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Intertextual Webs: A Multimodal, Inter-Genre Approach to English Literature in High Schools

Thesis presented to the Wits School of Education

By

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Yours in education



Nic de Jager

The poet ranks far below the painter in the representation of visible things, and far below the musician in that of invisible things.

Leonardo da Vinci

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is the product of my own work, and that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination, in any other university. All sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.



…… 19 August 2020 ……

Signed Date

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Abstract

This thesis investigates South African high school learners' remaking of prescribed novels, poems and plays into songs, storyboards and videogame 'screenshots' respectively. As a social semiotic study situated in the multimodal paradigm, it unpacks the contextual, thematic and modal features of each redesign and determines how these are representative of the literary elements (and meanings) of the original texts. Three schools − all within the Johannesburg South district − serve as research sites, with eleven FET Phase learners selecting a canonical narrative and using the researcher's *genre frames* to draw, colour, write, cut, paste and even sing their way to artefacts that concisely and agentively communicate prescribed themes, characterisations, settings, symbols and moods. Conducted over three months as an extramural, multimodal enrichment programme dubbed the *inter-genre approach*, the researcher analyses this data with the aid of his *label method* and *five C's of intertextual linkage*; two forms of transmodal captioning which can be applied as both a learning and data-analytical tool. Three simple but effective research questions not only enable the identification of such 'links' between original and remade works, but also the complex embodied process involved in redesign and − perhaps most importantly − the future implications of these for English HL pedagogy and language classrooms in general.

The findings emerging from the study are diverse, and many. With regards to the *product* of participants' redesigns, it is found that signs are not self-contained entities, but reliant upon a multiplicity of signifiers, modes and materialities to communicate their meanings. As for the *process* behind this, the author locates drawing, in particular, as an agentive mind-to-hand-to-paper process informed by mental image, transduced meaning and past experience. The final multimodal artefact is thus presented and analysed as a series of mental images, newly embodied. Findings that impact most upon the *pedagogic* dimension of the study (that is, its future in-class applications) include the possibility of modal affordances being limited only by the sign-maker's interests or capabilities, and the school-based semiotic chain being permeable to many more out-of-school texts and experiences as previously thought.

Another conclusion is that an *interconnectedness* exists between multiple modes, texts and genres, provided that these are thematically congruent or connected in some way. Thus, school set works are seen not as existing in a vacuum, but relatable to a plethora of out-of-school artforms and activities − particularly digital ones. Eagleton's seminal concept of *webs* of signifiers and signifieds (1983) is also expanded to the researcher's own *intertextual webs*; a hybrid of the semiotic chain which seeks to track participants' use of scaffolds and other, primarily screen-based substrates to arrive at the final artefacts. These trackings in turn demonstrate the *multimodal revivability* (De Jager, 2017) of formally prescribed texts − their ability to be *seen* again and regain prominence in the discourses of literature, art and entertainment − as a direct result of the proposed approach.

Keywords: ● multimodal pedagogy ● intertextuality ● social semiotics ● art and literature education ● transmodalisation / redesign of prescribed texts ● music and film studies ● videogamification

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Focus of the study

> "Instead of being well-defined, clearly demarcated structures containing symmetrical units of signifiers and signifieds, [texts] now begin to look much more like sprawling, limitless webs… where there is a constant interchange and circulation of elements, where none of the elements is absolutely definable and where everything is caught up and traced through by everything else."
>
> Terry Eagleton, from *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983, p. 129)

Written at a time when multiliteracies was still in its infancy, these words from literary theorist Terry Eagleton best demonstrate the pervasive and far-reaching nature of texts today, with every viewer, maker as well as re-maker newly aware of an interconnected *web* between modes, media and digital communications. This study capitalises on this symptom of the postmodern age, and applies a variety of everyday, multimodal texts as useful scaffolds for the teaching and learning of prescribed novels, poems and plays in the South African, English Home Language context. Approaching the project from three different disciplines in art − namely music, drama and visual art − I have made use of contemporary songs, films and videogames to both revive and sustain learners' interest in prescribed works for the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase. Drawing on the research of Kress (1993; 2000; 2005), Newfield (2009; 2014) and others, it is argued that multiple intertextual links exist between poems, plays and longer narratives − on the one hand − and music albums, motion pictures, animated series and videogames on the other. These intertextual connections are explored in depth, before any opportunities for the *multimodal revival* of set works are identified and geared towards making new meanings within future semiotic spaces.

This is achieved through participants' transmodalisation of prescribed texts into a plethora of songs, storyboards, computer-generated images (CGI), and illustrated videogame screenshots. The sample group consists of eleven learners from three high schools in the Johannesburg South (Ekhuruleni) and Soweto districts. I begin with the *product* aspect of these redesigns. Through eleven detailed case studies, the most visible design features or *aesthetic outcomes* of each artefact are put forward. Also included here is a form of intertextual captioning coined the *label*

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method (De Jager, 2017), whereby any contextual, thematic or modal links between the prescribed texts and artefacts are identified to demonstrate the extent to which learners had made new meanings, or transformed existing ones. I then focus on the *process* involved in such prescribed-text-to-artefact remakings, with a remapping of participants' semiotic chains as *intertextual webs* to track exactly how they may have applied themselves − both physically and cognitively − to complete each task. This is followed by the "So what?" question of what these products and their requisite processes imply for future multimodal pedagogies, particularly in the English literature learning space. Participants' interview responses (as secondary data) are referenced throughout to substantiate the value of an *inter-genre* approach for literature learning today. This ensures that the study is as impactful as possible, both in terms of its theoretical and practical applications in future.

My research questions are:

1. *How do FET learners re-semiotise, re-genre and re-make prescribed canonical English literary texts into scaffolding texts in the form of songs, storyboards and videogames?*
2. *What is the process required in such re-makings, that is, what chain of meaning-making did participants follow?*
3. *What are the implications of these redesigns for classroom practice, that is, how can participants' products and processes be translated into a viable multimodal pedagogy?*

Dealing with *product*, *process* and *pedagogy* respectively, these three enquiries are well aligned with my theoretical framework (Chapter Two) and methods (Chapter Three), and seem to suit the cumulative nature of the data analysis chapters outlined above. Above and beyond this, they lend themselves to an exploration of the multimodal artefact at a depth seldom pursued in social semiotic investigations of this kind; here participants' inscriptions, traces and markings in the graphological or *drawing* mode are seen as a representation of their literary and artistic identities; an embodiment of their unique readings, interpretations and remakings of prescribed literature. Before expanding further on the study's rationale, here follow some pertinent discussions on its background, the *problem* that had motivated it, as well as

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the feasibility of the *inter-genre* approach proposed here as a basis for literary text exploration.

1.2 Background of the research

From the onset of post-structuralism − and most notably since an increased development of post-method curricula for state high schools locally and abroad − much debate has surrounded the notion of a *visual culture* which greatly impacts upon learners' engagement with texts in literature learning contexts (Mirzoeff, 1999; Duncum, 2001). Noted academics across all language and literacy education domains, from the New London Group (NLG) and New Literacy Studies (NLS) to more recent multimodal cohorts (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Jewitt, 2009; 2012; Gee, 2015), have contemplated the internal dynamics of textual, generic and modal *globalisation* among school-leavers today. Arguably the main implication of this trend is a heightened awareness of how texts can afford one increased *power* and social *access* (Janks, 2014) in learning spaces and otherwise. Another distinctively global phenomenon, it can be argued, is a collective consciousness of the signs comprising many multimodal texts today − their colours, shapes, textures, sounds, scents or more complex systems of symbols and words. In *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001, p. 45) highlight a similar collectiveness or "deliberateness about choosing the modes for representation, and the framing for that representation" among diverse participants engaged in redesign tasks.

Other researchers exploring text-to-artefact transmodalisation in social learning contexts (Iedema, 2003; Stein, 2003; Newfield & Maungedzo, 2006; Walsh, 2009; Pahl & Rowsell, 2011) or the reconfiguration of modes across genres (Huang & Archer, 2014; English, 2011) have also observed this phenomenon during semiotic resource manipulation. The dolls in Stein's (2003) *Fresh Stories*, for example, all display similar aquiline silhouettes with cold-drink bottles serving as their bases, while the *Thebuwa Cloth* (Newfield et al, 2006), though quite varied in its collage-like composition, shows some consistency or *sameness* in the materiality of its pasted poems. It would appear that the social semiotic setting, on its own and without much teacher intervention, brings about a degree of uniformity with regards to multimodal

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redesign approaches and techniques among individuals − another phenomenon explored later, in Chapter Five.

