FROM BEOWULF TO BATMAN: CONNECTING ENGLISH AND MEDIA EDUCATION

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Media and English have been kissing cousins ever since F R Leavis launched what has since been dubbed the 'inoculation' approach to media: the development of critical close reading skills in school students to protect them from the ill effects of the mass media (Leavis and Thompson, 1924). For Leavis, as David Buckingham has emphasised (Buckingham, 2003), these ill effects were cultural; and Buckingham identifies two other kinds of protectionist impulses in media education since. One of these is the aim of radical pedagogy in the 1970's and 80's to protect children from the ideological effects of the media; the other is the moral protectionism Buckingham associates more with media education in America.

Most media teachers in the UK would not now subscribe to any form of protectionism, taking instead a positive view of young people's media cultures and practices, not least because of a general shift towards forms of creative production enabled by the increasing availability of digital authoring tools. However, they would see themselves as teaching forms of critical awareness, as we'll see later. In this chapter, I will focus on three aspects of media education which can inform English. It seems to me to be important not to produce neat models of media education – media studies, for instance – which emphasise difference from, even incompatibility with, English. Such models lead to media as a tacked-on appendage to the English curriculum at best. More productive, maybe, is to muddle the boundaries, find common ground, and use tensions to challenge each field of study to move beyond its limitations and prejudices.

The three areas I will focus on are *Cultural Distinction*, *Rhetoric/Poetics* and *Creative production*. They roughly correspond to the key concepts of the English curriculum: Cultural understanding, Critical understanding, and Creativity (QCA, 2007). However, my emphasis here will be on media literacy, which is also often understood in terms of this 3-Cs model (cf Burn and Durran, 2007). In this model, these concepts are rather differently understood, in ways which can usefully inform English teaching. Running through these I'll use a common theme, which I'll call the *oral-ludic sensibility*. This theme emphasises the textual forms of traditional oral cultures, in contrast to the (print)literary sensibilities traditionally favoured by English syllabi. It also relates these ancient oral forms to the modern computer game, a kind of media text which offers particular challenges to English teachers, as well as useful new ways to think about narrative, language and performance, I'll argue.

Cultural Distinction

The simple way to state the problem here is to say that the English curriculum has traditionally been concerned with 'high' culture (though of course those teachers who come under the category identified in the Cox Report as 'cultural analysts' have always contested the literary canon and the values associated with it); while media education is committed to

popular culture (though those who emphasise the importance of film sometimes observe their own kind of canon).

However, the curriculum, oddly, renders the question of culture pretty well invisible. A search through versions of the English for references to 'culture' or 'cultural' reveals only rather tokenistic references to multiculturalism, as if culture only becomes visible through contrast between ethnic groups. Contrasts between the cultures of different social classes, which even now might be expected to reveal something of the tension between popular and élite cultural forms and preferences, are not available as a mode of inquiry in the English curriculum. We are enjoined to consider, in short, the meaning of Sujata Bhatt's bilingual tongue, split between English and Gujarati; but not to consider why some teenagers might prefer Marvel comics to Shakespeare, Call of Duty: Modern Warfare to the war poets, or Hollyoaks to Keats. Such contrasts run the risk of reducing the argument to tabloid knockabout of the "Shakespeare or soaps?" variety, a hoary debate we have had many times before. Nevertheless, it seems important to acknowledge that these kinds of cultural distinction still exist, and to consider how to approach them in the classroom. In any case, my argument is that we don't need to choose. We can, and should, have both extremes of the cultural spectrum, and anything in between that suits our purpose.

The ideas of culture which I have found most helpful in scoping out the cultural space of English and Media education are those of Raymond Williams, who identified three levels: *lived culture*, the *documentary record*, and *the selective tradition* (Williams, 1961). Lived culture was the culture of everyday life, of ordinary people: in effect, a recognition of the vitality of the forms of popular culture which Leavis's approach had represented as debased. Williams recognised the importance of popular music, film, television drama, radio as important parts of this culture, resources to which ordinary people looked for meaning, identity and community, for pleasure, information and entertainment. It is this conception of 'common culture' which has been so influential in the field of Cultural Studies which Williams effectively founded; and which has profoundly informed the conception of popular culture in Media Studies and media education.

