

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.

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."

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.

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.