



National Certificate of Educational Achievement
TAUMATA MĀTAURANGA Ā-MOTU KUA TAEA

Exemplar for Internal Achievement Standard Media Studies Level Three

This exemplar supports assessment against:

Achievement Standard 91491

Demonstrate understanding of the meaning of a media text through
different readings

An annotated exemplar is an extract of student evidence, with a commentary, to explain key aspects of the standard. It assists teachers to make assessment judgements at the grade boundaries.

New Zealand Qualifications Authority

To support internal assessment

	Grade Boundary: Low Excellence
1.	<p>For Excellence, the student needs to demonstrate perceptive understanding of the meaning of a media text through different readings.</p> <p>This involves evaluating the significance of the effect of different readings for the text and/or society.</p> <p>This student has evaluated two readings for the film <i>Alice in Wonderland</i>, directed by Tim Burton. This extract reads the film from a gendered perspective.</p> <p>The student has done this by exploring the roles women have in a patriarchal society (1). Alice's empowerment as a result of her adventures in Underland is explored (2), as is the power relationship between males and females (3). The student begins to question the way society defines gender attributes (4).</p> <p>For a more secure Excellence, the student could further evaluate the significance of the reading by exploring the relevance of <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> for contemporary audiences (5), and the expectations around gender roles in society (4).</p>

GENDER READING (*This is ONE of TWO readings required*)

Student 1: Low Excellence

NZQA Intended for teacher use only

The way Tim Burton has portrayed Alice in his rendition offers modern audiences a 19th century character made relevant for the 21st century. In a gendered reading of *Alice In Wonderland* (2010), the director, Tim Burton turns gender stereotypes upside down. Women are strong minded, save the day, vanquish monsters/slay dragons, they're usually fighting against each other and there are no strong men. This contrasts to conventional fairytales in which the main goal for the female protagonist is to find 'Prince Charming' and live happily ever after. Happiness is associated with getting married, not so much in accomplishing and striving for their dreams. In her real world, England, Alice lives in a patriarchal society – where her identity is defined by her relationship with men, a situation some may argue, audiences would still recognise today despite the 100 year gap. However, when she falls down the rabbit hole we see a direct reversal of this.

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Alice's England is a patriarchal society where the power, both in government and society, is with men. In Underland women have power and are in all places of leadership, a noticeable difference between the real world and the fantasy world of Underland. Alice is shown as a powerful lead protagonist, an evolving character who is not one dimensional. She is the one to slay the Jabberwocky, not Prince Charming. All other females in the film are also powerful, including the little field mouse that has some serious attitude. The Red Queen rules by strong fear throughout the Kingdom. The people and creatures around her are scared to cross her in case she yells her infamous line "Off with their head!" She rules with a large army and fierce creatures such as the Bandersnatch and the Jabberwocky — a creature which draws parallels to fairytale fiends such as the dragon in *Sleeping Beauty*.

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The White Queen, being the antithesis of the Red Queen, is the role of the character that is all goodness and light" the praised one in a fairytale. She rules fairly and benevolently. However, she at times embodies a sickly sweet character, with over exaggerated, abnormally light steps and ballet style movements making her a little disturbing. She also refuses to harm any living creature because it "breaks (her) vows", however she is perfectly fine with others going to kill in her place, such as Alice. This shows that extremes in both character types are not particularly desirable. Although, most Kings and Queens throughout history do exactly this, rule from the throne and do not get their hands dirty. It could be said that newly empowered Alice embodies the best of both characters, the decisiveness of the Red Queen and the compassionate nature of the White Queen. Being feminine is not widely associated with the ability to also be assertive and a successful figure of authority. Burton debunks this popular idea and shows that women can be feminine and still be a good leader even though some critics argue that its only when the characters act masculine, then they gain respect.

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The role of power reversed in *Wonderland* is also seen in the lack of strong men portrayed, one could say they are seen as weak. The primary male characters are The Mad Hatter and the Knave of Hearts. The Knave of hearts is under the fear of the Red Queen like the rest of the kingdom, however he has the confident facade that he is seemingly intelligent and in fact the one manipulating the Queen. This confidence and manipulation would normally build him up as a character with a big role to play in the conflict but Burton glances over him in the climax and final battle scene. Apart from him being a great support to Alice, The Mad Hatter seems weak. As an individual he cannot stand on his own, it is only when he is in partnership

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with Alice his importance as a character grows. The Mad Hatter is essentially only seen as Alice's sidekick. He lacks any key motive and development but this could be due to Burton's aim being to focus on the Mad Hatter's emotional side, rather than his madness. Both characters are ultimately defined by their relationship to the female characters in the film, a contrast to the 'real world' where females like Alice are defined by who they marry.