This 'interconnected' nature of different genres on the levels of (a) contexts, (b) themes and (c) modes will be a focal point in the study. It thus foregrounds the modal connections between songs, films and videogames which − provided they are applied meaningfully in the learning space − could do much to contextualise or *revive* prescribed texts. Several revised handbooks and online guides (McCallum, 2001; Gradesaver, n.d.) seem to transcribe and illuminate the classic works of Golding, Shakespeare and others in an attempt to make them more engaging for learners, yet no mention is made of their film adaptations, the songs they have inspired or artworks they have helped to create. There is also a wealth of videogames available on multiple platforms today (a literacy-rich artform sadly neglected in scholarly research) which for almost four decades have allowed developers to expand upon the timeless archetypes of Homer, Blake, Lovecraft, Hemingway and Wells.

As a passionate gamer, I can also vouch for the rewarding and indeed emotional experience of playing today's triple-A titles. *Metal Gear Solid: The Phantom Pain* (2015) − created by Konami's Hideo Kojima, hailed as a hero and true visionary in Japan − has had a profound impact on both my personal life and course as a researcher. Its play on characters and symbols from Golding's *Lord of the Flies* universe also inspired the topic for my Masters Research Report (2017). It is not implied here, however, to leave our already tech-obsessed learners to their own devices with a games console in the classroom, but only that the genre should be seen for what it is: a digital interface for artists and storytellers contributing towards our everyday, visual culture.

Over the years, a number of studies from the NLS, in particular, have called for a convergence of the literacy practices undertaken by learners in the home and school domains (Snow, 1983; Hamilton, 2000; Stein, 2003; Olshansky, 2008; Pahl and Rowsell, 2011; Gee, 2015). A recent *Carte Blanche* investigation (Bingwa, 2017) into the literacy activities of learners aged fifteen to eighteen − primarily from Gauteng − also finds that fashion magazines, live music streams, *Youtube* videos and online multiplayer games are just some of the media pervading children's lives today. From a structuralist or more traditional perspective (Del Campo, Negro &

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Nunez, 2012), these media could easily be ignored as platforms rich in reading, writing, listening and speaking experiences, yet the NLG (1996) had long since recognised the potential of these to optimise the modern literature learning space. In the interests of perpetuating the more learner-centred and social semiotic practices set out by the NLS, NLG and multimodal school (Stein, 2003; Kress, 2005; Newfield, 2014), the *meaning-making* opportunities that such media could bring to English Home Language contexts today had to be explored further. So, in early 2019, eleven learners from three Ekhuruleni and Soweto schools volunteered to partake in the inter-genre approach, as part of an after-school, multimodal enrichment programme with designated redesign stations.

I knew that the contextual and modal links between seemingly divergent texts, like films and novels that share only a few thematic similarities, was still a key inquiry in the multimodal field (MODE, 2019). This was especially true of studies seeking to identify the *meaning potential* (Halliday, 1978) of different modes through a redesign lens. The parallels between texts have always fascinated me, but I wished to explore further how postmodern narratives − the movies, songs, videogames or social media streams dominating our lives right now − may have formed a multimodal code or *culture* (Mirzoeff, 1999) determining what meanings we ascribe to what visuals, sounds, movements and other phenomena. This has inspired research question one, and forms the first part of my data analysis − the eleven discussions detailing learners' physical and cognitive engagements with their prescribed texts, in order to arrive at their final works. What parallels can be identified between Wilfred Owen's (1917) war poems and Misha's storyboard (section 4.2.1) for example? My aim with this first enquiry, then, was to demonstrate an *interconnectedness* (Braud, 2003) between the multiplicities of modes, texts and genres pervading children's lives today.

To build upon this, research question two tracks each participant's semiotic chain or the actual *process* involved in remaking novels, poems and plays into songs, films and videogames respectively. With my weekly school visits and analysis of each redesign, I had to determine whether learners in different school environments could identify said *connectedness* between their prescribed texts, the scaffolds used and their own redesigns. How does a deeper understanding of the links between

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distanced texts − that is, between the old and new, canonical and progressive, print-based and digital − impact upon traditional views of texts as static or authorially imposed entities? Does an awareness of the dynamism − or constant *movements* (Newfield, 2017) − of modes and meanings across genres warrant a more open or holistic approach to high school literature? To help address these and other issues (including the affordances of the inter-genre approach for English Home Language classrooms) research question three has been formulated as a final enquiry.

To clarify why particular genres were selected to explore each prescribed text, it is necessary to outline their possible affinities, or how they relate to one another in terms of context, themes and modes (the three levels noted earlier). These levels will be called *intertextual links*, collectively, for the remainder of the thesis:

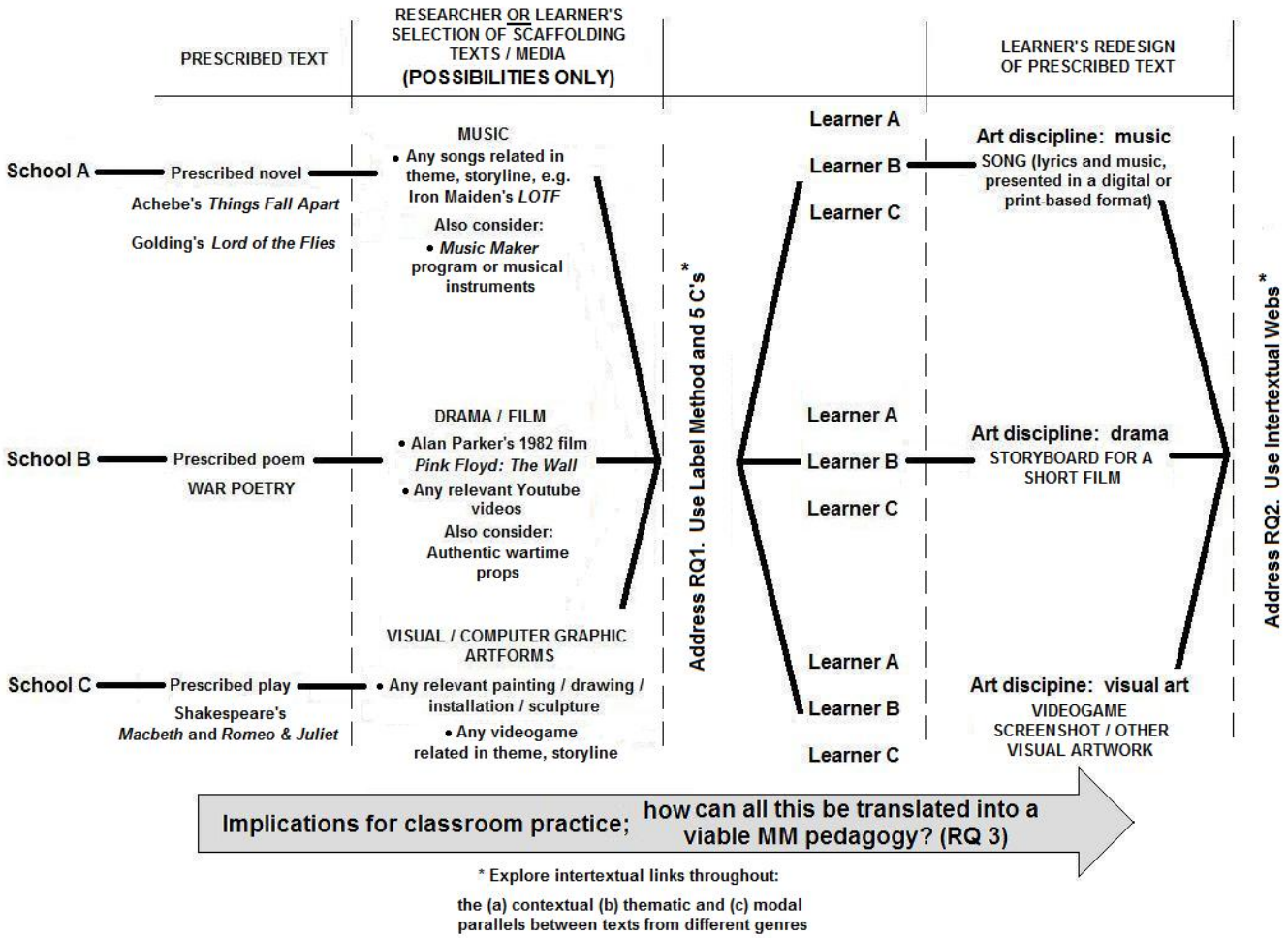


Fig. 1.1: Schema summarising my sampling techniques, my envisioned pairings of prescribed texts with their out-of-school counterparts and the overall order in which data would be collected / analysed

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The scaffolding texts (second column) were possibilities only and in some cases changed according to learners' interests. Also, the three disciplines (music, drama and visual art) could be paired differently. The process was quite adaptable, but there was always a motive behind my pairing of music with novels, film with poetry, and videogames with plays. Poetry and music, I felt, were too similar in their modal composition − if one thinks about song lyrics − to have offered a challenge comparable to the videogame task. Hence my coupling of films (which are often long) to the typically brief poems, and videogames to plays as they both employ more condensed storylines.

