

TECH1002-18 Social Media Innovation

Lecture Two: McLuhan & The Global Village

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1 Introduction: Cultural Tools

Velvet Underground – Waiting for My Man

<https://youtu.be/hugY9CwhfzE>

“New media are constructed on the foundations of the old. They do not emerge fully fledged or perfectly formed” (Silverstone, 1999, p. 20).

“The point that... McLuhan w[as] trying to make was not just that cultural tools allow us to do new things, but that they come to define us in some very basic ways. They usually don't just affect our ability to do a particular task. They also affect the way we relate to others, the way we communicated and the way we think” (Jones & Hafner, 2012, p. 2)

2 McLuhan - The Medium is the Message

“Marshall McLuhan is best known for the provocative thesis that the most important aspect of media is not to be located within issues connected to cultural content, but in the technical medium of communication. The medium, declares McLuhan, is the message” (Stevenson, 2002, p. 121).

“McLuhan is known for coining the expressions the medium is the message and the global village, and for predicting the World Wide Web almost thirty years before it was invented” (“Marshall McLuhan,” 2014).

“[I]f a new technology extends one or more of our senses outside us into the social world, then new ratios among all of our senses will occur in that particular culture. It is comparable to what happens when a new note is added to a melody. And when the sense ratios alter in any culture then what had appeared lucid before may suddenly become opaque, and what had been vague or opaque will become translucent” (McLuhan, 1962, p. 41).

McLuhan – The Medium is the Message

<https://vimeo.com/98041666>

“The Medium is the Message includes a photograph of [The Velvet Underground] performing at the Trip. At the heart of his thesis McLuhan describes what was happening here: ‘Time’ has ceased, ‘space’ has vanished. We now live in a global village... a simultaneous happening. We are back in acoustic space. We have begun again to structure the primordial feeling, the tribal emotions from which a few centuries of literacy divorced us.

“Electric circuitry profoundly involves men with one another. Information pours upon us, instantaneously and continuously. As soon as information is acquired, it is very rapidly replaced by still newer information. Our electrically configured world has forced us to move from the bait of data classification to the mode of pattern recognition. We can no longer build serially, block by block, step by step, because instant communication ensures that all factors of the environment and of experience coexist in a state of active interplay. We have now become aware of the possibility of arranging the entire human environment as a work of ‘art’” (McLuhan quoted in Bockris & Malanga, 2002, p. 66).

Velvet Underground – Sunday Morning

<https://youtu.be/0cWzxJvgWc8>

3 Andy Warhol & The Velvet Underground

Andy Warhol (August 6, 1928 – February 22, 1987) was an American artist who was a leading figure in the visual art movement known as pop art. His works explore the relationship between artistic expression, celebrity culture, and advertisement that flourished by the 1960s. After a successful career as a commercial illustrator, Warhol became a renowned and sometimes controversial artist.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andy_Warhol

A Day In The Life of Andy Warhol:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OK-CVKKED0s>

4 Velvet Underground

The Velvet Underground is a book] by Michael Leigh was a contemporary mass market paperback about the secret sexual subculture of the early 1960s that Cale's friend Tony Conrad showed the group. MacLise made a suggestion to adopt the title as the band's name.[9] According to Reed and Morrison, the group liked the name, considering it evocative of "underground cinema", and fitting, as Reed had already written "Venus in Furs", a song inspired by Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's book of the same name, which dealt with masochism. The band immediately and unanimously adopted the Velvet Underground as its new name in November 1965.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Velvet_Underground

4.1 Sterling Morrison

Holmes Sterling Morrison, Jr. (August 29, 1942 – August 30, 1995) was one of the founding members of the rock group the Velvet Underground, usually playing electric guitar, occasionally bass guitar, and singing backing vocals.

Reed, Cale, Morrison and original percussionist Angus MacLise constituted the original line-up of the Velvet Underground, taking the name from Michael Leigh's sadomasochistic novel of the same name. Reed sang and played guitar, Morrison played guitar, Cale played viola, bass and keyboards and MacLise was playing bongos, hand drums, tabla, tambourines and the cimbalom, but when the group were offered \$75 for a gig at Summit High School in Summit, New Jersey, MacLise abruptly quit because he refused to play for a specified time or conform to the notion of when to start and stop playing and also viewed accepting money for art as a sell-out. With no time to audition a replacement drummer, the group turned to Maureen Tucker to replace him, initially for that one show, but she soon became a permanent member and her rhythms would be an integral part of the band's music, despite the initial objections of Cale.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sterling_Morrison

