

**Contemporary Lit A: Film Studies**  
**Studying Cinematic Techniques in Music Videos**

**Name:**  
**Hour:**

THE MUSIC VIDEO	STUDY OF VIDEO	ANALYSIS NOTES
<div>Pre-recorded Music</div> <div>+</div> <div>Added Images</div> <div>=</div> <div>Music Video</div>	<p><b>1. Describe the Storyline</b> of the <i>video</i> – beginning, middle, end – what happens?</p> <p><b>2. Relationship between <i>lyrics</i> and <i>visuals</i>.</b> Explain if the visuals are illustrating, contradicting, or amplifying the lyrics.</p> <p><b>3. Relationship between <i>music</i> and <i>visuals</i>.</b> Explain if the visual are illustrating, contradicting, or amplifying the movement and sounds of the music.</p>	
	<p><b>4. Intertextual References.</b> Identify and explore if anything in the video is alluding to or is influenced/inspired by other music, videos, films, literature, art, TV texts, etc.</p> <p><b>5. Cinematography.</b> The way the camera is used has significant impact on meaning. Explain the use of shots, angles, lighting, and movement in the video.</p> <p><b>6. Editing.</b> Although the most common editing used is the fast-cut montage, some videos use other techniques: fades, pans, gentle transitions, etc. to create mood. Explain the editing.</p>	
	<p><b>7. Type of Clip.</b> Explain the single use or combination of clip styles – standard, performance, narrative, art, conceptual. <i>(See 2<sup>nd</sup> page for definitions.)</i></p> <p><b>8. Personal Response.</b></p>	

## Music videos can be highly rewarding, as they allow the creative director to...

- create a short story that does not necessarily need to be held together by narrative.
- be visually thematic, music videos don't have the traditional plot structure that films do,
- be extremely poetic in artistic expression
- connect the audience emotionally to a song, or simply
- stimulate the spectator's eyes and ears.

## Types of Music Video Clips:

- A **standard clip** is a music video that generally has these three visual traditions: a filmed singer is blended with inserted images and the presentation is artistically influenced by the experimental film tradition. Queen's influential *Bohemian Rhapsody* (1975) provided a model of a standard music video and has all these narrative traits. The concept of the standard clip is dynamic and has many variations. The vocalist might actively participate in the story while simultaneously standing outside the video, offering self-reflexive commentary; he might have a singing alter ego, for instance a cartoon character; or, he might change clothes between cuts, jump around in time, shift his shape, fly, float, etc
- A **performance clip** is a music video clip containing mostly filmed performance. It shows the vocalist(s) in one or more settings, performing the song. Common places to perform are the recording studio and the rehearsal room. But the performance can take place anywhere, from the bath tub to the garage to outer space. Walking down the street is another performance cliché, which is common in rap videos.
- The performance can be of three types: song performance, dance performance and instrumental performance. Almost every music video includes song performance. Some videos combine song and dance performances. Michael Jackson's videos often contain dance performance. Instrumental performance is not so common, but it occurs occasionally. Concert performance on stage with audience is so common that it has its own category, the **concert clip**.
- If a music video clip is most appropriately understood as a short silent movie to a musical background, it is a **narrative clip**. A narrative clip contains a visual story that is easy to follow. A pure narrative clip contains no lip-synchronized singing. Bruce Springsteen's "I'm on Fire" is a *pure* narrative clip.
- If a music video clip contains no clear visual narrative and contains no lip-synchronized singing then it is a pure **art clip**. The main difference between a music video art clip and a contemporary artistic video is the music. While the music video uses popular music the artistic video uses more modern, experimental music, such as electro-acoustic music.
- If the repetition of images in a music video resembles mostly the form of music, then the clip may be called **abstract or conceptual form**. Music videos are often organized around what we might call "theme and variations". The abstract qualities of pictorial elements assembled in thematic combinations create form. An introduction often presents the basic pictorial elements, which will develop to visual motifs.

