

WEEK 7.8.9

ANIMAL KINGDOM

INTRO

You are required to study two film texts for narrative so that you can *compare and contrast* how production and story elements work to communicate ideas.

We are looking at Animal Kingdom as the second text as it provides many points of difference to Two Hands yet is also very similar in the story structures and protagonist's journey.

PRACTISE SAC/EXAM QUESTIONS

Over the next three weeks you will study Animal Kingdom and complete short answer questions in preparation for the SAC and EXAM. Try to complete the questions under timed conditions.

1. When reading the question firstly work out **what is it asking you to do?**
Highlight only the key terms that tell you what to do such as *describe, explain, outline* and then underline the key terms that tell you what to write about such as *acting camera, narrative progression* etc. See example below.
2. Then look at the **marks allocated** for the question and try to see how marks will be allocated according to the marking scheme (All exams have a marking scheme that all the assessors follow – and remember the assessors are just teachers like me!)

For example *With reference to one narrative text that you studied this year **analyse** how one production and one story element combine to establish a relationship between two of the characters. (4 marks)*

You could safely assume that marks would be broken down into 2 marks for outlining how the story element establishes a relationship between the characters (naming and describing) and 2 marks for outlining how the production element establishes a relationship between the characters (naming and describing). 4 marks in total

3. **Spend time choosing appropriate examples from the text/s.** Choose one example to discuss in detail rather than discussing everything with one sequence. (Unless the question asks you to discuss more than one example).
4. Now begin answering using the formula from Week 3 (page 3.7) Firstly **rephrase the question as part of your answer.**

The production element camera and the story element setting combine to establish a relationship between the characters Les and Jimmy in Two Hands.

5. And now **refer to your examples and give your analysis.**

The two-shot that frames Jimmy and Les standing together in front of the strip club setting in Kings Cross clearly shows the two as colleagues who work together, equal in status, and both involved in the criminal and seedy lifestyle that Kings Cross has to offer.

HINT - SPEND ROUGHLY 2 MINUTES PER MARK

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the nature and function of production and story elements in narrative media texts, and discuss the impact of these elements on audience engagement.

In plain language what you will be doing is discussing *how production and story elements communicate ideas and keep the audience interested.*

KEY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (VCAA)

It is important that you read the Key Knowledge and Skills below and understand them as best you can. Highlight/Make notes of words and terms that you don't understand now.

Key knowledge

- the relationships between a text, its audiences, its consumption and reception, including how audiences read and are engaged by fictional narratives
- the nature and function of and relationship between production elements in fictional media narrative, including:
 - camera techniques, technologies and qualities for film
 - lighting
 - mise-en-scene
 - acting
 - sound
 - editing of vision and sound for film
- the nature and function of and relationships between story elements in fictional media narrative, including:
 - the opening, development and resolution of the narrative
 - cause and effect
 - establishment and development of and relationships between characters
 - point/s of view from which the narrative is presented
 - the function of setting in the narrative
 - the relationship between multiple storylines
 - the structuring of time and its impact on narrative progression
- the relationship between texts and the genre/s, styles and techniques they may reference
- the interrelationship between production and story elements in the narrative organisation of fictional narratives to structure and communicate ideas
- appropriate media language and terminology.

Key skills

- identify and discuss the nature and function of production and story elements
- compare and contrast the function of and interrelationship between production and story elements across different fictional media texts
- analyse how production and story elements are read by audiences and contribute to narrative organisation and meaning
- use appropriate media language and terminology.



ANIMAL KINGDOM

Animal Kingdom is an Australian crime drama. Unlike many dramatisations of crime that we see on our screens, think Underbelly, this film looks at the dynamics of a family rooted in a criminal lifestyle.

ACTIVITY #1

Watch the film from beginning to end.

While you are watching try to identify the production and story elements and what they are communicating to the audience. DO NOT take notes at this stage – you don't want to miss a thing.

COMPARING & CONTRASTING TEXTS

Before studying the next text it is important to understand what 'comparing' and 'contrasting' actually involves, some of the language and terms that will assist your responses and some example questions from past SACs and EXAM papers.

ACTIVITY #2

Read through the PowerPoint presentation on the website www.decvmedia.weebly.com

Take notes on the relevant information. Download or print the presentation for future reference.

