

What goes around
comes around and
the kill essay



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Both of the music videos that we have studied have equal amounts of qualities which make it 'more than just a music video'. In this essay I will be evaluating the different techniques, used by the directors, which make it so.

These two videos have been singled out due to their original style. As opposed to the usual techniques of promotion (e. g. girls dancing around in their bikinis) Justin Timberlake and 30 Seconds to Mars show the meaning of the song through the video. This creates a product which is more like a mini film as opposed to the artist(s) singing on a stage.

In the video 'What goes around comes around' the narrative is easy and clear to follow. The basic plot is as follows; Justin Timberlake meets Scarlett Johansson at a club, she's going out with another man at the time but she still goes with Justin. Then there are some shots in a swimming pool which gives a strong impression that they're a couple. Next, there is a gap in the music and some dialogue between Justin, Scarlett and some acquaintances. The topic of Scarlett moving in with Justin occurs in conversation. To break the silence, Justin's Friend kisses Scarlett on the hand and the camera shows, particularly in her eyes, that there's chemistry between them.

The next scene is where Scarlett is making out with Justin's friend in the stairwell, and Justin catches them. He beats up the man and Scarlett runs off, with Justin following. There's a very graphic car chase until Scarlett crashes her car into an already burning car in the middle of the road, and flips over it. Tragically, she dies and the last shot is of Justin discovering this.

I feel that the video puts across the message 'What goes around comes around' Very effectively not just by the title but also through the content.

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Inter textual reference is a very strong feature in the video, as it is used frequently. The strongest being the whole mood and plot constantly reminding you of the tragic love story 'Romeo and Juliet'. For example, the intimate scene in the swimming pool strongly relates to the scene in 'Romeo and Juliet' where the two characters meet for the first time, through opposite sides of the fish tank.

Also, judging on Scarlett Johansson's whole outfit, it implies that she is purposefully strongly portrayed as the major movie star, Marilyn Monroe. Her personality could also to reflect in this reference, as through the video, she has a very aloof, mysterious air about her.

Another main element of the video is the camera techniques. This stood out because there is an extremely noticeable difference between when dialogue is being used, when Justin's singing and also when the plot is nearing its climax.

The differences are when the camera's showing dialogue, it focuses in and out constantly and seeing as most of the dialogue occurs in the evening, it's giving the impression that the darkness/dimness is obscuring your eyesight. Or possibly that it's the effects of alcohol to create a more realistic grasp for the viewer on what it would have been like. Also, when the plot is nearing its climax, the shots seem to be much more jumpy and random, to create an atmosphere of panic and frustration and to build up the suspense.

The effect which I found most often used was the props which occur throughout the video. The continual theme which all of these conveyed was

their circular shape. This is a strong relation to the title because circles can be seen as a symbol for comeuppance.

Examples of these props are; Tustin's microphone, the stage which he sings on, the car wheel which is occasionally showed spinning on the road (which also ties in with the car related climax at the end), also Justin does a circular hand movement throughout the chorus.

In the video 'The Kill', it uses very different techniques, which coincidentally, creates a different effect to 'what goes around comes around'

The narrative for 'The Kill' is definitely not as clear as Justin Timberlake, because there isn't a true plot but it follows the story of the well known thriller 'The Shining'. It starts with the band '30 Seconds to Mars' driving to a hotel, which is the same one used as the setting on 'The Shining'

The band say clearly state that they're going to stay there for three days, and use it as an opportunity to relax. They enter the hotel and where their keys are ready for them to collect, there's also a note which warns them to stay out of room 6277. They just shrugged this off and didn't class it as anything really important, and all proceeded up to their separate rooms

Next some text flashes up on the screen reading '1 week later' which is more than the time allocated at the beginning. Then there are a few separate shots of members of the band on skateboards, exploring the hotel. One of the members comes across the room with the number 6277 on it, and obviously can't resist so he enters.

Waiting inside is a woman who's just stepped out of the shower and they kiss, but when the camera shows a shot of her back, it's all decomposed and rotting, which implies that she's a ghost or somehow subhuman. After this, weird things happen about the hotel, as if when he entered the room, it unleashed all of the ghosts about the hotel.

It gives the impression that the band is going mental, because there's a scene where the lead singer is singing to another version of himself (like his alter ego). Then the ultimate scene is where the band are performing at a ball occasion and all of the ghosts which we saw in the hotel are listening to them.

Again, one of the biggest features in the film is the inter textual reference. The main one, being the link with the film ' The Shining' as the plot and most of the effects are based around this, even the location and costumes at the end are the same.

Another reference was, when the band member spots another version of himself in room 6277 with the ' bear' giving him pleasure, the bear combined with the complete randomness is weakly linked with the film ' Donnie Darco'. This also suggests that the band members are just seeing what they fear the most.

Plus the part where the lead singer is banging his tennis ball up against the wall in boredom is a strong connection to ' The Great Escape' where Steve McQueen does the same in his prison cell, which could mean that the hotel is a prison for the band and includes ominous negative connotations for the rest of the plot.

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A feature which has clearly been carefully planned is the costumes as they change gradually throughout the video. When the band first arrives at the hotel, they're wearing modern outfits, but when all the ghostly things occur, costume is used as a way to distinguish the band members from their ghosts. The ghosts are wearing very old fashioned tuxedo's which gives the impression that they've been there forever.

The special effects in this video are used frequently to make it more like 'The Shining'. The main one is the subliminal images which flash up as corpses. This technique is used in the same way in the shining, except in this video, they flash to the drumming beat.

On these images, there's a lot of fake blood used to make the corpses look realistic, and also the make up was done to make them look gaunt and decomposed

Some of the smaller aspects of the special effects are; the nose when the lead singer is throwing the tennis ball and the text which flashes up at intervals in the film (e. g. one week later and the end).

In conclusion, I would say that 'The Kill' video is the most successful in the terms of being 'more than just a music video' because it fulfils more of than techniques and effects studied than 'what goes around comes around'. Even though 'what goes around comes around' has a clearer narrative, 'The Kill' is more likely to get the viewers interested because it's so closely related to 'The Shining'

The location for 'The Kill' is also more interesting because it's the setting for a horror movie; you're not sure what else they're going to show from the film. Whereas the location for Justin Timberlake is very appropriate for the genre of music and for the theme of the song, it didn't have the same amount of intrigue for me.

The special effects were equally good for both I thought, as the car crash at the end of Justin Timberlake was extremely realistic and both the ghosts and the subliminal images in 'The Kill' were effective too.

However, I do think that '30 Seconds to Mars' produced the most entertaining, interesting video out of the two due to its innovative and different perspective.