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## Scholarship 2021 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.

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

## QUESTION ONE

Quotation number: 2

"Human beings share the same problems. A film [or other media texts] ~~may~~ can only be understood if it depicts these properly" Akira Kurosawa

## PLANNING

Dodge lens

Ex Machina Alex Garland

Apocalypse now Francis Ford Coppola

2001. A space odyssey,  
iconoclastic

The Shining

Begin your answer to Question One here:

Film is a reflection of the world through the lens of the director - addressing fundamental flaws in our society, confiding opinions, fears and worries to the audience such that the inherent human problems that are ubiquitous and relatable, are communicated through the film. Only by producing a film that is relevant to the audience, can it provoke and elicit a meaningful response from the audience resulting in greater understanding and connection towards the film.

As the actor Diego Luna stated, "Cinema is a mirror that can change the world", as truly, film often acts as a microcosm of the inherent flaws found within society with regards to attitude and philosophy. Alex Garland's sci-fi film 'Ex Machina' is one example that addresses the global growth of technology and the fear of technology that entails in our advancements. With the growing use of technology and Artificial Intelligence, indeed, many workers are made obsolete and redundant whereas research in technology is simply maturing further. Through the perfection and the ~~apothecary~~ <sup>apothecary</sup> of Artificial Intelligence, the A.I. Ava in Ex Machina, presents questions and problems for the progressive mindset of the world. Ava's question "why should it be someone?" is symbolic of the ~~loss~~ <sup>loss</sup> of control and authority that humanity has on

technology. While the protagonist is clearly enamored by the charms of the A.I just as humans are charmed by the fascinating progress of the world, Caleb is guided and tricked by the A.I who eventually leaves him to die. In this representation, Alex Garland addresses the fears of individuals to become obsolete in the ever progressing world that is filled with competition. In fact the progressive nature of the world creates many situations of that such as ~~the~~ Ava and Caleb where Caleb slowly becomes redundant to Ava. This dehumanising element of Ava's identity as an A.I ~~proves~~ confronts the humanity within all viewers as we begin to question the visceral constituents of society and the materialistic progression of our ~~psyche~~ psyche. Ava's disregard for Caleb is what is referred as "true artificial intelligence" by Nathan as the object oriented views of Ava is regarded ~~and~~ as intelligence and dedication. This is true in our world too as we seek to gain the same intelligence as Ava to achieve objectives in life - often at the cost of our conscience or our human qualities. This ~~proves~~ <sup>raises</sup> the question of human importance on ~~these~~ <sup>these</sup> themes such as materialism as a trace of the cynicism and egocentricism of Ava is present in all of humanity and manifests itself in greed and jealousy. ~~The~~ This is the same nature of

AI In other sci-fi film such as Stanley Kubrick's '2001: A Space Odyssey' where the computer 'Hal 9000' forsakes the lives of the crew stating "This mission is far too valuable for me to let you jeopardise". Indeed, there is an increasing sense of "mission" and duty seen in our lives today as we are indoctrinated by measurements of wealth and materialistic objectives of life. As such the dystopian narrative of both '2001: A Space Odyssey' and 'Ex Machina' serve as a warning to the audience about the flaws of humanity and materialism.

A film presents the audience a real-time experience of ~~potential threats and dangers~~ potential threats and dangers, as well as unanswered questions for the audience to think about, these questions are often applicable to the majority of viewers as they pertain to the modern condition that humanity today suffers from. In 'Ex Machina' Caleb's paranoia and sense of identity is the archetype of humanity's existential question. To cutting his flesh to see if he himself is also an artificially intelligent robot like Ava and Kyoko, Caleb seems to lose his sense of purpose and identity. This is further exemplified by his realisation that his orientation was "programmed by nature or nurture or both" as Nathan reads

it. Disillusioned by the hopeful idea of freedom and the ability to control his life, Alex Garland uses these questions to confront the viewer. Nothman stated matter-of-factly that "of course" humans are programmed in a metaphorical way to operate and act according to social conventions. The surveillance room thus becomes a motif in the film of control and manipulation as society, no individual has full autonomy over the face they face. This is similar to Mel's film 'Hushman ridge' which identifies the social pressures and expectations acting against the conscientious objector Desmond Doss and his exposure as a pacifist soldier. Doss is when that "The world so readily" wants to tear itself apart further proves the inexorable path that our world is headed to and the inevitability of destruction. Indeed, ~~the~~ even the current war has fallen into Thucydides trap where opposing powers fight for dominance and true peace will never be obtained.

