

A LEVEL

Candidate Style Answers

MEDIA STUDIES

H409

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H409/02 Evolving Media

Version 1

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Introduction

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers. Whilst a senior examiner has provided a possible level for each Assessment Objective when marking these answers, in a live series the mark a response would get depends on the whole process of standardisation, which considers the big picture of the year's scripts. Therefore the level awarded here should be considered to be only an estimation of what would be awarded. How levels and marks correspond to grade boundaries depends on the Awarding process that happens after all/most of the scripts are marked and depends on a number of factors, including candidate performance across the board. Details of this process can be found here: <http://ocr.org.uk/Images/142042-marking-and-grading-assuring-ocr-accuracy.pdf>

The sample assessment material used in this resource is here: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/316675-unit-h409-02-evolving-media-sample-assessment-material.pdf>

SECTION A QUESTION 1

SECTION A

Media Industries and Audiences

Explain why popular music radio programmes struggle to gain recognition as Public Service Broadcasting. Refer to *The BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show* to support your answer.

In your answer you must also:

- Explain how political, cultural and economic contexts influence the status of popular music radio programming

[15]

Exemplar 1 – Level 3 answer, 15 marks

I do not necessarily agree with the statement in question 1 that popular music radio programmes struggle to gain recognition as Public Service Broadcasting. The Radio 1 Breakfast Show provides for its under 30 adult audience a diverse and varied selection of content, although it does focus on popular music. Radio 1 is branded the nation's favourite station and historically has had popular music at the heart of its public service remit. The Radio 1 Breakfast Show with Nick Grimshaw celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2017. For fifty years BBC Radio 1 has championed great British music, breaking some of the biggest and most important acts of all time and throwing its support behind talented artists regardless of genre, from rock and pop to dance and grime.

According to the BBC Trust website, the remit of Radio 1 is to entertain and engage a broad range of young listeners with a distinctive mix of contemporary music and speech. Its target audience is 15-29 year olds and it should also provide some programming for younger teenagers. This remit remains part of the public service remit set up by Lord Reith in 1927 and still holds today – to inform, educate and entertain. Operating under this remit, the BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show is funded by the licence fee which gives BBC popular music radio programmes more scope and range in terms of content and access to 'star' guests. It also gives it more options for modes of distribution, for example, via livestreaming and podcasts on iPlayer radio, iPlayer on TV and extra content on digital stations and more outside broadcasts and events.

The content of the BBC can be streamed via the internet or you can download multiple episodes of first run series via the BBC iPlayer Radio App. For example, the podcast which features the best bits from Nick Grimshaw's BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show is released every week on a Friday featuring the funniest stuff and highlights from celebrity guests, such as, Sam Smith and Pink. This on demand service is provided for free under the licence fee and is set up as a subscription.

Despite this expanding provision of service, the Radio 1 Breakfast Show has come under criticism for its falling number of listeners. According to Rajar it has affected the programme's status by seeing audiences drop to just over 5 million listeners, which is the lowest audience for nearly twenty years. This may be seen as an example of how The BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show with Nick Grimshaw is losing its popular appeal especially in justification of the BBC licence fee payment.

According to the BBC Radio academy website, though, it's still the number one discovery place for musicians such as the Arctic Monkeys, and it explains that the internet has changed the way the music industry works forever but radio is still at the heart of it - radio is as important as ever. In today's segmented 'listening' market, successful programme managers must already know their target audience and the brand values of the Radio 1 Breakfast Show. These should attract and hold their attention, through its energetic style and popular content, including the music and celebrity culture it promotes through the presenter Nick Grimshaw, who is the voice of the show. This is clearly illustrated by the content of the show on Friday 2nd March; there is the popular feature of the The Nixtape, for example, which sees Grimshaw select 30 minutes of party-oriented music before a DJ comes in to mix listener requests to close the week.

According to Radio 1's controller Ben Cooper, Radio 1 is evolving with its young audiences as we live through changing times for traditional radio. There have been record figures for Radio 1 videos on Facebook with 80 million monthly views, and 1.4 billion total views on Radio 1's YouTube channel. Although traditional radio audience ratings show a gradual decline in

listeners, online media has raised the profile of BBC Radio 1 and the Breakfast Show in a different way – meeting the needs of a young digital-savvy online audience.

The Radio 1 Breakfast Show also contains in its running order regular news reports in the form of Newsbeat. The broadcast on Friday 2nd March begins with the news and targets its news in both style and content at young audiences; this is evident in the selection and register of the information provided and the tone of the news presenters when reporting. This style and content of news aimed at young audiences is also embedded in the presentation of news on the Newsbeat website. Traditionally news is not targeted at younger audiences and has often been packaged for adults, especially with scheduled breakfast shows. Newsbeat packages news aimed at the under 30s – fulfilling the remit of providing information in the public sphere for young people and genuinely, I believe, involving them as citizens.

