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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

## Level 3 Media Studies 2023

### 91493 Demonstrate understanding of a relationship between a media genre and society

Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Demonstrate understanding of a relationship between a media genre and society.	Demonstrate in-depth understanding of a relationship between a media genre and society.	Demonstrate perceptive understanding of a relationship between a media genre and society.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

**You should write an essay on ONE of the four statements in this booklet.**

If you need more room for any answer, use the extra space provided at the back of this booklet.

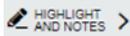
Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in any cross-hatched area (XXXXXX). This area will be cut off when the booklet is marked.

**YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

Low Merit

TOTAL 05



## Page 1

### INSTRUCTIONS

Choose ONE **media genre**.

Write an essay discussing the **extent** to which you agree with ONE of the statements below.

Respond critically to the statement by evaluating the **influence, impact, and wider significance** of a relationship between your chosen media genre and society.

*Note: 'Society' refers to a community in a specific time and place, or the audience for a genre.*

### STATEMENTS (Choose ONE)

1. Genre can subvert or reinforce societal norms.
2. Genre fosters social connection and identity.
3. Genre offers an escape from reality.
4. Genre tells us stories about ourselves.

Media genre:

Society:

Select your statement:

### PLANNING

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#### Introduction:

- Aswin Suebsaeng writer in 'The Daily Beast' - "If you have premarital sex, does drugs, binge drinks and parties like you fool, you'll be severely punished"

#### Slashers history:

- Psycho 1960 Alfred Hitchcock (widely considered the first slasher)
- Hays code: From the 1930 and abolished in 1968. Acted as a set of rules/ regulation which film producers must abide by to regulate 'appropriate' content being shown
- although Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 film was considered the first slasher the horror genre had been around from the early 30's with plays being held at the Grand Guingol in Paris showing

### 1970's:

- In glum over loss of vietnam war
- Halloween 1978 John Carpenter
  - > Laurie Strode as the epitome of a final girl (term coined by Carol J. Clover) friends punished. What it meant to be a 'good' family or not
- **Lauries friends** - Annie and Linda
- Second wave feminism aiming for more equality and fairness in the workplace, and in rights. - led by christian women themselves --> **Phyllis Schlafly** "The truth that American women never had it so good. Why should be lower ourselves to 'equal rights' when we already have the status of special previllage."
- Women became more independent as divorce rate rose to 51% by 1973 and nearly over half of the women in American society were in the work force.

### 1980's:

- Still in glum over loss of vietnam war
- Ronald Reagan - thought 1960 film production ruining American society with its violence
- ^ 40th US president ex hollywood actor
- with his strong ties in the industry he was able to influence/ convince film productions to encourage conservatism
- aimed to have a 'conservative renaissance'
- 'Family Ties' and 'Cosby Show' highlighted the solid and 'good' family unit - ensuring to highlight conservative views (which Ronald Reagan valued)
- Top Gun (\$357 Million USD in box office) - highlighted how amazing and strong the US military could be - the US military was as stronger than it had ever been after the loss of the Vietnam war.
- **Friday the 13th (Alice Hardy)** friends - Annie, Ned, Jack, Marcy and Brenda.
- **Nightmare on Elm Street (Nacy Thompson)** friends - Tina, Rod and boyfriend Glen.

### 1990's:

- Third wave feminism + 'Riot Grrrl' + Spice Girls
- Scream - Wes Craven 1996
- I know what you did last summer - Jim Gillespie 1997
- Buffy Shutt** - "Young people are beginning to assert themselves in ways they havent in a long time" believed that there is a new target audience as women had new income and were coming into see the movies more than men used to be - AND Universal Studios and Diamond productions (Led by **Bob Weinstein**) he believed that women wouldnt want to see the past/ old conventions as they were were slightly too traditional and sexist and women wouldnt want to see it.

### Wider Significance:

- Final girls change (Henri Foillon - Schema of cultural forms)
- Evolution of villains change (new experimental stage (Thomas Shatz proved that Henri Foillon's theory is in fact cyclical) where film industry wanted to create something new such as trying the concept of Freddy vs Jason.)
- Target audience changed

### Conclusion:

## ESSAY

Type your essay in the space below. You should aim to write a concise essay of no more than 800–900 words. The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your essay. (The counter will change colour when you reach the recommended word count.)

Make sure you **respond only to your chosen statement** *throughout* your essay, and include **relevant, specific supporting detail** from a range of media texts.