Regarding the column to the far right, *Learner's Redesign of [the] Prescribed Text*, it may be necessary to state what resources I had provided − from my side as researcher and task facilitator − so that participants at least had some material basis to work with during redesign. A central tool in this regard was the A3-size *genre frame*, which I designed myself. These may be described as worksheets or 'templates' to guide participants in the size, spacing and overall composition of their written text and illustrations. For the music group (top) they included lyric posters and music notation sheets, to assist with the writing of songs based on prescribed novels. The film group (centre) would receive blank storyboards, with ample space for drawings and a strategic placement of 'camera movement signs'. Initially, the storyboards would serve as visual references for video clips, to be recorded on learners' cell phones and posted on *Youtube* later. As a matter of ethics − and no less to protect participants' identities − I steered clear of this idea and rather focused on the storyboard's merits as a visual-verbal *abstract* of prescribed poetry, as seen in Chapter Four below.

Finally, the videogame group (bottom) was provided with drawing materials (in cases where they preferred a paper-based form above a digital one) and a range of frames including a map screen, heads-up display, inventory, and character select menu. From this it becomes clear that the project focused less on the implementation of *lesson plans* or a *teaching intervention*, and more on an experimental introduction of multimodal resources to diverse learner groups. This has also encouraged truly meaningful instances of text-based semiosis − that is, a deeper and more engaged exploration of prescribed texts. The participants' use of these texts and resources −

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and the ways in which they *orchestrated* (Bourne & Jewitt, 2003) different modes during each redesign − provided the raw data I needed to explore any contextual, thematic and modal parallels between texts from different genres.

I need to reiterate that this project was strictly extramural − that is, facilitated *outside* of the classroom and school time. Although my findings (Chapters Four through Six) may have strong implications for classroom practice, the multimodal programme itself was not applied inside any of the three schools' classrooms. In section 3.3.2 (p. 96) are examples of the genre frames used, and more information on my research design overall.

1.2.1 Key concepts

For future clarity, here follow concise definitions of some key terms, with notes on how they are used in the thesis.

- ***Mode***

Jewitt (2003, p. 83) defines a *mode* as "a means of communication or representation, which is realised in different materials and transmitted via different media such as speech, writing or music". A news bulletin on television, for example, will make use of different modes to clearly communicate a message to the viewing public. These may include the headlines at the bottom of the screen, the still images in the background, or music clips serving as 'cues' for weather, finance or traffic reports.

- ***Multimodality***

At heart this was a *multimodal* investigation, so it may be necessary to state the very broadest function or aim of the multimodal field, and how my research fits into it. On the *MODE* (2019) website, Carey Jewitt draws from Norris (2004), O'Halloran and Smith (2011) and her own work (2009) to arrive at this opening statement: "[multimodality] understands communication and representation to be more than about language; [it has been] developed over the past decade to systematically address much-debated questions about changes in society, for instance in relation to new media and technologies". As is evident from the *focus* and *background* discussions above, an exploration into the affordances (and overall applicability) of

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"new media and technologies" for literature learning is exactly where this study finds its home in multimodality, albeit with a strong reliance on participants' input during various social semiotic encounters. *Semiosis* (this section, below) clarifies what particular branch of semiotics this study pursues.

- ***Inter-genre***

Drawing mainly on Fiona English's (2011) reconfigurations of texts through different genres, an *inter-genre* approach is proposed here for literature teaching and learning in the FET phase. This involves, among other things, a tracking of the *movements of modes* between those genres that are traditionally thought of as unrelated, or irreconcilable on a contextual, thematic or modal level. The three research questions above may also divulge the *extent* to which FET learners had explored the meanings of their school set works through a simultaneous engagement with the visual, sonic and kinaesthetic modes in popular mass media texts.

- ***Text***

This study moves beyond traditional conceptions of the text as a strictly print-based artefact, or medium of communication that primarily utilises hand- or typewritten words (Jewitt, 2009). In the multimodal paradigm, the term 'text' may encompass any received or produced vehicle of meaning-making, such as a song, film, or visual artwork.

- ***Semiosis***

Jewitt (2003) describes *semiosis* as the interpretation and use of signs and symbols, in order to make meaning. Examples of semiotic phenomena can include anything from road signs and religious icons, to clothing and gestures. *Social semiotics* − the branch most proximal to the aims and nature of this study − investigates meaning-making practices within socio-cultural environments, but it is not always related to classroom practice or pedagogy (Bezemer & Kress, 2016).

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1.3 Problem statement

In my own experience as a high school teacher, I can attest to the difficulties surrounding learner participation or engagement with prescribed materials in the Senior and FET Phases. Many prescribed genres, particularly longer types of narratives, tend to intimidate and ultimately alienate learners from literature-based activities intended for exam preparation (Jenks, 2016). In the case of a novel, for instance, the largely monomodal composition and *book* materiality may dishearten more digitally or visually inclined learner groups. In addition, not all teachers prefer (or can afford) the use of audio-visual technologies in the classroom (Serbessa, 2006). Yet the so-called cover-to-cover reading (Langer, 1994) of literary texts, especially over extended periods of time, can be extremely monotonous for FET learners and has been criticised since the seminal works of the NLG (1996).

On the local front, journalist Bongani Bingwa (2017) notes that our learners are yearning for more engaging and sensorially stimulating experiences when it comes to studying literary works, particularly "lengthy novels". The screening of film adaptations in class time does achieve much in this regard, but new technologies such as *Virtual Reality* (VR) may enable our so-called *millennials* to take full control of the speech, choices and actions of their favourite heroes and villains. One can only imagine what such a full body-and-mind investment into the world of a book, play or poem could do; propelling one straight into the contexts and characters of stories. The VR headset, for example − coupled with Samsung's *hollow lens* 360-degree camera technology − will make it possible for viewers to select any viewpoint or seat in a museum, sports stadium or lecture hall. While many of our learners may be aware of these new developments in the tech world, this same progression does not seem to be reflected in South Africa's classrooms (Hague & Payton, 2010; Ledgard, 2011).

Peter Rule, associate professor at Stellenbosch University's Centre for Higher and Adult Education, also finds that South Africa is experiencing a "reading crisis" (2017) and that it is imperative for emergent literacy curricula (Grades R-4) to lay a proper foundation for deep, competent reading in later grades. Schools of all quintiles, Rule argues, should seek to optimise learners' reading time with pro-active strategies − including library corners in classrooms, *Drop Everything and Read* periods, prizes for

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reading a target number of books and creating learners' reading clubs. This follows the latest *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS), which found that seventy percent of Grade 4 learners in South Africa are "unable to read for comprehension" (2017). Online journalist Nic Spaull (2016) has also dubbed reading "the biggest solvable problem in South Africa", deducing from academic literature three main reasons "why the majority of our kids can't learn to read". These are *text-poor environments*, *wasted learning time* and the fact that many Foundation Phase teachers, in particular, *do not know how to teach reading*. We now know that the literacy *act* of reading involves more than the mere decoding of written text (Hamilton, 2000; Walsh, 2009; Jenks, 2016). Reading can be extended to processes of meaning-making, textual production and redesign, and as such it is of some relevance to this discussion. This study does not, however, seek to improve the accuracy, rate or comprehension levels of high school learners' reading, but rather to optimise their existing prescribed works as sources of meaning and enjoyment. This, in relation to the problems described above, may then result in an improved frequency and agency in learners' reading, of both prescribed and out-of-school texts.