**Contemporary Lit A: Film Studies**  
**Studying Cinematic Techniques in Music Videos**

**Name:**  
**Hour:**

**Example**

THE MUSIC VIDEO	STUDY OF VIDEO	ANALYSIS NOTES
<p>Pre-recorded Music</p> <p>+</p> <p>Added Images</p> <p>=</p> <p>Music Video</p>	<p><b>1. Describe the Storyline</b> of the video – beginning, middle, end – what happens?</p> <p><b>2. Relationship between lyrics and visuals.</b> Explain if the visuals are illustrating, contradicting, or amplifying the lyrics.</p> <p><b>3. Relationship between music and visuals.</b> Explain if the visual are illustrating, contradicting, or amplifying the movement and sounds of the music.</p> <p><b>4. Intertextual References.</b> Identify and explore if anything in the video is alluding to or is influenced/inspired by other music, videos, films, literature, art, TV texts, etc.</p> <p><b>5. Cinematography.</b> The way the camera is used has significant impact on meaning. Explain the use of shots, angles, lighting, and movement in the video.</p> <p><b>6. Editing.</b> Although the most common editing used is the fast-cut montage, some videos use other techniques: fades, pans, gentle transitions, etc. to create mood. Explain the editing.</p> <p><b>7. Type of Clip.</b> Explain the single use or combination of clip styles – standard, performance, narrative, art, conceptual.</p> <p><b>8. Personal Response.</b></p>	<p>1. A young "cowboy" is walking around NY. We see him at specific landmarks: statues, an amusement park, public sculptures, etc. He's walking by himself and carrying/ listening to a retro-style boombox. Eventually we see him performing his song on a jumbo tron, and we learn people have been following him, spying, and taking pictures. The video ends with him in a rock star number, performing "Devil's Haircut" in front of a huge neon sign.</p> <p>2. The visuals illustrate and amplify the lyrics. The lyrics describe things the character is noticing and thinking about: <i>everywhere I look a dead end waiting, pistol popping, a poor man's pockets, head's hanging, temperature's dropping</i>. In the video, the young guy is looking all around the city, maybe noticing these things. The video amplifies the idea that this is life in NY. The lyric <i>ghetto blasting</i> explains the boombox the character is carrying. The visuals seem to amplify the idea that this guy is seeking his opportunity to be in the limelight. By the end of the video, he finds it!</p> <p>3. The visuals seem in pace with the music. The music opens with a steady guitar beat that matches the slo-mo strut of the cowboy character. During the freeze-frame shot, there is a "boing" or slow slide in the music. During the chorus, the visuals show an even slower slo-mo, directing our focus to the character's demeanor.</p> <p>4. The music video does allude to Joe Buck in <i>Midnight Cowboy</i>. The look in the video mimics the simple, naive look Buck had when first coming to NY – wide-eyed looking around, confident strut. Especially the costuming is the same – cowboy hat, leather jacket, blond haired. It looks like in the video the main character will fare better than Buck did because by the end of the video, he's doing a rock-star performance with lights and energy!</p> <p>5. The film techniques that mostly make the storyline work are the freeze shots with the pan in, which clarifies that the guy is being watched, and we should watch or notice him, too. The contrast of the blue wash scenes where he is on his own in the business parts of the city, with the warm wash scenes, that indicate he is with people in the lively parts of town, help us to understand that by the end of the video (in the bright orange and gold neon light), he kind of "makes it."</p> <p>6. The editing really allows a story to unfold because there isn't a series of quick cut images. We follow the guy all around, and when the camera freezes and zooms in, we notice details about his face. When the camera uses a slow motion shot, we sort of enjoy the music and the moment being shown – his confidence, his simple-ness, or noticing a great mise-en-scene, like when he's got the plastic wrapped around him and he's kicking the puddle.</p> <p>7.</p> <p>8.</p>