

# BRUNO MARS UPTOWN FUNK - 2014

## MEDIA LANGUAGE: How UPTOWN FUNK communicates with the audience using symbolic and technical codes:

## REPRESENTATION: How UPTOWN FUNK constructs representations



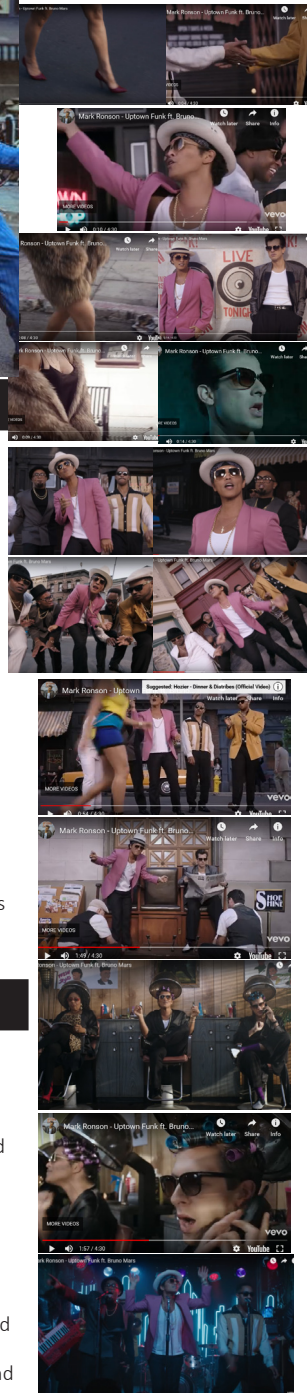
### BACKGROUND CONTEXT

Peter Gene Hernandez, known professionally as Bruno Mars, is an American singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, record producer, and dancer. He is known for his stage performances, retro showmanship and for performing in a wide range of musical styles, including R&B, funk, pop, soul, reggae, hip hop, and rock.

- Uptown Funk was released in 2014 as a single featuring Bruno Mars by Mark Ronson, a DJ and record producer, known for collaborations with artists such as Amy Winehouse.
- By end of 2017 Uptown Funk received more than 2.8 Billion Views on Youtube.
- "Uptown Funk" spent 14 weeks at number one on the US Billboard Hot 100, seven weeks at number one on the UK Singles Chart, and topped the charts in several other countries including Australia, Canada, France, Ireland and New Zealand.
- It became the best-selling single of 2015 and one of the best-selling of all-time.
- The song won two Grammy Awards, including Record of the Year, and the Brit Award for British Single of the Year.
- Music video stars Ronson, Mars, and Mars's backing band the Hooligans dancing in a city street, and got 3.5 billion views on YouTube as of March 2019, making it the fifth most viewed YouTube video of all time.

### CULTURAL CONTEXTS

- The song "Uptown Funk" has all the key elements of Funk in modern era including the inclusion of certain instruments including guitar, bass, synthesizers and horns instrumentation.
- Throughout his song he has used backing vocals that use the low frequency range expanding and creating a more dominant bass. [Low End Sound, over 2015] Uptown Funk is a song that many people have used to create parodies of using president speeches. By recreating a song with a genre/style from the past, the artist can easily appeal to a newer generation of listeners than if they were to solely rely on the style alone.
- Bruno said in an interview that his video is very much inspired by the Minneapolis sound of 1980s funk music.
- Sony described the song as having a 'fresh new retro sound' influenced by funk and RNB artists of the 1980s.
- 'Uptown Funk' is a performance based video filmed in a city location and the stylist chorographed dance sequences reference artists such as the Jackson Five. The video has high production values and the mise-en-scene also creates a retro feel.



The video starts with a medium tracking shot of a woman's feet, immediately grabbing the audiences attention. The music is introduced straight away building up tempo. This cuts to a slow motion shot of Bruno having a handshake with another person for a second until it cuts back to the original shot. The continuous shot reverse shot builds up the pace during the instrumental and excites the audience.

During this montage of clips we see Bruno is wearing a pink a pink tailored blazer and gold coloured accessories connoting wealth and power.

The camera tilts up the females actresses body; she is wearing a fur jacket with her legs on show which also suggests wealth as it is seen as a luxury item. Her bare legs conform to the Male Gaze theory as long legs are associated with beauty and sexiness.

Then a close up of Mark's face through quick flashes which disorientated the audience. This effect acts like strobe lighting which we associate with night clubs or partying, connoting fun. Mark's facial expression is very extreme and looks like he is screaming.