5 In Burton's other films, it is common to see more dominant female characters than male. He doesn't say whether this is on purpose or just a coincidence that his male characters are not dominant and strong. His other films embody this idea in films such as Edward Scissorhands (1996) and Mars Attacks (1996) screening male characters that are not particularly strong. When Tim Burton was asked of his opinion of his version of Alice In Wonderland being seen as a film with feminist ideologies he seemed to not be too fussed with what others thought about it and said "*Beyond all the kooky bells and whistles of my Alice, it's a simple internal story about somebody finding their own strength. She's been battered around by real life, has never quite fitted in ...*"

Before she enters Underland Alice's inability to fit in is determined by the perceived role she has as a woman. Her worth and her choices are determined by others' view of what a women should be. When Alice returns from Underland, she has to reconsider her identity on her terms. In the 'real' world she was wife potential, In Underland she was saviour potential. In the 19th century society of the time, women were expected to marry for security and society, marrying within their social hierarchy. In Alice's case, she is expected to marry Hamish. He is portrayed as a weak, pompous character that clearly is embarrassed by Alice's childlike and spontaneous personality. He tells her to suppress her jovial and childlike curiosity. Alice shows she is not afraid of bugs, something pampered girls raised in Victorian society would not like. But Alice is a no nonsense protagonist who can see beyond superficial distractions. The return from Underland sees her reject others notions of what she should be like. 2

2 When Alice returns back to normality, after slaying the Jabberwocky, she is significantly more confident and decisive. She says to Hamish out right that she can't marry him and that he is not the man for her. She then goes to Margret and says "I love you... but this is my life, I'll decide what to do with it." She assumes control over her life and stops letting others control her destiny. She remarks to Lowell, seen cheating on her sister earlier on in the movie, that she'll "be watching (him) very closely".

Alice's decision to take over the family business, sailing onto travel routes around the world is considered a brave act bearing in mind the expectations placed upon her at that time and that would've been drilled into her from a young age. Get married. Marry rich, marry within social status, just get married otherwise "you'll end up like Aunt Imogen", a spinster. Her self reliance is a nod to "girl power" not needing men for financial or emotional support, instead valuing personal growth, independence and strength: a message meant for modern audiences. In the opening scenes, Aunt Imogen awaits her prince to come. At the end of the movie, Alice tells her to stop deluding herself about a prince that does not exist and calls her to awaken her own power before Alice embarks on her own career, a bold choice. Absolem in his new form, a butterfly (symbol of freedom) is there with Alice as she embarks on her journey. He shares her metaphorical rebirth and they are free from the not-so-mythical terrors the pressure of society and marriage meant for women in these times. 2

	Grade Boundary: High Merit
2.	<p>For Merit, the student needs to demonstrate in-depth understanding of the meaning of a media text through different readings.</p> <p>This involves analysing the effect of different readings of a media text.</p> <p>This student has analysed two readings for the film <i>Alice in Wonderland</i>, directed by Tim Burton. This extract is a reading of the film from an auteur perspective.</p> <p>The student has focused on the key features of Tim Burton as a director, in particular looking at his use of the theme of the outsider (1) and how this helps us understand Alice as a character (2).</p> <p>The student analyses thoroughly how the presentation of two worlds helps develop Alice's sense of identity (3), and how features of Burton's visual style contribute to the audience's understanding (4). Detail from the film is included as supporting evidence (5).</p> <p>To reach Excellence, the student could evaluate the significance of the effect of the reading by further exploring the links with society, for example building on the discussion of what societal norms at that time may have been, and why this might be relevant to an audience now (6).</p>

Auteur reading

Tim Burton is an acclaimed film director who is well-known for a quirky, gothic style that is shown in practically all of the films he has taken part in. His artistic style is clearly shown through music, costume, colour and production design which gives off the dark, bizarre vibe. No other director has the same artistic vision and eye as Tim Burton, and if they did, it would be considered as copying and un-original, as Burton's vision is too distinct to be re-used by another director.