1.3.1 On the feasibility of proposed technologies in 2020 in the South African, English literature learning context

One of several arguments that could be raised against a study of this kind, especially from a practical or context-sensitive perspective, is that its promotion of overtly futuristic technologies may not fully recognise the needs or capacities of South Africa's predominantly under-resourced classrooms. It was not my intention − with this project or any other − to force the mass purchase of VR-headsets, sound systems and games consoles by schools for use in their English Home Language classrooms. After all, this would grossly contradict the NLG's first efforts to optimise available resources for rich, multimodal learning experiences − in both local and international contexts. A gap in extant research which needs to be addressed here, though, are the many connections that may exist between mass media texts − those "limitless webs" (Eagleton, 1983, p. 129) of signs that may ensnare even the most underprivileged youths during their mere commute from school, home, the mall or other domains of meaning-making. There are virtual technologies everywhere at staggeringly low prices and, while this may not necessarily demand nationwide

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pedagogical reform, it is certainly a clear indication of what teachers need to *do*, *look at* or *incorporate into* their literature teaching experiences to make our set narratives more engaging (or exciting) for learners. Many may not have uncapped access to the worldwide web, but this study recognises teachers' and learners' need to *move on* in terms of the material nature of support materials and − if financial strain should inhibit such a progression − to at least *replicate* certain digital technologies in the interests of enriching literacy learning experiences. A good example of this is Uys and Kaiser's (2008) case study of Potchefstroom learners drawing cell phones in the sand and − true to Prensky's (2001; 2010) *digital natives* concept − pushing the buttons as though they were born with an ability to communicate through electronic devices.

Prensky's influential yet heavily criticised article, *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants* (2001) also highlights the "new" learner's pre-occupation with computer technologies, and a youth identity that is evermore leaning towards creative self-expression and interconnectedness in the digital domain. The latter *connection* mainly involves posts (typed exchanges between users of the same social platform) and sharing of media files like pictures, songs, films and games. Not only does this comparatively exciting activity impact on learner involvement and classroom discipline across the curriculum, but it may also instil a sense of estrangement from prescribed materials − particularly among more mature school leavers. The most conspicuous symptom of this learner estrangement is, as Dunlop (2012) rightly points out, our schools' ongoing battle to monitor, if not ban, the use of cell phones in classrooms.

Although the increased educational use of digital technologies is not a focal aim of this study, an attempt is made to bring the abovementioned formats − the media that teenagers engage with in the home domain especially − *into the classroom* and link them semiotically to prescribed novels, poems and plays. This *link*, as noted above, is achieved by uncovering the contextual, thematic and modal parallels between paired texts and, in turn, facilitating a number of class discussions, literacy activities or alternative, more modally rich tasks to optimise learner engagement with prescribed material.

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1.3.2 On school set works, and implications for the study

> "A group of Gauteng educators have deemed a number of school set works outdated and not relevant to South African learners. Among them are Nadine Gordimer's novel *July's People* (which has been part of the curriculum since 1994) and Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm*, as they are said to highlight racial and religious intolerance. Black authors were also not spared. Although the report has been sent to publishers, the department has not taken a final decision regarding the exclusion of these books from the school syllabus."
>
> From *The Teacher* / *Mail & Guardian*, Johannesburg, 18 April 2001

Fierce debate has always surrounded the choice of texts for high schools both locally and abroad (Altieri, 1983), but it seems a current concern is how relevant they are for our typically *tech-savvy* millennials. A revision of the current South African selection is, again, not the aim of this study. Yet certain issues surrounding canonicity do warrant some attention here, as the enrichment programme has focused on remaking long-standing texts so they may enjoy a new relevance during literature learning.

The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages by Harold Bloom (1994) has redirected our attention to the idea of a pre-eminent or *most excellent* canon for educational purposes, determined by the authors and poets affording the most *cultural capital* to youths on the brink of adulthood. However, the singular conceptualisation of *society* here raises quite a few red flags, as John Guillory later retorts in *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (1994). In this book, Guillory does not join the familiar debate of which texts or authors should be included in literary curricula (in the so-called *Western* context or otherwise) but rather explores *why* this debate represents an unceasing, and very real, crisis in literary discourse. A key thesis of Guillory's in this regard is that, "if there exists a form of capital which is specifically symbolic or *cultural*, [then] the production, exchange, distribution, and consumption of this capital presupposes the division of society into groups that can be called classes" (1994, p. viii).

At the onset of this study, I feel it is necessary to challenge such presuppositions and, like Guillory and several of his successors (Wilczek, 2012; Ede, 2013; Bubiková, 2017), champion the idea of many, *individual* literary identities informing our schools' selection of texts. A different syllabus for each school in South Africa would be an

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impossibility; it would hold unmanageable implications for curriculum design, the setting of exams, teacher training and learner backgrounds, to name but a few logistics. As can be seen from my eclectic array of *scaffolding texts* (with participants welcome to have brought their own), the call is rather made for an increased emphasis on learners' more *proximal* interests or life experiences; texts derived from the world *out there*, from out-of-school spaces (Pahl et al, 2011). In the interests of a deeper, more meaningful or enriched reading experience, such mass media texts may then be intertextually linked (see fig. 1.1) to prescribed works. Mine is thus a democratic approach to text selection − for lack of a better term − and once again places trust in the learner to select materials representative of his or her life-world.

1.4 Research context & data collection methods

For this study, I was required to adopt the role of satellite researcher, guiding eleven participants from three different high schools through the redesign process. My initial plan was to have three core groups consisting of three members each, and to assign a different genre (or redesign *task*) to each. The small sample size would enable me to delve more deeply into the semiotic complexities of redesigned texts. My sampling method would thus fall into the *convenient* category (Bloome, 2012). Fifteen learners signed up for participation, but due to time constraints and other personal reasons, only eleven submitted their artefacts as data. I also required some assistance from Home Language teachers to profile learners' strengths, preferences, interests, cultural and artistic backgrounds − as well as curricular activities − before allocating the *music*, *film* or *videogame* genre to each school. In section 3.2 (p. 89) is more information on my sampling techniques, data collection methods and the unique circumstances of each research site.

Albertyn et al (2020) and Gordon et al (2019) however note that up to sixty-five percent of South African learners elect English as their home language at school, despite it being their second or even third language. This may be attributed to the hegemony of English in business, tourism and education, together with its perceived *accessibility* (Janks, 2014) on many social and digital-communications platforms. Already in 2008, though, Uys and Kaiser (2008) have observed local learners traversing between English and their mother tongues of Afrikaans, isiZulu,

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Portuguese, Tamil and others − perhaps in an attempt to express themselves clearly and creatively, or just to assert themselves in an ever-diversifying society. This was also true of my own sample, though it may not have impacted upon the linguistic or written contents of their artefacts in any, discernible way.

1.5 Rationale

> "Stories connected to objects and home experience[s] can provide a platform and starting point for text-making. Text-making can also be set within a framework that is multimodal and allows for a much wider concept of meaning-making."
>
> From Pahl & Rowsell's *Artifactual Critical Literacy: A New Perspective for Literacy Education* (2011, p. 129).

The redesign of prescribed texts is nothing new to multimodal studies. However, this study contributes to the field by generating and analysing data in unprecedented ways. Here follows a summary of the study's key innovations, and how these may impact on existing theoretical and pedagogical studies.

- The genres or forms of textual redesign explored in this project − from songs and storyboards to videogame screenshots − are quite pertinent candidates for social semiotic inquiry in 2020 and beyond. Rather than digressions from FET learners' usual routine, these genres could be applied meaningfully to school set works, and seen as tools or *platforms* for increased participation in literature learning.
- The comparative analysis of seemingly unrelated texts − from such diverse genres as music, film, games, novels, poetry and plays − is a central feature in my presentation and analysis of data. In line with the concepts of *universality* (McCloud, 1993) and the interconnected nature of mass media texts (Braud, 2003; Kress et al, 2001), this study asserts that the exponential growth of a *global culture* − in particular the habitual literacy practices this creates in the school domain − should urge us to explore the analogies between these genres and make children more aware of how texts can *influence*, *strengthen*, *diminish* and, in some cases, *transform* one another.
- In this study, an attempt is also made to build upon semiotic analyses of commercial or 'mass media' texts (e.g. videogames) by recognising high

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school learners as central *orchestrators* (Bourne et al, 2003; Newfield, 2009) of literary materials and other meaning-making resources, with an active *interest* (Kress, 1993) in re-shaping them to suit their own identities and contexts. I have done this by analysing their work as the result of such meaningful orchestrations.