Williams' 'documentary record' was the residue of past cultures, inaccessible to us now except through the texts, artefacts, buildings left behind. While Williams' example of ancient Greece is at an extreme distance, we might consider how the media texts of the late twentieth century could be viewed by students as documentary records of the spectacular sub-cultures of the fifties and sixties, the political and social significance of punk, the post-colonial cultures of diaspora, or the paranoia of the Cold War. At a greater historical remove, we can consider how the popular cultural texts of modern mass media continue in certain ways the narrative threads, styles, imagery, voice of older popular cultural forms: from the oral tradition of Old English poetry and the mediaeval ballad, through vernacular theatre such as the mystery plays, to the broadsheet ballads, penny dreadful and melodramas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While the popular culture of the mass media is different in certain ways, particularly in the production regimes out of which it emerges, in many ways these older textual forms and traditions are the direct ancestors of the modern pop lyric, soap opera, horror film and some genres of computer game.

Finally, Williams' 'selective tradition' is the historical process which sifts out some cultural phenomena as more valuable, important, worthy of preservation. It is the process which creates the literary canon, Leavis's Great Tradition. But what we can take from Williams is not the exclusive endorsement of this level of culture above all others, the stance adopted by Leavis (and by successive versions of the National Curriculum for England). Rather, we can interrogate with students the processes by which such texts become valued in this way. Through what mechanisms of commentary, critique, transformation, myth-making, appreciation, did Shakespeare become 'greater' than Marlowe or Ben Jonson? Through what kinds of cultural alchemy did low-budget formula movies like *Casablanca* and *Psycho* become elevated into paramount exemplars of cinematic art? These questions of cultural distinction are not ones which the English curriculum prompts, even allows us to ask, as I've already observed. Interestingly, though, they're not questions prompted by media education either. Both domains duck the question of cultural value, though both are locked solidly into it. Williams' clear-sighted model offers us a way to think about it constructively.

But what might any of this mean in practice? Let's take, as an example, Beowulf. An unquestionably canonic text, the best-known of a small surviving group of Old English poetry, it is valorized by academic commentary, and translated/adapted by Seamus Heaney. However, it usefully problematises the idea of literature. It was orally composed and transmitted, is by no known author, and conforms to Walter Ong's 'psychodyamics' of oral narrative (Ong, 1982). In particular, the figure of Beowulf himself is what Ong called a 'heavy hero': characterised by a few simple, memorable qualities; agonistic (solving problems through physical action rather than psychological effort); in short, formulaic, as might be expected from a text composed and transmitted in the oral-formulaic process (Parry, 1930; Lord, 1960).

My point in drawing attention to these characteristics is to show that Beowulf is what we now think of as a popular cultural text. This strong, formulaic narrative in which a mighty hero battles fantasy monsters may be the earliest jewel in the crown of English literature, performed in the mead-halls of kings as well as for the common folk; but it resembles the adventures of Spiderman, Superman and Batman more than it resembles the tortured protagonists of Renaissance drama or the modern novel. This is not to dismiss the psychological insights, descriptive power, social critique and aesthetic innovation that the prose and poetry of the modern era produce. My argument is not to prefer the archaic and fantastic over the modern and naturalistic; again, we can have both. I do want, though, to recall vital cultural forms that may get less attention than they deserve at present, and to point out the lineage which links them with modern mediated popular cultural forms, a lineage we can exploit for the benefit of our students.

In this respect, we can consider what happens when a text like this is adapted into a contemporary media form. Beowulf was produced as an animated film in 2007 (Zemeckis, 2007). In comic-book style, scripted by the graphic novelist Neil Gaiman, it represented Beowulf as a muscled super-hero (voiced with Cockney bravado by Ray Winstone), and Grendel's mother as a naked temptress (Angelina Jolie).

The popular cultural references to comic-strip narrative and fantasy film will make a connection with the imaginative worlds and media cultures of many students in our classrooms. But this connection is not contrived, superficial or gratuitous. The point of the Beowulf movie for the English and Media teacher is that it is an example of the continuity of popular narrative, of how its tropes, structures, values and affective charge descend in a discernible line from the archaic worlds of Achilles and Beowulf to the superheroes of Marvel comics. It is the line of descent that can be traced through the transformative threads which take Arthur and the Matter of Britain from early mediaeval verse through Malory's great prose epic to Tennyson's mournful idylls, T H White's comic genius, and the profusion of film and animation of the late twentieth century. It is the narrative simplicity and demotic appeal of Robin Hood, utterly transformed yet completely unchanged in his journey from mediaeval ballad cycle to the competing film icons of Errol Flynn, Sean Connery, Kevin Costner and Russell Crowe.

