

**SHIFT IN MEANING OF OCCULT SYMBOLS IN SELECTED  
CONTEMPORARY VISUAL AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC**

**BY**

**TOO KIPLANG'AT GIDEON**

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**DECLARATION**

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**Signature** .....

.....

**TOO KIPLANG'AT GIDEON**

**Date**

**MAS12/60004/14**

**DECLARATION BY SUPERVISORS**

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as the University supervisors.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Dr. Evans Gesure Mecha**  
**Department of Literature**

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Mr. Christopher Okemwa**  
**Department of Literature**

**Date**

## Abstract

Symbols are normally used to discreetly communicate euphemized information especially those which deal with sex, phenomena like death, lightning, and certain types of animals among others. Music producers have utilized this literary style in their music video production to communicate messages to their target audience (in most cases the youth). With time, occult symbols appeared to have adopted new meanings other than their original conventional meanings. This study sought to identify and analyze the shift in meanings of occult symbols in contemporary American popular music. The study sampled music from the American music top chart artistes namely; Lady Gaga, Nicki Minaj, Rihanna, Ke\$ha, Beyonce and Lil Wayne. The occult symbols were studied within the location of American pop culture. This study also utilized the tenets of postmodernism to bring an insight on how symbols are understood and used in the society. However, given that this study is about symbols, the main theory used is semiotics. Semiotics is the study of signs and sign processes, indication, designation, likeness, analogy, metaphor, symbolism, signification, and communication. (Caesar,1999).The primary data for this study was obtained through observation by watching American pop music videos done by American pop artistes between the years 2008 and 2014 and purposive sampling used to select music videos with occult symbols. The researcher subsequently explained the diverse meanings carried by occult symbols in contemporary American pop music, and finally analyzed the shift in meanings of occult symbols in contemporary American popular music.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Symbols are normally used to discreetly communicate suggestive information especially those which deal with sex, sexual organs, phenomena like death, lightning, and certain types of animals among others. Music producers have utilized this literary style in their music video production to communicate messages to their target audience (in most cases the youth) without raising eyebrows outside this group bracket. Internet is replete with information on occult symbolism as a tool utilized by American visual pop music writers and producers to discreetly communicate messages that end up creating multiple interpretations. Occult symbols are devices for evoking complex hidden ideas without having to resort to painstaking explanations that would make a story more like an essay than an experience, (Meyer, 2010). Conventional occult symbols have meanings that are widely recognized by society or culture. However, emerging meanings have been observed to be in usage more than their initial conventional meanings. This study seeks to identify and analyze the shift in meanings of occult symbols within the context of contemporary American popular music.

This study examined the shift in meaning of occult symbols as a style in literature that has been utilized in visual American pop music. Perrine (1974) states that a symbol is something that means more than what it is. It is an object, a person, a situation, an action, or some other item that has a literal meaning in the story, but suggests or represents other meanings as well, (Perrine, 1974). Symbols are dealt with in different domains of human's life. They form the basis of literature and have a direct relation with poetry. Symbols are used more in epic, allegorical and Gnostic poems. Symbols are also used by poets, authors, song writers, public speakers amongst others to heighten the language used so as to create aesthetic effect in their

works. A work of art that is devoid of symbols and by extension other literary tools is considered plain and dry specimen for literary appreciation.

Crabb (1927), states that the term occult is “knowledge of the hidden.” Occult symbols, therefore, are symbols used to communicate deep hidden information that goes beyond the literal or surface meaning. This study located the occult symbols in pop music and explained the diverse meanings carried by occult symbols. According to Arnold (1983), pop music (a term that originally derives from an abbreviation of "popular" music) is a genre of popular music which originated in its modern form in the 1950s, deriving from rock and roll. The terms popular music and pop music are often used interchangeably, even though the former is a description of music which is popular (and can include any style), whilst the latter is a specific genre containing qualities of mass appeal, (Arnold, 1983). The so-called "pure pop" music, such as power pop, features all above elements, utilizing electric guitars, drums and bass for instrumentation; in the case of such music, the main goal is usually that of being pleasurable to listen to, rather than having much artistic depth. Pop music is generally thought of as a genre which is commercially recorded and desires to have a mass audience appeal. (Arnold, 1983)

The study sampled music from the American music top chart artistes; Lady Gaga, Beyonce, Nicki Minaj, Rihanna, Ke\$ha and Lil Wayne. The occult symbols were also studied within the context of American pop culture. This is because pop music exists within the confines of pop culture. Steinem (1965), states that pop Culture-although big, mercurial, and slippery to define-is really an umbrella term that covers anything currently in fashion, all or most of whose ingredients are familiar to the public-at-large. The new dances are a perfect example... Pop Art itself may mean little to the average man, but its vocabulary...is always familiar. This paraphrased quotation justifies why American pop music was studied under the confines of

American pop culture. It also explains why the youth which forms huge audience of American pop music identify with this genre of music and not any other.

Visual videos were chosen because these are the means of communication where occult symbols are observable. Visual communication is communication through visual aid and is described as the conveyance of ideas and information in forms that can be read or looked upon, (Sless 1981). Visual communication in part or whole relies on vision and is primarily presented or expressed with two dimensional images, it includes: signs, typography, drawing, graphic design, illustration, colour and electronic resources. It also explores the idea that a visual message accompanying text has a greater power to inform, educate, or persuade a person or audience, (Smith, 2005).

According to Frascara (2004), the evaluation of a good visual communication design is mainly based on measuring comprehension by the audience not on personal aesthetic and/or artistic preference as there are no universally agreed-upon principles of beauty and ugliness.

According to Ganguly (2004), visuals are important because they play the following roles in our lives:

- i. Relevance. Visuals can give accurate representation of ideas. Visuals help to define facts and information easily and precisely.
- ii. Visuals save time.
- iii. Visuals help memory. For a majority of people, it is easier to remember pictures than to remember just words. People like to put into pictures what they are hearing.
- iv. Visuals can stimulate the imagination
- v. Visuals provide a shared experience in that two or more people can think on similar lines about the same subject where visuals are used.

This study analyzed popular culture which encompasses pop music using postmodernism approach. The term postmodern refers to “the condition of knowledge in the most highly developed societies” such as ours, (Lyotard, 1979). However, given that this study is about symbols, the main theory used is semiotics. Semiotics is the study of signs and sign processes, indication, designation, likeness, analogy, metaphor, symbolism, signification, and communication, (Caesar, 1999). All these theoretical underpinnings were used together in this study to the use of occult symbols in American pop music and analyze the shift in meaning of occult symbols in contemporary American pop music. This study analyzed symbols as a mode of communication in pop music. Pop music acts as a ‘space’ where this communication of information takes place. The primary data for this study was obtained by watching selected American pop music videos done by American pop artistes between the years 2008 and 2014. The researcher subsequently explained the diverse meanings carried by occult symbols in contemporary American pop music, and finally analyzed the shift in meaning of occult symbols in contemporary American pop music.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Occult symbols are devices for evoking complex hidden ideas without having to resort to painstaking explanations that would make a story more like an essay than an experience (Meyer, 2010). Conventional occult symbols have meanings that are widely recognized by society or culture. However, emerging meanings have been observed to be in usage more than their initial conventional meanings. This study analyzed the shift in meanings of occult symbols within the context of contemporary American popular music.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This study aimed to:

- i. Identify occult symbols and explain their conventional meanings in visual contemporary American popular music.
- ii. Explain emerging meanings that arise from interpretations of occult symbols in visual contemporary American popular music.
- iii. Analyze the shift in meanings of occult symbols in visual contemporary American popular music.

### **1.4 Assumptions to the Study**

This study is based on the assumption that:

- i. Conventional meanings carried by occult symbols in visual contemporary American popular music will be available.
- ii. Emerging meanings arising from interpretations of occult symbols in visual contemporary American popular music will be available.
- iii. There is a shift in meanings of occult symbols in visual contemporary American popular music.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- i. What conventional meanings are carried by the identified occult symbols in visual contemporary American popular music?

- ii. What emerging meanings arise from interpretations of occult symbols in visual contemporary American popular music?
- iii. What is the shift in meanings of occult symbols in visual contemporary American popular music?

## 1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study analyzed popular culture which encompasses pop music using postmodern theory. However, given that this study is about symbols, the main theory that will be used is semiotics.

Semiotics is the study of signs and sign processes, indication, designation, likeness, analogy, metaphor, symbolism, signification, and communication, (Caesar, 1999). Semiotics is closely related to the field of linguistics, which, for its part, studies the structure and meaning of language more specifically. However, as different from linguistics, semiotics studies also non-linguistic sign systems. According to Caesar (1999), semiotics is divided into three branches:

- Semantics: Relation between signs and the things to which they refer; their *denotata*, or meaning
- Syntactics: Relations among signs in formal structures
- Pragmatics: Relation between signs and the effects they have on the people who use them

Semiotics is frequently seen as having important anthropological dimensions; for example, Umberto Eco proposes that every cultural phenomenon can be studied as communication, (Caesar, 1999).

Constant reference to semiotics as a theory enabled a critical analysis of the use of occult symbols in American pop music and analysis of the differences or similarities in meanings that arise from interpretations of these symbols

Another theory utilized in this study is postmodernism. The term postmodern refers to “the condition of knowledge in the most highly developed societies” such as ours, (Lyotard, 1979). Lyotard (ibid.) notes that the term is used among sociologists and critics to designate “the state of our culture following the transformations which ...have altered the game rules for science, literature and the arts.”

Postmodernism was a movement in architecture that rejected the modernist, avant garde, passion for the new. Following this, the modern romantic image of the lone creative artist was abandoned for the playful technician (perhaps computer hacker) who could retrieve and recombine creations from the past--data alone becomes necessary. This synthetic approach has been taken up, in a politically radical way, by the visual, musical, and literary arts where collage is used to startle viewers into reflection upon the meaning of reproduction. Here, pop-art reflects culture (American). An example is the Californian culture where the person--though ethnically European, African, Asian, or Hispanic--searches for authentic or "rooted" religious experience by dabbling in a variety of religious traditions. The foundation of authenticity has been overturned as the relativism of collage has set in. (Keep, et.al, 1993). We see a pattern in the arts and everyday spiritual life away from universal standards into an atmosphere of multidimensionality and complexity, and most importantly--the dissolving of distinctions.

According to Keep *et al.* (ibid.), postmodernism is a rejection of the sovereign autonomous individual with an emphasis upon anarchic collective, anonymous experience. Collage, diversity, the mystically unrepresentable, Dionysian passion are the foci of attention. Most

importantly, these scholars see the dissolution of distinctions, the merging of subject and object, self and other. This is a sarcastic playful parody of western modernity and the "John Wayne" individual and a radical, anarchist rejection of all attempts to define, reify or represent the human subject

McRobbie (1994) says:

... I want to begin by suggesting that the recent debates on post-modernism possess both a positive attraction and usefulness to the analyst of popular culture. This is because they offer a wider and more dynamic understanding of contemporary representation than other account to date. Unlike various strands of structuralist criticism, postmodernism considers images as they relate to and across each other. postmodernism deflects attention away from the singular scrutinizing gaze of the semiologist, and asks that this be replaced by a multiplicity of fragmented and frequently interrupted, 'looks'.

The above quotation places pop music in what is defined as popular and it is against this backdrop that this research hinged on post modernism as one of the theories that was useful. Pop music is a genre of music that does not have clear format of formulation. Sometimes a song is produced from scratch and in many instances it is a reproduction of a song done many years ago. The ideas of Postmodernism are ideal to apply in the study analysis because, as indicated by Keep, et.al(ibid), it is a theory that rejected Modernistic ideas whose main tenet was to pursue that which is new and no one has ventured into it before. Postmodernism instead, advocated reproducing what has been done before. This therefore is the converging point between postmodernism and both popular culture and popular music...

