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Audiovision and Gesamtkunstwerk: The Aesthetics of First and Second Generation Industrial Music Video

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Introduction: Industrial Music, Video, and Audiovision

Michel Chion has famously and provocatively referred to film as a sound art (Chion 2009), developing his earlier reading of cinema in the synaesthetic audiovisual terms of Audio-Vision (Chion 1994). Similarly, it is possible to argue that industrial music from its beginnings with groups like Throbbing Gristle, Cabaret Voltaire, SPK and others was an audiovisual art-form, as much as a musical one, and never simply a generic sonic style. The visual aspects of industrial music were not necessarily limited to film and video and included such things as the development of logos and other design features on record sleeves and as concert backdrops, as well as specific uses of photography and other visual arts. These visual elements were often deployed via strategies of anonymity and ambiguity, generating meanings out of a deliberate and playful constitutive vagueness. However, whenever it was technically feasible to do so, industrial groups made use of both film and video technologies, and in terms of the latter were pioneers in the combination of music and video, before and outside of its commercial codification.

Throbbing Gristle (TG), for example, included in their first official album *Second Annual Report* (1977)*,* as the whole of its second side, the soundtrack to the barely seen TG precursors Coum Transmissions' film *After Cease to Exist* (1978). The title and content of this track were inspired by Charles Manson, and the film was described in Simon Ford's book *Wreckers of Civilisation* by Genesis P-Orridge in the following terms 'Thee voices are of a pathologist discussing a murdered teenager's

body found at a roadside. Thee murder victim had been killed be a homosexual ring by Bishop Gleaves that specialised in hostels for young runaways [sic] boys' (P-Orridge in Ford 1999: 12.27).[1] The first and last five minutes of the fifteen minute film were left deliberately blank to allow the audience to concentrate on the soundtrack and the visual section consisted of fetishistic scenes of Chris Carter tied to a table and apparently castrated by Cosey Fanni Tutti, a similar scene of Sue Catwoman being tied up in an iron bed, as well as some live footage of TG (Ford 2009: 7.8). Later they would compose music to accompany Derek Jarman's experimental film *In the Shadow of the Sun* (1981)*,* and also incorporated projected film into their live performances. After all two of their members had backgrounds in music visualisation, Peter Christopherson as a member of Hipgnosis designing record covers for progressive rock groups and ultimately becoming a prolific music video director in his own right, while Chris Carter, in addition to being a TV sound designer, also produced light shows for big rock groups. Even the anti-spectacle of early TG releases such as the plain white album cover of *Second Annual Report* needs to be understood as a deliberately designed anti-spectacle that would be complemented subsequently by a range of visual expressiveness from logos and paramilitary fashion, to film and video. As the group put it themselves at the time: 'Make your own TV, do your own video, your own image. It's a quick new form of communication that's all' (Dwyer and Throbbing Gristle in Vale and Juno eds. 1982: 65). According to Nick Cope, 'A punk /D.I.Y sensibility for multimedia production was fostered by the axis of groups coalescing around Throbbing Gristle's Industrial Records label which included Clock DVA and Cabaret Voltaire from Sheffield' (Cope 2012: 27), and this sensibility further fed into the development of 'Scratch video' in the early 1980s (2012: 30-37).

Cabaret Voltaire took this audiovisual tendency even further than other industrial groups since they began as a cut up art rather than music group, equally montaging video and sound material from the mass media, popular culture and other sources. By the late 1970s they had established their own video production company, Doublevision, that not only released their own music videos and live performance footage but also did the same for other groups like Clock DVA. As presented in the *Industrial Culture Handbook* (1983) 'their newest tool is video, their newest venture a video company, *Doublevision* (thanks to a high speed duplicator)' (Vale and Juno eds. 1983: 45). In the same publication group member Stephen Mallinder stated 'Now our visuals have video as an outlet. And the use of video means we can document a lot easier. I don't think we're neglecting the music side but you've got to be aware of the age we're in. The visual side is a much more potent form of feedback' (Vale and Juno eds. 1983: 45). Essentially for Cabaret Voltaire at this point in their history, video enabled the articulation of a synaesthetic mode of expression, capable of expressing a sense of rhythm, not restricted to being a merely sonic phenomenon. This is especially clear in their early video work for tracks like 'This is Entertainment' in which primitive video effects, screen text and cut up photographic images operate as a synaesthetic remediation of the medium of video itself.

