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COMD 3504 - Communication Design Theory

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Assignment 5 - First Paper

The Max Headroom

When it comes to the influence of designs, they would most likely be shown in a way that

allows the viewers to really comprehend what's going on. A design that has the influence of

theories considered thus far can be seen. The design that I would like to talk about is the most

iconic figure that has appeared during the 80s and that is the Max Headroom. The Max

Headroom is a fictional character, also known as a dystopian man who's also ahead of his time,

has appeared on a television show and a movie. The Max Headroom has made his first

appearance on a television backstory movie called *Max Headroom: Twenty Minutes Into the*

Future which is about a "television reporter who suffers an accident after discovering some

nefarious activities by his employer, and is replaced by a wise-cracking, glitchy "CGI" version of himself." As for the television show, the name of the show is called *The Max Headroom Show* which is pretty much about "including guest interviews, musical numbers, and short comedy skits." So it's basically a talk show starring a digital cyberpunk icon who's a host that likes to entertain the audience by involving well known people, music, and comedy. With that being said, let's get into more depth on who is really the Max Headroom and how he was actually made?

The idea of having a digital cyberpunk influencer during the highest peak of the 80's is a topic that people would forever always think about in the back of their mind. If there's anyone that could be the Max Headroom, it would have to be Canadian actor Matt Frewer who is and always will be the original Max Headroom. A little fun fact that I would like to briefly mention is that Matt Frewer never wanted to be an actor in the first place which in my opinion makes his alter ego character extra special. Now for the more interesting part for how Matt Frewer was transformed into the Max Headroom? The way that they were able to design the character is by using a lot of makeup, prosthetics and contact lenses that were apparently painful, thus, giving you the birth of the Max Headroom. In terms of who is precisely the ones that came up with the idea, Wagg and Stone, Annabel Jankel and Rocky Morton are the ones who are the co-creators of the characters. These three were responsible for bringing these ideas to life. The ones who are responsible for being the makeup artist and prosthetic designer are Peter Litten and John Humphreys. These two were also the ones who came up with the looks and feel of the Max Headroom. With that being said, the Max Headroom in a way is actually historical for being innovative along with being completely different to what the 80s have normally been producing. Being able to have the Max Headroom being "thrown" out there, making people do a "double take" makes this kind of creative design a huge success.

Matt Frewer being transformed into Max Headroom

Considering the factors that we have discussed in class so far, the creators of the Max Headroom in a way have responded to the kind of theories that are mostly focused on the psychological perception of forms along with the article that we've read in class, *The Futurist Manifesto*. The reason why I believe that the psychological perception theory and *The Futurist Manifesto* fits perfectly for the Max Headroom is mainly because of how this iconic figure has influenced the change of the 80s and also the fear of what the future holds. While I have unfortunately not been around during the 80s, I can't even imagine what it's like to truly experience the Max Headroom. It sure must have been one heck of an experience to be able to process something like that. My intake on this psychological perception theory and *The Futurist Manifesto* has influenced and changed the way people think by being able to come up with an idea that makes you see outside of the current time period an individual would be in with the idea of the future maybe a bit too advanced for the human race. It may probably have been a bit weird to some people, however for the most part, it became more of a positive outcome especially when coming up with these interesting ideas on the future, a topic that people in the 80s would understand the most. The design that I've chosen, Max Headroom, embodies this theory mainly because of the way he looks. It surprised a lot of people that creating the Max Headroom was all

hand made and not digitized at all, specifically the character himself. The background for the

Max Headroom can be seen throughout any kind of design. Specifically, things that are neon

colors with a mixture of futuristic and technology.

Works Cited.

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