OUTSTANDING SCHOLARSHIP EXEMPLAR

NZQA | Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Scholarship 2023
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 ONE

Quotation / statement number: 1

" reaching an audience with the right content in a personalised way is the challenge for media companies"

— Esther Westra

PLANNING

Begin your answer to Question One here:

Audiences are consistantly searching for greater control of & personalisation in the Global Music Industry. In the last year, many ethical arguments have been made for & against AI music, the latest 'game-changer', yet to rival the success of Napster, but threatening to do so. Recent months have seen great changes in the way the Global Music Industry aims to take a hold of & profit from this new technology.

Why has the music industry taken an interest in AI all of a sudden? Despite being around since the early 1950's, AI music has reached it's greatest prominance mid-2023 with @ghostwriter977's release of AI-generated track 'Heart on My Sleeve', garnering much attention with over 600,000 Spotify Streams & the BBC estimating the song earned $1,888 before being taken down by UMG (Universal Music Group). Some viewers, & fans of the Drake & The Weeknd (the artists of which AI-generated vocals were used in the track), argued that this new single sounded better than much of their recent music. From that, many got AI-generated covers of the two artists cropped up by anonymous users over Youtube & Tiktok saying "I wish ___ made music

like This!" See, fans were able to get a their favourite artists to sing the songs that They wanted them to sing, @ghostwriter977 themselves was able to personalise a Drake/The Weeknd song with Their lyrics & Their music. And, interestingly, ~~early in November~~ in June & November, strides have been made to pander to the market of personalised AI-music.

In early ~~the~~ June of 2023, quickly following the success & controversy of 'Heart on My Sleeve', alternative artist Grimes released 'ElfTech', featuring the all-new 'GrimesAI'. The project would allow anyone to sing a song (original lyrics or of Grimes' songs) & send it in through ElfTech, to which the user would then recieve back a GrimesAI audiofile back that they could use to craft & publish their own song—so long as GrimesAI was credited as the main or featured artist. In fact, "I'll split 50% royalties with anyone who creates a successful AI-generated song using my voice," was Grimes' promise to fans. This allowed for audiences to not just make money off of the artist (which was the global music industry's main concern at the time), but to connect with them & add their own interpretation to Grimes' songs, a creative outlet for those who don't have a naturally beatiful voice or access to heavy autotune. When GrimesAI launched, it was

very much on it's own, as AI music caused much outcry, with UMG (Drake's label) condemning AI music & those who support it: "[you side with] the side of the artists, fans, & creative human expression, or the side of deepfakes, fraud, & denying artists their due compensation" a spokesperson said in reference to their takedown of 'Heart on My Sleeve' from all streaming sites. This failed to change the popularity of AI-music, which @ghostwriter977 had proved was not only good, but believable, & the fans' own. The Global Music Industry arguably made the whole thing a far larger issue by giving it so much airtime. ~~Aft~~

Months later, with 'Skyfall' covers by 'Freddie Mercury" & 'Washing Machine Heart' by 'Tyler the Creator' still gracing my TikTok 'For You' page every day or so, UMG, perhaps, realised its mistake. Despite all their money, all their artists, & all their power, the fans always win, it's the music industry equivalent of 'The customer is always right': just stop arguing with them & give them what they want. After another humiliation with the release of @ghostwrite's second AI song 'Whiplash', this time actually accrediting artists 21 Savage & Travis Scott, & the anonymous artists' submission for his mid-year hit as both 'Song of the Year' & 'Rap Song of the Year' in the Grammy Nominations, UMG

began to ride a new course. UMG announced that it would now be working with google to create licensing & legal structures for AI-deepfakes of it's artist's voices. The Universal Music Group CEO Lucian Grainge informed press that it's the label responsibility to "give our artists the kind of cutting-edge opportunities & technology that is offered AI," acknowledging the Tech's threat but ultimately succuming to the realisation that if they can't stop AI. They can advertise it - & capitalise off of the fans who desire such a personalised music experience.

