a sense of genuine artistry, but rather with whatever creates the highest profits. This perspective has been discussed both by musicologists and artists, due to the possible disenfranchisement that these economic views create. An example of this can be found in the lyrics of the independent rapper Macklemore, who in his song 'Light Tunnels' sings;

They want talking topics, they want trending topics
They want outfits to be outlandish, they want sideways glances
Beef and problems, they want nipple slips
Cause they live for clips, this is economics (Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, 2016)

His claims, which appear to be not completely without merit, are that the industry is more concerned with the things that surrounds an artist than with the genuine expression. The music industry is not a tool for artists to launch their careers or present authenticity, but rather an economic machine that in our current age lives for ‘likes’, ‘retweets’ and ‘the applause’. This also becomes interesting due to the status of Macklemore as an independent artist, who is not signed to a major record company, but rather publishes and organizes his own music through his personal label. It is possible to argue that this increases the authenticity of his views, but could also be seen as an extension of his pop identity, which strongly connected to being an outsider. This creates an interesting contrast to the apparently free-spoken and rebellious Miley, who is on the inside of the industry.

One of the most interesting findings of this study has been the apparent flexibility of an artist’s expressions. While Miley might appear to rebel against gender roles, sexual normativity and promote recreational drug use, she appears incapable of criticising a male-dominated music industry that relies on the hypersexualisation and commercialisation of artists as products. There is something quite vacuous in ‘We Can’t Stop’, when she sings “this is our house, these are our rules.” In attempting to show her independence, she complies to a patriarchal industry, where her words are written by predominantly male songwriters, and her videos directed by male directors and her image promoted by a male manager. As an outspoken feminist, this, at least on the surface, appears to be inconsistent, if not hypocritical.

It is possible to argue that it is precisely this sort of inconsistency that is the basis of a pop identity. The need and possibility to constantly adapt, at times almost pretending that past identities have not existed, allows the artist to start from scratch each time. This means that a changed identity is potentially almost entirely independent of previous identities. However, this presents a challenge with maintaining a loyal audience through multiple identity changes, but also allows the artist to reach out to completely new groups of people. In the case of Miley Cyrus, this presents an intriguing perspective for the future, as she currently has undergone only one major identity reconstruction.

A key element to Miley's current identity is the degree to which it reflects her generation and social context. The millennial generation is known to be more liberal on social issues, such as gender and sexual identity, and has a focus on 'otherness' which creates room for an artist to explore and adapt. It is particularly interesting to see large degree to which Miley's new themes correspond with mainstream millennial views and perspectives. A key question here is the topic of cultural creation opposed to cultural interpretation. Does Miley, and artists like her, create views in their audiences or do they reflect the pre-existing views of their fan bases? Essentially, does Miley create or copy? This question could be viewed as a chicken-or-egg-type dilemma, in much the same way as subjectivity and identity is a constant back and forth between an artist and their audience. However, it is interesting to see that millennial artists to such a large extent have focused on social issues, and that this coincides with more openness and debate surrounding gender and sexual identity and equality regardless of such orientations.

These kinds of orientations constitute a central part of Miley Cyrus' identity (at the time of writing this thesis), as I have shown whilst describing and discussing her music videos and her current persona. Her portrayal of both sexuality and gender has gone from a traditional and non-controversial depiction to a more ambiguous and potentially provocative version, where she uses elements of androgyny and hypersexuality to challenge normative expectations. This can be viewed in light of other artists, like Madonna's hypersexuality throughout her career, and can be understood in different ways. One such way is to view it as a direct challenge, and that Miley is a radical artist who says and does things that she genuinely thinks to be reflective of herself. An alternate way is to view her rebellious attitudes in light of the history of provocative uses of body and sexuality in pop music, where it can be interpreted as a way of being radical in a way that the industry accepts and can turn into something marketable. In this latter view the individual artist's personal views are less relevant, as it can be argued that they merely follow a script rather than to write their own parts. An example of this is how Miley can claim to be a feminist, and yet objectify herself in her videos by displaying herself in a hypersexualised way. In other words, the artist can do most anything, but not bite the hand that feeds them. Miley can therefore criticise social views on gender and sexual normativity, but not criticise the male-dominated industry she is a part of. The result of this is that as a young, female artist most of her songs are still written by men. The words are therefore not necessarily completely hers.