Compare vocab

- both
- same
- also
- like
- analogous to
- similar
- similarly
- alike
- each
- likewise
- just as
- in the same way
- akin to
- as well as
- on a similar note

Contrast vocab

- different
- but
- although
- different from
- however
- one difference
- on the other hand
- in comparison
- by comparison
- otherwise
- instead of
- in contrast to
- conversely
- even though
- unlike
- on the contrary
- yet
- despite
- differ
- whereas

GENRE AND STYLE

The themes and storylines in *Animal Kingdom* clearly establish it as crime drama.

Crime (gangster) films are developed around the sinister actions of criminals or mobsters, particularly bank robbers, underworld figures, or ruthless hoodlums who operate outside the law, stealing and murdering their way through life.

Dramas are serious, plot-driven presentations, portraying realistic characters, settings, life situations, and stories involving in-depth development of realistic characters dealing with emotional themes.

Animal Kingdom incorporates:

- Power struggles between divisions of the police, justice system and government (corruption and sacrifices in private lives made by dedicated police)
- A question of morality
- Exploration of criminal behavior within the personal and social context in a realistic manner.
- It also explores family dynamics – enthralling, suspenseful and ultimately sad study of a family's disintegration.

ACTIVITY #3

Dot point some of the production and story elements that contribute to *Animal Kingdom* being classified as a crime drama genre.

Question A

Compare this to how the genre of *Two Hands* is established (Australian gangster comedy). What similarities and differences are there?

PRODUCTION CONTEXT

In recent years many popular crime dramas such as *Underbelly* have been based on the Melbourne underworld's activities. Often the lives of these crime lords are glamourised and glorified. They have been presented as celebrities even within our news programming. Their lives are portrayed as desirable, like a rock star, full of drugs, money, fast cars and fast women. Michod has stated that he wanted the film to be a fictional account of how people in the criminal world live and he was reluctant to turn criminals into celebrities. For Melburnians, this tendency to make celebrities of criminals, even if it is mostly watching them at funerals on television or making court appearances, will be quite familiar. The director of *Animal Kingdom* was interested in creating a fictional story with complex characters and layered storytelling. These aspects of the narrative are apparent when viewing the film.

Animal Kingdom was inspired by Melbourne's Walsh Street murders – the coldblooded shooting of two young policemen as they investigated a report of an abandoned car in South Yarra early on morning in 1988. Similar narrative events occur within the film and act as the stimulus for the cause and effect narrative structure that follows; however, it is important to note that the majority of the film is fictional. Michod was insistent that this not be a retelling of the event.

“There was something about that one event – the Walsh Street shootings – that has a confronting emotional power. It is actually quite harrowing to think of cops –especially young cops – being gunned down randomly as a result of larger tensions with which they had no involvement ... I wanted to build a big story and I wanted an event of that nature to sit at the centre of it.”

“I wanted to make a sprawling, Australian crime story that was multi-layered...with an ensemble cast that was representative of the way in which the criminal world filters through regular society and brushes against us constantly, even though we don’t realise it.”

RECEPTION CONTEXT

When studying narrative we also take into account that the nature of the viewing experience contributes to the audience reading and appreciation of narrative texts. This is known as the reception context. When discussing *Animal Kingdom* we can easily see that the prior knowledge that an audience brings to the film will contribute to their experience. For example a resident of Melbourne who remembers the Walsh Street killings will perhaps have a much more emotional response than an American citizen in her teens. Also the viewing experience itself can impact upon an audience’s experience. For example watching an illegal download on a mobile device alone is a very different experience to watching in a cinema with surround sound and a large crowd.

ACTIVITY #4

Think about criminal icons in Melbourne and their portrayal in the media.

Question B

When stories involving the activities of the so-called Melbourne underworld are turned into television drama, what is the impression created of the kind of lives these criminals lead? Choose five words to characterise how the lives and activities of these people are often presented.



STRUCTURING OF TIME and CAUSE AND EFFECT

The narrative of the film has a conventional linear narrative structure that follows the demise of a family of criminals, and the narrative engages the audience through its' strong characterisation. It is often difficult to predict what the motives of the ensemble of characters are, thus creating a series of twists, which make the plot appear convoluted. As an audience member we are positioned to relate to J and speculate on what decisions he will make and who he can trust i.e. will he find protection in his new criminal family or will he instead turn to the police for protection.

