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91248



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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Level 2 Media Studies 2025

91248 Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between a media product and its audience

Credits: Three

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between a media product and its audience.	Demonstrate in-depth understanding of the relationship between a media product and its audience.	Demonstrate critical understanding of the relationship between a media product and its audience.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

You should write an essay on ONE of the five statements in this booklet.

If you need more room for any answer, use the extra space provided at the back of this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in the margins (//////). This area will be cut off when the booklet is marked.

YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.

Excellence

TOTAL 07



Page 1

INSTRUCTIONS

Choose ONE **media product** and its **audience**.

Write an essay discussing the extent to which you agree or disagree with ONE of the statements below, in relation to your chosen media product and its audience.

STATEMENTS (Choose ONE)

1. Design elements must allow the audience to see themselves reflected in the media product.
2. A successful media product must be able to target more than one audience.
3. The internet allows media producers to engage with their audience(s) in different ways.
4. Audiences become engaged when a media product addresses important social issues.
5. Media producers must appeal to both long-time fans and new audience members.

Media product:

Audience:

Select your statement:

PLANNING

"Any media attention is an opportunity to give attention to my people"

"Maori privilege stealing from the taxpayers and hard working long suffering white man"

P1: Aroha Bridge addresses important social issues by use of setting

- Ira's dairy
- The social issue that Aroha Bridge addresses is Maori's disconnection to whenua living in Urban settings.
- Ira's dairy being a safe space for the main characters can connect with the audience and engage them.
- Maori urbanisation

P2: Aroha Bridge addresses important social issues by use of language

- Aroha Bridge uses character Uncle Noogy and his Maori speech to address the important issue of normalizing the Maori language.
- Also older generations can also relate.

P3: Aroha Bridge addresses important social issues by use of satire

- Aroha Bridge especially uses satire to address important social issues
- By using jokes to poke fun at real life issues such as Maori scholarships
- Agenda setting theory - using jokes to make the audience think about issues they may not have been aware of.

ESSAY

Type your essay in the space below. You should aim to write a concise essay of no more than 750–800 words. The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your essay. (The counter will change colour when you reach the recommended word count.)

Make sure you **respond only to your chosen statement** *throughout* your essay, and support your discussion with **evidence** from media text(s) and / or other sources, which may include your own production experience.

B *I* U ☰ ∨ ☷ ∨ ↶ ↷ ? ABC ∨

Aroha Bridge is an animated web series released in 2016 by Jessica Hansell (Aka Coco solid). It follows the lives of twins Kowhai and Monty hook as they navigate living in the urban town of Aroha Bridge. A description of the show has been that it is a cartoon snapshot of the multicultural melting pot that is Aotearoa, and this is reflected throughout the entirety of the show. The series started out as just a passion project for Jessica Hansell with only 3-4 minute episodes, however the show began to grow and even won an award for the best animated web series in the Los Angeles film awards. The show received around \$10,000 increase in funding from NZ on air and the series was released on Māori television during Māori language week. The increase in funding was obvious by the increase in episode length, increase in quality and new characters being introduced. However despite the show being comedic, Aroha Bridge isn't afraid to tackle real life social issues in Aotearoa which their audience can relate to. By using design elements such as satire, language and setting, Aroha Bridge allows the audience of Contemporary Urban Māori Rangatahi to see themselves in the media product.

Aroha Bridge allows its audience to see themselves in the media product by using the design element setting. Throughout the show there's multiple settings, however one that is the most prominent is their cousin Ira's dairy. The main characters are in that dairy in majority of the episodes. And it is used as a safe space for our main characters. Jessica Hansell was once an Urban Māori Rangatahi herself. What makes the show so great is her understanding of the characters and the audience because she was once in their position. Because of this she shows the struggles of being Māori and living in an urban environment which is primarily white. This is an issue that is rarely addressed in the media. Rural areas tend to embrace Māori culture, but urban areas lack this. From my personal experience I have noticed that rural places are more involved with Māori values. Urban Māori feel this deep rooted longing inside of them to speak their reo, be around their people and connect with their whenua. By living in a place that doesn't understand what it is to be Māori, they can feel a disconnection with their culture. The dairy is represented as a place where the main characters can come together and embrace their Māori culture. Especially because the main characters live in a hostile environment. On many occasions Monty, Kowhai and Ira experience microaggressions of racism, or just down right racism. The setting of Aroha Bridge is to show how primarily white urban areas are which the primary audience can relate to. Māori only make up about 20% of the NZ population, so having a place where the characters are able to come together is relatable for Māori audiences. The urbanization of Māori is something many can relate with. During WW2 the economy in Aotearoa struggled severely. Because of this Māori had to leave their ancestral land and move to cities to find work. However because of racism Māori are turned away from jobs, showing the everyday struggle of Māori. Even though a large amount of Māori moved to these urban areas, they are still heavily outnumbered by Pakeha and other ethnicities. Jessica Hansell reflects her audience by how she addresses social issues of being urban Māori. It is especially powerful that the place that is their chosen safe space is a dairy, something that everyone in New Zealand knows of. By this, she is normalizing the presence of Māori in everyday life. Although people tried to erase Māori, they aren't going anywhere and Jessica Hansell makes this extremely clear when she chose setting as a design element to represent Urban Māori Rangatahi.

