



GCSE MEDIA STUDIES REVISION BOOKLET

Component 2

Luther



Context

Product:

- The set product is the **first episode of Series 1**, broadcast in May 2010.
- Luther is a **police procedural crime drama** and an example of an inverted detective story.
- It is **produced by BBC Drama, distributed by BBC Studios, and broadcast on BBC1**. It is also **available on iPlayer and Amazon Prime**.
- The series was **created and is written by Neil Cross** who drew his inspiration for the protagonist Luther from Sherlock Holmes and the American detective Columbo.
- It has had **5 seasons**, the most recent being in 2019.

Social & Cultural:

(Understanding the time and place Luther was made helps us see how it reflects society through its themes, characters, and visuals.)

- In Luther, women are not always portrayed in traditional ways. Alice is both **clever and dangerous**, showing how crime dramas have moved away from stereotypes of women as helpless victims.
- The change reflects cultural shifts where **audiences expect stronger, more complex female characters**.
- The villain in Luther, like Alice, is more human and complex, representing a modern view of society. Instead of just "good vs evil," the show explores **shades of morality**.
- Luther is a mix of traditional and modern. Like Regan and Carter from the old show The Sweeney, he's a tough cop. But he's also flawed and emotional, which reflects modern audiences' taste for complex heroes.

- Luther challenges stereotypes as the **lead detective is Black**, something rare in British crime dramas. It also highlights issues of underrepresentation in TV and shows how diversity in media is improving.
- Luther borrows styles from **film noir** (dark visuals, morally complex characters) and American crime dramas. For example:
 - Film noir: Alice acts like a femme fatale, a mysterious and dangerous woman.
 - American crime dramas: Luther's urban settings and focus on psychology resemble popular US shows.
- London in Luther is **gritty and realistic**, showing the city's darker side. In *The Sweeney*, London was also rough, but Luther adds modern touches with themes of multiculturalism and urban tension.

Media Language

Narrative:

(This includes how the story is told and structured.)

- Linear Narrative: The episode follows a structured sequence of events, beginning with a pre-title sequence that introduces Luther's character and moral complexity. The audience is placed in a privileged spectator position as we see Luther let Henry Madsen fall, setting up key moral dilemmas for the series.
- Barthes' action codes: These are key moments that drive the plot forward. For example, Alice finding out Zoe's location and threatening her forces Luther into action.
- Barthes' Enigma Codes: Enigma codes create mystery and engage the audience by posing questions that demand answers. For example, the episode's ending leaves audiences asking 'What will happen next in Luther and Alice's battle of wits?' These unanswered questions encourage the audience to continue watching and theorising.
- The episode fits Propp's character roles but with subversions:
 - Luther as the hero, though he is flawed and unpredictable.
 - Alice as the villain, but also intelligent and charismatic.
 - DC Ripley as the helper/sidekick, assisting Luther in his investigations.
 - Zoe as the princess, but unlike typical damsels, she is independent and assertive.
- Cliff-hanger Ending: The episode concludes with an unresolved confrontation between Alice and Luther. Alice taunts him, maintaining a power struggle and keeping audiences engaged for the next episode.

Visual codes (mise-en-scene):

(These include the meanings created by what we see on screen.)

- Costume:
 - Luther:
 - Opening scene (Parka Jacket): The heavy, dark coat makes him look physically imposing, reinforcing his role as a tough detective. The bulkiness contrasts with the usual sleek detective attire.
 - Throughout the episode (Suit, Loosened Tie, Coat): The loosened tie, unbuttoned collar, and dishevelled look signal his maverick persona, making

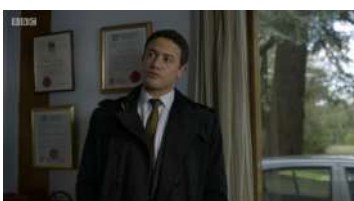
him an anti-hero rather than a conventional detective. His long coat aligns with film noir detective figures like Sam Spade (*The Maltese Falcon*). Unlike traditional crime drama detectives, Luther appears visibly worn and emotionally volatile.



- Alice costumes:
 - Everyday look (femme fatale aesthetic): Her dark, structured clothing and bold red lipstick mirror classic film noir femme fatales, who use seduction and manipulation as weapons.
 - Disguise (threatening Zoe): The dark wig and altered look highlight her intelligence and calculated deception, which reinforces the crime thriller genre's focus on mind games over brute force. However, her retained red lipstick keeps her femme fatale identity intact.



- Ripley's costume:
 - His neatly tailored suit and tie position him as a conventional detective, contrasting with Luther's rule-breaking approach. His clean, professional look reflects traditional police procedural dramas, where younger officers uphold the system, unlike the rebellious lead character.
- Rose Teller's costume:
 - Her neutral suits and waistcoats reflect her authority, which make her fit the typical police superior archetype in crime dramas. The absence of elaborate styling reinforces her no-nonsense, morally firm role, and aligns with traditional crime drama leadership figures.
- Zoe's costume:
 - Her navy blazer and blouse reflect her intelligence and professional status.



- Lighting:
 - The episode uses low-key lighting, a hallmark of film noir, to create deep shadows and a sense of mystery.
 - The episode is dominated by grey tones, which strip the world of vibrancy and emphasise its gritty realism. The washed-out aesthetic mirrors the moral ambiguity of the characters – Luther is neither entirely good nor entirely bad, and Alice operates beyond traditional concepts of morality. This grey aesthetic also aligns with the conventions of crime dramas, particularly those that focus on psychological depth rather than action.



- Actor's performance (expressions and gestures):
 - Luther: His aggressive and impulsive physical actions (punching doors, smashing objects) reveal his inner turmoil and lack of control. This subverts the typical calm and collected detective archetype, making him a more unpredictable and morally ambiguous protagonist.
 - Alice: Her measured, precise movements (using her hat pin, maintaining eye contact) contrast with Luther's chaotic gestures, showing her manipulative, calculated nature. She remains eerily calm, reinforcing her status as an unconventional and unsettling villain.
- Make-up and hair:
 - Alice: Long, sleek red hair aligns with the femme fatale archetype, symbolising seduction, danger, and manipulation. When she threatens Zoe, she wears a dark wig, disguising herself and reinforcing her ability to manipulate her image. Bold red lipstick draws attention to her mouth and words, reinforcing her psychological power and control.
 - Zoe: Neat, natural waves and Minimal and natural make up reflects her calm nature and reinforces her role as a grounded and morally upright character with emotional warmth.
- Props:
 - Alice's pin: A small but lethal object, it symbolises Alice's calculated and quiet danger. She uses it to threaten Zoe, reinforcing her femme fatale role where unexpected weapons become tools of manipulation.
 - Luther's gun: Unlike many crime drama protagonists, Luther rarely relies on his gun, which reflects his conflicted morality. His weapon symbolises authority, but also violence.
 - Alice's gun remnants: This prop represents Alice's meticulous nature. Instead of simply discarding the weapon, she conceals it within her deceased dog's ashes, showing both sentimentality and ruthlessness. This subversion of typical crime drama weapon disposal reinforces her unconventional villainy.
 - The dog's ashes: A disturbing reminder of Alice's lack of empathy, this prop is a metaphor for her ability to destroy and conceal.

- Venetian blinds: A Film Noir technique to make characters appear trapped.



- Settings:
 - The gritty, urban setting of London establishes realism and reflects the show's darker tone. This aligns with the crime drama genre, where settings often serve as a reflection of crime and corruption. The bleak cityscape, often shot in grey and blue tones, adds to the show's film noir influences.
 - Zoe's Office is bright and modern lined with books and represents order and intellect, which is a stark contrast to Luther's chaotic world. This setting also reinforces Zoe's independence and high status, making her a subversion of the passive "princess" trope in crime dramas.
 - Luther's workplace (office) is cramped, dimly lit, and cluttered to mirror his mental state and turbulent personality. This setting is conventional for crime dramas, where detectives often have dark, isolated workspaces that symbolise their personal struggles.
 - Alice's Flat is high up with large windows overlooking the city, it symbolises her control and omniscience. The setting reflects the femme fatale archetype from film noir, where such women often inhabit sophisticated, luxurious spaces that contrast their dangerous nature.

Genre:

(This includes conventions of crime dramas and how Luther fits or challenges them.)

- Conventions of crime drama used:
 - A crime to be solved: The central mystery revolves around Alice's murders, with Luther attempting to uncover the truth.
 - Binary oppositions: The show presents contrasts such as good vs evil (Luther vs Alice), law vs chaos, and justice vs corruption.
 - Recognisable character types: The show features key crime drama roles such as the detective (Luther), the villain (Alice), the sidekick (Ripley), and the victim (Alice's parents).
 - Realistic settings: Police stations, crime scenes, and urban London locations contribute to the show's gritty realism.
 - Iconography: Traditional crime drama elements include Luther's coat, crime scene tape, forensic equipment, and the use of weapons like the hat pin Alice wields.
- Luther supports Neale's genre theory by varying the traditional formula of crime dramas by introducing psychological depth, moral ambiguity, and film noir elements. Luther evolves the crime drama genre by incorporating:
 - Complex, flawed characters: Luther is not a conventional hero—his violent tendencies and obsession blur moral boundaries. Alice is not just a villain but an enigmatic and manipulative femme fatale.

