

A LEVEL MEDIA STUDIES

Component 1 Section B: Media Industries

Black Panther



In your study of *Black Panther* you will look at:

- The opening 30 minutes of *Black Panther*
- The wrath of posters *Black Panther* and Disney produced
- The teaser trailer, debuting on ABC1 and global trailer
- Two advertisements: Lexus “Long Live The King” & Hasbro *Black Panther* toys

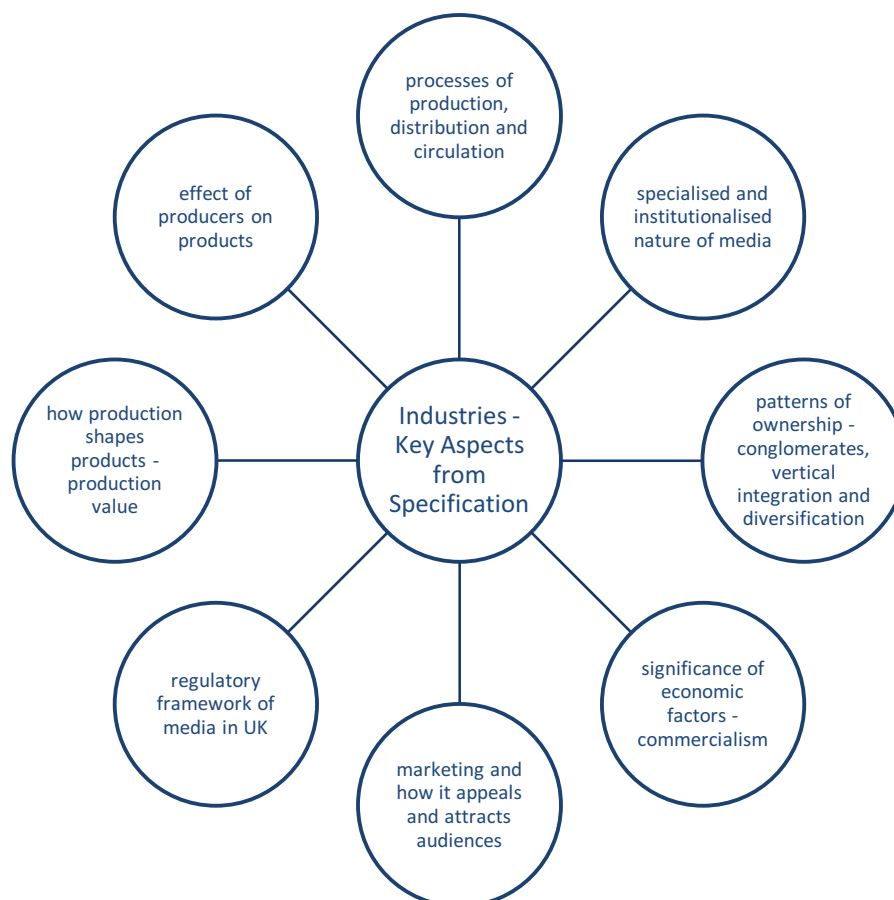
Media Studies Department

Name: _____

Mr McCartney

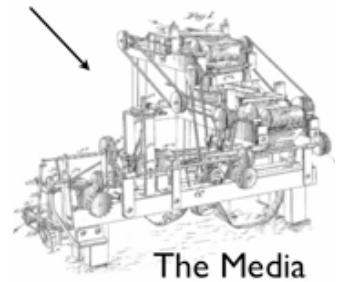
Component 1 Examination Overview

Component 1 Question	Focus and Set Texts	To do:
Section A: Q1 or Q2	Media Language (15 marks)	25 minutes to respond Unseen product of: advertisement, music video or newspaper CONTEXTS ASSESSED
Section A: Q1 or Q2	Representation (30 marks) Adv - Tide, KOTV, W. Aid Music V - Formation/ Riptide Newspapers - Mirror / Times	50 minutes to respond Set product vs. Unseen Bullet points will be provided to guide your essay CONTEXTS ASSESSED
Section B: Q3 OUR FOCUS NOW!	Industries (25 marks) Film - Black Panther/ IDB Newspapers - Mirror/ Times Radio - LNWH Games - Assassin's Creed III:L	Stepped short and long questions = 30m Testing knowledge and understanding - CONTENT Analysis is not expected - you need to use the text to cite your examples CONTEXTS ASSESSED
Section B: Q4	Audience (20 marks) Newspapers - Mirror/ Times Radio - LNWH Games - Assassin's Creed III:L Adverts - Tide / W. Aid	2 x 10 markers generally Testing knowledge and understanding - CONTENT Analysis is not expected - you need to use the text to cite your examples CONTEXTS ASSESSED



Media Industries – What’s What?

A media industry is the **COMPANY, PEOPLE** or **ORGANISATIONS** that produces a media text. It is vital to know about **MEDIA INDUSTRIES** as they have an immense amount of power and control; which henceforth influences our media consumption.



The Media

To do well in Question 3 of your Component 1 examination you should be able to show an awareness and understanding of media industries and the institutions behind a product’s **PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION** and **CIRCULATION**.

The following key terms, are essential terms that you must upskill your knowledge of:

Key Term	Definition
Production	
Distribution	
Circulation	
Globalisation	
Conglomerate	
Monopoly	
Oligopoly	
Subsidiary Company	
Horizontal Integration	
Vertical Integration	