In summary the Radio 1 Breakfast Show does have popular music at the heart of its broadcast and this is evident in the diverse and global music policy that it has. On the 2nd March broadcast, approximately 60% of the playlist was music by British artists or bands and the genre of music included pop, grime, indie rock and dance music from both British and International artists. Furthermore, in February the show promotes and covers the Brit Awards and September is the Live Lounge music month. Politically this may be seen as 'a waste of the taxpayers' money' but it is in line with the very principles of how Radio 1 formed over 50 years ago, using popular music to appeal to a wider audience. This ethos is promoted by the Radio 1 Breakfast Show today whilst it still retains a commitment to tie-in features such as the BBC weekender, live social event coverage such as Wimbledon. Also on the BBC website there are regular educational features with the presenter Nick Grimshaw visiting schools. The BBC is misunderstood if the fee-paying public believes the BBC is simply about popular music – at the heart of its revised remit is the commitment to bring diversity and cultural creativity in its music to represent all communities in the UK and promote British nationality on a global scale. The licence fee and the principles of public service broadcasting are the foundation which protects BBC Radio 1 and the Breakfast Show from the commercial pressures and influence of ownership in independent radio. The biggest challenge that the Radio 1 Breakfast Show faced was how to keep a media savvy under-30 audience in a technologically changing online media environment – one that I think it has achieved.

Examiner commentary

This is a well argued, confident response that demonstrates comprehensive application of knowledge and understanding of the radio industry, its audiences and how the industry is changing due to evolving digital technologies and patterns of consumption. There is clear and precise explanation of why BBC Radio 1 might be seen to struggle to gain recognition, countered by clear and precise reasons why it is a PSB service and can be seen to fulfil the BBC remit.

The response is supported by detailed and accurate reference to the set radio programme, the Radio 1 Breakfast show, with specific reference to a set case study showing knowledge and understanding of historical, cultural and political contexts, The response covers the influence of these on popular music programming and content.

Exemplar 2 - Level 2 answer, 8 marks

The BBC was set up with a public service remit in the UK. To this day it has to serve national interests and fulfil a remit set up in 1927 to inform, educate and entertain. The Radio 1 Breakfast Show promotes popular chart music to appeal to its young audience. It is a radio show which relies on the personality of Nick Grimshaw, who is a celebrity and the voice of the show.

The BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show with Nick Grimshaw is a radio show played every morning on BBC Radio 1. It is hosted by Nick Grimshaw and runs from 6.30 a.m. for over three hours. The show plays popular music in order to appeal to its target demographic of 15-29 year olds. As well as broadcasting contemporary music, the show has other purposes such as broadcasting important news updates with Newsbeat, weather information and more. This is because, since the show is played by the BBC, it has to meet the duties as a public service broadcaster. As a PSB the BBC's responsibility is to benefit the public and provide them with a national service and this is how it is regulated. This is because the BBC is publicly funded through the compulsory TV licence that every household in the UK must pay in order to view and use the BBC's content. It is extremely important that the BBC (radio show) provides this service to an acceptable standard to keep the listeners happy.

The Radio 1 Breakfast Show features content such as the Nixtape, an end of week feature which includes the best dance tunes of the week. The Radio 1 Breakfast Show is in crisis because of its popular music policy. It has been losing listeners on a regular basis over the last five years. Some have argued this is due to it losing its popular appeal and focusing too much on music and celebrities.

Without the funding from the TV licence, the BBC would not be able to exist and it must justify this fee through audience satisfaction. The BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show has no advertising and is not under the same commercial pressure as Capital Radio which has to justify delivering high audience figures to keep its advertisers happy.

However, music programmes do still struggle to gain recognition as PSBs because the radio station must make sure that its content appeals positively to a wide group of people. The issue with popular radio stations is that the music they play will not be to everyone's taste - some people may dislike the style of music that is popular at the moment. BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show tries to combat this by finding a balance between what is popular, but still taking into account multiple genres of music, such as its Live Lounge September music month or coverage of the BBC Music Weekender.

Nevertheless, at the heart of the Radio 1 Breakfast Show is its popular music. This is produced through the tradition of creating playlists. The prestigious Radio 1 playlist has dominated the shape of British music charts and today remains at the heart of Radio 1's commitment to informing and entertaining the nation. The Radio 1 Playlist is decided on the day before broadcast and makes up the majority of the songs that are played in the daytime. It's made up of around 50 songs that are played on rotation throughout the week. The amount of plays each song gets is based on which part of the playlist it is on.

It could be argued that the BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show is not fulfilling its public service remit due to it not representing all views and social groups in society. The show is heavily regulated and the songs played are carefully selected by the production team. They ensure that there is no swearing or inappropriate language in any of the songs played. This is important because, due to the timings of the show, it is very likely that children or immature audiences may be listening, and with that comes the risk of exposing them to inappropriate content. If such gatekeeping happens within an institution it could be argued that by careful selection of music and other content, the BBC is denying full expression and freedom. It could be argued that this prevents the audience from feeling satisfied with the services that the Radio 1 Breakfast Show provides.

Examiner commentary

This is an adequate response that directly addresses the question.