- The *label method* is applied as an empirical means to track the knowledge acquired by learners through their engagement with a 'source', literary text. The method, which can be described as a form of *semiotic captioning* between original and remade texts, may afford teacher and learner alike an opportunity to gain new meanings, transform existing ones or address silences while exploring novels and other works of literature. It involves presenting the text-maker's artefact(s) visually, with several labels pointing to the features that *speak back* most clearly to source. On transparent overleafs to be placed over the genre frames, quotations from the prescribed texts may be written in red, whereas green may be used to explore how learners' signs − or specific, compositional elements − represent their themes, storylines, settings and characterisations.
- More than an attempt to assess learners' levels of comprehension or grasp of descriptive detail, this approach may also provide insight into image-text relations, processes of decoding and encoding, socio-literary identity and − most crucially − how the orchestrated, visual-verbal text can empower one to construct and communicate meaning at an unprecedented level. For added precision in future practice, the *five C's* model of intertextual linkage (section 3.4.1) is used in conjunction with the label method whilst comparing texts from different genres.
- Finally − and in line with the works of Newfield (2006; 2009), Kress (1993; 2000; 2005) and Stein (2003; 2008) − multimodal pedagogies are used for developing language and literacy skills, but the focus here is on the FET learner in a socially situated, *literature* learning context. This study acknowledges that what learners 'take' from stories can hold strong implications (for both classroom practice and young adults' lives) outside of the school walls.

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1.5.1 Crossing further gaps in multimodal theory

It is clear that the interrelationship between texts from seemingly divergent genres − each with their own use of modes or channels of communication − will underscore the social semiotic analyses of both 'source' and redesigned texts in Chapters Four through Six. A review of current literature on the subject of universality or the parallels that exist in everyday texts (be they recreational, educational or even academic in nature) has however revealed several 'gaps' which necessitate further investigation. For one, there appears to be no consensus regarding the extent to which alternative and often complementary media such as films, theatre productions, songs and digital artforms should be included as *scaffolds* in class discussions, handbooks or year-end exams. Already in 1983, NLS pioneer Shirley Brice Heath has emphasised that these will be the texts keeping children connected to their friends, family members and teachers in future. Throughout my analysis of data, then, I have explored the *dialogues* (Bakhtin, in Holquist, 1990) between the colours, moods, ambiences, sounds and other sensory phenomena − *within* and *between* said texts.

From a more theoretical standpoint, it has also been interesting to explore the *contextual, thematic and modal parallels* (fig. 1.1) between the texts that were in many cases selected by myself − perhaps taking on a similar role to language teachers locally, who often take the initiative to use their own scaffolds to streamline literature lessons. Wilfred Owen's *Dulce Et Decorum Est* (1917), for one, belies its print-based and largely monomodal composition through the many first-hand accounts of the Great War − invoking images easily comparable to a modern horror film. The quandary that both teachers and learners are often faced with (and sadly this is the case when curricular deadlines need to be met, or syllabi need finishing) is that there is seldom a tangible or more *memorable* text to help concretise the poem-on-a-page, or prompt its entrance into learners' *life-worlds* (Husserl, 1931, in Welton, 1999). I feel a multimodal resuscitation or *revival* of the prescribed text is required in such cases. A modal pairing of Owen's masterpiece with snippets from Parker's controversial *The Wall Movie* (1982), for example, has proven highly effective in this regard. In-class demonstrations of how such 'distanced' texts can be linked

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thematically and contextually may be key to deeper and more engaged readings, of prescribed poetry and many other genres.

Such a multilayered and indeed cumulative method of data analysis, with its progression from *product* to *process* to matters of *pedagogy*, can be extremely generative in finding modal parallels between prescribed and remade texts − all within a uniquely creative and social literacy learning space. Outside of Stein's (2003), Newfield's (2006; 2009), Tomlinson's (2015) and Batchelor's (2018; 2019) success in tracking the affordances and constraints of visual, actional, gestural and sonic modes during facilitated re-semiotisation tasks, there is little emphasis on the *links* between texts of different genres and materialities. In crossing this gap, one may greatly contribute to the multimodal field and its recognition of textual interconnectedness, or the forming of our identities through mass media. The genres of music, film and computer graphic imagery (CGI, in the form of videogame scenarios) are thus intertwined with my analyses of both the *scaffolds* and learners' artefacts, since many different genres share modes or design elements. I also feel that this to-and-fro comparative style − *between genres* and *between texts within genres* − adds greatly to the theoretical and practical bearing of the study. Here, then, follow brief motivations for my use of the three genres.

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- **Music**[1]

Several studies (Bowman, 1998; Elliot, 2002; Gruhn & Seither-Preisler, 2008) have explored the affordances of integrating music-based activities into literacy teaching and learning scenarios, across subjects and school phases. Alves (2006) has also acknowledged songs or melodically improvised poems as the *sonic* ingredient of multimodal ensembles, yet the scarcity of research surrounding the specific, pedagogical implications of this medium − particularly its efficacy in a literature learning context − has remained largely unchecked since the advent of the multimodal and multiliteracies movements (MODE, 2019). This study aims to address this gap by presenting the humble song as both a scaffolding text and possibility for multimodal redesign, with the prescribed novel as participants' source text.

A very new approach taken here is an intertextual linkage between the researcher's selection of 'out-of-school' songs (as scaffolds) and key scenes from the prescribed novels *Things Fall Apart* (Achebe, 1958) and *Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1954). In Chapter Four, an exploration of their thematic parallels is followed by a comparison between the original novel and the participant's own song, whether its materiality is vocalised, written, instrumentally performed or digitally recorded in nature. The affordances of music in communicating feelings, moods, atmospheres or *invisible things* (Cave, in Dominik, 2016) also become evident if one inspects the generic, modern song at its most basic level − also touched upon in my data analysis.

In addition, Cave asserts that the affective response elicited by music is a feature not always enjoyed by the written mode. The structured and especially melodic aspect of the sonic mode, it seems, has the affordance of stimulating the *substantia nigra* −

[1] The combined CAPS (*Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement*) and NCS (*National Curriculum Statement*) for South African state schools stipulate that Creative Arts teachers may select only TWO of the four artistic disciplines (Visual Art, Music, Dance and Drama) for Senior Phase learners (Grades 7 through 9). This, according to the NCS, has been decided in order to accommodate learner interest and demand in different contexts, as well as individual teachers' experience or knowledge of these disciplines. By implication, not all learners will have formal music backgrounds − but this was never a requirement for participation in the study.

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the part of our brains responsible for producing the feel-good hormones dopamine and serotonin − in a more direct or potent manner than written or speech-based modes (Philp, 2006). The most conspicuous constraint of print-based materials, whether they are fictional, narrative or more academic in nature, is arguably its dependence on the reader to imbue them with a degree of *personal impact* or relevance, which may be synaesthetically linked to a particular memory or experience valued by the individual. Exposure to the affect of music or background sounds has previously been thought of as a distraction to learning, yet recent investigations (Goodwin, 2015; Baker, 2016; Burnett, 2016) find that such auditory accompaniments may actually optimise memorisation, creative thinking and meaning construction.

Music is often described as “the rhythm of the soul” but, with all clichés aside, it may very well afford literature learners the opportunity to express their text-inspired meanings in uncharted ways. By the time the decline of music education had become a subject of heated debate, Van der Linde (1999) identified six reasons why music and movement activities should not be negated in any learning context, including *improved mental capacity and intellect*, *mastery of the physical self*, *development of the affective aspect* as well as *creativity* (as cited in Gelineau, 2004, p. 104). More relevant to this study, though, is Alves’ (2006) outline of the most recognisable patterns or *ambiences* in audio works today, with descriptions of their ‘perceptible’ or intended influences on human emotion. Of course, the complexity and length of Alves’ observations far exceed the scope of this chapter, but it may be useful to highlight some of the instrumental effects which could be emulated in one participant’s song (see *Mandy*, section 4.1 below) by using a digital program:

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Instrument used	Description of sound	Ambience created
• Electric and acoustic guitars	• Electronic, metallic, distorted, echoing	• Airy, nostalgic, bluesy or eerie
• Timpani and bass drums	• Rounded, full, reverberating, deep	• Earthy, rhythmic or tribal
• Keyboards and synthesiser	• Electronic, flowing or *legato*	• Futuristic, unworldly or dream-like
• Flutes and recorder	• Sustained, shrill, high-pitched	• Ethereal, calm or tranquil
• Snare drums, marimba and shaker	• Percussive, textured, abrupt or *staccato*	• Fiery, aggressive or militaristic
• Triangle and cymbals	• Sustained, shimmering, metallic	• Aqueous, 'wide open' or clean

Fig. 1.2: Table of instruments, their characteristic sounds and possible ambiences created (adapted from Alves, 2006, p. 29-42). Mandy would later incorporate some of these into *Forbidden Love*, her song based on the play *Romeo and Juliet*.