Synergy <i>(synergetic)</i>	
Regulation	
Marketing	
Convergence	

Media Industries – *Key Points about the Media Machine*

In a nutshell:

<p>The media is exceptionally powerful in that it communicates ideologies globally.</p>	<p>Media industries has ideologies and agendas that pervade (dominate) their products.</p>	<p>Media industries are motivated by PROFIT and POWER - the 2Ps! COMMERCIALISM</p>
<p>Big media companies which operate across different platforms are called conglomerates.</p>	<p>A large amount of power is held by a small number of media industries companies e.g. Disney.</p>	<p>Media industries resort to RISK ADVERSE FORMATTING to lower risk and increase profit.</p>
<p>Media industries focus on profit results in repetitiveness and 'safeness' within products - stifles creativity.</p>	<p>Takeovers and mergers occur wherein companies 'take out' their competitors growing their monopoly of power.</p>	<p>Media industries will use a wrath of conventional and unconventional (guerrilla) marketing to get audiences aware of their products.</p>

The Film Industry

The global film industry is primarily dominated by USA productions originating within Hollywood, a haven for film from the golden age of cinema during the 1920s. The power and control exerted by Hollywood means that audiences are saturated with films which communicate Americanised beliefs and promote that the USA way e.g. capitalism is the truest and most supreme form of existence. Interestingly, the US film industry has been cited as, “**capitalism in its most brutal form.**” As a result capitalistic ideologies tend to permeate their products such as:

<p>SUCCESS is MEASURE in the ACCUMULATION of MATERIAL GOODS (possessions)</p>	<p>MEN and WOMEN are POLAR OPPOSITES</p>
<p>HARD WORK and ENDEAVOUR is the KEY to SUCCESS</p>	<p>MARRIAGE and FAMILY are a HAPPY RITE of PASSAGE – a SECURITY/ COMFORT BLANKET</p>

The benefit of films originating from Hollywood is the unrivalled budgets that can be injected into a film’s **production, distribution and circulation** comprised with the ability to:

- Have a **HIGH PRODUCTION VALUE** – more cinematic, CGI, lavish settings etc.
- Utilise **STAR APPEAL** – highly bankable stars/ directors– whom command big salaries
- More dynamic, creative and eclectic **MARKETING** with **BRANDING** and **SYNERGY**

Set Product: Black Panther (2018)

Product Context:

- ✦ Black Panther is the 17th film in the **MARVEL CINEMATIC UNIVERSE** – the highest grossing film franchise in the film industry ever. He was introduced in Capt. America: Civil War.
- ✦ It was directed by **RYAN COOGLER**, who directed Creed, a successful spin-off from the Rocky film series, however, led by an African-American actor: Michael B. Jordan, who also played the **antagonist** in Black Panther.
- ✦ The film focuses upon the **FICTIONAL AFRICAN KINGDOM** of **WAKANDA** which has avoided European colonialization and has a **technological superiority globally**.
- ✦ The film was produced by **MARVEL STUDIOS**, a famous comic book brand that is a **SUBSIDIARY** of the **WALT DISNEY COMPANY**.
- ✦ Black Panther was undoubtedly a success for Marvel and created an aura of positivity surrounding representation and inclusivity within the industry:
 - **BROKE RECORDS** – highest opening weekend for a film in the USA.
 - **GROSSED over \$1 BILLION** with 48% of its box office taking amassed outside of the USA – clearly a *globalised and successful text*.
 - The first superhero film to be nominated for **BEST PICTURE** at the **ACADEMY AWARDS** – the most esteemed level of recognition within the film industry.
 - It went on to win **3 OSCARS** for: Costume, Production Design and Soundtrack.



Video Activity: Watch the video for the history of the Black Panther; completing the mind map:

BLACK PANTHER
The First African Superhero

Contexts of Black Panther - Historical

1. COLONIALISATION of AFRICA

Black Panther has a rich historical context with the prime setting of Black Panther: Wakanda, an African haven and an allegory (social comment) for the immense development opportunity and positivity which the reality of Africa has missed due to the rife **COLONIALISATION** occurring during the 15th - 20th Century. Resources were stripped from African countries and Africans were forced and coerced into slave labour with Europeans deeming Africans as **SAVAGES** and **ANIMALISTIC**. As a result, Black Panther is meant to showcase the potential, cultural vibrancy of Africa with **WAKANDA** an aspiration for the potential of what Africa could become.

This historical suffrage of Africa is directed encoded within the opening scenes of Black Panther - mindmap below the media language used to draw attention to the problematic history which has confined Africa as a continent:

**ALLEGORICAL
THE BLEAKNESS OF AFRICA'S
HISTORY and COLONIALISATION**

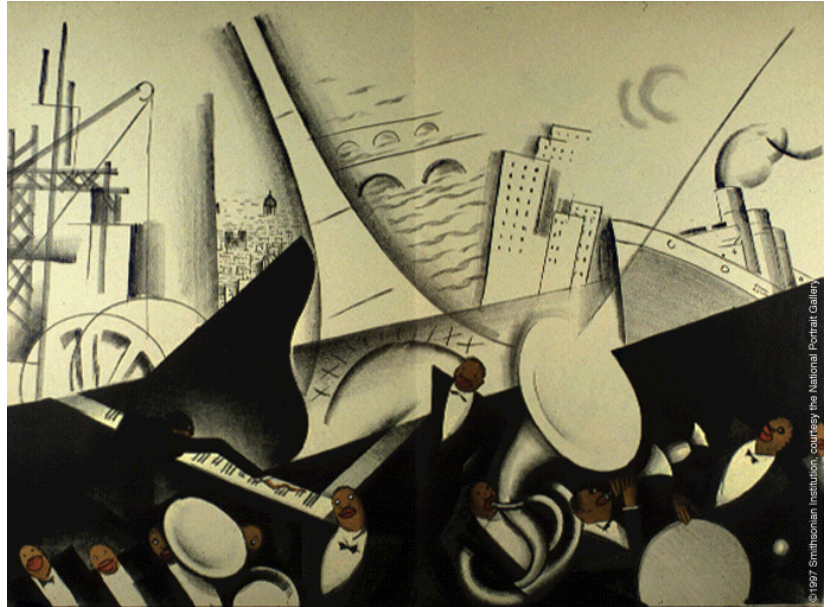
However, within the opening scenes of Wakanda there is clear **JUXTAPOSITION** and contrasting of Wakanda with a wrath of media language used to establish it is a haven, an aspiration. Such representations of Africa, a **hard to come by** within the film industry:

**MEDIA LANGUAGE USED TO
CONSTRUCT WAKANDA as a
HAVEN of POSITIVITY**

HARLEM RENAISSANCE – 1919/29

Another rich historical context which is interconnected within Black Panther is the **HARLEM RENAISSANCE**, a cultural movement during the **1920s** which attempted to **redefine: a BLACK CULTURAL IDENTITY**.