Referring to the mark scheme, the response directly addresses the question and provides an adequate demonstration of knowledge and understanding of why popular music radio programmes may struggle to gain recognition but it is a one sided answer to the question. The response demonstrates adequate knowledge and understanding of the radio industry and how it selects and provides content with reference to regulation, the

PSB remit and audience. The response is supported by adequate reference to the set radio programme, the Radio 1 Breakfast Show, although reference is general rather than including reference to a specific show. There is adequate and accurate knowledge and understanding of one or more contexts, political context in relation to regulation, and their influence on programming.

QUESTION 2

Explain the impact of digitally convergent media platforms on video game production, distribution and consumption. Refer to Minecraft to support your answer.

[15]

Exemplar 1 – Level 3 answer, 15 marks

The development of Minecraft in 2011 came at a time when video gaming was increasingly focusing on online and multi-platform gaming, a response to the rise of gaming on a range of devices, other than consoles. Digitally convergent media platforms opened up opportunities for games distributors to reach a wider audience of non-traditional gamers who game on media devices such as phones and tablets. This is evidenced by the media convergence that enables digital distribution and global access which hitherto had not been available. This was exploited by Persson in the distribution and circulation of Minecraft, meaning fewer master copies of the game were needed. Minecraft became a multi-platform game aimed not just at PC gamers but those who own smartphones, Microsoft X Box consoles and hand-held devices, for example.

Not only did Minecraft and its production company develop online distribution which saved costs, it also struck deals with Nintendo, the largest game software seller, and Sony, a hardware manufacturer and global conglomerate. By 2014 the intellectual property rights were acquired by Microsoft, an American multinational technology company. These gaming giants and technology companies had a vision for a product, Minecraft, which could be globally distributed and marketed through its community. In addition to the sales of hardware or software, Minecraft 'gamers', like any other media audience, could be sold games, add-ons and a whole range of merchandise including Minecraft magazine, t-shirts, mugs, calendars, backpacks, hoodies, ties-ins with Lego, Minecraft mini-games, and a proposed Minecraft movie in 2019 (with Warner Brothers film studio). This is an example of how Minecraft had multiple conduits of revenue for its product, not only in the gameplay but, also through merchandising, and in a very short space of time it was able to develop itself as a leading brand of computer game. The Microsoft Minecraft market place allows users to buy other features of Minecraft online, such as a new realm, story mode or modification. This online marketplace is a virtual store making it easier for Minecraft's community to shop for its products.

Digitally convergent media platforms had a significant impact on the distribution of Minecraft and its promotion to an audience, allowing it to maximise profits. Recent additions include The Minecraft: Story Mode available via Steam. Steam is developed by Valve Corporation, which offers digital rights management, multiplayer gaming, video streaming and a social networking service. Steam can be considered the equivalent to an online video games store, comparable to the internet platforms iTunes or Amazon. Online fan communities have enabled Minecraft's audience to have an active voice in its on-going production through detailed feedback and commentary on modifications and also beta testing through social media such as Facebook and YouTube. In addition, Minecraft has a Twitter account which documents game developments for its users.

Minecraft has tapped into the potential of the audience to ensure that the audience were engaged in its development. Minecraft allowed users to create new in-game content via beta testing processes, producing shareable, downloadable game modifications, called mods and producing texture and resource packs – such game development at the level of exchange is made possible by a cloud based platform where the transfer of data is now two-way and quick.

With digitally convergent platforms the biggest threat to the video games industry is piracy via leaked content that is playable across a number of platforms. However, video gamers are comparable to film fans in that they are willing to pay for game content, but will also share elements for free. As the cost of Minecraft is kept low and accessible to many audiences due to convergent media practices, and combined with the attitude of Minecraft that gamers will share and develop content – a philosophy that comes from the founder Marcus Persson - piracy of Minecraft is not as much of an issue as with other video games. Minecraft's embracing of online distribution and exchange offers value for content for its users – not only in the gameplay and shareable features but in the presence of its community. It does not just sell digital copies of a game but also packages an online experience for them. Of course, with the backing of Microsoft and the development of Oculus as a virtual reality headset game, Minecraft is now being packaged as a premium games experience and one that cannot be copied digitally.

Minecraft now has a global mass market audience and the game is highly successful. The takeover by Microsoft enabled Minecraft to be delivered by the world's leading technology company, reliant on providing instant and online access to the game, without the need for console-based technology. The success of Minecraft has been due to its ability to distribute and circulate engagement amongst its users – not just gaming fans but also non-traditional gamer audiences using digitally convergent media.

Examiner commentary

This is a well argued, confident response that directly addresses the question to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of industries and how they target audiences. The answer demonstrates a comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of industries for video games shown in the structure of the argument and excellent use of relevant terms. There is clear, precise and balanced explanation of the impact of digitally convergent media platforms on video game production, distribution (including marketing) and consumption. This is supported by a range of detailed and accurate examples with reference to Minecraft, the set video game.