Insert fig. 1 about here: Cabaret Voltaire 'This is Entertainment' Video

By the time of later tracks like 'Sensoria' this video editing has become a lot more sophisticated without losing this synaesthetic rhythmic dimension, yet still remaining very far removed from the now established MTV aesthetic. As with several industrial groups the direction they would develop in was increasingly that of creating both film

soundtracks and producing audiovisual artefacts, or in other words a form of audiovisuology rather than simply visualizing music.

Insert fig. 2 about here: Cabaret Voltaire 'Sensoria' Video

Even in this early period two things can be noted about the industrial music use of video. Firstly it is not seen as a mere supplement to sound and music but an integrated mode of communication, even if to begin with it was technologically primitive, and often used for quite conventional purposes such as recording live performances and making 'anti-promos' to accompany tracks that were highly unlikely to be seen on MTV. Secondly it was part of an experimentation with alternative modes of cultural media production, with the idea of circumventing the music industry in favour of network communication with enthusiasts directly via mail order and other channels. Far from the music industry funded video production as advertisement for a musical commodity, based on a star persona, industrial music video was cheap, experimental and at times, as in SPK's use of autopsy footage to accompany the track 'Despair' viscerally confronting (On SPK see Vale and Juno eds. 1983: 103-104).

This is not to say that all industrial groups were drawn to or able to incorporate video in their work, whether for aesthetic or economic reasons. However, in the cases that will be examined in the rest of this article, film and video played an essential role, and were incorporated into the very functioning of the groups themselves in different ways as multimedia spectacles. Test Dept in the UK and Laibach in Slovenia both began in the early 1980s and both took industrial music in a more overtly political and collective direction than the individual expressionism of contemporaneous groups like Einstürzende Neubauten in Germany or Whitehouse in the UK. More than this both these groups adopted a form of 'cold war poetics'

expressed as much through visual elements and performance as by the music itself. Both also had explicitly visual 'departments' including film and video production activities as an integral part of their aesthetics. It is perhaps unsurprising that they felt a mutual affinity, even if on the surface the political aesthetics that they adopted appeared to be radically different.

Program for Progress: The Audiovisual Political Mise-en-scène of Test Dept's Total State Machine

Test Dept, unlike some of their industrial predecessors with their arts and media backgrounds emerged from far more humble and proletarian origins in depressed industrial areas of south London. This perhaps accounts for their more literal interpretation of the industrial in the scavenging and reclamation of discarded industrial materials as the basis for their rhythmic percussive music. This did not, however, preclude an interest in modernist aesthetic ideas, even if they took more inspiration form Soviet avant-garde aesthetics than from mass murderers and occultists. In fact Brett Turnbull, responsible for most of the film and video for the group, saw a direct resonance with Soviet Proletkult aesthetic practices such as the use of agit-prop trains when Test Dept took to the road during the miners' strike:

> I loved the idea of the early agit-trains going out just after the revolution. It could be a mobile film studio / laboratory / theatre. They would shoot film wherever the hell they ended up in the new Soviet Union, and edit and show it to people wherever they arrived. The purpose was to agitate; it was about propaganda but also education. (Turnbull 2015: 24)

Test Dept's extraordinary video work, is especially evident on the video collection *Program for Progress* (1982-84)*,* the video elements largely though not exclusively

directed by Brett Turnbull. This section will explore some of these works in relation to a number of other works and artefacts from which it seems to have drawn inspiration. These connections will be with industrial film and culture, Soviet agit prop, and Polish revisionist cinema. I will proceed by a principal of audiovisual montage, hopefully resonating with Test Dept's own procedures or those of their avant-garde constructivist forerunners.

The name 'Test Dept' is a direct reference to industry, even as they put it 'a very direct, even naïve one' (Test Dept 2015: 24); in any type of industrial production it is necessary to test the product, to know how it will behave under extreme and adverse conditions. This was especially in relation to the automotive industries as well as the military where the development of vehicles designed to go at ever greater speeds needed to be thoroughly tested to gauge at what points they would break down. This crash testing was initially with human subjects but soon led to the fabrication of crash test dummies, whose appearance took on a significant role in contemporary industrial culture and its poetic imaginary.