All these theoretical underpinnings were used together in this study to analyze the shift in meanings that arise from interpretations of occult symbols in visual contemporary American popular music.



## **1.7 Significance of the study**

In literature, symbolism is an important device for writers. Literary symbols extend meaning beyond the prosaic representation of realities afforded by literal description or extracted through analysis and exposition. Symbols are educational devices for evoking complex ideas without having to resort to explanations that would make a story more like an essay than an experience. Symbols build high level thinking skills of inferences and interpretation. Symbol use is also an important form of communication for those who have a challenge in reading and listening. Having looked at all these roles played by symbols, it is therefore necessary to carry out a research to vividly demystify meanings carried by these symbols and bring out study results that will enable effective communication through symbols via works of literature especially visual literature.

Popular music is a genre of music that comprises current songs that lead in charts across the world in terms of how many times they command airplay and most requested by the audience. The type of symbols commonly used in contemporary American pop music is occult symbols. Occult symbols comprise symbolism that is subtle albeit cleverly hidden. This study identified occult symbols incorporated in American pop music and provided their meanings using available table of occult symbols and their respective conventional meanings.

What motivated this study is the need to provide a platform for literary scholars and other researchers on whether or not occult symbols used in contemporary American pop music still carry conventional meanings or they have adopted other meanings. It was the main objective of this study to find out the shift in meaning of the occult symbols carried in American pop music which is the most listened to genre in Kenya by the youth. This study will generally provide literary material in further studies of occult symbols.

## **1.8 Scope and Delimitation**

This study looked at occult symbols as a style in literature that has been utilized in American pop music. The study restricted itself to occult symbols within the context of American pop music because it is here that indication on the use of occult symbols appears more as compared to music from other contexts, let's say Kenyan pop music, for example.

The limitation to this study under such context is that the study never utilized first hand information from American pop music artistes. This means the study relied on music videos to obtain material for the study.

The study sampled American pop music videos from the years between 2008 and 2014. This is the time scope defined as contemporary. This was done to limit the scope of the study to enable a focused and manageable analysis of the data collected. Sampling of music was done from 6 American music top chart artistes namely; Lady Gaga, Nicki Minaj, Rihanna, Lil Wayne, Beyonce and Ke\$ha. These 6 videos were arrived at because they are seen to utilize occult symbols. This study used purposive sampling to identify the videos and the artistes to be subjected to this study.

## **1.9 Definition of Terms**

### **Popular music/Pop music**

The terms popular music and pop music are used interchangeably to mean a specific genre containing qualities of mass appeal.

### **Conventional Meaning**

This is meaning of a symbol that is widely recognized and understood by the society based on common cultural understanding.

## **Occult symbols**

The term ‘occult symbols’ has been used in this study to refer to those symbols whose meanings are confined to a certain target group.

## **Contemporary**

The term ‘contemporary’ has been used to refer to the years between 2008 and 2014.

### **1.10 Literature review**

This section presents a review of literature related to this study. The literature review was derived from books, journals and internet. Related literature review was categorized occult symbols Postmodernism and American pop culture and pop music.

## **Occult Symbols**

Music producers have utilized occult symbolism as a style in their music video production to communicate messages to their target audience (in most cases the youth). Perrine (1974:211) states that a literary symbol is something that means more than what it is. It is an object, a person, a situation, an action, or some other item that has a literal meaning in the story, but suggests or represents other meanings as well. Although the school of symbolism appeared in France in 1880, but one thousand years before appearing this school, people used symbols for expressing their feelings and thoughts about phenomena i.e. life and death, (Webster, 2003). Not everything used in a text is a symbol. In fact what is symbolic for one person might not be the case another except conventional symbols whose universal meanings have existed since the time of the Greeks. This study will analyze the emerging meanings against the conventional meanings that have existed and establish the shift in meaning. Lippman (1969) says:

Symbolism entails a relation between two different kinds of experiences one pointing to the other, and this is a type of relation that music presents in remarkable variety, for music is an extremely intricate activity. What is symbolic for the composer may not be so for the audience or the performer and the historian who finds his own kinds of symbolism in music. Symbols even can be thoroughly personal. There are special listeners and performers who have a marked synthetic response to music or who have strong associations with certain works or in whom music produces visual images of some kind. We are concerned with such significances only in so far as they exemplify general types of symbolism, evident in the normal music experience.

Lippman (1969), affirms the assertion that meaning of symbols is not static unless those with universal meanings. According to Perrine (1974), a researcher should observe the following in identifying symbols:

1. The story must furnish a clue that a detail must be taken symbolically. It means that symbolic phenomena can be identified by repetition, emphasis or position.
2. The meaning of a literary symbol must be established and supported by the entire context of the story. This means that meaning of the symbol can be identified inside the text, not outside it.
3. To be called a symbol, an item must suggest a meaning different in kind from its literal meaning.
4. A symbol may have more than one meaning.

However this study is based specifically on occult symbols. The term occult is sometimes taken to mean knowledge that is meant only for certain people or that must be kept hidden, but for most practicing occultists it is simply the study of a deeper spiritual reality that extends beyond pure reason and the physical sciences, (Crabb, 1927). Occult symbols are used in popular music in modern society to communicate messages whose meanings and interpretations appear to vary.

Most of these occult symbols are many centuries old and historians have maintained their meanings have remained the same to date. In the modern culture, however, occult symbols have been taken to carry totally different meanings other than that which existed centuries ago. Teichrib(2002) in, *A Short Guide to Occult Symbols* states that symbols are employed as tools to communicate the spiritual attributes of the New Age movement and the occult. And while most of these symbols are many centuries old, their meanings have remained the same. In fact, as the public extension of ancient occult teachings; the New Age movement has placed mystical symbolism squarely in the face of our modern culture. What makes this especially disturbing is that while the "marks" of occultism can be found throughout society, yet we no longer recognize their spiritual implications. Christians, for example, believe that occult symbols carry deep spiritual meaning that extends beyond pure reason and physical science, (Crabb, 1927). Take 'The Peace Symbol' for example. According to Campel (1980), The Peace Symbol meant different things at different times. Some call it Nero's cross, linking it to the notorious Roman emperor who persecuted Christians, while others labeled it, 'The Dead Man Rune' and was found on the tombstones of certain Hitler's troops.

### **Popular Culture and the Mass Media**

Shuker(2001) said that to study popular music is to study popular culture. Williams(1983) argues that contemporary usage of 'culture' falls into three possibilities, or some amalgam of these: 'a general process of intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development'; 'a particular way of life, whether of a people, period, or a group'; and 'the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity'. This can be seen as a useful, if overly expansive, definition. The interest of this study is primarily between the second and third of these definitions; and in the relationship between them – the way particular social groups have used popular music within their lives. This is to shift the focus from the preoccupation, evident in much media/cultural studies, with the text in and of itself, to the audience. This is also to

stress ‘popular culture’, rather than accept the reservation of the term culture for artistic pursuits associated with particular values and standards, sometimes referred to as elite or high culture – Williams’ third definition.

‘Popular’ is a contested term. For some it simply means appealing to the people, whereas for others it means something much more grounded in or ‘of’ the people. The former usage generally refers to commercially produced forms of popular culture, while the latter is reserved for forms of ‘folk’ popular culture, associated with local community-based production and individual craftspeople, (Shuker, 2001). In relation to popular music, for example, this is the distinction often made between folk music, especially when acoustically based, and the chart-oriented products of the record companies. As we shall see, however, such a clear-cut distinction has become increasingly untenable. While not all popular culture is associated with the mass media, there is a reciprocal relationship between the two. The mass media involve large-scale production, by large economic units, for a mass, albeit segmented, market. The term ‘mass media’ according to Shuker (2001) refers to print, aural, and visual communication on a large scale – the press, publishing, radio and television, film and video, the recording industry, and telecommunications, to mention only the more obvious mediums of production and dissemination. Used as an adjective, ‘popular’ indicates that something – a person, a product, a practice, or a belief – is commonly liked or approved of by a large audience or the general public. Applied to the media, this means that particular television programmes, films, records, and books and magazines are widely consumed. Their popularity is indicated by ratings surveys, box-office returns, and sales figures. To a degree, this definition of ‘popularity’ reifies popular cultural texts, reducing them to the status of objects to be bought and sold in the marketplace, and the social nature of their consumption must always be kept in mind. This study equates the ‘popular’ with commercial, cultural forms of entertainment, and regards markets as an inescapable feature of popular culture.

Popularity is central to popular culture, as its various products and figures attain general social acceptance and approval. In a sense, a circular argument holds here: the popular are mass, the mass are popular, (Shuker, 2001). Turner (1984), says that popular culture and mass media have a symbiotic relationship: each depends on the other in an intimate collaboration.’ Contemporary popular culture in the United States and Canada, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand – to mention only the national settings we are primarily concerned with in this study forms the majority of mass media content, while the majority of popular culture is transmitted through the mass media.

Commercial forms of popular culture increasingly depend on mass marketing and publicizing on a multi-media basis. Mass marketing campaigns promoting a range of products accompany the release of major feature films such as *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace* and *Toy Story*, (Shuker, 2001) What we have here is the creation and marketing of a cultural phenomenon, with the cinema film, its video and music soundtrack, the posters, T-shirts, souvenir books, games, and children’s toys, not to forget revivals of the original comics, films, or television series which established the popularity of these programs and their characters. Increasingly, popular films also have ‘the making of’ programmes accompanying their release, (Shuker, 2001)

A similar process is evident in the mass marketing of popular music. The music can be reproduced in various formats (or ‘texts’) – vinyl, audio tape, compact disc, DAT (Digital Audio Tape), and video – and on variations within these: the dance mix, the cassette single, the limited collector’s edition, the remastered CD, and so on, (Shuker, 2001)The music can then be disseminated in a variety of ways – through radio airplay, discos and nightclubs, television music video shows and MTV-style channels live concert performances, and the Internet and MP3. Accompanying these can be advertising, reviews of the text or performance, and interviews with the performer(s) in the various publications of the music

press. In addition there is the assorted paraphernalia available to the fan, especially the posters and the T-shirts, (Shuker, 2001)

## **Popular music**

Popular music defies precise, straightforward definition. Accordingly, some writers on popular music slide over the question of definition, and take a ‘common-sense’ understanding of the term for granted. Historically, the term popular has meant ‘of the ordinary people’, (Shakur, 2001). It was first linked in a published title to a certain kind of music that conformed to that criterion in William Chapple’s *Popular Music of the Olden Times*, published in instalments from 1855 but it was not until the 1930s and 1940s did the term start to gain wider currency, (Williams, 1983). Middleton (1990) observes that the question of ‘what is popular music’ is ‘so riddled with complexities ... that one is tempted to follow the example of the legendary definition of folk song – all songs are folk songs, I never heard horses sing ’em – and suggest that all music is popular music: popular with someone’. However, the criteria for what counts as popular, and their application to specific musical styles and genres, are open to considerable debate. Classical music clearly has sufficient following to be considered popular, while, conversely, some forms of popular music are quite exclusive (e.g. thrash metal).