The fears of humanity can also be explicitly revealed in the form of film. Such as the ~~revolution that~~ ~~AI~~ fear of being outcompeted and becoming obsolete, "Ex Machina's line "One day AIs will look back on humans as the same way we looked back at fossil skeletons".

In the genre of sci-fi and war, the extralimits of reality is explored creating a "hyper-reality" that emphasises common fears shared by humanity. The bleak dialogue in *Ex Machina* addressing the retirement of humanity to A.I. reveals the growing threat of technology in our world ~~especially~~ especially as it is used for more extreme tasks like military.

In fact, the ~~competition to or society~~ AIs in *Ex Machina* may also allude to the toxic competition of the world as Ava directly asks "why create something that will hate you?". Indeed, the hyper-reality provided by film allows viewers to address problems in society such as the increasingly materialistic values in our society. As humans become increasingly apathetic to each other, the disparity of understanding and lack of sympathy in Coppola's '*Apocalypse Now*' becomes more evident. Colonel Kurtz is seen by authority as "insane" and far better to discover the savage brutality of war that made Kurtz who he was - something that no superior could ever understand. Thus, the films of '*Apocalypse Now*' and '*Ex Machina*' are clear examples on how society's dehumanising society we live in ~~these~~ begets conflicts and a lack of unity in humanity. Contrasted with the discord that humanity, viewers ~~have~~ are faced by a very real and relevant problem - one that elicits thought and understanding.

Films also challenge the status quo and the

mistaken beliefs that viewers may hold. The film that directly contradicts hypocrisy in our world is 'Apocalypse Now' that presents a vastly different view of war and humanity that traditional war movies present. The traditional patriotism and courage in war films is replaced by hypocrisy and disillusionment in 'Apocalypse Now'. The irony of the speaker blarney 'we are here to help you' in the presence of a scene of injured among destroyed buildings and planes shows the <sup>antithesis</sup> ~~antithetical~~ of justice that the audience are so used to associating with the army. Instead viewers are presented with the anarchy of war where Willard asks a soldier deep in the jungle who was in charge, only to be replied to ask "aren't you?". There is no order in war and the patronising views of the military are fully exposed. Supporting this argument, the caricature of American soldier, ~~the~~ Bill Kilgore, but is the quintessence of America's ~~hypocritical~~ ~~the~~ army - the levity in the line "If I say it is safe to surf, it is safe to surf!" undermines the brutality of war with his lecherous interpretation of the situation. By the end of the film viewers are led to sympathise with ~~the~~ Willard and ~~for~~ ~~the~~ who understood and rejected "the Starch of War" the pernicious American ideology. This challenges public perception of faith and trust in the epitome of order and discipline of the army. The

Same way that Scott Frank's film 'The Queen's Gambit' challenges our idea of justice. In 'The Queen's Gambit', the relationship of Tolene and Beth reveal that there is no safety on our world. Tolene refers Beth at one point stating "I'm not your guardian angel. I'm not here to save you" indicating the helplessness in society that often betrays our expectations of trust. Tolene contemplates that "I can't even save myself" revealing that no matter how we view something initially, the disillusioning truth will always remain and cannot be overlooked. The disillusioning nature of 'Apocalypse Now' and 'The Queen's Gambit' challenges ~~our~~ viewers beliefs of the world such as the righteousness of the army or of our ~~own~~ <sup>reliability</sup> of our very close friends.

Film is a microcosm of our world and challenges ~~the~~ preconceptions that the world has imposed on us. The shared problems of all of humanity such as our faith in the stories we tell or our fears of progression, technology and materialism are all questions that are reflected in film. Such relevant human questions naturally prompt the ~~audience~~ <sup>viewer</sup> to understand, sympathise and realise the themes of a film.

## QUESTION TWO

Quotation number:

2

"They [social media platforms] may be changing the world,  
but it doesn't mean they run it" Scott Morrison

## PLANNING

Nadine Strossen

↳ "The change in tone is, at least, partly due  
to external pressures"

"They are businessmen"

"Their baseline is the financial bottomline"

"Facebook is the biggest censor the world has seen"

Texas Governor Greg Abbott

"Dangerous move by some social  
media companies to silence the  
conservative views and opinions"  
law Hoicht.