Google ~~also~~ has a hand in each pocket here, as while they are working with UMG they are also working with Youtube. Google is the parent company of DeepMind AI labs, which is currently ~~working~~ developing AI vocals of 9 artists, including Troye Sivan & John Legend, who, interestingly, are signed to labels owned by Universal Music Group. Youtube belives that with these artists, they will be able to "expand the future of AI in the music industry," & with a small industry that is speculated to be worth $26Billion USD come 2032, why not? The AI vocals are being developed as 30-second snippets for use on Youtube Shorts, a minor competitor to TikTok, so it will certainly be interesting to see if audiences make the switch between platforms if this new personalised feature is enough to sway them.

Henry Jenkin's theory on 'Textual Poaching' explains one of many ways in which audiences ~~come~~ connect with media, the known 'fandom'. It's something you've probably seen before. 'Stranger Things' Cosplays, 'Harry Potter' fanfiction. 'Friends' stickers ~~an~~ on 'Redbubble'. The key idea is a discussion around the way in which an audience of a certain media product 'reclaim' & personalise it. We ~~see~~ haven't really seen this so much in music, as posters & merchandise are usually made by companies associated with an artist, but if you've ever seen videos like 'drawing a someone for each of Taylor Swift's '~~Midn~~ Anti-Hero lyrics', that's the stuff. ~~Or more~~ or as close as you get. ~~popular is the so~~ What AI music does, in a way, resembles fanfiction, in that it uses common source material / vocals, to create a product with a fans own Story / lyrics / musical composition. We could see this soon on Youtube with fans inputting the prompt: love ballad, Christmas, metaphor for trees, & reviewing a Charlie Puth song. It's like an interactive middle ground between artists & fans. Similarly to Clay Shirky's 'End of Audience' theory, which discusses the increasing role of the audience in the media that they consume, textual poaching is a base for personalisation of which the music industry would do well to get behind. Fans want in.

It started with comment sections & letters to the editor, now they want a tighter grasp on the reigns.

When 'Heart On My Sleeve' came out earlier in the year, I was one of many who saw the music industry's failure to adapt to AI Music as a looming Napster-sized failure. Given the impact that AI music is having on artists (eg ⅓ of producers already using AI, a bit of a concern), it is ~~both~~ good (& highly hypocritical) for UMG that they have decided to join the bandwaggon. The other major recording studios are following suit, giving audiences a taste of AI that allows the user to become the creator in the ultimate next step in personalisation. The big push for AI begins, & the industry knows how to reach an audience now.

QUESTION TWO

Quotation/statement number: 1

"Learn from mistakes. Yours and other people's."
— Joko Anwar.

PLANNING

Begin your answer to Question Two here:

Crafting a school Yearbook for a cohort of over 300 students was certainly a year-long exercise of 'learning from mistakes'. First-time editor, first-time printing correspondent, first-time I've had to remember the names & faces of a year group. I genuinely thought that we had the most achievable goal. Being in a group environment with total amateurs like myself was perhaps the greatest & most frustrating learning experience I will ever encounter. & also the most necessary.

The first mistake made was our time frame, & our general assumption that things should be fine, simply because they were so in theory. Looking back at our school's previous yearbooks, the thing I disliked most were the half-empty 'leavers quotes' pages that usually took up 30 pages. With a 60-page limit, we all decided that we couldn't have half of our yearbook looking like a barren desert, with a few quotes & the occaisonal Year 9 or Year 13 student photo barrelling across the sands like tumbleweed. The executive decision was made that every student should have a year book quote. There were 3 stages to this process, which we imagined would take at most, 3 weeks. The first step was the survey titled 'Leavers'

