

Principal Examiner's Comments

B322 June 2010 (Bourne Identity)

One of the best answers in the June 2010 exam.

Question 1

Explain two ways the characters and/or events in the extract fit the action adventure genre.

This answer shows thorough understanding of generic conventions, both of which are explained. The supporting evidence from the extract is perhaps the weakest part of this answer but the candidate does cite Marie asking Bourne whether she can use the bathroom, and the examiners were instructed to be generous on this point given the lack of textual evidence in the inadvertently shortened extract for this exam.

10/10

Question 2

Explain how each of the following is used to create effects that fit the action adventure genre:

- soundtrack
- camerawork
- editing
- mise-en-scène.

Some errors – the misunderstanding of non-diegetic sound and the erroneous statements about ‘many point of view shots’, the ‘panning shot around his face’, and the ‘two jump cuts of other areas of the house’ - but this is otherwise competent and detailed. All four bullet points are addressed. The understanding of connotative effect is through and clearly lifts the answer into level four. Accuracy in the use of terminology is the weakest part of this answer and limits it to the bottom of level four, but there is some accurate use.

16/20

Question 3

**Discuss the ways in which people are represented in the extract.
Make reference to stereotypes.**

This answer only addresses one representation issue – gender stereotyping – but does this thoroughly and with detailed reference to the text. Aspects of characterisation are clearly linked to gender stereotypes, showing through understanding of representation issues. This answer is rather short, but clearly attains level four.

18/20

Question 4a

Discuss in detail how and why one comedy programme was scheduled on one or more channels

This answer clearly addresses both the how and why parts of the question with an effective discussion of both the scheduling and the institutional elements, even though the answer is rather short. The point about the competitive teenage audience slot is well made (though could be improved with some discussion of what the competitor channels are scheduling). The candidate clearly understands how channel 4 uses E4 to attract a

young audience, though one has to ignore the point about social class category E for this to make sense, and explains this in terms of PSB requirements. This answer assumes without exemplification that Friends will attract teenagers, but this is better than the many answers that got bogged down with long analyses of audience pleasures.

15/15

Question 4b

Compare the audience pleasures offered by two comedy programmes.

This answer clearly meets all the level four descriptors: detailed knowledge of audience pleasures and thorough understanding of how programmes offer these pleasures, with detailed exemplification (from different episodes of the programmes), and a thorough understanding of the differences between the programmes.

The answer is held up by some discussion of the 'actcom' at the beginning, but then gets into its stride with a contrast between scripted narrative arcs and unscripted liveness. It then contrasts a well exemplified discussion of the pleasure of narrative resolution with the pleasures of satire. It ends with a third and again well-exemplified contrast in pleasures: relating to the familiar characters of a sitcom and schadenfreude offered by Boris as the guest host.

15/15

Total: 74/80

1) The events in this extract conform back to the action adventure genre as Jason Bourne is searching for something – his identity. Although this is not a completely generic convention it still features in many films of the genre as the character starts at the beginning of the film searching for something and throughout it they have an adventure in order to find it like Jason Bourne in this extract. He will have to pursue his adventure and along the way there will be many crossroads – a typical storyline for an action adventure film. Another way in which this extract conforms to the genre is by having a dominating male as the protagonist as this is typical of action adventure as it focuses on leading male characters that are the main characters in the story. Bourne is very dominating as Marie asks him whether to use the bathroom and is in control throughout the scene and when the water is cold Marie asks him for his help demonstrating the lead role of his character.

(10 marks)

2) Soundtrack – there is little music in this extract as this heightens the suspense but high pitch pans banging together start during the tense moments in the scene, acting as a warning bell to Jason Bourne's shock discovery whilst on the phone. When action is building it is typical for an action adventure film to start to play music as it creates more tension. There is a lot of use of non diegetic sounds as well such as the dialling of his phone and the running of water – adding to the realistic atmosphere of the scene.

- Camerawork – There are many point of view shots from Bourne's perspective that use the oblique angle as they are unsteady showing the rush in which the character is in; they used that shot when Bourne was searching for his passport, drawing the audience in to the scene as though they are the character. There is also a long shot of Bourne which shows him by the white light of a window highlighting one contrast between his dark clothes and the sun outside to demonstrate he is trapped and a slightly dark character. Lastly after Bourne has received the news they do a panning shot around his face to portray the emotion on it and to convey that message to the audience as he is shocked.
- Editing – At the beginning of the scene there is very slow paced editing to draw out the suspense and keep the audience on the edge of their seat but as Bourne soon realises whilst on the phone that someone may be in the flat, there are two jump cuts of other areas in the house suggesting they might not be alone creating suspense and dramatic tension as Bourne and the audience know but Marie is unaware. They also show Marie in the bathroom after the shot of Bourne searching through the money and for the passports to highlight the differences between their characters.
- Mise-en-scene – Bourne's costume in this extract is dark and plain where as Marie's outfit is messy and baggy showing a difference between the two but also to reflect their personality types – Bourne is very dismissive whereas Marie was very cheerful and happy. They use natural lighting of the flat but show Bourne standing against the white light of a window – contrasting the colour of his dark clothes to show his dark personality and his reaction to the news. The setting is very relatable to audiences and this the action adventure genre as it is a flat in an urban area creating sounds such as traffic and alarms from outside highlighting the silence in the flat.