In as much as industrial culture had invaded every aspect of 20th Century life we are all crash test dummies, with the often gruelling and toxic processes of industry being tested on our bodies and brains. However, in the case of Test Dept there is an ambiguity at work, since the group were also the experimenters and testers of new insurrectionary post-industrial possibilities for life and society, after the decay of industrial culture by making resourceful use of its abandoned materials. Finally there was another aspect of testing involved which is that of the television test pattern, used by engineers to test that a TV transmission is functioning and also appearing at moments of technical breakdown and censorship, via a usually comforting image. Test Dept would also begin some of their own videos with their

own test pattern, indicating that they were presenting an alternative to television, or even an alternative form of television via their site specific industrial audiovisual performances, in which television sets were sometimes used as significant props.

For Test Dept, the engagement with this side of industrial culture was less nihilistic than critical, ultimately opening up the radical collectivism of later projects by means of an unrelenting critique of consumerism, as one aspect of the 'unacceptable face of freedom' to cite one of their album titles. In the video for Test Dept's 'Compulsion', the obsession with car culture, spoken of so enthusiastically by J. G. Ballard in works like *Crash* (1973), ends up on the scrap-heap of the post-industrial landscape, while the consumerist desire associated with both the automotive industry and media culture is revealed is nothing other than machine-like behaviourist compulsion. All of this is given a humorous treatment as coins are extracted from a video game parlour to pay for an unusual spray painting operation applied to human subjects rather than cars.

Nevertheless, the idea of industrial testing as practiced by Test Dept is rather different to that of its earlier industrial predecessors. It has to be remembered that for first generation industrial groups, the industrial aesthetic was just a name for a certain lo fi synthetic music, as well as a satirical broadside at the mass produced nature of contemporary music. If the results somehow contained traces of the post-industrial environment of 1970s London, this was almost aleatory, and certainly not a reflection of how the music itself was produced. Test Dept was industrial in a more literal, and direct way, firstly being based on the resourceful appropriation of discarded industrial materials and re-using these as compositional elements, a practice they shared with their German contemporaries Einstürzende Neubauten, albeit in a totally different manner and context (see Emmerling and Weh eds. 2015:

34-46). While Neubauten was a kind of urban gang of misfits, each expressing their individuality and rejection of industrial mass conformist culture ironically via a range of expressive industrial means, Test Dept adopted a collectivist approach, frequently evoking the state socialism of the Eastern bloc and in this way shared more with Laibach than with Neubauten in a mode of operation utilising numbers and anonymity. Nevertheless, while Laibach's anonymous strategies aimed to dissolve individuals into a faceless and hierarchical pseudo institution, Test Dept were producing a nameless proletarian machinery out of the ruins of industrial culture in a quite literal way—even if both used the language of totalitarianism, propaganda and the state, this was not at all the same state, and nor was It imagined from the same perspective. One only has to compare audiovisual documents to see how clear these differences between these second generation industrial outfits were. In Einstürzende Neubauten's video for Armenia, for example, a ruined factory and industrial waste are only the theatrical props for the expression of an Artaudian scream, supported by some fairly, even deliberately, conventional instrumentation and compositional elements. It is Expressionism or even Romanticism deploying the machine against industrialised cold war society.

Completely different to this is the first video off the *Program for Progress* collection 'Cold Witness' in which abandoned industrial space is inhabited and subverted from within, via the ritualistic relocation of objects and the appropriation of and burying of that supreme instrument of industrial domination, the clock. In this video there is an entire industrial poetics in which image and sound work together to embody the ideas of both survival in harsh industrial conditions and the resourceful appropriation of these elements, echoed in the sound by the 'found percussion' and use of early sampling. In terms of what we see there is a kind of industrial creature

worthy of Lynch's early work, who fashions a kind of divining rod or compass leading to the discovery of the clock face that seems to be at the heart of a diabolical industrial mechanism.

This clip is noteworthy for another reason as well. The entire video for *Program for Progress* (1982-1984) was produced as an audiovisual document, prior to the music being released on the *Beating the Retreat* (1984) album. While visual material had already been given prominence by industrial groups as already indicated, Test Dept had a more complex audiovisual strategy in which multiple projections were intrinsic to their often site-specific performances, slide projections complementing the screenings of films, and TV propaganda blaring from TV sets appearing as a key aspect of their mise-en-scène. To fully grasp these audiovisual strategies though, it is necessary to look at another context, that of the cold war, the Eastern Bloc and what Alexei Monroe in an interview with Thomas Bey William Bailey has referred to as 'cold war poetics' (Monroe in Bailey, 2011, 429).