Most definitions are based on identifying the constituent genres making up ‘popular music’, though views vary on which genres should be included. For instance, *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Popular Music* (Clarke 1990) never attempts to define ‘popular music’ in any generic sense, instead noting that popular music ‘has always been a great mainstream with many tributaries’ (Introduction), it deals with an impressive range of these, including jazz, ragtime, blues, rhythm and blues, country, rock (and rock ’n’ roll and rockabilly), pub rock, punk rock, acid rock, heavy metal, bubblegum, and reggae. The point that this is a



shifting topography is shown by the lack of reference to rap, only just emerging into the mainstream market when Clarke wrote. Linked to this broad genre approach, are those definitions based on the commercial nature of popular music, and embracing genres perceived as commercially oriented. Many commentators argue that it is commercialisation that is the key to understanding popular music: e.g. 'When we speak of popular music we speak of music that is commercially oriented' (Burnett 1996). This approach places the emphasis on the 'popular', arguing that such appeal can be quantified through charts, radio airplay, and so forth. In such definitions, certain genres are identified as 'popular music', while others are excluded, (Clarke 1990). However, this approach can suffer from the same problems as those stressing popularity, since many genres, especially meta-genres such as world music, have only limited appeal and/or have had limited commercial exposure. Moreover, popularity varies from country to country, and even from region to region within national markets. It also needs to be noted that this commercially oriented approach is largely concerned with recorded popular music, that is usually listened to in a fairly conscious and focused manner.

Tagg (1982), characterises popular music according to the nature of its distribution (usually mass); how it is stored and distributed (primarily recorded sound rather than oral transmission or musical notation); the existence of its own musical theory and aesthetics; and the relative anonymity of its composers. The last of these is debatable, and I would want to extend the notion of composers and its associated view of the nature of musical creativity (see Chapter 6). However, musicologists have usefully extended the third aspect of this definition, while sociologists have concentrated on the first two dimensions. It seems that a satisfactory definition of popular music must encompass both musical and socio-economic characteristics. Essentially, all popular music consists of a hybrid of musical traditions, styles, and influences, and is also an economic product which is invested with ideological

significance by many of its consumers. At the heart of the majority of various forms of popular music is a fundamental tension between the essential creativity of the act of 'making music' and the commercial nature of the bulk of its production and dissemination, (Frith, 1983).

### **American Pop Music**

Occult symbols were studied within the context of visual American pop music. Popular music as the music since industrialization in the 1800's is most in line with the tastes and interests of the urban middle class, (Grove, G. et al, 2013). This would include an extremely wide range of music from vaudeville and minstrel shows to heavy metal. Pop music, on the other hand, has primarily come into usage to describe music that evolved out of the rock 'n roll revolution of the mid-1950 and continues in a definable path to today. (Grove, G. et al, 2013). American popular music had an effect on music across the world. The country has seen the rise of popular styles that have had a significant influence on global culture, including ragtime, blues, jazz, swing, rock, R&B, doo wop, gospel, soul, funk, heavy metal, punk, disco, house, techno, salsa, grunge and hip hop. Distinctive styles of American popular music emerged early in the 19th century, and in the 20th century the American music industry developed a series of new forms of music, using elements of blues and other genres of American folk music. These popular styles included country, R&B, jazz and rock. The 1960s and '70s saw a number of important changes in American popular music, including the development of a number of new styles, such as heavy metal, punk, soul, and hip hop. Though these styles were not popular in the sense of mainstream, they were commercially recorded and are thus examples of popular music as opposed to folk or classical music.

In the world music tradition, we have rather extensive history (extending all the way back to the Greeks) of the use of music to induce certain states- modes were thought to have certain

qualities. There is even some evidence to suggest that the Egyptians used music as a healing tool. This anticipated the later utilization of these techniques by figures as diverse as Sun Ra, Jimi Hendrix, the Misunderstood, Rudolph Steiner, various "new age practitioners" such as Stephen Levine and the biased experiments tying plant growth to listening to classical music. (Gomes, 2004)

These types of customs are utilized in Africa, India, South America and within most native cultures (shamanic cultures from Russia to the Americas to the Pacific) have some kind of tradition of sacred song to them. The links run from the Russian shamanic traditions, the Australian aborigines to East Indian Gandharva Veda and Karnatak musics to Hawaiian chanting, to perhaps the most infamous occult music tradition of all, the Yoruban culture in Africa which found its expression as Voudon (Voodoo) in Haiti and Santeria throughout most of the remainder of South America. This tradition has found its way into contemporary culture through jazz, tango, Cuban music, and of course, blues and rock and roll. (Gomes 2004)

Broadly there seem to be several possibilities in the analysis of the music appreciated by the social group. It could be argued that the value of the music is totally socially given. That is, that the music itself is a cipher, without inherent structures of meaning and value, and that it is the group that reads value into it. There is extreme difficulty, of course, in explaining why it should be pop music, and not some other form, that is specifically taken as the receptacle of socially created meanings and values. One could only explain this in terms of historical accident, by which at a certain point in time in the past the art form is fused with certain values by a certain group. It could be that a certain group is naturally exposed to certain music, so that proximity breeds a relationship which is, in the beginning, accidental in the sense that there is nothing intrinsic in the art form which makes it, and no other form, suitable for a certain group.

## **Symbolic Anthropology**

Symbolic anthropology views culture as an independent system of meaning deciphered by interpreting key symbols and rituals (Spencer 1996:535). There are two major premises governing symbolic anthropology. The first is that "beliefs, however unintelligible, become comprehensible when understood as part of a cultural system of meaning" (Des Chene 1996:1274). Geertz's position illustrates the interpretive approach to symbolic anthropology, while Turner's illustrates the symbolic approach. The second major premise is that actions are guided by interpretation, allowing symbolism to aid in interpreting ideal as well as material activities. Traditionally, symbolic anthropology has focused on religion, cosmology, ritual activity, and expressive customs such as mythology and the performing arts (Des Chene 1996:1274). Symbolic anthropologists have also study other forms of social organization such as kinship and political organization. Studying these types of social forms allows researchers to study the role of symbols in the everyday life of a group of people (Des Chene 1996:1274).

**Clifford Geertz** (1926-2006) studied at Harvard University in the 1950s. Societies use these symbols to express their "worldview, value-orientation, ethos, [and other aspects of their culture]" (Ortner 1983:129). For Geertz symbols are "vehicles of 'culture'" (Ortner 1983:129), meaning that symbols should not be studied in and of themselves, but for what they can reveal about culture. Geertz's main interest was the way in which symbols shape the ways that social actors see, feel, and think about the world (Ortner 1983:129). Throughout his writings, Geertz characterized culture as a social phenomenon and a shared system of inter-subjective symbols and meanings (Parker 1985).

**Victor Witter Turner** (1920-1983) was the major figure in the other branch of symbolic anthropology. Born in Scotland, Turner was influenced early on by the structural-

functionalist approach of British social anthropology (Turner 1980:143). However, upon embarking on a study of the Ndembu in Africa, Turner's focus shifted from economics and demography to ritual symbolism (McLaren 1985). Turner's approach to symbols was very different from that of Geertz. Turner was not interested in symbols as vehicles of "culture" as Geertz was but instead investigated symbols as "operators in the social process" (Ortner 1983:131) believing that "the symbolic expression of shared meanings, not the attraction of material interests, lie at the center of human relationships" (Manning 1984:20). Symbols "instigate social action" and exert "determinable influences inclining persons and groups to action" (Turner 1967:36). Turner felt that these "operators," by their arrangement and context, produce "social transformations" which tie the people in a society to the society's norms, resolve conflict, and aid in changing the status of the actors (Ortner 1983:131).

**David Schneider** (1918-1995) was another important figure in the "Chicago school" of symbolic anthropology. He did not make the complete break from structuralism that had been made by Geertz and Turner, rather he retained and modified Levi-Strauss' idea of culture as a set of relationships (Ortner 1983; Spencer 1996). Schneider defined culture as a system of symbols and meanings (Keesing 1974:80). Schneider's system can be broken into categories, however there are no rules for the categories. According to Schneider (1980:5), regularity in behavior is not necessarily "culture," nor can culture be inferred from a regular pattern of behavior. A category can be made for an observable act, or can be created through inference. Therefore, things that cannot be seen, such as spirits, can embody a cultural category (Keesing 1974:80). Schneider was interested in the connections between the cultural symbols and observable events and strove to identify the symbols and meanings that governed the rules of a society (Keesing 1974:81). Schneider differed from Geertz by detaching culture from everyday life. He defined a cultural system as "a series of symbols" where a symbol is

"something which stands for something else (1980:1). This contrasted with the elaborate definitions favored by Geertz and Turner.

### **1.11 Research Methodology**

This section gives a description of the research methodology which was used in the research process. The population sample and sampling techniques, research instruments and data collection procedures are explained.

#### **Research Design**

This research was a qualitative research, which attempted to establish whether there were occult symbols in visual contemporary American pop music, explain varied meanings that arise from interpretations of occult symbols and to analyze the shift in meanings of occult symbols in visual contemporary American popular music.

#### **Population of the Study and Sample**

The target population of the study is American pop music produced between the years 2008 to 2014. From the target population, videos thought to be containing occult symbols were chosen using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling - The researcher chooses the sample based on who/what they think would be appropriate for the study, (Deming, 1990). Purposive sampling was used because only those videos perceived to have utilized occult symbols were studied. The American videos studied are as follows:

## **Bad Romance Video – Lady Gaga**

"Bad Romance" is a song by American recording artist Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta (Born March 28, 1986), better known by her stage name Lady Gaga, is an American singer and songwriter. Born and raised in New York City, she initially performed in theatre, appearing in high school plays and briefly studying at CAP21 through New York University's Tisch School of the Arts before dropping out to pursue a musical career. A collaborative effort between Gaga and Red One, the lyrics of "Bad Romance" explore Gaga's attraction to individuals with whom romance never works, her preference for lonely relationships and the paranoia she experienced while on tour. The accompanying music video of "Bad Romance" features Gaga inside a surreal white bathhouse. There, she gets kidnapped by a group of supermodels who drug her and sell her to the Russian mafia for sexual slavery. The music video ends with Gaga killing the man who bought her. The song's video garnered acclaim from critics, who not only applauded the risqué and symbolic nature of the plot, but its artistic direction and vivid imagery. (*Source: The Independent (London). Retrieved on January 9, 2011*)

## **Out of My Mind (B.o.B and Nicki Minaj)**

The video was done by Onika Tanya Maraj (Born December 8, 1982), better known by her stage name Nicki Minaj is an American rapper, singer, songwriter and actress. After success with three mixtapes released between 2007 and 2009, Minaj signed to Young Money Entertainment. Minaj's debut studio album, *Pink Friday* (2010), peaked at number 1 on the US Billboard 200 and was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). The music video was filmed in Detroit the week of July 16, 2012. A behind-the-scenes video was released on August 13th. The video was directed by Benny Boom and it is set in a mental hospital. In one scene B.o.B is handcuffed to a wheelchair. In another, he is

struggling in a strait jacket and a Hannibal Lecter-type mask. Nicki Minaj is also seen rapping alongside B.o.B. Minaj is referenced as 'Dr. Minaj' for a brief moment in the video, just as her verse begins. (Source: *The Independent (London)*. Retrieved on January 9, 2011)

### **Die Young (Ke\$ha)**

"Die Young" is a song by American recording artist Ke\$ha. Ke\$ha Rose Sebert (born March 1, 1987), known professionally as Ke\$ha (formerly stylized as Ke\$ha) is an American singer-songwriter and rapper. In 2005, at age 18, Ke\$ha was signed to producer Dr. Luke's record label, Kemosabe Entertainment, and publishing company. 'Die Young' was released on September 25, 2012 as the lead single from her second studio album, *Warrior* (2012). Kesha co-wrote the electropop song with its producers, Dr. Luke, Benny Blanco, and Cirkut, with additional writing from Nate Ruess, the lead singer of FUN. Kesha wrote the lyrics after traveling around the world and embarking on a spiritual journey. Music magazine *Billboard* reported on the symbolism used in the video, documenting synergy with it and the Illuminati conspiracy theory. (Source: *The Independent (London)*. Retrieved on January 9, 2011)

