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93303A



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SUPERVISOR'S USE ONLY

OUTSTANDING SCHOLARSHIP EXEMPLAR



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
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QUALIFY FOR THE FUTURE WORLD
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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	
TOTAL		

ASSESSOR'S USE ONLY

QUESTION ONE

Quotation/statement number: 4

The growth of Social Media has contributed to Misinformation that Undermines trust in the Mainstream Media/News and creates increasing Polarization.

PLANNING

Robert Seaver

① Why does SM Create Misinformation?

- Profit incentive. Such is profitable
- No desire to use Moderation
- Trends away from Mod. Eg. Elon Musk + Twitter.

② How does this Undermine the Mainstream?

- Moderation often self-fulfills Conspiracy.
- Us vs. Them.

③ How does this then lead to polarization?

- Echo Chambers.

Begin your answer to Question One here:

If the 1800s ^{was} the Industrial era, and the 1900s ^{was} the Modern era, then the 2000s ~~is~~ is the Information era, an explosion of information which can be attributed in large part to the gigantic rise in the strength and presence of Social Media. Yet, while such rise is notable, it has also caused an expansion in our access to misinformation, of which in turn has led to greater mistrust toward the establishment and in turn furthered polarization. It is with this side effect that the greatest issue of Social Media has emerged - and that is the balancing act between freedom of access and control, of which the result of such struggle is our prevalence of misinformation.

It is first necessary to understand why such misinformation is prevalent on Social Media, and in turn why it is so hard to combat. Misinformation in its rawest form can just be attributed to the high prevalence of people on Social Media, ~~which~~ with the increase in concentration simply leading to more ideas being generated and in turn more fake ones. But why ~~does~~ do Social Media platforms continue to allow misinformation to flourish? Such can be attributed to the reasoning that "firms such as Meta are overwhelmingly motivated by profit" (Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez) and in turn do not hold a desire to moderate. Misinformation is often more engaging on platforms and as such allows firms to collect more revenue from advertisers. Equally, if the highly-controversial nature of such misinformation exists then it opens up the opportunity to collect more data which in turn can be sold to advertisers, as firms such as Meta are often reliant on the commodification of user behavior to generate revenue, and if users engage with the platform more there is more opportunity to collect data. Equally, Social media platforms hold a status within the

Public Psyche as an extension of their existing rights to free Speech, a trend which has only been exacerbated by the self-assigned 'free-speech Jurist' Elon Musk acquiring Twitter in 2022. If firms hold a view that they will moderate extensively, it justifies users leaving from the platform which is in turn bad for business. The Unique Nature of algorithms on social media platforms acts as a catalyst to this fact, as users are repeatedly shown content that they positively engage with as this keeps them on the platform for longer. As such, if users are positively engaging with false information, algorithms will continue to show such content, eventually magnifying the impact that misinformation has until a cultivation effect is created, in which the users are eventually led to believe that such misinformation is true. Platforms therefore hold no motivation to moderate, in turn allowing them to emerge as a hub of misinformation.

The eventual weight of such cultivation effect leads to drastic repercussions in how users engage with traditional media. Most notably, if users are pushed into echo-chambers through social media, they are likely to reject differing narratives from traditional media which in turn fosters mistrust. It is also important to understand that such misinformation is often intertwined with a flair of conspiracy, as this allows for the misinformation to be more engaging on social media while also contributing to a notion of a shared community online which allows for users to feel united under a collective dogma, feeding into our interpersonal desires to be included. An example of this is in the recent Black Israelite conspiracy theory, which states that Black people are the true children of Israel and that Jews are a false representative put in charge of the world by Satan, a conspiracy which has seen drastic uptake in online support, particularly,

by individuals such as Kyrie Irving or Kanye West. However, as with Conspiracies establish a strong sense of community, an 'us vs. them' Mindset is fostered, particularly due to the activating effect that Social Media has. This in turn means that reactions against the Movement, such as Kyrie Irving being banned from the NBA's Media or Kanye West being banned from Mainstream Media, is seen as proof that such Conspiracy is real and that the 'Majority' is trying to destroy it, which is especially prevalent in anti-Semitic Conspiracies such as this one. Because Social Media has conditioned groups of people into believing that Misinformation is true, and because such Misinformation is modelled to be Conspiracy-like in nature, trust in Mainstream Media decreases as believers of such Misinformation are unable to distinguish what is actually true.