- The show challenges stereotypes, particularly by featuring a Black lead detective, which is rare in British crime dramas.
- Luther borrows from American police procedurals and film noir:
 - The Femme Fatale: Alice embodies this archetype-intelligent, seductive, and dangerous. Her red lipstick, sharp suits, and control over Luther link her to classic film noir figures like Phyllis Dietrichson in *Double Indemnity*.
 - Chiaroscuro Lighting: The show frequently uses stark lighting contrasts, deep shadows, and dramatic framing that reinforces noir's visual style.
 - Much like classic noir settings, Luther's London is dark, oppressive, and morally ambiguous.
 - Luther mirrors noir's 'maverick detective' protagonists like Sam Spade (*The Maltese Falcon*), who operate outside the rules but still pursue justice, through Luther's coat, his outsider status, his flawed heroism.
- Genres evolve over time to reflect social and cultural changes. Luther addresses the changing roles of women (Alice as a femme fatale, Rose Teller as a senior officer) and greater ethnic diversity (Luther as a Black lead detective). The hybridisation of crime drama with psychological thriller and noir elements makes Luther harder to categorise than traditional police procedurals.

Technical codes:

(This includes how the camera, lighting, sound, and editing communicate meaning.)

- Close-ups intensify emotions and tension, particularly in Luther's interviews with Alice, where facial expressions reveal power shifts and manipulation.
- Shot-reverse-shot enhances psychological intensity in key confrontations, such as when Luther realises Alice is the killer. The use of SRS reinforces their mental battle.
- Low-key lighting dominates the opening sequence, creating deep shadows that reflect Luther's moral ambiguity and the show's noir influences.
- Rapid cuts heighten tension and urgency, particularly in the opening scene. The use of rapid cuts/fast pacing mirrors Luther's reckless determination.
- Non-diegetic music builds suspense, often signalling imminent danger or a shift in power dynamics.
- Dialogue reveals character motives, with Alice's taunts exposing her intelligence and psychological control over Luther.



Representation

Constructing representations:

(Media products construct representations rather than simply reflecting reality. These representations are shaped through technical codes, audio codes, and iconography, influencing how the audience perceives characters and events.)

- Technical codes (including audio codes):
 - Camera shots, angles, and editing construct representations by positioning the audience in relation to characters.
 - The first introduction to characters in Luther is carefully framed to establish their status, power, or vulnerability.
 - In the interview scene with Alice, the camera and editing gradually shift perspectives, revealing different aspects of her character. Shot-reverse-shot between Alice and Luther highlights their mental battle, changing the audience's perception of Alice from victim to manipulative antagonist.
 - Audio codes (diegetic and non-diegetic) reinforce representations:
 - Diegetic and non-diegetic sound including a soundtrack, mood music, and dialogue contribute to the construction of representations.
 - For example, the ways in which other characters refer to or describe Luther and Alice contribute to their representations. In Luther's discussion with his colleagues mid-way through his interview with her after the murders:
 - Luther: "It's the way of her saying to us, look at me."
 - "She's proud of this, why give anyone else the credit?"
 - This dialogue constructs Alice as intelligent, narcissistic, and manipulative, reinforcing her femme fatale persona.
- Iconography:
 - Clothing plays a key role in constructing representations:
 - Luther's coat symbolises his detective identity, aligning him with noir and crime drama traditions.

- Alice's red lipstick and sleek suits reinforce her femme fatale role, adding to her aura of power and danger.
- Zoe's professional but softer wardrobe positions her as a contrast to Alice, emphasising her emotional depth rather than manipulation.
- Rose Teller's neutral, masculine tailoring reflects her authority and no-nonsense attitude.

Ethnicity:

- Luther as a Black detective challenges the stereotypical roles often assigned to Black men in British crime dramas, where they are more commonly represented as criminals rather than protagonists.
- The opening chase sequence subverts audience expectations – Luther is the pursuer, not the villain, which disrupts racial stereotypes.
- Luther's representation challenges Stuart Hall's Representation theory by providing a counter-hegemonic portrayal of a Black man in a position of authority.
- The main villains in the series are white, reinforcing the shift away from the traditional racialised criminal stereotype.
- Zoe is a mixed-race woman in a high-status profession as a human rights lawyer which reflects the increased diversity and progress in media representations.

Men & Masculinity:

- Many of the men in the police force hold positions of power, reinforcing traditional male dominance. Even Rose Teller, a female officer, answers to a male superior.
- Luther embodies both stereotypical and subversive traits of masculinity:
 - His physical size, aggression, and dominant presence fit the crime drama archetype of the tough male detective.
 - He is emotionally vulnerable, controlled by both Alice and Zoe, and openly expresses pain and desperation, challenging the trope of the tough, male detective.
- Mark is a binary opposite to Luther, representing a more metrosexual, modern masculinity. Luther struggles to accept Mark's gentler nature, highlighting a conflict between traditional and evolving male identities.
- Alice taunts Luther's masculinity, questioning his strength in his relationship with Zoe: "Why did your wife turn her face from you? Is it because you shine so bright?" This suggests that Luther's intensity is both his strength and weakness, reinforcing the idea that masculinity is fragile and complex.

Women & Femininity:

- Alice Morgan:
 - Begins as a vulnerable victim (crying, shaking, appearing fearful) supporting stereotypical imagery of women before transforming into a dominant, powerful antagonist.
 - She embodies the femme fatale archetype, alternating between seduction and threat, controlling her interactions with Luther.
 - Her dialogue challenges male authority, asserting intellectual superiority:
 - Luther: "I'm coming for you."

- Alice: "Not if I come for you first."
 - She is manipulative and unpredictable, subverting traditional representations of passive female victims in crime dramas.
 - Alice's femme fatale persona aligns with Mulvey's male gaze theory, as her seductive appearance and calculated allure are designed to attract both Luther's and the audience's gaze.
- Zoe:
 - Her role is ambiguous. While she is a successful lawyer, she is also vulnerable and reliant on male protection (Luther and Mark).
 - She is defined largely by romance, love, and relationships and she does not actively drive the narrative. Instead she exists as a catalyst for Luther's emotional struggles.
- Rose Teller:
 - As a senior officer, she represents progress in female representation in law enforcement.
 - Unlike Alice or Zoe, she is practical, authoritative, and independent, actively contributing to the narrative's progression.
 - However, many of her traits (directness, assertiveness, and control) align with traditionally masculine qualities, reinforcing the idea that women in power often adopt male-associated behaviours to succeed.
- It can be argued that the women of the series subvert the male gaze theory as they are not passively objectified for male pleasure, but instead hold power, agency, and narrative significance; Alice weaponises her sexuality and intelligence rather than being reduced to a spectacle, Zoe's role is emotionally complex rather than purely visual, and Rose Teller's authority is defined by her leadership rather than her appearance.

Media Industry

Production:

- Luther is a mainstream programme produced and distributed by the BBC, a major public service broadcaster. The BBC operates under a public service remit, which requires it to inform, educate, and entertain.
 - Luther fits within this remit by offering high-quality, original drama that engages audiences while exploring social themes, such as justice, morality, and crime.
 - As a publicly funded organisation, the BBC is expected to create diverse and culturally significant content, ensuring its programming appeals to a broad UK audience and international markets.
- The show has high production values, evident in:
 - Choice of locations
 - Cinematography
 - Well-established actors such as Idris Elba, Saskia Reeves, and Indira Varma.
- The BBC engages in risk-taking by producing new, innovative programmes but also relies on the repetition of successful formats to maintain audiences in a competitive media landscape.
- The set episode had 6.35 million viewers when it aired in 2010, ranking 6th for the week, behind EastEnders and Doctor Who, indicating strong audience engagement.

- Luther has a wide global distribution, being broadcast on BBC America and in over 200 territories.
- BBC Worldwide marketed Luther globally by releasing a video featuring a scene dubbed into different languages.

Technological Convergence:

- The BBC has adapted to the changing television industry, where digital technology impacts how programmes are produced, distributed, and consumed.
- Luther is not just broadcast weekly at 9pm during a series run, but is also available on-demand across multiple platforms and devices and available on DVD, allowing audiences to binge-watch episodes.
- The show was previously available on Netflix, is currently (March 2021) available on Amazon Prime, and past series were made available on BBC iPlayer before the release of the latest season to encourage brand engagement.
- The BBC has leveraged cross-platform promotion, including a dedicated website and social media platforms to maintain audience interaction.



Funding:

- The BBC operates under a public service broadcasting model, funded by the licence fee (£169.50 per year), rather than commercial advertising.
- This funding model gives the BBC greater autonomy than commercial broadcasters, as it is less driven by ratings and profit, allowing it to offer diverse programming, including crime dramas like Luther.
- The BBC is subject to some governmental control and there is an ongoing discussion centred around the continuation of the licence fee, which is set by the government, with some members unhappy about the BBC's funding model.
- However, there is considerable support from the public, the arts and entertainment industry and sections of the government for what is seen as the essential role played by the public service broadcaster.

Regulation:

- The BBC follows self-regulation measures, including:
 - Scheduling decisions
 - The watershed (9pm for adult content)
 - Pre-programme announcements warning viewers about sensitive content.
- The BBC Board ensures the organisation meets its public service mission, as outlined in the Royal Charter, which is reviewed periodically (current charter runs from 2017 to 2027).

