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| **Media Studies**  **Assessment Feedback Sheet** | |
| Student Name |  |
| Assessment | A2 Music Video Feedback (CULTURE & POLITICS) |
| Date | May 2020 |
| Mark Breakdown | /12 |

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| **AO1 1b, AO1 2a and AO1 2b**   * **Demonstrate understanding of the theoretical framework of media (4 marks)** * **Demonstrate knowledge of contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes (4 marks)** * **Demonstrate understanding of media and their influence on media products and processes (4 marks)** | | | |
| Level | Range | Description |  |
| 4 | 10-12 | • Excellent and accurate understanding of the theoretical framework that is demonstrated by consistently appropriate explanation of the representations of music and musical acts in the products  • Excellent knowledge and understanding of the influences of the political and cultural contexts on media products that is consistently supported by highly appropriate and effective reference to the set products  • Consistent highly appropriate use of subject specific terminology throughout |  |
| 3 | 7-9 | • Good understanding of the theoretical framework that is demonstrated via frequent appropriate explanation of the representations of music and musical acts in the products  • Good knowledge and understanding of the influences of the political and cultural contexts on media products that is usually supported by mostly appropriate and effective reference to the set products  • Frequent appropriate use of subject specific terminology throughout. |  |
| 2 | 4-6 | • Satisfactory understanding of the theoretical framework that is demonstrated by generally appropriate explanation of the representations of music and musical acts in the products  • Some satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the influences of the political and cultural contexts on media products that is sometimes supported by generally appropriate reference to the set products but inconsistently effective  • Generally appropriate use of subject specific terminology throughout. |  |
| 1 | 1-3 | • Basic understanding of the theoretical framework that is demonstrated by occasional appropriate explanation of the representations of music an musical acts in the products  • Basic knowledge and understanding of the influences of the political and cultural contexts on media products that is generally unsupported by appropriate reference to the set products with limited effect  • Occasional appropriate use of subject specific terminology throughout. |  |
| 0 | 0 | Nothing worthy of credit |  |

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| General feedback:   * Overall   To move to the next level you need to:      Student Reflection & Actions: |

**Indicative content:**

This question assesses understanding of the theoretical framework of representation and knowledge and understanding of the contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes particularly focusing on (though not limited to):

* the effect of cultural and political contexts on representations
* the way events, issues, individuals (including self-representation) and social groups (including social identity) are represented through processes of selection and combination.

**Political and cultural contexts:**

* media products and the representations in them can be seen as a product of the political and cultural context in which they are created
* products must reflect the cultural values of their target audiences in order to be successful but these may be diverse and can explain the differences in representation
* products may take up particular political and cultural standpoints from which to address their intended audiences and ‘the world’.
* In relation to the two products:
  + both products are contemporary and address issues of identity and contested issues of representation within the context of their respective form
  + these products both have political intent reinforced by significant cultural context
  + they both inhabit a political and cultural discourse which revolves around visibility and voice

**General points**

**GHOST TOWN**

* Analysis of Ghost Town can help develop an understanding of the processes of selection and combination which construct versions of reality
* The effect of social and cultural and historical contexts on representations of ethnicity (British multiculturalism)
* How representations invoke discourses and ideologies and position audiences
* Representation of time and place within the video – England in the early 1980s, specifically London as shown in the video, but also Coventry which is referred to in the song and was the home city of the band
* Theories of representation including Hall
* The video combines eerie shots of a deserted East End of London with the band in a 1962 Vauxhall Cresta lip syncing.
* The mise-en-scene and cinematography seem to reference a range of film styles including British social realism, thriller and horror genres, with the expressionist lighting drawing attention to the different meanings of the lyric ‘ghost town’.
* The hybrid mix of references and music video forms – an experimental combination of narrative (the journey), performance and concept – means that the video can be read through **a postmodern approach** with reference to **intertextuality** and **hybridity**.
* The strong political message of the video is a challenge to the audience with a direct mode of address which is both angry and plaintive. The video was unusual for the time in conveying a strong social message (in contrast to the dominant style of pop music in the charts at the time), meaning that the audience of the time might well have been shocked or discomfited by it.
* In 1981 opportunities for revenue directly from music videos were very limited and their economic value came as a marketing tool to advertise the single. This function was particularly important pre-internet, with the popularity of broadcast pop shows such as Top of the Pops (MTV was launched in 1981 but had limited availability in the UK initially).
* However the Ghost Town video is now on YouTube with revenue opportunities through viewing and advertising. It also provides a link to The Specials YouTube subscription channel which has opportunities to purchase their back catalogue and new material.

**General points**

**LETTER TO THE FREE**

• This is a question about the ways in which different parts of a product’s audience may offer quite different readings of that product according to how they are positioned to it socially, culturally and politically

• There is an opportunity to employ both cultivation theory (Gerbner) and reception theory (Hall) to support an examination of how groups might be positioned by their socio-cultural status (reinforced by dominant modes of representation) and may position themselves politically to offer ‘dominant hegemonic’, ‘negotiated’ and ‘oppositional’ readings Common’s Letter to the Free

• This is an explicitly political text dealing with social and cultural issues

• The audience are invited to position themselves in relation to these issues by the provocative character of this video (Common rapping alongside other musicians inside an otherwise deserted prison)

• The title includes an implicit challenge that we as an audience live up to our billing since we are, potentially ‘the free’ and are drawn into this heart of darkness partly to find a way out. In a long tradition this is therefore partly a ‘redemption song’ exhorting us to emancipate ourselves from ‘mental slavery’ to embrace the prospect that freedom will come.

• The contrivance of the hovering black rectangle stresses the need for an interpretative response which cannot then let these things be. It seems likely that there is a reference here to Kubrick’s 2001 and the black obelisk which facilitates the transition from one state of being to another (primitive to ‘early modern’). This was also an inspiration for the cover of Led Zeppelin’s seventh studio album Presence which also features a black ‘object’.

• The lyrics, displayed, are also a provocative gesture offering an informed if emotive response to the troubling issues of race and incarceration. The song appeared at a time when race was once more on the agenda and is very much a history of the present: though they refer to “southern trees we hung from”, “the new Jim Crow” and “the caged bird sings for freedom”, it is concerned starkly with the here and now: “Shot me with your ray-gun, And now you want to trump me, Prison is a business, America’s the company”.

• Stylistically it has an austerity which implies verité/ authenticity (black and white film, realistic location, element of historical accuracy)

• The song and video are both part of a broader political project that links with and depends upon the work of collaborators like Bradford Young (the cinematographer) who has also previously worked with Ava DuVernay whose Netflix documentary 13th (about the 13th amendment) featured the song. Also musicians like Karriem Riggins as well as Robert Glasper who also collaborated in a performance of the song at the White House for Barack Obama. There is also some gesturing at least to the history of Black protest music and in particular Billy Holliday’s Strange Fruit.

• The song is part of an album entitled Black America Again: a call to action that asks its audience to stand up and be counted.

• Some of the ways that context is productive concern issues of gender, ethnicity and social disadvantage/ advantage all of which may impact on the way this text is read.