Acting alongside the fostering of Conspiracy is the diminishing utility of Mainstream Media, a notion which platforms are able to feed on through the plethora of content that they provide. Because Social Media platforms are able to provide large amounts of content through their decentralisation of Media production (when compared to traditional media), users are tricked into believing that such consumption of Media is making them more informed about the world around them, of which is led simply by the excess of Media users are now exposed to. As such, the exposure to a significant amount of information "reduces the overall individual gratification we get from each new piece of information" (Mark Marson) which in turn leads to a diminishing value associated to information from Mainstream traditional Media, of which are not able to compete with the excess of information found on Social Media. As we reject the authority of Mainstream Media, which faces more checks and balances to ensure truth in what it publishes, we in turn become more receptive to the authority

of unmoderated content on social platforms, of which often holds misinformation. As such, the combined effect of a declining importance of traditional media alongside growing antagonization of such leads to an environment in which misinformation can flourish, and in turn leads to a decline in our trust of established mainstream news and media.

As trust in media falls, polarization rises, a trend which social media has greatly magnified. To start, social media firms once again hold no desire to moderate content and are actually skewed towards allowing misinformation to thrive as it is more profitable. This in turn means that platforms often allow or promote polarizing forms of misinformation. This has been seen in the 2020 US Presidential election, in which both Joe Biden and Donald Trump can attack each other through Facebook Ads, of which showed "the ability for even politicians to spread misinformation on Social Media" (Elizabeth Warren). Social media actively encourages polarizing content, of which is often forms of misinformation. But even on a more subliminal level, social media holds an incredible amount of weight in how it fosters polarization through misinformation, a process which often occurs due to the creation of echo-chambers. As users are constantly fed supporting ideas of their beliefs through algorithms, they lose access to differing perspectives on issues they may be getting misinformed about. This in turn leads to one-dimensional views being constructed about opposition which in turn contributes to polarization as users become so deeply engrained in their own misinformed beliefs. This is an issue which exists heavily in the MAGA communities online, in which the lack of exposure to differing opinions or information heightens the value assigned to social media while diminishing the value of mainstream

Medic, in turn creating polarization between online MAGA communities and mainstream Medic communities. Equally, the mistrust in the establishment alongside a polarized view towards opposition allows misinformation to ~~reach~~ attract further misinformation. This is an issue forced by the online political right, which through their demonizing of the Left through their rejection of the 2020 US Election have come to adopt other misinformed values simply because the establishment shall be held in opposition. We see this with the expansion of the anti-vax movement worldwide, which while was not a right-wing policy, has found refuge in the right as they seek to rebel against the establishment. Left of Joe Biden in the USA or Jacinda Ardern in NZ, for example. Such is valid explanation for why individuals such as Kyrie Irving appear to hold multiple misinformed beliefs (antisemitism, anti-vax and flat earth), as the polarization created by social medic forces them to reject all forms of information from the establishment, even that of which is less divisive.

As social medic continues to grow and evolve we are likely to see greater trends in how misinformation flourishes and spreads within our wider society. Yet the existing framework for social medic is a beacon that attracts the motto of misinformation, in turn leading to massive detractions in the trust of our mainstream medic alongside increasing polarization. If we want to lead into a future society which is more collective and less divisive, a wealth of attention must be drawn to the role that social medic plays, for ignorance of such will lead to a worsening of our misinformation problems, both now and into the future.

QUESTION TWO

Quotation/statement number: **2**

Everything seems really simple on paper until you 'take out the camera from the box'

PLANNING

- ① Malleability of Creativity →
 - ↳ David Lynch 'Eraserhead'
 - ↳ Denis Villeneuve. 'Dune' forced to make creative sacrifices.
- ② Unforeseen circumstances.
- ③ Francis Ford Coppola 'Apocalypse Now'
- ④ The Troubles of action.

