

G322 June 2010
Examiner's comments 97/100

Question 1 (47 marks)

This is a detailed, sustained and thorough response to the set question. The candidate is clearly analytical and answers with confidence and depth. This is an integrated approach to addressing the question, with interwoven analysis of the technical aspects of television drama and how meaning is constructed in relation to the representation of gender. There is excellent and correct use of media terminology (at times with the occasional error, such as the reference to invisible rather than continuity editing). The candidate considers a full range of representation of gender which is needed for a level 4 mark for explanation, analysis and argument. This is reflected, for example, in the analysis of sound and gender, which is matched in analysis with character types and the framing of gender identity. This is a balanced response, which was not awarded full marks for explanation/ analysis and argument because of small gaps that appear in the analysis of editing. There is a degree of sophistication in analysis; it is a comprehensive analysis of the extract.

Question 2 (50 marks)

The area that the candidate has addressed is Music. The response begins with a contextual introduction to Sony. This case study of Sony is sustained and developed using contemporary exemplification to demonstrate the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the music industry, which is extensive from production to distribution and audience consumption. This explanation, analysis and argument (AO1) is extended to deal with the size and scale of the media conglomerate and considers horizontal integration as a key concept within institutional practice.

The candidate then seamlessly progresses to consider independent music companies with a case study of 'Innit for the Money'. The degree of sophistication to the candidate's answer is embedded in the argument and exemplification of the development of the company through synergy and media convergence, itself a consequential trend with digital initiatives. This quality in the response clearly signposts the award of a level four mark for both explanation, analysis and argument and the use of examples and further there is a clear command and debate of key media concepts. To the extent that the candidate has a full understanding of the nature of the music industry in address of the set question.

This is an excellent response – see in particular the latter part of the candidate's response in discussion of the global success of the company using digital initiatives and their assessment of the music industry using independent and conglomerate companies. There is good case study material within this answer offering a plethora of exemplification, for example, the response concludes with a discussion on illegal downloading and the implications of 'copyright collectives'.

Total 97 marks

Question One.

Representation can be described as how reality is constructed or reflected to fit into the producer's ideology. In this extract of Primeval there are several different representations of gender. For the purposes of simplicity I have split the extract into four parts.

The first part is the opening scene ending with the woman driving off in a jeep. Within this opening the composition and mise en scene, makes up a great deal of the audience's understanding of the text. The woman character who is angry with the man is shown to be so through the use of his having to catch up with her and overtake her in order to prevent her from leaving before he has a chance to talk to her. In the stereotypical view of women, they are expected to be emotional and "flighty" meaning that they leave whenever they get too emotional. This is shown in this opening as low toned violin music is played, implying sadness, which then picks up towards the end of this scene into a louder cacophony of instruments showing the hostility felt. The over shoulder shot of the man looking at the woman trying to reason with her emphasises his height, which could represent his superiority at being able to keep calm whilst she leaves irrationally. Throughout this scene, invisible editing is used to emphasise the narrative and the characters and generally aid the realism of the programme. A reaction shot is used when the man tries to calm the woman, showing that she is unaffected by his rationalisation and purely wants to leave. The representation of gender in this section of the media text shows women to be emotional, and therefore inferior when compared to the emotional sophistication of the male characters.

In the second section of the text however this representation is changed, with the first character to be seen being the blonde female driving a vehicle. The woman is dressed in a leather coat which is done up, emphasising her power, whereas the man is dressed in a scruffy t-shirt and jeans, showing him to be inferior to her. This is further backed up due to her being the one driving the vehicle, an activity stereotypically believed to be for men. During this section, the pace of the camera shots quicken, and the editing switches from invisible editing to many jump cuts, showing the increase in activity. A convention commonly used in action films, particularly a fight scene. This gives clues to the audience as to what to expect in the upcoming sequence of events. Another clue to this is the music, which changes and becomes faster paced. When the arm is found in the hole a sudden change in the music leads to a high pitched rising intonation of sound, which quickly turns back to the music once the sabre tooth tiger appears. These changes also tell the audience that the scene they are witnessing is going to be dramatic. As far as the representation of gender goes in this scene, the woman is viewed in a more intellectual way. A typical stereotype of men and women, is that women react to situations using their minds, in other words thinking up plans and preparing. Whereas men often react with violence and without thought. This is reinforced in this extract as the man makes the tiger follow him, running out into the open unarmed, whereas the woman uses the vehicle and the gun to protect her co-worker. In this way, the woman is seen to have superiority as she is the one who shoots the tiger. Once the tiger is shot, the music stops, showing that the action has come to an end for the moment.