### **Love Me (Lil Wayne video)**

"Love Me" (originally titled "Bitches Love Me") is a song by American rapper Lil Wayne featuring Drake and Future for the former's tenth studio album *I Am Not a Human Being II*. It was released on January 18, 2013, by Young Money Entertainment, Cash Money Records, and Republic Records as the third single from the project. The song was written and produced by Mike WiLL Made It, with additional songwriting by Lil Wayne, Drake, Future, and Asheton Hogan. It also appeared for free downloading on Rich Gang mixtape *Rich Gang: Allstars*. (Source: "*The Hot Boys – Billboard Singles*". *Allmusic*. Retrieved September 13, 2008)



### **Run the World (Girls) - Beyoncé**

"Run the World (Girls)" is a song recorded by American recording artist Beyoncé. Beyoncé Giselle Knowles-Carter (Born September 4, 1981) is an American singer and actress. Born and raised in Houston, Texas, she performed in various singing and dancing competitions as a child, and rose to fame in the late 1990s as lead singer of R&B girl-group Destiny's Child. The song's title and lyrics comprise an unapologetically aggressive message promoting female empowerment. "Run the World" initially divided critics; some complimented the song's sample, its musical direction, and Knowles' aggressiveness, while others criticized the continuation of past themes and stated that they wanted to see Knowles covering new topics. The song's accompanying music video was directed by Francis Lawrence and was filmed in California over three days. It received widespread critical acclaim, with critics affirming that Knowles started a dance revolution and favoring the heavily-choreographed visuals. (*Source: The Independent (London). Retrieved on January 9, 2011*)

### **Where Have You Been - Rihanna**

"Where Have You Been" is a song by Barbadian recording artist Rihanna. The track is a dance-pop and techno house song that draws influence from trance, R&B and hip hop. It is backed by "hard, chilly synths" and contains an electro-inspired breakdown sequence. The song's lyrics interpolate Geoff Mack's 1959 song "I've Been Everywhere" and speak of a woman who is searching for a partner who will please her. The song's accompanying music video, directed by Dave Meyers depicts the singer in an assortment of costumes and locations, referencing the song's lyrics. Rihanna is seen as a semi-naked water reptilian, in an Egyptian desert, an African themed hut, and channeling Hindu god Shiva with multiple limbs. The video received a positive response from critics, who praised Rihanna's new

approach to deeper choreography. (Source: "*The Evolution of Rihanna*". *BET*. March 25, 2014. Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

### **Data Collection Methods**

The data collection method that was employed is observation.

#### **Observation**

The researcher relied on observation as the method of data collection in the study. The researcher watched the American music videos between the years 2008 and 2014 and identified occult symbols in them.

In order to achieve the second objective, to explain the meaning carried by occult symbols in American pop music, the researcher identified the occult symbols in American music videos and juxtaposed with other messages carried in the song. The tenets captured in postmodernism were used by the researcher to achieve this objective. The differences and similarities in the meanings carried by occult symbols originally and currently were finally analyzed.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CONVENTIONAL MEANINGS OF OCCULT SYMBOLS

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter answers research question one which finds out if occult symbols are evident in visual contemporary American pop music between years 2008 and 2014, a sample of six videos were chosen using purposive sampling. Research question two one was also used to find out the conventional meanings carried by occult symbols in visual contemporary American popular music These videos were watched to find out if they contained occult symbols. These videos are:

- a. Bad Romance – Lady Gaga
- b. Run the world (Girls) – Beyonce.
- c. Die young – Ke\$ha.
- d. Bad romance – Lady Gaga.
- e. Love me – Lil Wayne.
- f. Where have you been – Rihanna.
- g. Out of my mind - B.O.B. and Nicki Minaj.

#### **Bad Romance Video – Lady Gaga**

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## 2.2 Occult symbols in Pop Music Videos

### Beyoncé - Run The World (Girls)



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 1

Beyoncé dances beneath the elephant god. In the middle of the performance is this image from the one-dollar bill flashed onto the triangle. It isn't the pyramid from the back of the bill. It's the number 1 and word "one" from the corners of the bill. These are the only motifs actually from the one-dollar bill.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 2

Police car featuring pentagonal symbol for the American University in Cairo



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 3

Logo for the American University in Cairo



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 4

Posters with the letters AA, indicating the Silver Star. On the police car there is a logo consisting of a thorny-looking pentagon. This is the logo for the American University in Cairo.

### **Ke\$ha - Die Young**

The video takes place in Mexico, where Ke\$ha her crew arrive at a cabin. As the car door opens, a Skull and Bones symbols flashes.





*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 5

Skull and Bones is also the name of Yale's elite secret society- *Vigilantcitizen.com*



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 6

A car-hearse-arrives and when it opens, Ke\$ha exits in a black veil. She is then carried on the shoulders of her gang of mimbos, as in cultures where people carry statues of the Virgin Mary on the streets. While this is happening, a bunch of symbols are flashed on the screen.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 7

Ke\$ha wearing an All-Seeing Eye ring while hiding one eye.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 8

Inverted crosses flash many times during the video.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 9

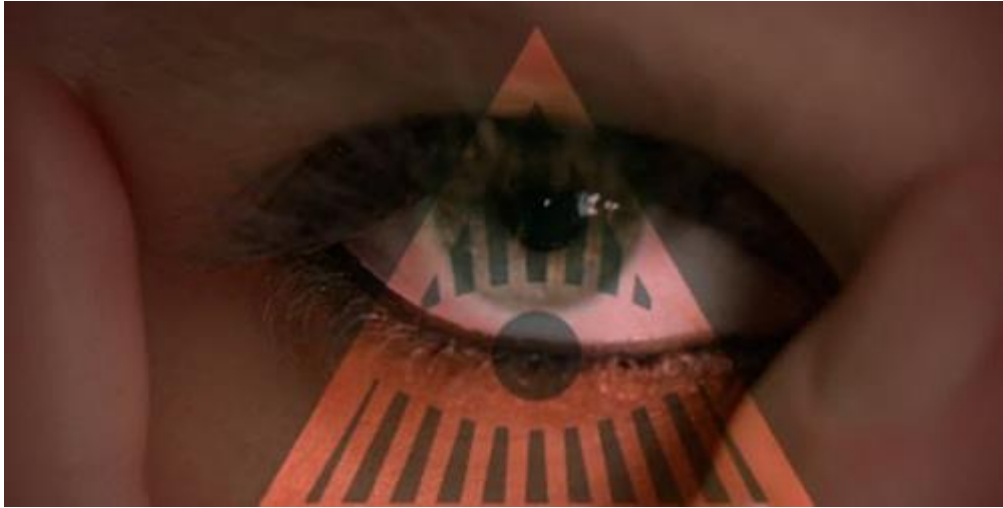
Ke\$ha sits a the throne of the “orgy”, under a pentacle.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 10

Ke\$ha does the one-eye sign. Throughout the video, symbols are flashed on screen, mainly triangles that are either upright or reversed



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 11

### **Lady Gaga- Bad Romance**

In the video there's the presence of the horned head, Baphomet.

#### **Analysis of the Video**

The video is dense with symbols and images. Some are significant while others seem to be random. The video starts with Gaga emerging from what looks like a high-tech coffin or maybe a sensory deprivation tank. At the beginning of the video, she is deprived of her senses. Either her eyes, her ears or her nose are covered. Sensory deprivation is a torture technique used on prisoners or mind controlled slaves in order to “break” them and to facilitate their re-education. -*Vigilantcitizen.com*



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 12: *Gaga can't see or hear anything*

In one scene, she is wearing thick sunglasses and talking to herself through a mirror.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 13

She is then roughly handled by two women. She fights them but she finally accepts her fate and even raises her hands in praise.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 14

Throughout the video, there is a back and forth between her being forced to go through with her duties as a slave and her willingness to go through with them. She is then forced to drink some vodka, which is in fact an MTV-friendly substitute for drugs. Mind controlled sex slaves are heavily drugged to numb their thoughts and make them easy to manipulate.

Gaga is then undressed and forced to perform in front of a bunch of men.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 15

Gaga seems to be well aware of what is happening and she chooses to charm a particular guy, who seems to have what she wants. The masked man seems to enjoy what is happening to him and bids to obtain her. The masks represent their hidden nature.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*



Figure 16

Gaga is then required to have sex with the winning bidder. So she proceeds into a very symbolic room.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 17: Her hands are strategically placed under the horned heads. Immediately after, a fire ignites the room.

On each side of the bed are gazelle heads, who symbolically refer to Baphomet.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 18

The presence of those horned heads in that room is symbolic.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 19

When the fire starts, another scene plays simultaneously showing Gaga and masked dancers dressed in red, the color of sacrifice and initiation. The virginal white garments she wore during most of the video are replaced by bloody red ones.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 20

Gaga then makes her trademark “Eye in the triangle” hand gesture.

The final scene shows Gaga lying in bed with the burned skeleton of the Russian mafiosi.





*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 21

Notice how everything is burnt except the two gazelle heads. The real “intercourse” happened between Gaga and Baphomet. The guy was a tool, a middle-man who was sacrificed in the process of Gaga’s initiation.

### **Other Symbols in the Video**

Aside from the main storyline, the video is riddled with numerous symbols and images which are occult in nature. Here are some of them:

**Sun Symbolism:** There are many symbols referring to the sun in the video. As said above, Ra is an Egyptian sun god who is mentioned many times in the magic incantation-like “Rah-rah” chant. Sun worship has always been at the center of occult mysteries as it is considered to be the ultimate representation of God. *-Vigilantcitizen.com*



Figure 22: *Image of the sun in the razorblade shades. She is wearing a golden dress. Gold is representative of the sun in occultism. Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*



Figure 23: *Golden sunlight bringing her back to life*



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 24: *Gaga at the center of planetary orbits*



Source: Vigilantcitizen.com

Figure 25: *In this choreography, Gaga does what looks like the sign of the cross but her hand gesture describes a triangle instead (classic phallic symbol).*

### **Reptilian Monster Symbolism**

In some scenes, Gaga gradually starts to look like reptilian monster, with a focus on the spine.



Source: Vigilantcitizen.com

Figure 26: *Emphasis on the spin*



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

**Figure 27: Angry looking bat on her head**

### **Lil Wayne - Love Me**

Lil Wayne single “Love Me” (featuring Drake and Future). The symbolism in the video directly refers to Monarch Mind Control, specifically Kitten Programming, and even refers to its techniques. I’ll look at the symbolism of Lil Wayne’s “Love Me”.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 28

The video contains ALL of the possible symbolism relating to Kitten Programming and it also emphasizes the slave status of the women in the video. Lil Wayne's girls are literally locked in cages and depicted as animals. Let's look at the meaning of the video.

### **Women as MK Slaves, Rappers as Handlers**

In the very first seconds of the video, we see a semi-subliminal image.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 29

For about a second, the fire from the lighter takes the shape of a Baphomet head / goat of Mendes. The song is about how women apparently love Lil Wayne. In the video, they however don't seem to have much of a choice because they are TRAPPED IN CAGES, inside a very dodgy-looking compound.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 30

Locking slaves in cages an actual Monarch Programming technique to discipline, traumatize and dehumanize the victims.