- **Film**

"Films have the power to capture dreams."

The fictitious film historian *René Tabard* in *Hugo* (2012)

No other genre, it can be argued, depends as heavily on the modes of image and movement as the full-motion picture, or *movie* as it has been known since 1896. In fact, the earliest films − especially those from the Chaplin oeuvre and famous 1920s *Hammer* horrors − still relied on brief typewritten dialogue or 'title cards' in-between scenes to help explain the plot, or to make up for the lack of synchronised audio-visual recording technologies at the time. As early as 1896, the Lumiere brothers had begun dubbing music over their short films (most memorably the fifty-second *L'Arriveé d'un train en gare de La Ciotat*) which made the so-called *picture house* a main attraction in Western Europe up until the outbreak of World War One. The brothers' interest in cinematography soon waned, though, but it was taken to new heights by the former magician George Meliés (1861-1938), who is regarded today

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as the father of visual effects or “wizardry” (Scorsese, 2012) in film. What is quite special about Meliés and his peers’ work, though, is the typical use of a two-dimensional *catwalk* point of view, with actors performing in front of a static camera and regularly jumping in-and-out of the frame.

This perspective is quite reminiscent of a theatre stage or, on a more progressive level, a 2D side-scrolling videogame. As such, I found it useful to show some of Meliés’ masterpieces to the film and videogame groups (see Appendix B1, on data disc) perhaps so that their artefacts could be equally inspired. They would soon produce a series of nine-frame storyboards, in-game stills, character select screens and pencil portraits, among other original redesigns. Movement and the *kineikonic sign* (Youngs & Serafini, 2011) were no doubt the star players in these artefacts, despite their ostensibly *flat* paper materialities. During my interviews, the learners also motivated their selection of each sign, and explained how their work related contextually, thematically and modally to prescribed content (see Appendix C for transcripts).

- **Games**

A recent study (Rippon & Van Tulleken, 2017) involving seventy senior citizens from Edinburgh revealed that social, competitive sports like table tennis − played for one hour a day over ten weeks − can significantly decrease the risk of Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia linked to cortical shrinkage in the elderly. By encouraging sustained hand-eye coordination, the game of ping-pong had surpassed the brain health benefits of the control group: the thirty-five participants who simply had to walk briskly for an hour a day. Ping-pong also proved effective for energising the connective tissues between the nerves and muscles of the body. As the *Forbes* (2017) and *Livestrong* (2017) sites also indicate, the new wave of whole-body, interactive videogame consoles (such as the *Nintendo Wii* and *Switch*) have done much to raise health awareness among the stereotypical ‘couch potato’ teenagers of today. Though the physical movements required for playing on such formats can keep one fit, the focus here is on their potential for heightened brain or neural activity − especially in cases where intertextual connections are made by the gamer. A key aim of this investigation, then, was to move beyond the simple

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entertainment or *leisure* functions of videogames, and to use them as sturdy scaffolds for prescribed plays in the FET Phase.

Only a handful of local studies highlight the pros and cons of videogames as useful support materials in the language, numeracy as well as *life skills* subjects. I find this rather disconcerting and (to be frank) confusing, as several literacy learning paradigms have always supported the confluence of literacy practices from the home, school and social *domains* (Heath, 1983). PC training and computer-based education was introduced to schools as early as the 1970s − even in the poorest of countries (Hattingh, Breed & Hahn, 2008; Serbessa, 2006) − yet the programs used now are often seen as mere 'audio-visual supports' for prescribed and largely paper-based texts. The idea behind the integration of such digital technologies into curricula is, as Apple had stated back in 1975, to make learners' experiences more engaging sense-wise, or relevant to their daily lives. However, the poor graphics and monomodal composition of these programs are often so far removed from the games played by learners, that they are seen as a chore or mere distraction from the normal classroom routine. The majority of self-learning programs like *JFLAP* (Java Formal Languages and Automata Package) and *Delta* seem to lack atmosphere, depth or an invitation to engage on an affective level. With the videogame element of this study, I wanted to see whether the monotony and monomodality of the typical *PC Lab* experience could be remedied with games platforms a little closer to learners' digital expectations. The sheer aesthetic impact and quality of data generated by the videogame school (see section 4.3) suggests that this is, indeed, possible.

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1.6 Structure of the thesis

- **Chapter One: *Introduction***

See above. This chapter has included a focus of the study, a background of the research, a problem statement, outlines of research context(s) and data collection methods, a rationale and, most importantly, my research questions.

- **Chapter Two: *Theory***

This chapter begins with outlines of post-modernism and post-structuralism − the literary theories which seem to underscore participants' artefacts as *avant-garde* redesigns of canonical literature. It then reviews five of the most current concepts in multimodality, to serve as frameworks for my analysis of these artefacts.

- **Chapter Three: *Method***

Here my research design is discussed, and an overview of the research sites, participants, data collection instruments and data analysis methods is provided. Issues surrounding ethics (especially the measures I have taken to ensure participants' confidentiality) are also discussed briefly.

- **Chapter Four: *The 'Product' of Participants' Redesigns***

The first step in my analysis of data. The findings here pertain to research question one, as it explores all eleven artefacts from the music, film and videogame groups in terms of their most visible design features or aesthetic outcomes. Here I also unpack the use of signs in each artefact, by applying the *label method* and *five C's* methods.

- **Chapter Five: *The 'Process' of Participants' Redesigns***

The second step in my analysis of data. The findings here pertain to research question two, as it deals with the embodied process of participants remaking their prescribed texts into multimodal artefacts, as observed during my visits to the three research sites.

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- **Chapter Six:** ***The 'Pedagogic Implications' of Participants' Redesigns***

The third and final step in my analysis of data. The findings here pertain to research question three, as my focus shifts towards pedagogy or the translatability of participants' journeys into a more concrete 'approach' for future English Home Language contexts.

- **Chapter Seven:** ***Reflections on the Inter-Genre Approach, and Multimodality in General***

A consolidating discussion that includes participants' reflective feedback, potential pitfalls of the inter-genre approach, possibilities for future research and some closing thoughts on what the project *meant* for us (the participants, myself and other role-players) on an objective as well as more personal level.

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CHAPTER TWO

Theory

The aim of this chapter is to provide a theoretical and conceptual framework for my analysis of data in Chapters Four through Six. These theories − categorised under the broad topics *semiosis*, *remaking of texts*, *intertextuality*, *new literacies* and *multimodal revival* − have also served as research lenses for the project in terms of its application at the research sites, the participants' redesign of the prescribed texts and finally, my overall approach to the analysis of each artefact. Before entering into these discussions, though, the postmodern and post-structural literary theories will be outlined, as they have essentially motivated the three out-of-school genres employed in the study.

2.1 Postmodern and post-structural literary theories, and applications in the study

In addition to the multimodal theoretical framework provided below (section 2.2), I include here an outline of selected concepts from the postmodern and post-structural movements to further support my analyses of participants' artefacts. For the sake of brevity and relevance to this study, an in-depth discussion of these movements − of their exact origins and epistemological features − will not be provided here. Their histories are long and complex; postmodern trends in art and literature can be traced back to the first reactions against *modernist formalism* in the 1940s (Kleiner & Mamiya, 2004, p. 1105). It can be described as a broad discourse which immediately follows, and in some ways seeks to supplant, the modern era with its promotion of standard *form* in art, literature and philosophy (Kleiner et al, 2004, p. 1037). Post-structuralism, though more closely associated with the linguistic mode, espouses an equally *open-minded* approach to subjects and aesthetics − gaining prominence with Barthes' (1967; 1977) and Derrida's (1967) conceptualisations of texts as dynamic orchestrations, each carrying a multiplicity of signs, meanings and modes. What follows is an outline of how these movements may have impacted on our perceptions of *meaning*, particularly how texts are read, used and produced. I will then briefly discuss *terminological dialogues between modes* (section 2.1.3) as a distinctive feature of the post-structuralist movement.