Discussions of the visual influences or perhaps rather repertoire of Test Dept often end up with Russian and Soviet referents from Malevich's Black Cross, to the cinema of Eisenstein or Vertov. In the words of one commentator on *Program for Progress*:

This was a nostalgic world of steam, engineering, the machine, functionality, David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977) meets *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), Tarkovsky colluding with Rodchenko. (Rimbaud in Test Dept 2014: 55).

This range of influences, of course derive from diverse and eclectic contexts that at the time were often in contradiction and contestation with one another; for example, the well-known antagonism between Eisenstein and Vertov, over both understanding of revolutionary cinema and over the uses and effects of montage, the conflict

between avant-garde montage aesthetics and the doctrine of socialist realism, not to mention the rejection of montage aesthetics by later Soviet filmmakers like Tarkovsky. Unlike the more studied appropriations of these aesthetics in post 1968 militant cinemas, this was more an available image resource that could be mined and appropriated just as Test Dept found and repurposed discarded industrial material for percussive instruments. While certain Test Dept films display montage tendencies they are just as affected by socialist realist tropes, nowhere more evident than in their adoption of the figure of the Stahkanovite shockworker, a device used in the Soviet Union and its satellites as a tool for the realisation of five year plans and to increase production quotas.

Insert fig. 3 about here: Test Dept 'Shockwork' video

The actual Stakhanov movement, emerging through the state capture and exploitation of the working practices of dedicated communist workers like Stakhanov himself in the 1930s was, of course, less a movement than a state appropriation, designed towards the ends of supporting both the ideological and production goals of the Soviet state, which is clearly apparent in Soviet propaganda films of the time. There is certainly something of this monumental, industrial heroic tone in the Test Dept video for 'Shockwork', a direct reference to the Stalinist era and its associated representational policies of Socialist Realism. Combining as it does footage of South London industrial sites with footage taken on a trip to Poland, the cold war poetics mentioned above are fully evident.

This raises the question of what function this socialist realist imagery played in the aesthetics and politics of Test Dept, and their awareness of the problematic ideological functions of these figures as actually deployed in the Soviet Bloc. In fact Test Dept were far more aware of the shortcomings of Soviet style socialism than

most groups, with Test Dept member Paul Jamrozy having visited Poland under martial law, and the group would also tour there in the mid 1980s, as well as maintain links with artists from several Eastern Bloc countries as well as from Yugoslavia. The use of this imagery is both a provocation against Western values of freedom and individuality, whose despotic sides were becoming increasingly apparent in Thatcherite Britain, and the desire to reclaim the positive dimensions of discipline, collectivism, and solidarity as instruments of both art and struggle. This was both as a provocation to the West and as a critique of the corruption of these values in the East. As such they generated their own version of an 'aggressive inconsistent mixture', as Žižek famously identified in Laibach (Žižek 2009: 96), only from a very different position and also with a markedly different strategy not only to Laibach but to most industrial groups dealing in transgressive or disturbing imagery. There is no ambivalence here but rather the expression of the conflicting facets of a proletarian industrial culture, as if the figure of the Stakhanovite shock worker could be liberated both from its capture in the Soviet state machine, but also from its rejection in the British context where a war was going on against industrial working class culture and communities. In this context Test Dept's 'Total State Machine' was both highly critical of both East and West existing models of states, as well as of middle class bohemian libertarian anarchy, and also generative of revolutionary forms of industrial subjectivity based on discipline, collectivity and solidarity, as would become abundantly clear in their participation in a range of struggles including the miners' strike

A key dimension of this strategy was clearly influenced by the Polish experience of the *Solidarność* (solidarity) union and the mass movement it gave rise to. However different the politics involved in this movement, which afterwards would

be revealed to be highly reactionary, nationalist and religious, Test Dept were able to detect in the actions of the striking Lenin shipyard workers a legacy going back to the heroic phase of the Russian revolution, to Proletcult, and even the figure of the Stakhanovite worker. Famously this figure was revisited in the Andrzej Wajda film *Man of Marble* (1976), which tellingly juxtaposed the construction of this heroic worker figure under Stalinism with media work in the present and its (supposedly) soft but nonetheless effective regimes of censorship, making it virtually impossible to address difficult subjects such as the recent political past. Whether or not Test Dept was aware of this film, highly influential on both a new era of realist cinema in Poland and arguably giving ideological support to the Solidarity Movement itself, it nevertheless constituted a key moment of revisionism in Eastern bloc history, that would soon be replaced by a new phase of the cold war, in Poland characterised by the period of martial law

