

## Massive Attack – Unfinished Sympathy

Q5 Full mark response:

10/10

***Explain how media language in music video incorporates viewpoints and ideologies. Refer to one of the music videos you have studied to support your answer.***

Massive Attack's 'Unfinished Sympathy' was widely considered the beginning of 'trip hop', a genre of music which arose in Bristol during the 80s, during a time of economic turmoil. This is reflected by the urban squalor setting of the video which reflects the deprived area where 'trip hop' roots stemmed from. This is highlighted from the old amputee on a skateboard, to the discarded trolleys and litter.

The beginning of the video opens with two metal balls clanking in the hands of a gang member, which evokes films like 'Boyz in the Hood' and gangster culture, depicting violence, which is also alluded to by the young boy playing with a toy gun. This also reflects the idea of gun control in America and the poverty the child will face.

The theme of poverty is strongly predominant throughout the video, and we all different races and ethnicities represented, from Caucasian, Asian, Latino and African American citizens, which powerfully highlights that the problems of poverty affect anyone, not just minorities. This message pre-empted the LA race riots which happened not long after the video was released. This emphasises that this video presents real life problems.

This contrasts to Shara Nelson's role in the video, as she walks around with the poverty mise-en-scene all around her, but is oblivious to it. On face value this could be because she is strongly fixated on how her past lover 'really hurt' her and she's questioning as to whether to allow herself to love again; but on a deeper level, could reflect the American government's attitude to problems such as poverty, gun violence and the lives of ethnic minorities. However, the fact that a black woman is the focus of the video and she is presented as powerful and strong, walking on her own to figure out her problems, rather than seeking external help, or resorting to using her sexuality, places her in a position of strength and self-belief. This evokes a proud feeling from the spectator, as when she turns the corner the camera pans out to highlight her coming out of the dark.

Ultimately the combination of mise-en-scene, cinematography and lyrics of the song in combination with contextual knowledge dynamically highlight the ideologies and viewpoints incorporated in Massive Attack's 'Unfinished Sympathy'.