Exemplar 2 – Level 2 answer, 9 marks

What is Minecraft? It is a computer game that has achieved phenomenal success within a very short period of time. It was independently conceived and produced by Marcus Notch Persson and was premised on the concept of crafting – extracting ore from the earth allowing users to create new objects and realms from raw materials. In its beta or programming stage the game was available for a low cost purchase fee and was developed through gameplay and the exchange of ideas and realms. It was launched in 2011 through Mojang Studios. The player chooses an avatar which can be personalised and destroys or creates blocks, forming imaginative structures. Through single play adventure, creative modes and online multiplayer servers communities can be built and relationships with other Minecraft fans made.

The success of the game is not only due to the game design but the way in which it took advantage of digitally convergent technology at the level of consumption by creating a platform of users who formed a community sharing ideas and tasks. These users would watch online tutorials on how to build the game and seek advice from other gamers. Minecraft's creator Notch Persson encouraged users to 'build with your community'. Users would report bugs and, more importantly, created mods or game modifications which were new worlds, characters and items for gamers to play with inside Minecraft.

Persson also wanted to spread the game's concept, and its ethos to stay within the control of genuine gamers, but he understood that the game's success would come from the backing of the technology companies who could provide him with the multiple digital platforms to distribute the game - ultimately to traditional non-gamers through the use of mobile digital devices. In its short history, Mojang Studios have struck partnerships deals with Sony and Microsoft to distribute the game. These partnerships helped Minecraft play across a number of devices making it easy to access and use. There are no obstacles to accessing the game from mobile phones, laptops and games consoles with Minecraft creating platforms using cloud technology to distribute and market the game. Indeed Minecraft set up its own Facebook pages and Twitter feed to keep audiences engaged with the game.

At the same time, the cost of the game was low and as it was digitally convergent, it did not require expensive console-based technology or a physical copy for the fan. Minecraft's success is due to embracing such online technologies. With the takeover of Minecraft by Microsoft on 2014 this technology company aided the distribution and marketing of the game further by enabling easier sharing and access to Minecraft features in its 'marketplace'. In 2017 Microsoft developed cross-play which enables gamers (the audience) to experience online play with other Minecraft players at the same time, irrespective of the platform they own to play games.

In summary, Minecraft now has a global audience, reaching a mass market and the game is highly successful. The takeover by Microsoft enabled Minecraft to be delivered by the world's leading technology company, reliant on providing instant and online access to the game through digitally convergent technology in the media, without the need for console-based technology. This impact is signposted by its ability to distribute and circulate engagement amongst its users.

Examiner commentary

This is an adequate response that demonstrates adequate knowledge and understanding of industries for video games and in relation to Minecraft as the set product. Generally there is accurate explanation of the impact of digitally convergent media platforms on most stages of production, distribution and consumption, although the quality of the response is not balanced in terms of production, distribution and circulation, as there is little content for consumption. It is supported by a good range of generally accurate reference to Minecraft, the set video game.

SECTION B QUESTION 3

SECTION B

Long Form Television Drama

In **question 3**, you will be rewarded for drawing together knowledge and understanding from your full course of study, including different areas theoretical framework and media contexts.

You should have studied **two** long form television dramas: **one** from **List A** and **one** from **List B** below.

Your answer should make reference to **both** long form television dramas you have studied: one from **List A** and **one** from **List B**.

List A	List B
<i>Mr Robot</i> (Season 1, Episode 1)	<i>The Killing / Forbrydelsen</i> (Season 1, Episode 1)
<i>House of Cards</i> (Season 1, Episode 1)	<i>Borgen</i> (Season 1, Episode 1)
<i>Homeland</i> (Season 1, Episode 1)	<i>Trapped</i> (Season 1, Episode 1)
<i>Stranger Things</i> (Season 1, Episode 1)	<i>Deutschland 83</i> (Season 1, Episode 1)

Why do long form television dramas from different countries offer different representations?

In your answer you must:

- consider the contexts in which long form television dramas are produced and consumed
- explain how media contexts may have influenced representations in the set episodes of the **two** long form television dramas you have studied
- make judgements and reach conclusions about the reasons for the differences in representation between the **two** episodes.

[30]

Exemplar 1 – Level 3 answer, 30 marks

In address of the question above I shall be comparing and discussing the U.S. long form television drama Homeland with the European long form television drama The Killing. In this comparison I hope to draw upon the different contexts in which long form television dramas are produced and consumed by audiences and offer explanation as to how such contexts may influence representations of gender and crime in the set episodes. In reaching conclusions for the differences and similarities in these television episodes I hope to illustrate how the key media concept of representation can be used as an analytical tool in a global media environment to aid an understanding of how messages are constructed within the conventions of long form television drama.

Homeland was produced on a high budget by the cable channel Showtime, a premium cable and satellite television network that is the flagship service of the Showtime Networks subsidiary of CBS Corporation. The original broadcast of the opening episode, 'Pilot', received just over one million viewers, becoming Showtime's highest-rated drama premiere in eight years and drawing record-setting audiences for the cable network. It was produced for a cable and global

internet audience, and demonstrates the opportunities for character development in authored programmes allowing for more complex, individualised three-dimensional characterisation rather than simple stereotyping.