Begin your answer to Question Two here:

As artists, we often spend 95% of our time within our own heads of creativity and the marginal 5% actually creating, of which is by far the hardest portion. The dreaming of ideas for short films is deceptively simple, as I found with my extensive creative treatment of my short film 'Alone', yet the actual task of creating is difficult, as we face creative constraints, unforeseen circumstances, or even fall victim to our own troubles of inaction. In the words of David Fincher therefore - "everything seems really simple on paper until you take a camera out of the box", until you create art out of creativity, until you turn dreams into reality.

The hardest part of making art is the creative constraints that reality often brings us, a notion I experienced deeply with the creation of my short film 'Alone'. On paper, my idea of a character-driven look into isolation in adolescence was simple, yet as I eventually got the ball rolling I found that a lot of what I wanted to do would be constrained by my own circumstances. My school didn't have a tracking camera, for example, so my desire to film a long-shot of my lead running would have to remain within the mental vault. I was equally constrained by wealth - I couldn't have the high filters and colour grading I'd enjoyed in previous films, instead I'd have to be resourceful in my enjoyment of just iMovie. The sacrifice of creative elements due to physical constraints is in essence one of the hardest tasks we do as artists as we 'take the camera out the box', as we often attach so much of ourselves to the art and want to represent this part of ourselves in the best way possible. This malleability of creativity only comes at a cost - but it is perhaps one of the worst sucker punches we have to face.

as limited artists. Yet, I think solutions exist for such problems, especially when we look to other low-budget films such as David Lynch's debut 'Eraserhead'. The film was meant to capture Lynch's vision of living in the industrial city of Philadelphia, a notion he captures vividly in his surreal depictions of long, grey industrial shots or a whirling, tedious soundtrack. Sure, the dialogue and performances were mediocre at best, and Lynch lacked a lot of the funds to do the Dillerist special effects to the extent we see in his later works. Such as 'Twin Peaks', but he still was able to work with what he had to create a film which was somewhat reminiscent of his experience, even if constrained. As I look to my own film 'Alone', I see similarities in our own constraint of resources, as the complex beginning we have to make with our own creativity as resources physical constraints prove. Yet while such is definitely a complexity we never consider on paper, it is an overcomable one, albeit difficult.

Equally, constraining however is the unknown, as while one can plan for constrained resources on paper, we as artists are not fortune tellers and cannot see what issues may exist on the horizon. In the making of 'Alone' I found difficulties throughout my productive process which were unforeseen. Working with actors is such an issue - while on paper I had a concrete idea of what I wanted to create, actors bring their own creative views which often skew initial intentions. I found myself often arguing with my lead over how to depict my foul character, with myself opting for a more artistic, silent one, while my lead wished to be more intensive and more involved with dialogue. These challenges are unforeseeable on paper, but highly prevalent as we 'pull'

out the Camera', an issue that Francis Ford Coppola experienced in the creation of 'Apocalypse Now', his iconic war film. Coppola was caught in production 'hell' for a vast majority of it, with actors fighting on set and the crew being faced with threats of disease and weather as they tried to film. Marlon Brando, the actor who played Colonel Kurtz, showed up to set overweight, which forced Coppola to reimagine his treatment of the character to be one covered in low-key lighting rather than foul. When we create art on paper, we lack the consideration of differing perspectives, while also lacking the consideration of the actual people who will fulfill our 'visions' of our creative ambition. Just as Coppola neglected to perceive the variability in actors' physiques, I neglected the variability in actors' perceptions of film, which in turn created additional complexities which did not exist on paper. Making a film is a process of a multitude of working parts, parts that must all be functional for a film to be created. Yet, as the creativity of our minds requires complete functionality, reality often proves otherwise, of which makes the hardest part of our film-making 'fitting a square out of the box'.

