

# Ffar 298: mid-term exam essays example

[Politics](#), [Communism](#)



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## **Answer to Question 1**

The novel-based movie *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* has featured an entirely outrageous concept in its storyline – the involvement of alien forces in the infiltration of a small fictional town of Santa Mira, California. The capability of the aliens to produce replicas of people through atomic-mutating giant plant pods have become the subject of fear among people in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, which they have sought all throughout to challenge. Turning people into empty replicas of their original selves, the alien forces have taken the form of “evil” that has taken over Santa Mira, erstwhile a peaceful and balanced town (Deutsche 306-307; Finney; Siegel). Miles Bennell, a general physician in Santa Mira, attended to his patients who all had the earnest belief that alien forces have taken away their relatives and replaced by replicas. However, Bennell encountered the baffling fact that many of his patients who despaired for his services suddenly became “perfectly all right”. Oftentimes, Bennell would encourage his patients in fear of the alien forces to go to psychiatrists – an allusion to the popularity of psychiatry during the 1950s. Nevertheless, Bennell went beyond his profession as a general physician in approaching the problem at hand – he

temporarily “ forgot” that he is a general physician in critically understanding how alien forces have worked to terrorize Santa Mira (Deutsche 306-307; Finney; Siegel).

It is from the foregoing where the premise that critical thinking and commonsense is more important than professional expertise in Invasion of the Body Snatchers have emerged. For instance, not even the police forces – professionally tasked to maintain peace and order, have contributed to approaching the replica-production activities of alien forces, given that their strict adherence to laws and rigid logical thinking precludes them from even recognizing the validity of said problem in the first place. The negative predisposition aimed against professionals – characterized as self-entitled with their positions of authority, makes Invasion of the Body Snatchers a movie that allegorically promotes independent commonsensical reasoning and critical thinking (Deutsche 306-307; Finney; Siegel).

McCarthyism, a political practice associated with Senator Joseph McCarthy of the United States (US), emerges as a highly possible target of Invasion of the Body Snatchers, given that such has enabled several people to condemn communism without any tinge of evidence. The fact that McCarthyism has allowed people to become drones that badger communist activities as entirely anti-US in unreasonable ways stands as an applicable subject to the advocacy of Invasion of the Body Snatchers, which values the use of employing sensible reason over conforming to unfounded accusations. The strength of extreme right-wing views in the US perpetrated by McCarthy at the height of fears against communism is an apparent inspiration for Invasion of the Body Snatchers. By analogy, McCarthy - driven by paranoia

over communism, stands as perhaps the leader of the alien forces that convert people from rational beings to robotic creatures, with professionals such as the police forces condoning such a problem out of conformity to McCarthyism (Deutsche 306-307; Finney; Siegel).

Invasion, therefore, takes on a highly meaningful undertaking within the context of McCarthyism when related to Invasion of the Body Snatchers. The apparent invasion of communism in the US has led to troublesome consequences underlined by the infiltration of Santa Mira and the capture of people turned into replicas by giant plant pods is, in itself, a phenomenon that is beyond human in nature. It emerges, therefore, that the kind of conflict that exists in Invasion of the Body Snatchers involve that of the individual against his community – precisely the standpoint author Jack Finney and director Don Siegel might have had in mind in creating the novel and the movie. The fact that professionals in Invasion of the Body Snatchers have a negative image owing to their conformity and resulting ignorance makes the entire movie a timely critique of the anti-communist agenda of the US at the time of its release. McCarthyism, which prevails as a central theme to the anti-communist stance of the US government at the time Invasion of the Body Snatchers first reached audiences, stood as a dangerous social phenomenon in the eyes of critics in as much as conformists saw it as a perfectly normal way for dealing with communism. Therefore, the struggle to send out a message to the people through a strong theme such as invasion is present in the context of Invasion of the Body Snatchers (Deutsche 306-307; Finney; Siegel).

The genre of Invasion of the Body Snatchers itself - science fiction, poses

strong relevance to the message the movie has for society. Extraordinary scenes involving adversaries greater than the strength of individual humans usually emerge in science fiction as a representation of fear and uncertainty on events related to the Cold War – the time when the genre greatly flourished. Nevertheless, science fiction provides a powerful way of dealing with social issues indirectly, given that it involves a creative panache that sits well within the prevailing milieu. Also, the community response prevalent in science fiction, particularly in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, gives the message that the beyond-human problems confronting humans can only find due resolution through collective action. Such promptly suits the kind of reaction *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* sought to elicit from its audience, with many of them acting as conformists to the exaggerations of McCarthyism (Deutsche 306-307; Finney; Siegel).

