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| **Media Studies**  **Assessment Feedback Sheet** | |
| Student Name |  |
| Assessment | A2 Music Video Feedback (NARRATIVE) |
| 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 (5 marks)** * **Demonstrate knowledge of contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes (5 marks)** * **Demonstrate understanding of media and their influence on media products and processes (5 marks)** | | | |
| Level | Range | Description |  |
| 4 | 10-12 | • Excellent analysis of the product that is detailed and critically engages with ideas about narrative and how they relate to the CSP  • Analysis of the set product is perceptive, insightful, and informed by a detailed knowledge and understanding of narrative theory  • Excellent, astute judgements and conclusions that are consistently well supported by relevant analysis. |  |
| 3 | 7-9 | • Good analysis of the product that engages with many aspects of narrative theory and how it relates to the CSP  • Analysis of the set product is good. Informed by a good knowledge and understanding of narrative theory  • Good judgements and conclusions that are supported by some good analysis. |  |
| 2 | 4-6 | • Satisfactory analysis of the product that engages with some aspects of narrative theory and how it relates to the CSP  • Analysis of the set product is reasonable and straightforward, and informed by a sound knowledge and understanding of narrative theory  • Satisfactory judgements and conclusions that are supported by satisfactory analysis. |  |
| 1 | 1-3 | • Basic, if any, analysis of the product that engages with the very straightforward aspects of narrative theory and how it relates to the CSP  • Analysis of the set product is superficial and generalised, and informed by little or no knowledge and understanding of narrative theory  • Basic judgements and conclusions that are generally unsupported by analysis |  |
| 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:**

The content below is not prescriptive and all valid points should be credited. It is not expected that responses will include all of the points listed.

Responses are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how contexts can influence the ways in which audiences variously read media products with particular reference to the set music videos.

Responses are expected to apply knowledge and understanding of enabling ideas **about narrative to analyse the specified product.**

Responses in the higher bands will clearly engage with the usefulness of these ideas in understanding the music video and draw conclusions that are substantiated by effective analysis of the product. Responses in the middle band will show some engagement with this element of the question and use examples in a straightforward way to support conclusions. Responses in the lower bands may not engage with this element of the question, may not draw conclusions that are substantiated by analysis, or may simply describe aspects of narrative theory and / or the set product.

There is no requirement to argue that the ideas about narrative are useful; candidates might equally argue that the ideas are not useful at all, or that there are other better ways to analyse this product. Various approaches are acceptable, provided they are substantiated through analysis of the Close Study Product.

This question assesses the ability to apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media language to analyse media products particularly focusing on (though not limited to):

* how the different modes and language associated with different media forms communicate multiple meanings
* how the combination of elements of media language influence meaning.

Todorov’s ideas and theories on narratology:

* narrative structure
  + equilibrium • disruption • new equilibrium.

In applying their knowledge and understanding of ideas about narrative, students may refer to one or more of:

* narrative codes: there is plenty of opportunity to read Action and Suspense as well as the paradigmatic codes which are always at work
* narration: this is made interesting by the fact that this is provided by the lyric / singer
* diegesis: this may be particularly useful for this short film with its cinematic iconography
* quest narrative: the film certainly plays with this notion
* character types: there is scope for Proppian categories
* causality: this has implications both practically and symbolically
* plot: there is a plot which is open to interpretation
* masterplot: it’s possible to read Ghost Town as an ironic take on the isolation and fall out in modern day Britain

**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.