When you initially create in a world without limit, that of course being your mind, you often formulate ideas that are of great ambition, of which can make the complexity of film-making not in what Scid Cemere does after it is taken out of the box, but rather just in the act of showing ones hands into the box to actually create. I found a lot of my production difficulties came in my initial lack of action - both because I am a human procrastinator, but equally because of the intimidation one gets staring at a blank canvas with no key 'place to start'. When we

Moved into the editing stage of 'Alone', I remember finding difficulties in knowing how to start with the editing stage, as while my friend had sent all the files, I was lost at where to start - whether I should start cutting footage or just drag it into my workspace and hope for the best. Such issue is only magnified when you have a wide variety of ideas you want to implement in the edit, of which sparks its own complexities. I see my own experience mirrored in that of Denis Villeneuve when he stated working on 'Dune', who commented on how "just the source material was" and how he "didn't know where to start". Frank Herbert's lucious source material for 'Dune' is resemblant of my own lucious mental source material for 'Alone', of which sheer excess simply prompted procrastination. I found eventually that such issue is simply resolved by 'going-in' and 'figuring it out', but such issue highlights how on paper we forget to actually envision ourselves in the process of creation. As many artists likely feel, we are bombarded by ideas constantly, which while can all fit on the mental paper of our minds, lack clarity in reality, of which makes ~~less~~ ~~more~~ starting an additional complexity of production.

At the end of the day however, we make art for ourselves but also in the hopes that it will be enjoyed by other people, of which makes things additionally complex. I remember when making 'Alone' the difficulties I felt when showing my initial project to my teacher, who suggested I make a wide variety of changes, many of which compromised my own personal vision. Yet, I valued their perspective and made

Such, I initially, in their suggestion to add soundtrack, something of which I initially, did not want but warmed to. With every suggestion however we piece apart our own art and make it also someone else's, of which is perhaps the hardest part of producing. While we want our art to be a true representation of ourselves, we are always forced to make sacrifices if we want it to be well-received by an audience. And even when we eventually show it to an audience, we cannot expect them to receive it as positively as we feel about it, of which is also very hard. I look to Stanley Kubrick, a director I very much admire, with his treatment of '2001: A Space Odyssey'. Through the process of producing, Kubrick was forced to make sacrifices, particularly to the length of the film. Yet, even as such film was released, it polarised critics, many of which saw it as 'too arty' and 'unenjoyable'. I imagine the direction of your art, a piece of yourself, would have been even more harmful to Kubrick with the bigger audience he was exposed to, but yet I think such vulnerability is a universal condition of the creative process. On paper, our film is believed as 100% ours, yet in reality, it is often changed and may even receive mixed reception. Such is a challenge that only exists however when we put ourselves out there and 'pitch up that canva'; otherwise, we are simply left with great personal ideas, but no art.

To make film forces us to wear two hats - the artist, and the producer. While such hats compliment one another, they also feed off each other too, which causes the artist within ourselves great pain. The journey of making 'Above' is symbolic of that, a process that started with a great idea on paper and ended with a different idea in reality. As such, all film-makers are faced with the same issue - that art is simple on Media Studies 93303, 2022 paper, but deeply complex in reality.

QUESTION THREE

Quotation/statement number: 4

We go to the theatre to be entertained, but if what is left after you watch the movie is an eye-opening perspective on some social issues, then it can be a really powerful art piece.

PLANNING

LGBT Art Films

- ① Vulnerability and intersectionality → Moonlight → Barry Jenkins.
- ② Masculinity → Moonlight → Call Me By Your Name.
- ③ Perceptions on LGBT love - its lack of difference from heterosexual love.
↳ CMBYN, Moonlight.

Lady Bird somewhere?

Begin your answer to Question Three here:

Mankind has flocked to cinema for years for the entertaining exorbitant factor that film can provide, yet for such film to be effective it must not wade in the waters of experimentalism for too long, rather, it should ground itself within our reality, as the social issues that we face. The depiction of LGBT+ social issues within LGBT+ art film is ~~not~~ adherent to this notion, with directors in the genre meshing entertaining narratives with complex dissections of our issues of vulnerability, masculinity, and love, of which makes for eye-opening and deeply powerful art.