- The BBC is externally regulated by Ofcom which is responsible for ensuring broadcasting standards are upheld and investigating complaints about BBC programmes.
- DVD releases of Luther are classified by the BBFC (British Board of Film Classification) to ensure they meet age rating requirements.

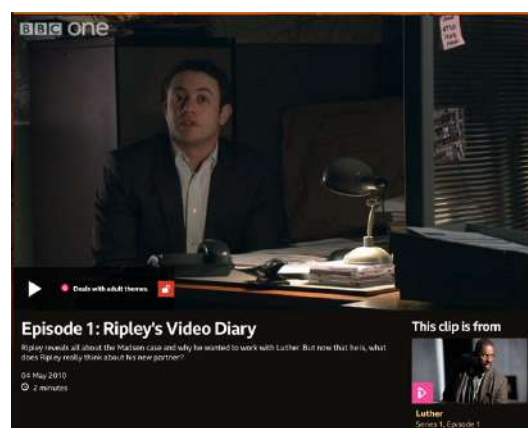
Audience

Target Audiences:

- Luther is produced by the BBC, a public service broadcaster, and is expected to maintain high production values that appeal to a wide audience.
- Primary target audience:
 - The BBC targets 25-40-year-olds, who are familiar with BBC dramas and crime series.
 - The 9pm post-watershed slot allows for adult content, making it suitable for a mature audience.
- Secondary target audience:
 - Luther also appeals to a younger audience (16-25), particularly through its availability on Netflix (previously) and Amazon Prime.
 - Younger viewers are more likely to binge-watch the series, which aligns with changing consumption habits.

How the BBC Targets Audiences:

- The use of teaser and longer trailers introduced the character of Luther to audiences and established an enigma around his character.
- The high production values obvious from the marketing material including the use of recognisable stars and the expectations related to the BBC branding.
- The introduction of enigmatic characters to intrigue audiences including Luther, but also Alice who became very popular. The BBC website for the programme included 'Postcards from Alice' encouraging audiences to engage with the character's story world.
- The creation of other interactive and online features which extend the world of the programme including 'Ripley's Video Diary' which involves the audience by creating a backstory around Luther. The blog from the writer Neil Cross gives an insight into the process of creating the programme and the BBC Writer's room allows audiences to read programme scripts.



Audience Consumption & Changing Technologies:

- Changes and developments in technology have had an impact upon the way in which audiences access, consume and respond to media products. Audiences now have a range of content to choose from on a range of different platforms to suit their needs and lifestyle.
- Multi-platform accessibility:
 - Luther was available on BBC iPlayer, Amazon Prime, DVD, and streaming platforms.
 - Digital technology allowed for on-demand viewing and binge-watching, adapting to audience habits.
- Social media interaction:
 - The BBC used Twitter and Facebook to track audience responses and build engagement.
 - Discussions about Luther made it an example of "water-cooler television," meaning audiences discussed it both online and in-person, particularly between long gaps in series.

Blumler & Katz's Uses and Gratifications Theory:

- Entertainment/Escapism: Crime dramas offer escapism, and Luther's inverted detective story encourages audiences to solve the crime alongside the detective. Audiences may recognise the conventions of the genre and will predict certain outcomes, experiencing pleasure when they are correct in their assumptions. Luther involves the audience from the beginning by placing them in a privileged spectator position regarding the outcome of the chase and Henry Madsen at the start and the relationship between Luther and Alice. Audiences may also be attracted to the actors who are popular, for example Idris Elba, Ruth Wilson and Saskia Reeves. Luther is an enigmatic character who does not display the typical characteristics of his role and this may add to his appeal.
- Information/Education: Crime dramas provide an insight into police procedures, allowing audiences to learn about criminal investigations.
- Social Interaction: Advancements in technology allow viewers to watch and discuss episodes in real-time via social media and online forums. The long gaps between series encouraged fan speculation and discussions before new releases, allowing the show to become a water-cooler topic.
- Personal Identity: Some viewers may relate to specific characters or themes, finding elements of their own lives reflected in the story.

Stuart Hall's Reception Theory:

- Preferred Reading: Audiences see Luther as a progressive, high-quality crime drama, with a Black lead detective subverting stereotypes and a complex femme fatale in Alice, making the show engaging and innovative.
- Negotiated Reading: While viewers may appreciate Luther's gritty storytelling, they may question whether Luther's anger and emotional volatility reinforce stereotypical representations of Black masculinity, and whether Alice's dominance maintains white superiority in power dynamics.
- Oppositional Reading: Some may reject Luther as failing to be truly innovative, arguing that Luther is still manipulated by a white antagonist, Zoe is defined by romance rather than career, and the show adheres to familiar crime drama conventions rather than breaking new ground.

The Sweeney



Context

Product:

- The set historical product is a ten-minute extract from **Series 1, Episode 1** (Ringer), which first aired on ITV on **2nd January 1975 at 9pm**.
- The Sweeney is a **crime drama** that blends **action with police procedural elements**.
- It was **created by Ian Kennedy Martin** as a **spin-off** from a 1974 Armchair Theatre television drama called **Regan**, which had **over 7 million viewers**, leading to the decision to develop it into a series.
- The show follows **two members of The Flying Squad**, a branch of the Metropolitan Police, with the title The Sweeney **derived from Cockney rhyming slang for 'Flying Squad' – 'Sweeney Todd'**.
- The series starred **John Thaw as Jack Regan** and **Dennis Waterman as George Carter** and **ran until 1978**, with two feature film **spin-offs in 1977 and 2012**.

Historical:

- The Sweeney demonstrates how **crime dramas evolved over time**, introducing a more **gritty, realistic representation of the police** influenced by press stories and American crime dramas. This **challenged the previously reassuring image of law enforcement** seen in shows like Dixon of Dock Green and Z Cars.
- The visual style was designed to **reflect realism**, with **16mm film** used to create a **washed-out, grainy look**, reinforcing the show's gritty atmosphere.
- The show **reflected real-life issues within the police force**, as in the 1970s, **The Flying Squad** was frequently in the **news for bribery, corruption, and links to gangsters**.
- It was **produced before the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE)**, which later introduced stricter policing regulations. In The Sweeney, **Regan is seen using violence and**

intimidation to obtain information, reflecting a time when **police operated with fewer restrictions**.

Social & Cultural:

- The show **reflects 1970s British society**, particularly in terms of social hierarchy, power, gender roles, and attitudes towards authority.
- The **male protagonists** are portrayed as **macho, rule-breaking, and violent**, appealing to a **predominantly male audience** at the time.
- While Regan and Carter are shown to be **good at heart**, their morally questionable tactics reflect real-world police corruption, particularly the **Metropolitan Police scandal of the 1970s**, where **Sir Robert Mark investigated police corruption**, leading to the **prosecution of 50 officers and the forced retirement of 478 more**.
- The **representation of women reinforces gender inequality**, with most police officers being men, while female characters are often depicted as victims or sexual temptresses.
- The show had a **lasting impact on crime dramas**, influencing later series such as *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes*.
- The Sweeney became **culturally iconic**, with its dialogue and references appearing in popular culture, including songs like *Wow!* by Kate Bush and *Cool for Cats* by Squeeze.
- The show also **referenced real-life gangsters** like the Kray twins to establish authenticity and cultural links, as seen in Carter's line about Kemble: "He's hard. He's one of the few that The Twins left alone."

Media Language

Narrative:

(This includes how the story is told and structured.)

- The Sweeney follows a linear narrative structure, conforming to Todorov's theory of disruption and resolution. Each episode presents a new crime to be solved, with the character relationships providing an ongoing narrative arc.
- The series features binary oppositions (Levi-Strauss), such as:
 - Good vs evil – Regan and Carter vs criminals.
 - Hero vs villain – The Flying Squad vs gangsters.
 - Law vs crime – Police officers trying to maintain order.
 - Detectives vs authority – Regan and Carter frequently clash with their superior, Haskins.
- Propp's character roles can also be applied:
 - Regan and Carter are the heroes, they solve crimes, arrest dangerous criminals and protect the community, but Regan, in particular is also an anti-hero as he is flawed - he drinks, smokes, challenges authority and does not always follow the rules. He is seen by his superiors to be a bad influence on Carter, referred to by Haskins as 'undisciplined and irresponsible'. However, although he and Carter may use tactics to elicit information, it is clear that they are not corrupt and are ultimately 'good guys', one of the villains comments: 'This is The Sweeney, you don't buy them'.
 - Kemble and his gang are the villains and are clearly established from the opening sequence. They are violent, hardened criminals who are used to getting what they

want through violence and intimidation as seen in the unpleasant scene where Jenny is threatened with the iron.

- Jenny is the princess/damsel in distress, threatened by the criminals.
- Helpers are present in both groups, such as Carter for Regan, Kemble has a sidekick in Brooker and Billy has Stupid Hawes.

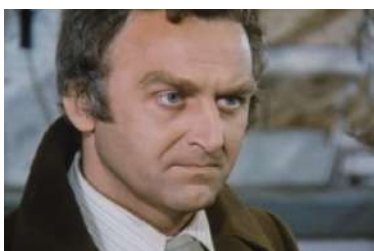
Visual codes (mise-en-scene):

(These include the meanings created by what we see on screen.)