Towards the end of the film a flashbacks are used to assist the audience in determining the thoughts of the character 'J'. This is the only time in the film that the linear structure of the film is disrupted. The flashback is used to create tension and add drama to the climax of the film where J is set to testify in court. Through this flashback the audience learns that J has sought protection in the Cody family rather than that of the police.

Additionally throughout the film unexpected narrative events assist in shocking and thus engaging the intended audience. Often it appears the audience is lulled into a false sense of security, before witnessing a fast paced and unexpected act of violence. For example towards the beginning of the film the murder of Baz by members of the armed robbery squad is unexpected and because of this it is shocking for the audience. The scene where Baz is killed by the police starts off with a slow paced conversation between Pope and Baz in the suburban setting of the supermarket. The normality attached to the setting and the subject of their conversation (e.g. the stock market), reflects a world that is not too different from the audiences. It also suggests to the audience that Baz, despite his prior history with committing armed robbery, is no longer involved in criminal activity and in some ways he is admired for maintaining this moral high ground when discussing future possibilities with Pope.

*BAZ: You know that Craig is making a f*cking fortune with the drug thing. You saw the house he has bought. I don't know if I've got that in me. It's grubby, you know, it's a grubby business. The stock market mate. There's a resources boom. I'll get you started, I'll set you an account up and you're away.*

Given that Baz is the central focus in the beginning of the film, and therefore a main protagonist, his death appears unconventional and prepares the audience to expect similar twists to occur. Additionally the fact that his death has been executed by members of authority who are in a position of trust (i.e. the police) his death is not only surprising, but also reflects a modern context where distrust in police exists and corruption is evident.

When the police officer yells "He's got a gun" followed by the loud shot of the weapon, the audience is at first confused and shocked; however, it quickly becomes clear that it is difficult in a modern society to know who can be trusted. This helps to position the audience to empathise with J who must navigate through this confusing moral landscape and who is, like the audience, unsure of who can be trusted and relied upon.

Similarly the resolution of the film is unexpected and shocking for the audience. J arrives back at his grandmother's house following the acquittal of the Cody boys.

The mood appears optimistic with all family members welcoming J and the upbeat song *April Sun In Cuba* playing in the background. Pope sits down to make amends with J and barely is able to say the few words “It’s a crazy f*cking world”, before J shoots him at close-range in the head. The positioning of the mattress behind Pope allows the visual effect of the blood splatter to remain with the audience after the fast pace of the events are over. This is event is a sign that J has confronted his fears and taken action to help control his own life, though this has meant he has had to give into more animalistic instincts and become what he has despised.

ACTIVITY #5

Watch the sequences leading up to and when Baz is shot by police. This is one of the major events of the film that sets off a chain of cause/effect related events. Compare this sequence to the one in *Two Hands* where Jimmy loses the money answering the following question as a practise SAC/EXAM question.

Question C

Explain how cause and effect combined with one production element to engage the audience and develop the narrative. Compare this with another film that you studied. (6 marks)

Now watch the sequence where J has discovered that Pope killed Nicole. Compare this to the sequence in *Two Hands* where Jimmy and Alex are on the run from Pando’s gang answering the following question as a practice SAC/EXAM question.

Question D

Referring to production and story elements explain how the structuring of time creates a strong emotional response for the audience (fear, suspense, happiness etc) in two narrative texts that you have studied this year. (6 marks)



POINT OF VIEW

The narrative is introduced and progressed through the insights of the character J. He appears to be meeting the other characters for almost the first time (having been distanced from them as a child), thus in some ways he is in a similar position of that of the viewer. This constructs both J and the viewer as voyeurs who are given access into the private world of violent criminals.

Animal Kingdom and Two Hands make excellent comparison as both are presented from the point of view of young men who are forced to grow due to their involvement in the criminal underworld.

SETTING

Although crime exists in every Australian city, the fascination that Melbourne has for its' criminals and its' ability to turn them into celebrities, is unique. In this respect Melbourne provided the perfect setting for the scrip to unfold. In order to create a sense of realism writer/director David Michod and his production team conducted extensive amounts of research and location scouts – this resulted in an authentic construction of the Melbourne underworld. For example when J watches the footage of the news report relating to the killing of the police officers (which appears on the television) the footage he is viewing is of archival and therefore of the actual event.