In contrast, the long form TV drama *The Killing* (2007-12), shown on BBC 4 in the UK, attracted more viewers in the UK than its contemporary U.S. counterpart *Mad Men*, with a regular audience share in Denmark of 1.7 m viewers and in the UK of approximately 500,000 per episode. *The Killing* is one example of the popularity and success of Danish television drama which operates under a public service remit. It was not made for a global market, but spread throughout Europe, Australia then the UK, South America and Asia. *The Killing* proved particularly attractive to middle class viewers in the UK; it was such a popular subtitled TV drama that BBC 4 even developed a special Saturday slot for subtitled foreign programmes. The BBC picked up the show four years after the first episode for, in terms of TV deals, a small amount of money. *The Killing* was so successful as a global product that it inspired an American remake produced by Fox 21 Television Studios for the U.S domestic market, and Netflix globally distributed the drama in 2014. Here is an example of different economic contexts which will have an influence on the representations constructed in the programme.

The differences between production budgets for US television dramas and European television dramas can influence representations through allowing more or less choice to programme makers when constructing representations, for example with regard to *mise-en-scène*, filming, sound and editing technology. *Homeland* has a cast full of recognisable actors which audiences are familiar with, whereas *The Killing*, as a Danish drama, used little known stars and was shot in Copenhagen, using the city and its locations as a source of its drama. Both dramas are highly stylised. *Homeland* uses fast paced storytelling that is cinematic in its filming, whilst *The Killing* relies on lighting stylisation and the use of the camera for replicating crime drama conventions and is slow paced to develop emotional ties with the characters.

In long form TV drama the use of narrative arcs and complex central characters are important and at the heart of *Homeland* and *The Killing* this is evident. *Homeland* is an American spy thriller TV series with the storyline revolving around two central characters Carrie Mathison, a CIA officer, with bipolar disorder, and Nicholas Brody, an American sniper, a sergeant for the Marine Corps who is found at the start of the episode missing in action, presumed dead. Mathison had come to believe that Brody, who was held captive by al-Qaeda as a prisoner of war, has been turned whilst in captivity by the enemy and he poses a threat to the United States. The series focuses on a storyline that evolves from this premise, together with Mathison's on-going covert work as an intelligence agent. *Homeland* also raises discussions of the moral legitimacy of political espionage, which is debated and communicated to its audience. The narrative complexity deployed in *Homeland* follows a narrative arc conventional of the long form TV drama, around the two characters, Mathison's role as an intelligence officer and Brody's return to the U.S as a war hero. The plot twists of *Homeland* are comparable to the successful cable TV series *24*, with its themes of loyalty and legitimacy, demonstrating the established convention of these elements within the crime/political/espionage thriller genre which represents social anxieties and/or contested social values on television programmes, for example the perceived rupturing of the 'American dream' illustrated through allegorical representations of social anxieties such as domestic terrorism and surveillance, and also more broadly through wider western social values towards security and family and home.

The Killing also deals with a crime storyline. At the centre of *The Killing* is Detective Inspector Sarah Lund and a characteristic of the drama is that each episode of the three seasons represents a day in the police investigation of one murder – it is a 'whodunit' narrative. Such elongated storytelling allows for detailed exploration of the emotional reaction to a horrific killing by victims, families and friends – often not represented in crime TV dramas as the crime is solved within the programme as part of the narrative resolution. The Danish programme makers wanted to deal with a subject matter that was not often written about in western contemporary or Hollywood crime fiction. The narrative arc of episode 1 revolves around Detective Inspector Sarah Lund and is plotted around day 1 of a murder investigation themed on the search for a missing schoolgirl and then in the final scene the discovery of her body. The programme makers introduced three different narrative strands to tell the storyline – the crime, the introduction of the victim's family and their emotional responses and a political mayoral election campaign, which subsequently is revealed to be caught up in the murder case. The use of established genre conventions in both *Homeland* and *The Killing* reflects Hesmondhalgh's view that cultural industries rely on repetition to sell formats to audiences.

At the heart of *Homeland* and *The Killing* is the discussion of the representation of gender in relation to Carrie Mathison and Sarah Lund, whose characters are crucial to the narrative and who, on occasion, challenge and subvert those representations to try and instigate cultural change and domestic conversations on representations and identity. Both female leads share certain generic traits in their representations across westernised television culture. As in Van Zoonen's argument about gender being performative, we see Jessica rehearsing being 'the good wife' and the army desperately trying to persuade Brody to perform as the masculine 'hero'. The CIA management are male, reinforcing patriarchal power, but the narrative follows the agency of a female protagonist playing the central role of the maverick who is proved right. In *The Killing* the central female character, Sarah Lund, is represented as a single mother but career minded – a detective inspector who protects the innocent. Lund is calm, calculating and methodical in her police work, her professionalism is admirable and she is the problem solver and communicator.

