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91493



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SUPERVISOR'S USE ONLY

Level 3 Media Studies, 2014

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

9.30 am Friday 28 November 2014
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 nine 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.

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

Merit

TOTAL

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INSTRUCTIONS

Choose ONE **media genre** that you have studied.

Discuss the **relationship** between your chosen media genre and society by responding to ONE of the statements below.

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

You may agree and/or disagree with your chosen statement.

You must respond to your chosen statement.

STATEMENTS (Choose ONE)

The statements below relate to aspects of a media genre.

1. Genre is not set in stone.
2. Genre and identity are closely linked.
3. Genre is really about money.
4. Genre changes society.
5. Specific events lead to changes in genre.
6. Genre does not reflect indigenous culture(s).
7. Genre and technology are closely linked.
8. Genre has historical significance.
9. Genre shows society what it wants to see.

In your essay, you should focus on the relationship between your media genre and society by:

- explaining the **relationship** between your chosen media genre and society
- explaining the **impact** of this relationship on your chosen media genre and/or society
- drawing conclusions about the **wider significance** of this relationship by including **relevant, specific supporting detail** from at least THREE media texts, and any evidence from other sources.

Write your chosen media genre, society, and statement number on page 3.

Plan your essay on page 3.

Begin your essay on page 4.

Media genre: HorrorSociety: America 1950Statement number: 5*Note: Responses made in this space may be used as evidence for assessment.***PLANNING**Explanation of the **relationship** between your chosen media genre and society:

The Incredible Shrinking Man 1957 Jack Arnold
 Crab Monsters 1957 Roger Corman
 Invasion 1958 Don Siegel
 The Blob 1956 Irvin Yearworth

The **impact** of this relationship on your chosen media genre and/or society:The **wider significance** of this relationship:

You must respond to your chosen statement.

The suggested maximum for your essay is 800 words (6–7 pages). The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your essay.

Support your discussion by **drawing conclusions** with **relevant, specific supporting detail** from at least THREE media texts, and any evidence from other sources.

Begin your essay here:

Andrew Tudor, a film theorist, once said, 'a genre defines a moral and social world.' The horror genre and American society during the 1950s has a reciprocal relationship, the genre relies on the current, dominant fears of society in order to generate the greatest fear and reach mass audiences and in return, society relies on the horror genre to provide a release, encouraging audiences to work through negative emotions by meeting the problem head on and providing hope through resolutions. Specific events lead to changes in the horror genre, as fears develop and change filmmakers have no other option but to change their content in order to remain relevant and secure audiences. The horror genre is a genre which ultimately sets out to intentionally gain negative emotional reactions by playing on viewers' nightmares, hidden fears, revulsions and fear of the unknown to ultimately provide a cathartic experience. Through a range of common conventions such as isolated location, orchestral music, musical cues, 'the monster,' and immediate disruption, filmmakers force audiences to invest emotion into the film allowing them to be vulnerable for horror-provoking content. The American society went through dramatic times of change during the 1950s and the leading fears at the time present in every day society were the fear of science and communism. These were highlighted in the films released

during the 1950's reflecting the events that lead to these fears and thus proving specific events lead to a change in genre.

After the second World War America quickly became one of the world's wealthiest nations relishing in times of growth, hope and optimism.

Gender roles were reestablished as the independence women had gained during the war was quickly challenged by posing male affluence. Women resorted back to cleaning, cooking and caring for her family and in contrast, men regained the position of being the provider, protector and boss of the house.

There was also a ~~boom~~ leap in technology with a boom in demand for consumer goods. By 1958, 31% of households owned a television and small, lightweight radios became relatively more affordable.

A youth culture ~~emerged~~ emerged with the new-found term teenager being introduced, ^{finally} giving the young group a place in the world. Rebellion became encouraged accompanied by new music, styles and ~~money~~ ^{money} ~~friends~~. Teenagers now had money, and the new age range provided film makers with a new audience to target, and since teenagers now had money to visit the cinema regularly, they became a valuable new market for the entertainment industry.