The police elements were the most expensive aspects of the setting, as they too needed to reflect a sense of realism and authenticity. While a great deal of effort was spent ensuring these scenes were real to life, blue tones and dramatized lighting was employed the interrogation scenes to engages the audience through its' artistic merit and convey mood.

“We did our homework. We visited Melbourne’s Assessment Prison, because though it’s easy to write a scene that’s set in such a place, when it comes to actually staging it, you need to have been there. We visited the Metropolitan Remand Centre and had a tour of how contact and non-contact visits work, and thereafter our production designer, Jo Ford, was able to build the prison set which looked exactly like the real thing ... whenever we’d written something that was set in an unfamiliar environment we would go visit them.” – David Michod (dir. Animal Kingdom, 2010)

One of the key locations for the first half of the film was the Cody house. The Cody house contains rich, dark colours that help to capture the heat of the Melbourne summer. In contrast to this with the appearance of the character Leckie and the setting associated with him the interiors become simpler and brighter, thus providing a dramatic contrast to the richly textured dark animal den of the Cody’s home. David Michod was concerned that the Melbourne seen in this film was not filled with tourist icons such as ‘trams, Victorian architecture and cute little village style suburbs’. Instead, he wanted cinematographer Adam Arkapaw to try to encompass the different sides of the city, from its quiet leafy suburbs and cityscapes to its stark industrial side. Michod also instructed production designers, Jo Ford, to avoid obvious art direction i.e. to avoid shooting Melbourne’s cultural icons.

ACTIVITY #6

Question E

Outline the function of setting in the narrative and compare this to Two Hands. (4 marks)

CHARACTERS –J

Although *Animal Kingdom* marks Frencheville's first film role, the search for a young actor to portray J proved immense, with over 500 boys auditioning for the role. J is at the heart of the story, though he is never really 'at home' with his uncles and grandmother. It is through J's perspective that the audience is introduced to the other characters and guided through the events of the narrative. The film pivots on the character J; however, at opposing ends of the moral spectrum there is on the one hand, Pope and on the other, Detective Senior Sergeant Leckie. Throughout the film J acts as a voyeur and gives the audience an insight into the criminal world from the perspective of a character, who like the majority of the audience, has not experienced this type of lifestyle.

The opening scene of the film constructs narrative expectations for the audience and due to J's unconventional reaction to his mother's death, the audience finds themselves unsettled from the beginning moments of the film.

The film opens on a black screen and the sounds of a dog barking, birds cheeping, children playing and a television can be heard – constructing the setting as suburbia. The audience sees that the character J (still dressed in his school uniform) is watching a television game show. These elements appear relatively normal to the audience and could take place in any neighbourhood in Australia – though in this case the context is clearly one of a low socio-economic area. While it initially appears that his mother is asleep on the couch next to him, it is only through the appearance of the paramedics that the audience learns that she has in fact overdosed on heroin.

J seems unperturbed by his mother's overdose from heroin and although having called paramedics he continues to watch a television game show, even while the paramedics place his mother's body on the stretcher, which indicates his emotional disconnection from the scene and his lack of a parental figure in his life. This lack of emotion continues as he calls his estranged grandmother for assistance.

SMURF: *Oh Josh. How are you darling?*

J: *Yeah good ... um ... mum's gone and OD ... and she's died so ...*

SMURF: *Are you OK?*

J: *Yeah I'm OK. Sorry I probably should have said it a bit slower and not just have gone and blurted it out like that.*



J's narrative perspective is pivotal in conveying the criminal backstory to the film and helping to construct the main characters. This then allows the director the majority of the film to focus on the family's downfalls and social interactions with each other, rather than their past criminal dealings. This avoids glamourising the criminal activities of the characters and thus makes the text more of a social drama rather than a crime film. In this vein J is often positioned on the outside of the action - in doorways or lurking behind the family members. His presence often seems to go unnoticed allowing him to observe the action of the family and take on the role of the voyeur. What people say in this film, how they speak and the context in which they speak are crucial to the intended audiences' responses to the characters. J is quietly articulate sometimes and at other times withdrawn and wary, but this is represented in his demeanour and body language as much as what he says. J appears to be torn between a world of innocence and a more morally corrupt existence, thus he is represented as a young man - yet still a boy through the way he behaves and looks. An example of J's conflicting nature can be characterised by the fact that although he is able to participate in criminal activity through the stealing of a car, he is awkward when attempting to express his feelings and emotions.