1 A common theme found in Tim Burton films is the idea of the outsider character. The outsider is typically the main character in the film and works on finding their identity and/or escaping out of a world of misunderstanding and isolation. It is known Burton was considered an outcast during his youth, so it is natural that he has made multiple films telling stories surrounding this idea. Through these films it is clear to see that Burton admires the outsider character, values and sympathises with them as he identifies and sees himself in these characters, a person who doesn't fit in with the so called norms of society. They are generally misunderstood and are lonely and have been rejected from society, or by a particular person. 1

Burton builds on the idea of identity and the outsider by playing on the idea of two worlds, generally one where the outsider character lives in, and then a fantasy-like world in which the outsider can escape to, and/or find themselves. This idea is suggested to be born from Tim Burton's distaste for the 'normal world', as he sees it as difficult and unpleasant. In Alice in Wonderland, Alice is faced with the problem of being unsure with her own identity, in both her home in England and in Underland. It appears as though she is trapped in a world of proper etiquette and her escape from this world is in her dreams and later Underland. In England, at the start of the movie, Alice attends what she thinks is a garden party, but then gets told that it is a surprise engagement party between Lord Hamish Ascot and herself. Hamish and Alice are polar opposites of each other and it is clear that neither of them love each other. Hamish is a character that is considered somewhat boring and normal, whilst Alice is more of a dreamer and rebellious character, which Hamish appears to be irritated by as it doesn't conform to society's idea of normal, where he wants Alice to be a respectable wife. Although Alice detests the idea of marrying Hamish, she is forced to consider it by those around her, as one, Hamish is in fact a Lord, meaning she will be considered high up in social rankings, two, being a female and not married in this Victorian era is seen as a life you would not want to live and three, no one else better would want to marry her in a few years as her "pretty face won't last", which appears to be the only value considered by men in marriage in this setting. Because of this, Alice is torn between the identity of falling into the stereotypical, traditional, Victorian wife or following her dreams and rebelling against the unpleasant society. Ultimately she chooses to chase a rabbit wearing a waist-coat down a rabbit hole to Underland, a place where she has been before when she was a child. 2

Visually Tim Burton is able to create a gothic, fairytale world through the creative, visual palette that has become his trademark. By doing this, he is able to connect the emotions of the characters through such things as costumes, symbolism and metaphors, so that the audience is able to understand characters in more depth. Burton uses costume and plays with scale in Alice in Wonderland on the character Alice to symbolise her confusion over her

ever changing identity. This is shown through her repetitively changing sizes, from being too small and then being too big and also through her multiple costume changes. In terms of her changing size, we are able to see her struggles, stress and discomfort of not knowing her who she is and where she 'fits', both metaphorically and physically. This can be seen just before she enters the door to Underland where she grows too big for the room and you can physically see her struggling to fit into the environment, symbolising her being the outsider in society, and not being able to fit in with the ideals of others surrounding her. However we see her at her 'normal' size when she is at the White Queen's castle, where you could say, she has found her identity, which is symbolised through her comfort in the environment at her normal size. Tim Burton is also able to show Alice's rebellion against the social ideals through her costume, and her dialogue about what she wears when she has a conversation with her mother: "Where is your corset? And no stockings!" – Alice's mother. "I'm against them" declares Alice. "But you are not properly dressed". "Who's to say what is proper? What if we agreed that proper meant wearing a codfish on your head. Would you wear it?" "Alice", "To me a corset is like a codfish". We can immediately tell through this conversation that Alice questions the expectations placed on women in this world, and therefore does not fit in with the society she lives with.

As we can see above, Burton's representation of the outsider is often portrayed by how others feel and behave towards the character – in other words Alice's feelings of being an outsider are built on by how others perceive her. Along with Alice being confused about her identity in England, others in Underland also appear to be confused to who she is and debate whether she is the "real Alice" or not, a statement that Alice doesn't understand until later on. She soon begins to realise her potential of being a strong female leader in Underland, compared to her small respectable wife role she can take in England, and says "I've been accused of being Alice and of not being Alice, but this is my dream. I'll decide where it goes from here". Ultimately you could say this is where Alice starts to shape her identity and realises who she wants to be, a strong willed, adventurous woman, who when she goes back to the "real world" takes what she's learnt in Underland and declines Hamish's proposal and decides to continue her late father's business in China. Burton presents an Alice who doesn't stop being an outsider but rather has accepted that she is one and embraces it, a step that an audience of today would expect and support.

