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From Intimacy to Visual Experience: How POV Inserts Reconstruct Spectatorship in Contemporary Music Videos

Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Literature Review.....	6
3. Chapter 1: What Are POV Inserts in Music Videos	7
4. Chapter 2: How Do They Change the Way We Watch?	10
5. Conclusion.....	12
6. Bibliography	12

Abstract

This study explores the meaning and function of point-of-view (POV) inserts in music videos. It looks at how POV inserts affect the viewer's experience. It also examines how this helps music videos spread more easily. This paper argues that POV inserts are not only technical tools but also play an important role in shaping visual experience. Existing research often views POV as a stylized technique to enhance realism or intimacy, but this paper proposes that POV insertion actually reconstructs the viewer's perspective, transforming subjective intimacy into an objective visual experience and therefore should be considered a unique operational mode. This paper will analyze in depth the constituent elements and spatial relationships of POV insertion and conduct empirical research through a case study of popular Korean music videos. Through case analysis, this paper demonstrates how POV insertion transforms subjective intimacy into a repeatable, shareable visual experience. The results show that POV inserts are not only an aesthetic choice. They are also a visual form that fits well with platform viewing habits. This helps music videos spread more easily and be more widely accepted.

Keywords:

POV shot; music video;

INTRODUCTION

On the short-video social networks, including Instagram reels and Tik Tok, music videos may popularize incredibly fast. This instantaneous visibility does not just happen because of the quality of the content, but it is a structural possibility made possible through the transformation of the circulation of media in the Web 2.0 space. In this regard, the circulation of information is no longer one-to-many, but a many-to-many network of users that interactively disseminate, reproduce, and reinterpret the materials (Jerab 2025). Subsequently, social media networks are infrastructures of viral spread enabling messages to circulate on the basis of interpersonal networks and not institutional broadcasts.

Such developments of platform-based media conditions put into significant space questions concerning the ways in which visual forms are being modified and restructured. In particular, the growing presence of first-person perspective (POV) inserts in contemporary music videos—especially in K-pop productions—suggests that new modes of spectatorship may be emerging. In the literature on POV as a device that raises the level of realism, immersion or intimacy, or as a style. Nevertheless, these points of view do not completely describe why such a visual form has become so repeated and standardized. This essay asks: how do POV inserts reorganise ways of watching, and how do they transform intimacy into a repeatable visual experience? Through visual

analysis and case studies, this paper argues that POV inserts function as a viewing mechanism shaped by platform-based media logics.

Literature Review

Most existing studies understand Point-of-View (POV) as a technique that makes viewers feel more subjective and immersive. Branigan (1984) argues that POV is not just about camera position, but a narrative structure that shapes how subjectivity is organised. Similarly, Sobchack (1992) highlights the embodied nature of viewing, arguing that spectators' experiences are shaped by cinematic form. However, these studies mainly focus on narrative films. They focus on what viewers feel, rather than on how POV operates at a formal level to restructure the act of looking itself. In particular, little attention has been paid to how POV operates within the fragmented, nonlinear form of contemporary music videos.

When it comes to affect and intimacy, many scholars describe them as psychological or social experiences. Jenkins (2006) and Papacharissi (2015) point out that emotions circulate easily in participatory and platform-based cultures, and that emotional engagement helps media content become more visible and widely shared. However, such approaches often treat intimacy as

an outcome of audience behaviour, rather than as something actively produced by specific visual forms.

Although previous research has addressed POV, intimacy, and platform culture separately, these discussions remain largely disconnected. Few studies examine how POV operates specifically within music videos, or how it links these dimensions together. This essay addresses this gap by analysing how POV inserts reorganise modes of spectatorship and transform intimacy into a visual experience that is repeatable, transferable, and easily circulated.

Chapter 1: What Are POV Inserts in Music Videos

In most mainstream music videos today, the dominant mode of spectatorship remains third-person. The camera usually functions as an external observer, presenting the performer's body, dance, and facial expressions, while editing, camera movement, and visual effects are used to enhance visual impact (see Figures 1 and 2). Within this structure, viewers are placed in a relatively stable position as spectators, that is, in the position of watching others perform. In this perspective mode, a certain distance exists between the viewer and the idol. Therefore, the insertion of a first-person perspective (POV) becomes crucial.



Figure 1 EXO's *Love Shot* (2018).