- Costume:
 - Regan and Carter are plain-clothes detectives, wearing casual suits and jackets rather than formal police uniforms. This reflects their status as members of the Flying Squad, operating outside standard police procedures.
 - DCI Haskins wears a formal suit and black overcoat, establishing his authority and adherence to regulations.
 - The criminals' attire visually differentiates them from the police. Frank Kemble, the gang leader, is dressed in more expensive suits, highlighting his wealth and status, while lower-level criminals wear working-class clothing such as leather jackets and casual shirts.



- Lighting:
 - The show uses natural lighting, reinforcing the programme's gritty realism.
- Actors' Performance (Expressions and Gestures):
 - Regan's aggressive physicality (leaning in, pointing fingers, grabbing suspects) establishes his confrontational approach.
 - Carter, as the younger officer, often reacts with facial expressions of concern or amusement, showing his loyalty to Regan but also his occasional discomfort with his methods.
 - Villains are often framed in positions of dominance, lounging in expensive chairs or using direct eye contact to assert power, particularly in Kemble's case.



- Make-up and Hair:
 - Female characters, such as Jenny, are presented with minimal make-up, reinforcing the working-class setting and the lack of glamour in their lives.

- Props:
 - Guns and weapons play a significant role, reflecting the show's focus on violent crime and high-stakes action.
 - Surveillance equipment and photographs are used in investigative scenes, which highlight the police's methods of gathering intelligence.
 - Cars are central to the show's iconography, with high-speed chases serving as a signature element of *The Sweeney*. The Ford Consul GT, frequently driven by Regan and Carter, became iconic.



- Setting:
 - The urban setting of London provides a gritty and unglamorous backdrop, with real locations rather than studio sets being used to enhance authenticity.
 - The police station is depicted as chaotic and overcrowded, reinforcing the high-pressure environment in which the officers work.
 - Criminal hideouts and pubs serve as key locations and reinforce the social divide between the police and the criminal underworld.

Genre:

(This includes conventions of crime dramas and how Luther fits or challenges them.)

- Conventions of crime drama used:
 - Each episode follows a self-contained investigation, with Regan and Carter tracking down criminals involved in violent robberies, kidnappings, or corruption. The show's episodic structure aligns with traditional police procedurals.
 - The show uses binary opposition to present stark contrasts such as law vs crime, order vs chaos, and duty vs corruption. However, *The Sweeney* blurs the moral boundaries between police and criminals, as Regan's aggressive tactics often mirror those of the criminals he pursues.
 - The show includes key crime drama archetypes, such as the no-nonsense detective (Regan), the loyal sidekick (Carter), the authoritative superior (Haskins), and the ruthless villain (Kemble).
 - The show's urban London backdrop, police stations, and crime scenes contribute to its gritty realism.
 - Iconography: Traditional crime drama elements include firearms, car chases, surveillance equipment, and working-class pubs where detectives gather information. The villains are often seen in expensive suits and lavish homes, visually reinforcing their power.
- How *The Sweeney* evolved the crime drama genre:
 - Unlike earlier British crime dramas such as *Dixon of Dock Green*, *The Sweeney* introduced a grittier and more violent portrayal of police work, aligning more closely with American crime dramas such as *Starsky & Hutch*.

- Regan is not a conventional law-abiding officer; he drinks heavily, disregards authority, and uses violence to extract confessions. This reflects a shift in crime dramas towards anti-heroes rather than traditional role models.
- The show was informed by real-life corruption in the Metropolitan Police, mirroring the headlines of the time and reflecting public concerns over institutional wrongdoing.
- The Sweeney supports Neale's genre theory by both repeating and varying crime drama conventions:
 - It retains traditional crime drama elements, such as investigations, action, and law enforcement themes, ensuring audience familiarity.
 - However, it departs from idealistic portrayals of the police by showcasing flawed, rule-breaking detectives.
 - The Sweeney was a hybrid of the traditional British police procedural and the high-energy, action-driven American crime dramas of the 1970s.
- Genre as a dynamic force:
 - Crime dramas evolve to reflect changing social attitudes, and The Sweeney signalled a move away from idealised law enforcement towards a more cynical, complex representation of crime and policing.
 - The show's success influenced later crime dramas such as Life on Mars and Luther, which built upon its themes of flawed detectives, ethical dilemmas, and action-packed narratives.

Technical codes:

(This includes how the camera, lighting, sound, and editing communicate meaning.)

- Cinematography (camera & lighting):
 - Handheld and dynamic camera movements create a sense of urgency and realism, particularly in action sequences and chase scenes.
 - Low-angle shots establish dominance, often used on figures of authority like Haskins or villains like Kemble.
 - Close-ups emphasise emotions, particularly Regan's frustration and aggression or Carter's more level-headed expressions.
 - Over-the-shoulder shots are frequently used in interrogations and confrontational dialogue scenes.
 - Natural lighting dominates most scenes, reinforcing the gritty, realistic tone of the series.



- Editing:

- The show predominantly uses continuity editing, maintaining a sense of realism and allowing smooth transitions between scenes.
- Shot/reverse shot is common in dialogue-heavy scenes, reinforcing power dynamics between characters.
- Jump cuts and cross-cutting heighten tension during action sequences, particularly in car chases and shootouts.
- Longer takes are used in some moments of surveillance or stakeouts, building suspense.
- Sound:
 - Diegetic sound plays a crucial role, with authentic street noises, sirens, and car engines adding to the realism of the urban setting.
 - Non-diegetic music is limited but plays a significant role in the opening sequence, with The Sweeney's theme tune becoming an iconic feature of the show.
 - Silence is used innovatively, particularly in surveillance scenes, heightening suspense and making sudden bursts of action more impactful.

Representation

The Sweeney clearly reflects the values and beliefs of 1970s society in terms of the representations constructed. The police are white heterosexual men reflecting the police force at the time, as are the criminals. Those in positions of authority wielding power and influence are also white men. Very little screen time is given to women in the programme.

Men & Masculinity:

- Regan
 - He is introduced in a way that reflects the stereotypical masculine traits of the 1970s.
 - His attire in a flowered dressing gown and his rough, unkempt appearance reflect his nonchalant attitude towards his appearance, which is a stereotype of the time.
 - Regan's persona is tough, powerful, and willing to use violence when needed. This is reflected in his dialogue: "We're The Sweeney son and we haven't had any dinner, you've kept us waiting. So unless you want a kicking, you tell us where those photographs are."
 - Regan is unafraid to challenge authority, bending the rules without being outright corrupt.
 - As Haskins says: "Everything seems to mould itself around Jack Regan's convenience."
 - His actions and dialogue align with the traditional masculine archetype of the tough, rebellious, and somewhat reckless character.
- Carter
 - Regan's partner, serves as the 'sidekick' in a typical 'buddy' relationship. Carter is portrayed as more stable and level-headed, often balancing Regan's impulsiveness.
 - However, like Regan, Carter is involved in violent actions and helps solve the crime.
 - His role as a stabilizing force shows a more rounded version of masculinity where strength is accompanied by stability and wit.
- The Villains, led by Kemble, represent stereotypical criminal masculinity.

- They are portrayed as aggressive, violent, and hardened, with their access to weapons and their involvement in organized crime constructing their representation.
- This portrayal fits the usual villain archetype in crime dramas, where the villain is often aggressive, power-hungry, and dangerous.

Women & Femininity:

- Women's roles in *The Sweeney* reflect the male-dominated environment of the time, especially in the police force, where women rarely held high-ranking positions. The only female officer depicted is in a caring role, seen arriving to protect Jenny after she is threatened by the gang.
- Jenny:
 - She is the victim in the episode and is portrayed as helpless and reliant on male protection.
 - In the opening scene, she is not seen but heard, hidden under a duvet.
 - She is threatened by the criminals, and Regan steps in to protect her.
 - Her relationship with Regan remains ambiguous and does not significantly develop throughout the narrative.
 - In the final scene, Jenny is physically subservient to Regan, lying on the floor while he remains in a dominant, protective position on the chair. This reinforces the stereotypical representation of women as passive victims in need of male protection.
- Edi:
 - She is another woman in the episode presented as more streetwise and feistier than Jenny, yet she still embodies the role of the long-suffering woman.
 - Edi's character does not have control over her situation; she is unaware of her husband's criminal return and displays grudging respect for Regan.
 - Despite her resilience, her representation still aligns with traditional gender roles of women enduring hardship.

Media Industry

Production:

- *The Sweeney* was produced by Talkback Thames using the Film Production Unit Euston Films, which focused on high production values.
- Each episode cost over £250,000 to produce and was filmed on a strict ten-day shooting schedule.
- *The Sweeney* was the most popular programme made by Euston Films.
- Thames Television was one of the regional franchise holders of the ITV network, broadcasting in the London area from 1968-1992.
- *The Sweeney* was produced by ITV, a commercial broadcaster, which follows a different production and distribution model from *Luther*, which was a BBC production.

Funding:

- *The Sweeney* was broadcast on ITV, which in 1974 was the UK's only Independent Television Channel that relied on advertisements to fund television programmes.
- The viewing figures for each episode would have guaranteed ITV valuable income from advertisers who wanted to place commercials during the breaks.

