

ENTERTAINMENT

Do rock videos rot your mind?

by Jim Carruthers
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I keep saying over and over, "I must not think bad things," but it just doesn't work, I keep getting dangerous thoughts. Are UFO's alien drunk drivers from outer space? I hope not, especially if they observe what we sadistically refer to as entertainment.

It has often been conjectured that alien civilization learn about us from our radiated TV and radio signals. What are they getting from rock videos?

Obviously a healthy dose of misogyny, stupidity and repetitive ideas. Much of the blame for this rests in the origins of the leisure-industrial complex. Most people assume that the products they consume in terms of entertainment exist solely for leisure-time activity, but they fail to realize the impact that these products have on culture.

Culture is that vast mucky area which we are all immersed, it is your sensory input divided by your thoughts. The unfortunate thing about people attempting to do anything about their culture is that the leisure-industrial complex isn't really keen about people doing their own thinking.

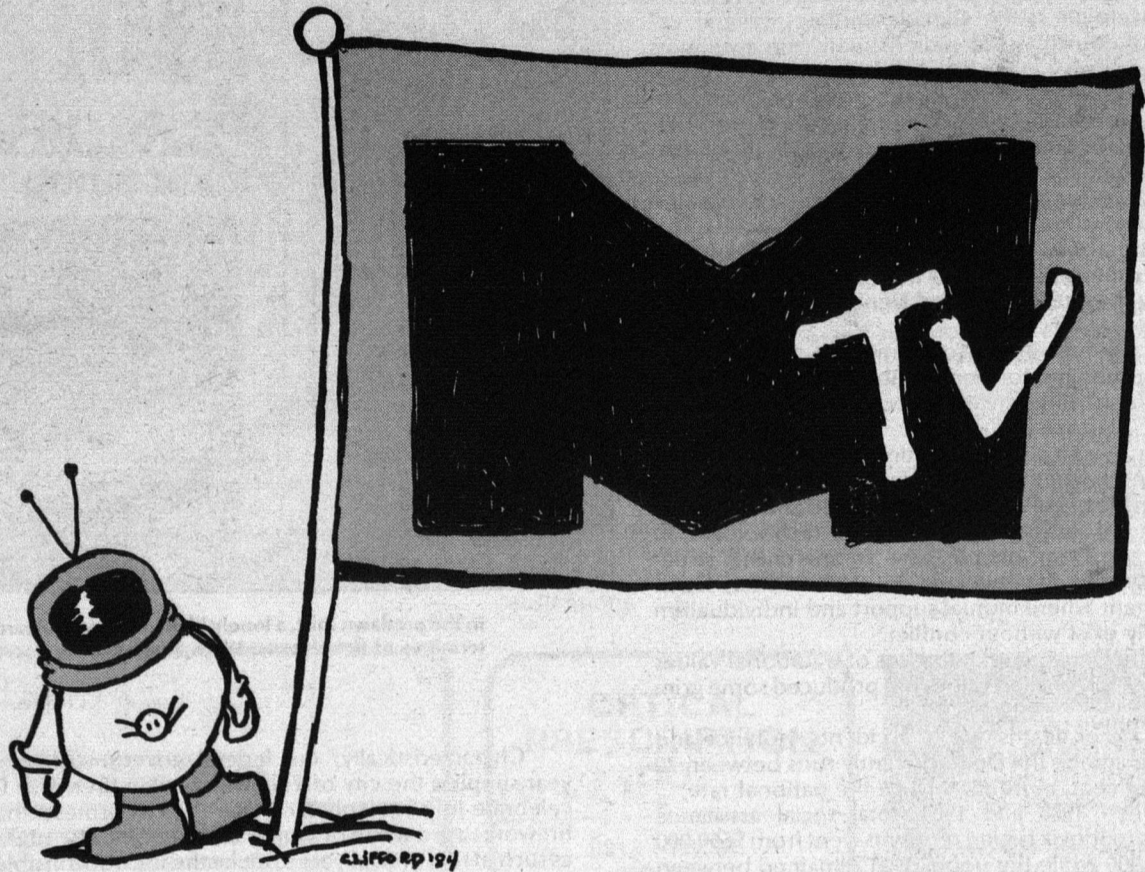
The commercial media has gone ga-ga over rock videos, pondering such questions as who will get rich from them, how much was spent on them, how frantically promoters and speculators are trying to get franchises and licences for them and how rapidly consumer products can be sold. However we are only getting a trickle about what these videos mean.

If you spend any time critically watching rock videos, one thing becomes apparent when the meaning of the average pop song is tied to images, become obvious that few pop songs mean anything.

The initial reaction is one of "all that money, all that time and for what; just to amuse a few poor fools." You may think, 'hey it's only rock and roll but I like it,' but the fact remains that it is contributing to your culture. All of those broken glasses, bullets, lockets and other trivial video language images do mean something, even though they come across as repetitive and not worth paying full attention to, it works for selling detergent, and it seems to be working for the selling of piece of vinyl, known generically as the rock'n roll record. The fact that the rock'n roll is getting farther away from the consumer is something to worry about.

Most people can't see the culture for the trees. Videos have a tremendous impact on our culture and how we can take control of it, but by packaging it as entertainment it gets treated as fluff and the leisure-industrial complex gets more time to use us as guinea pigs.

Presently, there is a great concern about the use of university research facilities for the creation of



weapons for the military-industrial complex, but there is nary a peep about the work being done by the leisure-industrial complex. That is what has alien visitors worried. After all, any society which can master interstellar travel would hardly worry about nuclear weapons. Game shows worry them, soap operas worry them (but only when the bag people seem to be winning), jiggle shows really worry them, Canadian content sit coms would worry, but nobody watches them. The only thing which has them selling is rock videos.

After all gratuitous sex and violence might be fine in semi-pornographic panty-hose commercials, but are they really necessary in a song about a boy and his car?

Not only do rock videos imitate beer commercials, but they are being used as beer commercials. Rock promoters and people who buy lottery tickets are all frantic to get these mini-essays in living the

good consumer life onto the small screen in your living room (the one they watch you talk to yourself through), that way they can sell you more zit cream and beer to make your life worth living.

Of course rock videos have some of the finest talents in the film industry working to provide the ultimate in special effects. A fine example is the *Thriller* video with Michael Jackson. After spending a million dollars, we get special effects of Jackson turning white before our very eyes. This video has been banned in some countries because it gives children and people with a shred of intelligence nightmares. "Quick, Annie, get yer gun, the cultural cossacks are coming over the hills," said Earl passing along the newflash which interrupted his music video program as fear crossed his bloated features.

"Fuck you," said Annie as she saddled up the pony to join them, "if you're going to think, don't jive and if you are going to jive, don't think."

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