We often try to look at social issues as forces that act in isolation, yet LGBT+ art film is deeply powerful in its ability to highlight the various intersections that such social issues have, presenting a powerful perspective on the complexities of vulnerability for LGBT+ youth. Barry Jenkins' 'Moonlight' holds such nature strongly, with the character driven plot centred around Chiron opening up our eyes to the intersectionality between queerness, poverty, and blackness, and how this ultimately magnifies societal vulnerability. Jenkins often casts Chiron in harsh lighting which amplifies the shadows within the set, with mid-shots with deliberate low-field-of-view providing an entrancing feeling, as if we as an audience are invading his privacy, heightening the position of the dangers of vulnerability for queer youth. Shots of Chiron's cocaine-addicted mother also hold such low-FOV, with Jenkins deliberately folding in and out of muffled audio alongside the Foley effect to create the effect that we are within Chiron's consciousness and experiencing the scene swings in and out of focus.

just as he does when his Mother calls at him. By depicting Chiron as in such an intimate light, we as an audience are able to gain a unique perspective into the issues of Black LGBT adolescents which is often ignored from the media. Which in turn makes for a powerful piece of art. Equally, Vulnerability is shown in a different light in Greta Gerwig's 'Lady Bird', in which the secondary character of Danny opens up our eyes to a different form of (LGBT-centred) Vulnerability, but this time through the lens of homophobia in traditional Conservative households. Lady Bird's outing of Danny as gay with the dialogue "you're gay!" is only followed by a series of muffles before a mid shot shows him pleading to "not tell his Mum", the following full shot showing him crying as Lady Bird consoles him. While 'Lady Bird's' treatment of setting is vastly different from 'Moonlight', both films offer comprehensive and powerful views into the idiosyncratic Vulnerabilities that LGBT people face, of which makes such films depiction unique and powerful as they shed light on often ignored social issues. As such, the unique depiction of LGBT Vulnerability in art film makes for entertaining and gripping narratives but equally the opportunity for the audience to gain a new eye-opening perspective.

Communities

While not entirely specific to LGBT, the ongoing issues and debates around the depiction and glorification of Masculinity is a deeply prevalent social issue within wider society, especially when it takes a toxic strain. Barry Jenkins offers a keen insight into Masculinity with 'Moonlight', with the triptych nature of the film allowing Jenkins to push the

Perspective on the audience that toxic Masculinity comes from nurture, not nature, of which is powerful. Little's initial finding of a father figure in Ivan is evident of this, with the two eventually going swimming together. As they swim, Ivan helps Little float, with the sticky cones dipping in and out of the water before eventually stabilizing, just as Little becomes stable and comfortable in Ivan's presence. In this case, masculinity is shown as Warm, and Caring. When Little asks Ivan what a "f***er" is, Ivan simply responds with the dialogue that it is "Something people say to make gay people feel bad", a piece of dialogue which once again highlights the theme of positive Masculinity, deviating from the Nietzschean view of Masculinity, being tied to homophobia. Yet, as Little's environment becomes more toxic, we see him adopt more 'toxic masculine' traits. In the second act, Chiron stands up to a bully by smashing a chair on his head, with the law-for-and-folly effect layered over the chair's crash highlighting the weight of Chiron's actions as he resorts to violence, something he was taught against as Little. In the third act, Chiron transforms to Black, a completely Masculine presence, with close-up shots of him doing push-ups or selling drugs highlighting the Masculinity that has been conditioned onto him as a result of his toxic upbringing, a notion only magnified by the Goodie Mob gangsta rap soundtrack of 'Cell Therapy'. If we want more caring men, we must raise them in more caring environments, a perspective that Jenkins brings to us as an audience which is both eye-opening and powerful. Masculinity is equally depicted in Luca Guadagnino's 'Call Me By Your Name', a gay romance which sees two passing-straight men fall in love. Oliver is shown to be strong, a typical Masculine

