

MUSIC VIDEO UNSEEN TEXT CHEAT SHEET

RELEVANT MEDIA LANGUAGE THEORIES

SEMIOTICS

ROLAND BARTHES - ORDER OF SIGNIFICATION

- The idea that texts communicate their meanings through a process of signification
- The idea that signs can function at the level of denotation, which involves the 'literal' or common-sense meaning of the sign, and at the level of connotation, which involves the meanings associated with or suggested by the sign
- The idea that constructed meanings can come to seem self-evident, achieving the status of myth through a process of naturalisation.

* Use when addressing connotations and possible polysemic readings of music videos.

GENRE THEORY - STEVE NEALE

- The idea that genres may be dominated by repetition, but are also marked by difference, variation, and change
- The idea that genres change, develop, and vary, as they borrow from and overlap with one another
- The idea that genres exist within specific economic, institutional and industrial contexts.
- Remember Steve Neale's quote - "genre are instances of repetition (generic conventions) and difference"

* Use when talking about whether a music video either reinforces the conventions associated to that music video (or music) genre or subverts it in some way. Remember that media texts can do both too...

STRUCTURALISM

CLAUDE LEVI-STRAUSS - BINARY OPPOSITIONS

- The idea that texts can best be understood through an examination of their underlying structure (which is structuralism).
- The idea that meaning is dependent upon (and produced through) pairs of oppositions (which is Levi- Strauss' Binary Oppositions theory)
- The idea that the way in which these binary oppositions are resolved can have particular ideological significance as one will usually be more dominant...

* Use when discussing particular opposites within a music video and whether one of those opposites is stronger / weaker.

MEDIA LANGUAGE QUESTION

OR

REPRESENTATION QUESTION

Depending on the way the unseen text music video question is framed / asked, it should address at least one (maybe more) of the following required list of media language aspects of the theoretical framework. Try to refer to technical vocabulary (including the various codes listed below AND the relevant media language theories listed next to this box - where relevant) whilst doing this:

- How the different media modes and language associated with different media forms (music videos) communicate multiple meanings. What are the plausible connotations of the polysemic (text / signs exhibiting multiple meanings) imagery?
- How the combination of elements of media language influence meaning and what meaning is created by this.
- How developing technologies affect media language (for example, green screen technologies and / or Computer generated imagery - CGI - bringing fantastical imagery into the music video on a relatively inexpensive budget).
- The codes and conventions of media forms and products, including the processes through which media language develops as genre. Does it fit into a Music Video sub-genre? Is the music video conventional or does it subvert conventions? How?
- The processes through which meanings are established through intertextuality - what other text(s) does it reference and how?
- The significance of the varieties of ways intertextuality can be used in the media. What is the purpose of this intertextual reference in the music video? Irony? Nostalgia?
- How audiences respond to and interpret the above aspects of media language - how do they want the audience to react to the way the music video is constructed and why?
- The way media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies. What mainstream values or beliefs does the message behind the music video support or challenge? How are these ideologies constructed through the music video?

Depending on the way the unseen text music video question is framed / asked, it should address at least one (maybe more) of the following required list of representation aspects of the theoretical framework. Try to refer to technical vocabulary (including the various codes listed below AND the relevant representation theories listed next to this box - where relevant) whilst doing this - even though this is a representation question you still need to refer to media language and how it creates the representation(s) within the music video you are referring to:

- The way that events, issues, individuals (including self-representation) and social groups (including social identity) are represented through processes of selection and combination.
- The way the media through re-presentation construct versions of reality - is it genuine verisimilitude or does it serve a purpose?
- The processes which lead media producers to make choices about how to represent events, issues, individuals and social groups - why is it represented this way in this music video?
- The effect of social and cultural context on representation.
- How and why stereotypes can be used positively and negatively.
- How and why particular social groups, in a national and global context, may be under-represented or misrepresented, and if the representation in the music video is helping / hindering.
- How media representations convey values, attitudes and beliefs about the world and how these may be systematically reinforced across a wide range of media representations.
- How audiences respond to and interpret media representations.
- The effect of historical context on representations.
- How representations invoke discourses and ideologies and position audiences, creating room for discussion and debate.
- How audience responses to and interpretations of media representations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances within the wider context within society.

RELEVANT MEDIA REPRESENTATION THEORIES

REPRESENTATION THEORY - STUART HALL

- The idea that representation is the production of meaning through language, with language defined in its broadest sense as a system of signs
- The idea that the relationship between concepts and signs is governed by codes
- The idea that stereotyping, as a form of representation, reduces people to a few simple characteristics or traits
- The idea that stereotyping tends to occur where there are inequalities of power, as subordinate or excluded groups are constructed as different or 'other' (e.g. through ethnocentrism).

