



Popular Culture as Transformative Action: Videoclips, Performances, and Speeches in US Popular Culture

Videoclips and public performances at events with a large audience—such as sporting events' halftime shows, as well as public readings or award acceptance speeches—have been recognized as powerful cultural signifiers and present political tinges which appeal to both performers and audiences. Artists who include a political component as part of their public identity—or belong to minoritized communities—have exploited the possibilities entailed by performativity to stimulate dialogue and a change in the audience's perception of specific topics. As such, the field of Performance Studies and—tied to it although differing somehow—Speech Act Theory present a prolific theoretical frame for analyzing this kind of shows or events, specifically in the assessment of performance as an action with an intrinsic power to transform reality (or, at least, the perception of it). Mass mediated performances like the Super Bowl Halftime Show—with Beyoncé and her crew wearing Black Panthers uniforms in 2016, or Jennifer Lopez and Shakira addressing the family separation policy implemented by the current Trump administration last year—have paved the way for global debates regarding these political and racial issues. Because of the wide audience and repercussion of this kind of performances—as well as the popularity of the artists involved—their scholarly analysis often includes concerns related to spectator theory, the commodification of art and performance under capitalism, or strategic essentialism.

Conversely, there has been increasing scholarly interest in the evolution of the visual politics of single artists over time and the significance of the changes in their trajectories. For example, the volume *The Lemonade Reader* edited by Kinitra D. Brooks and Kameelah L. Martin—apart from examining the ethnomusicological knowledge extracted from Beyoncé's 2016 visual album—analyzes its impact on society, specifically when compared to her previous videoclip aesthetics. Artists such as Bad Bunny and Billie Eilish have used their public image and the huge reach of their social network profiles and media platforms to engage in activism of different sorts. Aside from capitalizing on their activity across social media, several artists have, more interestingly, conveyed their messages through the aesthetics of their videoclips and the outfits they wear at public performances—a phenomenon that goes a long way back in the history of pop music—specifically those with a wide reception such as popular TV late night shows.

This call for papers is thus aimed at exploring the social and political relevance of these performances, understood as products interacting with society in a dialectical way. At the same time, it also welcomes theorizations concerning the formal elements and conventions intrinsic to the diverse performative genres, and how the emergence and spreading of these genres can be understood through theory. The products for analysis this call for papers aims for range from public performances of all sorts (big events such as the Superbowl Halftime Show but also more localized performances such as a dance or a speech during a protest) to recorded versions of them (such as videoclips, musical films or a performance



within a film) carrying the same performative potential. Suggested fields of analysis include but are not limited to:

- Performance and ethnic “authenticity”
- Performance and gender
- Performance as resistance and protest
- Soft power and performance
- Speech-acts
- Rituals and ceremonies in popular culture
- Performance in cyberspace
- Pop stars, public opinion, and mass media
- Popular performances in the era of globalization

PopMeC accepts submissions of **full papers** (3000 words max. references excluded) about any aspect related with the call. The papers will be **peer-reviewed** on a rolling basis by our editorial team and external collaborators, who will get back at you with the shortest notice possible. Accepted languages will be **English and Spanish**, although we recommend the election of the latter only if coherent with the content of the article.

Authors can also submit 500 words abstracts (taking into account the deadline) if they liked to consult their idea with the editor and receive some feedback in order to the develop the longer text.

The works accepted will be published on our platform as part of a special section dedicated to the subject. According to the feedback and participation the call raises, we will consider proposing the publication of an edited volume collecting the contributions.

The deadline for submission of full papers is October 16, 2020.

Send your proposal to popmec.call@gmail.com attaching your text, inclusive of a **short bio** (100-120 words), name, affiliation, and email contact in a single file. The editor in charge of this call is Mónica Fernández Jiménez, so feel welcome to contact her directly with any inquiry regarding the call, at monica.fernandez@uva.es.

Please, check our refreshed [author guidelines page](#) and don't hesitate to drop us a line with any doubt or inquiry you might have in this respect at popmec.research@gmail.com.