

G322 June 2011
Examiner's comments

Candidate C
Section B Film

Question 1

This is a fluent and articulate response, making accurate use of media terminology and showing a degree of sophistication in analysis of the extract. The candidate has effortlessly combined analysis with the use of technical examples, for example "This slow motion is there to highlight the selfish attitude and high position of the Prince in the status quo as he is able to break the rules of society and effectively break free from the bonds of social conformity as he challenges and fights Merlin in the street." There is discrimination in the use of examples to discuss the representation of class and status, fitting high level four criteria.

This level of analysis is sustained, with all technical aspects being covered, with discussion of mise en scene involving subtle and succinct semiotic analysis, enabling the candidate to evaluate how class and status is subverted from the more obvious stereotypes used.

High level four for all categories

Question 2 – Film

There is a range of examples cited from different contexts, offering some good contrast and a knowledgeable approach to the topic. Terminology is used accurately throughout. Understanding of practices of distribution and marketing is developed and exemplified, with many contemporary films cited.

High level 4 for all three categories.

1. Discuss the ways in which the extract constructs a representation of class and status

Firstly the extract from the BBC TV drama Merlin written by Julian Jones and James Hawes creates a representation of class and status using different shot types to create the overall effect of an ancient fantastical status quo. The positions of both the servant Merlin and his master are established using the variety of shot types orchestrated in the extract. For example the many different pan shots as Merlin walk through the corridors of the castle through the streets of the market and when coming out of the castle help to cement his low class position as he is compared to the enormity of the castle in a way which makes him seem smaller. In comparison the mid-shot which establishes the Prince Arthur's involvement in the scene shows him walking powerfully and purposely through the streets in the slight low angle of the shot gives an impression of size and importance. Also during the scene within the servants quarters between half than the old man is presented in a simple shot reverse shot. This displays both the characters and the scene as equal in class and status within the scene both presented a medium close-up and in the shot reverse shot format showing how they are both equals within the mediaeval style status quo.

Secondly the editing of the extract gives a construction of class and status through use of fast editing and slow motion shots to create a sense of danger during the fight sequence. The fight sequences vital to the plot of the episode as for the first time a member of the servant class challenges the Prince and in effect challenges the status quo of the mediaeval system and the editing displays this conflict as all media dramas are based upon conflict the importance of the scene is high. The conflict and the scene is increased with the fast editing during the fight scene as the camera jump cuts from different elements in the marketplace to characters weapons and even their faces to imply danger and conflict during the scene. Also uses slow motion when the Prince brings his weapon down on the produce of the market. This slow motion is there to highlight the selfish attitude and high position of the Prince in the status quo as he is able to break the rules of society and effectively break free of the bonds of social conformity as he challenges and fights Merlin in the middle of the street. Also the slow motion highlights the danger and heated emotions of the situation as the violent blows land on things surrounding the Merlin character.

Furthermore the editing during the confrontation scene before the characters Merlin and Arthur engage in armed conflict as the two share a heated discussion and swapping of insults. When Merlin is trying to walk away the camera can see his face in reaction to the arrival of the Prince however none of the other characters in the scene are aware of his facial expression. This in effect draws the audience into the scene as we are placed in Arthur's position because of his emotional and physical reaction to the Princes words are only visible to ours personally bringing us into the battle of the classes.

These are sound and the extract helps to create a sense of high importance and status quo as it brings tension to situations where the servant acts in a way displeasing to the higher status figures. For example when Merlin is in the Princess's room when she is not there without her permission the non-diegetic music is employed to create tension and create a sense that some kind of class-based rule is being broken. Also implies that somehow the Princess is not quite as she seems and that by

being the character Merlin is unearthing some hidden secret. This we can see another example of the editing as the mirror shows a old and whether the figure nothing like the younger freshfaced Princess that is visible to Merlin. Also this is another example of how the audience of the scene is drawn into the action as we in the audience are the only ones able to see the real form of the Princess, this personalises the extract and gives the audience a feeling of superiority as we are in possession of more information than most of the characters. This is an audience pleasure that is usually employed in television drama. Also the sound bridges when the Merlin character is the castle and walks through the market show a level of impending conflict as they create a sense of Merlin's combative personality.