Harlem, an neighbourhood within Bronx: New York, became a **MECCA** of cultural affirmation, inspiration and celebration of being African American and black. It attempted to subvert historical, problematic stereotypes:



Harlem Renaissance brought the Black experience clearly within general American cultural history and had huge significance

- The Black migration, from south to north, changed their cultural image from rural to urban, from peasant to sophisticate.
- Harlem became a crossroads where Blacks interacted with and expanded their contacts internationally.
- The Harlem Renaissance profited from a spirit of self-determination which was widespread after WWI.
- It became a symbol and a point of reference for everyone to recall
- The name, more than the place, became synonymous with new vitality and Black urbanity
- It became a racial focal point for Blacks the world over; it remained for a time, a race capital
- It stood for unity; Alain Locke wrote: "The peasant, the student, the businessman, the professional man, artist, poet, musician, adventurer and worker, preacher and criminal, exploiter and social outcast, each group has come with its own special motives ... but their greatest experience has been the finding of one another."

Equally:

- It subverts the stereotypes shrouded by postcolonial thinking promoting the reality that **TECHNOLOGY** can thrive within Africa.
- The wrath of stars within Black Panther incorporates some of the most talented and esteemed African-American/ Black actors including:

Chadwick Boseman Michael B. Jordan Lupita Nyong'o Daniel Kalluuya
Forest Whitaker

- The costuming, which won an Oscar for Best Costuming is deep in the diversity and cultural identity of different African communities.

HARLEM RENAISSANCE and BLACK PANTHER: Just like Harlem, Wakanda is seen to symbolise a **MECCA** for cultural affirmation for African-Americans.

Wakanda within Black Panther and Avengers: Civil War/ Infinity War acts as a crossroads between white and non-white communities.

Black Panther Cultural Context

REMINDER:

Industries are dominated by conglomerates who have monopolies of power owning a wrath of companies through horizontal and vertical integration. As a result, the film industry conglomerates prioritise **PROFIT** and **MAXIMISATION** of **AUDIENCE**.

The result? Avoidance of **RISK** through formatting of products resulting in overproduction of genres, facilitating cross demographic (audience) appeal, use of famous stars to attract audiences and use of spin offs and serial to keep audiences retained.

Marvel Cinematic Universe – the world’s most successful franchise

The Hollywood industry for the past 30 years has been substantially dominated by two genres which are **both HIGHLY BANKABLE** and **LOWER RISK**:

1. Science Fiction
2. Superhero

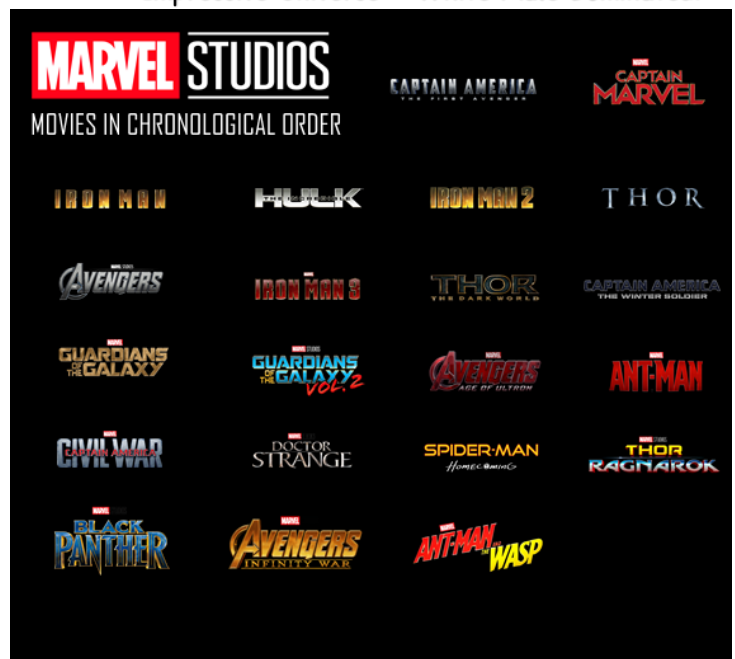
The fact that Black Panther is the 17th film in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) is prime evidence of the immense level of global popularity the superhero genre has amassed. However, whilst superhero films have proved bankable they have tended to be dominated by white, male characters; henceforth **lacking diverse representations**. With only the odd exceptions in the 1990s with **Will Smith** within Men in Black and **Wesley Snipes** in the Blade Trilogy films.