	Grade Boundary: Low Merit
3.	<p>For Merit, the student needs to demonstrate in-depth understanding of the meaning of a media text through different readings.</p> <p>This involves analysing the effect of different readings of a media text.</p> <p>This student has analysed two readings for the film <i>Little Miss Sunshine</i>, directed by Jonathan Dayton. This extract reads the film from a cultural perspective.</p> <p>The student has done this by focusing on the American Dream and how this film debunks the myths surrounding it (1). A description of what constitutes the American Dream is followed by some analysis of how each main character in the film subverts the stereotypes associated with it (2). The student offers a contrast between the family and those involved in the beauty pageant (3).</p> <p>The interpretation is supported with evidence from the film (4).</p> <p>For a more secure Merit, the student could develop the analysis further (5) and more closely link the examples selected to the idea of the American Dream (6).</p>

Little Miss Sunshine Cultural Reading

Little Miss Sunshine shows its audience a realistic look at life in an attempt to point out the massive flaws in the commonly-idealised "American dream."

① The film Little Miss Sunshine presents the audience with a deep and critical look at the "American dream" and how it can change or damage people's lives. By grounding itself in everyday characters with realistic problems, this film shows an alternative to a lifestyle that so many people think will make them happy and yet very often turns out to be a disappointment.

The phrase "American dream" is characterised by certain conventions, such as material success, an orderly house, and a "normal" family life. Little Miss Sunshine confronts all of these stereotypes that supposedly make the 'American Dream' head-on and pulverises them, presenting to the audience instead a workaholic father, a mother who isn't the world's best cook, a drug-addicted grandfather and a little girl who, despite the fact that she isn't thin and blonde, still manages to make the best of her life. The film also draws attention to subjects that 'polite' society commonly labels as taboo or tries to avoid, such as homosexuality, suicide (shown collectively in Olive's uncle V Frank), divorce, death, bankruptcy, personal isolation and society's obsession with physical appearance. ②

① In the idea of the "American dream", people are always the most prominent feature; a person drives their own personal desire, feeding the want to be successful, popular and good-looking. Little Miss Sunshine takes each individual character stereotype and carefully and methodically picks it to pieces, using instead a much more grounded base for the people in the story. In other words, a member of the audience could analyse practically any of the main characters and find within their role a blatant subversion of the American dream "norm". The overall premise of the story itself, is based around the fulfilment of an American dream – that Olive would win a beauty pageant. ②

Olive's father Richard is perhaps one of the most fleshed-out examples of this. He is presented during the opening of the film as self-motivated and set in his goals, being somewhat set up as a likeable character, someone the audience can quite easily identify with, but very quickly the audience is forced to change their opinion of Richard when they see the way in which he tries to force his opinions down the throats of everyone else in the dinner table scene near the film's beginning. Also, in trying to shield Olive from being exposed two subjects he considers unsuitable (suicide and homosexuality, the latter of which he describes as being "sick in the head" during the family dinner scene), the audience sees Richard trying to build up the ideal life or what he thinks is the 'American Dream' around himself. He chooses to ignore aspects of the life around him that he sees as unacceptable or out of sync with his ideal lifestyle, trying instead to fulfil his role as the authoritative head of the family and provider. ② Ultimately however he fails in this goal, as his book deal falls through and subsequently leaves him bankrupt. He then takes on a more grateful outlook on life, in part influenced by the unexpected death of his father halfway through the film.

In the "ideal" family, one would expect Sheryl Hoover as the mother to be a model of femininity and homely values. However when she is introduced the audience does not even

see her immediately; instead there is a close-up of her hand on the steering wheel of a car, with a cigarette between two of her fingers. Her voice is heard and the audience makes the connection that she is talking on her mobile phone while driving, something that a model citizen should not do. She is clearly arguing with her husband Richard, and she looks worn-out and tired instead of sharp and glamorous. Sheryl Hoover's first impression on the audience is therefore of someone who considers practicality over style. The hurried way that Sheryl prepares dinner for her family reflect her personality as a mother who leaves things such as housework and cooking (stereotypically considered to be at the top of a housewife's priority list) to the last minute. This idea is reinforced when the grandfather complains that they "always have chicken," and that Sheryl always buys it rather than cooking her own.

