Horror Final Paper Case study.

The movies I chose are ‘Us’ (2019) and ‘The Strangers” (2008). I’m using prompt 2 with the monster being strangers/the unknown. In each movie, the main cast is fighting off masked strangers who want to take their lives. The main difference between the two is that in The strangers, the biggest fear is that they don’t know the people trying to kill them. As well as the fact that the killers don’t have a true motive, they targeted the couple simply because they were home. In Us, the fear becomes ourselves and seeing that we are our own worst enemy.

When you search for the rotten tomatoes of the two movies, *Us* definitely did significantly better for audiences and critics alike than *The Strangers* did. *The Strangers* received a critics score of 48% and an audience score of 48% as well. It seems at the time of release the film received mixed reviews. Some people raved over it, and others hated it. Some of the arguments made were mostly about the ending, and the story overall. In a review by Roger Ebert, he states in his review after the release “The Strangers" is a well-shot film. It does what it sets out to do. I'm not sure that it earns the right to do it.” He references the fact that this is the director’s first movie, so he wanted to a little kinder, but couldn’t get passed the, in his opinion, poor writing.

In contrast, the film *Us* was a huge hit with critics and had mixed, but mostly positive reviews with audiences. Rodger Ebert, the same reviewer from the previous movie speaks highly of this movie’s direction and speaks on how well it works with Peele’s vision. Upon listening to other interviews and reading other article/ reviews it’s clear that many people are solid on the fact that Jordan Peele is an amazing director, and the cast of this film are very talented, but their issues with the film itself seem to fall under the umbrella of the ending being a letdown. Words along the lines of “pretentious” were thrown around when referencing the film’s message and how on the nose the point was with the cast playing the heroes and the villains in the form of their own doppelgängers. While that may be the highlight of the film for some, it was enough of a disappointment to others to bring down the audience score.

I believe the difference in reception of these two movies, outside of the popularity/fame of the directors, reflects the fears of the times they were released. It was hard finding sources and reviews for *The Strangers,* not many people were talking about the movie during it’s release. Most of the reviews and videos I found speaking on the film were much later, 3-4 years later. However, with *Us,* it was a lot easier to locate people talking about it during its initial release because it was the anticipated follow-up to the ever popular *Get Out.* Both films show two very real fears we have a society, but tells them in very similar ways, which is why I chose them for my final paper.

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