There are plenty of lessons here for the English and Media classroom about the form and content of popular cultural narrative. What do superheroes mean, and why are they perennially fascinating to us? What serious themes do they enact, of justice, identity, freedom, revenge, gendered power, behind their fantastic costumes and elaborate weaponry, from Beowulf's sword to Batman's utility belt, Athena's shield to Xena's spinning steel ring? How are these meanings encoded in the poetic forms of successive ages, from alliterative verse and kenning to the chiaroscuro of late twentieth century comicbook art, or the rapid editing, CGI effects and condensed scripting of superhero film franchises? These are questions about meaning and representation; but also about semiotic mode and medium, which I will return to below.

For the purposes of this section, there are serious questions about the nature of culture, distinctions between differently-valued cultural forms, and the articulation between such texts and the cultural lives of our students. These are questions about which the pedagogies and curricula of English and Media remain routinely dumb, each content to outlaw the cultural territory of the other, and reify the values of its own terrain. This is not a matter of wilful choice by today's teachers, but of sedimented practice accreted over time, and regressive curriculum policy.

Let's move on, however, and look at the relatively new medium of computer games. The animated film of Beowulf has been further adapted into a computer game version (Beowulf, 2007). Game versions have been developed in the cross-media franchises of *The Lord of the Rings*, the Harry Potter stories, and the film based on Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights* sequence (where you can wield a Wii-mote and nunchuk as an armoured bear).

I'll come back to how computer games might help us think in different ways about narrative, language and literacy. Here, the focus is on their cultural status and function. An argument for English teachers to consider is that computer games are particularly well-suited to adapt the ancient narratives of oral tradition I have described above. This is partly because they share the popular cultural milieu of their sister media forms. But it is also because they are, literally, formulaic texts, made up of computer code. Suppose you want to describe the death

of a warrior in battle. The sensibility of modern literature requires variety and originality – cliché and formula are the enemies. We need different words to describe the warrior's fall each time; different words to describe the sounds of battle; novel ways to render the agony of death. For Homeric texts, the opposite was true. The oral poet, performer and audience needed the repetition of the *same* words for these familiar scenarios: words that could be easily remembered, easily re-ordered if the performer needed to alter the narrative, and easily recognised by an audience which needed familiar stories. The battlefield slaughter of *The Iliad* follows a well-rehearsed formula of weapon use, disembowelling and the ringing of armour about the fallen warrior. The computer game is not dissimilar. The character is a bundle of audiovisual resources, constant through the game. The actions of killing an enemy will involve triggering the same animation cycle, the same soundtrack, the same range of player options each time. As in the oral performance, significant variations on the theme are possible, such as the way in which these options can be exercised by the player. Although computer games are very different from traditional oral narratives in many ways, both employ formulaic narrative techniques, integral components of the popular aesthetic.

Finally, while popular culture is more than able to explore the serious preoccupations of everyday life, we always know that the fictions we love to spin about these concerns are a kind of game. When we enter Coleridge's 'willing suspension of disbelief', it is very similar to entering the contract about the status of a game: that however dramatic the combat, claws will be sheathed; however convincing the representation, its rules only apply within the magic circle of the game. Above all, it is played for pleasure, a fact never adequately represented in curricular programmes. It is important to consider how such pleasures may fall into different categories, perform different psycho-social roles: the thrill of risk for a teenager aspiring to adulthood; the pleasure of catharsis in tragic narratives; the pleasure of humorous, subversive, carnivalesque inversions of officialdom (or, for children, of the adult world).

An 'oral-ludic sensibility', then, might have much to offer the cultural work of the English and Media classroom, offering a recuperation of ancient stories, styles and values; a dramatic engagement for students with the protagonists of these narratives; a goal-oriented approach to the problems of everyday life; and a reminder of the importance of pleasure and play.