The next shot is introduced through a wipe/sliding motion which takes us to a medium close up of Bruno and others. Bruno is positioned in the middle highlighting his important and is the centre of our focus, connoting his dominance. In one shot Bruno looks directly at the audience. This makes the viewer seem more involved as the atmosphere is more playful now.

There is a low angle shot, connoting power and dominance of Mars. There are shots of the dancing- a common convention of a performance based music video as we expect to see dancing.

The lighting remains natural as the majority of the shots are filmed outside on the streets in Los Angeles. This creates realism.

The video is very male dominant with no females been facially identified. The main focus is on their bodies as they walk in and out of frame., fitting the male gaze theory (women as objects to be looked at by men).

The location changes to a shoe shining station and then a hair salon where Bruno and Mark have hair rollers in breaking the stereotype as hair rollers are normally associated with women. The shoe shining station is very retro and links to historical contexts of ethnicity. The males using the salon also adds humour to the music video and makes it more enjoyable for the audience to watch.

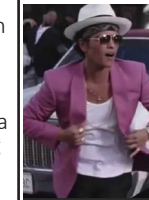
The video creates an 80's vibe reinforced through the costumes and props as we can see Mark is using an old fashion phone instead of a smart phone.

The video continues similar to before with the majority of the shots being medium close ups or close ups on Bruno as he should be our main attention. However in the last minute of the video the vibe completely changes. Neon lights are used to create a more modern party feel as well as smoke machines. The technology has upgraded in these shots suggesting a new era as the musicians have electric pianos and guitars. Again lots of close ups are used to highlight their enthusiastic facial expressions and make the audience enjoy it more as you can see how much fun they are having.

**Bruno mars is constantly in shot - The editing style is rather quick to complement the quick music beat and quick movements - It has a modern yet old style with a party like theme - Bruno mars makes direct eye contact to the viewer. Key messages include have fun! flaunt what you have!**

### REPRESENTATION OF BRUNO MARS

Mars is portrayed as the hero (Propp) and represents the song's ideology



- Bruno's clothing in the video connotes a multifaceted representation of men- the pink blazer shows that he is comfortable in his own style as pink is usually associated with girls and gay men.
- The props of gold chains connotes wealth and success, showing that Bruno is a successful male singer.
- The sunglasses connote coolness and style, showing that Bruno is stylist and cares about his appearance.

### REPRESENTATION OF ETHNICITY

Uptown Funk represents equality

- Bruno Mars was born in Hawaii and is of Filipino/Puerto Rican/Spanish /Canary Island/Catalan/Italian/Costa Rican heritage. He is seen to be the leader of a group of African Americans (his band mates, The Hooligans) and one White male (Ronson). Having a wide heritage and leading the group represents ethnicity as equal/not a main focus.

The show shining scene shows how role have reversed and become more equal as it shows two older white males performing the task of shining Bruno and Mark's shoes. Shoeshining has been linked to younger people, mainly children from poor backgrounds, performing this task. This shows wealth again of Mars and Ronson, even more so by the position of them in the frame- being higher than the males performing the shoe shine.

In the video, Mark Ronson, the white male, is shown to be higher in the frame on top of the white car. He is also shown to be being carried in the music video by the other males. This could connote his importance.

### REPRESENTATION OF GENDER

Men are dominant, metrosexual, stylist and interested in women

- There is very little sexualisation of woman in the video with only a brief moment in the beginning, where they are never facially identified and all dressed in little clothing. Each time they are shown, it is followed up by the male in the music video looking at them in a satisfied way. This fits the male gaze theory and suggests that men like to look at women. It portrays women as sexual objects to be looked at, for pleasure, by men. This also reinforces the common stereotype that men are the dominant gender group and does not account for those from the LGBTQ+ community. Interestingly as Bruno wears pink, commonly associated with the colour that a gay man would be more comfortable wearing.

Bruno mars is depicted as a smooth womanizer type as well as very fun, hip and stylish. This is shown through his costume and props as well as his overall role in the narrative.

- Men in the music video look as though they care about their appearance, with Mark and Bruno getting their hair done in the salon - normally a feminine thing to do. Equally, getting their shoes shined, although historically common for males, again shows how they care about their appearance.

### CONNOTATION OF LYRICS

- "Bitch say my name you know who I am" and "If you sexy then flaunt it" suggests Bruno is a womaniser and gets pleasure from a good looking woman.
- "Got Chucks on with Saint Laurent" and "Gotta kiss myself, I'm so pretty" suggests that Bruno cares about showing his worth and likes to take care of how he looks and how other people see him.