

Performance Standards for Stage 2 Creative Arts: AT2 – Inquiry **A+**

	Knowledge and Understanding	Practical Application	Investigation and Analysis	Evaluation
A+	<p>In-depth knowledge and understanding of creative arts concepts specific to relevant creative arts discipline(s).</p> <p>Astute and accurate understanding and use of language specific to relevant creative arts discipline(s).</p> <p>In-depth knowledge of a variety of creative arts media, materials, techniques, processes, and technologies, and understanding of their possible applications.</p>	<p>Creative and clear expression and communication of ideas and opinions relevant to the program focus.</p> <p>Discerning use of the creative arts process in the development and presentation of well-refined creative arts product(s).</p> <p>Highly productive and proactive approaches to the creative arts process.</p> <p>Refined and integrated development and application of a variety of practical skills, techniques, and processes.</p>	<p>Purposeful investigation, selection, critical analysis, and full acknowledgment of a variety of appropriate sources and ideas.</p> <p>Astute and detailed exploration and analysis of appropriate creative arts media, materials, techniques, processes, and technologies within and/or across creative arts forms.</p>	<p>Insightful and knowledgeable evaluation of creative arts products, with reference to practitioners' intentions, processes, outcomes, and contexts.</p> <p>Insightful critical reflection on personal creative arts ideas, processes, and products.</p> <p>Discerning and well-informed appraisal of others' creative arts ideas and processes, and highly effective communication of aesthetic opinions.</p>

Purpose

To investigate an area of creative arts practice, including a critique of the creative arts products of one or more practitioners.

Description of assessment

- Plan, design and explore the breadth and depth of the study;
- Identify, access, interpret and critically analyse data from different sources (including determining the most appropriate methods for collecting and collating material);
- Analyse the data, materials and information;
- Synthesise aspects of the material into a coherent report.
- Undertake a review of the arts products of one or more practitioners;
- Summarise and make conclusions about the findings of the investigation;
- Communicate personal aesthetic opinions on creative arts products;
- Evaluate your own learning.

Outline of the task

- Study a range of works of the filmmaker Alfred Hitchcock;
- Collect, collate and analyse reviews, interviews and articles on and by Hitchcock;
- Narrow the area of investigation, with a particular focus upon Hitchcock's cinematographic techniques;
- Set yourself a question to answer in report form that involves the analysis of a particular film or films as evidence;
- Present a report on the investigation and review. The report may be presented in written, oral or multimodal form. The report should be a maximum of 1000 words if written, or 6 minutes if oral;
- Sources must be appropriately referenced and a bibliography provided. This is not included in the word count. (critique)

Evidence of your Learning

Your work will be assessed on the basis of:

- In-depth knowledge and understanding of creative arts concepts specific to relevant creative arts discipline(s). (Knowledge and Understanding 1)
- An astute and accurate understanding and use of language specific to relevant creative arts discipline(s). (Knowledge and Understanding 2)
- In-depth knowledge of a variety of creative arts media, materials, techniques, processes, and technologies, and understanding of their possible applications. (Knowledge and Understanding 3)
- Purposeful selection, critical analysis, and full acknowledgment of a variety of appropriate sources and ideas. (Investigation and Analysis 1)
- Astute and detailed exploration and analysis of appropriate creative arts media, materials, techniques, processes, and technologies within and/or across creative arts forms. (Investigation and Analysis 3)
- Insightful and knowledgeable evaluation of creative arts products, with reference to practitioners' intentions, processes, outcomes, and contexts. (Evaluation 1)
- Discerning and well-informed appraisal of others' creative arts ideas and processes, and astute expression of aesthetic opinions. (Evaluation 3)

Described as the “architect of anxiety”, Alfred Hitchcock’s films have the power to galvanize and frighten even a viewer who has seen them before.

Discuss how film technique is used to enhance the sense of panic and horror in Hitchcock’s work.

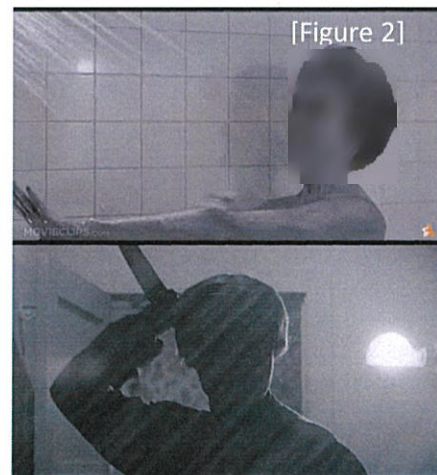
Described by critics as the ‘*Master of Suspense*’, Alfred Hitchcock is renowned for his unique perspective on human psychology, often priding himself on prompting extreme reactions of thrill and anticipation. His visual style focuses on the “terror felt *before* an impending attack,” as “he engages [his] viewers with a type of voyeurism that encourages [them] to come back for more.” (Borges, 2013) The narrative of one of his most famous films, *Psycho*, centers on the journey of a Phoenix secretary, Marion Crane, who embezzles money from her employer in the hope of starting a new life with her recently divorced boyfriend. His equally regarded film, *The Birds*, follows the activities of wealthy San Francisco socialite, Melanie Daniels, as she pursues a handsome lawyer to the picturesque Bodega Bay, where she soon encounters the horrifying and destructive power of nature. Both films incorporate cinematic techniques such as dramatic irony, varying camera angles, strategic editing and emotive soundscape, which cause viewers to *sympathize* with the characters and feel a *mutual* sense of fear, panic and anxiety, and then subsequently *anticipate* the events of impending doom.