Integral to these crime dramas is not only the discourse on crime, but the key functional unit of the family. Both crime dramas use melodrama as a subplot and a part of the narrative arc. This is intentional as conflict is worked out in society and traditionally the family is central to any culture. The use of melodrama is crucial in *Homeland* when Nick Brody returns as a war hero to meet his family – in the airport the melodramatic is played out as the family is reunited, but what the episode does is to also reveal how torn apart the family has been by the father's absence – for example the daughter is caught experimenting with drugs. Carrie Mathison is without a sense of family; the CIA is her family but she is considered a 'loose cannon'. Sarah Lund on the other hand is a single mother with a career with the Danish police force, but as a police officer and mother she is central to the narrative plot. She is also strong in the treatment of the victim and their families. Both dramas share a sense of the melodramatic albeit from different perspectives and this is an example of how long form TV drama is experimenting with the crime genre – using the family and family values so important to U.S. and Danish society. These readings of the text are offered to the audience in negotiation with the text; the melodramatic elements do not soften the issues but heighten the emotional realism of the victim's/reunited family in each drama, offering an understanding of how families deal with conflict in society. *The Killing* is described as Nordic Noir as a way of defining stylistic and narrative elements and subsequently as a brand used for Danish drama abroad.

In conclusion, there are a number of reasons for the differences in representation between the two episodes of *Homeland* and *The Killing*. This is due in part to the different contexts of production being a mainstream cable TV drama and a Danish produced drama. These contexts clearly have had an effect on the representations of gender and the family. Additionally, there are differences in how the crimes are represented – one is a crime against homeland security, the other about a murdered schoolgirl. The complex narrative storytelling and representations of femininity which challenge traditional stereotypes, have resulted in readings by the audience of these representations not only as different but as sharing similarities in the drama. It can be argued that what brings these two very different dramas together is an understanding of the form and genre of long form TV drama, which is packaged and sold to a global audience which appreciates the variety of complex representations that these dramas offer.

AO1: 10 marks

AO2: 20 marks

Total: 30 marks

Examiner commentary

This is a comprehensive response to the set question that demonstrates a developed and detailed line of reasoning that is coherent and logically structured, relevant and substantiated.

AO1:

There is comprehensive and accurate knowledge and understanding of the influence of media contexts in the representations, with reference to economic, political, social and historical contexts.

AO2:

There is comprehensive, detailed and accurate application of knowledge and understanding of theoretical frameworks of representation, media language, audiences and industries for long form TV drama.

There is detailed knowledge and understanding of contexts and media theory with a comprehensive account of cultural context explained with reference to patriarchy and the use of Van Zoonen's theory of gender as performative to analyse the representation of gender in the two set products.

There is convincing, perceptive and accurate analysis of representation in the set episodes with analysis of the representation of gender, families and storylines.

The response consistently provides logical connections and a good line of reasoning to compare and contrast the representations offered in both episodes.

There are developed and accomplished judgements and conclusions; the response concludes that whilst there are clearly differences, there are also similarities in the representations.

Exemplar 2 – Level 2 answer, 15 marks

Homeland was written as a response to 9/11 and the war on terror. How this affected the American psyche has been reflected and re-interpreted through television dramas. On the other hand The Killing was made to reflect Danish life, and its representations are different to US dominated conventional crime drama series. The programme makers of The Killing understand the nature of TV crime drama and wanted to encourage a reading focused on the victim and consequences not often told in formulaic crime drama series. At the heart of both dramas is a female-centred narrative and how they respond to crimes as investigators. Each story is told in relation to gender and race. Homeland is an American cable TV network show with a large budget, whereas The Killing was produced for state run Danish TV and produced by one production company.

The long form TV drama is a form of media which has been able to comment and make drama on topics which reinterpret their own political institutions. In Homeland, Carrie Mathison questions the hero's welcome of Nick Brody - a war hero. She is critical of the CIA for whom she works, reflecting an understanding that western programme makers have the freedom to criticise their own domestic politicians. Likewise in The Killing, the narrative plotting of a mayoral candidate election interwoven into the onset of an investigation into the murder of a popular school girl enables the programme makers to be playful with allegations of political scandal including the involvement of investigative journalists and missing diaries.

Homeland, episode 1, explores the historical trauma of 9/11 in the USA: the protagonist is haunted by her failure to prevent the terrorist attack. The Killing has a political storyline as well around a forthcoming mayoral election and important Danish social issues – childcare, refuse collection and education. The episode reflects a perspective on politics representing two separate worlds within the same society: that of family life and that of politics, the former with values of caring, solidarity and the latter with values of political point scoring highlighting an understanding of Danish politics. Homeland represents the U.S ideological reaction to global terrorism and international conflict and The Killing contains specifically Danish representations – the representation and the nature of Danish politics.

Homeland's racial and ethnic representations are simultaneously both stereotypical and anti-stereotypical: a black man is poised to become Director of the CIA, and the hero is represented as being turned by a terrorist cell. The episode shows the influence of social anxieties about the contemporary terrorist threat, constructed as middle-eastern and about the state's response to that threat. Denmark is represented as an avowedly multicultural society, with Vagn's racism represented as a character flaw in opposition to Theis's joking that Vagn couldn't even spell falafel – a poignant comment in the dialogue in relation to the name-calling of the shopkeeper.