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2.1.1 A new perspective on meaning-making

In the *Key Concepts* section above (p. 16) I describe the "text" as much more than a paper-based medium of communication utilising hand- or typewritten words. Drawing mainly from Jewitt (2009), I argue that the text can encompass any received or produced vehicle for meaning-making − in the case of this study − a song, film or any visual-verbal articulation, be it paper-based or more digitised in nature.

The postmodern movement, it can be argued, supports this view: it challenges the accepted ideals or material conventions of texts (whether they manifest in a linguistic, visual or auditory mode, or a combination of these) and encourages a shift towards wider and more varied subjects, practices, styles and formats. In the artistic as well as literacy domains, the traditionally formal or *structured* approaches of the modernists (ca. 1850-1970) may thus be challenged, affording opportunities for diverse text-making and "a much wider concept of meaning-making" in social contexts (Pahl et al, 2011, p. 129). The postmodern text also includes paradoxical themes and reveals a self-conscious awareness − on the part of the text-maker − of meaning-making processes or the inner workings of an increasingly sign-driven and jaded world. In Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), for instance, a cheerful Beethoven symphony accompanies a montage of several London 'preppies' being raped in a housebreaking frenzy. It would appear that Kubrick's screenplay binges on a typically postmodern cocktail of irony, satire and juxtaposition − as reviewer Jeremiah Kipp (2007) observes: "it glorifies a certain kind of amoral violence, presenting it to the viewer in a spectacular, operatic, colourful, and exquisitely photographed manner… giving us an avenue into understanding a corrosion of society".

Key to this argument is the fact that the post-structural movement has − since its inception in the '60s − altered our idea of *meaning* and the processes required for (and during) its production. Public law and legal theory expert Bernard Harcourt (2007) takes a particularly fascinating stance here, describing post-structuralism as a style of critical reasoning that focuses on a *moment of ambiguity* in our systems of meaning, quite reminiscent of the transmodal moment. It thus allows us to reflect on the ethical choices we make − whether this manifests in our writings or everyday, 'acted' lives. A more traditional view, though, is that meaning can only manifest

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because of an extant, often *text-based* set of structures; analogised by Mann (2014) as a dictionary with "words explaining words explaining words". Drawing from the iconic words of Jacques Derrida (1967), little or no meaning-making can occur "outside of the text", that is, outside of what we already know from our past engagements with written, spoken, visual or multimodal phenomena. Also central to post-structural semiosis (and text analysis) is the practice of supplanting the *author* as primary source of meaning in a text, and examining alternative sources such as the reader's linguistic identity, cultural norms or the influence of other literatures.

Similar to its postmodern counterpart, the post-structural text imparts meaning through much less conventional avenues than those preferred by the classical structuralists − most notably Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan and, formerly, Roland Barthes. Eagleton (1983, p. 133-134) describes this most effectively:

> "texts [have] come to embarrass their own ruling systems of logic; and deconstruction shows this by fastening on the 'symptomatic' points, the *aporia* or impasses of meaning, where texts get into trouble, come unstuck [or] offer to contradict themselves."

On account of these movements, the concepts of *text* and *meaning* have evolved to fit our current zeitgeist; they are things of constant movement − of change, agency and endless association − and processed in multiple ways depending on the recipient's way of seeing.

2.1.2 A brief history of *text*: changes in practice, and implications

By the time English had been identified as the hegemonic language of trade and commerce in the late eighteenth century (Hamelink, 1994), several grammatical structures or systems (morphology, phonology, syntax and vocabulary) were widely published in an effort to standardise the language, or to ensure that its written and spoken varieties retained their 'form' for future generations. This structured or static view of world languages, coupled with the then-groundbreaking research of B.F. Skinner and other supporters of the Behaviourist paradigm, spawned school curricula and teaching methods that supported *positive reinforcement*, or the rewarding of 'true' and 'conventional' language use. Such methods included *Total Physical Response* (TPR), the *Grammar Translation Method* (GTR) and rote memorisation of language rules. At this time, teachers both locally and abroad

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placed emphasis on the *correctness* of morpho-syntactic forms, as opposed to comprehensible *meaning* communicated through speech and writing of the target language (Uys et al, 2008). A main aim of the post-structural progenitors (Levi Strauss, Roland Barthes, Vladimir Propp and Michel Foucault) was to question these ideals, and to move both practical and theoretical foci towards the meaning-making potentials of language as they manifested *in* and *through* multiple signs.

The postmodern artwork, specifically, seems to share many traits with the post-structural text due to its more holistic approach to form or the application of modes. It seeks to move beyond traditional 'structures' which are now seen as potential hindrances to processes of encoding and decoding. As a literary theory, though, post-structuralism is mainly concerned with supplanting past notions of languages as rigid or rule-governed systems of communication; *codes* which may be acquired or perfected through Behavioural techniques encouraging memorisation, rote learning or explicit instruction (Eagleton, 1983; Uys et al, 2008). This focus shift from 'correct' lexical *form* to comprehensive *meaning-making* within dynamic social contexts has also brought with it strong implications for literacy instruction in the micro- and macrocosmic domains.

My participants' artefacts have been analysed from a similar, *holistic* perspective. The focus was on how orchestrations of modes (as embodied through the eleven artefacts) could be 'linked' to each source text on a contextual, thematic and modal level. Although this approach to data analysis may be deemed 'post-structural' − with an emphasis on meaning as opposed to the accuracy of diction or other grammatical aspects − a degree of *structure* or the logical application of (largely visual) modes was still required of participants to make for clear and cohesive songs, storyboards and videogame scenarios. As noted earlier, the post-structural paradigm has traditionally been associated with the written or spoken word − or more broadly, the print-based text and its many derivatives. Yet, its under-emphasis of 'correct' lexicon or morpho-syntax is also important for my semiotic analyses of more modern multimodal texts, presented here as an outcome of the inter-genre approach. A storyboard for a film, however, has to commit to at least some structural conventions seen in comic strips and graphic novels (McCloud, 1993), with their left-to-right vectors and the gutters in-between frames representing various progressions

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in time and space. This same coherent or, if you will, *structured* approach to modal re-configuration was also required of the music group (with regards to the rhyming and logical flow of the songs' verses) as well as the videogame learners, who had to rely on textual elements to anchor their visuals more firmly within the actual, written content of the source text.

How else have the above movements informed my selection of scaffolds and data-analytical approaches, amid other aspects of the research design? It can be argued that the three scaffolding texts (see fig. 1.1) − selected here as *platforms* for agentive redesign among the eleven participants − are largely postmodern in *content* or modal composition. Their inclusion here was by no means a *happy accident* as Olshansky (2008) would call it, but informed by perceived learner interests and current trends in text selection. *Lord of the Flies*, for example, is now widely prescribed for the FET Phase and many of my former colleagues have attempted to make its two hundred-and-fifty pages more accessible or engaging for learners. For this study, Harry Hook's film adaptation (1990) and Parker's *The Wall* (1982) were also used as semiotic springboards for the multimodal exploration of novels and war poetry, respectively. Videogame technology, for one, has featured quite prominently in the homes of children from all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, since the "last decades of the twentieth century" (Prensky, 2001, p. 1). Even in high poverty contexts, the cell phone has supplanted almost all other communication technologies due to its affordability, mobility and increased access to gaming and media streaming platforms.[2] The commercial and critical success of today's videogames often depend on the postmodern *aesthetic* described above − striking visuals, complex storylines and the *archetypal night journeys* (Cuddon, 1999) of everymen and anti-heroes.

[2] The *MyBroadband* site (2018) has listed the *Cheapest Mobile Phones in South Africa*. A base-model *Alcatel*, for only R99, takes the number one position. Some entry-level *Android* smartphones with all the latest applications − from live music and film streaming to online gaming − can cost as little as R350. These are devices that seem almost *native* to the majority of learners' literary identities in the state, high school domain − speaking from my own experience as a Johannesburg-based teacher − yet individual preferences and data costs may mean that such 'apps' are not always used to their full potential.

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Even of its own accord, the range of multimodal texts that have emerged from this study seem to reflect the innermost threads of Eagleton's post-structural *web* (1983). The three storyboards, for example, employ a variety of visual and written modes to communicate meaning to viewers, and seldom place emphasis on 'correct', 'appropriate' or 'accurate' language use. Certainly, a degree of structural coherence or chronology was required of the storyboard for it to *make sense* (McCloud, 1993), but a number of postmodern artists are now coming forth with more subtle or subliminal styles of meaning-making through the visual mode. For example, the *Spawn* comic below (fig. 2.1) from the height of creator Todd McFarlane's (1994) fame includes little or no written text on each page, yet this does not detract from its semiotic impact or *meaning potential* (Halliday, 1978). This latter term, first coined by Halliday in *Language as Social Semiotic* (1978), relates just as easily to comic books as it does to solely linguistic texts. Halliday, though, was not working with any comics or visual media at the time. Used by English (2011) in a similar way, the term most effectively describes what a multimodal text can *do* in terms of imparting meanings to the listener, reader or viewer.