Finally the mise en scène gives a representation of class and status as it shows the different characters and their environments and when they are out of them. For example when the Prince's first displayed on screen he is framed next to his guards on either side of him in the middle of them. This shows that he is of a high status because the surrounding guards are in support of him but further back and less prominent in the scene. In comparison to Merlin's entrance where he is shown through a pan shot walking down the corridor alone shows how the two characters statuses are very different in the programme. Also the clean white halls and corridors are in direct contrast to the dark dingy and small environment that the two servants are in, furthermore the clothes of the servants wearing dull and torn whereas the soldiers in Princes clothes are clean and practical but also have armour and weapons to show their higher class and status symbols as they are above the servants. Also in the fight scene when Merlin is forced to bend to pick up the weapon he drops this displays his lower class as he is involuntarily bowing to the Prince and how he is going to be forced into his class position by the Princes physical might. However this scene does subvert social class and status as the lowly servant is able to defeat the Prince through his use of cunning and magic. When the Princes forced onto his back the crowd cheer as they see a subversion of the status quo also Merlin is pleased as through this action he gains higher status than the Prince. However the new status positions are short lived as with a quick look from the older generation the in effect teenage rebellion of the Merlin character is quelled and the status quo is returned to normal as Arthur Knocks Merlin to the ground. However second subversion of character stereotypes is visible in the end of the scene as Arthur gives Merlin a compliment and let him go his way. This can be seen as a metaphor for the changing role of the ruling classes in non-society as they become more open to change and act on hole for the better of the people. However the beginning of the scene the powerful elements i.e. the Prince and Princess and the old man are controlling Merlin and telling him what to do. He is the definition of his class during pleasure in only the enforcing of his masters will. He is told to take the jar to the Princess so he does is told to stop fighting the Prince so he does and he is told to stop using magic which he refuses. This is bringing a fantastical element into the story and increasing view interest.

In conclusion the representation of class and status in the extract is treated well through the use of long pan shots and fast editing to create a sense of danger and status positioning. Also the mise en scène of the environments that the characters inhabit shows the different class structure and place in society. Moreover the sound is used to create danger and conflict during scenes where the construction of class and status is subverted.

2. "Successful media products depend as much upon marketing and distribution to a specific audience as they do upon good production practices" to what extent would you agree with this statement remedial study?

I would somewhat agree with the statement that within the media film the distribution and marketing of the film is the most important element to the films economical success. For some to make money and needs to have the widest possible and most effective distribution this is why such importance is placed on marketing in the modern film industry. In big studio production houses like Disney and universal are famous for their overall control of the film industry. This is because of their vertical distribution system enabling them to be certain that when developing a film they can release it through their cinema chains and distribution networks. Also their connections with TV companies and print media allow them to be sure that the marketing campaign can be a success this in effect allows them to invest more money and create bigger and better projects to distribute and market. For example in the 2010 film "Alice in Wonderland" the studio network Disney was certain that the success of the film was guaranteed and it can get a wide release due to Disney's distribution network and cinema chains. The film was therefore guaranteed success was completely because through the certain wide distribution and DVD sales that the distribution and cinema time would guarantee the film was almost guaranteed to make a profit. Also due to Disney's TV connections and lasting appeal to a younger audience through the merchandise and themepark business the film was guaranteed to have a continuing and growing success as the influence of the films wide distribution and marketing campaigns are guaranteed to create a wide appeal. The ultimate demonstration of this studio domination is with the film "toy story 3" which grossed 72.3 million on its opening weekend showing the fundamental importance they wide distribution and successful marketing has on the film industry and the success of the film in question.

Secondly the recent film "A kings speech" was only guaranteed success when it became distributed due to the investment of the UK film Council by momentum pictures. This meant that the film could achieve such great success through the distribution network as without it the film would not have received the public and critical acclaim that it did. The film won four Oscars and seven baftas including best picture and best actor in both awards. The film could not have achieved this success about its international distribution and therefore the success of the film was almost solely reliant on the marketing and distribution as without it little or no success would have been achieved. The film's director Tom Hooper said in an interview that the modern revolution of better and cheaper cameras in theory should allow a wider variety of films to be produced. However due to the fact that distributing and marketing a film can cost up to 3 times the amount of the films production the power of the major studios has not been diminished. However the success of the film was not solely dependent on the distribution of it the quality of the directing and acting and the screenplay was

vital to the film success. Also the success of the film was due to the Royal setting and the nostalgic heritage genre that it was based in. The success of heritage British pictures and mainly ones involving the Royal family has been well-documented with films like "the Queen" and "Mrs Brown" achieving wide success especially in America. The nature of the American audience the largest and most important cinema audience in the world I can be up to 10 times the size of the British one effects many cinema productions and the American love of British Royal family was undoubtedly a factor in the film success. This is commented by renowned film critic Mark Kermode said that cynical view of the film would be the it was clear Oscar bait as it was about a commoner becoming friends with a member of the Royal family. This shows how the success of "kings speech" was not solely reliant on its distribution.