### **Answer to Question 4**

The kind of horror present in *Psycho* has received praise from various circles for its groundbreaking feature that led it to figure prominently as among the greatest movies ever made. *Psycho* promptly presents a rather unconventional and revolutionary dimension of fear – one incorporated by the seemingly normal person staying next door. Robert Bloch, the author of the original *Psycho* novel, created the plot based on the story of Ed Gein, a notorious murderer in Wisconsin also known to rob graves. The eerie background of Gein – who has a reputation of flaying dead bodies and turning the skin into parts of clothing, has provided enough fear factor that lives up to the name of both the novel and the movie, henceforth raising the profile of *Psycho* as a pioneering force in the horror film genre (Hitchcock;

Palmer 4-19; Rebello).

Perhaps the most notable scene in Psycho involves the shower murder scene, which critics continue to hold in high regard to this day as the most iconic feature of the movie, which has knitted well alongside other portions of the movie through a series of musical scores and effects that portrayed crucial portions such as stabbing and suspense scenes. Moreover, Psycho gave a very engaging insight into scenes where the atrocities it featured have occurred, hence providing audience with an eerie tour of the setting as in the case of the death of Marion Crane in the shower in the hands of Norman Bates. Another radical feat seen in Psycho is the scene where Marion flushed down torn paper down the toilet. For many people back then, toilet-flushing scenes in movies stood as quite a taboo mainly because of the disgust such generates from the audience (Hitchcock; Palmer 4-19; Rebello). The fearsome reputation of Psycho attributes to the vividness of the scenes shown throughout its duration. Standing out as an accommodating theme to the terrifying scenes of atrocity involving Marion, the prevailing guilt connected to the commission of a criminal act has since stunned the poor woman into staying in a motel run by the eccentric and murderous Norman. The complex web of events that led to Marion staying in the motel provides a psychologically disturbing effect to audiences, particularly in terms of the implications connected to her act of stealing \$40, 000 from a client in the real estate office she previously worked in. Marion, highly aware of the illegality of her action, escaped from the real estate office with the stolen money she intended to use to fund her marriage to her boyfriend, Sam Loomis. The ensuing paranoia led Marion to become highly evasive from the

patrol officer who seemed to follow her wherever she went, even changing cars frequently than usual in an attempt for her to break the paper trail (Hitchcock; Palmer 4-19; Rebello).

One may gain the impression that Marion has eventually regretted her decision to steal the money from the client of her previous employer through scenes showing her becoming increasingly weary in dealing with her paranoia, what with the patrol officer that appeared to trail her as she sought to exchange her car for a different one in a dealership. The arrival of Marion in the motel owned by Norman proved the last vestige into her fateful exploits. The macabre scenes that following – the opening dinner, conversation between Norman and his mother overheard by Marion, her murder in the shower and his disposal of her body, may lead audiences to think of those as deserved, albeit undeniably violent, on her part.

Regardless, the fact that Marion was not able to get away from her act of stealing the money has successfully enhanced the fear factor classically associated with Psycho (Hitchcock; Palmer 4-19; Rebello).

Despite being a low-budget movie, Psycho effectively utilized resources to the advantage of the audiences, with many of them attesting to the cult status the movie holds to this day. The visibly troublesome demeanor of Norman, which transpired further beyond his murder and disposal of Marion, extended further to include Sam and Lila Crane. Lila, the sister of Marion, collaborated with Marion in their search, which fatefully led them to the motel owned by Norman following leads coming from their hired private eye, Arbogast. The atrocity of Norman gained further emphasis when he murdered Arbogast and attempted to kill Sam and Lila as they stayed in the

motel. Another macabre aspect of Psycho prevailed in the revelation of the real state of the mother of Norman. Perhaps many throughout a good part of Psycho may have thought that the mother of Norman is the murderer. Yet, the grotesque surprise revealing a dressed-up Norman impersonating his mother to be the murderer all along has successfully provided Psycho a combination of terrifying scenes and an unconventional plot twist that has somewhat sat well with audiences. Such gained further clarification when Norman himself disclosed his story to a psychiatrist while serving jail time (Hitchcock; Palmer 4-19; Rebello).

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