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Slasher; the sub-genre of Horror can most certainly reinforce societal norms, particularly the norms of American Society from the 1970s to 1990s. When looking at the genre we might see what we now find are ridiculously unbelievable villains, silly plot lines and ditsy characters, but once we delve a little deeper we can see how these film produced from the 1970s to the 1990s absolutely reinforce the societal norms during this time period. Characters in these 'ridiculous' films were reflecting how American society was seeing teenagers during this time and using the characters to show a direct reflection of what the societal norms were in each time period, very much like how Aswin Suebsaeng said from 'The Daily Beast' - "If you have premarital sex, does drugs, binge drinks and parties like you fool, you'll be severely punished."

The 1960 film created by Alfred Hitchcock, 'Psycho' was widely consider the first slasher due to its use of, now very common conventions, such as, a mask villain/ killer, the final girl trope, use of bladed weapon and jump scares, all of which are still seen in within post-modern slashers today. 'Psycho' was created during the Hays code era, this code acted as a set of rules/ regulations which film producers in America must abide by to regulate 'appropriate' content being shown. Hitchcock managed to escape the Hays Code by using cinematography tricks such as, quick cuts, and using black and white when showing scenes of 'blood' in his film. With Alfred being able to get around the Hays code at the time he was able to show what had never done before; a shot of a flushing toilet and even portraying violence, both of which at the time was deemed 'unacceptable' in American society. Only 8 years after the release of 'Psycho' in 1968 the Hays code was abolished due to the rise of television shows and films being made and America being unable to monitor the content being made over seas being aired into its country. Although Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 film 'Psycho' was considered the first slasher, the horror genre had been around from the early 30's with plays being held at the Grand Guingol in Paris showing the stalking of 'Thirteen Women' in 1946 and the Spiral Staircase in 1932.

In the 1970s American society was very sullen due to the loss of the Vietnam war - something they weren't used too; losing. The slasher genre was influenced by this era as the second wave feminism wave was running through the 1970s aiming for women to get more equality and fairness in their own rights, such as owning a cell phone and going to work. These protests were started by enthusiastic Christian American women such as people like Phyllis Schlafly she said that - "The truth that American women never had it so good. Why should be lower ourselves to 'equal right's' when we already have the status of special previllage." From this era women became more independent and as divorce rate rose to 51% by 1973 and nearly over half of the women in American society were in the work force. Although this second wave of feminism was in American society the film industry subverted the societal norms of women power and ignored having a strong women presence of film. 'Halloween' the 1978 film directed by John Carpenter was a good example of this. Although there was a presence of a women on the screen the portrayal of her on screen did not reflect the societal norms occurring in American Society. The final girl, (a term coined by Carol J. Clover) teenager Laurie Strode played by Jaime Lee Curtis was the epitome of a final girl back in the 1970s she was a classic, pretty blonde who was being stalked by the now infamous Michael Myers. Although she survives the hands of Myers, Laurie was the ditsy blonde who somehow managed to escape her demise, not portraying the powerful portrayal of the second wave of feminism. Women became quickly frustrated at the representation of women from Jaime Lees Curtis' character; Laurie.

Even in the early 1980s American society were still in foul mood over loss of the Vietnam war. Only 4 years into the 80s Ronald Reagan came into presidency in 1984, making him the 40th US president of America. He had many great plans and an enthusiastic plan and vision of the 'new' America by ushering a 'conservative renaissance'. Coining the term "Make America Great Again." Being a ex-Hollywood actor, Reagan knew many connections within the film industry, he encouraged his idea of conservatism to big show and films producers to portray his vision, which had worked! The Slasher genre was on its way of reinforcing these conservative ideals. First 'The Cosby show' and 'Family Ties' came out into American society and was a big hit highlighting what a solid and 'good' family unit looked like. Then came Top Gun also highlighting a 'better' America where the US military was highlighted as very strong

patriotic force. With the box office proceeds of \$357 million USD Top Gun was a success, the US military was as strong as it had ever been, due to the loss of the Vietnam war. The Slasher genre picked up on its cue and created films which shone light on the importance of a family unit. Friday the 13th (1980) directed by Sean S. Cunningham and 'Nightmare on Elm Street' (1984) by Wes Craven. These films both gave the message of how the lack of parental figures would affect society. With the lack of support given by Nancy's (final girl in 'Nightmare on Elm Street') alcoholic mother and father missing, she and her friends were left alone to be tortured by antagonist Freddy Kruger and her friends Tina and Rod, of whom both punished for their sexual behaviour. Same with 'Friday the 13th' where Alice Hardy's (final girl) friends Annie, Ned, Jack, Marcy and Brenda all punished for congesting alcohol and playing a stripping game and engaging in promiscuous activity, all without any signs of parental figures or adults around in both films. Showing serious reinforcement of the then current societal norms in American Society

