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93303A



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## TOP SCHOLAR



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY  
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

QUALIFY FOR THE FUTURE WORLD  
KIA NOHO TAKATŪ KI TŌ ĀMUA AO!

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# Scholarship 2022 Media Studies

Time allowed: Three hours  
Total score: 24

## ANSWER BOOKLET

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

Answer all THREE questions from Question Booklet 93303Q, and write your answers in this booklet.

Begin your answer to Question One on page 3, your answer to Question Two on page 11, and your answer to Question Three on page 19.

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 2–28 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

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

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

Question	Score	
	Subject knowledge/ Critical thinking	
<b>TOTAL</b>		

ASSESSOR'S USE ONLY

## QUESTION ONE

Quotation/statement number: **2**

"Being a media creator <sup>and</sup> not being on [other online platforms] is like selling a food product and not having it at the supermarket"

## PLANNING

Begin your answer to Question One here:

"Being a [media creator] and not being on [offline online pdf platforms] is like selling a food product and not having it at the supermarket," Mazhou Q/ once said. An Once thought to be a declining relic of the past, this was absolutely true of the book publishing industry — until the TikTok boom of 2020 made waves, resulting in a massive resurgence for the industry.

Back in the 1980s, things were unimaginably different, with book publicity relies upon things such as author events, signings and the role of independent bookstores, who, ~~work~~ with their more personal customer to retailer relationship, could turn books into best-sellers. There were around 3,500 in the US (and during the 80s, Lennartz, 2011), but by the time the the 2010's rolled around their number had halved. Moving into the future, pair that with the increasing digitisation of content, the rise of Amazon and the ebook, and a new generation of youth glued to phones <sup>and</sup> with decreasing attention spans that rendered picking up a book largely unthinkable,

it's easy to see how publishing was thought to be doomed. Their traditional formats simply weren't "up with the times" — it was, in essence, like ~~an~~ selling a food product and not having it in a supermarket<sup>o</sup> until <sup>recent book booms on</sup> the ~~rise of~~<sup>re-</sup> social media. Launched in 2019, by 2020 <sup>online</sup> platform TikTok ~~and had~~<sup>had</sup> amassed 465 million active users — currently ~~700+~~<sup>755</sup> million, projected to reach 955 million in 2025 (López Ceci, 2022). It was ~~an~~ what began as a niche ~~book~~ what began as a niche book discussion community on the platform <sup>swifly</sup> ballooned — resulting in videos tagged under "#booktok" on the app amassing 89 billion views ~~on~~ ~~the app~~ to date.

To its credit, the book publishing industry immediately saw this for what it was — mass publicity — and ~~then~~ immediately found ways to place themselves at an advantageous point within it. ~~One~~<sup>Perhaps</sup> most notable ~~marketing~~ is through their utilisation of content creators, or so-dubbed 'influencers' (social media users with enough of a following to constitute ~~the~~ sway). ~~For~~ Once a niche aspect of online, <sup>youth</sup> and fan culture ~~the influencer~~ became a ~~booming~~ booming

business model; publishers began ~~sending~~<sup>to send</sup> ARCs' (Advanced Reader Copies of unreleased books) to said influencers for the purpose of manufacturing anticipation surrounding a title. On top of this, publishers do not even have to pay them for publicity services provided — satisfied with the reception of said ARCs, many in turn work tirelessly in order to create 'fun' content. This boom of ~~book~~ online book content came at a time when, due to the pandemic, <sup>not only were</sup> many people <sup>finding</sup> themselves increasingly at home and looking for ~~new~~ hobbies such as reading, but ~~as~~ many were also looking for interpersonal connection due to the isolation induced: a role that the influencer filled perfectly, by allowing <sup>consumers to</sup> ~~them to~~ foster parasocial relationships by virtue of frequently viewing said influencers' content. ~~That~~ <sup>consumers</sup> People (particularly Generation Z, who are most notorious ~~than~~ on TikTok) are more likely to be influenced by publicity from <sup>"</sup>people they feel like they know rather than picture-perfect publisher advertisements. ~~With~~ Pair this with the short, accessible, entertainment-based nature of 3-60 second TikTok videos, and there has never been a form of publicity

