

Exploring the theme of the supernatural in popular culture

4Ws + H strategy for analysing a topic

1. What is the theme?
2. Why is it a popular theme amongst people of today?
3. Where do we see examples of this same theme being explored in other texts? (Books, articles, comics, video games, TV). Give 3 to 4 ***specific*** examples.
4. When, do you think, this interest in this theme really gained popularity and why? (Teacher may assist you with this one).
5. How do you view this theme personally? Is it something you find interesting? Why\Why not?

The crossover between the secular view of the supernatural and the religious view.

- **Read the following article on [Religious themes explored in horror films](#) and complete the set questions.**

Discussion

- Religious ideas in horror films

The supernatural assumes the possibility and reality of miracles.

- What is considered normal for a supernatural force is considered a miracle by those of us limited to the natural world.
- Miracles as bridges between the sacred (religious) and secular (laymen) understandings of the supernatural. [Read the miracle account of the soldiers in Lebanon and complete the activity.](#)
- Belief in miracles is a common belief across many religious traditions. Read the story of the healing of the paralysed man in [Mark 2: 1-12](#)
- Answer in your book: What is a miracle? You may consult a dictionary etc

Christian Beliefs

- **The Christian Church is built upon a series of core supernatural beliefs. These are the incarnation, resurrection and ascension of Jesus into heaven.**

God and the Devil

- If God raised Jesus from the dead to save us from sin and evil, then, does evil have a particular name? According to many Christians, the source of sin and evil in the world is the devil.
- If one believes in God then must the devil exist as his arch-enemy. Read the story of Jesus being tempted by the devil in the wilderness in

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/matthew/4>

Nature of God and the Devil

- **Are both God and the Devil a presence or is God a presence while the devil is an absence? For example think of a candle.**
- **When the candle is lit there is a presence of light (God) when the candle is extinguished there is an absence of light (the devil).**
- **Is the devil then, a pointer or symbol of God's absence rather than some entity in its own right? How does this fit with St Matthew's 4:1-11?**

Heaven, Purgatory and Hell

- Pope John Paul II pointed out that the *essential* characteristic of heaven, hell or purgatory is that they are *states of being of a spirit (angel/demon) or human soul*, rather than *places*, as commonly perceived and represented in human language.

Heaven

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/papaldoc/jp2heavn.htm>

- *Heaven "is neither an abstraction not a physical place in the clouds, but **a living, personal relationship with the Holy Trinity.**"*
- When the form of this world has passed away, those who have welcomed God into their lives and have sincerely opened themselves to his love, at least at the moment of death, will enjoy that fullness of communion with God which is the goal of human life.
- **Heaven** is the ultimate end and fulfilment of the deepest human longings, **the state of supreme, definitive happiness"** (n.1024).

Ascension

- <http://www.usccb.org/bible/acts/1>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0Gyheg8Djs>

Incarnation

- <http://www.ranker.com/list/best-reincarnation-movies-list/all-genre-movies-lists>
- <http://www.usccb.org/bible/john/1>

Understanding of Afterlife

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8f0x9cFbbE>
- Complete a PMI table on each of these religion's views.
- Which of these two world religions appears to be most like the Catholic Christian beliefs?
- Identify 3 similarities between Islam and Catholic Christian views on afterlife.

Summary of findings

- Both believe in an afterlife that features a judgment by their God followed by an eternity either in a place of punishment (Hell) or reward (Heaven). A key difference is that Islam has no concept of a purgatory.
- Is there a connection between what we do when we are alive and where we go when we die?

Modern technology – the robot

Humans have free will unlike robots

Irobot roomba

780 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkwtlyVAaEY>

10 commandments and 8 fold paths

- [Handouts](#)
- <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+13%3A17-14%3A31&version=ESV>
- <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=exodus+19-20&version=ESV>
- all religions key moral teachings can be boiled down to two basic commandments: love of God and love of neighbour.
- [Good Samaritan](#)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&NR=1&v=ktYroQP5A1c>

Funeral rites

- To what extent the key beliefs of God's existence, Heaven, Hell and Purgatory are evident in the two videos? Complete the following table

	What is said	Rituals	symbols
God's existence			
Heaven			
Hell			
Purgatory			

Videos

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXceaNZupSA>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1pErNQ0oEk>