Parker free speech app

Luxemburg "intellectual culture is created by

the social dilemma  
Tristan Harris

Francis Hayden white blazer

Lee Ross False consensus experiment

↳ alternate responses are uncommon  
deviant and inappropriate

Begin your answer to Question Two here:

Social media is an ever-growing medium of our world that interconnects societies from across the world. As much as social media accelerates communication and catalyses the growth of ideas, social media platforms itself is not able to dictate the world. Social media in fact presents a reflection of the ideological and political climate of the world, and is used by individuals to propagate ideas. However, the reception of the idea is still entirely dependent on the users themselves. Social media is also a business, one that can ~~being~~ be suppressed by lawmakers and politicians as they see fit.

Social media is not as powerful as it seems ~~and~~ despite the large user base and its availability, ~~as they are still dependent on their~~ ~~the political climate and the leaders~~ ~~users opinions and this means users~~ ~~people can lead the world~~ are still in ~~the~~ control of social media. ~~Control~~ The idea of social media is still dependent of profit. As civil liberties leader Nadine Strossen suggests, the people behind social media "are businessmen" and as a result their "baseline is the financial baseline". As such, the manner of profits is indeed of large significance to platforms such as Facebook.

or further. As the Netflix documentary 'The Social Dilemma' reveals, the business model ~~model~~ adopted by social media platforms is that of a "addiction-based technology" and relies on users to spend time on the platform on interactions. In what the documentary suggests as "clicking nothingness" the interaction and addiction of social media is what ultimately allows Facebook to have such success. Thus, Facebook and other platforms target individual users and their habits for profit rather than for control. As Frances Haugen <sup>an</sup> ~~sup~~ prominent whistleblower revealed, "Facebook over and over again, have shown they value money over safety". As seen in the Cambridge Analytica scandal that breached the security of 50 million Facebook profiles is further evidence of the selective manipulation of user data on social media like Facebook. Thus for profit, ~~for~~ the Facebook algorithm is known to be very biased and one British firm even discovered that to sensationalise stories and promote interaction even "holocaust denial content" was favoured by Facebook's algorithm. The reliance on profits and user interactions results in a ~~ecosymbiotic~~ symbiotic relationship of user and social media as social media adapts to the users to encourage interaction and subsequently

you more profit. Thus, many individuals would  
 be affected but they ~~could not~~ still fail  
 to fully obtain the ~~best~~ position to "run" the  
 world. Politicians such as Biden and Trump in  
 the 2020 election spent millions on facebook  
 advertisements and this was often criticised by  
 others like candidate Elizabeth Warren who was  
 extremely disappointed that "politicians could run  
 false ads". As Tiger Woods mentioned "sensationalism  
~~sell~~ sells. Don't let ~~fact~~ facts get in the  
 way of a good story". Therefore, it can  
 be concluded that social media platforms  
 remain as a tool for identities such as  
 Trump to exploit and use. //

Social media has played a significant role  
 in the 2020 election and may sometimes  
 have an effect on how the world is "run".  
 Bornies of Trump from platforms such as that  
 of twitter and facebook following allegations ~~that~~  
~~he was~~ "inciting violence" after the Capitol  
 riots of 2021 have shown that social media  
 acts as a response of political events. The  
 changes done by social media according to  
 Nadine Strossen is "the change is ~~in~~ ~~for~~ at  
 least, partly due to external forces" such as  
 law makers and politicians. The Capitol riots  
 created a huge spur of opposition to the

free speech idea of Facebook ultimately forcing them to remove posts and ban accounts. For example the "stop the steal" Facebook group that gathered 300,000 members in 48 hours were removed for political fears and unrest. Facebook accused them of "delegitimizing the election process" which is often met with the argument of conservative free speech. This exemplifies how social media acts as a response to placate unrest. In a similar way, this censorship is done across the world. Facebook has procedures that can allow governments to ~~request~~ <sup>request</sup> to remove posts. In 2020, around 600 Palestinian posts were censored ~~which~~ <sup>as well as</sup> the censorship of a 16 year old Palestinian boy who was killed by Israelis in Jerusalem. This prompted people like Raed to tell media "as a Palestinian, I want to be able to use Facebook like any other user". This reveals how social media can succumb to political pressure by entities such as foreign governments. Mark Zuckerberg initially did not want to succumb to any censorship for Facebook stating in 2019 that "we must stand for freedom of expression". The ultimate abandonment of this policy is accredited to politicians and law makers according to Strossen and this

has led to the deletion of 1000 accounts and many more by Facebook in 2020. This leads to intense anger as conservatives believe they are being silenced on social media and social media is affecting politics. As ~~Trump~~ Donald Trump ~~President~~ "media is the enemy of the people". //