- The success of *The Sweeney* was crucial for Thames Television and ITV in generating revenue.

Regulation:

- *The Sweeney* was broadcast by ITV in the post-watershed 9pm slot, which indicates that the show contained mature themes related to violence and crime.
- The characters being part of the Metropolitan Police's 'Flying Squad' suggested that the narrative would explore themes of law enforcement and violence.
- While there was mild swearing and some references to sexual activity, the content remained relatively restrained, reflecting the social and cultural attitudes of the 1970s.
- At the time *The Sweeney* aired in the 1970s, ITV was under the regulation of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), which had stricter controls than today's Ofcom, but the rules around depictions of police violence and corruption were looser than they would be now.
- *The Sweeney's* DVDs were later given a 15 rating by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) due to its use of violence and adult themes and the 2012 film adaptation of *The Sweeney* was rated 15 by the BBFC.

Audience

Targeting audiences:

- The initial appeal of *The Sweeney* was its more realistic representation of the police force, which reflected real news stories of the time.
- The show also attracted audiences with the humour created through the relationship between Regan and Carter.
- The filming style and action sequences appealed to crime drama fans who wanted a more contemporary take on the genre and the longer takes (compared to modern crime dramas) were similar to more serious dramas of the time, expecting greater audience concentration.
- Over time, audiences became invested in the characters of Regan and Carter, which contributed to the show's continued success.
- At its peak, *The Sweeney* had 19 million viewers per episode and the programme's ongoing popularity is evident in the two spin-off films released in 1977 and 2012.

Audience consumption:

- The gritty realism of *The Sweeney* made it stand out from other crime dramas of the time, appealing to audiences who wanted something new.
- Action sequences, including car chases and shootouts, made it more visually exciting, offering spectacle usually seen in films rather than TV.
- As audiences became more engaged with the characters, they followed the series across multiple seasons, leading to its long-term success.

Blumler & Katz's Uses and Gratifications Theory:

- Entertainment/Diversion: *The Sweeney* provided audiences with high-energy action sequences, including car chases, shootouts, and violent confrontations, which were not commonly seen in British television crime dramas at the time. The fast-paced narrative and Regan and Carter's witty banter added excitement, which made it engaging escapism for

viewers. The show's gritty realism made it feel more immersive compared to earlier crime dramas like *Dixon of Dock Green*, which portrayed a more idealised version of policing.

- **Personal Identity:** Male audiences, particularly working-class men, may have related to the rebellious, tough, and anti-authority attitude of Regan, who often clashed with his superiors but still got the job done. Some viewers may have identified with Carter's more level-headed and loyal personality and saw him as a grounded counterbalance to Regan's reckless nature. The show reflected the struggles of law enforcement in the 1970s, and viewers working in similar professions may have identified with the harsh realities of police work.
- **Information/Education:** While primarily a fictional drama, *The Sweeney* mirrored real concerns about crime and police corruption in the 1970s, giving audiences insight into London's gangland culture and the Flying Squad's role in tackling organised crime. The representation of the police, while dramatized, reflected real-world issues of corruption and rule-bending officers which echoed public discussions at the time.
- **Social Interaction:** *The Sweeney* became water-cooler television so audiences would discuss the show with friends, family, or colleagues after each episode. The popularity of Regan and Carter's characters led to the show having a strong fan following.

Stuart Hall's Reception Theory:

- **Preferred reading:** Some audiences accepted the gritty realism of the show, seeing it as an accurate reflection of policing in the 1970s. The heroic portrayal of Regan and Carter as rule-breaking but effective officers would have been appealing to those who viewed crime as a serious societal issue.
- **Negotiated reading:** Others may have appreciated the action and humour but were more critical of the violence and corruption in the police force.
- **Oppositional reading:** Some viewers may have disagreed with the macho, aggressive policing style, feeling it glorified police violence rather than critiquing it. Feminist audiences may have also opposed the lack of strong female characters and the gender stereotypes in the show.

TLC – Waterfalls



Context

Background:

- TLC is an **all-girl R&B/hip-hop group**; at the time of the release of 'Waterfalls', the members were Tinonne '**T-Boz**' Watkins, Lisa '**Left Eye**' Lopes and Rozonda '**Chilli**' Thomas.
- They have **sold over 65 million records worldwide**, making them one of the **best-selling American girl groups** and the **5th best selling girl group worldwide**.
- 'Waterfalls' is a track from their second album, *CrazySexyCool* (1994), and achieved international success, reaching **number one in many territories**. It's also considered to be one of the band's signature tracks.
- The group was originally formed as a **fusion of R&B and hip-hop** (a hybrid that became popular in the 1990s). TLC combined the smooth and soulful elements of R&B and the tougher, more 'street' approach of rap, to create a girl group with a '**tomboy**' image.
- Unlike many girl groups, TLC had more of a '**rock 'n' roll image**'.
- In the press, they were **honest about their individual battles** with addiction, police arrests (Lopes burned down her boyfriend's house following an argument), abusive relationships and their spats with each other. These **issues were often explored in their music**, arguably making TLC more 'gritty' than other R&B acts.
- In **2002, Lopes was killed** in a car accident, but the remaining members of TLC continue to record and tour as a duo.

Social & Cultural:

- Many R&B videos **focus on romantic narratives** and, often, hip-hop videos feature groups of men **celebrating their wealth often achieved through crime**.

- ‘Waterfalls’ references these genre conventions by **showing the temptations of both sex and crime**. Its overall message is **less glamorised and more cautionary** than many videos in this genre.
- In the **1990s**, there was a **lot of public concern** and media coverage of the song’s two issues - the **spread of HIV/AIDS** (at that point a deadly condition) and the **escalation of street violence** related to drug gangs.
- ‘Waterfalls’ attempts to explore these through **two tragic but sympathetic narratives**: a young black man trying to make easy money despite the worries of his mother; and a couple whose lack of safe sex leads to their deaths.
- TLC were the **second-biggest girl band of the 1990s** after the Spice Girls, who had a similar message of female solidarity and empowerment.
- The song could fall into the sub-genre of **‘socially aware’ hip-hop** that explores real-life issues but in a sympathetic way, rather than glamorising damaging lifestyles.
- Many **‘gangsta’ rappers** (such as Tupac, NWA, and Notorious BIG) also produced songs about the **difficulties of poverty, crime and peer pressure**, but **‘Waterfalls’ feels more emotional and nuanced** than these ‘ghetto fables’.
- The video sends its messages using the **style of expressionism** rather than social realism.

Media Language

Genre, lyrics, and narrative:

- ‘Waterfalls’ blends three music video genres: performance, narrative and conceptual.
- There are two clear narratives with characters and situations that directly relate to the lyrics of the song.
- There is some clear illustration of the lyrics (where the images show the literal meaning of the words); for example, there is a mother literally gazing out of a window at her son and a man literally doesn’t recognise his own reflection.
- Intercut with the narrative sections are shots of TLC performing the song and dancing in sync; demonstrating typical codes of the music video form.
- The music video also incorporates conceptual elements to convey the song's message and thematic content through the use of SFX, iconography, symbolism, and how the produces choose to depict the storylines.



- The chorus:

*“Don't go chasing waterfalls
Please stick to the rivers and the lakes that you're used to
I know that you're gonna have it your way or nothing at all
But I think you're moving too fast”*

- "Chasing Waterfalls" is TLC's way of expressing how people chase intangible dreams with no thought of the consequences.
- The metaphor of waterfalls could be linked to how beautiful waterfalls are but also how dangerous they are.
- This rain and water imagery could be a metaphor to represent the tears that chasing an unrealistic dream will bring to you.

- The first verse:

*"A lonely mother gazing out of her window
Staring at a son that she just can't touch
If at any time he's in a jam she'll be by his side
But he doesn't realize he hurts her so much
But all the praying just ain't helping at all
'Cause he can't seem to keep his self out of trouble
So, he goes out and he makes his money the best way he know how
Another body laying cold in the gutter
Listen to me"*

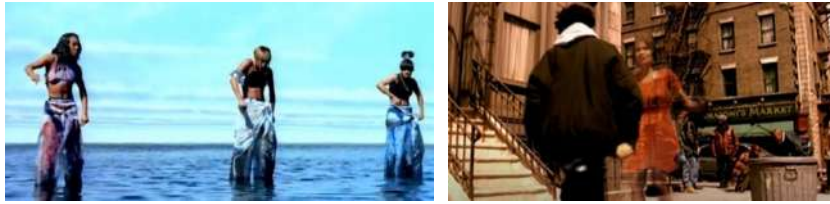
- The first verse is talking about an inner city mother-and-son relationship.
- He is chasing "waterfalls" (money and respect by dealing drugs), but his mother knows this cannot end well.
- He eventually dies because of this.
- The second verse:

*"Little precious has a natural obsession for temptation
But he just can't see
She give him loving that his body can't handle
But all he can say is, "Baby, it's good to me"
One day he goes and takes a glimpse in the mirror
But he doesn't recognize his own face
His health is fading and he doesn't know why
Three letters took him to his final resting place
Y'all don't hear me"*

- The second verse deals with a man's relationship with a woman.
- His "waterfall" is unprotected sex - his girlfriend has a "natural obsession for temptation." This could mean she is cheating on him or has been promiscuous.
- Either way, he contracts HIV and dies.

