

Q4: EVALUATE THEORY

For this question you will be asked to **evaluate 1 media theory** (likely through a choice of 2) discussing its relevance to both LFTVDs we have studied.

For example:

Evaluate the usefulness of **one** of the following theories in understanding long form television drama:

EITHER

- Jenkins' theories about fandom

OR

- Barthes' theories about semiotics.

[10]

- **What is the difference between application and evaluation?**

Q4: What you need to do/know

- ✓ Know your theorists!
- ✓ Be able to break every theory down into main ideas
- ✓ Know what points apply to the LFTVD texts
- ✓ Know which points are limited or challenge the LFTVD texts

Essay structure 1?

- 15 mins – 4 paragraphs.
- Evaluate question means you will be expected to CONCLUDE (*'make judgements and reach conclusions'*).
- *Para 1 – intro summarising your chosen theory and their main ideas on media lang/representation/audience/industry.*
- ***Para 2 – body paragraph 1 focusing on one idea outlined by the theorist, evaluated where it applies and where it is challenged in Stranger Things***
- ***Para 3 – body paragraph 1 focusing on one idea outlined by the theorist, evaluated where it applies and where it is challenged in The Killing***
- *Para 4 – conclusion – overall, how relevant, useful etc is the theory when applying it to the texts in your opinion?*

Main body of essay – I.T.E Structure:

- **Always start a paragraph with a sentence that tells your reader what the rest of the paragraph is all about.**

I
T
E

1. **I:** Idea from the theory that is applicable to LFTVD. Sentence starter: *One aspect of _____'s theory is ...*
2. **T:** Text – evidence/detail from BOTH texts that highlight or evidence the aspect you identified above. Sentence starter: *This is clearly/ somewhat/ not particularly relevant/ evident in _[text]_ when...* [Then go into detail. Use the texts to illustrate this. Be detailed, specific and use terminology. Link to wider ideologies if you can]. Use conjunctions when moving the discussion from one text to the other.
3. **E:** Evaluate/explanation. This is where you put in some analysis and make conclusions. Conclude the relevance/usefulness of the aspect of theory you have discussed in regards to both texts, how far, to what extent etc. Offer ideas why/why not the theory is relevant.

For example:

I One of the main ideas found in Gilroy's representation theory is that of 'the black other'. Post-colonial attitudes, alongside the African diaspora has led to established hegemonic hierarchies of ethnicity in western society. These are frequently reflected in the media, with black characters marginalised, misrepresented or omitted from mainstream media products.

T This idea can be seen to some degree in *Stranger Things Ep.1*, which focuses on a social world where the narrative is driven by white characters. Whilst there are a small number of black characters (Lucas, Officer Callahan, Principal Coleman) who can be seen as broadly positive representations, they are generally supporting characters – marginalised throughout. Lucas has little dialogue in Episode 1, and is frequently framed to the side or in the background of the numerous group wide-shots we see. His costume (a Rambo parody) is perhaps also presenting him as the angry, violent young black male.

Similarly in The Killing.....

E Gilroy's approach is helpful in identifying issues around the representation of ethnicity in LFTV dramas and drawing attention to the way in which media representations are often addressed to a white audience, and as a result, marginalise other ethnicities. However it should be noted than for the said TV dramas, time period and Scandinavian culture are understandable reasons for this ethnic representation imbalance

In contrast to this, however, alternatively, on the other hand...

I Todorov's theory of narratology also supports the concept that there are narrative resolutions or some kind of closure to a narrative.

T However, there is no restoration of the equilibrium in the first episodes of either TV drama, as a key convention from this sub-genre is to suspend the resolution so episodes unravel over a period of time. This enables the narrative to be explored through different plots and characterisation (both of which also challenge the main plot/main character focus of Todorov's narratology structure. These open 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.

E This therefore is a limitation of Todorov's theory and is only relevant here in identifying the differences between singular narrative films and long form TV drama, as the idea of narrative closure is more relevant for single narratives rather than the complex serial-narratives of long form drama where climax and resolution are delayed and sometimes never reached.

Essay structure 2?

- 15 mins – 4 paragraphs.
- Evaluate question means you will be expected to CONCLUDE (*'make judgements and reach conclusions'*).
- *Para 1 – intro summarising your chosen theory and their main ideas on media lang/representation/audience/industry.*
- ***Para 2 – body paragraph 1 focusing on one idea outlined by the theorist, for/against evaluated using ITE structure for BOTH TV DRAMAS.***
- ***Para 3 – body paragraph 2 focusing on second idea outlined by the theorist, for/against evaluated using ITE structure for BOTH TV DRAMAS.***
- *Para 4 – conclusion – overall, how relevant, useful etc is the theory when applying it to the texts in your opinion?*

For example:

I Todorov suggests that most narratives provide drama and conflict through a disruptive incident that causes a form of 'narrative disequilibrium' for the characters.

T In episode 1 of Stranger Things this disruption stage is clearly evident through the vanishing of the young child Will Byers. Not only does this provide disequilibrium for many of the show's other protagonists, but sets up the serial narrative convention whereby audiences will follow the characters attempts to restore the narrative equilibrium by the final episode.

E Todorov's ideas of disruption and disequilibrium within a narrative are a vital component for LFTVD, with this narrative stage usually taking place at the climax of episode one. This is perfectly illustrated within the serial narrative structure found in Stranger Things.

Now offer a counter to the 'T' section of the paragraph – how is the same idea challenged in ST?

Question	Level	Mark Scheme	Mark
4	3	<p>Comprehensive application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to evaluate academic theories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive, detailed and accurate application of knowledge and understanding of media industries to evaluate Curran and Seaton's ideas about power and media industries or Livingstone and Lunt's theory about regulation. Convincing, perceptive and accurate evaluation of the usefulness of either Curran and Seaton's ideas about power and media industries or Livingstone and Lunt's theory about regulation in analysing long form television drama. 	7–10
	2	<p>An adequate application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to evaluate academic theories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An adequate and generally accurate application of knowledge and understanding of media industries to evaluate Curran and Seaton's ideas about power and media industries or Livingstone and Lunt's theory about regulation. Adequate and generally successful evaluation of the usefulness of either Curran and Seaton's ideas about power and media industries or Livingstone and Lunt's theory about regulation in analysing long form television drama. Responses that do not use relevant LFTV examples should be capped at top of L2 	4–6
	1	<p>A minimal application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to evaluate academic theories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimal application of knowledge and understanding of media industries to evaluate Curran and Seaton's ideas about power and media industries or Livingstone and Lunt's theory about regulation. Evaluation of the usefulness of either Curran and Seaton's ideas about power and media industries or Livingstone and Lunt's theory about regulation in analysing long form television drama is minimal or brief and is likely to be largely descriptive of the theory or contradictory. 	1–3
	0	No response or no response worthy of credit.	0