Despite <sup>censorship</sup> ~~attacks~~ by social media, it seems that there is always a way for individuals to get around it. The ~~app~~ free-speech app ~~parler~~ has so far gotten 11.1 million installations and is often branded as "a conservative twitter clone". Similarly, Trump has developed TMTG (Trump media tech group) where it ~~can~~ wants to present the Think media app where "there will be no discrimination based on political belief". This shows how social media platforms such as Facebook cannot run the world ~~due to~~ using censorship due to opposition from the public and the competition of other social media platforms such as Parler. Furthermore, a law that was recently blocked but nearly passed in Texas was to allow the state to punish social media for censorship. ~~the~~ Texas Governor Greg Abbott stated that "the dangers now by some social media companies to silence conservative voices and opinions" and wanted to impose laws on social media preventing censorship. This is a clear

example of the effect of politics on social media platforms.

Censorship by social media platforms however do manipulate and run the world to a certain extent. Social media can often be used as a tool of propaganda. China's strict monitoring of digital information on Wechat is a clear example of using a social media platform to maintain political hegemony and control.

The posts of a recent Chinese tennis star Peng Shuai have recently disappeared due to censorship after she accused a communist party premise of sexual harassment. This is the same censorship that governs Hong Kong and their movement towards independence. However, censorship here cannot be used to run the world as there are always ways around it. Hong Kong citizens are shifting to different apps to communicate and share their thoughts. In the same way, censorship on Facebook only has a limited effect on politics. The censorship of Trump's messages as well as allegations on Brett Kavanaugh Biden's dealings reveal that the information is still circulated despite censorship. Thus while censorship does manipulate the opinions of users to a small extent, it is insufficient to "run" the world. Modern states censor Facebook

as "the biggest censor the world has seen" due to its political censorship that prevents the public from knowing their public servants. Facebook and other social media platforms however, are still fundamentally a business that depends on its users. In modern day political climates the censorship simply reveals the false consensus that the users have come to. Ross Lee's 'false consensus experiment' reveals that political views <sup>mean</sup> ~~and~~ "afternoon responses are uncommon, deviant or inappropriate", meaning that it is inevitable for people to become offended by opposing views on social media leading to censorship.

Although censorship seems to have an effect on politics and leaders, the moderation of content by social media platforms is insufficient to run the world. It does however manipulate individuals as ~~to~~ <sup>social</sup> media platforms rely on sensationalism and public interactions to profit. Thus, as L'Hotteblow Frances Hagen identifies, social media platforms "value money over safety" and will bend to political pressure. The way in which politicians use social media to publicise themselves has however changed largely due to the large popularity of social media. ~~Therefore~~ The genuine opinions of society can always be expressed regardless of censorship or social media platforms.

## QUESTION THREE

Quotation number: 3

"Dig where you stand, go for telling stories you know, the chances are those are the ones that will be more interesting to an audience". - Levan Akin

## PLANNING

Steven Spielberg: Thinking without a camera is the least precise method of planning the audience into a feel-time experience.

The audience is not drawn to the technology but to the story

'The essence of cinema is editing' - François Truffaut

Begin your answer to Question Three here:

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Film production is to relate to the audience your thoughts and perspective. As Stanley Kubrick mentions, "If it can be pictured or thought, it can be filmed". There is no better place to start but to "dig where you stand" using personal experience and understanding to create a relatable story that the audience will be interested in.

As director Steven Spielberg stated "The audience is ~~drawn~~ not drawn to the technology but to the story". In my own film, named 'Tony', it serves to summarise and reflect the struggles of a student's <sup>in academics</sup> ~~academic~~ journey to success as any generation high schooler could experience. Perhaps the "stories" I know best relate to my own experience in film and other activities like sport. However, with limited time and resources, I decided on a short film without dialogue to capture the life of a high school student as he undergoes the process of planning and persevering to reach the climax of achievement. ~~Through~~ Through the storytelling process, many <sup>personal</sup> ~~own~~ experiences such as anxiety is incorporated in microscopic directions such as a tremble in the hand. ~~the~~ Staying true to the idea of "digging where I stand" I incorporate my experience in ~~the~~ persevering in

Film making to the script. Alfred Hitchcock once said "There are three great parts to a film: the script, the script and the script". Producing a lengthy and detailed script, it underwent several revisions before we concluded on a coherent linear and impactful script that follows the life of a generic student designed to match the title of the film, as he undergoes the epiphany of purpose and trains to eventually win a race.