These Polish events as well as the artistic response to them were arguably synechdoches for Eastern European experience as a whole in a process that goes back at least to the Second World War, where Poland entered the Western imaginary, for the brutality of its Nazi occupation and subsequently the holocaust, but also acts of resistance. Later on there was a kind of leftist British love affair with Polish cinema in the 1950s, for example on the part of the Free Cinema movement who, however incorrectly, saw a range of Polish filmmakers from black series documentary filmmakers to fiction filmmakers like Wajda, as a type of artistic left dissident opposition to the regime, an attitude that was revived during the pre-solidarity period of the late 1970s and the so called 'Cinema of Moral Concern'. Rock music had also re-imagined Poland from David Bowie's Warszawa to Joy Division's name and thematic obsessions. Test Dept both continued these traditions and

challenged them, at least partially since they had direct experiences of Poland. All of this is directly embodied in the track 'Gdansk', which in its airing on the youth TV programme Red Herring was the first moment of contact with the group for many people who would subsequently become their fans. It is hard to imagine a stranger spectacle appearing on British TV than this and is also remarkable for the way the group were able to transform their site specific performance work for a televisual studio setting. Again the idea of the group as providing a radical, alternative to TV culture and propaganda is emphasised through incorporation of TV sets spouting propaganda, while a Stakhanovite ritual is staged live, accompanied by modernist classical music (apparently inspired by Polish composer Gorecki's 'Symphony of Sorrowful Songs') in a performance that is still 'noisy' today in its absolute anomaly to television norms past and present, despite the quietness of the soundtrack. This chapter will now turn to examining another example of industrial cold war poetics, namely Laibach, operating at first from the other side of the curtain, or rather between East and West in state socialist Yugoslavia.

'You will see Darkness': Laibach TV, Video and Audiovisuals

Laibach from its opening action of a proposed art exhibition and concert *Red Districts* in Trbovlje (which was recently recreated at the 30 years of Laibach and NSK symposium) has also been an essentially audiovisual phenomenon. This is perhaps so obvious as to not need stating especially for anyone who has attended a recent Laibach performance and experienced the complex interweaving of sonic, video, lighting and textual elements, all of which are intrinsic and in no way incidental to the total performance. In fact in addition to the many other departments listed on the NSK Organigram, many of which deal with visual or audiovisual phenomena from

architecture to ballet, there is clear reference to a film and photography department –

associated in some instances with the name *Retrovisja* (Retrovision), which for a

time produced regular NSK news bulletins, and was also adopted by some of the

documentary makers working closely with Laibach.

This section will therefore track some of the audiovisual strategies in Laibach

ranging from the notorious 'Bravo' TV interview, through their participation in and/or

production of a number of documentaries and videos, to the use of video and lighting

in their contemporary live performances. The argument will be that they can best be

grasped as a form of audio-vision rather than in purely either musical or visual art

terms, as the mise-en-scène of a *gesamtkunstwerk* of rhythmic power, hyper-

identification and somatic intensity. In this way there is an appropriation of the

concept of audio-vision that Michel Chion developed in relation to cinema to

emphasize the fact that cinema is an essentially a synaesthetic audiovisual medium

rather than a merely visual one with sound in a secondary role, that sound is as

determining of cinematic perception as the usually privileged regime of visual

images. In the case of Laibach, to speak of audiovision is rather to emphasize that

the sonic and visual expressivity of Laibach whether in live performances, video,

documentaries of other manifestations, is always essentially audiovisual and is never

just a case of decorative imagery to accompany the music nor the sonic reflection of

a privileged visual art practice, but a synaesthetic audiovisual event operating on

multiple senses and via multiple media at once.

Aside from Laibach's early, and notorious, multimedia performances, the most

visible conjunction of Laibach and audiovisual media was undoubtedly the

'mousetrap' situation of their appearance on Slovenian RTV, conducted as a kind of

show trial by television by the host Jure Pengov, and in which almost every element