more easily or willingly consumed. Paul Lazarsfeld's 1949 theory of the 'two-step flow of communication' hypothesises that ~~opinion leaders~~ ideas ~~flow first from the opinion leaders~~ to ideas flow first from the mass media to the opinion leaders, then to the public, and <sup>aptly</sup> ~~sums up~~ <sup>publishing's new social media</sup> the highly effective nature of ~~this~~ business model. ~~mass media~~  
 Perhaps Perhaps the biggest example is Colleen Hoover's 'It Ends With Us', which first released to <sup>very</sup> little acclaim in 2016 began as a backlist by ~~Simon & Schuster~~ an imprint of Simon and Schuster. In mid-2020, buzz surrounding the book appeared on '#booktok', catapulting the author not only onto the New York Times Bestseller list (the most 'prestigious' <sup>weekly</sup> sales ranking), but also to remain there for 73 consecutive weeks to date.  
 Clearly, the ~~success~~ being on social media is absolutely ~~ext~~ crucial for publishing. The NZ book market size grew 3% in 2020, despite the opposite being ~~the age demographic of TikTok and~~ <sup>with impacts of mass media exposure to the likes of which are unprecedented</sup> ~~so~~ forecasted due to <sup>lockdowns.</sup> ~~the pandemic.~~

The age demographic of social media and TikTok users also proves a large impact on the book publishing industry. Young Adult (YA) fiction had its bestselling year in

2021, with sales quadrupling since BooksScan began recording in 2004<sup>6</sup> of all bookbuyers, in 2020-2021, 50% of those aged 16-19 used TikTok, alongside 43% of those 20-24, with percentage decreasing ~~as~~<sup>as age</sup> increased. This can be seen reflected in the prominence of titles such as Chloe's Liang's 'These Violent Delights', Dustin Thao's 'You've Reached Sam' and Xivan Jay Zhaos 'Iron Widow' on both '#booktok' and the New York Times Bestseller List. All are examples of new, debut authors from 2020-present who ~~utilises~~ crucially utilised TikTok in order to capture, engage and foster parasocial relationships with their <sup>young target</sup> audiences. Despite the <sup>covid19</sup> pandemic preventing the traditional ~~there are many positives to publishing~~ routes of publicity such as author events, conventions and signings, these creators careers actually <sup>sky</sup> rocketed, ~~benefiting~~ <sup>benefitting</sup> greatly ~~due to the power of online~~ ~~platforms~~ <sup>audience</sup> mass exposure. To not be on these platforms would be unthinkable.

There are many positives to this new, TikTok-driven world of publishing - one being the potential for previously-unknown authors to go viral and become best-sellers overnight. In March 2021, Alex Astar, for example, posted a self-made 'teaser' TikTok for her

then-unpublished novel 'Lightmare', which resulted in not only 109 million views and 369,000 likes, but a 6-figure book deal for the then-unagented author. Take a look in any New Zealand whitcoulls or Fopp Paperplus and I'm sure you'll be met with 'TikTok made me read it!' signs ~~and~~ and stickers, something <sup>that is</sup> certainly financially beneficial, alongside offering mass publicity and exposure. ~~After~~ 825 million print copies of US books were sold in 2021, while the global book market is expected to ~~not~~ expand at a compound annual growth rate of 1.9% <sup>between 2022-2030</sup>, that's a jump ~~of~~ of 20 billion USD. However, negatives are ~~beginning~~ beginning to emerge too. When Aster's book hit the ARC stage, then shelves, it was met ~~by~~ a polar shift in opinion from the very platform and community which heralded its success - ~~the release was marred by 'industry' plant~~ allegations and negative reviews. This raises question of how ~~to define~~ "success" <sup>to define</sup> ~~is measured~~ within such an industry, alongside considerations of audience fickleness when said audience is a massively globalised yet compacted digital userbase, so prone to influence from the two-step flow of communication and the ripple effect of peer opinion. Some books are beginning to be

printed with lists of included ~~top~~ popular online 'tropes' on their back covers (such as 'enemies-to-lovers', 'forced proximity'), and it is this 'trope-ification' which, while potentially beneficial in aiding new readers in finding books to their tastes) may also be cause for concern, as publishers begin to prioritise trope box-ticking and short catchy pitches catered to online vitality and subsequent pre-sales over actual complex discussion, critique, character or literary value. In this new, TikTok-driven world, what is the future of literature to look like, if longevity and literary value are sacrificed in favour of vitality?