Mise-en-scene:

- Costumes:
 - The costumes of TLC are influenced by 90s R&B fashion.
 - The costume of the son and the people he meets up with (baggy tracksuits, baseball caps, dark glasses) has connotations of a 'ghetto' / dangerous urban environment. The costume along with the location has intertextual links to films of the 1990s like New Jack City and Boyz 'N The Hood.
 - The costumes of the couple suggest an active sexual relationship.



- Make-up & hair:
 - TLC's make up (make-up accentuating eyes and lips) presents them as traditionally feminine which differs from their costume.



- Props:
 - Props such as the photo frame and the brown paper bag serves as a symbolic tool that is used to present the narrative in a conceptual manner.



- Settings:
 - The presence of waterfalls and large bodies of water provides a visually striking contrast against the urban or indoor settings in the video.
 - The locations that TLC can be seen in are an endless body of water and a waterfall. Both these locations are reflective of the song and push forward the water imagery TLC are creating with their lyrics.
 - Chilli in an interview with The Project said “when you think about a waterfall, it looks very beautiful ... but if you follow it down, it crashes. So, that is anything in your life that is not good for you is a waterfall... anything that is not healthy in your life”



- In the first verse, the main location is the streets of an urban city. We can see this by the brownstone house, stoop and street corner. This environment is often viewed as “ghetto” and there are connotations of violence and danger.
- This location is often used in media texts (Crooklyn, Everybody Hates Chris, hip hop music videos, etc.) to connote an urban environment.
- The last location is a bedroom used for the 2nd storyline. This creates an intimate atmosphere and is reflective of the topic of the storyline.



- Iconography:
 - Within the narrative of HIV/AIDS, the iconography commonly associated with the romance genre is employed. This includes the use of attractive semi-naked actors, silk stockings, tangled sheets, and large mirrors.
 - However, these familiar elements swiftly take on a threatening and horrific tone, serving to depict the symptoms of the disease. For instance, the over-exposed image of the man's face and glowing eyes bear a resemblance to the transformation scenes found in horror movies.



Symbolism:

- Symbolism is used to communicate meanings through connotation. Instead of explicitly showing drugs or a clear HIV diagnosis, symbolic representations are used.
- Drugs are symbolized by a brown paper bag, while AIDS is represented through visual cues such as skin deterioration.
- Also, a montage of photos depicting the female character's previous partners serves as a symbolic representation of the impact of the disease or how she got the disease.

Technical codes:

- Camera shots:
 - The performance section use multiple formal conventions of music videos: close-ups of their faces, direct address, and in terms of editing, dance moves cut to the rhythm of the music.
 - The use of wide shots and extreme wide shots in a large body of water creates a visually striking spectacle. This has connotations to nature, tranquillity, and a sense of freedom.
- Editing:
 - The video utilises montage editing and quick cuts at the start and after each the music video which gives certain parts of the video a fast-paced feel.
 - The montage of flying imagery, with natural and urban landscapes zooming past is a deliberate editing technique carries connotations that are linked to the song's message of caution against moving too quickly.
 - The video also utilises cross fades and dips to black when cutting between shots as this was common for music videos during the time.
- SFX:
 - There are some abstract elements in the video. TLC first appear like water spirits, liquid versions of themselves.
 - This could be an intertextual reference to the 'liquid metal' T1000 in Terminator 2. This links explicitly to the title and metaphors of the song.



- Special effects are used to portray the ghostly characters of the mother and son, and the symptoms of the man's disease. This use of CGI adds an almost supernatural element to a song about very real social issues. They balance the gritty realism of the narratives with something almost magical.
- The mother appears as a 'ghost' trying to prevent her son from approaching the gang; and the son later appears as a 'real' ghost that the mother can't see.
- The SFX in the HIV narrative make the disease seem more like a magical curse than a sexually transmitted illness.



Representation

Ethnicity:

- The video challenges some racial stereotypes while reinforcing others.
- The young Black man is not depicted as a typical gangster but as someone trying to make easy money to help his family, offering a more sympathetic portrayal.
- However, the gang members who kill him do reinforce ethnic and gender stereotypes, as they are dressed in typical 'street' attire, using aggressive body language and props associated with gang culture.
- The video shifts the focus from blaming individuals to highlighting systemic issues in Black communities.

Gender:

- TLC's costume and make-up create a complex representation: parts of their image are traditionally feminine (make-up accentuating eyes and lips, colourful costumes and skimpy tops baring their slim midriffs). However, some elements are more masculine: such as the loose-fitting trousers that are similar to combat pants and hide their legs (women's legs are something on which many hip-hop/R'n'B videos obsessively focus).
- The mother is depicted as a stereotypical nurturer, caring and worried about her son's actions, reinforcing traditional gender expectations of maternal figures/women.
- The son is portrayed as overly independent, a masculine trait, which ultimately leads him to his downfall.
- The woman in the second storyline is represented as promiscuous, which is suggested through the prop of the picture frame with flashing images of different men. This and the STD she gives her partner reinforce the stereotype of sexually active women as irresponsible.
- However, the man becomes the victim, subverting the usual gender dynamic where women suffer the consequences of sexual behaviour.

Age:

- Age is represented stereotypically, with young people shown as impulsive and reckless, while older figures, like the mother, are wise, loving, and cautious.
- The young Black man ignores his mother's warnings, reinforcing the common narrative of youth disregarding parental guidance.
- The young couple is depicted as wealthy and sexually active, but their lack of responsibility ultimately leads to tragedy, reinforcing the idea that youthful excess has consequences.

Social Issues:

- The video tackles serious topics like HIV/AIDS and gang violence but presents them in an emotionally impactful way rather than glamorising them.
- The young man is not a typical gangster but rather represented as someone trying to make easy money to help his family. His 'call me' hand gesture to his mother before his death humanises him as it shows he still cares about his mother. He becomes a victim of the violent black male gang members.
- The sexuality of the couple is first represented as glamorous and intimate, and the multiple close-ups of the man as he begins to become ill encourage our empathy rather than condemnation.
- The supernatural presence of TLC themselves, appearing from water-based landscapes, elevates them as wise, guiding figures, reinforcing their role as messengers rather than just performers.
- The start of the music video is filmed and edited as if something/someone is falling from the sky (like an angel?) before TLC manifest from the water.

Understanding the exam questions

Section A: Television (crime drama)

Question 1: Media Language or Representation

This question will be worth **20 marks** and will assess your ability to analyse either media language or representation in relation to the extract set and will be in two parts.

- Part (a) will assess the ability to analyse media products.
- Part (b) will assess the ability to analyse and make judgements and draw conclusions. Reference to relevant contexts may be required.

This question will focus on an extract from a set television programme (Luther or The Sweeney).

Typical focus areas include:

- Media Language: Exploring genre, narrative, technical codes such as sound and camerawork, and visual codes such as mise-en-scene or costumes.
- Representation: Analysing how gender, ethnicity, or issues/messages are constructed.

Tips for Success:

- Use specific examples from the extract.
- Identify how techniques link to the genre or audience expectations.
- Apply theories where relevant and use subject specific terminology.

Question 2: Media Industry, Audience or Context

This question will be worth **10 marks** and will assess knowledge and understanding of media industries, audiences, or media contexts.

This question will focus on a set television programme (Luther or The Sweeney).

Typical focus areas include:

- Media Industries: How TV shows are produced, distributed, and marketed.
- Audiences: How TV shows engage with, target, or are consumed by audiences.
- Media Contexts: How societal, cultural, or historical factors influence TV shows.

Tips for Success:

- Start with a clear point, provide evidence (specific examples), explain how it supports your point, and link back to the question.
- Use contexts to support your points.
- Apply theories where relevant and use subject specific terminology.

Section B: Music Videos and Online Media

Question 3: Media Language or Representation

This question will be worth **20 marks** and will assess the ability to make judgements and draw conclusions through an analysis of the set media products in terms of either media language or representation. Reference to relevant contexts may be required.

This question asks you to discuss the two set music videos, either Taylor Swift-- The Man, Justin Bieber -- Intentions, or TLC – Waterfalls.

Typical focus areas include:

- Media Language: Exploring music video conventions, technical codes such as sound and camerawork, and visual codes such as mise-en-scene or costumes.
- Representation: Analysing how gender, ethnicity, or issues/messages are constructed.

Tips for Success:

- Give clear points that directly address the question with evidence from the music videos to support.
- Evaluate whether these reinforce or challenge the topic.
- Link to media contexts, such as societal norms or industry trends.
- Apply theories where relevant and use subject specific terminology.

Question 4: Media Industry, Audience or Context / Online Presence

This question will be worth **10 marks** and will assess knowledge and understanding of media industries, audiences or media contexts.

Typical focus areas include:

- Media Industries: How music videos are produced, distributed, or marketed.
- Audiences: How music videos engage with, target, or are consumed by audiences.
- Media Contexts: How societal, cultural, or historical factors influence music videos.

Tips for Success:

- Start with a clear point, provide evidence (specific examples), explain how it supports your point, and link back to the question.
- Use contexts to further support your points.
- Apply theories where relevant and use subject specific terminology.