of televisual discourse was effectively subverted. Everything about this TV appearance had been carefully chosen from the location in the ŠKUC gallery in Ljubljana (or, in other words, on home territory) to the costumes worn by the group, the Laibach Kunst visual works in the background of the scene, to the use of posture, gesture and prepared statements. Every attempt on Pengov's part to individualize and humanize the group was a resounding failure, as instead of going along with this strategy at once that of state power and cliché-ridden rock journalism ('what do you do professionally, how old are you'), Laibach responded with a total absence of spontaneity, reading out prepared statements: 'We are the children of the spirit and brothers of might'. Describing themselves also as the first TV generation, they demonstrated their superior understanding of the medium as a form of collective mass communication and indoctrination by refusing at every turn to fall into the discursive traps Pengov was setting for them, responding to his 'trial by television' with enigmatic yet consistent statements at once performing and affirming collectivism, depersonalisation and fanatical devotion to art. From the first moments in which the group indulgently educated their host and audience about the historical provenance of the name Laibach, a name whose use on their part would subsequently be banned, to the final statements about the powers and potential of media manipulation via television, Laibach completely controlled the course of the interview, even including the post-produced final statement by Pengov, as the camera scours the illuminated from below faces of Laibach: 'maybe now someone will get moving and prevent, repress these dangers, these horrible ideas and statements, right here in the middle of Ljubljana'. This not only revealed the obscene side of the state and its use of media instruments but demonstrated the effectiveness of Laibach as a collective machine, plugged into media systems whether of television

or popular music and appropriating them as part of their own totalising work of art. Pengov's attempted trial by television only served to intensify these operations.

Since this early foray into state television, a quite substantial audiovisual Laibach archive has been established via several documentaries, tour films, music videos and other works that defy straightforward classification. It will not be possible to survey this entire archive but it is worth discussing and looking at some key examples. First, however, it is necessary to underline that just as the aesthetics of Laibach and NSK is based on multiple reappropriations of what Žižek has termed an 'aggressive inconsistent mixture' of symbols and ideologies, so too is the audiovisual archive, which consists of multiple repeated components and genres, which keep getting remixed across different works according to retro-avantgarde principles of creating the new out of the old and showing what is already old in the new. The first film to be discussed, for example, *Laibach: A Film from Slovenia* (originally entitled *Bravo,* Slovenia; UK, 1993), contains almost the entirety of the Pengov interview, several of the key Laibach music videos also almost in their entirety, as well as footage from the *Divided States of America* tour, Tito's funeral and other newsreel footage: this reappropriation or rather 'Recapitulation' to appropriate the title of one of Laibach's first albums available in the West, is typical of the audiovisual material produced by, and about Laibach, and also reflects the Neue Slovenische Kunst (NSK) practice of mutual reference between the various departments of NSK such as Irwin, Novi Kollektivism, the various theatre groupings and Laibach themselves (references to which also appear in the audiovisual archive). This dense network is perpetuated both by filmmakers with strong links to the group and relative outsiders, as a kind of totalising effect whereby the audiovisual discourse *on* Laibach becomes

inevitably *part of* the Laibach machine and likely to be subject to further reappropriations, condensations and recapitulations.

Daniel Landin and Peter Vezjak's film, which was scripted by the UK music journalist Chris Bohm, while more or less an official account of the band made both for Slovenian TV and for release in the West via Mute Records, is not merely, however, an assembly of these various pre-existing materials. What is fascinating about the film is the way it is addressed not to the audience but to Laibach themselves, according to a quasi-masochistic and theological economy of desire and abandonment: 'Oh Laibach, why have you forsaken us in our hour of need?' Beginning with this seemingly grandiose and over-inflated call for Laibach to reappear and take charge of the specific historical moment of post-communist transition circa 1990, the film proceeds to inscribe Laibach into Slovenian, Balkan and Cold War European history, echoing the aesthetics of Laibach themselves and gestures such as their 'Occupied Europe' tours in both the West and Warsaw Pact countries, or their appropriations of Western pop culture, reworked to bring out its totalitarian dimensions. The film in fact begins in a cosmic metaphysical realm, illustrated by the NSK theatrical manifestations of retro futurist space travel, but quickly descends into the fraught political constitution of cold war Europe as experienced form the uniquely inbetween space of Slovenia, and more specifically from the perspective of Laibach.

Another telling aspect of this and other Laibach documentaries is the strong association between Laibach and various manifestations of political theory, whether expressed by Laibach themselves (especially by Laibach member Ivan Novak) or more commonly the now well-known take of Žižek on Laibach, as directly expressing the obscene 'hidden obverse' of state ideology, which he argues is precisely why

Laibach are not, and cannot be fascists (see Žižek, 2009, 96). As it passes form archival materials presented via a poetic and enigmatic narration, to various live and video manifestations of Laibach Kunst, the film recreates the kind of aggressive inconsistent mixture that Žižek is discussing in the film, by refusing most of the standard tropes of the expository or music documentary; instead of band interviews there are militant prepared statements; instead of tour footage of the band there are highly stylised performances and confrontations with fans (especially form their US tour), and ultimately the film is posed as a series of questions to Laibach rather than any explanation of their aesthetics to an audience.