With the boom of TikTok, social media, and "#booktak", it is clear that for book publishers and authors (particularly YA creators aimed at youth) not to be on ~~social~~<sup>online</sup> platforms<sup>such as TikTok</sup> is like not having food products in a supermarket. With the online boom and book resurgence, it is clear that these platforms are crucial in providing publicity - something the book publishing industry has ~~harnessed~~<sup>harness ed</sup> well, with its exploitation of the 'influencer' and ARC distribution, aided by the 'two step flow of communication'. Whenever you stand regarding the positive ~~or~~<sup>or</sup> negative impacts

**QUESTION TWO**

Quotation/statement number: **1**

Great things are done by a series of  
small things brought together

**PLANNING**

Begin your answer to Question Two here:

In the words of creative master Vincent van Gogh, "Great things are done by a series of small things brought together," a philosophy I found absolutely applicable in my experience producing a print magazine feature article entitled 'If I was a man, I'd be the man.'

~~when~~ ~~once~~ beginning my production, I'd had the idea of writing a piece about the impacts of internalised misogyny on young women for a while, and given that in recent years this has become something more colloquially discussed within the affected demographic, I knew I'd found ~~within~~ my time and place. Great things are done by a series of small things, and I knew that finding the correct destination publication for my piece would be a crucial aspect to its success. I originally considered VNO magazine, but upon acquiring a copy and reading through, I immediately knew that its target audience demographic and subsequent content — adult leisirs of the middle age range, with a content focus of local lifestyle — would ~~not~~ not be fitting. I knew that my article would best reach its potential and ~~an~~ effect if

if the ~~for~~ audience demographic reflected those most aware and impacted by the topic — young women, around 16-35. ~~So I~~ I briefly looked at women's magazine *Cosmopolitan*, which advertises the same audience, but concluded that its conventions, tone and content would be at odds with what I wanted to communicate. It was when I was met with Australian 'indie' women's magazine '*frankie*' that I knew I'd found the right piece to my puzzle. <sup>*frankie has the*</sup> ~~with the~~ success and readership from my exact same target audience demographic to prove that their approach to great things would befit mine best. In 2009-2011, the overall Australian market size dropped 5%, while ~~an~~ *frankie's* grew 13%, and by the end of 2011, its monthly circulation was 87,000, outnumbering big name competitors such as *Harper's Bazaar* (54,000) and *Vogue* (51,000). *Frankie's* successful brand relies quite heavily on an overall emphasis upon 'quirky, authentic' content, and uses ~~many~~ <sup>other more</sup> various conventions to distinguish itself from ~~its~~ <sup>its</sup> ~~mainstream~~ magazines, some as simple as paper ~~the~~ selection.

Most women's magazines, such as 'Women's weekly' tend to be printed on glossy paper (hence the name 'women's glossies'), while *frankie* prints on matte paper, added to this ~~is~~ an overall 'stripped back, authentic, fun and quirky' tone as opposed to the glamourised depictions of other women's ~~mag~~ publications. Similarly, *women's weekly* relies upon bright colours, crammed compositions and compelling ~~subtitles~~<sup>subtitles</sup> whilst a key focus of *frankie's* is minimalism. Negative space, visual illustration and breathing room are all integral, with its 70pt body ~~font~~ text font size implying that its appeal may not be about written content ~~or~~ at all: not a sum of smaller things, but instead the sole power of visual aesthetics. \* (extra space)