The many close-up shots of girls during the video all somehow allude to an aspect of Kitten Programming. Here are some of them:



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 31

This model has a feline prints on her face (which is used in mass media to refer to Kitten programming). She also has cat eyes and is licking her “paw”.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 32

Licking a blade is maybe sexily dangerous, but also refers to the mix of inhibiting lust and physical abuse involved in Kitten Programming.





*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 33

This headgear is used to represent a slave's mind being trapped and controlled by a handler.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 34

This model has a huge butterfly covering one of her eyes, which is reference to Monarch mind control in the video.



In the video, Lil Wayne somewhat plays the role of the handler, where he's basically in control of these mesmerized women.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 35

Here, Lil Wayne is in a bedroom that is full of water with women swimming in it. Aside from the fact that this water will probably cause a lot of water damage in that room, it is also a way to show that these slaves are literally “out of their element”. Also, notice the frame on the left with butterflies in it.



*Source:*

*Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 36: Lil Wayne with horns.

The last part of the video begins with “kittens” entering a white room.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 37: They move like cats in Kitten programming.

## **Rihanna -Where Have You Been Video**



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 38: Rihanna with one eye covered.

Here is the video:

### **Rihanna emerges from The Sea**



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 39

She emerges from a lake as a mermaid-like sea creature. In mythology mermaids were fish-human hybrids and said to be related to Dagon, the god of the Canaanites and Philistines in the Bible.Hall (2003)

### **The Third Eye of Illumination**



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 40: Rihanna leans back with the Third Eye of Illumination shining.

At the climax of the video, Rihanna, moving in slow motion has several images of her emerge from her body. In the photo above, Rihanna, along with multiple images of herself raises her head back as if in worship and a light with the Third Eye of illumination on her forehead shining.

At 1:50 in the *Where Have You Been* video, Rihanna and her dancers form a pose of an eye with Rihanna in the center.



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 41: All Seeing Eye formation. Also note the Baphomet head in the upper left.

### **The Goddess**



Figure 42: Imagery that resembles the god Shiva.

The final imagery of the video shows Rihanna with many arms. In this image she is mimicking the god Shiva, also known as The Destroyer, in Hinduism. Here is a statue of the many-armed god:

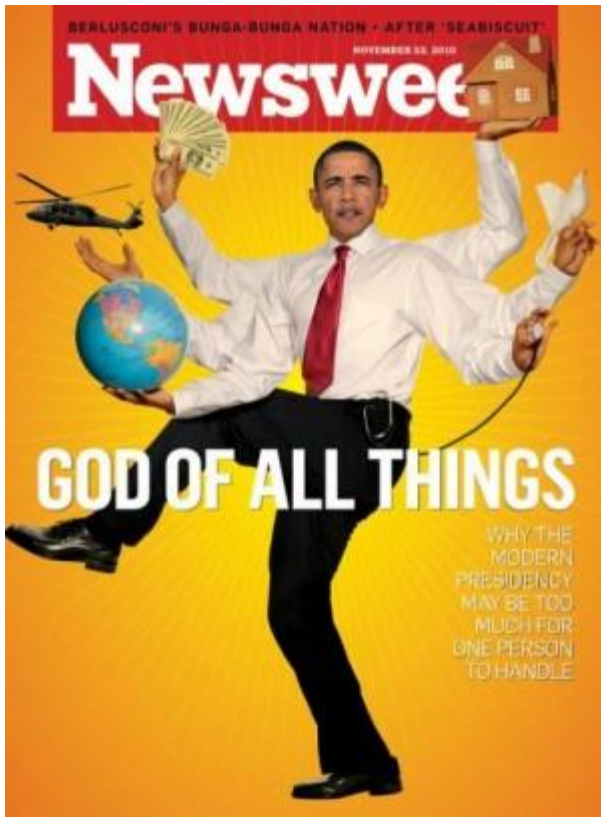


*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 43

Newsweek Magazine made a cover of President Obama looking like the god Shiva.





Source: *Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 44: President Obama depicted as Shiva.

### **B.O.B. and Nicki Minaj - Out of My Mind**



Source: *Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 45

B.O.B.'s *Out of My Mind* is about him being a crazy so, fittingly enough, the video takes place in a mental institution. Let's look at the video's main scenes.

The video begins with B.O.B. and Nicki Minaj locked inside a cell and acting all crazy. On the wall behind them are carvings that appear to be made by someone that is crazy and paranoid, but, on closer look, one can decipher words and symbols. There are several All-Seeing Eyes, a symbol that not only represents the occult elite, but is central in actual mind control programming. –vigilantcitizen.com



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 46

Behind B.O.B. are weird carvings such as the All-Seeing Eye inside a spaceship. There are also unsettling phrases such as "They are us" and "We are them".





*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Figure 47

At the bottom left, we see a carving saying “They see” with an eye in between.

According to the researcher’s observation, the selected 6 American pop music videos contained occult symbols whose meanings needed decoding. The data therefore successfully answers research question number one which required identification of occult symbols in American pop music videos.

In summary, the following occult symbols were evident in all the seven videos;






- Baphomet
- Bat
- Elephant symbol
- Kitten programming symbols
- Mermaid
- Pentacle

- Pentagram
- Phallus
- Shiva god
- Skull and crossbones
- Sun symbolism
- Butterfly symbol
- Trinity

### **2.3 Conventional Meanings of Occult Symbols used in the Sampled Videos**

Research question two was used to find out the conventional meanings carried by occult symbols in visual contemporary American popular music. The table below carries some occult symbols that are generally used across various fields including literature, government, finance, religion, music amongst other disciplines. However, some of the corresponding meanings extend all the way back to the Greeks. Many of these symbols have double or multiple meanings. For example, the pentagram has been used to transmit occult power in all kinds of rituals for centuries, but to Christians the same shape may simply represent a star -- a special part of God's creation, (Carl, 1991). The image of a fish may mean a sign of the zodiac (astrology) to some, but to Christians it has meant following Jesus and sharing the message of His love, (Carl, 1991).

Table 1

SYMBOL	NAME/MEANING
	<p><b>ALL-SEEING EYE:</b> A universal symbol representing spiritual sight, inner vision, higher knowledge, insight into occult mysteries. Look at your \$1 bill.</p> <p><b>EYE in top Triangle of the PYRAMID:</b> Masonic symbol for the all-seeing eye of god - an mystical distortion of the omniscient (all-knowing) Biblical God. You can find it on the \$1 bill. See triangle, Eye of Horus, the Franklin Institute website, and the symbol for the U.S. government's new Total Information Awareness (TIA) System.</p>
	<p><b>BUTTERFLY:</b> Reminds Christians of the amazing transformation that takes place through Christ's redemption and regeneration. When "born again," we become "a new creation." (2 Cor. 5:17) To many pagans, its mythical meaning is linked to the soul (of the deceased) in search of reincarnation. See the new, politically correct meaning at Butterfly 208: "There's a theory that says if a single butterfly flaps its wings in, say, China, the air disturbance may cause a storm in Nunavut, Canada a month later. If that's the case, imagine the power of your own ideas and others to help improve the quality of life in the world's 208 countries! The Butterfly 208 contest is a chance for you to create your own Butterfly effect! 208 = Number of Countries in the World Butterfly + 208 = A totally interconnected world! A world where even small actions can have a big effect."</p>
	<p><b>HOOK 'EM HORNS &amp; HORNED HAND (Mano Cornuto):</b> "President Bush's 'Hook 'em, horns' salute got lost in translation in Norway, where shocked people interpreted his hand gesture during his inauguration as a salute to Satan. That's what it means in the Nordics when you throw up the right hand with the index and pinky fingers raised, a gesture popular among heavy metal groups and their fans in the region....'Shock greeting from Bush daughter,' a headline in the Norwegian Internet newspaper Nettavisen said." "Norwegians Confused by Bush Salute"</p>
	<p><b>MERMAID:</b> Based on ancient myths in India, Greece, Syria, Africa and other parts of the world. Seen by some cultures as sea goddesses, these seductive beings guarded treasures, frightened travelers, and were eventually featured in alchemy and other occult practices as well as in fairy tales. By medieval times, the alluring Sirens of Homer's days had apparently evolved into a promiscuous split-tailed versions that symbolized mystical sex to alchemists and secret societies. German legends describe a mystical Nixie -- a fish-tailed female water spirits, daughter of "Mother Night." In our times, the more benign fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen and Disney Studios have generally erased any cultural memory of those occult roots.</p>
	<p><b>TRINITY [Our Triune God]:</b> An early Christian symbol for the Trinity. It is related to the symbol of the fish (<i>vesica piscis</i>) used by the early -- and often persecuted Christians -- to identify themselves as belonging to Jesus Christ. Apparently, the word "fish" in Greek is a combination of the first letters of His name: Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior. Like many Christian symbols, the same shape has also been used by various pagan religions throughout</p>

	history. <i>See the next symbol:</i>
--	--------------------------------------

*Source: vigilantcitizen.com*

## Other Symbols used in the Sampled Videos

### 1. Baphomet



*Source: Vigilantcitizen.com*

Baphomet is an enigmatic, goat-headed figure found in several instances in the history of occultism. From the Knights Templar of the Middle-Ages and the Freemasons of the 19th century to modern currents of occultism. Scholars such as Peter Partner and Malcolm Barber agree that the name of Baphomet was an Old French corruption of the name Muhammad,

with the interpretation being that some of the Templars, through their long military occupation of the Outremer, had begun incorporating Islamic ideas into their belief system, and that this was seen and documented by the Inquisitors as heresy. Peter Partner's 1987 *The Knights Templar and their Myth* says,

In the trial of the Templars one of their main charges was their supposed worship of a heathen idol-head known as a 'Baphomet' ('Baphomet' = Mahomet = Muhammad).

## 2. Bat



The Native American animal symbolism of the bat comes from a keen observation of this magnificent animal. These people recognized that the bat was highly sensitive to their surroundings and so therefore was considered a symbol of intuition, dreaming and vision. This made the bat a powerful symbol for Native American shamans and medicine people. Often the spirit of the bat would be invoked when special energy was needed, like "night-sight" which is the ability to see through illusion or ambiguity and dive straight to the truth of matters. It is a symbol of communication because the Native Americans observed the bat to be a highly social creature. Indeed, the bat has strong family ties. They are very nurturing, exhibiting verbal communication, touching, and sensitivity to members of their group. According to them, a bat represented; Illusion, rebirth, dreams, intuition, initiation, journeying, inner depth and communication. (*source:vigilantcitizen.com*)

## 3. Elephant Symbol



In Asia, Elephants have been used to represent wisdom and royal power. In Europe the Elephant was used as a symbol of military might. In America the Elephant has been used to represent the Republican vote, (Guading, 2009). Many African cultures revere the African Elephant as a symbol of strength and power. It is also praised for its size, longevity, stamina, mental faculties, cooperative spirit, and loyalty. South Africa, for instance, uses elephant tusks in their coat of arms to represent wisdom, strength, moderation and eternity, (Guading, 2009).