Quotes Survey' sent out to all year 13 students by our Head of School. We asked for the students name, & then their quote, with their email recorded automatically so that no fake names or quotes could be given. The second step was to gather quotes in person from those who had not filled out the form within a week, using fellow Media Studies students who had shown interest in the creation of the Yearbook to follow up those without quotes. In the opportunity that a student was simply nowhere to be found, we would give them an AI quote generated by ChatGPT, as warned in the survey. In our initial survey, after about 6 weeks, we recieved half of the group's quotes. Slight Disaster. We assumed that given that 'The book' was a school project, students would understand that quotes had to be appropriate, ~~we also assumed that the lead teachers would be a little~~ and as such at least 25 quotes were axed. Chasing people up proved nigh-impossible, with ~~tatpas~~ those we gave with lists of names returned a week later having entirely forgotten to do the task. Many more AI quotes were given than expected, & all in all, the process was a ~~meg~~ major setback. ~~But~~ What ~~sy~~ we learnt, rather quickly, is that your consumes are not necessarily interested in your product until you provide them with it. The same people who ~~wood~~ would joke

about being yet to hand in a quote would subsequently ask you how the yearbook was going. It was a lesson, early on, that taught us of our own naivete, but "what's important is that when you make mistakes, you move forward" (Anna Wintour - Vogue editor) & It meant that we had to allocate shorter time frames for certain tasks, & rethink much of the content that relied on the cooperation of other people. For this reason, we moved head student, head of school, & headmaster interviews forward, & started to ask students for quotes & articles for the sports & music pages much earlier on.

Another mistake, which, at the time, felt rather factual of us, was to collect all of our information in term 2, design the pages in term 3, & send through to the printer the first day of term 4. For this reason, we abandoned the idea of deciding on a theme until later, much to do with the fact that we were unable to decide on imagery & a colour scheme. Because of delays in gathering quotes, much of the information collection in term 2 was pushed back to term 3, what which encroached on time to design. This meant that the theme we decided on had to be quick to create without looking messy. It was then that we settled on "Scrapbook", beloved for it's homemade flair.

We looked through many other publications for inspiration. One thing we admired was the Fanzine 'Faith's ability to reemerge in 2020 with it's focus on 90's culture, icons, imagery, & most importantly for our yearbook, nostalgia. Faith boasted grunge, colour on black-& white graphics, & one 2021 ~~version~~ issue that enthralled me with it's halftone dot figures. On applying these techniques to some mock-up pages, we talked to some other students, as they were our consumers too, & asked for feedback. While we found generally ~~enthusiastic~~ positive feedback, it wasn't very enthusiastic. Could we count on a majority of students to spend $25 on this product? We were unsure, so no. But I really liked the design of 'Faith', & I wasn't looking forward to the long yet time-pressured search for new inspiration. ~~Bu Yet,~~ Realistically, it wasn't going anywhere. Vanity Fair's former editor, Graydon Carter, had an insightful comment, because the reality is that "you have to set aside your ego with the greater picture in mind," ~~to was &~~ The truth was that if I stuck to the kind of Yearbook I <u>loved</u>, I might be the only person who did so. ~~In~~ In group & collab-orations, like the yearbook, like films, you have to be & prepared to sacrifice a little bit of your vision, to create something that was a better reflection of our year group, & a more accurate version than I would prefer.

And so we found 'PlastikComb' a modern

day biannual publication, inspired in part by 'Faith' &
'Raygun'; that indirectly drew on past nostalgia while
also having a fresh image. It was brighter, intentionally
a little messy, filled with collage (signature of the
Scrapbook) artwork, & a little experimental, while retaining
meaning. One thing I preferred in 'PlastikComb' over
'Faith' was it's use of various imagery, ~~too~~ as with
a higher focus on pictorial elements than rules of
design, I (who is in no way, shape, or form, very good
at design) found th we were able to shape &
form an identity as a Class. Our text was a bit
more structured than 'PlastikComb', but it wasn't
afraid to have 'standout' pages which were more
experimental, such as the 'TV Shows & Movies'
double-page spread, which used images from the
media th & edited them into comic style ~~illust~~ illustrations
& then placed them into frames that made the
spread look like a comic panel, inspired by
the rise in popularity of the Marvel Cinematic
Universe in recent years.