(16 marks)

3) People are represented very differently in this extract as Jason Bourne is represented as a dominant male – stereotypical of a strong male character in this genre as Marie asks him whether she can use the bathroom. It also portrays him as very impatient and

dismissive as he hangs up the phone and doesn't really listen to Marie. They also show him in dark clothes illustrating his low mood and also to show darkness to his personality. Whereas Marie is shown as a stereotypical woman; she is obsessed about her vanity – looking in the mirror and adjusting her hair but this also reveals her very normal personality and how she does the usual things people do whereas Bourne has a bag full of money and fake passports – showing the difference between their lives as Bourne's is far from normality. The extract also shows Bourne as a very neat and thorough person as in his flat all the books are in order and the camera shows a shot of him taking his pen lid off – the notebook is already there. Whereas Maria first drops her shoes on the floor and leaves them there clearly an untidy person which is atypical as in most situations women are usually the more tidy people. Each character has a very different personality which is reflected by their actions in the extract and also by the camera angles as many shots of Bourne are long shots – showing his rigid stance as he awaits the news whereas Maria is shown through low angle and mid shots showing the laidback style of her personality.

(18 marks)

4a) Friends is shown on E4 which is part of the Channel 4 institution which is aimed at a young audience like Friends is as it attracts categories from the audience demographic category E. It is shown 5pm until 6pm in paired episodes to hook viewers on E4 and is then repeated on E4+1 from 6pm to 7pm every weekday. This is because both these times are very competitive for the teenage audience slot; by showing it at both times the channel is more likely to gain more viewers. Back in 1994 Friends was broadcasted on Sky 1 and 9pm, before the watershed but was later bought by Channel 4 in 1996 as it proved very popular and as Channel 4 is under the public service broadcasting regulations it cannot show Friends on a stripped schedule in repeated blocks like E4 as it has to attract other audience demographics not just the niche audience Friends attracts. E4 was set up to appeal to a niche audience.

(15 marks)

4b) Friends is a sitcom in which the actors follow a script which means that the actors and writers have a symbiotic relationship allowing for comedic timing but also by being scripted it allows audiences to feel included in the storyline and watch it unfold from one episode to the next e.g. when in one episode they all go to a beach and Ross brings his girlfriend: she shakes her head and Ross dumps her for Rachel but by the next episode Ross and Rachel are fighting and throwing objects at each other. Whereas 'Have I Got News For You' is a panel show and has a loose no narrative and is unscripted therefore allowing different opinions to be raised in the show. The show ridicules topics in the news and the audience feel good as they feel as though they know what is going on in the world. Also in Friends and every sitcom after most episodes it comes to a conclusion and audiences like to watch enigma and resolution of the episode e.g. The one where the monkey gets away, the episode starts in a state of equilibrium where Rachel is looking after Marseille the monkey but then it goes into a state of disequilibrium when he runs out of the door and so most of the episode involves the whole gang looking for the monkey around New York and is resolved when [unreadable] cannot give him back after they shot Phoebe with a dart and so the disruption is restored when the monkey is returned and the audience feel as though they have been on a journey with the character. Whereas HIGNFY doesn't come to a conclusion they just play the game and try to gain as many points as they can by being satirical and humorous; they offer different audience gratifications such as in one episode when Frank Skinner is guest host they show a clip of Gordon Brown saying he was responsible for a mistake and then contradicting himself by

saying he fired the person responsible leading journalist Ian Hislop to say “Pure Stalin” so it is offering the audience an attack on wealthy people or those who are usually highly regarded becoming figures of ridicule – making the audience feel better about themselves. Lastly in Friends audiences can relate to the characters and understand what they are doing e.g. when Chandler gets a promotion to a great job in season eight the audience can relate the situation and like his character but for characters audiences don’t like, we like to see them suffer as laughing at others is funny e.g. when the annoying neighbour dies. This is the same for HIGNFY as they get guest hosts in everyweek who are not usually put into this situation therefore causing them discomfort which is the audience gratification – laughing at others e.g. in the episode where Boris Johnson is a guest host he asks Hislop a question which he gets correct but as Boris had never been placed in the situation he repeated the question three times and gave points to the wrong team leading Merton to put his head in his hands which Johnson also did, heightening his nerves and discomfort. The live audience was laughing hysterically and so were the guest panellists.

(30 marks)

Total paper mark 74