Horror was especially appealing to teens as it provided them with a type of coming of age activity, proving they were brave enough to deal with the suspense, but also the excitement of reaching the restricted age of viewing and gaining their independence.

Due to radio's becoming more affordable, this paved the way for a more rebellious sound for teens with the introduction of rock'n'roll and stars such as Elvis.

Through these dramatic times of changes it was only natural for fears to be magnified and mirrored in horror films.

The fear of science was one of the major fears present in everyday life, influenced by the common belief that America was on the brink of a nuclear war. Bombings in Japan during ~~1945~~ 1945 confirmed the devastating impact of nuclear weapons and the harm of radiation. Nuclear testing occurred almost weekly in America, and many families went as far as to build bomb shelters. Common fears included possibilities of birth defects, cancer and burns.

Of course, this was mirrored in horror films during the time, with the films enforcing messages concerning the unknown and uncontrollable effects of radiation. Science was seen as insane and dangerous, and these fears were only heightened as America became more weapon orientated and deadly. The monsters that were part of creature features during the 1950s were more often than not, results of atomic testing, turning ordinary life dangerous and unstable. The monsters put humanity under threat, although are often of humanity's own making.

The Incredible Shrinking Man directed by Jack Arnold in 1957 is one of the many films produced surrounding the fear of science. Scott Carey's life literally collapses around him as he continues to shrink and even ordinary household objects

become of danger to him, all after passing through a radioactive cloud. When consulting the doctor, he simply states; 'people don't just get shorter,' enforcing the fact that even experts are unknown to the dangers and effects. The fact that Carey is forced to leave behind his family, career and life, reflects the situation men went through as they were forced to leave to war. Also, Carey's loss of height reflects the fear of failure, as he could no longer provide for his family the prosperous middle class life they deserved, a common fear of men during these times. In an unconventional resolution after fighting a spider and fighting for his own survival, Carey accepts his powerless state, claiming; 'to God there is no zero I still exist.' This film encourages audiences to consider their own perceptions and expectations of life before it's too late, just as Scott Carey is forced to do in the film.

The Attack of the Crab Monsters is a second film that deals with the fear of scientific experimentation. Directed by Roger Corman also in 1957, the film tells the story of giant mutated crabs which have become immune to weapons and kill off a group of scientists on a remote, isolated island - the location being a common convention of the genre. The film offers evidence of dehumanisation and throughout the film, crabs cause earthquakes and rock falls, demonstrating their extreme power even over nature. At one stage in the film, the crab states; 'So you have wounded me, I must grow a new claw, good and well, I can do it in a day, but will you grow a new life

when I have taken yours from you?.' This reflects the extreme power of mutation and ultimately the threat of science on ~~the~~ humanity. In the final scenes of the film, one scientist electrocutes himself and ~~the~~ the last giant crab, thus saving humanity, and audiences are provided ^{with} hope. Corman creates suspense throughout the film with his tight close ups, clever use of sound and orchestral music. Again this film highlights the uncontrollable nature of science, presenting it as dangerous and evil.

A second dominant fear present in America during the 1950's was the threat of communism. A succession of world events confirmed the very real threat such as Russia detonating ~~the~~ the first bomb, China adopting communism and the beginning of the Korean War. The US government had suspicions that communist spies were passing on military secrets to Russia and this fear was heightened by Republican senator, Joseph McCarthy, who claimed to have a list of 200 people working in the state department who were communists. Citizens of America lived in fear and paranoia, knowing any strange behaviour could potentially be interpreted as 'un-American.' Everyone felt as though they were being watched and there were huge feelings of distrust in society.