Going into my own production, I was keenly aware of this, and ~~so~~ subsequently prioritised the production of visuals highly. In fact, *frankie* is so reliant upon visuals that illustration pages, photography pages and even removable art prints on perforated paper feature frequently. As a painting and design student, I

I was excited to apply myself to this new production ~~as~~ context. ~~Then~~ I experimented with digital illustration techniques using Photoshop, ~~but~~ but discovered that this did not fully capture the more quirky and organic atmosphere of frankies that I wanted to emulate. This hand made aesthetic was best created using traditional art-making processes, so I experimented with painting illustration, acrylic ~~or~~ masking washes, and even pressed flowers and leaves for textures, all of which I scanned and then manipulated digitally to create my magazine spread layout. These <sup>smaller</sup> elements, I found, created a ~~an~~ greater, more successful media product, as influenced by the approach of frankie in emphasising visual appeal and atmosphere.

However, while I knew that aesthetics were integral in capturing and engaging my audience, ~~knows~~ that written content remained important ~~in~~ in retaining them. If ~~apple~~ brought together well, I hoped these small things would accumulate in a great media product. Upon selecting

my topic, I found myself at a conundrum regarding my tone and angle. I didn't want to write a piece that was too serious & heavy, so as to dispel the importance of the welcoming <sup>and quirky</sup> visual atmosphere, ~~but~~; informed by Frankie's success, but I also didn't want to write too lightly or humorously so as to trivialise the topic. Ironically, it was as I was zoning out of work with music that I found the answer: I would use a public figure as a case study through which to angle my discussion, and the public perception and media representation of Taylor Swift was perfect. As a cultural icon well known at least fleetingly if not extensively to all within my target audience, Swift would increase the accessibility and appeal of my article by combining a social issue with aspects of pop culture. For further inspiration, I began to look further afield from Frankie and found the work of Natalia Ahmed for online women's magazine 'The Tempest' (particularly her piece 'Modesty is being used as ~~an~~ an excuse to police women's bodies, and it needs to stop'). Her use of personal narrative and

pronouns to drive the piece in a way that elicited an emotional connection with the audience was of particular inspiration to me, and I decided to emulate it within my own, using my own personal using a personal story as an anecdote to open my piece and weave throughout. In selecting my tone and language conventions, I began with colloquial language, a sprinkle of light humour, and ~~then~~ became more serious with emotive language as the subject matter called ~~for~~ for it before returning to colloquialisms. This allowed me to ~~communicate~~ write in my natural inflection as though speaking directly with a peer, which I believe is key in connecting with the audience, particularly my younger target demographic. This can be attributed as a key aspect to Frankies success, with editor Jo Walker stating, "I think there's a real quest nowadays for something a bit more real, a bit more genuine, a bit less mass-produced." "[Frankie] will always ~~try~~ try to be on a level playing field with people." Speaking to your reader as an equal is key, and is one of the many smaller things discussed

which accumulate in a great product.

The Tilly Brogan's piece for *The Tempest*, *'Fan Antists' owe it to YA fandom to include diversity in their fan art'* was also of particular inspiration to me through the inclusion of the convention of interview, which drove the piece and added a valuable personal aspect to it, something I felt would work well in conjunction with Frankies philosophy of 'authenticity': I reached out to ~~multiple~~ multiple young women, both online and in my life — the exact same ~~demographic~~ demographic as my target audience — and asked them to share their experiences regarding internalised misogyny, embracing femininity and fan appreciation of Taylor Swift. The resulting effect was a more personal, narrative-driven media product, which incorporated these different perspectives and experiences in a way which I hoped might allow the interviewees to constitute the audience's own peers, or even hold a mirror to themselves. Overall, ~~it was~~ ~~is~~ ~~this vital combination of~~

Overall, I found with my media production

**QUESTION THREE**

Quotation/statement number: **2**

film genre has a lot to answer for when it comes to representing diversity.

