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91251



Draw a cross through the box (☒) if you have NOT written in this booklet

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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Level 2 Media Studies 2025

91251 Demonstrate understanding of an aspect of a media genre

Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Demonstrate understanding of an aspect of a media genre.	Demonstrate in-depth understanding of an aspect of a media genre.	Demonstrate critical understanding of an aspect of a media genre.

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 five 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 the margins (//////). 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.

Merit

TOTAL 06



Page 1

INSTRUCTIONS

Choose ONE media genre.

Write an essay discussing the extent to which you agree or disagree with ONE of the statements below, in relation to an aspect of your chosen media genre.

STATEMENTS (Choose ONE)

1. Changes in the audience are what drive changes in the media genre.
2. The need for profit means that genres will take very few creative risks.
3. A media genre must take on influences from other genre(s) to remain relevant.
4. A genre is successful only when it reflects what audiences are thinking about at the time.
5. As a genre evolves, its conventions will also evolve.

Media genre:

Select your statement:

PLANNING

2nd sources

robin wood horrors expose repressed fears

thomas doherty success of film signalled the breakdown of censorship in hollywood

sarah williams society

1st sources

pov

Laurie Strode final girl male gaze 2nd wave of feminism

unstoppable masked killer

2nd sources

carol clover

video nasties

metz life cycle

audiences starting to get tired

Randy's rules of surviving a horror movie

Sidney Prescott updated final girl

blended humour with genuine fear

satisfied for knowing references, nostalgia

metz life cycle

ESSAY

Type your essay in the space below. You should aim to write a concise essay of no more than 750–800 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 support your discussion with **evidence** from media text(s) and / or other sources, which may include your own production experience.

B *I* U       

The Slasher genre follows a formula that evolves with what audiences are thinking at the time. Slasher's usually follow a group of teenagers and include key tropes and conventions such as an unstoppable masked killer, multiple knife murders, and a final girl. The Metz life cycle follows 4 main stages of a genre's evolution: the experimental stage (Psycho), the classical stage (Halloween), the parody stage (Scream), and the deconstruction stage (Smile, Scream Queens, FNAF). We can apply the Metz genre life cycle to the Slasher genre to show how the genre evolves with the zeitgeist and audience thinking of each era.

Psycho, released in 1960 and directed by Alfred Hitchcock, was in the experimental stage of the Metz life cycle. The film made \$50 million at the box office from an \$800 thousand budget and shocked audience expectations in various ways. During this stage conventions are being experimented with, a formula starts to be created, and the genre is starting to form. The zeitgeist at the time of this film's release was dominated by post WWII prosperity and the idea of the "Perfect Nuclear Family". Horror movies before this were only ever supernatural threats but Psycho challenged this by introducing a future convention of the genre, the psychologically disturbed killer Norman Bates, we can see this from his reveal, double personality, and quote "We all go a little mad sometimes". This film broke and challenged censorship policies of the 1950s and the Hay's code which was active during the time. The iconic shower scene featured 70 quick cut shots that challenged rules of nudity and violence in Hay's code and shocked audiences with suggestion of adult themes. Marian Crane's early death was also shocking to viewers as horror movies would never usually kill off a main actress so quickly. Hitchcock also requested that any theaters showing Psycho should not let anyone in after the movie has started and to also keep the cinema dark for 30 seconds after the film had finished so that the audience could linger on it. These are all examples of how the film and genre challenged the norms of film and horror of the 50s and reflected what audiences were used to and thinking about at the time. Secondary sources help us understand this. Robin Wood argues that horror movies expose repressed fears of the time which Psycho does directly with themes of violence, sexuality, and instead of supernatural fear, fear of a seemingly normal civilian that could be a threat to the peaceful and prosperous suburban life and American dream. Thomas Doherty says the success of this film signaled the breakdown of censorship in Hollywood as it pushed boundaries of the Hay's Code which would go on to be dismissed and the GMRX censorship ratings would form. Sarah Williams says the film reflected the thoughts and fears of society at the time. Challenging censorship, introduction of new conventions, and reflecting the zeitgeist of the time all show how Psycho adapted to audiences thinking and expectations of the time and was new and exciting during the experimental stage which set up the genre and key conventions for films in the classical stage such as Halloween.

