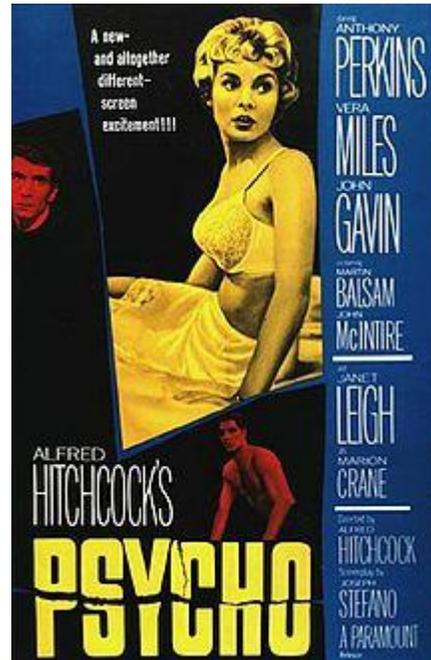


Directions for your Constructive Response to *Psycho*

- After you have read each of the constructed response questions below, select one to answer. The constructed response verbiage is listed below to assist you in this process.
- Responses are graded on quality not quantity, looking for thinking in your writing, and reflection on the article above.
- Use the film *Psycho* to explore the characters and storyline in order to provide support for your answers and to properly address the questions.
- You may compose your response in a *Microsoft Word document*.
- Make sure to include your name and hour attached to your work.
- Email your assignment as an attachment or within the email your instructor. Subject line: *Psycho* Assignment



Censorship and the movie *Psycho*, 1960

In 1960 censorship in America was much stricter than today. All screenplays and films had to gain approval from the Motion Picture Association which enforced a code of ethics, originally established in 1930 by the Hayes Office (named after its first boss, ex-postmaster general, Will H. Hayes). If a film failed to be approved, it was very unlikely to be shown in most cinemas and probably would not even be made. In 1960 the Hayes Office was run by Geoffrey Shurlock. In addition there were nongovernmental groups as the Catholic League of decency which could mount considerable opposition to films with scenes or themes of which they did not approve.

According to the Hayes Office and the ethics in operation in 1960 the following provisions applied to films.

1. The sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of the crime, wrongdoing, evil or sin. (Interpreted that Justice had to be served, the notion that a criminal must be caught and must be punished.)
2. Excessive and lustful kissing, lustful embracing, suggestive gestures and postures were unacceptable.
3. Explicit nudity was unacceptable.
4. Swearing such as the use of "Damn", "God" and "Hell" was unacceptable. (All other swear words were off limits also, but in 1960 no one would have even thought of using those words in a film.)
5. Brutality and possibly gruesomeness had to be treated within the careful limits of good taste.

Option One

What effect do you feel each of these provisions might have had on *Psycho*? Do you feel Hitchcock got away with a lot?

Option Two

It can be argued that *Psycho* is a better film for not being explicitly violent. The shower scene's editing arose in part from the need to suggest rather than show Marion's nakedness and death. Some people claim that the scene was actually filmed in color; so shocking was its original effect. Do you think *Psycho* is a better film for not showing us everything and leaving some things to our imagination?

Option Three

Which do you find more disturbing: the sex in *Psycho* or the violence? Which did Hitchcock portray more graphically and what, if anything, does this reveal about the censorship laws in the early 1960s? Do you think the depiction of sex and violence ought to be treated in the same way by the censors? What are the "limits of good taste"? Who decides?

Partially composed by Derek Malcolm and the GCSE Media Studies, filmeducation.org

Key Verbs and Tasks used in Constructive Response

- Analyze - Examining carefully by looking at the different parts of the whole and figuring out how they are related to each other.
- Apply - Using what you have learned to demonstrate show, or relate something.
- Compare - Using examples to show how things are similar.
- Contrast - Using examples to show how things are different.
- Evaluate - Making a judgment backed up with support.
- Infer - Making an educated guess or hypothesizing... reading between the lines.
- Interpret - Explaining a possible meaning of a text
- Paraphrase - Putting the author's ideas into your own words
- Predict - Using information available to make an educated guess about future events
- Summarize - Presenting the author's main ideas in a shortened form
- Support - Using specific facts to "back up" your answer, utilize details and examples from the text.
- Synthesize - Combining several ideas and making something new