Example responses

Paper 2 – Q1



(a) Explore how costumes create meaning in this extract. [10]

Costume plays a crucial role in constructing meaning in this extract from *Luther* as Zoe's professional attire, Alice's dark disguise, and Luther's dishevelled suit all contribute to the tension and themes within the narrative.

Zoe's formal costume and Alice's disguise create a stark contrast that reinforces their differing personalities and power dynamics in the scene. Zoe wears a professional outfit that reflects her status as a successful lawyer and signifies her intelligence. However, in the hostage scene, this polished appearance becomes ironic as she is placed in a vulnerable position, unable to use her authority to escape. In contrast, Alice's wig and dark costume serves as a disguise that reinforces her role as the Proppian villain. Alice's costume reflects her psychological power – she controls situations through calculated manipulation rather than brute force and her transformation aligns with the archetype of the femme fatale who uses intelligence and unpredictability to dominate her victims.

Luther's costume reflects his dual identity as a dedicated detective and a deeply flawed individual. His suit and tie conform to the conventions of crime drama detectives. However, his untidy appearance (loosened tie, crumpled shirt) suggests an emotionally burdened character who prioritises solving crimes over maintaining a polished image. His slightly unkempt look also symbolises his maverick approach to policing.

In conclusion, the costumes in this extract are carefully constructed to enhance characterisation of Luther, Alice and Zoe whilst communicating deeper themes within the narrative.

(b) How typical of the genre are the locations used in this extract? [10]

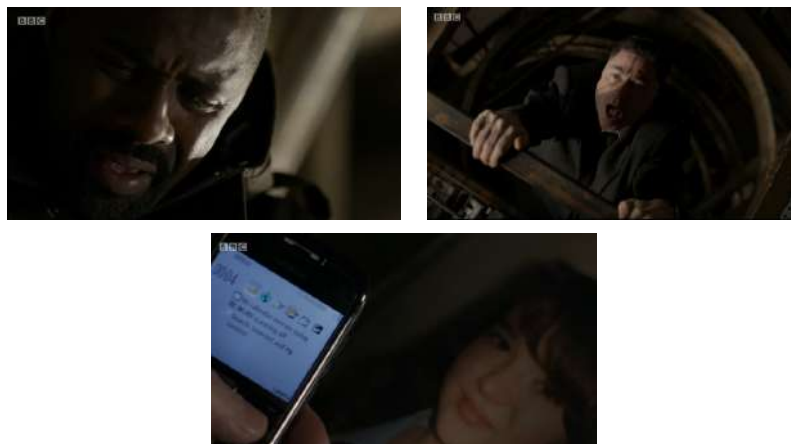
The locations used in this extract align closely with the conventions of the crime drama genre. The empty London streets outside a modern business building create a tense atmosphere and emphasise isolation and vulnerability which are a common theme in crime dramas. The use of corporate architecture contrasts with the gritty, violent nature of the

scene, which signifies the idea of hidden dangers lurking beneath the surface of society. Many crime dramas use urban settings to reflect a world where crime operates in plain sight, making this a typical convention.

Luther's office is a more traditional crime drama setting. The space is cluttered with stacks of case files to reflect his obsession with solving crimes. This mirrors classic detective figures who are consumed by their work. The confined nature of the office adds to the noir-inspired atmosphere, which reinforces the idea of entrapment and the detective's inability to escape his work. This setting is highly typical of crime dramas, which frequently depict detectives in enclosed spaces to highlight their dedication and isolation.

However, the extract also includes some elements that are less conventional. The modern corporate exterior is less commonly associated with crime dramas, which often favour abandoned buildings or dark alleyways to establish a grittier tone.

In conclusion, while the locations used in this extract are largely typical of crime dramas, some aspects challenge conventions by offering a more modern environment that contrasts with the gritty world of crime.



(a) Explore how sound is used in this extract. [8]

In this extract from Luther, sound is used effectively to build tension and create a sense of danger. At the start of the chase, non-diegetic music is used to create intensity and makes the audience feel the urgency of the situation. The diegetic sound of footsteps and heavy breathing of Luther and Henry during the chase also heightens the tension. This makes the audience feel as if they are part of the chase, experiencing the danger alongside the characters.

The diegetic sound of police sirens interrupts the chase and adds to the tension. The use of the diegetic sound reminds the audience of the stakes involved and connote the danger and urgency in this extract. Sirens are a common sound in crime dramas and their inclusion links the scene to the genre and raises the suspense.

During the stand-off between Luther and Henry, the diegetic sound of heavy breathing continues but there is no dialogue at first, which creates an uncomfortable silence and builds suspense as the audience anticipates what will happen next. When dialogue does occur, it provides context and exposition, which help the audience understand the characters of

Luther and Henry and the situation at hand. The dialogue allows the audiences to place Luther as the Proppian hero and Henry as the Proppian villain.

(b) How far is the camerawork in this extract typical of the genre? Explore examples from the extract to support your points. [12]

The camerawork in this extract is in many ways typical of the crime genre but there are also moments where it challenges genre expectations.

Firstly, there is a range of shot types, including long shots, close-ups, and extreme close-ups, which are cut together in a fast-paced sequence. This is typical of the crime genre because it helps to create tension and excitement, especially during the chase between Luther and Henry. These shots make the audience feel the urgency of the moment and reflect the life and death stakes common in crime dramas. The use of a hand-held camera during the chase adds a sense of chaos, which is typical of the crime genre as it often aims to put the audience into the action and create a gritty but realistic atmosphere.

The first time we see Luther's face is an extreme close-up of his eyes, which immediately shows the intensity and determination of his character. This reflects his role as the Proppian hero, though the extreme close-up also hints that he may be dangerous, which suggests a more complex hero than usual for the genre.

During the stand-off, low-angle shots of Luther when Henry is dangling from the bridge create a sense of power and authority, which is typical for a detective in this genre as they are often portrayed as figures of authority. However, this shot also makes Luther look threatening, almost villainous, which is untypical as he is supposed to be the hero. This suggests moral ambiguity and reflects the more modern, psychological approach of crime dramas like Luther, where heroes are flawed. By contrast, high-angle shots of Henry make him appear weak and vulnerable as he hangs on for his life. This is typical of the genre, where criminals are often caught and shown to be powerless when faced with the detective.

Finally, there are insert shots of Mia's photograph, which connect to the narrative and Luther's motivation. These shots are important because they remind the audience of the emotional stakes which is typical of crime dramas as they often focus on the personal connection between the detective and the case/pursuit of justice.

In conclusion, the camerawork in this extract is mostly typical of the crime genre through the variety of shots and angles to create tension and show power dynamics. However, some shots, like the low angles that make Luther look threatening, are untypical and reflect the more complex nature of his character.



(a) Explore the representations of gender in this extract. [10]

In this extract, the representations of gender support and challenge traditional crime drama stereotypes. Men are depicted as Proppian heroes, with Luther embodying the classic detective archetype. He is presented as a figure of authority and physically dominant but morally complex. This reinforces traditional expectations of masculinity in crime dramas. His determined presence and engagement in violent confrontations align with the genre's conventions, where male protagonists are often responsible for restoring order. However, the extract also portrays men as violent, as seen in Luther choking Alice Morgan, which suggests a darker side to masculinity.

However, women in the extract challenge traditional gender stereotypes, particularly through Alice, who subverts expectations by assuming the role of the Proppian villain. As a femme fatale, she is manipulative and dangerous, demonstrated through her calculated behaviour. Her grabbing of the knife to threaten Luther highlights her power and breaks away from the victimised roles often associated with female characters in crime dramas. Her ability to outsmart and challenge Luther reinforces her status as an unconventional female antagonist and challenges Mulvey's male gaze theory as she is not objectified but instead is presented as intelligent and powerful. Rather than being there to provide visual pleasure for a male audience, as Mulvey argues often happens to women in film and television, Alice holds narrative power and drives the story forward. This subversion of the male gaze is significant because it offers a more complex and empowered representation of women in the crime drama genre.

In conclusion, the extract presents a complex representation of gender where both men and women support and subvert from stereotypes.

(b) How stereotypical are the representations of ethnicity in this extract? [10]

The extract features both stereotypical and subversive representations of ethnicity. Luther, as a Black male protagonist, challenges traditional crime drama stereotypes by occupying the role of the Proppian hero, a position typically held by white male detectives. His intelligence and authority make him an atypical representation of Black men in the genre. However, when he violently chokes Alice, he aligns with the common stereotype of the 'angry Black man'. This gesture reinforces a negative portrayal of Black masculinity as aggressive and emotionally volatile. This moment complicates his role as the hero, as his

actions blur the line between protector and perpetrator. Hall argues that stereotypes are a form of representation that reduces people to oversimplified characteristics. In this instance, Luther's dual portrayal both supports and challenges Hall's representation theory. On one hand, he is not entirely reduced to a stereotype, as his intelligence, authority, and position as the lead detective present a more complex and positive representation of Black masculinity but his violent act of choking Alice reinforces a negative stereotype of black men. While he is not solely defined by this aggression, it momentarily conforms to societal fears and media portrayals of Black men as dangerous figures.

Alice, as a white woman, initially subverts racial and gender stereotypes by being the aggressor. She is manipulative and dangerous, taking on the role of the Proppian villain. This is untypical in crime dramas, where women, particularly white women, are often victims rather than threats. However, as the extract progresses, she falls into a more conventional role when Luther overpowers her. Her vulnerability in this moment reinforces the stereotypical representation of white women as fragile and in need of protection, particularly in contrast to the perceived physical dominance of Black men.