Summary –

- It is through J's perspective that the audience is introduced to the other characters and guided through the events of the narrative;
- J acts as a voyeur and gives the audience an insight into the criminal world from the perspective of a character, who like the majority of the audience, has not experienced this type of lifestyle;
- The opening scene of the film constructs narrative expectations for the audience and due to J's unconventional reaction to his mother's death; and
- J appears to be torn between a world of innocence and a more morally corrupt existence.

ACTIVITY #7

Establishment of characters usually occurs in the opening sequence. Answer the following practice SAC/EXAM question on the establishment of characters.

Question F

With reference to both texts that you studied explain how the protagonist is established in the opening sequence referring to production and story elements. (6 marks)

CHARACTERS – POPE

The character Pope is represented as a mentally unstable, violent and paranoid criminal. Throughout the course of the film the paranoia and fear that the character Pope is able to exert increases. The first signs appear in the unsettling scene where we see Pope watch Nicole and J as they sleep on the couch. The change in audio cues indicates to the audience that Pope is not a character to be trusted and therefore we question his intentions of carrying Nicole to the bedroom and his comments to J about her beauty. While his actions may appear innocent enough (assisting Nicole to bed and complimenting her) his body language and lingering stares are unsettling for the audience.

Additionally throughout the film Pope's actions and words are constructed as being something to distrust. His interaction with the other characters appears awkward and his lack of ability to connect with others is representative of his unstable mental state. For example his insinuation

that his brother Darren might be gay appears out of context and Pope seems unaware of the frustration his ongoing questioning is causing Darren.

Pope is also constructed as a character to fear – again, due to the fact that he is untrustworthy and mentally unstable. When we see the character Nicole arrive at the Cody household the audience immediately begins to have fears for her safety. This fear is then confirmed when the audience views Darren’s reaction. Through a mid shot we see that Darren is visibly upset when he over hears from off-screen dialogue that Nicole is entering the house without the presence of J. Darren’s level of fear increases over the duration of the scene.

As Darren listens to Pope’s questioning of Nicole the shot cuts back to the mid-shot of Darren, who appears paralysed with fear as his eyes focus into space and he rocks slightly back and forth. Darren continues to watch helplessly as Pope injects a lethal shot of heroin into Nicole’s arm. The helplessness that the audience feels in regards to the situation is reflected in Darren’s inability to intervene as the events unfold.

With the injection of heroin into Nicole the tone of the scene quickly becomes more menacing. The low-key lighting casts shadows across the face of Pope and the soundtrack assists in creating tension. Pope continues to question Nicole and as his paranoia takes over he starts to act in an irrational way – slapping Nicole in the face, tenderly caressing her face, suffocating her and then denying that anything out of the ordinary has occurred.

POPE: You’ve gone and done it again haven’t you, Darren. You’ve smoked yourself silly. You think something is going on.

As Pope (through the dialogue above) denies the events that have just occurred, the camera pans down from him to reveal the limp and lifeless body of Nicole. There is no longer any doubt that Pope is an unpredictable character who is capable of murdering the innocent.

In one of the final shots in this scene Pope carries the body of Nicole out of the house. The shot is filmed in a very stylistic manner with low-key lighting, slow motion and dramatic soundtrack all adding the emotion of the scene and giving it a haunting quality.



ACTIVITY #8

Watch the sequence where Pope is watching Nicole and J asleep on the couch. Answer the following practice SAC/EXAM questions. When we look at **characters** we analyse what they do, what they say and how they look (costume, casting decision etc). Remember **acting** refers to body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, as well as prior roles the actor has played eg associations we bring.