The next section of the text is when the other members of the group arrive onto the scene. At this point, the blonde woman from the last scene is the only female and therefore a minority, but is dressed equally smart to the man in a suit, showing that she fits in with the collective. The music during this part of the extract changes back to the almost melancholy violin music, possibly signalling the despair felt because the arm is wrecked or because they've realised that the other female is in danger. Once the men start to talk however, the music stops, so that the audience can fully grasp the severity of what they are saying. The camera shots at this point also quicken, panning around the inside of the circle of characters, showing each one in turn. This allows for a more dramatic way of viewing the collective, and increases the tension of the situation. The editing in this section is back to invisible editing, so that the audience don't realise it is actually edited, but just feel that what they are viewing is real and therefore experience emotional realism. The music then restarts when a solution

is reached and most of the characters run away to find the other female. This is done so that the audience realise that the discussion is over and the action is again starting back up. The representation of gender in this extract shows the woman to be almost equal to the men, but mildly less superior due to the fact that they do most of the talking.

The final section of the scene is where the woman and "Mr. West" are talking in a shed. During this scene, the woman is dressed smartly speaking with received pronunciation, whilst Mr. West is wearing a dirty t-shirt and trousers and speaks in colloquial slang. The composition also reveals the distinction between the characters, with the woman's body language signalling power and authority, and the man insolence and panic. During this scene the representation of men acting without thought and using violence comes back, as the woman tries to talk about the situation but the man becomes hysterical saying "I won't be stitched up" and then pulls out a shotgun. The music once the man reveals the shotgun slows, to a sort of animalistic cacophony often used in hunting scenes, in this case this could represent the man hunting the woman, or the woman hunt for the truth. Editing in this section quickens to a lot of jump cuts, again showing the danger and action; often jumping from the man, to the dogs to the woman. Once the shotgun is revealed the power again switches from the woman to the man, as the woman starts pleading and falls to the ground. A long shot of her on the ground shows most of her, and a partial indicator of the scene around her. Throughout this part of the scene the dogs continue to bark, almost showing their support for the man in his pursuit of vengeance. Slow motion is also used to show the dramatic nature of the scene, with the woman lying on the ground and a low angle shot of the man standing above her with a gun. The representation in this scene shows the man using violence, and the woman using smarts, pleading with him until her co-workers arrive. An extreme long shot at this point shows those supporting her, and the dogs are suddenly quietened, showing that the man has once again lost power.

The extract ends with the man reasoning with the group, standing alone, without the support of the dogs, and with 3 people holding guns up at him, the extract started with a woman pleading with a man, and ends with a man pleading with two women. The roles were reversed as to who had superiority, and many different representations of gender were portrayed.

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Question Two

Within this essay I will be comparing how the development of digital media technology has affected both a conglomerate record label- Sony Music Entertainment, and an independent record label- Innit For The Money.

Sony Music Entertainment (Sony ME) are a multinational conglomerate who monopolise the music industry as well as other areas (insurance, gaming, electronic devices). They employ millions of employees and provide a global service to a well established audience. Sony ME have utilised digital technology through both their production of music, and its distribution.

Sony ME own all stages of the development of music, from production right through to distribution, an example of vertical integration. Because of this profits are kept in house, and Sony ME are able to be one of the Big 4 record labels. Sony mass produce their CD's worldwide, but only if the artist is already well established and therefore bound to be successful. To ensure this, Sony utilise digital technology such as the internet, where singles can be released digitally, such as through Itunes or social networking sites such as Myspace or Facebook. Sony ME have also recently signed a content deal with Youtube, allowing them to gain profits from people watching their videos on the site. This allows an audience to listen to the tracks and the artist to build up an established fan base. Once this fan base is established, Sony release their CD's for distribution, along with merchandise, to further advertise their artist and bring in extra profits. Sony ME often create websites for artists who have become well known, with links for fans to purchase their CD's and merchandise from there. Along with tour dates, biographical information and activities for the fans. These

websites allow the fans to hear about all of the merchandise which they can also purchase, and to book tickets for tour dates and gigs. As well as the site having links to the main Sony ME site, which has a list of all the artists they represent. This allows the fans to find other Sony artists whom they also like, which then encourages more profits for Sony ME. Once a fan base is built, Sony then release the CD, where it can be purchased from shops such as HMV, or online from Amazon, iTunes etc. However, the emergence of sites like youtube and the web 2.0 culture has taken care of part of the distribution process.