The Killing episode 1 also reflects gender relations: the police management and politicians are white males reinforcing power in society, but the narrative follows the agency of a female protagonist, whose professionalism and efficacy outshines her male counterpart. There is similar ambiguity in gender representation when Theis and Pernille are represented as equal partners in their business and family affairs, but, stereotypically, it is the husband who goes out to search for the missing child while the wife stays at home.

Both dramas construct representations about contemporary life in modern democracies and deal with gender and ethnicity and politics at the heart of the episodes. It is the representation of place and national identity that is constructed in a complex and clever way by the programme makers using the long form TV drama, and this has taken shape according to how the production companies have wanted to mediate different realities of gender, crime and politics.

AO1: 5 marks

AO2: 10 marks

Total: 15 marks

Examiner commentary

This is an adequate response to the set question that demonstrates a line of reasoning with some structure. The content is relevant to the question and is supported by some evidence from each of the set products.

AO1:

There is adequate and accurate knowledge and understanding of the influence of media contexts on representations with reference to political, social and cultural contexts to demonstrate influences of media contexts on representations in the set products.

AO2:

There is adequate and generally successful application of knowledge and understanding of some of the media

theoretical framework with reference to representation and industries in some detail.

There is generally successful application of media contexts to analyse the two set products with discussion around the social and cultural contexts useful in developing the response.

There is adequate and generally successful analysis of representations in the set episodes with some logical connections and lines of reasoning although the response is descriptive in parts.

There are adequate and generally well-reasoned judgements and conclusions made about the differences in representations for the set products in relation to the question.

QUESTION 4

Evaluate the relevance of Todorov's theory of narratology to long form television drama.

[10]

Exemplar 1 – Level 3 answer, 10 marks

Narratology is the study of narrative and the function or purpose of narrative structure in communicating meaning, messages and values in media products. Todorov's theory of narratology can be seen to be partly relevant when applying his ideas to long form TV drama. Although his ideas are designed to be applied to films with single narratives and clear resolutions, when applying his theory to long form TV drama, it exposes the complexity of long form drama narratives, which can be seen to be one of the reasons for the form's success and popularity with audiences. Todorov's theory of narratology can be seen to be useful, yet also have some limitations, when applied to dramas such as *Homeland* and *The Killing*.

Todorov described narratives as having a state of equilibrium which is present at the start of a narrative. In *Homeland* this equilibrium is set in Washington around a spy espionage thriller. This is established in the setting and the location – Washington DC is the capital state of the U.S. It isn't in a good state of affairs as episode one reveals in the opening sequence with an American CIA agent, Carrie Mathison, attempting and ultimately failing to negotiate the release of a political prisoner in Baghdad. Although this isn't necessarily a good state of affairs, it can be considered a stable starting point, or equilibrium, for the rest of the narrative to flow from as the episode flashforwards to 8 years later. What becomes the equilibrium is the story set post 9/11 which focuses on how well *Homeland* security can deal with terrorist threats. In *The Killing* the normal state of affairs or equilibrium is the civilised Danish capital city of Denmark signified by the wide shots of the location used as cutaways in the TV drama. The normal state of affairs is constructed around the Detective Inspector Sarah Lund who is introduced as leaving the Danish police force to live in Sweden. Todorov's theory is sufficiently simple here, and therefore relevant, to help us see how long form dramas will begin with an equilibrium of some kind, before disruption in the narrative takes place.

In applying Todorov's concept of equilibrium to long form TV crime drama, disruption to the community or state of affairs takes place. In *Homeland* the discovery of Nick Brody who has been missing in action for 8 years is the jolt that drives the narrative, which gives the audience a story and a narrative arc for the lead character Carrie Mathison. She is not convinced that the return of the war hero, Nick Brody is all that it seems. She suspects him of being turned by a terrorist group. In *The Killing*, Sarah Lund has to cancel her flight because of one last job – the report of a potential missing person. The narratology evolves around strong female characters that are represented as the investigators of the crimes in each episode.

Todorov argues that a recognition of disruption occurs next in the narrative structure and sometimes this is almost simultaneous with the disruption itself. This is particularly relevant, and useful, when we consider the narrative structure in the first episode of *Homeland*. In *Homeland* it is the arrival home of Nick Brody that stirs suspicion with Carrie Mathison – first in discussion with her mentor at the CIA and then in the debrief with Nick Brody himself. These suspicions unravel in episode 1 where Mathison has to uncover the evidence that Brody has been turned. Here it is the female intelligence officer that realises that something has gone awry. However, in *The Killing*, the recognition of the disruption unfolds differently and the suspicion of a missing person is delayed in the pacing of the narrative. The slow moving plot introduces different characters and their links to the main storyline – the politicians and the victim's family. The use of an interweaving narrative enables the audience to understand the crime that is unravelling and the discovery that Sarah Lund makes of the missing person and subsequently a body. What is creative with the use of equilibrium in *The Killing* is that each episode reflects a sequence of events in the crime. Episode 1 is telling the story of who has disappeared and what disruption this brings to Sarah Lund's plans, the victim's family represented by the editing of their emotional responses and creating a reality of Danish society. Todorov's ideas regarding recognition of disruption are relevant here and although they appear differently in the narrative structure of the two dramas, his ideas help us to analyse just how the recognition occurs and, as they are both crime dramas, when the recognition of disruption is revealed, it helps to create further suspense and engagement with the narrative.

