

Music and Memetics

1. Are songs memetic? I argue that some songs are memetic.
2. If we are defining a “meme” as the smallest packet of an idea- the smallest, most efficient unit of an idea- I would say some songs are memetic. Other songs perhaps have zero ideas or more than one. So they can become too complex. A song that has one clear idea shine through can be defined as memetic.
3. If a song isn't recorded, does it exist? I am going to argue that a song that is not recorded does not exist. Things are real if (1) you write them down and they're real if (2) one other person believes it. These two steps comprise the generic reification process, which the initialization of all memes is subject to.
4. The reason songs can get stuck in your head is because they are pleasant. So, they are so easily reiterable because they are pleasant.
5. Melody and rhythm differentiate songs from mundane speech. The melody and the rhythm can help to compress the information.
6. A memetic song is almost always a mood induction.
7. Grabbing the attention of the audience is the key first step in any psychological intervention. One has to become aware of the stimuli of interest.
8. What does it mean to achieve memetic success? Instant gestalt processing is a hallmark of memetic success: immediately comprehending the whole idea.
9. One example of a memetically successful song: the novelty horn-honk from The Dukes of Hazzard: the first few notes of Dixie. A part of the whole is even functioning as the whole. All of the information is in that one little part. The whole story is right there.
10. I believe that memetic success is a different factor from a song's catchiness. There is an algorithm for making a successful pop song, for example including a lot of high and low tones and being a certain length of song. This sort of algorithmic catchiness is not equivalent to memetic success. You can have a catchy song and the lyrics are about too many things or you don't really know what the song is about. That would be a failure.