Sony ME have become so successful that they are able to buy smaller independent record labels and run them under their company. They own hundreds of record labels, buying them when they get successful and are therefore perceived as a threat to Sony, these include, Columbia Records, Arista Records, RCA Records and Epic records. This is an example of Horizontal Integration.

Sony are also able to use their cross media ownership to increase their profits. For example, Sony ME own ACDC and Playstation, and so produced a Playstation game, using ACDC music, this example of Synergy allows for more advertising for the band, as well as extra profits coming in to the conglomerate.

The independent record label I have studied, Innit For The Money (IFTM) have become successful locally, within the Somerset area but are aiming to expand their fan base worldwide through the use of the internet. They are however always threatened by conglomerates such as Sony ME because they don't have the funds to represent that many artists. IFTM however maintain their artists from start to finish, building them to success, however once successful they are often poached by conglomerates such as SONY ME. One of IFTM's successful bands are "You love her cos' shes dead" and they have appeared on popular teen drama Skins. Showing a prime example of Convergence, as channel four, and IFTM have collaborated together to increase the advertisement of both You love her cos shes dead (and therefore IFTM) and Skins, because they are associated with one another. Because of this advancement in digital technology, IFTM have been able to become more successful and well known.

IFTM don't own their own recording studios, because fiscally it is impossible, instead their artists find their own locations. You love her cos she's dead produced their first single in a closet, and their second in a bathroom, claiming that the acoustics are just as good as a recording studio but the DIY aspect means there is no expenditure to take care of, especially as they use their own editing software on their own computers.

IFTM aim their products at a niche audience, partly due to their small size and lack of funds for a wider audience, and also because of their current status as only being known locally. However, the advancement of digital technologies has increased IFTM's contacts, as they are able to forge communications with bands in Australia via Myspace. However, until they become a bigger company, it will be impossible for them to tour in Australia, due to the agent fees. On the other hand IFTM have become successful in France, with them being able to send You love her cos shes dead over there for gigs, and a tour. In this way, digital technologies have aided them in becoming more successful.

IFTM also have their own Facebook page, due to the main users of Facebook being 18-24 year olds, this gives them a good way of accessing their niche audience, and therefore makes it easier for them to know the demographics of them, and in general what they want to hear. IFTM also use Myspace as a form of distribution, so that their audience can pre-listen to the music; therefore building up a fan base.

So far in this essay I have discussed the positive effects of the advancement of digital technologies, but there is in many ways a downside. Whilst the increased development and use of the internet has aided advertisement and distribution for both Sony ME and IFTM, it also leads to a decline in CD sales. This has been seen by both companies, with Sony ME now only mass producing music by artists who are bound to sell big, and IFTM not able to mass produce. IFTM only produce records on demand, mostly just 500 copies through Rough Trade. This is partly due to the decline in CD sales, (fallen 20% since 2006) and also because vinyl is far more collectible, and so they are able to sell it at a higher price. This decline in CD sales can be attributed to illegal downloadings becoming more

readily accessible; due to the development of digital technologies. During my research task in College I found that 1 in 3 people (of a 500 people sample) get all of their music via illegal downloads, meaning that no money is being paid to the record labels or artists. When asked, 100% of those people said that they downloaded illegally purely because music is too expensive.

It appears that the future for the music industry is global policing on illegal downloading, in order to prevent it from spreading, otherwise there isn't any hope for record labels, particularly independent ones such as IFTM. Consequently, in order to try and prevent this from occurring, a new form of control called "Copyright Collectives" has been brought into force. This means that the artists and record labels receive a portion of the money gained from producing and distributing a track, so they still receive profits from their work, even if people are no longer purchasing as many CD's. Unfortunately this wouldn't occur for the independent record labels.

Consequently, the continuing development of digital media technology has led to a culture where an audience expects everything for free. Which could inevitably lead to the downfall of Independent Record Labels, and the reduced activity of conglomerates such as Sony ME, unless global policing is brought into force more successfully.

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