The later documentary *Predictions of Fire* (*Prerokne Ognja,* Michael Benson, 1995), repeats this focus on symbolic elements, especially fire, for example by including an archival industrial film about the conditions under which objects will burst into flames and using this as an emblem of the explosion of ethnic conflicts in in the Balkans that Laibach serve prediction and warning. Again the film makes references to the cosmos (as did the earlier *Bravo*) and it is probably the most aesthetically and politically complex of these two documentaries in its montage of different elements directly and indirectly connected to the history of Laibach. Žižek for example reappears but in a much more stylised setting and there are textual theoretical references not only to his work but to other philosophical perspectives like those of Deleuze and Guattari. There are also interesting sections of the film dealing with other NSK branches such as the visual arts group Irwin, especially in relation to an NSK exhibition deep within a coal mine, a type of location that Laibach themselves have recently returned to, and the Black Square/Red Square action that took place as part of the NSK State in Time embassy in Moscow project.

This account of Laibach documentaries would not be complete without mentioning some of the more recent works made by Laibach themselves, especially the one accompanying the release of *We Are Time* (2003) and included with the Mute records DVD collection of Laibach videos. Presented as a kind of state propaganda film with an amiable American accented female narrator, this film is divided into three parts: "Past: Perfect", dealing with the history of Yugoslavia up until the appearance of Laibach; "Past: Forward" dealing with the history of Laibach themselves, very much in the style of state propaganda established in the archival materials of the first part, and finally "Present:Tense", a deadpan track by track commentary on some of the songs of *WAT* by the group's singer Milan Fras. What is notable here is again the repetitions and reappropriation of some of these earlier materials already mentioned, but this time as part of a propagandistic narration of the group's triumphs in the form of a state propaganda film.

Laibach's music videos present different yet related strategies to the documentaries already mentioned, perhaps unsurprisingly given that the directors of the Bravo film, for example, also directed several of the key music videos from the 1986 'Država' (The State) to tracks from the *We are Time* album like 'Tanz mit Laibach' (2004)*.* Yet whereas the documentaries tended to be assembled montages of heterogeneous audiovisual materials of different provenances, each video develops a specific aesthetic concept standing as a complete work in its own right, in conjunction with the music. While clearly incorporating visual and performative ideas of their directors, they also bear the imprint of Laibach's own audiovisual strategies, which become fused together to the point of being indistinguishable from other Laibach productions and part of the total work of art of Laibach Audiovision.

The first and perhaps key Laibach video, directed by Daniel Landin, is entitled simply "Država" (The State). Notably the video features the dance performance of Michael Clark, who had already collaborated with post-punk figures like The Fall. The video provides via relatively simple means a kind of condensed mise-en-scène of Laibachian state aesthetics expressed via elements ranging from the backdrop with the by now familiar Malevich cross, to the emphatic trumpeting and military drumming of the band (which is theatrical given that these sounds are appropriated and electronically manipulated ones), to the use of quasi military uniforms, lighting from below in stark black and white high contrast, and especially the ecstatic and abstracted expressions of the band members who seem to be caught up in a state ritual transcending and rupturing individual identity. While there are stark contrasts between the singer's almost barked vocals and stiff military posture, and the fluid expressiveness of the dancers, the overall effect is to give the sense of a state ritual, with definite references to the mise-en-scène of films by Lena Reifenstahl like *Triumph of the Will* (1936). The video also played a key role in the translation of Laibach to new audiences, signalled by the trilingual rendering of the title in Slovenian, English and German, a linguistic strategy that would continue up to the present. As such, this video anticipates Laibach's later strategies of intervening into Western popular culture through their practices of new originals, while at the same time constituting an autonomous and uncompromising aesthetic creation.