Rhetoric-Poetics

English and Media have quite different approaches to textuality: to communication, representation, lexico-grammar, and the aesthetic properties of texts. Approaches to literary texts have often focused on their aesthetic form, and have been characterised by what we might call a mode of appreciation. By contrast, media texts have been approached in what we might call a rhetorical mode, exploring the politics of representation, and interrogating the motivations of producers and audiences. These two modes have long histories which can be traced back to Aristotle: we can detect the legacy of his *Poetics* in the English approach to literature, and the legacy of his *Rhetoric* in the Media approach to the texts that fall within its domain. I simplify here for the sake of contrast; but, both in the habituated practices of the English and Media classrooms, and in the curricular formations that have constructed literature as an object of reverence and media texts as objects of suspicion, something like

this contrast seems stubbornly resistant to change. We need both rhetoric and poetics if we are to attend to the politics of representation in both media and literary texts, as well as to the aesthetic forms in which such representations are framed.

The rhetorical stance of media education is often encoded in the conceptual frameworks used to identify what critical understandings students might be expected to gain. There are several different versions of these, but they can generally be grouped under *institutions*, *texts* and *audiences*.

Institutions

The idea of media institutions is often seen as problematic by media teachers; it is rarely considered in the teaching of literature, though much of Dickens' work was structured by the contingencies of magazine publication, the careers of the women writers of the 19th century were at the mercy of male publishers, and the literary creations of modern novelists are commonly franchised by multinational media organisations. To move beyond the immediate pleasures of engagement with media texts in order to consider the shadowy regimes of production and distribution that lie behind them can seem dry, remote, and hard to pin down. There are also uncertainties: what institutions are we talking about exactly? What do we need to know about them? Why do we need to know it?

Current approaches to media education would support a nuanced attitude to the question of the media industries. Buckingham argues, for instance, that we have moved beyond a paradigm of 'radical pedagogy' in which the role of education is to unmask bourgeois and capitalist ideologies (1999). This is not to say that a degree of healthy scepticism is not warranted. There are good reasons why we might want young people to understand what commercial interests lie behind a MacDonalds advert or a leader in a Murdoch-owned newspaper. But institutions more typically have complex motives and socio-political functions. The practical question is: how might we explore these?

One example comes from a colleague who explored the cross-media Harry Potter franchise by looking at logos on the covers of the book, the DVD box and the game box. The media institutions involved included Bloomsbury, Sony, Knowwonder games, Electronic Arts, the Times Educational Supplement, Dolby sound, and several more. The complexity of function speaks for itself.

Another example, from a Year 8 game design course, is the simulation of a game development company by the class. They create a name for the company, consider the roles of the people who work on the design, develop the marketing of the game, write the press release for game journals, and so on (see Burn and Durran, 2007, chapter 7).

These activities give some sense to young people of the complexity of motives, functions and processes in the production of a media text, whether it be a novel or a computer game. It is routine work for media teachers; and easy enough to imagine as a dimension of literature teaching and learning. This is too brief an introduction: more can be found in books

elaborating the theory and practice of media education (Buckingham, 2003; MacDougall, 2006; Burn and Durran, 2007).

Texts

A rhetorical approach to texts will centre on the question of *representation*. This is a familiar word in media education and media studies; not so commonly found in English documents or conceptual frameworks. At one level, of course it means any semiotic act: any utterance, written word, image, dramatic gesture, is a representation of some aspect of reality. The question to explore with students is the nature of the relationship between the representation and that 'reality', which is of course multiple, shifting and situated. We may explore Shylock as a representation of Renaissance ideas about Jewishness; but we cannot escape the fact that the actor depicting the role, the director behind him, and the audience in the theatre (or cinema) have more recent memories of the Holocaust and the Arab-Israeli conflict. To return to the example of Beowulf, we might investigate how the character represents an ideal of the Anglo-Saxon warrior prince. But we can also attend to the meanings of the contemporary superhero which the animated film invokes; or to the gendered significance of the combat mechanics in the computer game.

How, though, might students understand the detailed structure of texts which produce these meanings?

One approach is to focus on the signifying systems of particular media. There is no room here to run exhaustively through all possible media; so I will use two examples from film and games. In the first, a year 8 boy is writing about what he has learnt from re-editing a sequence from Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*. The task was to take a sequence of footage from the film, imported into an editing software (Adobe Premiere), and to creatively rework it, adding different music, changing the order and duration, but producing their own take on the play using these 'found' resources:

> Also, at that point when the camera tracks up, it is the first time there has been any significant movement in it. The camera has stayed still to reflect the movement of the most important character in the sequence: like Mercutio, the camera has witnessed everything, but has done nothing about it . . . The final shot is of a new character to the sequence: Samson. The camera is placed at an oblique angle to him. He is not an important character, he is at the side of the action. His emotion, his expression of fear and anxiety, needs to be acknowledged—not felt—by the audience. He simply watches—he does not act.