Many ~~intentional~~ unintentional errors also
served to the aesthetic. One such example is when
fellow editor Lizzie transferred a spread from Adobe
Illustrator to Adobe Indesign, & when we tried to adjust
the image to scale it down, the images & textures
cut to tens of pieces to an extent that we
struggled to work with. While some images were
replaced, we added drop shadows to cut pieces in the
background, which simply added to the Scrapbook

effect. 'PlastikComb's founder Aaron L. Beebe, discussed the ~~advantaged~~ advantages of the 'random' factor of collage as 'being able to take an image, & change it so that it can mean something else'. At the very least, the messy yearbook theme is reflective of a messy few years at school, burdened by Covid-19, tragedy, & strikes. We tried~~#1~~ to make it work, & ~~x~~ we only succeeded because we made the mistakes first.

Others aren't the only people who make mistakes, or even create faults, & neither are you. Growth requires both of us, & it is unavoidable, perfection (or even just 'good enough') is achieved through failure. Creating a publication, planning it, designing it, ~~printing~~ getting it printed, is not something that you can perfect first time. There's also a reality that so long as you isolate yourself from others, your group, members, your audience, & their wants, that fixing your mistakes becomes a thing you cannot seem to see nor do, nor how to harness them into something better.

QUESTION THREE

Quotation/statement number: 4

"Truly Creative things happen when one thinks differently, yet nobody wants to ~~th~~ think differently."
            -Shonda Rimes.

PLANNING

Begin your answer to Question Three here:

To an extent, we are afraid to 'go against the tide'. Often associated with tall poppy syndrome, the idea of 'standing out', which is a prevalent issue in New Zealand society, I'd argue that while creativity is undoubtedly crafted by 'thinking differently', we are less afraid of doing so ~~that~~ than we assume.

Taika Waititi's 2019 film 'Jojo Rabbit' was a success, & it made the 'dangerous' & different decisions that Rimes alludes to. The film used overdramatic flair to tell a touching & purposeful story about a controversial time period (WWII Germany) using 11-year old Nazi Jojo Betzler. When it comes to war films, it is a struggle to talk about 'the other side'. 'Gone With the Wind' certainly got its (deserved) flack for depictions of relations between slaves & the ~~South~~ Confederacy. What 'Jojo Rabbit' does fantastically is that it never once tries to sanitise its actions to look better to the audience. That's not to say that Waititi's film wasn't controversial - it absolutely was, a comedy from the perspective of the Nazis? It did, likely, help that Waititi himself is ~~of Jewish~~ Jewish, commenting himself on the irony of "a Jewish man directing & portraying Hitler. He'd hate it."

Carnivalesque theory, developed by Mikhail Bakhtin, discusses the ~~use of~~ "destruction of & irreverance towards

order. The example used is of Jesters playing as kings, a disruption of expected power structures. In Carnivalesque Theory, there are two subcategories— Socratic Dialogue, & Minnepean Satire. 'Jojo Rabbit' takes the satirical route, with it's very direct 'not-so-much room-for-~~dis~~ interpretation' humour, Minnepean satire is intentionally unrealistic for the intention of exposing 'hidden truths' of society, though it is <u>usually</u> intended for works taking place in the near-current day. "Characteristic of E the Carnivalesque," Bakhtin states, "is a contrasting narrative, mixing up highs & lows, the serious & the comic." Other films that are Minnepean in nature include the 'Borat' series & 'Dr Strangelove', which both used comedy to fish out the issues in the society of each." 'Jojo Rabbit is the only film in which you will watch Hitler sit down to eat a unicorn head made of ham, I'd bet, but ~~it~~ is balanced with ~~the~~ as such being a representation of how Naziism & Fascism destroyed (ate) the childlike innocence of many, boys like Jojo, & Jewish girls like Elsa. It's an... uncommon metaphor, undeniably, but appealing, & starkly haunting when the 'serio' part of the serioconic film comes to light.

    Also made use of are Claude Levi-Strauss' theories of binary opposites, which, like the carnivalesque opposites of ~~its~~ ~~how~~ humour & seriousness, create extremes that somehow, manage to meet in the middle. The classic opposition of 'good' & 'evil' are

present in the film. In the mind of Jojo, his imaginary friend Hitler, is good, & the Jewish people, are evil, which goes against the 'evil' that Hitler truly presents, & the 'good', or at least the internal good, that characters like Elsa, Rosie, Jojo, & even Khlezendorf, present. The film doesn't want to blur the lines for its audience on what is 'good' & 'evil', only for Jojo, whose <u>innocence</u> goes against the <u>cruelty</u> of the world allows for him to question his own perceptions on the binary opposites of good & evil that he sees in his life. Strauss' theory of opposites is his belief in the core conflict, & therefore, the plot, of a film, conflicting forces must meet.