**PLANNING**

Begin your answer to Question Three here:

In his 1970 study, 'Violence in Television Drama: Trends and symbolic functions', George Gerber found that "violence in television drama is a demonstration of social power. It projects the fears, biases, privileges and desires of men onto a global canvas." Dealt with its proximity to violence, there is perhaps no genre more guilty of this than the thriller genre — ~~as~~ when it comes to representing diversity (particularly ~~queer~~ <sup>queer</sup> diversity characters), it has a lot to answer for.

"Non-white, lower class, non-American characters were more prone to victimisation. However, ~~that~~ they were also more violent than their upper-class white male American counterparts. The result was that these minority characters paid a higher price for their violence," Gerber found. Essentially, characters who deviated from Western society's construction of norm expectations for 'normalcy' were deemed to be 'societal undesirables', and were thus linked with violence, ~~and~~ death and killing — relegating them to roles of villains and victims. Gerber's theory can be applied not only to race

and class, but also to sexual orientation; one such example being 'Killing Eve', <sup>a modern thriller.</sup> first aired in 2018, the character(s) of Villanelle might have fit the idea of the queer (and therefore societally undesirable) killer, with the potential to be read as a predator, <sup>loving</sup> Eve <sup>out of her</sup> socially acceptable life of ~~normality~~ "normalcy" and into being a deviant — but she was universally loved amongst audiences, seen ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> with creator Phoebe Waller-Bridge approaching the text subversively, humanising Villanelle through instances of comedy, warm lighting and character exploration despite the <sup>unsettling</sup> <sup>and violence key to</sup> terrors ~~of~~ the thriller genre. That was until the final episode aired in 2021, wherein <sup>after</sup> ~~Eve~~ and Villanelle finally begin ~~as~~ a relationship, they are given ~~approx~~ <sup>approx</sup> ~~maxinately~~ ten minutes of happiness together before Villanelle is shot dead <sup>concludes.</sup> out of however, and the series abruptly ends. Unsatisfying ending aside, this occurrence was not an anomaly: queer death is a pattern ~~is common~~ Most commonly referred to as the 'Bury-Your-Gays' trope, is an embodiment of the idea that, by virtue of existing outside of what society has dictated as ~~normal~~ <sup>(alongside other diversity)</sup> the standard for 'normal'; queerness is thus deemed a

'threat' upon the constructions of society, and must therefore be punished accordingly. Essentially, it is the idea that queer people are undeserving of happy endings.

Another example is Abigail Haas' 2013 <sup>thriller</sup> novel 'Dangerous Girls', wherein protagonist Anna kills in a "jealous rage" upon finding out that her best friend (Elise, with whom she shared an <sup>intense</sup> relationship that was ambiguously queer) and her boyfriend (Tate) were having an affair. It is not Tate she kills, despite him being the one undeniably cheating, but Elise, whom Anna loved equally. This can be explained through the application of Gervais' framework: as the upperclass, white cis-heterosexual male, Tate is afforded all <sup>of</sup> the power and privilege within the narrative — he is put upon a pedestal. By comparison, those who deviate from said norm are deemed a 'threat' and must be punished through <sup>via</sup> the most extreme form of punishment the human brain knows: death. Hence, Anna becomes a killer, <sup>and</sup> Elise loses her life, whilst Tate remains untouched. ~~to be seen~~ In "It sounds bad, I know," Anna narrates, "but the truth is we made each other, like we learned about in science class, symbiosis."

Häas treats the relationship between the two girls not as a 'good' thing but as something to be studied in a lab, or friction between two dangerous chemicals. It is dehumanised. It is a trainwreck headed straight for inescapable tragedy. When Anna thinks about the moment she went down the wrong road to becoming a killer, she concludes, "And Elise... she was my catalyst." Had they never met, Häas implies, Anna would never have become a psychopathic killer. Queerness is ultimately treated as a 'corrupting force'. This <sup>representational trend</sup> ~~concept~~ is, unfortunately, not limited to 'Killing Eve' and 'Dangerous Child', nor is it strictly to the thriller genre. It prevails over a wide range of texts, though the thriller genre has a lot to answer for, ~~in part~~ in part due to its proximity to using violence as a key narrative device. In 2016-2017 alone, GLAAD found that out of the 28 bi and lebian characters on broadcast television, 12 died. This number is sadly reflective of wider prevailing sociopolitical societal ideology that influences our present and future. After all, the filmmakers of tomorrow are informed by those of today and yesterday - often resulting in the subsequent perpetuation of this violence <sup>and this violence's role in projecting societal fears and pain</sup>.

dehumanising cycle of violence-linked representations, ~~when~~ when said creator might not be consciously aware of the readings, roots and interpretations of the narrative decisions they've implemented.