This kind of critical work, a fluid mix of technical production, aesthetic choices and critical reflection, is close to the kind of work a student might undertake in analysing literature. Media teachers would recognise it as a thoughtful reading of a filmic text, aware of both the grammar of the moving image and the meanings conveyed by it. English teachers would recognise it as an equally thoughtful reading of a sequence from Romeo and Juliet. It can be seen as an aspect of critical literacy, and as situated within the conceptual framework of media education. But it also exemplifies the kind of thing I am thinking of as a 'poetics' of

media education: an attention to the aesthetic features of dramatic texts which Aristotle codified, adapted for the photographic media of the early twenty-first century.

Here's another example, again by a Y8 boy, an extract from his proposal for a computer game based on The Odyssey, written after learning basic principles of game design using the software *Missionmaker*:

> My game, being largely concerned with narrative, will not contain exceptionally large amounts of rules and economies. One example of a rule, however, is involved in Odysseus's encounter with Scylla (an huge, six-headed monster) and Charybdis (a deadly whirlpool). A rule used in this section states that if the ship enters a special trigger volume by getting too close to Scylla's cave, she flies out and carries away six of Odysseus's men (one for each head), reducing the crew economy by six. This economy is a fairly close equivalent of the standard health economy, in that the game is ended if it gets reduced to zero, although it varies in that the player is hampered when its value is reduced to close to zero, as the ship becomes more difficult to manoeuvre. In this respect, then, it is closer to a strength economy. …

This piece of work presents an understanding of narrative but one that is informed by the game concepts learned in the course as well as those he knows from his own experience. The two key concepts of game design which the use of the software has rehearsed—rules and economies—are important in this rendition of *The Odyssey*. The student conceives of game rules, such as the one which states that if the player gets too near to Scylla she will carry off some of the ship's crew. Similarly, he imagines an economy (a quantifiable resource) related to the 'strength' of the ship, depleted by the men carried off by the monster.

In these two examples, work in different media extends the understanding of textual structures that students might learn in English. To the metalinguistic lexicon of clause, sentence, paragraph, narrative, argument, and so on is added the grammar of film (shots, camera movement, camera angle) and game design (levels, non-player characters, rules and economies).

However, these new understandings are not simply additive: they can be mutually reinforcing. An English teacher in a media literacy project currently being conducted asked Year 8 students to think about systems of address across book, game and film, first in relation to Harry Potter, then through making their own stories, films and games. In doing so, their understanding of a complex set of ideas such as point-of-view, person, address, focalization (Genette, 1980) became richer, more robust, less susceptible to reductive formulations. Such semiotic principles run across different modes and media: they are, in short, *multimodal* (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2000).

Attention, then, to the representational strategies and the poetics of texts can be reinforced, enriched, made more complex if it encompasses the semiotic structures of different media.

Audience

It is now an orthodoxy for English teachers and media teachers to encourage students to create texts for a particular audience. But who that audience might be, or how we might get a concrete idea of them, is a slippery business. We can imagine, for instance, a series of concentric circles, in which the most intimate idea of audience is to ask students to conceive of themselves as audiences: what are their reading/viewing/playing preferences? How do they make particular cultural choices? What kinds of pleasure do they derive from the texts they choose? In what social groups do they engage with these texts? What cultural practices do they engage in as audiences? The second level might be to identify a specific actual audience: making texts for a partner primary school class; for a parents' evening; for a local council meeting; for a visiting VIP. The third level, one often used by media teachers, could be the socio-economic groupings of market research: are they targeting their texts at the A1 or the C2 grouping, for example?