One of the films that conveyed the fear of communism during these times was The Blob, directed by Irvin Yeaworth in 1956. The blob itself represented the Red Scare, as was red in colour, becoming redder and redder as it grew and consumed

more people. The blob attacked in very public places such as the movie theatre and the grocery store, perhaps reflecting the boom in consumerism at the time. Medical experts were unable to explain the problem, exclaiming: 'It's ^{like} just a mass, it just keeps getting bigger and bigger,' and 'nothing will stop it.' Audiences struggle to think of a way to eliminate the blob, just as they struggle to find a way to demolish communism. The teenagers in this film are seen as the outsiders, they are the ones who know the danger of the blob, yet the community dismisses their raised concerns. Figures ^{of} authority in the film such as the police officers and the teenagers' parents ignore the kids, and the film suggests these people need to take the time to listen and understand outsiders' perceptions. Yearworth is making a wider social comment about the need to listen to outsiders, those who do not conform, rather than shutting them down, as those who conform do not always know best. This is made extremely evident is the conflict between the two police officers, one who has no time or respect for teenagers, and the other who feels they need to be understood. The blob, just like communism, took unsuspecting victims and relays the idea that although America in the 1950's was a time of conforming, it was also an era which was deeply critical of conformity. ^{Teenagers are often intrigued by the outsiders in horror, they provide them with a point of identification as they express their dissatisfactions with ordinary middle class life.}

Invasion of the Body Snatchers, directed by Don Siegel in 1956 is a second film that deals with the fear of communism. In the film, pod people that paralleled McCarthy, searched for rebels like Miles who refused to conform to what is defined in the film as the 'American Way.' The film

encourages the extent of the difficulty of distinguishing between the communists and the non-communists, ultimately adding to the distrust in society.

~~By placing the fear on Am~~ By making ordinary American citizens the 'evil' in the film, Seigel places the monster in us, suggesting we are the problem and generating the source for a new type of horror. The witch-hunt, mobs, suspicion and corruption within authority, all paralleled to McCarthy situation, adding authenticity to the film.

Films like these suggested the problem of communism was not totally external, rather inevitable progression of an on-edge American society, and also suggests that the government, media and technology were partly to blame. Although Mile's refuses to conform and become an emotionless citizen, he at no point is displayed as in the wrong, suggesting not all that refuse to conform are threats.

The American society had many implications on film makers especially during these times. It is crucial to note that this films do not question the values in society at the time, they simply crystallize it. Due to the McCarthy situation and the fear of their messages the relayed through their films being interpreted as un-American, filmmakers probably felt bound to create films that created nationalistic feelings. Filmmakers were not so much concerned about the quality of the picture but rather what the censors would say to their films. The nature of the horror genre is it must continue to change and evolve by incorporating new content in order

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to secure an audience. What scared audiences back in the 1950s would not have the same impact to audiences now. As a result the genre evolves into distinct entities. For example the 50s known for alien horror, the 60's slasher horror and nowadays the horror is a lot more desensitised and objectifying.

For these reasons film makers^{of horror} are constantly under pressure to find ways around the media laws and restrictions to introduce new conventions and continue to evolve the genre.

The horror genre uses fears already present in society, meaning film makers have a psychological advantage as audiences are already afraid about the content being discussed.

The implications of using fears already present in society, is that for some audiences the fears are compounded and they finish a film feeling more judgemental, suspicious and concerned than before. For others, the film provides a cathartic experience whereby they are given the opportunity to work through^{and then} negative emotions and face the problem head on, given a resolution to provide hope, ultimately allowing them to gain a new perspective on the fear and eliminate aspects of the fear.

Horror films quite often allow the government or military to save the day, allowing viewers the reassurance that their country is in safe hands. However, film theorist Andrew Tudor believes this glorifies the government by saving those in peril. Films such as The Blob and Invasion of

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the Body Snatchers hint that the ~~for~~ government is actually part of the problem and that the inability to listen to the opinion of 'outsiders' and those who refuse to conform is a downside.

The films encourage and create nationalistic feelings and passivity. By providing a sense of community viewers believe that by standing together they can overcome all threats to humanity.

In conclusion, specific events certainly do change the horror genre. The McCarthy situation put America on edge and especially film makers who had no choice but to simply agree with the values of the time rather than challenging them.

Horror is a manipulative genre that relies on changes in society to provide them with new fears to develop content on so they can continue to reach mass audiences.

The relationship between the horror genre and the 1950s society proves the events change the genre.

Anti

Although contemporary horror is extremely different to 1950s America horror, many commonly used conventions in horror today can be attributed to the 1950s horror, for example it was the 1950s horror that moved the concern away from isolated exotic locations and into the centre of American society.

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