Knowing a bit about the music industry and the ways identities are exchangeable, it becomes clear that Miley Cyrus, the artist, is a construction. This does not mean that she does not have opinions of her own or that she is a puppet, but that her pop identity is not the product of only her creation. In this thesis I have shown how her image and lyrical focus changes from her early teenage popstar identity to her adult superstar identity, and through this it is reasonable to think that this has been a managed process of development. The Miley Cyrus that is shown in her recent videos carries most of the hallmarks of a typical female pop artist, with a focus on her body, her sexuality and bases itself on contemporary topics. In other words, she may sound and appear controversial, but still fits well within the mould.

Based on this it is relevant to bring up again the question of how real our idols truly are, and what it does to us if the people we look up to are in fact constructions that are shaped to make us like them. On the one hand it is clearly problematic, because it both contradicts the messages of authenticity that we experience and creates a false image. Essentially, we can never truly know when an artist is real and genuine, or when they are saying what they are told to say so that their records sell, their image is enhanced and their stardom grows. On the other hand, does not everyone construct their identity? It would be true that most of us do so on a smaller level, and that our constructions are less influential, but we still have a process of creating a persona that we believe people will like and relate to. And in any case, should the music not be left to the listener? When we listen to music it can be argued that the level of authenticity or the meaning behind the song is irrelevant, because from the second we hear it the music belongs to us, to interpret and contextualise on our own terms. A song can be written from one perspective, performed from another, and understood from a completely different one, without it being possible to state that either is the only true one.

Regardless of whether constructed identities are an issue or not, it is now clear to me that Miley Cyrus has undergone drastic changes from her early years up until now. She has changed how she is perceived, by accentuating her 'otherness', sexualising herself and others, and playing with the boundaries of normative genders. These changes reflect her generation, and seem to a large degree to be authentic. However, based on what we know about the music industry, its male-dominated structure, and the typical ways of constructing female artists, it appears that her authenticity might also stem from a construction. In other words, when she sings "it's my mouth, I can say what I want to", those are lines written by others, because it would be just the right thing for her to sing!

Bibliography

Askerøi, E. (2013). *Reading Pop Production: Sonic Markers and Musical Identity*. Kristiansand: Universitetet i Agder.

Auslander, P. (2013). Sound and Vision: The Audio/Visual Economy of Musical Performance. In Richardson, J., Gorbman, C., and Vernallis, C. (ed). (2013). *The Oxford Handbook of New Audiovisual Aesthetics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Berland, J. (2000). Sound, image and social space: music video and media reconstruction. In Frith, S., Goodwin, A., and Grossberg, L. (ed.) (2000) *Sound & Vision. The music video reader*. New York: Routledge.

Butler, J. (2007). *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge.

Chion, M. (1994). *Audio-vision sound on screen*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Chion, M. (2013a). The Audio-Logo-Visual and the Sound of Languages in Recent Film. In Richardson, J., Gorbman, C., and Vernallis, C. (ed). (2013). *The Oxford Handbook of New Audiovisual Aesthetics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chion, M. (2013b). Sensory Aspects of Contemporary Cinema. In Richardson, J., Gorbman, C., and Vernallis, C. (ed). (2013). *The Oxford Handbook of New Audiovisual Aesthetics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education*. 7th edition. New York: Routledge.

Cohen, S. (2001). Popular Music, Gender and Sexuality. In Frith, S., Straw, W. & Street, J. (ed.). *The Cambridge companion to pop and rock*. (2001). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cook, N. (2004). *Analysing musical multimedia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dalen, M. (2011). *Intervju som forskningsmetode*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Dickinson, K. (2009). "Believe": Vocoders, digital female identity and camp. In Whitely, S., Bennett A., & Hawkins, S. (ed). (2009). *Music, space and place: popular music and cultural identity*. Burlington: Ashgate publishing company.