In addition Aroha Bridge reflects its audience using design elements such as language. A goal of Aroha Bridge is the normalization of speaking Te Reo. Jessica Hansell crafted it so every character speaks Te Reo at least once. What makes the show even more important was that it was released during Māori language week, having an even more powerful effect. A character in particular that strives for the normalization of Te Reo is Uncle Noogy. Uncle Noogy is the Uncle of Kowhai and Monty and is a radical political activist. Uncle Noogy speaks only Te Reo, and has made it clear in his refusal to speak English. Him speaking only in Te Reo normalizes it in the show, having an effect of normalizing it in real life. You end up forgetting that he is speaking Te Reo because it just feels so natural, this affect is promoting speaking Te Reo and also educating audiences who don't know how to speak it. In an episode where Uncle Noogy speaks to Kowhai, she is unable to understand him as she says "I wish I listened more in Te Reo class." Showing how she wants to speak Te Reo, she just doesn't know how. This is for sure a relatable subject to Māori all over the country, reflecting the audience's emotions. This is because of an attempted erasure of the language and culture. What makes Uncle Noogy such a powerful character is also the fact that he is of an older generation of Māori. In the past the British tried to fully get rid of Māori and their culture. A method to erase the culture was by beating children in schools who spoke Te Reo. This led parents and grandparents to feel fear of speaking it which led to a fear of teaching the language to their children. Uncle Noogy's brother (the twins dad) contrasts Uncle Noogy completely. He is ashamed to be Māori and doesn't identify himself with that part of him. Although his character is mostly exaggerated, older generations could relate to him with this shame of being Māori because of these ideas that were forced onto them in the past. This shows that Aroha Bridge not only caters to Māori Rangatahi but broader audiences like older Māori too engaging a larger group. Despite colonization taking place years in the past, it still lingers and affects Māori everyday. The show is trying to undo this by encouraging audiences to speak Te Reo in everyday life. This reinforcement of speaking Te Reo displays similarities to the reinforcement theory. When people watch this media already wanting to speak Te Reo it reinforces these opinions, which achieves Jessica Hansell's goals of normalizing speaking in Te Reo.

And finally, Aroha Bridge reflects the audience using the design element of satire. Constantly the show uses satire to poke fun at characters in Aotearoa. One of these is the mother of Kowhai and Monty. She is a Pakeha woman however she loves Māori culture to the point where it is borderline appropriation. She is an incredibly funny character and she represents people who are like her in New Zealand. However another way that satire is used is to poke fun at social issues. This occurs on many occasions. One issue especially is the episode 2 season 3 when Ira gets a Māori scholarship. There are lot's of jokes about this like a quote from the dad where he says "Māori privilege stealing from taxpayers and the hardworking long suffering white man." This is obviously ironic because it is Māori that are oppressed. And there is much debate in this episode in whether Māori scholarships should be a thing when there are no scholarships for specifically Pakeha. Audiences related with this, when Aroha Bridge made a Facebook post and the comments were full of people relating to this Māori scholarship debate with people saying things like "We were just discussing this today." This is also important because it links to the agenda setting theory. The agenda setting theory is that the media is able to tell people what issues to discuss and what to think about. People who weren't aware of the issues like debates on Māori scholarships and it can educate and raise awareness. But the reason why Aroha Bridge executes satire perfectly is because it's in a way that doesn't create harmful stereotypes. The audience of Contemporary Urban Māori Rangatahi is a group that is rarely represented in the media. And there are times when this representation is inaccurate causing harmful stereotypes. Yes, Aroha Bridge makes jokes, but there is obvious sarcasm and doesn't go too far when making jokes. The almost dry humor and realism is something that I personally enjoy about it. An episode that is a personal favorite for me is the episode 'Radical bro'. In this episode the twins want to make a music video to be on TV and go to Uncle Noogy for help, however he uses this opportunity to make a protest video against the government. This for me was one of the funniest moments in the show. However one quote said by Uncle Noogy really reflects Aroha Bridge and stuck with me. He says "Any media attention is an opportunity to give freedom to my people." Despite being in an ironic way, this quote perfectly reflects the values of Aroha Bridge. Aroha Bridge gives media attention to issues that the primary audience face daily. And by doing this Aroha Bridge positively impacts the lives of Māori even if it's small. Aroha Bridge uses humor to mirror the absurdity of people that are seen everyday in New Zealand. By doing this they are changing the future of Māori Rangatahi by challenging social norms and representing their audience in a way that is accurate.

Aroha Bridge giving media representation to a group that is so rarely acknowledged sends a beautiful message to future filmmakers. Showing that a piece of media can be entertaining whilst also tackling real life social issues. Jessica Hansells use of design elements is inspirational for other media platforms. Māori culture is slowly becoming more accepted and embraced in the media with more Māori characters in international shows, Māori actors and actresses, Māori directors and much more. Although colonization still is deep rooted in society, by raising awareness to these issues it inspires younger generations to make change as they grow older. The description of Aroha Bridge is a cartoon snapshot of the multicultural melting pot that is Aotearoa is an perfect description of the show. As if reflects Aotearoa perfectly making it an incredibly well made piece of media.

1748 WORDS / 800 RECOMMENDED

Excellence

Subject: Media Studies

Standard: 91248

Total score: 07

Q	Grade score	Marker commentary
1 (1)	E7	<p>The candidate showed a clear understanding of the primary audience and formulated a strong argument in response to their chosen statement 1: “Design elements must allow the audience to see themselves reflected in the media product”. The candidate used media theory with some confidence.</p> <p>The candidate demonstrated an awareness of the nuance and complexity of the relationship in their satire paragraph, securing an Excellence grade with additional theory/secondary sources, and a more in-depth discussion of the ramifications of the media product on the primary audience and perhaps other audiences as well.</p>