THE PRODUCER AND THE PRODUCT: KANYE WEST’S YEEZUS

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KANYE WEST
RAPPER, ARTIST, DESIGNER AND ENTREPRENEUR
WHAT’S GOING ON IN YEEZUS?

Looking at the relationship between the producer and the product tells us more about our perception of postmodern art.
ELEMENTS OF PRODUCTION

• Terry Eagleton’s *Criticism and Ideology*.

• Producer.

• Means of Production.

• Product.
WEST’S OVERARCHING GOAL: UNDERSTANDING HIS LYRICS

• Curation of the content.
• Control from an ontological standpoint.
• Results.

via The New York Times
THE ISSUE OF MULTIPLE DISCOURSES: MICHEL FOUCAULT

- Social constructs of rules and conventions make up societal structure.
  - *The Archaeology of Knowledge.*
  - *The Order of Things.*
THE EFFECT OF MULTIPLE DISCOURSES

• Composite personality.

“\textit{I think that’s a responsibility that I have, to push possibilities, to show people: ‘This is the level that things could be at.’ I will be the leader of a company that ends up being worth billions of dollars, because I got the answers. I understand culture. I am the nucleus.’}”

THE EFFECT OF MULTIPLE DISCOURSES CONT.

- Convergence of producer and product roles.
- Accountability for and ownership of Yeezus.
- Uncertainty of the divide between artist and art.
“Being a work of Kanye West, Yeezus is also a brilliant, obsessive-compulsive career auto-correct. Kanye is 36 years old, a fashion-world comer and a tabloid fixture about to have a kid with one of the dozen or so people on Earth who are more famous than he is. This isn’t just a way to stay ahead of the competition; it’s a way to stay ahead of himself.”

Rolling Stone, “Kanye West Yeezus Review”

“At my concerts, I make sure everybody has as good a time as possible. So all this demonizing me, it ain’t goin’ to work after a while. Pick a new target. Pick a new target. Because I’m not one of these dumbass artists that you’re used to. You come at me, I’m going to take my platform and break this shit down for real, intelligent people every night. And then, we’ll get back to the music.”

Kanye West, 12 September 2014
CONCLUSION

• The connections between the producer and the product derived from *Yeezus* have implications beyond the album and West himself.

• *Yeezus* forces West, his audience and the world to think beyond the surface levels of understanding postmodern concepts.