Question G

Explain how a character in a film you studied is constructed referring to acting, camera, lighting and sound. (5 marks)

Using the exact same information from the question above complete this practice comparison question. (Hint refer to Acko as the other character)

Question H

Compare how two characters from two narrative texts are constructed referring to acting, camera, lighting and sound. (10 marks)

CHARACTER RELATIONSHIPS

It is important to also consider the relationships between characters, and not necessarily the 'romantic' relationships. Think back to Two Hands and the relationship between Jimmy and Les. The character Les served as a contrast to Jimmy, through his lewd and crude behavior we were quickly able to establish Jimmy as the 'nice' guy. The further conflict later in the film where Les turns on Jimmy serves as a symbol that Jimmy is cut out for this criminal world, and that a life with Alex is a better option.

Question I

With reference to one narrative text that you studied this year analyse how one production and one story element combine to establish a relationship between two of the characters. (4 marks)



MISE-EN-SCENE

Remember that mise-en-scene encompasses all the elements that we see in the frame but we do not include any analysis of sound.

ACTIVITY #9

Read over this very thorough break down of the mise-en-scene for revision.

<http://collegefilmmediastudies.com/mise-en-scene-2/>

Now watch the opening sequence (**TURN OFF THE SOUND!**) up until Smurf comes to collect J, taking notes on setting, costume, framing, lighting, props etc and complete a few sentences outlining what information this conveys about J and his current situation.

Question J

Compare the use of mise-en-scene in two texts that you have studied, explaining how it was used to effectively communicate ideas to the audience. (6 marks)



LIGHTING

Both the director and the cinematographer did not want to overplay and stylise the film's violent sequences, as they felt it would be far more disturbing for an audience to experience the reality of those scenes, rather than watching an almost cartoonish bloodbath. This naturalistic approach also extended to the lighting as they tried to utilise light from natural sources, or recreate light from natural sources when there was insufficient lighting. Lighting throughout the movie was designed to create realism as well as communicate symbolic meanings. For example the warm yellow/orange tones used in the Cody house are symbolic for that of an animal den. Costumes and furnishings are browns and orange tones too. In contrast, the scenes filmed at the police station used a filter to provide blue tones in all the shadows which contributed to the sterile feel. Many of the costumes in these scenes are also blue, so the overall effect conveyed is quite sterile. Much of the film was also lit with cool white tubes, imbuing it with a sombre blue-tone. Additionally the use of low key single source lighting creates shadows which are often cast across the faces of the ensemble cast, thus creating a level of distrust and distance between each of the characters and the audience.

**Summary –**

- Lighting has been utilised to create realism as well as communicating symbolic meaning;
- Where possible natural lighting has been utilised as part of the production process; and
- The use of low-key lighting helps to create a level of distrust and distance between each of the characters and the audience.

ACTIVITY #10

Look at the opening sequence and any sequence in the police station.

Question K

Explain, referring to two contrasting examples, how lighting can contribute to the mood of a particular scene in a text that you have studied this year. (6 marks)





CAMERA AND EDITING

Cinematographer Adam Arkapaw employed a number of key techniques throughout the film. In particular the film was shot on 35mm film stock and hand held camera techniques are used to create a cinema verite feel. This helps to construct a sense of reality and convey the voyeuristic nature of the film, however it is not used in the entirety of the film. For example the majority of the scenes shot at the location of the Cody house were hand-held due to their violent and voyeuristic nature, however the scenes located in the police station were shot on a tripod to reflect the order and control of authority figures.

Additionally lingering close-ups are used to reveal the characters' thoughts. This is particularly important in regards to the character J. He is not as vocal with his thoughts through dialogue therefore the viewer relies on his facial expressions and body language to communicate meaning – the framing of a close-up allows this to occur. Similarly a shallow depth of field (which occurs in many shots) provides an art cinema aesthetic and again allows the audience to focus on particular elements such as character reactions. The art cinema aesthetic appeals to a niche audience who has an interest in independent film.

Suspense is also created through the use of cinematography and editing. *Animal Kingdom* was edited over 16 week in Sydney with editor, Luke Doolan. The film is edited in such a way as that the tension continues to build across the duration of the film – as J narration at the beginning of the film foreshadows '*crooks always come undone*'. In particular the use of slow motion helps to create suspense in combination with an eerie soundtrack. These techniques are evident in the scene where the police take J into custody.

This scene is constructed as being surreal through the lack of diegetic sound and the use of slow motion. The scene begins with a close-up of a syringe and the camera tilts up to Pope – implying to the audience that Pope again has been using drugs. Throughout the scene the hand held camera moves between J and Pope, drawing the audience's attention to the relevant character through the use of focus pulls.