In conclusion, the extract presents a complex portrayal of ethnicity, both reinforcing and challenging stereotypes.

Paper 2 – Q2

Explain how media contexts influence crime dramas or sitcoms. Refer to *The Sweeney* or *Friends to support your points*. [10]

Media contexts are important in shaping crime dramas, as they influence their themes, characters and portrayal of law enforcement. *The Sweeney* reflects the social and historical context of 1970s Britain; a time when crime rates were high and public trust in the police was declining due to corruption scandals. This is evident in the representation of the protagonists, Regan and Carter, who are tough, rule-breaking detectives in the Metropolitan Police's Flying Squad. Their violent methods reflect real concerns about police corruption at the time. However, the show was influenced by American crime dramas to adopt a gritty, action-packed style.

Crime dramas also reflect cultural attitudes toward law enforcement and justice. *The Sweeney* presents a male-dominated police force and reflects the lack of diversity in the real police service during the 1970s. Women in the show are largely confined to passive roles, either as victims or love interests. The show's representation of criminals also mirrors fears about organised crime and gang violence in London at the time.

In conclusion, *The Sweeney* is a prime example of how crime dramas are shaped by the media context in which they are produced. The show's themes, characters, and visual style all reflect the context of the 1970s.

Explain the effect of social and cultural contexts on crime dramas or sitcoms. Refer to *Luther* or *The IT Crowd* to support your points. [10]

Social and cultural contexts effect crime dramas by shaping their narratives, use of genre conventions, character representation, and themes. *Luther* reflects the evolving social attitudes of today's society, particularly through its' diversity and moral ambiguity in law enforcement. Unlike earlier crime dramas, *Luther* features a Black lead detective, which challenges traditional representations of authority figures in British crime dramas. This reflects a growing push for diversity in mainstream media and aligns with the BBC's duty as a public service broadcaster to reflect modern Britain.

Social and cultural contexts also influenced the representation of characters and gender roles. Unlike traditional crime dramas where female characters were often passive victims or love interests, *Luther* introduces strong, independent women such as Alice Morgan who is a highly intelligent and manipulative antagonist. As a femme fatale, Alice subverts expectations of women as defenceless and reflects shifting attitudes towards female agency. Similarly, DCI Rose Teller, *Luther*'s superior, represents the increasing presence of women in high-ranking police roles. This change reflects audience expectations for more complex and capable female characters.

Unlike earlier crime dramas that focused on street-level criminals, *Luther* explores psychological crime and serial killers, which is influenced by public fascination with criminal psychology. This shift reflects how audiences have become more interested in the motivations behind criminal behaviour rather than just the process of solving crimes and straightforward 'good vs evil' narratives.

In conclusion, Luther demonstrates how crime dramas are shaped by the social and cultural contexts in which they are produced. The show's diverse representation and focus on modern policing issues reflect contemporary Britain's evolving attitudes.

Why might audience responses to crime dramas or sitcoms change over time? Refer to the crime dramas or sitcoms you have studied to support your points. [10]

Audience responses to crime dramas change over time due to shifting social attitudes. When *The Sweeney* was first broadcast, audiences largely took a preferred reading (Hall's reception theory) of the show, viewing it as an exciting and action-packed portrayal of the police. The show's depiction of the Flying Squad, a real-life specialist police unit would've been seen as more realistic than previous crime dramas like *Dixon of Dock Green*, which presented a polite and reassuring image of policing. In the 1970s, many viewers (mostly men) would've admired Regan's tough, rule-breaking approach to catching criminals. However, modern audiences are more likely to take a negotiated or oppositional reading and question the show's portrayal of police brutality and corruption. The show normalised aggressive policing methods, with Regan using violence and intimidation to get results. While this was accepted at the time, today's audiences, particularly in light of concerns over police misconduct, may see this as problematic.

By contrast, *Luther* reflects modern audience expectations for diversity and complex storytelling. When the show first aired, many viewers took a preferred reading and celebrated Idris Elba's role as a Black lead detective, something rare in British crime dramas. However, some critics later took a negotiated reading by arguing that while *Luther* promoted diversity, it lacked an authentic representation of Black British culture. Similarly, shifting attitudes towards gender may also influence audience responses. Alice Morgan, as a highly intelligent and manipulative female villain, was seen as refreshing at the time, but some modern audiences may take an oppositional reading, arguing that the show reinforces the trope of unstable women who use their sexuality and intellect to manipulate men.

To summarise, audience responses to crime dramas evolve as social attitudes change as seen with *The Sweeney* and *Luther*.

How does Uses and Gratifications theory explain why audiences watch crime dramas or sitcoms? Refer to *Luther* or *The IT Crowd* to support your response. [10]

People watch crime dramas for different reasons and the Uses and Gratifications theory explains that audiences actively choose media texts like *Luther* to satisfy specific needs.

One reason people watch *Luther* is for education and information. Although it is fictional, *Luther* gives viewers insight into the world of policing and criminal investigations. Audiences may be interested in learning about criminal behaviour and what it's like fighting crime on the front line.

Another key reason is escapism. *Luther* allows viewers to escape from their everyday lives and enter a dark, dangerous world of crime and moral conflict. By watching *Luther*, audiences can experience the tension and excitement of catching criminals without facing real-life risks, which is a typical gratification gained from crime dramas.

Audiences may also watch Luther for social interaction. As a popular show, Luther provides viewers with watercooler topics to discuss with friends, family, or online communities. For example, audiences might debate whether Luther should be blamed for letting Henry Madsen fall to his death.

Another reason audiences may watch Luther is personal identification. Some viewers may relate to Luther or other characters. Luther's complicated personality makes him more human and relatable, especially to viewers who may face their own challenges. Seeing Luther navigate his emotions and moral dilemmas can create a strong emotional connection for the audience.

Finally, the main reason most people watch crime dramas is for entertainment. It is entertaining to see a programme with high production value that constantly mentally stimulates and surprises the audience.

Explain how digital technologies change the ways in which audiences consume television. Refer to the crime dramas or sitcoms you have studied to support your points. [10]

Digital technologies have transformed the way audiences consume crime dramas by making them more accessible and interactive. Traditionally, audiences watched shows like *The Sweeney* on TV at a scheduled time. There were no catch-up services and audiences had to watch live or miss an episode. In contrast, when *Luther* first aired in 2010, digital technology was expanding. It was available at a scheduled time on BBC One but also on BBC iPlayer, which allowed audiences to watch on demand.

Streaming services have further influenced how crime dramas are consumed. *The Sweeney* is now available on digital platforms such as BritBox and Amazon Prime, making it accessible to both nostalgic older audiences and new viewers interested in classic crime dramas. Similarly, *Luther* is available as a box set on BBC iPlayer and Amazon Prime, which encourages binge-watching. This shift contrasts with how *The Sweeney* was originally consumed, where viewers had to wait weekly for new episodes.

Social media and online platforms have also changed how audiences consume TV by helping them become more active participants. *Luther* has an official BBC website featuring trailers and character profiles and audiences use social media to discuss theories and speculating on storylines during and after watching the show. This reflects Blumler and Katz's Uses and Gratifications theory, as viewers use social media for social interaction. In contrast, *The Sweeney* originally relied on traditional marketing, but today has fan pages and discussion groups on platforms such as Facebook.

In conclusion, digital technology has changed how crime dramas are consumed by providing audiences with more accessibility and engagement. Unlike *The Sweeney*, which was restricted to linear TV, *Luther* has benefitted from streaming, online marketing, and social media discussions.

Explain how funding models impact television programmes. Refer to the crime dramas or sitcoms you have studied to support your points. [10]

Funding models have a huge impact on how television programmes are made as they influence everything from their content to their production quality and target audience.

The BBC, which produces *Luther*, is a Public Service Broadcaster funded by the licence fee. This means the BBC does not rely on advertising or product placement to fund its shows. Instead, its funding allows it to focus on creating high-quality content that fulfils its PSB remit to “inform, educate and entertain” and serve all audiences. This is seen in *Luther* through its high production values, such as detailed set design, cinematography, and a famous lead actor (Idris Elba), all of which are possible because of the licence fee funding.

Being a PSB also means the BBC must represent a diverse audience, which is reflected in *Luther* by having a Black lead character, a choice that challenges traditional crime drama stereotypes. Also, the darker narratives in *Luther* are possible because the BBC is not under pressure to please advertisers. Therefore, the BBC’s funding model allows *Luther* to focus on quality and diversity rather than commercial success.

In contrast, *The Sweeney*, shown on ITV, was funded as a commercial broadcaster through advertising revenue. ITV’s funding model means that it needs to attract large audiences to keep advertisers happy and generate profit. As a result, crime dramas like *The Sweeney* were designed to be more mainstream and action-focused, featuring car chases and violence to appeal to mass audiences.

In conclusion, funding models shape the way crime dramas are made. *Luther*, as a BBC show, benefits from licence fee funding that supports high production values and complex storytelling aimed at diverse audiences, while *The Sweeney*, as an ITV show, reflects the needs of a commercial broadcaster to attract broad audiences and advertisers.