Figure 2 'The ReVe Festival' *Finale* (2019)

POV is generally understood as first-person shooting, that is, "seeing through the character's eyes." Firstly, in terms of camera angle, the camera is usually placed close to eye level, which simulates the viewpoint of a human body that is looking(see Figures 3). Secondly, in terms of composition, the visible subject is usually cropped out of the frame. The viewer is no longer "seeing someone

present," but is placed in the position of "someone present." For example, in Newjeans' music video "Ditto" released on December 19, 2022, the girl holding the camera disappears, but through the camera's movement and perspective, the audience can feel her presence. The audience seems to become this girl, playing and frolicking with the members of NewJeans (see Figures 4 and 5). Thirdly, in terms of camera movement, the shot's swaying mimics the bodily sway produced by walking.



Figure 3 *'Ditto'* NEW JEANS(2022)



Figure 4 *'Ditto'* NEW JEANS(2022)



Figure 5 *'Ditto'* NEW JEANS(2022)

Point of view (POV) is more than just camera position. According to Branigan (2012), POV is not a simple matter of the placement of the camera. It is a plotting which determines the arrangement of subjectivity. It implies that POV is not characterized by its appearance similar to the first-person point of view, but by the character of the viewer and viewer functionality. Consequently, first

person perspective is not just about putting forward a fake vision, but about bringing us into a particular point of observing things by creating visual indicators that are well organized and created. It helps elicit emotional appeal to the idol, it brings about identification between the idol and the fan. Another advantage offered by Dagrada (2014) is that POV is not a natural state of perception but a visual order that was developed by history and media. She notes that POV places a counterfeited image between the eye and the world such that the process of viewing becomes an artificial practice. It produces the presence by the visual organization. Stated differently, POV does not actually make the viewer immersive, but rather puts the viewer in a given viewing position that is defined by the movie.

Chapter 2:How Do They Change the Way We Watch?

The intimacy created by POV inserts cannot be compared to that one created by real life interpersonal relationships. Instead, it needs to be seen as a fake-authentic experience that was created by visual means, aimed at decreasing the perceived gap between idols and fans. The cultural of fans, especially, is a vivid example of the construction of emotional groups, which is achieved through discourse. Celebrity fandom demonstrates that we are more active in the process of creating a sense of belonging through engaging ourselves in popular culture. Fan culture, in particular, clearly demonstrates how emotional communities are built through discourse. Celebrity fandom

shows that we increasingly develop a sense of belonging by participating in popular culture (Driessens, 2012). In contemporary music videos, intimacy is not naturally given. Rather, it is systematically produced through visual and sonic techniques.

Media and communication studies have long suggested that mediated intimacy differs fundamentally from lived, interpersonal intimacy. Horton and Wohl's (1956) concept of *parasocial interaction* explains how audiences form emotional attachments to media figures in the absence of genuine reciprocal interaction. On mainstream short-video platforms such as TikTok, this mediated intimacy has become a driving force for content dissemination. Jenkins (2006) and Papacharissi (2015) argue that emotional investment enhances user engagement, visibility, and the spread of media content.

However, much of this scholarship conceptualises intimacy primarily as a psychological or social outcome. It pays comparatively little attention to its visual production. POV inserts operate at this level of formality. They function as a structural mechanism. Rather than simply making viewers "feel closer," they simulate intimacy. They do so by altering the spectator's positionality.

They mimic the perspective of the human eye. They also remove the visible subject from the frame. In this way, POV places the viewer into a designed

perceptual role (see Figures 3 and 4). More importantly, this experience is modular. It is also repeatable. The same POV structure can be deployed across different music videos. It can produce similar emotional effects. In other words, POV inserts do not represent intimacy. They construct it. Because it can be designed and constructed, the intimacy created through the POV perspective is a visual experience that is well-suited for copying, dissemination, and consumption.

Conclusion

In summary, this article defines what POV (Point of View) insertion is in music videos. It also explains that POV insertion in music videos is not simply a shooting technique or style choice, but a visual form that changes the way people watch. Subjective perspective insertion alters the viewer's position within the frame. It transforms intimacy from a relationship-based feeling into a visual experience. This visual experience is easily repeated, shared, and consumed. Therefore, it aligns with the platform-based media communication logic, thus facilitating wider dissemination.

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