And ~~the~~ 'Jojo Rabbit' is ~~is~~ far from the only media that ~~challenges~~ exerts the ability to 'think' differently. Another Modern day text like Prime's 'The Boys' (2019-present, created by Erik kripke), both presents Strauss' binary opposites & ~~presents~~ the Carnivalesque (though more accustomed to Socratic Dialogue than Minneegan satire). The show covers a world like ours, but with the existence of superheroes. That being said, the superheroes are not what you'll find in the mainstream 'DC' or 'Avengers' franchises. They're a little different. Mostly paid by Vought, a conglomerate with money & power to rival Disney, 'The Boys' superheroes take advantage of their supernatural abilities, & don't care for the collateral. The first

Superhero created in this universe, now going by Stormfront, was ~~literally~~ a member of Hitler's inner circle. S often goes out of her way to attack and kill people of colour out of shear suspicion, 'collateral damage', or because she knows that she can get away with it. Other characters, like primary antagonist Homelander, is considered the greatest superhero alive, borderline unkillable, and so he gets away with murder, mass destruction, ▓▓▓▓ all covered up by parent company Vaught, so he can look the hero. The carnivalesque uses 'unnecessary' displays of graphic violence & comedy, to present the cruel nature of a society where the rich & powerful can get away with whatever they please - that does sound rather familiar. ~~Btoo~~ & Strauss' opposites also come into play in many levels when it comes to 'good' v 'evil', because most characters, even the good ones, do atrocious things, Homelander's rival, Billy Butcher, may be fighting for his wife, but he also endangers his friends along the way, especially the protagonist Hughie, who is the 'good' & 'innocent' to Butchers ~~cr~~ 'bad' & 'cruelty' the same way that Butcher is the 'good' ▓ to Homelanders 'evil'. Using a simple framework like 'good' & 'evil' in binary opposites show the complexity of certain relationships & stories.

I think that we yearn for stories

that 'think differently' rather than shy away from them. I'd argue that TV & film allows us to more easily do so from home & isolation where we are granted the reprive to 'think differently' away from the judgement of the outer world where, it's true, different is not necessarily a good thing. I think that, especially in the modern day, we are granted the opportunity the challenge, or at least dissect the norm for it's flaws, & create something highly ~~is~~ unique & poignant, ~~someti~~ Sometimes you just have to look for it.

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93303A

Outstanding Scholarship

Subject: Media Studies

Standard: 93303

Total score: 20

Q	Score	Marker commentary
1	7	The candidate selected Question One, statement 1 and demonstrated extensive and convincing knowledge on the GMI, comparing current developments of AI with historical understanding of the industry. The candidate provided a detailed discussion on @ghostwriter977, Drake, The Weeknd, and Grimes' use of AI, and links to audience participation. The candidate provided a clear and independent analysis in a well-structured argument. They addressed the question and offered insightful analysis on audience / media theory, and how it shapes the industry, including future participation.
2	7	The candidate selected Question Two, statement 1 and demonstrated convincing and extensive knowledge, as well as a critical understanding of the production of a school yearbook. They addressed and integrated the question in a cohesive manner throughout their response and analysed the mistakes / issues that were encountered during the production process, considering the impact of these. They wrote insightfully on the production elements and the potential appeal to the target audience. They referenced other publications and the influence on their media production in a well-structured argument.
3	6	The candidate selected Question Three, statement 4 and demonstrated convincing knowledge across a range of media texts, in particular Jojo Rabbit, The Boys, and other diverse texts. They provided some insightful and perceptive analysis on critical media / literary / film theory, in a coherent, well-structured argument. They drew on how these media texts challenge the norms, using humour in a creative way that was uniquely different.