#### **4. Monarch/MK Ultra-Sex Kitten Programming**

Throughout the course of history, several accounts have been recorded describing rituals and practices resembling mind control. One of the earliest writings giving reference to the use of occultism to manipulate the mind can be found in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. It is a compilation of rituals, heavily studied by today's secret societies, which describes methods of torture and intimidation (to create trauma), the use of potions (drugs) and the casting of spells (hypnotism), ultimately resulting in the total enslavement of the initiate. ” (Extracted on 02<sup>nd</sup> September, 2014 from *vigilantcitizen.com*). Other events ascribed to black magic, sorcery and

demon possession (where the victim is animated by an outside force) are also ancestors of Monarch programming. ” (Extracted on 02<sup>nd</sup> September, 2014 from *vigilantcitizen.com*). It is, however, during the 20th century that mind control became a science in the modern sense of the term, where thousands of subjects have been systematically observed, documented and experimented on. One of the first methodical studies on trauma-based mind control were conducted by Josef Mengele, a physician working in Nazi concentration camps. He initially gained notoriety for being one of the SS physicians who supervised the selection of arriving prisoners, determining who was to be killed and who was to become a forced labourer. However, he is mostly known for performing grisly human experiments on camp inmates, including children, for which Mengele was called the “Angel of Death”.(Extracted on 02<sup>nd</sup> September, 2014 from *vigilantcitizen.com*)



source: [vigilantcitizen.com](http://vigilantcitizen.com)

- A. Purple Cat Suit with Animal Print: Symbolizing Beta ‘Sex Kitten’ Programming + Purple represents the color of dissociation in Monarch Programming.
- B. Purple Cat Mask: Symbolizes the slave’s alter ‘sex kitten’ persona.
- C. Reflection: Representing the multiple alters of the Monarch Slave (Katy Perry).
- D. Shadow: Represents ‘shadow’ alters (created to hold the pain when the main alter dissociates from torture).
- E. Ball of String (wrapped around wrist): Represents a Ball & Chain (symbolizing the



slave's imprisoned/restrained mind). ".(Extracted on 02<sup>nd</sup> September, 2014 from *vigilantcitizen.com*)

## 5. Phallus



Source: *what-is-your-sign.com*

The symbolic version of the phallus, a phallic symbol is meant to represent male generative powers. According to Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis, while males possess a penis, no one can possess the symbolic phallus. Lyons (2004). Jacques Lacan's *Ecrits: A Selection* includes an essay titled *The Significance of the Phallus* which articulates the difference between "being" and "having" the phallus. Men are positioned as men insofar as they are seen to have the phallus. Women, not having the phallus, are seen to "be" the phallus. The symbolic phallus is the concept of being the ultimate man, and having this is compared to having the divine gift of a god. Lyons (2004).

## 6. Symbols of Lord Shiva

Lord Shiva, one of the most complex gods of India, embodies seemingly contradictory qualities – He is the destroyer and the restorer; the great ascetic as well as the symbol of sensuality; the benevolent herdsman of souls and also the wrathful avenger. Images of Lord Shiva have various symbols representing the powers and qualities of the deity, (Axel, 2004)



*Source: what-is-your-sign.com*

**Matted Hair-** The matted hair represents Lord Shiva's connection with the wind and Brahma's "breath of life", (Axel, 2004)

**Unclad Body and Ash-** The unclad body symbolizes the transcendental aspect of Lord Shiva.

**Third Eye-** Lord Shiva has three eyes. His right and left eyes are the sun and moon respectively, while His third eye is the eye of wisdom, (Axel, 2004)

**Crescent Moon-** Often depicted on Lord Shiva's head is a crescent moon, representing the cyclical nature of the universe. The waxing and waning of the moon symbolizes the cycle through which creation evolves, (Axel, 2004)

**Snake-** Lord Shiva is often shown with a snake curled three times around His neck. The three coils of the snake represent the cycle of time – the past, present and future. The snake around Lord Shiva's neck symbolizes his transcendence over the cycles of creation and time, (Axel, 2004)

**Trident-** The three-pronged trident known as the Trishul shown with Lord Shiva symbolizes His three fundamental powers, or shakti, of iccha, kriya, and jnana (will, action and knowledge). The trident also represents Lord Shiva's power to destroy evil and ignorance, (Axel, 2004)

**Tiger Skin-** The tiger skin that Lord Shiva wears symbolizes His victory over every force. The tiger also represent lust, and Lord Shiva indicates, by sitting on the tiger skin, that he has conquered lust, (Axel, 2004)

## 7. Skull and Crossbones



*Source: what-is-your-sign.com*

The 'Jolly Roger' is the name given to any of various flags flown to identify a ship's crew as pirates. The flag most usually identified as the Jolly Roger is the skull and crossbones, being a flag consisting of a skull above two long bones set in an x-mark arrangement on a black field, (Holscher, 2013). This design was used by four pirates, captains Edward England, John Taylor, Sam Bellamy and John Martel. Despite its prominence in popular culture, plain black flags were often employed by most pirates in the 17th-18th century, (Holscher, 2013). Historically, the flag was flown to frighten pirates' victims into surrendering without a fight, since it conveyed the message that the attackers were outlaws who would not consider themselves bound by the usual rules of engagement -- and might, therefore, slaughter those

they defeated, (Holscher, 2013). Since the decline of piracy, various military units have used the Jolly Roger, usually in skull-and-crossbones design, as a unit identification insignia or a victory flag to ascribe to themselves the proverbial ferocity and toughness of pirates, (Holscher, 2013).

## 8. Pentagram



*Source: what-is-your-sign.com*

The pentagram is one of the most persistent symbols in human history. It is one of oldest symbols dating back to the time of Uruk of 3500 BC in Ur of the Chaldees in Ancient Mesopotamia. The pentagram is found in many ancient cultures including India, China, Greece, Egypt, Babylon and the Mayans of Central America. Each culture has its own symbolism attached to the five points of the pentagram, (Dina, 2012). As the primary symbol used by Wiccans and other Neo-Pagans, the pentagram also represents aspects of their faith. To some, the pentagram represents the spiritual aspects of life and seeking secret knowledge. To others the five points symbolize the four directions of north, south, east and west with the fifth point representing sanctity of spirit, (Dina, 2012). When within a circle, the star symbolizes wholeness, unity and divine knowledge. In antiquity Christians viewed the pentagram as a lesser-used symbol of their faith. The five points of the pentagram represent the five wounds of Christ, (Dina, 2012) Early Christians also attributed the pentagram as a symbol of the Trinity with the two other points representing the two natures of Christ. It also symbolizes truth, the work of the Creator, the five joys of the Virgin Mary, the Alpha and the Omega and the five virtues of generosity, fellowship, purity, courtesy and mercy. To knights

it represented the five knightly virtues of generosity, courtesy, chastity, chivalry and piety,  
(Dina, 2012)

## CHAPTER THREE

### EMERGING MEANINGS OF OCCULT SYMBOLS

#### 3.1 Introduction

Research questions two was used to check whether there are emerging meanings of occult symbols in visual contemporary American popular music and whether there is a shift in meanings of these occult symbols. The hypotheses for these questions are: There are emerging meanings of occult symbols in visual contemporary American popular music. The following is an analysis of emerging meanings of occult symbols in American popular music.

#### 3.2 Emerging Meanings of Occult Symbols

##### Skull and cross bones

The skull and cross bone is generally used as a warning of danger, usually in regard to poisonous substances, such as deadly chemicals, (Holscher, 2013). If one wears a skull and cross bone tattoo, it means that the wearer is or is related to piracy (or he/she thinks of him/herself as a pirate), (Holscher, 2013). A skull and crossbones is usually a sign of something dangerous and warns a person not to enter ...or to fear death. They were long popular in the old school of tattooing on bikers to show one's outlaw side and now they are synonymous with heavy metal, outlaws and the 'wrong side of the tracks, (Holscher, 2013) As the art of tattooing has progressed as have the type of people sporting them, a skull and crossbones can be a new school tribute to the old school art...a way for someone to show there 'other' side. It is also a reminder of our own mortality. It is also a symbol of a rebellious spirit. As well as demonstrating love for horror. It may also be demonic, (Holscher, 2013).

## **Pentagram**

Martin in *Sphere of Hip-hop*, (2007) says;

Anything can be co-opted to represent something else, or its original meaning reclaimed. The rainbow is one example. We all know that the rainbow is a symbol of God's covenant with mankind, that he would never flood the world again. Yet, the gay community has taken it and made it to be their symbol. If popular culture recognizes the pentagram as a satanic symbol, then that's what most people will look at it as (regardless if you label it as something else).

From the above quotation it is clear the contemporary meaning of pentagram in converted form which stands for satanic worship has become more prevalent than the original meaning which was the Trinity with the two other points representing the two natures of Christ.

## **Monarch/MK Ultra-Sex Kitten Programming**

Beta is referred to as "sexual" programming (slaves). This programming eliminates all learned moral convictions and stimulates the primitive instinct, devoid of inhibitions. "Cat" alters may come out at this level. Known as Kitten programming, it is the most visible kind of programming as some female celebrities, models, actresses and singers have been subjected to this kind of programming. In popular culture, clothing with feline prints often denote Kitten programming. Beta is the second Greek letter, and it represents the sexual models and sexual alters that the Programmers are creating. The primitive part of the brain is involved in this type of programming. An early sexual abuse event will be used to anchor this programming. These sexual slaves will develop sexual abilities that are far beyond what the public is aware is even possible. They also receive the worst kind of abuse far beyond what most people's imagination can picture. Beta alters generally see themselves as cats. "

*(Extracted on 02<sup>nd</sup> September, 2014 from vigilantcitizen.com)*

## **Baphomet**

In Egyptian mythology, Toth Hermes was a mediating power between good and evil, making sure neither had a decisive victory over the other. Baphomet represents the accomplishment on this cosmic task on a very small scale, within oneself. Once perfect equilibrium is attained on a personal level, the occult initiate can point one hand towards the heavens and one hand towards the earth and pronounce this hermetic axiom which reverberated through millenniums: "As Above, So Below". (*source:vigilantcitizen.com*). Some Christians however, claim that Baphomet is satan or a demon, a member of the hierarchy of Hell. Baphomet appears in that guise as a character in James Blish's *The Day After Judgment*. Christian evangelist Jack Chick claims that Baphomet is a demon worshipped by Freemasons. The symbol of the goat in the downward-pointed pentagram was adopted as the official symbol—called the Sigil of Baphomet—of the Church of Satan, and continues to be used amongst Satanists. (*source:vigilantcitizen.com*)

## **Hook 'em Horns & Horned hand**

"Hook 'em, horns" is the slogan of the University of Texas and the hand sign that illustrates this motto is the same as the one used by heavy metal fans. It is intended to symbolize the head and horns of the university mascot, the longhorn, and has been used since the 1950s. Fans use it as a greeting or just to emphasize their Texan identity, a demonstration most famously seen in recent years by George W Bush. His wife Laura and daughters were also fans. With the thumb sticking out, it has a different meaning entirely. "It is the American sign for 'I love you'," says Sarah Murray of the British Deaf Association. "It would probably be recognized by people here [in the UK] but you wouldn't see it often used." American politicians like Barack Obama, Bill Clinton and Dick Cheney have been photographed using it in the same way, although some believe that Jimmy Carter was its first exponent when



running for president in the 1970s. When the Obamas use it with their thumb sticking out, it is different from the specifically Texan use by George Bush, says Trevor McCrisken, a professor in US politics at the University of Warwick. In southern Italy, it can also be directed at a man whose wife is thought to be unfaithful, so it should be exercised with great care. *(Extracted from news.bbc.co.uk on 3rd September, 2014)*

### **Trinity**

The symbol has been used by Christians as a sign of the Blessed Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), especially since the Celtic Revival of the 19th century, (Scott, 2004) When modern designers began to display the triquetra as a stand-alone design, it recalled the three-leafed shamrock which was similarly offered as a Trinity symbol by Saint Patrick. Some have also suggested that the triquetra has a similarity to the Christian symbol, (Scott, 2004) The triquetra has been used extensively on Christian sculpture, vestments, book arts and stained glass. It has been used on the title page and binding of some editions of the New King James Version. A very common representation of the symbol is with a circle that goes through the three interconnected loops of the Triquetra. The circle emphasizes the unity of the whole combination of the three elements. It is also said to symbolize God's love around the Holy Trinity, (Scott, 2004). In contemporary Ireland, it is traditional for a man to give a loved one a trinket such as a necklace or ring signifying his affection towards her, (Scott, 2004). The triquetra, also known as a "trinity knot," is believed to represent the three promises of a relationship such as to love, honour, and protect, and can be found as a design element on and other wedding or engagement rings, (Scott, 2004).