Frith, S. (2001). The Popular Music Industry. In Frith, S., Straw, W. & Street, J. (ed.). *The Cambridge companion to pop and rock*. (2001). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Frith, S. (2001). Pop Music. In Frith, S., Straw, W. & Street, J. (ed.). *The Cambridge companion to pop and rock*. (2001). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Frith, S. & McRobbie, A. (1991). Rock and Sexuality. In Frith, S. & Goodwin, A. (ed.). *On Record: Rock, Pop and the Written Word*. (1991). London: Routledge.

Goodwin A. (1992). *Dancing in the distraction factory: Music Television and Popular Culture*. Minnesota: Minnesota University Press.

Grossberg, L. (2000). "The media economy of rock culture: cinema, post-modernity and authenticity". In Frith, S., Goodwin, A. and Grossberg, L. (ed.) *Sound and Vision: The music video reader*. London: Routledge.

Hansen, K. A. (2015). Empowered or Objectified? Personal Narrative and Audiovisual Aesthetics in Beyoncé's 'Partition'. *Popular Music and Society*. DOI: 10.1080/03007766.2015.1104906.

Hawkins, S. (2002). *Settling the Pop Score: Pop Texts and Identity Politics*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Hawkins, S. (2009a). *The British Pop Dandy*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Hawkins, S. (2009b). On performativity and production in Madonna's "Music". In Whitely, S., Bennett A., & Hawkins, S. (ed). (2009). *Music, space and place: popular music and cultural identity*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Hawkins, S., and Niblock, S. (2011). *Prince: The making of a Pop Music Phenomenon*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Hawkins, S. (2012). 'Great, Scott!'. In Hawkins, S. (ed). *Critical Musicological Reflections: Essays in Honour of Derek B. Scott*. (2012). Surrey: Ashgate.

- Hawkins, S. (2013). Aesthetics and Hyperembodiement in Pop Videos: Rihanna's "Umbrella". In Richardson, J., Gorbman, C., and Vernallis, C. (ed). (2013). *The Oxford handbook of new audiovisual aesthetics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hawkins, S. (2016). *Queerness in Pop Music: Aesthetics, Gender Norms and Temporality*. New York: Routledge.
- Hawkins, S., and Richardson, J. (2007). *Remodelling Britney Spears: Matters of Intoxication and Mediation*. Downloaded from <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rpms20#.U3Dj9yivFHY> (15.01.16)
- Holst, C. (2009). *Hva er feminisme*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Koestenbaum, W. (1994). Queering the Pitch: A Posy of Definitions and Impersonations. In Brett, P., Wood, E., & Thomas, G. C. (ed). *Queering the Pitch. The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*. (1994). New York: Routledge.
- Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Det kvalitative forskningsintervju*. 2nd edition. Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk.
- Levy, C. (2009) Who is the 'other' in the Balkans? Local ethnic music as a *different source* of identities in Bulgaria. In Whitely, S., Bennett A., & Hawkins, S. (ed). (2009). *Music, space and place: popular music and cultural identity*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company.
- Mayhew, E. (2009) Positioning the producer: gender divisions in creative labour and value. In Whitely, S., Bennett A., & Hawkins, S. (ed). (2009). *Music, space and place: popular music and cultural identity*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company.
- McClary, S. (2002). *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender & Sexuality*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Nilssen, V. (2012). *Analyse i kvalitative studier: Den skrivende forskeren*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Richardson, J. & Gorbman, C. (2013). Introduction. In Richardson, J., Gorbman, C., and Vernallis, C. (ed). (2013). *The Oxford handbook of new audiovisual aesthetics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Schiefloe, P. M. (2010). *Mennesker og samfunn*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Scott, D. (2009). Introduction. In Scott, D. (ed.). *The Ashgate Research Companion To Popular Musicology*. (2009). Surrey: Ashgate.
- Solie, R. A. (1993). *Musicology and Difference. Gender and Sexuality on Musical Scholarship*. Berkley: University of California University Press.
- Thagaard, T. (2009). *Systematikk og innlevelse*. 3rd edition. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Tjora, A. (2010). *Kvalitative forskningsmetoder i praksis*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag.
- Vernallis, C. (2004). *Experiencing Music Video: aesthetics and cultural context*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Vernallis, C. (2013). *Unruly Media*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Välmiäki, S. (2013). The audiovisual construction of transgender identity in Transamerica. In Richardson, J., Gorbman, C., and Vernallis, C. (ed). (2013). *The Oxford Handbook of New Audiovisual Aesthetics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Walser, R. (2000). "Forging Masculinity: Heavy-Metal Sounds and Images of Gender". In Simon Frith, Andrew Goodwin and Lawrence Grossberg (eds.) *Sound and Vision: The Music Video Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Williams, A. (2011). *Constructing Musicology*. Surrey: Ashgate.
- Ålvik, M. (2013). Det vi ser og ikke ser: Nærhet og avstand hos Marit Larsen og Marion Ravn. In Myhr, P., Hval, J., Ålvik, J,M,B., Sandve, B., Myrbråten, C., Engevik, S. (ed) *I dreamt I was a real boy*. (2013) Trondheim: Rockheim/Museumsforlaget AS.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Party in the USA