The 1990s most defiantly reinforced the societal norms when the rise of the third wave feminism struck into American society, as Spice Girls and the Riot Grrrl movements were in full swing aiming for the equality of women in media, workplace, beauty standard and in words. Wes Craven's 1996 film 'Scream' is a prime example of this reinforcement of societal norms at the time. The slashers of 1990s particularly 'Scream' portrayed a new type of female character who was not only brunette but also self-aware of her surroundings. 'Scream' was not only portraying a realistic view on women in the 1990s but also it helped to reinforce the new societal norms of women being the new target audience. Film production companies were no longer following the traditional sexual script designed to appeal to men, women were finally being thought of when creating these Slasher films. Buffy Shutt the Marketing manager of Universal & Dimension Studios believed this first saying "Young people are beginning to assert themselves in ways they haven't a long time." Shutt believed that there is a new target audience to be reached as women had new income and were coming into see the movies more than men used to be. Due to Buffy's proposed idea Bob Weinstein leader of Universal Studios and Dimensions productions further thought that women wouldn't want to see the past used/ old conventions as they were too traditional and sexist towards women and they don't care to see it. Leading post-modern films like 'Scream' 1996 by Wes Craven and 'I Know What You Did Last Summer' 1997 created by Jim Gillespie both showed signs of improved conventions such as having both of their final girls being able to have sex and survive! Not only were these societal norms reinforced in Slasher but also the societal norm that the villain could be anyone... In the previous films from the Golden Age of 1978 to 1984 they all had the convention of a masked antagonist who were seemed to be unstoppable forces who always seemed to survive but now in post-modern Slashers such as 'Scream' and 'I Know What You Did Summer' they all had the self-reflective style of accusing the people around them.

Therefore Slashers took on the norm in society and placed it into slashers, showing that anyone is now the killer.

After looking into each era we can clearly see how Slashers reinforce the societal norms occurring within American society which are constantly changing. The change can be viewed through the idea from Henri Foillon, a French art historian who taught at College De France and later at Yale university. His theory is the believing that is a schema of cultural forms which applies to the slasher genre. Outlining four key stages, the experimental stage, classical stage, refinement stage and baroque stage. All of which the Slasher films all fit into. This Genre theory can be used to help show the change/ evolution of which the villains changed, as said earlier before, villains the 1990s were not what they used to be portrayed as, in the Experimental stage the era of the 1960s fits into this stage where experimentation the villains such as Norman Bates - antagonist in Psycho was dealing with his multiple personality disorder trailing the new physiological element to the villain. Then comes the Classical stage also known as the Golden age stage, where villain and antagonists such as Michael Myers, Jason Voorhees and Mrs. Voorhees were all 'born' during this stage, where they all are the classic icons of the slasher villains the third stage of Henri's Genre theory he predicts that there is a refinement stage, Freddy Kruger is a prime example of this stage as he is still a conventional 'masked killer' had elements of psychological element making him more refined fourth stage; the baroque stage also known as the self-reflective self-referential stage, we see this in Scream as Billy Loomis and Stu Macher two Ghost face killers are now just two high school students, not some unstoppable force with powers. Thomas Shatz had believed that Henri Foillon's theory is not just stages but in fact a cyclical process, where after the Baroque stage, the experimental stage occurs. This was seen in the evolution of the making Freddy vs. Jason a new style of Slash that has not been produced before, a play off, if you will.

After looking into each era of American slashers we can see that not only does the slasher genre have ridiculously unbelievable villains, silly plot lines and ditsy characters, but once delved a little deeper we can absolutley see how these films with villians, conventions, final girls produced from the 1970s to the 1990s certainly do reinforce the societal norms during these specific time period.

1859 WORDS / 900 RECOMMENDED



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## Merit

**Subject:** Media Studies

**Standard:** 91493

**Total score:** 05

Q	Grade score	Marker commentary
1 (1)	M5	<p>The candidate clearly set up the society, timeframe, and texts to be used in the argument, with a clear focus on statement 1: "Genre can subvert or reinforce societal norms". The candidate linked 1970s society and what was happening at that time to the slasher genre. There was a judicious use of media theory and secondary source material – second-wave feminism, Schlafly, Clover, Focillon, and Columbine – and how these impacted on the texts and genre. The candidate consistently referred to the statement, using it as a springboard to delve into analysis of how and why, and utilised the statement in topic sentences. The candidate also used detailed and relevant evidence to support their argument, including secondary sources and / or relevant media theory. More detail about how and or why society impacted on the genre in this way, and more thorough conclusions drawn, could have helped the candidate gain a higher grade.</p>