### **Sun Symbolism**

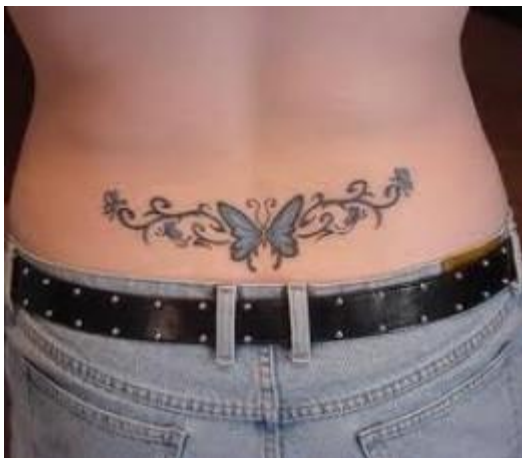
Ancient civilizations used the symbol of the sun to represent vitality, fertility, and everything associated with life, (Neubecker, 1976). The sun makes life possible for us all and all living

things. It also makes life grow. The sun gives off heat, light, energy, and life. To several different cultures, the sun symbolized all these attributes. Native Americans considered the sun to be the guardian of the day. They believed the sun had the power to heal, (Neubecker, 1976). Some cultures believed that the sun was sacred and it was portrayed as a sacred symbol. These civilizations even worshipped the sun and viewed it as a god. Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians are cultures that believed in this method. To the Inca Indians, the sun was considered the "divine ancestor of the nation". The Zia Indians held the sun as a sacred symbol. They would paint the sun on their ceremonial vases, (Neubecker, 1976). Two of the most common meanings of the sun tattoo is truth and light. Many people believe that the reference to this meaning is that the sun gives light to the world and shines through dark times, (Neubecker, 1976). Anyone that has went through hard times or a hard past may consider the sun tattoo to represent that. It is a sign of a troubled past that has changed and saw the light. It could reference the direction you are choosing in life. It can also remind them that they made it through, they shinned through and see a bright day ahead, (Neubecker, 1976).

### **The Butterfly Symbolism**

The butterfly stands for transformation among many cultures. The metamorphosis of the butterfly stands for the journey from childhood to adulthood, the transformation to an adult. It symbols the journey we take to grow up and mature. It is also a symbol of beauty and diversity among many cultures as well. The butterfly symbols the overall change a person endures during this stage of their life. In Western culture, including Japan, one butterfly stands for womanhood and two butterflies stand for marital bliss amongst partners. It is also shared by other cultures. Even cultures of the past used symbolic meaning from the butterfly. The Aztecs used the butterfly in their spiritual beliefs. They believed that butterflies stood for the souls of the dead. It was also used symbolically within the culture when women died

giving birth to their children. It was also used in Mexico and South America for similar reasons. In Greek myth, Psyche (which literally translates to mean "soul") is represented in the form of a butterfly. Befittingly, Psyche is forever linked with love as she and Eros (the Greek god of love, also known in Roman myth as Cupid) shared an endlessly passionate bond together - both hopelessly in love with the other. Christianity considers the butterfly as a symbol for the soul. To wit, the butterfly is depicted on ancient Christian tombs, as Christ has been illustrated holding a butterfly in Christian art. It's connection with the soul is rather fitting. We are all on a long journey of the soul. On this journey we encounter endless turns, shifts, and conditions that cause us to morph into ever-finer beings. At our soul-journey's end we are inevitably changed - not at all the same as when we started on the path. In the modern society, butterflies are used to make tattoo marks. The meaning of butterfly tattoos deals with transformation because of the butterfly's impressive evolution through life. (Source: *what-is-your-sign.com*)



(source: *what-is-your-sign.com*).

### **Bat Symbolism**

Bat is the night beast of prey, so they are almost always associated with evil, danger and death. People believed that the image of bats can be found witches, werewolves and vampires who were the direct offspring of darkness. There is a special kind of vampire bats that hunt at

night and feed on the blood of warm-blooded animals, and sometimes attack people. Therefore, people often feared and hated them, even the appearance of the animal near catching up fear and dread. In Europe, during the middle ages, before the spread of Christianity, bats were considered carriers of the unique ability to perceive the hidden forces of nature, and contact with otherworldly worlds, so they were like pets with fortune tellers and witches and were often used in their magical rituals. And soon present in the incoming Christianity, as in Judaism, the bats were directly associated with the devil and used as a symbol of Satanism and idolatry. These animals, by the way, were mercilessly destroyed, because of fear and superstition. The corpse of a bat, nailed or hanged near the home, traditionally considered a protector against evil forces and spirits. In the mythology and beliefs of the peoples of America and Brazil bat was a terrible god of hell, the enemy of peace and light, some felt that she can swallow even the sun. In ancient Rome and Greece bat valued and respected for its incredibly sharp vision and spatial perception, which allows it to fly very fast in the dark without bumping into obstacles. She came to symbolize vigilance and discernment. And thanks to the work of Homer became even more famous as a symbol of the underworld: According to Homer, the souls of the dead had wings of bats. In China, bats are seen very positive, the animal became a symbol of good luck, fertility and longevity, as well as a symbol denoting a dignified death. (*Source: what-is-your-sign.com*)

## **Conclusion**

The analysis of conventional meanings and the current emerging meanings indicate that meanings of occult symbols in contemporary American has shifted from its original conventional meanings to the various current emerging meanings.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE SHIFT IN MEANINGS OF OCCULT SYMBOLS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter answers research question number four which is; What is the shift in meanings of occult symbols in visual contemporary American popular music? This was done by comparing the conventional meaning of each symbol with the emerging contemporary meaning to establish the shift in meaning.

#### 4.2 Shift in Meaning of Occult Symbols

##### **Baphomet**

Scholars such as Peter Partner and Malcolm Barber agree that the name of Baphomet was an Old French corruption of the name Muhammad, with the interpretation being that some of the Templars, through their long military occupation of the Outremer, had begun incorporating Islamic ideas into their belief system, and that this was seen and documented by the Inquisitors as heresy. Peter Partner's 1987 *The Knights Templar and their Myth* says, In Egyptian mythology, Toth Hermes was a mediating power between good and evil, making sure neither had a decisive victory over the other. Baphomet represents the accomplishment on this cosmic task on a very small scale, within oneself. Once perfect equilibrium is attained on a personal level, the occult initiate can point one hand towards the heavens and one hand towards the earth and pronounce this hermetic axiom which reverberated through millenniums: "As Above, So Below". (*source:vigilantcitizen.com*). Some Christians however, claim that Baphomet is satan or a demon, a member of the hierarchy of Hell. Baphomet appears in that guise as a character in James Blish's *The Day After Judgment*.

Christian evangelist Jack Chick claims that Baphomet is a demon worshipped by Freemasons. The symbol of the goat in the downward-pointed pentagram was adopted as the official symbol—called the Sigil of Baphomet—of the Church of Satan, and continues to be used amongst Satanists. (*source:vigilantcitizen.com*)

## **Bat**

The Native American animal symbolism observed the bat to be a highly social creature. Indeed, the bat has strong family ties. They are very nurturing, exhibiting verbal communication, touching, and sensitivity to members of their group. According to them, a bat represented; Illusion, rebirth, dreams, intuition, initiation, journeying, inner depth and communication. (*source:vigilantcitizen.com*)

## **Elephant Symbol**

In Asia, Elephants have been used to represent wisdom and royal power. In Europe the Elephant was used as a symbol of military might. In America the Elephant has been used to represent the Republican vote, (Guading, 2009). Many African cultures revere the African Elephant as a symbol of strength and power. It is also praised for its size, longevity, stamina, mental faculties, cooperative spirit, and loyalty. South Africa, for instance, uses elephant tusks in their coat of arms to represent wisdom, strength, moderation and eternity, (Guading, 2009).

## **Monarch/MK Ultra-Sex Kitten Programming**

Throughout the course of history, several accounts have been recorded describing rituals and practices resembling mind control. One of the earliest writings giving reference to the use of occultism to manipulate the mind can be found in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. It is a

compilation of rituals, heavily studied by today's secret societies, which describes methods of torture and intimidation (to create trauma), the use of potions (drugs) and the casting of spells (hypnotism), ultimately resulting in the total enslavement of the initiate. ” (Extracted on 02<sup>nd</sup> September, 2014 from *vigilantcitizen.com*). Other events ascribed to black magic, sorcery and demon possession (where the victim is animated by an outside force) are also ancestors of Monarch programming. ” (Extracted on 02<sup>nd</sup> September, 2014 from *vigilantcitizen.com*). It is, however, during the 20th century that mind control became a science in the modern sense of the term, where thousands of subjects have been systematically observed, documented and experimented on. One of the first methodical studies on trauma-based mind control were conducted by Josef Mengele, a physician working in Nazi concentration camps. He initially gained notoriety for being one of the SS physicians who supervised the selection of arriving prisoners, determining who was to be killed and who was to become a forced labourer. However, he is mostly known for performing grisly human experiments on camp inmates, including children, for which Mengele was called the “Angel of Death”.(Extracted on 02<sup>nd</sup> September, 2014 from *vigilantcitizen.com*)

## **Phallus**

The symbolic version of the phallus, a phallic symbol is meant to represent male generative powers. According to Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis, while males possess a penis, no one can possess the symbolic phallus. (Lyons, 2004). Jacques Lacan's *Ecrits: A Selection* includes an essay titled *The Significance of the Phallus* which articulates the difference between "being" and "having" the phallus. Men are positioned as men insofar as they are seen to have the phallus. Women, not having the phallus, are seen to "be" the phallus. The symbolic phallus is the concept of being the ultimate man, and having this is compared to having the divine gift of a god. (Lyons, 2004).

## **Symbols of Lord Shiva**

Lord Shiva, one of the most complex gods of India, embodies seemingly contradictory qualities – He is the destroyer and the restorer; the great ascetic as well as the symbol of sensuality; the benevolent herdsman of souls and also the wrathful avenger. Images of Lord Shiva have various symbols representing the powers and qualities of the deity, (Axel, 2004)

## **Skull and Crossbones**

The ‘Jolly Roger’ is the name given to any of various flags flown to identify a ship's crew as pirates. The flag most usually identified as the Jolly Roger is the skull and crossbones, being a flag consisting of a skull above two long bones set in an x-mark arrangement on a black field, (Holscher, 2013). This design was used by four pirates, captains Edward England, John Taylor, Sam Bellamy and John Martel. Despite its prominence in popular culture, plain black flags were often employed by most pirates in the 17th-18th century, (Holscher, 2013). Historically, the flag was flown to frighten pirates' victims into surrendering without a fight, since it conveyed the message that the attackers were outlaws who would not consider themselves bound by the usual rules of engagement -- and might, therefore, slaughter those they defeated. (Holscher, 2013). Since the decline of piracy, various military units have used the Jolly Roger, usually in skull-and-crossbones design, as a unit identification insignia or a victory flag to ascribe to themselves the proverbial ferocity and toughness of pirates, (Holscher, 2013).