Hitchcock’s use of dramatic irony fosters a connection between the viewer and the characters, as the viewer is made aware of anomalies and even potential threats to the safety of the characters, yet the characters *themselves* appear ignorant. In *The Birds*, the viewer is left in a prolonged state of suspense when they are provided with several building images of Melanie smoking on a bench outside the Bodega Bay School. Beginning with close-up shots of Melanie smoking, the images are fused with a distinct soundscape: the cyclical chant of the children singing an innocent rhyme. Gradually, these shots of Melanie absentmindedly waiting are juxtaposed with shots of the playground behind her besieged with the menacing black crows, each separate shot showcasing a



[Figure 1] This fusion of terrifying increase in their number. [Figure 1] This fusion of dramatic irony and juxtaposition heightens the sense of unease felt by the viewer, as they are forced to merely watch on in anticipation whilst Melanie remains oblivious to the menacing force of nature behind her. The use of dramatic irony in *Psycho* is similarly thrilling, for the viewer is forced to become a voyeur and watch Marion blissfully shower, clearly unaware of the threatening figure emerging from the doorway behind her. The viewer is placed in a position of 'privileged perception', as close-up shots of her smiling face are juxtaposed with medium shots of a human figure with a raised knife approaching the curtain, which ultimately evokes panic and horror as we are forced to anticipate the inevitable murder about to transpire. [Figure 2]

Hitchcock's unmistakable ability to create suspense through his use of camera shots, angles and strategic editing is also evidence of his "power" as a director. In *The Birds*, Melanie is trapped within the attic and is brutally attacked by hundreds



of birds which descend from a hole in the roof. Extreme close-ups of her distraught expressions and injured body combine with high-angle shots of her vulnerable and weak figure. Hitchcock then juxtaposes the aforementioned shots with a subjective view of the birds flying towards her face, reinforcing her as powerless in their presence, and simultaneously evoking a *mutual* sense of distress within the viewer. The fast-paced editing of these shots then further heightens this anxiety, as medium shots of her struggling and close-ups of the birds pecking at her clothing flow together in quick succession, leaving the viewer with little time to comprehend each moment and ultimately enhancing the horror of the attack. Similar cinematographic work is evident in the iconic shower scene of *Psycho*. Hitchcock's strategic use of camera shots and editing provokes a sense of alarm

without *actually* exposing the viewer to graphic vision of the murder. Hitchcock combines extreme close-ups of the knife, Marion's hands and feet, and her blood dripping into the bath, all using quick cuts blended together in fast succession, thus building pace and panic – both from the suggestion posed by the images *themselves* and the *speed* at which they are edited together. This feeling of terror is further accentuated by a close-up shot of the blood trickling down the drain, which then dissolves into an extreme close-up of Marion's lifeless eye, "subtly implying the presence of a third eye – the viewer's". (Berg, 1996) [Figure 3]



Hitchcock's attention to soundscape also enhances the sense of shock within his scenes. Music is notably absent in *The Birds*, relying instead on diegetic sound to enhance the action. The viewer watches as Melanie, Mitch, Lydia, and Cathy silently wait in their lounge room, unaware of when the threatening screeches and snarls of the birds might return. It is these sounds that become motifs, as they come to symbolize the inevitability of a bird attack and thus evoke fear within the viewer. In comparison, moments of suspense in *Psycho* are almost *always* accompanied by Bernard Herrman's jarring musical score, most recognized by the famous leitmotif that symbolizes the occurrence of *every* tension-filled moment – including the two murders. The fast-paced staccato and high pitched screeching of the violin accentuate the hysteria felt by the viewer, as the intensity and pitch of the arrangement suitably matches the screams of the victims and the pace of the quickly edited camera shots. In particular, Arbogast's death is heavily reliant on the combination of music and diegetic sound, as Hitchcock fuses close-ups of the knife held in the air with the confronting sounds of it being inserted into his torso, thus providing a more disturbing effect for the viewer. Clearly, whilst Hitchcock's soundscape varies uniquely within each of his films, he nevertheless remains successful in achieving a state of horror and suspense.

Director Alfred Hitchcock is deemed by many as the 'Architect of Anxiety' for his renowned ability to employ psychological suspense, and thus, produce a distinctly interactive experience for his viewers. Using techniques such as dramatic irony, camera shots, editing and soundscape, he provides the viewer with a cinematic experience that goes beyond simply *watching*, and instead prompts us to *see, feel* and *experience* the plight of the characters themselves. Ultimately, it is this sense of inclusivity and empathy that has made him an innovator to be celebrated and revered for all time.

Bibliography

- Berg, C. R. (1996). *Alfred Hitchcock: The Master of Suspense*. Retrieved September 17, 2015, from Alfred Hitchcock: A Brief Biography: <http://hitchcock.tv/bio/bio.html>
- Borges, A. (2013, September 9). *dna*. Retrieved September 17, 2015, from The Undisputed Master Of Suspense - 8 Alfred Hitchcock must watch films: <http://www.dnaindia.com/entertainment/report-the-undisputed-master-of-suspense-8-alfred-hitchcock-must-watch-films-1886656>
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