Richard's father, far from being a jolly, Santa-Claus type figure, is a sexually frustrated heroin addict who has recently been evicted from his retirement home for taking drugs. However, he does come across as affectionate in his own way and turns out to be likeable, being perhaps the only character in the whole story who fully supports Olive in her dream to win the Little Miss Sunshine pageant. In some ways he is the character who most goes against the grain of the American dream, because despite his "unacceptable" habits of swearing, talking openly and explicitly about sex, and taking drugs, he still manages to be reasonably content with how things are working out in his life, proving to all of those people out there who follow the American dream that you don't necessarily need it to be happy. In fact he could be perceived by the audience as being the most relatable character because of his subversion and refusal to accept the American Dream stereotype the rest of the family believe in.

This film also shows the lifestyle of people on the other end of the scale; those who do appear to find their own "American dream" and hold onto it. The attendants of the beauty pageant in the second half of the film all fit into this category. The realistic approach to life that most people follow is carefully avoided by these people, as shown in the scene where the Hoovers enter the backstage dressing rooms and find prepubescent girls being made up essentially like show ponies, with spray tan, heavy makeup, and sexually evocative costumes. All of these ideas come across as very fake and unsatisfying; the happiness they offer is always short-lived and superficial. People like this are shown to be the polar opposites of the Hoover family: they are particular, proper and obsessed with the concept of physical image. In this way the filmmakers show the audience the downfalls of this lifestyle, in which appearance becomes everything and everyday, real problems are swept under the carpet rather than confronted. Life suddenly becomes very superficial.

Conclusively, the film Little Miss Sunshine methodically points out all of the flaws in the "American dream" that so many people today find themselves striving to achieve. The fact that the film also shows a flip side to this lifestyle, the more grounded and bittersweet relationships embodied in the Hoover family, is what makes the film so appealing and endearing; it convincingly shows its audience that you do not always have to be materially successful or socially compliant to be happy in life.

	Grade Boundary: High Achieved
4.	<p>For Achieved, the student needs to demonstrate understanding of the meaning of a media text through different readings.</p> <p>This involves explaining the meaning of a media text through different readings.</p> <p>This student has identified and explained two readings of the film <i>Little Miss Sunshine</i>, directed by Jonathan Dayton. In this reading, the student has discussed the meaning of the film through the lens of the road movie genre (1).</p> <p>It does this by explaining thoroughly how through the metaphor of the journey the meaning of the film is made clear (2). This includes exploring the how the individual journeys of the main characters are then fulfilled through the physical journey to take Olive to the beauty pageant (3).</p> <p>The student also begins to explain how the use of the car acts as a symbol of the family and the issues that they face (4).</p> <p>The interpretations are supported with specific evidence from the film (5).</p> <p>To reach Merit, the student could move beyond explanation and develop the genre discussion into analysis. This could include exploring further how it supports and subverts the genre conventions associated with road movies (6). The metaphor of the car as a symbol of the family could be developed further (7).</p>

Genre Reading

The film *Little Miss Sunshine* is a perfect example of a road movie, displaying all of the conventions that come together to complete a film of this genre. ①

In many ways the road movie can be interpreted as a metaphor. While the characters in a road movie are clearly on a journey in the physical sense, they also undertake a journey of a very different kind: a personal one. Each person will start out as being isolated or otherwise somehow "removed" from everyone else in some way, however upon the closing of the film they are much closer with each other. The characters are eventually forced to alter their outlook on life, thereby improving or otherwise altering themselves. This idea can certainly be recognised in *Little Miss Sunshine*, where the Hoover family start out as having very individual ideas of what they want out of life before they are forced to face disappointment and instead turn to happiness that can be found in the here and now (namely, watching Oliver perform at the beauty pageant). ②

The story is set up so that all of the different members of the Hoover family have their own personal goals, ones that they individually strive towards: Dwayne wants to be a pilot in the US Army, and has undertaken a vow of silence until he sees this through; Richard is determined to make his plan-to-succeed' method a reality, and in doing so tries to put himself ahead of the rest of the family (including Olive's dream of making it to the *Little Miss Sunshine* pageant); Olive's mother tries to keep her family together with varying degrees of success. However, over the course of the trip, each of the goals of the individual members of the family are stripped away one at a time--Richard's book deal is turned down, leaving him effectively bankrupt; Dwayne finds out that he is colourblind, and so cannot fly an aeroplane--and the Hoover family are left with only one dream left to cling on to: Olive's. It is this last, almost desperate attempt to see that something right comes out of their long journey that truly brings the Hoover family together. This is seen clearly in perhaps the most memorable scene of the film, in which the family overturn pageant etiquette and join Olive onstage to dance with her. As they dance, the audience gets a sense that the Hoover family are being summed up: they may have conflicts and they definitely have faults, but the fact that they are able to unite when faced with outside criticism presents them as being superior to all of the shallow pageant-goers around them. The filmmakers are clearly promoting familial loyalty over material success or physical appearance which reflects what the physical journey of the road movies has been about. ③ ⑤ ⑥