In fact many films have had wide distributions through international companies that have not received the same public and critical acclaim in fact many have been overlooked or even attacked in newspapers of the press by critics for trying to solely appeal to the largest audience. For example the film "the boat that rocked" directed by Richard Curtis and produced by working title was not critically or even publicly well received. Working title have connections with universal a huge distribution studio in America. The studio is owned by General Electric who own the television station NBC and many DVD manufacturing networks. Therefore the vertical distribution system of the film is guaranteed to cause success if limited as it is able to have print ads, televisual ads and even DVD copies already made to supply the demand for a film. Furthermore the General Electric Company has connections in the videogame industry so the film distributed by universal can achieve cross media synergy by having a videogame created about it and achieving higher levels of awareness and economic achievement. Therefore in certain respects the economical success is guaranteed however as most if not all films achieve a certain level of profit the success of the film is not just measured in its economical gains. As we can see in the film "the boat that rocked" the film like many working title productions was undoubtedly made with an American audience in consideration. Many working title films like "Love actually" and "Notting Hill" are created with a American audience in mind to distribute to as both these films have American actors namely Billy Bob Thornton and Julie Roberts, they also show a unrealistic and even on real view of Britain designed to have a wide distribution potential. The films have been ridiculed and attacked first but in the past work very successful but unfortunately for working title the "boat that rocked" did not achieve the same success. Therefore we can see that this by a large distribution this film was not wholly success so therefore the success of the film is reliable and more than just distribution alone.

The marketing and awareness of the film can be achieved in a cacophony of different ways. For example the independent British film "sift" by between the eyes productions was marketed through a legal spam e-mail campaign. The e-mail said that the person who received there was under investigation for drug dealing I needed to click on the link to see how to escape their prison time, however the link was just to the "shifty" website. This form of marketing was successful however problematic as it caused the company to come under investigation by the FSA as the advert broke their guidelines. This however just caused more hype and buzz about the film as the creators now seemed interesting and dangerous breaking the law to get their film out there. However clever marketing of the film is not the only element that achieves success as the film "shifty" did not receive a wide distribution or achieve much monetary gains. Therefore marketing and distribution

when coupled together can almost solely create successful film but the two cannot achieve this when not coupled with the other.

A second example how a dynamic and interesting way of marketing a film is not achieved film great success therefore proving that successful products are more reliant on distribution and marketing than production practices is as follows. The 2011 film "red state" directed by Kevin Smith is attempting to distribute privately by the director himself. The director will take film across the country of America performing a Q&A session after the a private screening of the film therefore marketing the film himself. This was done because of the added pressures that the director Kevin Smith said that the studio industry and the high marketing and distribution costs placed on his films. This attempt to distribute the film has been largely successful however it is limited as the success of the film can only be measured only core audience who are undoubtedly likely to turn up as the Q&A sessions of the direct are popular anyway. However this dynamic techniques of distribution does show a studio control industry that has forced smaller directors and production companies to find new ways to try and compete with the studios marketing and distribution might. This therefore proves that a large proportion of a films success is reliant on the marketing and distribution of the product.

Smaller distribution networks and production houses in smaller countries are forced to link themselves to a larger distribution company to achieve monetary success as about international appeal and distribution a film is likely to fail to gain its largest possible audience. For example the working title production company was forced to attempt to gain universal as a partner in the early part of its creation. The ability of a small national production company to continue to exist is limited by an inability to create successful films about a huge marketing and distribution network. This is why the success of film is reliant on its distribution system as early films by working title like "the launderette" were far less successful than later films distributed by universal like "Notting Hill" and "four weddings and a funeral". This shows how the distribution and marketing the film is vital to its overall success. However this need to internationally marketer film to a wider audience has caused the films to be less individual and show a less naturalistic view of British society.

In conclusion despite the importance of fine directing acting and production the success of the film is still reliant on a wide distribution system and this is why the vertical distribution networks the large studios are still the most important film creators in the film industry. Also when marketing the film the importance of an international audience is vital to the film success therefore the marketing of film itself is a necessary component to create successful film.