A rather different approach is to explore audience practices, particularly online. To take games as an example again, game fans engage in the following kinds of activity:

- Fanfiction - writing stories, 'spoilers', backstories, poems about their favourite characters. Popular cross-media franchises such as Harry Potter, Buffy the Vampire-Slayer, Lord of the Rings or the Narnia Chronicles produce vast quantities of such writing, often carefully-crafted, generically disciplined (sometimes parodic), reverential in its attitude to the source-text, and highly-regulated by its constituent communities.
- Fan art: drawings, paintings, computer-generated artwork, produced in similar ways.
- Walkthroughs – elaborate sets of instructions for playing games. Again, the Harry Potter games provide good examples, often beautifully produced as websites, illustrated with images and screengrabs from the games.
- Mods – modifications of games by fans to produce their own version of a game, or a level, or even a completely new games based on the game-engine (the programmed 'skeleton') of an existing game
- Online communities: such as the clans that are supported by online role-playing games such as World of Warcraft; or the Role-Playing groups who develop intricate stories which they act out via their online characters or avatars.

There are, then, many ways to conceive of audiences. Students need to visit these regularly if they are to learn how texts are adopted or rejected, how cultural affiliations are made and broken, how meanings are interpreted, how cultural resources are appropriated and transformed, what pleasures are sought and found, and in what social configurations, for what cultural or political purposes, this all happens.

The idea of a critical literacy which detects the workings of media institutions and analyses audience behaviours is only part of the picture, however: a reader who could *only* perform such a reading would be a dull creature indeed. Do we really want a world where there can be no media 'effects'? Of course we don't want an entire generation uncritically swallowing the message that life without Coke or Playstations isn't worth living. But do we want them to be

unmoved by the affective charge of horror or romance; unaffected by the polemic of Orwell's 1984 or Lennon's 'Imagine', unamused by the satirical humour of The Simpsons? The great 19th century French magician, Jean-Eugene Robert-Houdin, argued that he much preferred to perform his illusions to intelligent people than stupid people. Stupid people would always try to see how the trick was done, thereby making his job more difficult and destroying their own pleasure; while intelligent people would allow themselves to be duped, knowing that this was where the enjoyment of the experience lay. We could make the same argument about the media. We can know it is an illusion, and still surrender ourselves to its spell. It is the paradox of Coleridge's 'willing suspension of disbelief'.

Creativity: Cultural Resources, Semiotic Tools

Creativity in education is a highly-contested idea, appearing in a bewildering variety of forms (Banaji and Burn, 2007). Here, I draw on the work of the Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, for whom the creativity of children and adolescents was closely related to play (Vygotsky 1931/1998). In playful activity, children learn the meaning of symbolic substitution through the manipulation of physical objects: Vygotsky's well-known example is a child using a broomstick as an imaginary horse. These symbolic understandings become internalised and develop into the mental processes which generate creative work. True creativity for Vygotsky only develops, however, when the imaginative transformations of play are connected with thinking in concepts: in other words, with rational intellectual processes.

What might this kind of creativity look like in the English and Media classroom? Figure 1 shows a screengrab from a computer game made by Y9 students. Their task was to devise a game based on *The Tempest*. From a cultural point of view, it juxtaposes the most popular of contemporary art-forms and the most elevated of literary-dramatic texts. It can be seen as a practical example, perhaps, of an exploration both of Williams' 'lived culture', the students' familiarity with games, and his 'selective tradition', the successive, aggregated cultural commentaries and practices which have promoted Shakespeare's work to the status it currently enjoys.

Figure 1: *Screengrab from Year 9 computer game adapted from The Tempest*

The four Y9 girls who have designed this level have used the game-authoring software, *Missionmaker*. Their game design involves creating rules - central to the composition and play of videogames (Salen and Zimmerman 2004) - specifying particular events. These rules construct an sequence in which the player, as Ferdinand, the king's son, must overcome a series of challenges based on events in the play, to find his love Miranda, and confront the (assumed) anger of her father, Prospero. This screen grab shows the final stage of the game, when the three meet.

While this game design involves a creative transformation of the digital assets of the software (characters, objects, locations), the creation of new rules, and the recording and deployment of spoken dialogue, it also, of course, involves a transformation of Shakespeare's original text. The dramatic sequences are converted into the challenge-and-reward structures and win-lose states of the adventure game genre; while the characters become the first-person avatar and non-player characters of this genre. Shakespeare purists might express horror at the apparent violence done to this most cherished piece of literary heritage; though Derek Jarman's and Peter Greenaway's films of *The Tempest* emphasise the need to create the play anew for a different cultural moment. More specifically, it can be argued that this 'ludic' approach to the play recognises its similarities to a game: its magical island, the challenges, tests, punishments and rewards Prospero devises; even Prospero's final surrender to the control of the audience, who must decide whether he will finally return to Milan or not.