A central icon in any road movie is the vehicle, and *Little Miss Sunshine* is no exception to this convention. In many ways, the antique yellow van that the Hoovers use to drive to California can be seen as a reflection of the family themselves. For one thing, a yellow minibus is not a vehicle that would typically appeal to upper-class Americans; it is not a particularly "trendy" vehicle to have. Likewise the Hoovers, with all their faults and quirks, do not come across as an ideal family. On the way to Redondo Beach the family experiences several difficulties with the van: it develops a faulty clutch, a broken door and a stuck horn throughout the journey. The way in which the Hoovers deal with these problems can be interpreted as a mirror image of how they overcome the various conflicts that take place in ④

their lives. The van is mended upon the closing of the film, reinforcing the idea that the relationships between the various members of the Hoover family have also been repaired. 7

In conclusion, the film Little Miss Sunshine employs a ready-used genre and manages to turn out a completely refreshing storyline. The transformation undergone by the Hoovers is both touching and thought-provoking, offering many lessons for everyday people (such as Dwayne's message of "Do what you love and ____ the rest" while standing on a California wharf with Frank). The ideas behind the story are grounded in reality, as is the journey undertaken by the Hoover family; the fact that all of the scenarios are plausible, however unlikely, helps to drive the film's charm. Road movies are characterised by characters going on a journey in which the perspective of their everyday lives is changed because of the events they go through. Unlike many road movies though, like *Thelma and Louise* or *Easy Rider*, the family reach the end of their journey and have found redemption and happiness of a sort with each other. As a family they have been changed and while they will never be the same as what they were, they may go back home in a more positive, albeit realistic, state than before. 6

	Grade Boundary: Low Achieved
5.	<p>For Achieved, the student needs to demonstrate understanding of the meaning of a media text through different readings.</p> <p>This involves explaining the meaning of a media text through different readings.</p> <p>This student has identified and begun to explain two readings of the film <i>Alice in Wonderland</i>, directed by Tim Burton. This reading interprets the film from a gendered perspective, offering the hypothesis that the stereotypes normally found in Hollywood films are reversed in this film (1).</p> <p>The student has done this by discussing the character of Alice and how taking on the hero role within the film drives the narrative (2). A discussion of the Red Queen and how she is a dominant character also supports this hypothesis (3). A contrast with the male characters in the film is offered (4).</p> <p>The interpretations have been supported with some specific evidence from the film (5). The student begins to link this with other films being produced in Hollywood (6).</p> <p>For a more secure Achieved, the student could explain the meaning of the film in more depth by building on how Alice demonstrates the characteristics of a hero (7) and the impact on the audience of this change in stereotypes (6).</p>

Gender Reading

Gender is important in films as it defines the storyline and the attributes of the main characters. There are plenty of films where women are presented in stereotypical roles, which we would define as stereotypes that perpetuate gender roles within a male-dominated system. But in *Alice in Wonderland*, directed by Tim Burton, he reinvents the stereotype through the female protagonist of Alice. 1

In Hollywood, males are typically shown as being strong, handsome and heroic, with the women being the damsel in distress- prize for the hero, typically shown in many fairy tales. Due to his feminist views, Tim Burton does not do this, instead he tries to avoid Hollywood's unoriginality when it comes to how heroes are shown as being traditionally male. He does this frequently in his films- *Edward*, *Beetlejuice* etc. where he flaunts the male/outcast but in doing so represents males at the same time as being weak and inferior to women.