Quite different strategies are evident in the period of Laibach's 'New Originals' that make up much of the *Opus Dei* album (1987) when they were reworking key moments of Western pop culture to bring out their hidden totalitarian reverse as Žižek might put it. It is in these videos that a kind of 'blood and soil' iconography is apparent, mixing image repertoires from Slovenian and Balkan folklore with imagery

with more Nazi associations, as is especially evident in the 'Opus Dei' (Life is Life) video. A more complicated example of these multiple appropriations is evident in Laibach's video for the Rolling Stones cover 'Sympathy for the Devil', directed by Peter Vezjak. It has to be remembered that this is a song already subject to East-West appropriations since it was inspired by the Bulgakov novel *The Master and Margherita* (arguably already appropriating universal themes of God and the Devil to a Russian context), which were then adopted by the Rolling Stones, who domesticated this transhistorical figure of the devil to little more than some bad boy rock posturing. Laibach, however, restore both the Eastern and the satanic dimensions to this track, both through their sonic treatment but also in the audiovisual mise-en-scène of the video. In this scenario, the singer's bass processed voice suggests satanic resonances, and the song is appropriated to being about Laibach's own mythology: 'but what's puzzling you is just the nature of my game'. The game is further played out via an at once folkloric and National Socialist mise-en-scène in which the excessive enjoyment of the group at a castle banquet, parodies the western stereotypes about the East that led to the creation of mythologies such as of Dracula; the hunks of meat tossed nonchalantly at the Alsatian dogs providing the finishing touches.

Insert fig. 4 about here: Laibach 'Sympathy for the Devil' Video

As with the other Laibachian aesthetic strategies, their videos have been subject to change over time and quite soon after this adopted a quite distinct set of tropes to do with animation, cyborgs, retrofuturism, space travel and the NSK state in time. This was already becoming apparent in the *Metropolis* like mise-en-scène of 'Wirtschaft ist Tot' from the *Kapital* (1990) album, in which the band members were covered in silver paint and futuristic outfits suggesting a post-human metamorphosis,

but it reaches an apotheosis in the video for 'Final Countdown' (1994), which is entirely digitally animated and features an assemblage of both retro and futurist technologies, culminating in the establishment of the NSK embassy on Mars complete with Plečnik's never realised architectural design for a Slovenian Parliament.

Before concluding this discussion of Laibachian audiovision it is worth returning to the question of Laibach's live performances which have always been an audiovisual phenomenon in which costume, staging, lighting and increasingly complex uses of video play a vital role. In the contemporary period, Laibach perform with double screens featuring video material, some of which remixes the archive already referred to, and some of which brings in new and unexpected elements, accompanied by phrases in the three languages already referred to. In conjunction with the lighting and other elements of staging (costume, use of megaphones, posture and gesture) this audiovisuality is part of what makes Laibach performances uniquely intense synaesthetic ones, rather than simply being industrial rock shows; the visual dimension also serving to communicate specific meanings such as the incorporation of reprocessed footage (in a Pop Art style) from *Deep Throat* (1972) to accompany the track 'America' from the *Volk* album (2006) (this was particularly effective when Laibach were invited to an event sponsored by the US embassy in Ljubljana and this was one of their three contributions to the evening's proceedings). A recent highpoint of this was their 'Monumental Retro-Avant-Garde' performance at the Tate Modern in April, 2014, which began with a Yugoslav propaganda film, followed by the recreation of one of their earliest performances with its original line up, before finally progressing onto their more recent material (a good deal of which is also a retro reprocessing of their early material). The rich audiovisual juxtapositions

at work here worked especially well in the monumental industrial space of the Turbine Hall, far removed from the kind of spaces that Laibach would usually get to play in in the UK, and approaching their ideal of a total synaesthetic audiovisual *gesamtkunstwerk*.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the industrial music use of film and video from first generation industrial groups such as Throbbing Gristle and Cabaret Voltaire to the cold war poetics of Test Dept and Laibach. It is clear from this engagement that while these groups were fundamentally audiovisual phenomena, their uses of audiovisuality did not correspond to normative ideas of music video forms, even when examining their actual production of music video rather than the wider multimedia performative strategies and experiments engaged with. As such industrial music video can perhaps best be seen less as in terms of the industrial production of music video as a promotional commodity, than in terms of a complex, hybrid 'audiovisuology', to borrow the term from a recent series of German research projects, investigating sound/image relationships across the history and diversity of media arts. As Dieter Daniels puts it 'the analysis of sound/image relations can be classed as an exemplary case study for the entire field of art/technology relationships' (Daniels 2011: 10). Such an approach seems highly applicable to the synaesthetic and totalising yet at the same time paradoxically artisanal productions of industrial music video, which seem to share more with the current digital, networked, and hybrid proliferation of heterogeneous audiovisual materials, than with the standardised production of MTV music video from their own time of the 1980s.

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[1] Ford's book departs from standard pagination, so page numbers are given as indicated.