* Use when talking about stereotypes within your music video - think about who benefits from these representations too.

IDENTITY THEORY - DAVID GAUNTLETT

- The idea that the media provide us with 'tools' or resources that we use to construct our identities
- The idea that whilst in the past the media tended to convey singular, straightforward messages about ideal types of male and female identities, the media today offer us a more diverse range of stars, icons and characters from whom we may pick and mix different ideas.

* Use when discussing how representations may have been employed within the music video which offer a diverse range of role models (or positive aspects of role modelling behaviour) which impressionable viewers may base their own identities on. How do the identities in the MV address the 'idea'?

FEMINIST THEORIES

LIESBET VAN ZOONEN & BELL HOOKS

- (Van Zoonen) The idea that gender is constructed through discourse, and its meaning varies according to context. The display of women's bodies as objects is a core element of western patriarchal culture. In mainstream culture the visual / narrative codes that construct the male body as spectacle differ from those used to objectify females.
- (hooks) The idea that feminism is a struggle to end sexist / patriarchal oppression. Feminism is a political commitment rather than a lifestyle choice. Race and class as well as sex determine the extent to which individuals are exploited.

* Use when talking about representations of women and the objectification of females.

POSTCOLONIAL THEORY - PAUL GILROY

- The idea that colonial discourses continue to inform contemporary attitudes to race and ethnicity in the postcolonial era.
- The idea that civilisation constructs racial hierarchies and sets up binary oppositions based on notions of otherness.

* Use if the music video addresses issues of race or ethnicity and how they are doing this. Is there still any trace of subtle / obvious marginalisation of race in relation to how non-white / non European's are represented in relation to white representation in the music video?

The building blocks of how a media text / music video is put together - use this technical vocabulary as you analyse the music video for either media language or representation unseen text questions. Codes work hand-in-hand with conventions.

TECHNICAL	SHOT TYPE:	ANGLE:	MOVEMENT:	MONTAGE EDITING:	AUDIO	MISE-EN-SCENE:	COLOUR:	OTHER:	LANGUAGE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extreme Close Up (ECU) Close Up (CU) Medium Shot (MS) Medium Close-Up (MCU) Long Shot (LS) Medium Long Shot (MLS) Culinary (CA) Two Shot / Three Shot Over the Shoulder Shot (OTSS) Noddy Shot Point of View Shot (POV) Establishing Shot (ES) Weather Shot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aerial Shot Bird's Eye View High Angle Low Angle Worm's Eye View Eye Level / Straight On Centered Angle / Dutch Tilt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracking / Dolly Hand Held Zoom / Crash Zoom Pan / Whip Pan Tilt Reverse Tracking / Dolly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ellipsis Jump Cut 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diegetic Sound Non Diegetic Sound Dialogue Voiceover Direct Address "Breaking the Fourth Wall" Sound Effects Hyper-Real / Pleasurable Sound Ambient Sound Parallel Sound Contrapuntal Sound Music Soundtrack Themes / Leitmotifs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settings & Props Costume, Hair & Make-up Facial Expressions & Body Language Lighting & Colour Positioning of Characters & Objects in Frame 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black - power, elegance, mystery White - innocence, perfection Blue - stability, loyalty, confidence Red - romance, danger, wildness Green - nature, jealousy, life 	
VISUAL	EDITING TRANSITIONS:	CONTINUITY EDITING:	EDITING TRANSITIONS:	EDITING TRANSITIONS:	VISUAL	LIGHTING:	BODY LANGUAGE (NVC):	OTHER:	LANGUAGE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Straight Cut Fade to Black / White Cross Cut / Parallel Edit Dissolve Cross Fade Wipe (Clock, etc.) Split Screen Morph L Cut 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 180 Degree Rule The 30 Degree rule Shot / Reverse Shot Eyeline Match Match on Action / Match 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Straight Cut Fade to Black / White Cross Cut / Parallel Edit Dissolve Cross Fade Wipe (Clock, etc.) Split Screen Morph L Cut 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low Key Lighting High Key Lighting Backlighting Key Lighting Filler Lighting German Expressionism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facial Expressions Body Movement Posture Gestures Eye Contact / Gaze Touch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Space (Proxemics) Paralanguage (Voice) - this includes Pitch, Volume, Emphasis, Accent, Fluency, Speech Rate, Modulation, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Period Costume Period Setting Technique Graphics Iconography Blocking Symbols Prosthetics Pathetic fallacy Zefgriet Retro Fashion Primary Colours Loading Lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads Lang. Features Hyperbole Imperatives Colloquial Lang. Slang Direct Quotes Mode of Address High Register Low Register Accent Dialect Redundancy Entropy Context Specific 	