4.2 Maureen Tucker

Maureen Ann "Moe" Tucker (born August 26, 1944) is an American drummer, singer and musician best known for having been the drummer for the New York City-based experimental avant-garde ensemble The Velvet Underground. Tucker's style of playing was unconventional. She played standing up rather than seated (for easier access to the bass drum), using a simplified drum kit of tom toms, a snare drum and an upturned bass drum, playing with mallets rather than drumsticks. She rarely used cymbals; she claimed that since she felt the purpose of a drummer was simply to "keep time", cymbals were unnecessary for this purpose and drowned out the other instruments. Rock critic Robert Christgau said of Tucker, "Mo was a great drummer in a minimalist, limited, autodidactic way that I think changed musical history. She is where the punk notion of how the beat works begins."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maureen_Tucker

4.3 John Cale

John Davies Cale, OBE (born 9 March 1942) is a Welsh musician, composer, singer-songwriter and record producer who was a founding member of the NYC-based American experimental rock band the Velvet Underground, of which he is now the last surviving founding member. Though best known for his work in rock music, Cale has worked in various genres including drone and classical, and studied music at Goldsmiths College, University of London. Since departing from the Velvet Underground in 1968 he has released approximately 30 albums. In early 1965, he co-founded the Velvet Underground with Lou Reed, recruiting his flatmate Angus MacLise and Reed's college friend Sterling Morrison to complete the initial line-up. Cale left the band in September 1968, owing in part to creative disagreements with Reed.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Cale

4.4 Lou Reed

Lou Reed (March 2, 1942 – October 27, 2013) was an American musician, singer, and songwriter. He was the guitarist, vocalist, and principal songwriter of the Velvet Underground, and his solo career spanned several decades. The Velvet Underground was a commercial failure in the late 1960s, but the group gained a considerable cult following in the years since its demise and has gone on to become one of the most widely cited and influential bands of the era. Brian Eno famously stated that, while the Velvet Underground's debut album sold only 30,000 copies, "everyone who bought one of those 30,000 copies started a band." Reed began a solo career in 1972. He had a hit the following year with "Walk on the Wild Side" but this level of mainstream commercial success was not repeated. Reed was known for his distinctive deadpan voice and poetic lyrics, and for pioneering and coining the term ostrich guitar tuning.

In 1964, Reed moved to New York City and began working as an in-house songwriter for Pickwick Records. In 1964, he wrote and recorded the single "The Ostrich", a parody of popular dance songs of the time, which included lines such as "put your head on the floor and have somebody step on it". His employers felt that the song had hit potential, and arranged for a band to be assembled around Reed to promote the recording. The ad hoc group, called "The Primitives", included Welsh musician John Cale, who had recently moved to New York to study music

Reed tuned each string of his guitar to the same note, which they began to call his "ostrich guitar" tuning. This technique created a drone effect similar to their experimentation in Young's avant-garde ensemble. Disappointed with Reed's performance, Cale was nevertheless impressed by Reed's early repertoire (including "Heroin"), and a partnership began to evolve. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lou_Reed

4.5 From Up-Tight: The Velvet Underground Story

"The whole idea was to take a stab at everything. Before The Velvet Underground almost without exception all groups came out and said, 'Hey, we're gonna have a good time, let's get involved!', faced the audience, said, 'This is a time of love, peace, happiness and sexual liberation and we're gonna have a great wonderful time.' The Velvets on the other hand came out and turned their backs to the audience. I remember one review said this is musical masturbation. Who do they think they are? They're jerking off on stage" (Bockris & Malanga, 2002, p. 84).

Andy Warhol is quoted saying: "'If they can take it for ten minutes, then play it for fifteen,' I'd explain. 'That's our policy. Always leave them wanting less.'" (Bockris & Malanga, 2002, p. 39).

4.6 Velvet Underground Documentary:

<https://youtu.be/H3Uk2Y-De-w>

5 Mediation in the Global Village:

Today, the term "Global Village" can be used to describe the Internet and World Wide Web.[citation needed] On the Internet, physical distance is even less of a hindrance to the real-time communicative activities of people, and therefore social spheres are greatly expanded by the openness of the web and the ease at which people can search for online communities and interact with others who share the same interests and concerns. Therefore, this technology fosters the idea of a conglomerate yet unified global community.

According to McLuhan, the enhanced "electric speed in bringing all social and political functions together in a sudden implosion has heightened human awareness of responsibility to an intense degree."

Increased speed of communication and the ability of people to read about, spread, and react to global news quickly, forces us to become more involved with one another from various social groups and countries around the world and to be more aware of our global responsibilities.

Similarly, web-connected computers enable people to link their web sites together. This new reality has implications for forming new sociological structures within the context of culture.

Contemporary analysts question the causes of changes in community and its consequences some potentially new sociological structure.

Most of them have pointed out the fact that the increased velocity of transactions has fostered interactional density, making social networks a technical catalyst for social change.