It is not only the narrative structures of the text which are transformed into the elements of the game, however. The students also pay close attention to the words and imagery of the text. So Ariel's song to Ferdinand, *Full fathom five thy father lies*, is incorporated into the text as a pop-up (Figure 2), and voiced by a girl in the group. At the same time, the imagery of the song is transformed into objects in the gameworld: a treasure chest of clues for the player as Ferdinand to open and acquire (Figure 3). The objects they found that were most

representative of the play-text were a skull, representing Alonso's bones and death; a crown to indicate his kingship; and a marble (the closest they could get in the menu of objects in the software to the 'pearls that were his eyes').
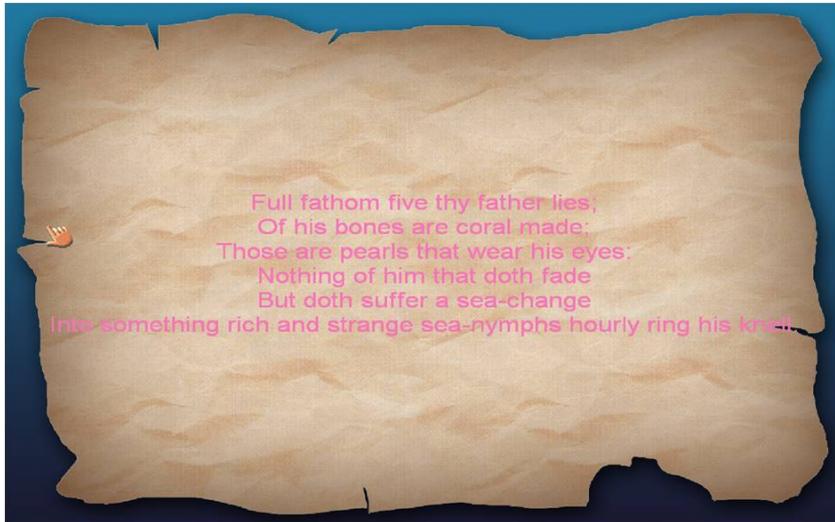

FIGURE 2: *Ariel's song as a game pop-up*

FIGURE 3: *Objects from Ariel's song as pick-ups in the game*

These objects have a twin significance in the game. Adventure games and roleplaying games are a combination of narrative structures (events, characters, systems of narration and address, narrative duration and order, and so on); and ludic structures (choices, challenges, game objectives, points, assets, alternative routes, win-lose states, and so on). This group of girls have constructed these objects with poetic significance, charged with the metaphorical and narrative meanings of Ferdinand's supposed bereavement. But they have also constructed them as ludic objects: they are pick-ups, which the player must drop into an inventory, and use later in the game to open a door to the next stage. They have been programmed by the girls to collectively weigh the required amount to open the door when dropped in front of it.

In Vygotsky's terms, there is imaginative work here: a transformation of verbal imagery to visual; of Ariel's song to a game environment; of Prospero to a mad scientist and Miranda to a scantily-clad Amazon; of Ferdinand's trials to a series of ludic challenges. Vygotsky's argument that creativity consists of rational, conceptual thought is equally well-demonstrated, as these imaginative transformations are regulated by the rational structures of narrative sequence and consequence, ludic coherence, and metaphoric representation.

Conclusion: 10 Principles

The view of media education presented in this chapter, and the notion of media literacy associated with it, offers significant variations on the ideas of culture, criticality and creativity in the English curriculum. Rather than repeat these, here are ten key principles. While they run the risk of omission and reductiveness which all lists court, they may serve as a stimulus for discussion, department meetings, CPD sessions and seminars. There is no settled way to resolve these issues, no simple template to adopt. The examples of this chapter can only hope provoke debate, and contribute something to the thinking, reflection, and curriculum design which only teachers can carry through.

10 principles of media education.

1. Build on students' experiences and knowledge of the media.
2. Find connections between high culture and popular culture
3. Find connections between the popular cultures of the past and those of contemporary media
4. Cultivate orality as well as literacy
5. Explore the rhetorics of institutions, texts and audiences
6. Explore semiotic principles, lexicons and grammars across different media
7. Promote creative production in different media
8. Connect analytical work with production work
9. Develop a media poetics, and explore the nature of cultural value and taste
10. Promote the online distribution of students' work, and explore the meaning of such distribution

Acknowledgements

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