The skull and cross bone is currently used as a warning of danger, usually in regard to poisonous substances, such as deadly chemicals, (Holscher, 2013). If one wears a skull and cross bone tattoo, it means that the wearer is or is related to piracy (or he/she thinks of him/herself as a pirate), (Holscher, 2013). A skull and crossbones is usually a sign of



something dangerous and warns a person not to enter ...or to fear death. They were long popular in the old school of tattooing on bikers to show one's outlaw side and now they are synonymous with heavy metal, outlaws and the 'wrong side of the tracks, (Holscher, 2013) As the art of tattooing has progressed as have the type of people sporting them, a skull and crossbones can be a new school tribute to the old school art...a way for someone to show there 'other' side.it is also a reminder of our own mortality.It is also a symbol of a rebellious spirit. As well as demonstrating love for horror. It may also be demonic, (Holscher, 2013).

## **Pentagram**

The pentagram is one of the most persistent symbols in human history. It is one of oldest symbols dating back to the time of Uruk of 3500 BC in Ur of the Chaldees in Ancient Mesopotamia. The pentagram is found in many ancient cultures including India, China, Greece, Egypt, Babylon and the Mayans of Central America. Each culture has its own symbolism attached to the five points of the pentagram, (Dina, 2012).As the primary symbol used by Wiccans and other Neo-Pagans, the pentagram also represents aspects of their faith. To some, the pentagram represents the spiritual aspects of life and seeking secret knowledge. To others the five points symbolize the four directions of north, south, east and west with the fifth point representing sanctity of spirit, (Dina, 2012). When within a circle, the star symbolizes wholeness, unity and divine knowledge. In antiquity Christians viewed the pentagram as a lesser-used symbol of their faith. The five points of the pentagram represent the five wounds of Christ, (Dina, 2012) Early Christians also attributed the pentagram as a symbol of the Trinity with the two other points representing the two natures of Christ. It also symbolizes truth, the work of the Creator, the five joys of the Virgin Mary, the Alpha and the Omega and the five virtues of generosity, fellowship, purity, courtesy and mercy. To knights

it represented the five knightly virtues of generosity, courtesy, chastity, chivalry and piety, (Dina, 2012)

### **Monarch/MK Ultra-Sex Kitten Programming**

Beta is referred to as “sexual” programming (slaves). This programming eliminates all learned moral convictions and stimulates the primitive instinct, devoid of inhibitions. “Cat” alters may come out at this level. Known as Kitten programming, it is the most visible kind of programming as some female celebrities, models, actresses and singers have been subjected to this kind of programming. In popular culture, clothing with feline prints often denote Kitten programming. Beta is the second Greek letter, and it represents the sexual models and sexual alters that the Programmers are creating. The primitive part of the brain is involved in this type of programming. An early sexual abuse event will be used to anchor this programming. These sexual slaves will develop sexual abilities that are far beyond what the public is aware is even possible. They also receive the worst kind of abuse far beyond what most people’s imagination can picture. Beta alters generally see themselves as cats. ”  
*(Extracted on 02<sup>nd</sup> September, 2014 from vigilantcitizen.com)*

### **Hook 'em Horns & Horned hand**

"Hook 'em, horns" is the slogan of the University of Texas and the hand sign that illustrates this motto is the same as the one used by heavy metal fans. It is intended to symbolize the head and horns of the university mascot, the longhorn, and has been used since the 1950s. Fans use it as a greeting or just to emphasize their Texan identity, a demonstration most famously seen in recent years by George W Bush. His wife Laura and daughters were also fans. With the thumb sticking out, it has a different meaning entirely. "It is the American sign for 'I love you'," says Sarah Murray of the British Deaf Association. "It would probably be

recognized by people here [in the UK] but you wouldn't see it often used." American politicians like Barack Obama, Bill Clinton and Dick Cheney have been photographed using it in the same way, although some believe that Jimmy Carter was its first exponent when running for president in the 1970s. When the Obamas use it with their thumb sticking out, it is different from the specifically Texan use by George Bush, says Trevor McCrisken, a professor in US politics at the University of Warwick. In southern Italy, it can also be directed at a man whose wife is thought to be unfaithful, so it should be exercised with great care. *(Extracted from news.bbc.co.uk on 3rd September, 2014)*

### **Trinity**

The symbol has been used by Christians as a sign of the Blessed Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), especially since the Celtic Revival of the 19th century, (Scott, 2004). When modern designers began to display the triquetra as a stand-alone design, it recalled the three-leafed shamrock which was similarly offered as a Trinity symbol by Saint Patrick. Some have also suggested that the triquetra has a similarity to the Christian symbol, (Scott, 2004). The triquetra has been used extensively on Christian sculpture, vestments, book arts and stained glass. It has been used on the title page and binding of some editions of the New King James Version. A very common representation of the symbol is with a circle that goes through the three interconnected loops of the Triquetra. The circle emphasizes the unity of the whole combination of the three elements. It is also said to symbolize God's love around the Holy Trinity, (Scott, 2004). In contemporary Ireland, it is traditional for a man to give a loved one a trinket such as a necklace or ring signifying his affection towards her, (Scott, 2004). The triquetra, also known as a "trinity knot," is believed to represent the three promises of a relationship such as to love, honour, and protect, and can be found as a design element on and other wedding or engagement rings, (Scott, 2004).

## **Sun Symbolism**

Ancient civilizations used the symbol of the sun to represent vitality, fertility, and everything associated with life, (Neubecker, 1976). The sun makes life possible for us all and all living things. It also makes life grow. The sun gives off heat, light, energy, and life. To several different cultures, the sun symbolized all these attributes. Native Americans considered the sun to be the guardian of the day. They believed the sun had the power to heal, (Neubecker, 1976). Some cultures believed that the sun was sacred and it was portrayed as a sacred symbol. These civilizations even worshipped the sun and viewed it as a god. Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians are cultures that believed in this method. To the Inca Indians, the sun was considered the "divine ancestor of the nation". The Zia Indians held the sun as a sacred symbol. They would paint the sun on their ceremonial vases, (Neubecker, 1976). Two of the most common meanings of the sun tattoo is truth and light. Many people believe that the reference to this meaning is that the sun gives light to the world and shines through dark times, (Neubecker, 1976) .Anyone that has went through hard times or a hard past may consider the sun tattoo to represent that. It is a sign of a troubled past that has changed and saw the light. It could reference the direction you are choosing in life. It can also remind them that they made it through, they shinned through and see a bright day ahead, (Neubecker, 1976)

## **The Butterfly Symbolism**

The butterfly stands for transformation among many cultures. The metamorphosis of the butterfly stands for the journey from childhood to adulthood, the transformation to an adult. It symbols the journey we take to grow up and mature. It is also a symbol of beauty and diversity among many cultures as well. The butterfly symbols the overall change a person endures during this stage of their life. In Western culture, including Japan, one butterfly

stands for womanhood and two butterflies stand for marital bliss amongst partners. It is also shared by other cultures. Even cultures of the past used symbolic meaning from the butterfly. The Aztecs used the butterfly in their spiritual beliefs. They believed that butterflies stood for the souls of the dead. It was also used symbolically within the culture when women died giving birth to their children. It was also used in Mexico and South America for similar reasons. In Greek myth, Psyche (which literally translates to mean "soul") is represented in the form of a butterfly. Befittingly, Psyche is forever linked with love as she and Eros (the Greek god of love, also known in Roman myth as Cupid) shared an endlessly passionate bond together - both hopelessly in love with the other. Christianity considers the butterfly as a symbol for the soul. To wit, the butterfly is depicted on ancient Christian tombs, as Christ has been illustrated holding a butterfly in Christian art. It's connection with the soul is rather fitting. We are all on a long journey of the soul. On this journey we encounter endless turns, shifts, and conditions that cause us to morph into ever-finer beings. At our soul-journey's end we are inevitably changed - not at all the same as when we started on the path. In the modern society, butterflies are used to make tattoo marks. The meaning of butterfly tattoos deals with transformation because of the butterfly's impressive evolution through life. (Source: *what-is-your-sign.com*)

### **Bat Symbolism**

Bat is the night beast of prey, so they are almost always associated with evil, danger and death. People believed that the image of bats can be found witches, werewolves and vampires who were the direct offspring of darkness. There is a special kind of vampire bats that hunt at night and feed on the blood of warm-blooded animals, and sometimes attack people. Therefore, people often feared and hated them, even the appearance of the animal near catching up fear and dread. In Europe, during the middle ages, before the spread of

Christianity, bats were considered carriers of the unique ability to perceive the hidden forces of nature, and contact with otherworldly worlds, so they were like pets with fortune tellers and witches and were often used in their magical rituals. And soon present in the incoming Christianity, as in Judaism, the bats were directly associated with the devil and used as a symbol of Satanism and idolatry. These animals, by the way, were mercilessly destroyed, because of fear and superstition. The corpse of a bat, nailed or hanged near the home, traditionally considered a protector against evil forces and spirits. In the mythology and beliefs of the peoples of America and Brazil bat was a terrible god of hell, the enemy of peace and light, some felt that she can swallow even the sun. In ancient Rome and Greece bat valued and respected for its incredibly sharp vision and spatial perception, which allows it to fly very fast in the dark without bumping into obstacles. She came to symbolize vigilance and discernment. And thanks to the work of Homer became even more famous as a symbol of the underworld: According to Homer, the souls of the dead had wings of bats. In China, bats are seen very positive, the animal became a symbol of good luck, fertility and longevity, as well as a symbol denoting a dignified death. (Source: *what-is-your-sign.com*)

## **Conclusion**

The analysis of conventional meanings and the current emerging meanings indicate that meanings of occult symbols in contemporary American has shifted from its original conventional meanings to the various current emerging meanings.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter gives the summary, conclusions and recommendations based on research findings. It is divided into: summary, which includes summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

#### **5.2 Summary**

The concern of this study was to analyze the conventional and emerging meanings of occult symbols in visual contemporary American pop music and finally to analyze the shift in meanings that arise from interpretations of these occult symbols. This research was qualitative research design. Data was collected using observation (watching) American pop music produced between the years 2008 to 2014. From the target population only videos thought to contain occult symbols were selected using purposive sampling.

#### **5.3 Summary of Findings**

Seven visual American contemporary music videos were selected using purposive sampling and watched. The videos are as follows Bad Romance – Lady Gaga, Run the world (Girls) – Beyonce, Die young – Ke\$ha, Bad romance – Lady Gaga, Love me – Lil Wayne, Where have you been – Rihanna, Out of my mind - B.O.B. and Nicki Minaj. Occult symbols were found to have been used in these music videos. Some of the occult symbols used include; Baphomet, Bat, Elephant symbol, Kitten programming symbols, Mermaid, Pentacle, Pentagram, Phallus, Shiva god, Skull and crossbones, Sun symbolism, Butterfly symbol and Trinity. The findings from the analysis of conventional and emerging meanings of occult symbols used in contemporary visual American pop music have shifted.

#### **5.4 Conclusions**

Occult symbols are evident in contemporary visual American pop music. These occult symbols were found to have acquired new meanings of occult symbols in contemporary visual American pop music emerged, other than conventional meanings. This therefore means there is a shift in meanings of occult symbols in visual contemporary American popular music

#### **5.5 Recommendations**

Contemporary visual American pop music need to be analyzed as literary texts as they contain literary aspects such as occult symbols. Their mutual inter textuality is analyzed. Meanings that arise from interpretation of occult symbols changes with time and context and interpretation need to incorporate these factors when studying them.

#### **5.6 Suggestions for Further Research**

This research was carried out specifically on occult symbols. It is suggested that research be carried out in other types of symbols. A study to establish the effect of the use of occult symbols usage in pop music on the readership and communication is also suggested.



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