Upon filming, there were various conditions such as weather that cannot be manipulated. "Digging where I stand", we filmed on the given conditions and we operated with what we were given. This gave our film an unprecedented organic flavour that was quite original for a film produced in ~~such~~ such recent times. This also meant our access to equipment such as cameras (although ~~were~~ limited) played a role in obtaining the quality of our footage. We even settled on a phone at one point to capture close-ups and slow-motion footage. Although this detracted from our original ~~part~~ script of having a steady and more consistent ~~camera~~ scene, the use of hand held footage presents a potential of more interaction with the viewer. As Steve Spielberg stated "Travelling without

cutting is the least jarring way of placing the audience into a real time experience". The aware effect was that although the footage seemed less professional, there was a more vivid interaction with Tony from the viewer's perspective. Undoubtedly, if I was given more time, experiments with different lens and film would have produced a product closer to our original goal of a constant and steady perspective. //

I drew heavy inspiration from the film 'Amblin' directed by Steven Spielberg. It was Spielberg's first film on 35mm film compared to the cheaper 16mm or 8mm film making this film a significant step in the nascent of Spielberg's career. 'Amblin' was a short film that lacked dialogue and relied heavily on symbolism and mise-en-scene to fully develop a theme or idea of ~~the~~ the hippie lifestyle and the appreciation of freedom. To incorporate such symbols into my film 'Tony' common objects ~~identified~~ <sup>often</sup> associated with students are ~~presently~~ present in the scenes of 'Tony' from a pen ~~to~~ to a book on the ground. Even outdoor scenes would incorporate the idea of a student's role as an academic through notes written on the back of ~~them~~ or actor's hand. Thus, as he pursues his dreams of sports, he is always reminded of his duties as

a student. Some of these ideas were created impulsively and spontaneously, with no plan. This is perhaps what director Stanley Kubrick mentions in his idea that "The director's style is partially ~~direct~~ a result of the manner in which he imposes his mind on the semi-controllable conditions existing on any given day". Indeed these small details that we improvised played a much larger role in the film than what we had initially expected. Details like what is written upon the book and his notes became a key detail for the audience. Likewise the decision to depict such as a trembling of the hand on the podium were the elements that made the film more human and improved the reception to the audience. //

To "dig where I stand" the improvisations done ~~there~~ on the spot played a key role in engaging the audience. Our actor was a fellow student taking drama so improvisations were quite common throughout the film and this avoided the rigid and inflexible nature of reading directions from the script. In fact, the reliance of actors was heightened in the lack of dialogue as we tried to emulate the features of a short film without dialogue like that of 'Anakin'. This drew

more attention to the symbols and our mise-en-scene as we arranged for scenes such as Frank and Grace to be instantly recognisable to any viewer. Although admittedly, the restraint on time often meant that the positioning of the camera was often not optimised and the background was often not as discernable and significant as one would have liked. //

The composition of our footage was probably the most arduous task. Drawing inspiration from the New Zealand short film 'Day trip' directed by Zoe McIntosh, the use of cross-cutting was implemented into our film as well as we tried to picture the multitudes of tasks he faced. There was also a use of the motif of walking through a tunnel in 'Day trip' indicating a journey that my protagonist was similarly going through. In the end we set our motif as one of thought - looking into the distance upon the stairs outside. Kubrick mentions that editing is the only feature of film that "has no connection to any other art form" and is uniquely associated with film. As such an important task, editing of our very organic, raw and sometimes ~~handwritten~~ ordinary ~~and~~ footage took about over half the time we invested into creating 'Long the film'.



here given, 'Tony' was, a good and relatable film.

To stand where I stand and go from personal experience and responding to natural improvisations, I believe 'Tony' was a rather genuine and organic film that fully incorporates the experiences of school life. This could have been a very relatable experience for many viewers. The story I knew as a student was fully reproduced in my film 'Tony'.

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