I hopped off the plane at L.A.X. with a dream
and my cardigan
Welcome to the land of fame, excess, whoa!
am I gonna fit in?
Jumped in the cab, here I am for the first time
Look to my right, and I see the Hollywood sign

This is all so crazy, everybody seems so
famous
My tummy's turnin' and I'm feelin' kinda
homesick
Too much pressure and I'm nervous
That's when the taxi man turned on the radio

And the Jay-Z song was on
And the Jay-Z song was on
And the Jay-Z song was on

So I put my hands up, they're playin' my song
The butterflies fly away
I'm noddin' my head like Yeah!
Movin' my hips like Yeah!

Got my hands up, they're playin' my song
And now I'm gonna be okay
Yeah! It's a party in the USA!
Yeah! It's a party in the USA!

Get to the club in my taxi cab
Everybody's lookin' at me now
Like who's that chick that's rockin' kicks
She's gotta be from out of town

So hard with my girls not around me
It's definitely not a Nashville party
'Cause all I see are stilettos
I guess I never got the memo

My tummy's turnin' and I'm feelin' kinda
homesick
Too much pressure and I'm nervous
That's when the DJ dropped my favorite tune

And the Britney song was on
And the Britney song was on
And the Britney song was on

So I put my hands up, they're playin' my song
The butterflies fly away
I'm noddin' my head like Yeah!
Movin' my hips like Yeah!

Got my hands up, they're playin' my song
And now I'm gonna be okay
Yeah! It's a party in the USA!
Yeah! It's a party in the USA!

Feel like hoppin' on a flight, on a flight
Back to my hometown tonight, town tonight
Something stops me every time, every time
The DJ plays my song and I feel alright

So I put my hands up, they're playin' my song
The butterflies fly away
I'm noddin' my head like Yeah!
Movin' my hips like Yeah!

Got my hands up, they're playin' my song
And now I'm gonna be okay
Yeah! It's a party in the USA!
Yeah! It's a party in the USA!

So I put my hands up, they're playin' my song
The butterflies fly away
I'm noddin' my head like Yeah!
Movin' my hips like Yeah!

Got my hands up, they're playin' my song
And now I'm gonna be okay
Yeah! It's a party in the USA!
Yeah! It's a party in the USA!