Pope attempts to interact with J, but due to Pope's blank facial expression and unperturbed disposition (especially considering he has just committed a crime and his reaction is vastly different to Darren who in the previous scene was devastated) the audience is left feeling uncomfortable. This feeling is then amplified when Pope questions J as to whether Nicole could cut his hair. The thought of an innocent, naïve teenager being involved with Pope in any circumstances (particularly one which would involve physical contact) is disturbing to the audience due to his violent and unpredictable nature.

As J moves towards his bedroom the music soundtrack replaces any diegetic sound. The shot is framed so that the audience sees J in the foreground walking in the hallway and unexpectedly the armed tactical response group moving through the house guns pointed straight ahead in the background. J appears unfamiliar with this situation and is therefore distressed; however Pope reacts slowly and calmly to the events. Their reactions are highlighted through the use of slow motion. The slow motion vision continues as both characters are led through police station corridor to be questioned. The slow motion emphasised the importance of the events and positions the audience to respond to the text in a dramatic way. It is another way in which the text is constructed to be more of a drama than that of a fast paced crime genre text. Low-key lighting casts shadows across the characters and symbolically this conveys their downfall into crisis. In the soundtrack the audience hears what sounds like a clock striking the hour, which could be interpreted as an indication that the Cody boys time is up.

Summary –

- Techniques used throughout the film include; hand-held cinematography; focus pulls; and lingering close-ups;
- The film has an art cinema aesthetic which is common to independent films;
- 35mm film stock was used; and
- The editing helps to build suspense with slow motion often used to emphasis important events.

ACTIVITY #11

Visit this website and read about editing in more detail. Take brief notes, referring to examples where possible, in your book in a table format.

<http://www.angelfire.com/film/eliab/artofediting.html>

Editing technique	Example Two Hands	Example Animal Kingdom
Continuity editing – portraying action in a realistic manner, uninterrupted stretches of action, flow of events	Jimmy's room, getting ready to meet Pando.	J at Nicole's after he realizes Pope has killed her.

Watch the montage sequence (1:23:36 – 1:24:40) and answer the following practice SAC/EXAM question.

Question L

Explain what montage editing is and discuss the impact of one montage sequence from a film you have studied on the narrative as a whole. (4 marks)

SOUND

The score for the film is one that combines classical with synthesized approach – creating atmosphere and tension, along with character suspense and mood. Although there were no rigid character themes in terms of the music, the main opening title music is constantly referred to throughout the film.

“We tried to create and build suspense using a few different techniques which hopefully weave together and compound to move the audience – from unease at the beginning to dread by the second act, and to a release by the end” – Sam Petty
(sound designer, *Animal Kingdom*, 2010)

The soundtrack for the film also exploited the sense of claustrophobia, which is personified by ‘Smurf’s’ power and control over her sons and family. This is achieved through the use of insistent cicadas, pulsing insistent frequencies, while removing the diegetic sound of air movement during the hot Melbourne summer. This affects the film by creating a ‘heavy’ heat and stillness and a sense of being increasingly trapped.

Summary –

- The score for the film combines classical with synthesized approach;
- The opening credit title music is repeated throughout the film;
- The music creates atmosphere, tension, suspense and mood; and
- Music helps to convey a sense of claustrophobia and fear that the characters will be caught.

Remember - What people say in this film, how they speak and the context in which they speak are crucial to the intended audiences’ responses to the characters. J is quietly articulate sometimes and at other times withdrawn and wary, but this is represented in his demeanour and body language as much as what he says. J appears to be torn between a world of innocence and a more morally corrupt existence, thus he is represented as a young man - yet still a boy through the way he behaves and looks. An example of J’s conflicting nature can be characterised by the fact that although he is able to participate in criminal activity through the stealing of a car, he is awkward when attempting to express his feelings and emotions.

ACTIVITY #12

Further develop your sound vocabulary by reading information and watching examples here

<http://collegefilmandmediastudies.com/film-sound-and-music/>

Take brief notes on each type of sound that you have read about.

