



Rocking Around the Clock: Music Television, Post Modernism and Consumer Culture

By E. Ann Kaplan



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Ann Kaplan examines the cultural context of MTV and its relationship to the history of rock music. The first part of the book focuses on MTV as a commercial institution. In the second, Kaplan identifies five distinct types of video. There are detailed analyses of videos by Bruce Springsteen, Billy Idol, Paul Young, Madonna, Tina Turner, Pat Benatar, Annie Lennox, and Aretha Franklin, and discussion of many more. Kaplan focuses particularly on gender issues in videos by both male and female stars.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Kaplan (Women and Film), a Rutgers professor of English and film, offers a full-length study of the 24-hour cable channel MTV. Even though the channel airs promotional rock videos in "one nearly continuous advertisement," she notes that its use of avant-garde techniques and Hollywood pastiche have made MTV a popular, postmodernist success. Kaplan examines the business side of MTV, then delves into the rock videos themselves, which she divides into five distinct types (romantic, socially conscious, nihilistic, classical and postmodern). She also considers violence in videos, commenting on Tom Petty's "Don't Come Around Here No More," which many consider typically nasty: "The events do not have the overall investment in a certain kind of desire that the sadistic narrative usually has." In general, Kaplan argues that MTV "utilizes adolescent desire for its own commercial ends." Her conclusions about the long-range implications of MTV and today's "massified youth culture" are perceptive, depressing and probing.

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