The thematic and social prevalence of the 'violent societal undesirable' trope can be linked not only to vast & wider sociopolitical and historical contexts—colonial assimilationist values, religious conformity which led to the persecution of "witches" ~~in~~ in Salem 1692—but, in a more modern ~~contex~~ context, the AIDS crisis of the 80's and 90's. This pandemic added a layer of 'inappropriateness' and inherent tragedy to the perception of queerness due to public stigma and negative media bias. 'The Silence of the Lambs' (1991), ~~is a~~ wherein the serial killer murders and skins women in the hopes of 'wearing their skin' acts as a coded and stereotyped embodiment of ~~queer bias,~~ wherein of these societal fears regarding the 'threat' imposed by queer men and transgender women. Buffalo Bill is explained to be the way he is due to insanity and trauma, further pathologising queer identity (after all 'homosexuality' was only removed from the

American Psychological Association's list of mental illnesses in 1973, with 'gender identity disorder' only removed in 2012) and acting to represent queerness as a 'dangerous', 'darker', 'unhealthy' underside. The 1934 Hays Code was also hugely impactful — while abolished in 1968, its influence was immense and lingers even now in what we as consumers, audiences and society have come to accept as common place. The clause widely accredited as the root to why queerness is so closely linked to violence and victimisation is section 2: 1b: "the sympathy of the audience shall never be thrown to the side of wrongdoing, crime, evil or sin." Essentially the wording here provided filmmakers a loophole: queerness could be depicted represented, so long as it was "unsympathetic" — say the character was a villainous killer or untimely deaths served as 'divine punishment' in the narrative (such was seen in 'The Children's Hour' (1961)). Palatability is key. Hence, such 'threats' were represented through a punishing lens which villanised and demonised them, thus neutralising their perceived 'danger' to

society and hegemony — which, in turn, became prevalent in violence-heavy genres such as the thrillers. As long as media producers remain with profit as their highest concern, ~~we~~ we will likely see a perpetuation of the ideologically-fuelled representations despite a rise in positive ~~and~~ queer representations and diversity, as creators remain wary of challenging the societally-dictated ~~a~~ set of norms for the sake of palatability and profit amongst audiences regarding ~~less of their~~ whether they are accepting of LGBQTQ portrayals.

Overall, Creber's words certainly ring true, and it can be concluded that violence in the thriller genre acts as a microcosm of ideology which deems queerness a threat upon the construction of society and punishes and villanises it accordingly in a projection of societal fears. This has resulted in a self-perpetuating cycle of dehumanisation: the thriller genre has a lot to answer for.

Extra space if required.  
Write the question number(s) if applicable.

Q1 of ~~at~~ this development, one thing is certain: Tiktok's influence won't be going anywhere for some time.

Q2 \* After all, in this ~~modern~~ digitised world where content is available on anything, anywhere, anytime, it is the visual ~~and~~ atmosphere and reader experience that makes a print magazine valuable.

Q2 experience that it was combination~~s~~ of ~~the~~ series of smaller elements, from the written components <sup>and conventions of</sup> ~~of the~~ interview ~~convention~~, tone, language use and personal <sup>narrative</sup> ~~language~~ to the important of visual aesthetics such as atmosphere and illustration, which, ~~accuse~~ when brought together, accumulates into a great ~~media~~ <sup>print</sup> magazine feature articles. ~~through~~ ~~the proven success of approaches of~~ ~~Frankie magazine and The Tempest~~ ~~writers Natalia Ahmed and Tilly Braganza~~

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