Across the global village people have reached out and transcended their neighbourhood. They are involved in complex community networks stretching across cities, nations, and oceans.

Yet the ease with which telecommunications connect friends of friends may also increase the density of interconnections within already existing social clusters.

Therefore, the global village's implications on sociological structures are yet to be found, whether it fosters cultural exchanges and openness or not. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_village_%28term%29

6 Exploding Plastic Inevitable:

The Exploding Plastic Inevitable, sometimes simply called Plastic Inevitable or EPI, was a series of multimedia events organized by Andy Warhol between 1966 and 1967, featuring musical performances by The Velvet Underground and Nico, screenings of Warhol's films, and dancing and performances by regulars of Warhol's Factory. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exploding_Plastic_Inevitable

"Throughout 1966 he would make The Exploding Plastic Inevitable more and more interesting, changing the way people looked at rock'n'roll in tune with McLuhan's understanding in his book *The Medium is the Message* that, 'Electric circuitry has overthrown the regime of 'time' and 'space' and pours upon us instantaneously and continuously the concerns of all other men. It has recognised dialogue on a global scale. Its message is Total Change, ending psychic social economic and political parochialism" (Bockris & Malanga, 2002, p. 37).

<https://youtu.be/HsR4ghMfq0U>

EPI stands for Exploding Plastic Inevitable. The EPI was a series of events that Warhol staged in 1966 and 1967, first in New York and then on tour across the United States.

EPI brought together a sensory collision of live music from the Velvet Underground and Nico, multiple film and slide projectors, strobe lighting effects, and provocative dances by [Warhol Superstars] Gerard Malanga and Mary Woronov or Ingrid Superstar.

It was what we would now think of as a multi-media experience. In 1966 Warhol was managing the Velvet Underground and actively filmmaking.

It would appear that EPI was in-part conceived to bring those two areas together, as one of the alternative names for the EPI was 'Disco-Flicka-Theque'.

Certainly, some inspiration for the EPI must have come from the New York 'Happenings' of a few years earlier, Warhol's first encounter with the Velvet Underground in Greenwich Village's Café Bizarre, and the social and creative space of Warhol's studio The Factory that staged more intimate concerts and performances as part of its scene.

I was wondering whether you thought Warhol's role as 'band manager/event organiser' was conceived by him as an artistic practice or experiment?

<http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/andy-warhol-exploding-plastic-inevitable>

Warhol "thus learned to see emerging cultural trends by constantly scanning headlines and tabloids, the radio and TV, and mode and fashion magazines - sometimes staying up all night! He also scanned music in the same way - he had the habit of playing the same rock and roll records over and over again until he got into the core of the meaning. Through his previous experience in advertising, and through his learned ability to scan and utilize media as a means to understand emerging trends, Warhol learned how to craft "brands" and "icons" in media. In the final process, he was eventually able to make himself into his own unique branded icon and a work of art" http://people.wcsu.edu/mccarneyh/fva/N/Nameth_EPI.pdf

"They took music as far out as it is possible to go without losing consciousness (which is what separates them from their Sixties contemporaries, who did) and made so many new connections, combining poetry with trash, primitiveness with sophistication, delicacy with violence – that they virtually laid the foundation for a new age in rock" (Bockris & Malanga, 2002, p. 228).

7 Cultural Impact

David Bowie – Andy Warhol

<https://youtu.be/P4sANPk3ys>

Lou Reed – Walk on the Wild Side, Transformer

<https://youtu.be/RsVLii8Vfo>

Lou Reed – Metal Machine Music
<https://youtu.be/9I5OtIKjzJo>

BBC Perfect Day Promo
<https://youtu.be/WJpQJWpVJds>

Echo & The Bunnymen Cover
<https://youtu.be/nQgkLn43-Ys>

Bryan Ferry – What Goes On
<https://youtu.be/TdwUbK9W7jc>

Joy Division – Sister Ray:
https://youtu.be/NdlcNt2IR_o

Mike Flowers - Medley
<https://youtu.be/qHqa2cpfrGw>

NouvelleStar – Femme Fatal
<https://youtu.be/6wiMIF5TJoQ>

8 Conclusion

“McLuhan’s statement, ‘In an electric information environment, minority groups can no longer be contained-ignored. Too many people know too much about each other. Our new environment compels commitment and participation. We have become irrevocably involved with, and responsible for, each other’ – could almost work as a formal definition (which Andy Warhol would never make) of the aim of the EPI” (Bockris & Malanga, 2002, p. 88).

8.1 Critical Questions

- Can you make and share your own cover of Femme Fatal?
- Can you form a band?
- Can you put on a multimedia event?
- Can you turn your back on the audience?

Velvet Underground – Rock & Roll:
<https://youtu.be/EkbpmFOuKrc>

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