Alice is the female protagonist in *Alice in Wonderland*, she is absent minded, v adventurous and lets her imagination run away with her. Tim Burton gives her the stereotypical role of the male hero/knight in shining armour. For example; Alice slays the Jabberwocky in order to save her friends, whereas in Hollywood and other fairy tales, the hero slays the monster or dragon to gain personal victory, glory and status, plus in most cases to win over or save the female. When Alice first goes to wonderland she is not ready to be the 'saviour'. This is shown through characters such as the door mouse telling her "we've got the wrong Alice", but throughout her journey and adventures in wonderland she realises what she has to do and so she finds herself and regains her bravery to become the hero she needed to be, beheading the jabberwocky in Underland and in the real world turning down Hamish. 2 7

Males are shown in this film as being weak and less dominant than Alice. Hamish is a snobby 'insider' who does everything his mother says, he has no individuality, personality or power. You can see this when Hamish is proposing to Alice, you can tell through the way Hamish acts that he doesn't like or appreciate Alice's wild imagination and creativity. We can tell that he is only proposing to her as this is what his mum blatantly wants and has arranged, so Hamish is trying to keep his mum happy by doing this. The Hatter is truly mad, which is shown through his split personalities and the dark knight is weak and under the control of the red queen- who is another female character that has more dominance and power than the male characters. 4 4

Red queen is another dominant female character. Firstly she is a queen, when in usual fairy tale stories, it is a king who rules the land but in *Alice in Wonderland*, there is only a queen. She is powerful, dominant and rules the kingdom. Even though she may not rule justly, she still has power and portrays immense dominance over all the males in this film, for example the dark knight who grovels at her every command, and her followers who live in fear of her turning against them if they do something wrong. Burton uses this contrast to enforce that the role of a female can also be a role including dominance and power, particularly over males. She is the strongest character in the beginning of the film, as is shown as undefeated. This further signifies Burton's purpose for drawing away from typical stereotypes in order to create an original plot that is intriguing for his audience as it is unexpected. 3

Burton glorifies the female character in order to be original and to get a refreshing change to an unoriginal society that praises male dominance in films. Other films in media have been highly influenced by the concept that Burton has used, for example: modern films such as the Hunger Games and Divergent, where the main characters are female, living in a society oppressed by a dominant male figure. These films, as well as Alice in Wonderland serve greater purpose for society as Tim Burton tells girls through his films that creativity and individuality is a gift that should be recognised and flaunted. Girls are influenced by these films and shown that they can be strong and males don't always have to be the heroes.

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	Grade Boundary: High Not Achieved
6.	<p>For Achieved, the student needs to demonstrate understanding of the meaning of a media text through different readings.</p> <p>This involves explaining the meaning of a media text through different readings.</p> <p>This student has identified two readings of the film, <i>Alice in Wonderland</i>, directed by Tim Burton. This reading focuses on Burton as a director and identifies key features of his filmmaking such as characters as outsiders, his unique retelling of classic stories, visual elements, and the use of the same cast and crew (1).</p> <p>This student has described how Alice is shown as an outsider (2) and described the ways in which Burton has changed the film from the original story (3). There is a description of how the character of Absolem may link to issues in contemporary society (4). Some specific details from the film including film language and a synopsis of the film are mentioned (5).</p> <p>To reach Achieved, the student could focus on explaining the contribution Burton has on the meaning of the film, rather than a discussion of him as a filmmaker (7). This could include explaining the influence Alice's role as an outsider (2), and the key themes of Burton's films drive Alice's journey within the film (8).</p>

TIM BURTON DIRECTOR READING –

The novel "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll is a fairy tale of a surreal world surrounded by mythical creatures. A 19 year old girl named Alice who falls down a rabbit hole and falls into a wonderland type world. The movie was created as 'Alice in Wonderland' in 2010 by the director Tim Burton. **Burton has his own unique style and film content labeling him a famous auteur among our generation today. Being an auteur Burton changed the original Alice to his style of Alice by adding small but significant parts into the movie.** There are secret aspects of 'Alice in Wonderland' for example the use of drugs, gender roles (further discussed in gender reading) and a social hierarchy. **Burton creates these deeper messages through his style of visual elements such as graphics, camera techniques, lighting, and textures in the frames. These visual elements help Burton to express the idea that there is some hope for the future society and for corrupted adults' world hidden under the innocence of a fairy tale.** This reading is about Burton as an Auteur and the evidence shown in his movies that makes him one. 8

Alice is shown as the outsider which is typical Burton Auteur style. The outsider character developed from his own childhood. As a child Burton would spend hours watching old Hammer horror films and drawing, completely enveloped in his own world. This has impacted him on his directing career by the creation of the outsider character throughout his movies. Movies such as 'Batman', 'Edward Scissorhands', 'Ed Wood', 'Jack Skellington' and 'Planet of the Apes'. Burton claims that he "wouldn't change anything (about his childhood) because the more pain you endure when you're young, the richer your adult life will be" Burton changed parts of the original 'Alice in Wonderland' story. For example showing Alice as a nineteen-year-old girl. **Burton also changes the story by making it Alice's second trip to Wonderland which is changed to Underland for her grown up present self. Burton's directors choice of Alice not remembering visiting Wonderland creates a connection of emotional attachment of being in real Underland, reflecting the real world in his style.** Referring to the original story he says "It was always a girl wandering around from one crazy character to another, and I never really felt any real emotional connection." His dream with the movie is to give the story "some framework of emotional grounding" and "to try and make Alice feel more like a story as opposed to a series of events." 2