Question M

Using an example from a text that you studied this year (AK), explain how the musical score contributes to communicating ideas to the audience. (4 marks)

Question N

Discuss the effect of post-production sound effects in conveying information to the audience in a sequence from one text (AK) that you have studied this year. (3 marks)

OPENING, DEVELOPMENT & RESOLUTION

Remember that in the opening sequence certain expectations are established, possibilities are set up, characters and settings are introduced, both through the genre and production and story elements.

ACTIVITY #13

Watch the opening (until J has threatened the guy with the gun) and closing sequence (from where J comes back to the Cody home) taking notes in the chart on the following page. Now answer the following practice SAC/EXAM questions.

Question O

Compare the narrative texts that you studied this year, referring to at least two production and two story elements. Compare how the opening sequence studied raised narrative possibilities, and communicated ideas and how these were resolved or unresolved. (10 marks)

STORYLINES

This story element involves looking at the main storyline and any other ones that develop or stem from it. It involves any conflicts or resolutions, motivations or ideas that come from the main storyline. There are generally multiple storylines within a narrative. How do the storylines relate and connect, how do they differ or how are they similar?

ACTIVITY #14

Plot the main storylines as a diagram/graph outlining where they intersect and the major points such as development, climax and resolution.

KEY SEQUENCE CLOSE ANALYSIS

Good sequences to look at in Animal Kingdom would include where Pope is established as evil and dangerous when watching Nicole and J sleep. This is a good comparison to the hit and run sequence where Acko is established in the same manner.

Another would be where Baz is shot – as this sets up the cause and effect chain of events for the rest of the narrative, much like the losing money sequence in Two Hands.

ACTIVITY #15

Choose one sequence to complete close analysis on using the charts on page 7.21 and 7.22.



Opening			Closing		
	Production elements	Story elements		Production elements	Story elements
Narrative possibilities			Narrative resolution		
Audience expectations			Audience satisfaction		
Character (J) establishment			Character (J) growth		

Production Elements

	Description of example	Idea communicated
Camera –Shot –Angle –Movement –Focus		
Lighting –Harsh –Soft –Expressive –Atmospheric –High/low key		
Mis-en-scene –Setting –Props –Costume –Lighting –Framing –Objects –Etc		
Acting -Body language -Facial expression -tone of voice		
Sound –Music –Dialogue –Sound effects		
Editing –Pace –Rhythm –Juxtaposition –Relationships between sound and image		

Story Elements

	Description of example	Effect/meaning/mood created
Character -What they say -What they do -What others say about them -Costuming		
Setting -What is its function -Does it create realism -Or atmosphere		
Storylines -Are there multiple storylines -Do they relate or connect		
Structuring of time -Linear/Non-linear -Flashbacks/forward -Compression -Expansion		
Cause and effect -Character motivation -Other causes such as weather, supernatural events		
Point of view -From whose point of view -What impact		
Narrative progression -Are the possibilities established in the opening resolved by the closing?		

CHECKLIST OF WORK TO SEND

- ☐ Questions A – O

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Much of the content comes from
The Study Guide published by ATOM
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VCE Media Units 3&4 Cambridge Checkpoints



315 Clarendon Street, Thornbury 3071
Telephone (03) 8480 0000
FAX (03) 9416 8371 (Despatch)
Toll free (1800) 133 511

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STUDENT NUMBER _____

SCHOOL NAME _____

STUDENT NAME _____

63009



SUBJECT

Media Unit 3

YEAR/LEVEL

12

WEEKS 7/8/9

TEACHER



PLEASE ATTACH WORK TO BE SENT.

NOTE: Please write your number on each page of your work which is attached to this page.

SEND

Please check that you have attached:

☐ Questions A – O

If you have not included any of these items, please explain why not.

Use the back of this sheet to reflect on what you have learned this week and to ask your teacher any questions you may have.

REVIEW, REFLECT AND ASK

<p>I found this week's course work:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Very interesting</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Interesting</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Sort of interesting</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Unsure</p> <p>Comments:</p>	<p>I think the work was:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Too easy</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Easy</p> <p><input type="radio"/> OK</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Challenging (it got me thinking)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Hard</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Too hard</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>Questions I have about this week's work:</p> <p><i>I would like further explanation on:</i></p> <p>Other comments:</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">TEACHER'S FEEDBACK</p> <p>Some good things about your work were:</p> <p>Please consider doing the following in your next piece(s) of work:</p>	

DISTANCE EDUCATION CENTRE TEACHER