Halloween was directed by John Carpenter in 1978 and made \$70 million at the box office from a \$13 million budget. This film came during the classical stage of the slasher genre which is where the formula and conventions have solidified. The Zeitgeist at the time of Halloween's release included anxiety and public distrust following events such as Vietnam. John Carpenter said that audiences wanted a "safe scare" from slasher movies. The opening POV shot of the killer puts us in the killers position which becomes a convention in this stage. Laurie Strode was the final girl in this film which was during the 2nd wave of feminism. Carol Clover created the final girl theory and says that the final girl witnesses her friends die around her but she stays alive by being resourceful and 'morally pure' by neither having sex, drinking, or doing drugs. Laurie Strode followed this convention's rules by being morally pure but she wasn't overly resourceful and was perhaps mainly for the "male gaze". Michael Myers or "The Shape" represents the unstoppable masked killer trope who used a knife as a murder weapon which symbolised the fragility of life. This film was released at a time of debates around "video nasties" and censorship which added a reason as to why it was so successful. Conventions were solidified in this film during this stage and the film reflected what society was thinking about by giving audiences a somewhat "safe scare" during a zeitgeist dominated by anxiety. Eventually audiences started to get tired of the genre conventions and the formula became too predictable and repetitive especially after 8 Halloween sequels were made in around 10 years, this caused the transition into the parody stage.

Scream was directed by Wes Craven in 1996 and made \$173 million at the box office. This film was released during the parody stage of the Metz life cycle where the slasher genre becomes self aware and mocks its own formula and conventions. By the 1990s audiences had become too familiar of the genre's conventions and formula and had become tired of it. Audiences wanted self mockery and parody which is where Scream came along. The opening phone call blended humour with genuine fear in this self aware film. Sidney Prescott was an updated, self aware final girl in Scream which came during the 3rd wave of feminism where society was against discrimination towards women. This allowed her to break "moral rules" such as having sex and drinking alcohol while still surviving by being resourceful and even killing the masked killers such as Billy herself. Randy's rules of surviving a horror movie directly mocked the film's own genre conventions and formula by showing that it was self aware of the rules. Scream blended ideas from other films and the genre's conventions which satisfied the audience as they could understand references and possibly feel some nostalgia. This self awareness and mockery reflected what audiences were thinking about at the time as they were tired of the predictable formula and repetitive conventions but the parody stage allowed the genre to stay successful. Eventually the genre reached the deconstruction phase with psychological thrillers such as Smile, shows such as Scream Queens, and even video games such as Five Nights at Freddy's which show the formula can be used across different media platforms and evolve to audience's thoughts at different times to stay successful.

The Slasher genre has gone through the experimental, classical, parody, and deconstruction phases of the Metz life cycle. From being new and exciting, to having solidified conventions, and then to becoming self aware and mocking those conventions, the genre has adapted and evolved to viewer expectations and what audiences are thinking about during different times to stay relevant and successful.

1156 WORDS / 800 RECOMMENDED

Merit

Subject: Media Studies

Standard: 91251

Total score: 06

Q	Grade score	Marker commentary
1 (4)	M6	<p>The candidate demonstrated a good understanding of genre in response to their chosen statement 4: "A genre is successful only when it reflects what audiences are thinking about at the time", supported by effective use of secondary evidence, including box office data and genre theory. There was a clear discussion of genre theory applied to the texts in detail, showing clear insight.</p> <p>While the response attempted to address the implications for the genre, the discussion required further examination and depth to gain an Excellence grade. For example, more sustained analysis of how the genre formula operated across other media, such as video games, or clearer exploration of the genre's movement into a deconstruction phase.</p>