Characteristic, with a montage showing his prowess in lifting archaeological objects. Eli's on the other hand holds a bit of internalized homophobia, making fun of his gay relative while also having a girlfriend. Yet, the romance they share sheds light to the audience about how we interpret typical forms of Masculinity, and how heterosexuality and homosexuality are not tied to binary definitions of Masculinity and femininity. While 'Call Me By Your Name' dissects the social issues of ~~Abortion~~ Masculine toxicity in its breaking of stereotypes, 'Moonlight' achieves such through providing a depiction of how such toxicity emerges, yet both films are ultimately successful in their ability to mesh eye-opening perspectives on social issues with deeply compelling narratives, of which makes them very powerful.

Even with the gradual normalization of homosexuality within Western media, the issue of homophobia is still deeply prevalent, of which often derives itself in the belief that LGBT people are inherently different to straight folks. Yet, with Luca Guadagnino's treatment of love in 'Call Me By Your Name', we find that such belief is baseless. Guadagnino creates a setting which is dripping with nostalgia; the mis-en-scene light, the lighting soft, pastel green clothing for the leads, and a narrative which is dominated by long-shots of cycling through rural Italy or full shots of eating peaches by the pool. This creation of a nostalgic setting within the film reminds us of our own nostalgia towards adolescence, times of greater innocence and less stress. As such, the eventual reveal of the two leads' homosexuality is incredibly powerful,

as it provides to the audience the perspective that such love is identical to their own love, even if it is shared between two men rather than in a heterosexual sense. The first scene in which Eliot is shown with a close-up shot of him crying in front of a fireplace, the stripped-back falsetto vocals of Sufjan Stevens combined with a low-FOV, reminds us of our own universal pain in heartbreak, and in turn highlights the similarities we all feel through the confusing experience of love. Just as we can reduce discrimination through contact theory, Godzeyans is able to do so by engrossing his audience in a beautiful narrative, essentially making us more sympathetic to the needs of Eliot no matter our pre-existing perspectives on homosexuality. As such, while some issues in *the Society*, such as toxic masculinity or vulnerability, are best tackled through collective denunciation, more subliminal issues such as homophobia are dismantled through the breaking of the bonds of what such ideology rests upon, of which makes for a powerful statement.

In an era of heightened homophobia - whether it be through the 'Don't Say Gay' bill or the toxic ramblings of men such as Andrew Tate, art film provides a breath of fresh air into such discussion. While such genre is able to craft unique narratives due to its relative independence, it is its treatment of social issues of which allows it to become a loved genre. Whether such issues manifest through vulnerability, masculinity, or homophobia, the creation of new eye-opening perspectives on the hardships of the LGBT community allows for the creation of film that is truly powerful.

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93303A

Outstanding Scholarship Exemplar 2022

Subject	Media Studies		Standard	93303	Total Score	19
Q	Score	Annotation				
1	7	<p>The candidate selected Question One, statement 4 and demonstrated extensive knowledge on the topic of social media. In particular, the candidate offered convincing references to media theories, including contemporary examples, such as Kanye West, Kyrie Irving, and Black Hebrew Israelites, and a variety of other celebrities and far-right organisations. They offered insight and perceptive analysis on how social media algorithms lead to increasing polarisations, with examples drawn from anti-vaccine movements in the USA and New Zealand. The candidate offered a convincing argument that addressed the statement.</p>				
2	5	<p>The candidate selected Question Two, quotation 2 and demonstrated convincing knowledge of their short film production experience. They provided reference to other media texts (Apocalypse Now and 2001: A Space Odyssey) to explain their argument. They offer some insight, particularly the tension between the creative vision and the production experience, and provided an evaluation with a thoughtful conclusion.</p>				
3	7	<p>The candidate selected Question Three, quotation 4 and demonstrated a convincing argument on issues facing LGBTQ in various film texts. They integrated and synthesised across their response and analysed societal representations in contemporary society. In addition, they provided extensive and detailed knowledge in an insightful and original manner.</p>				