Appendix 2: When I Look at You

Everybody needs inspiration
Everybody needs a song
A beautiful melody, when the night's so long
'Cause there is no guarantee, that this life is easy

Yeah, when my world is falling apart
When there's no, light to break up the dark
That's when I, I, I look at you

When the waves are flooding the shore
And I can't find my way home anymore
That's when I, I, I look at you

When I look at you, I see forgiveness, I see the truth
You love me for who I am like the stars hold the moon
Right there where they belong
And I know I'm not alone

Yeah, when my world is falling apart
When there's no light to break up the dark
That's when I, I, I look at you

When the waves are flooding the shore
And I can't find my way home anymore
That's when I, I, I look at you

You appear just like a dream to me
Just like kaleidoscope colors that cover me
All I need, every breath that I breathe
Don't you know, you're beautiful

Yeah, yeah,yeah

When the waves are flooding the shore
And I can't find my way home anymore
That's when I, I, I look at you
I look at you

Yeah, yeah, oh, oh
You appear just like a dream to me

Appendix 3: We Can't Stop

It's our party we can do what we want (no drama)
It's our party we can say what we want (Mike will made)
It's our party we can love who we want
We can kiss who we want
We can sing what we want

It's our party we can do what we want
It's our party we can say what we want
It's our party we can love who we want
We can kiss who we want
We can sing what we want

Red cups and sweaty bodies everywhere
Hands in the air like we don't care
'Cause we came to have so much fun now
Bet somebody here might get some now

If you're not ready to go home
Can I get a "Hell, no! "? (Hell no)
'Cause we're gonna go all night
'Til we see the sunlight, alright

So la da di da di
We like to party
Dancing with Molly
Doing whatever we want
This is our house
This is our rules

And we can't stop
And we won't stop
Can't you see it's we who own the night?
Can't you see it's we who 'bout that life?

And we can't stop
And we won't stop
We run things, things don't run we
Don't take nothing from nobody
Yeah, yeah

It's our party we can do what we want
It's our party we can say what we want
It's our party we can love who we want
We can kiss who we want
We can sing what we want

To my home girls here with the big butt
Shaking it like we at a strip club
Remember only God can judge ya

Forget the haters 'cause somebody loves ya
And everyone in line in the bathroom
Trying to get a line in the bathroom
We all so turned up here
Getting turned up, yeah, yeah, yeahhh

So la da di da di
We like to party
Dancing with Molly
Doing whatever we want
This is our house
This is our rules

And we can't stop
And we won't stop
Can't you see it's we who own the night?
Can't you see it's we who 'bout that life?

And we can't stop
And we won't stop
We run things, things don't run we
Don't take nothing from nobody
Yeah, yeah

It's our party we can do what we want
It's our party we can say what we want
It's our party we can love who we want
We can kiss who we want
We can sing what we want

It's our party we can do what we want to
It's our house we can love who we want to
It's our song we can sing if we want to
It's my mouth I can say what I want to
Say yeah, yeah, yeah, eh

And we can't stop, yeah
And we won't stop, oh
Can't you see it's we who own the night?
Can't you see it's we who 'bout that life?

And we can't stop
And we won't stop
We run things, things don't run we
Don't take nothing from nobody
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, eh

Appendix 4: Wrecking Ball

We clawed, we chained, our hearts in vain
We jumped, never asking why
We kissed, I fell under your spell
A love no one could deny

Don't you ever say I just walked away
I will always want you
I can't live a lie, running for my life
I will always want you

I came in like a wrecking ball
I never hit so hard in love
All I wanted was to break your walls
All you ever did was break me
Yeah, you wreck me

I put you high up in the sky
And now, you're not coming down
It slowly turned, you let me burn
And now, we're ashes on the ground

Don't you ever say I just walked away
I will always want you
I can't live a lie, running for my life
I will always want you

I came in like a wrecking ball
I never hit so hard in love
All I wanted was to break your walls
All you ever did was break me

I came in like a wrecking ball
Yeah, I just closed my eyes and swung
Left me crouching in a blaze and fall
All you ever did was break me
Yeah, you wreck me

I never meant to start a war
I just wanted you to let me in
And instead of using force
I guess I should've let you in
I never meant to start a war
I just wanted you to let me in
I guess I should've let you in

Don't you ever say I just walked away
I will always want you

I came in like a wrecking ball
I never hit so hard in love
All I wanted was to break your walls
All you ever did was break me

I came in like a wrecking ball
Yeah, I just closed my eyes and swung
Left me crouching in a blaze and fall
All you ever did was break me
Yeah, you, you wreck me

Yeah, you, you wreck me