However, in the MCU era of films such as Iron Man trilogies and Captain America trilogies, African-American actors have played

secondary roles: sidekicks to the white, male lead. Such as Don Cheadle within Iron Man and The Falcon in Captain America. Equally, characters such as Black Widow in the MCU captures how female characters have been relegated to secondary roles with the Black Widow feature film released in 2020; **a decade after Black Widow’s film debut in Iron Man 2.**

Indeed, the fact it took MCU until Phase 3 and 10 years after Iron Man, the first MCU film, to **diversify** into African-American (Black Panther [2018]) and female (Captain Marvel [2018]) is prime evidence of how it took MCU to be well established to take the risk to omit the safe bet of the white alpha male (hypermasculine) hero.

Impressive Universe – White Male Dominated!



Curran and Seaton would argue:

MCU is a **monopoly** for Disney and Marvel; formulaic and risk-free. The range of commercial merchandise and spin offs prove this!

Marvel Diversifying into Black Cinema

The global success of Black Panther is culturally due to it being the first superhero film to focus upon the black community, combined with a setting outside of the stereotypically safe, American city setting. In line with its historical context, Black Panther is a film that resonates with **BLACK CINEMA**, celebrating black culture, lifestyles, potential and traditions.



However, the mainstream globality of Black Panther, due to its MCU affiliations and being part of an established franchise (17th film, remember!) was a departure from the issues-based films of black cinema such as: **SPIKE LEE** social realist films which have a quirky, niche appeal or the arthouse prestigious pictures such as Best Picture winner of 2016: Moonlight. Black cinema has always seen to be a stand against the patriarchy and oppression of the white community exposing the suffering and marginalisation of communities. However, Black Panther was mainstream giving black cinema equal weighting just as other white, male-led superhero films.



Academy Award Cultural Controversy

Remember: Black Panther was the first ever superhero film to be nominated for the most prestigious film award: **ACADEMY AWARD for BEST PICTURE**. Oscars (aka Academy Awards) tend to go to niche films and arthouse films which have an eclectic style, message or issue at its core. However, the fact that Black Panther in 2019 received the most nominations for Best Pictures, has its roots in the **controversy** of the 2016 Oscars wherein the Academy were accused of whitewashing the industry, only rewarding white actors, white directors, white writers. **Black Panther's** popularity and appraisal by the Oscars (winning 3!) can be deemed as a way of diversifying and distancing this prestigious award from marginalising minority groups.

Africa - The Dark Continent and the Light of Wakanda

US/ European news has culturally in the postcolonial era branded Africa as a country in persistent state of 'disruption' lacking order, civil order and calm. With global audiences viewing the diverse traditions of Africa and its 43 countries as **one category** - Africans - poor, malnourished and poverty stricken. Such origins can be traced to Victorian era which cited Africa as the **Dark Continent**, however, films in the industry have perpetuated this discourse with films such as: Blood Diamond and Captain Phillips, whilst sympathetic to African people, still reiterating the 'pitiable' and 'dangerous' Alvarado representations; exacerbating the terrorism and barbaric animalistic nature of Africa. **Black Panther DEPARTS** from this!