Station Question Worksheet

Station 1: Mitski, "Be the Cowboy"

In 2018, singer-songwriter Mitski released her fifth album Be the Cowboy. *On* The Daily Show with Trevor Noah, *Mitski talked about the title of her album and its meaning to her as a Asian-American woman. Read the transcript provided in the station and answer the following questions:*

Mitski clarifies that she means "not the working cowboy but the cowboy myth." What characteristics does Mitski attribute to the myth of the cowboy?

Why are these attributes appealing to Mitski and/or her listeners who possess identities opposite of the media portrayal of the cowboy?

Station 2: Los Tigres del Norte, Joan Sebastian, and Christian Nodal

Los Tigres del Norte and Christian Nodal are Norteño artists, which is regional Mexican music. Los Tigres del Norte has been performing for over fifty years and have a large fanbase. Their songs are often corridos, a narrative ballad. Los Tigres tackle issues of the border and immigration in their songs, often centering the working class near the border. Christian Nodal is a 20 year old artist who combines mariachi and norteño. Read the article and analyze the pictures in the station, and then answer the following questions:

How do these artists intertwine *vaquero* culture in their artistry and stage presence?

How does the history behind Norteño music connect to the origins of the *vaquero*/cowboy?

Station 3: Solange, "When I Get Home"

In March 2019, singer-songwriter, artist, and producer Solange Knowles released her fourth album When I Get Home*. Read Solange's interview on* The Daily Show with Trevor Noah, *examine the images, and answer the questions below:*

In the interview Solange mentions that none of the cowboys and imagery associated with Americana and the American West looks like the cowboys she grew up seeing. Why might this be?

How is reclaiming the ignored cultural contributions of Black cowboys a form of reclaiming power, according to Solange?

Based on the stills from the short film for *When I Get Home*, how are cowboys represented?

Station 4: Compton Cowboys

Established in the 1980s, Compton Cowboys met while participating in a non-profit that aimed to keep youth from gang life and gun violence through horseback riding. The Compton Cowboys have participated in rodeos, have been featured in fashion campaigns such as Pyer Moss, and interviewed by numerous media outlets. Read the profile of the Compton Cowboys in the station and respond to the following questions.

What are some of the goals of the Compton Cowboys?

According to the *New York Times* piece, what are some of the obstacles the Compton Cowboys confront?

How are the Compton Cowboys different from popular depictions of the cowboy? Why is this significant?

Station 5: Lil Nas X

In December 2018, Atlanta rapper Lil Nas X released his hit single "Old Town Road," which some have described as country trap. In spite of the song containing elements of traditional country songs, the song was removed from the Billboard Hot Country charts igniting controversy and discussion about how country is categorized. The song went on to become the longest running number one song on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. Read the article and answer the following questions:

How has Lil Nas X taken his own approach to the American Cowboy and country music?

Why do you think there has been backlash towards Lil Nas X being on the Billboard Country charts?

Station 6: Pyer Moss and Telfar

Pyer Moss was founded by New York City-born designer Kerby Jean-Raymond in 2013. Telfar, a unisex clothing line, was founded by Telfar Clemens in 2005. Both fashion brands have incorporated cowboy imagery and aesthetics in conjunction with representations of Black identity in recent collections. Read the quotations below, examine the pictures, and answer the following questions:

How is the cowboy incorporated into the Pyer Moss collection? Telfar collection?

Based on the quotes and images, what narrative is Pyer Moss trying to tell through his designs? What is Telfar trying to say?