Todorov's theory of narratology supports the concept that there are narrative resolutions or some kind of closure to a narrative. However, there is no restoration of the equilibrium in either TV drama as the convention of long form TV drama suspends resolution and episodes unravel over a period of time. This enables the narrative to be explored through different plots and characterisation. These open ended or unresolved narratives help to set the scene of the next episode and enables conflict to be explored and possibly restored at some stage in the future. This therefore is a limitation of Todorov's theory and is only relevant here in identifying the differences between traditional singular narrative films and long form TV drama, as the idea of narrative closure is more relevant for single narratives rather than the complex narratives of long form drama where climax and resolution are delayed and sometimes never reached.

To conclude, it can be argued that Todorov's narratology is relevant when analysing the use of narrative in long form TV drama but only to a certain extent. His ideas around equilibrium, disruption and recognition of disruption are relevant. These ideas are useful in the analysis of narrative in long form drama as they help us to identify the similarities and differences in different genres and products within the form. However, Todorov's ideas regarding narrative resolution are less relevant but can be considered useful in that they help to identify that there is often no resolution in long form TV drama, which is part of the appeal for audiences. In *Homeland* and *The Killing*, we can see that the initial equilibrium of the episodes is explored, explained and disrupted, but resolution is absent. Complex narrative arcs are developed within long form TV dramas whether it is an American or European drama. They set up equilibriums which are disrupted and explored in episode 1 enabling the audience to delve deeper into what is disrupted and each drama addresses the questions why, but never with a sense of closure or resolution.

Examiner commentary

A comprehensive, well supported response that demonstrates comprehensive, detailed and accurate application of knowledge and understanding of media language with a focus on narrative to evaluate Todorov's narratology. There is convincing, perceptive and accurate evaluation of the usefulness and limitations of Todorov's narratology in analysing the media language of long form television dramas with reference to the two set products.

Exemplar 2 – Level 2 answer, 5 marks

Narratology as a concept allows for the study of a narrative's cause and effect. Todorov is useful for understanding different stages of how stories are told. Todorov's theory is very useful in teasing out the messages and values underlying a narrative, in pointing to the significance of the transformation between the initial equilibrium and the new equilibrium. Todorov's ideas about narratology are relevant in helping us understand the narrative structure in Homeland. In Homeland the following stages of Todorov's narratology are an equilibrium, the setting of the scene is established in Washington and the CIA are established showing what life is like in a post 9/11 U.S. We are also introduced to Carrie Mathison a CIA agent as well as her colleagues.

The next stage to the episode storyline is the news that a MIA marine officer Nick Brody has been found alive in the Middle East and will be returning to the US. The hero's return to the US is a celebratory story for America as a hero is returning home. There is some disrupting of these events throughout the story – his wife has a lover, his family is dysfunctional, and Carrie Mathison suspects Nick Brody of being turned against his country – quite controversial for such a story to be set up. We know this because Carrie has told her supervisor and in his absence Nick's wife has had affair. Todorov's ideas about disruption are useful here.

There is recognition of this disruption to the equilibrium as Carrie Mathison is determined to investigate Nick's story – she sets up surveillance in his house and looks for evidence that he is messaging the terrorist cell and she has to convince her mentor at the CIA. Mathison provides evidence to the CIA that in televised coverage of Nick's heroic return he is signalling his terrorist cell through his body language – this complicates matters and the episode is left to consider what will happen next. Todorov's ideas about recognition of disruption are relevant here.

There is no resolution to the story because the nature of the long form TV drama means that often storylines are worked out over a series of episodes, for example in Breaking Bad or Mad Men. European drama, like the Danish drama The Killing often works with a lack of resolution or a return to a new state of affairs often in the last episode. This presentation of how the story is told is important to the media form and has helped sell the long form TV drama to audiences globally and through binge viewing. Todorov's theory about narrative closure is not relevant for long form dramas and therefore not as useful.

Todorov's narratology might not be seen as totally relevant but it helps us see that these TV dramas could be defined as mixing linear narrative and non-linear narrative techniques. Non-linear narratives and circular narratives have a structure that is not so straightforward. A non-linear narrative can move backwards and forwards in time usually using a flashback or flash forwards technique, which is used in the opening to Homeland. Such narratives allow for deeper engagement with character and motive.

Examiner commentary

There is an adequate application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media, in this case media language and narrative, to evaluate Todorov's academic theory. There is a mostly adequate and generally accurate application of knowledge and understanding of media language to evaluate Todorov's narratology in relation to one set product. There is an adequate and generally successful evaluation of the usefulness of Todorov's narratology in analysing the media language, specifically narrative, in long form TV drama with Homeland but the evaluation of the theory's relevance is taken for granted and simplistic.



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