Alice is now a 19-year-old, in the movie and she must decide whether she wants to accept the marriage proposal of Hamish, the son of a Lord. She struggles with the fact that she doesn't want to just be a wife and feels at odds with the fact that people think she should marry, even if that isn't what she wants. As she wanders away from the engagement party to reflect on the proposal, her curiosity leads her down the rabbit hole into Wonderland which was referred as Underland in the film, Alice's v emergence as a heroine is not only about helping others but also about identity, autonomy, competence, and self-development, Burton's version is superior in creativity and depth, as well as more resonant with the themes of positive psychology. Burton said that "The goal is to try to make it an engaging movie where you get some of the psychology and kind of bring a freshness but also keep the classic nature of Alice." Tim Burton added a chain of a connection between teenagers turning to adults and entering the real grown-up world. 2

As well as changing parts of the story Burton brings to the movie his unique visual elements. Such as camera movements, angles, lighting styles, colors, shot framings and visual transitions throughout the movie. These techniques show hidden ideas such as the use of drugs, gender roles, and social hierarchy. The genre of Alice and Wonderland is adventure fantasy. This meant that a lot of the scenes in the movie would never happen in the real world, such as no one would fall down a hole into Wonderland. But drugs however are something that does happen in the real world and I believe this is a hidden message Burton tries to get across to us in 'Alice in Wonderland.' Children watching this movie would not pick up on the use of drugs but as an older member of the audience I find it easy to identify that the movie referred to the use of drugs.

I did not realise the use of drugs until I looked closer at Burton and how he expressed drugs skillfully through visual elements. More than one scene showed common drugs that are big problems in today's society. The way Burton creates each scene with the different uses of colors, camera movements, and angles helps reinforce the drug like effect. I believe some characters in the movie are using drugs by changes in their behaviors as the movie progresses. For example, when Alice arrives in Wonderland she runs into a Caterpillar named Absolem. Absolem's house ' is covered in smoke which is smoke from cigarettes.

Then a few moments later the audience can notice that the Caterpillar is definitely smoking a cigarette. When Alice meets the Caterpillar later he talks to Alice while holding a pipe. Burton purposely places Alice and the Caterpillar directly facing each other while talking, so we see the effect the smoke has on Alice. Burton is creating a message reflecting our own society when adults smoke in front of kids or any person they are talking to. He is implying that not enough adults care about how they are also damaging those they talk to while they are smoking, especially around children. The encounters Alice has with Absolem is Burton getting across the message of the corrupted society we live in today.

Another important factor of Burton as an Auteur is he likes to use the same people while directing movies. Burton does this because he can direct a movie knowing he has a team who shares the same creative vision and will make the best end product. 'Alice in Wonderland' includes Burton's favorite actor, Johnny Depp. Burton and Depp have a professional strong relationship and friendship. Many directors change actors often and on average won't direct the same actor in main parts twice. But Burton and Depp's relationship is strong and they enjoy working together. Burton always likes to make Johnny Depp look as freaky as possible ('Edward Scissorhands', 'Sleepy Hollow', 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory', and 'Sweeney Todd'). Another important man that Burton uses frequently across his movies is Danny Elfman.

Elfman is an American composer, record producer, and actor. Burton and Elfman first worked together on "Pee Wee Herman's Big Adventure." Burton has said of his relationship with Elfman: "We don't even have to talk about the music. We don't even have to intellectualise – which is good for both of us, we're both similar that way. We're very lucky to connect" And finally Burton also has a good relationship with his production designers. Colleen Atwood his favourite costume designer and Bo Welch his production designer. Atwood (costume designer) designed the costumes sharing the same vision as Burton she did not want to repeat the cliché Alice. She changed the actors into unrecognisable characters such as turning Anne Hathaway into a frosty White Queen; Johnny Depp into a clown-faced Mad Hatter, and Helena Bonham Carter into a cartoonish Red Queen.