Speaking from personal experience, this same downplaying of explicit writing − or words that strictly adhere to the conventions or forms of different genres and texts − is something that may be expected from the majority of today's high school learners, regardless of available technologies or socio-economic standing. Gee (2015, p. 35-36) also observes that today's texts revel in their unconventional ways of imparting meaning to the world − a phenomenon that belies the rigid language uses of old. This perhaps explains why the post-structural ethos has underscored both the selection and outcome of participants' texts, as explored in the data chapters later.

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Fig. 2.1: Excerpt from a *Spawn* (McFarlane, 1994) comic book. Note the minimal use of written text in each frame. As the archetypal anti-hero of today, Spawn fits the typically *paradoxical* postmodern mould (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 47). Despite his sinful past and evil appearance (right), Spawn protects children and other innocents in a dystopian New York City.

In closing, the postmodern and post-structural paradigms discussed here have proven crucial to the study on many levels, both in theory and practical application. Similar to qualitative studies conducted by such multimodal scholars as Newfield (2009; 2014) and Stein (2003; 2008), this study recognises its raw data, analysis approaches and theoretical perspectives − among other features of its research design − as direct results of our digitally interconnected and largely multimodal *zeitgeist* (Victor, 2011). Perhaps because of this, my eleven-member sample selected materials, texts, artistic techniques and modes that seem to fit into the postmodern and post-structural aesthetics described above. My participants' artefacts thus reflect darker or more controversial issues relating to both their prescribed texts and personal lives, on an emotional and even spiritual level. Berger (1972) alludes to an equal degree of *soul* infusing all works of art and − with our

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social order always tainted by political, socio-economic and religious turmoil − it is fitting that each redesign reflects an individual's innermost thoughts, fears and desires. However, the occurrence of these intangibles only became wholly clear after each artefact has been analysed scrupulously through a comparative, intertextual and above all multimodal lens; hence my application of the label method and five C's in Chapter Four below.

2.1.3 Terminological dialogues between modes as a distinctive feature of post-structuralism

As a former Visual Art teacher, I have always likened the texture in a piece of music to the thickness, density or direction of brushstrokes on a canvas, and the rhythm of a song to an artist's movements as the paint is applied. With this crossing of textual barriers at its centre, *intersemiotic relations* may also shed light on the potential affinities between concepts from entirely different modes, such as the linguistic, visual or auditory. A concept such as *colour*, for instance, may not only describe the wavelengths of light reflected off surfaces, entering the eyes and visual processors of the brain − which currently suffices as its scientific definition (Kleiner et al, 2004, p. 1098) − but it can also be used as a tangible quality of language, or music. The artistically inclined individual may speak, for example, of a *colourless* discussion, or the music producer may air his attempts to *add colour* to a song. The same can be said of *texture* and *tone* − concepts often reserved for a more 'visual' discourse. Alves (2006) alludes to a similar proclivity among today's musicians and music teachers for crossing the art-music divide, with them equating *texture* to the timbre or tone of a composition, or using percussive instruments to add *something rough* to a song. In art, texture refers specifically to the surface qualities of a painting, drawing or sculpture, and is classified as either *visual* (seen only) or *tactile* (seen and felt). Tone, on the other hand, refers to gradations of light (white), dark (black) and the greys in-between, though the term is also used in music to describe "the pitch, or quality of sounds… of instruments and voices" (Alves, 2006, p. 9).

More than a case of semantics, the ever-broadening use of such terms may be described as a glaring *symptom* of the post-structural ethos; a time where artists, musicians and writers alike break down long-standing (often linguistic) walls to express themselves freely, or to arrive at new meanings. Meaning no longer resides

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in the word itself, but in the *spaces* around it − its colour, texture, shape and size − and where, when and how it is used. The multimodal paradigm, it would appear, readily complements our post-structural times in both theory and application; it *wants* texts to go beyond the call of duty and transcend their material and semiotic boundaries. It is perhaps this transcendental quality of the post-structural text that has changed how we perceive music, films, forms of digital entertainment and art in general − at times using them almost simultaneously.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The *Key Concepts* section (p. 16) has outlined what could be deemed phenomena most integral to the multimodal approach (including *mode*, *text* and *semiosis*) but this section calls for an expanded view of each, or their specific applications in the context of artefactual redesign. These were also the very frameworks or 'lenses' that would guide the participants and I through every step of the redesign journey.

2.2.1 Semiosis and related concepts

Semiosis, in essence, is the process of making meaning (Mavers, in MODE, 2019). *Semiotics* is the study of this process − usually through ethnographic practices − whereas *social semiotics* focuses specifically on how people engage with meaning-making resources in everyday, social settings.

To cite one study where the affordances of this process emerge with particular clarity, Simon, Evis, Walkland, Kalan and Baer's *Navigating the "Delicate Relationship between Empathy and Critical Distance": Youth Literacies, Social Justice and Arts-based Inquiry* (2016) resonates closely with my own goals as social semiotic researcher. As with the inter-genre approach, these Toronto middle-school learners were empowered to remake their prescribed literature into representations of the *self* − of engaged and highly individualistic readings − or artworks worthy of intensive analysis. Here Art Spiegelman's graphic novel, *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* (1986) is transmodalised into "…paintings, constructed on foam core with paper, velum, paint and collage materials" (p. 431). Not unlike my own participants' lyric posters, storyboards and videogame screens, these "paintings" have enabled learners to communicate their unique readings and interpretations of *Maus* − and no less the

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atrocities of the Holocaust − visually through a series of small drawings, anchored in the centre by an original panel from the novel.

While it remains unclear whether the production of "frames" (p. 431) for what are otherwise extant, artistic representations had made for the most meaningful redesign task, it is evident that the participants had been sensitised to this terrible moment in history − with the artefact acting as mobiliser or *embodiment* of their epiphanies − in much the same way that my storyboard group could bear witness to the horrors of WWI. Glaringly absent from this article, though, is a clear conclusion or consolidation of *what modes had done what* in each artefact, that is, *why* these sign-makers had made particular design decisions or selected certain materials above others as they were transducing meanings from the source. The participants' reflections (p. 433-448) do shed some light on these, but not enough to demonstrate how the use of multiple, specifically non-linguistic modes are central to the making of new meanings during redesign. This centrality of the mode − or many collections of many modes − *within* and *between* artefacts had certainly emerged in my own participants' journeys, and will be a focus in many of the discussions to follow.

On the move: towards an idea of the mode as textonaut

As it focuses so on what the mode *is*, and not what it can *do* across different texts and genres, the data in Simon et al (2016) may not fully demonstrate the potential of the mode as a prime communicative entity. It is arguable whether this focus on the modal *what* (as opposed to the *why*, *how* and *when*) is present in most studies that cross modes in pedagogical ways (Chrisholm & Whitmore, 2016; Rolling, 2018; Batchelor, 2019). A cornerstone of the inter-genre approach, though, has been its attentiveness to the finer details in participants' artefacts − it truly looked at, listened to and valued every individual's use of modes to remake meaning. While I wholly accept Jewitt's definition of the mode as "a means of communication or representation, which is realised in different materials and transmitted via different media such as speech, writing or music" (2003, p. 83), I assert that the mode can do much more than articulate or transduce meanings from a source text or some other 'target' for transmodalisation. The ways in which modes *mean* is a theme that perhaps underscores the bulk of studies tracking the redesign process − from local publications (Newfield et al, 2006; Stein, 2003; 2008) to more recent, international

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ones (Tomlinson, 2015; Batchelor, 2019) − yet it is only through a more fine-grained comparison between the maker's signs and the particular meanings that had *motivated* them, that the specific representational properties of each written, drawn, cut or pasted element come to light. Some might scoff at such an approach for being overly descriptive, or ask why the researcher and participant would want to actively identify the "intertextual connections" (Batchelor, 2019, p. 4) between any artefactual elements, materials or resources used − on the one hand − and the extant phrase, passage or chapter *behind these*, on the other.

It is exactly this reluctance to delve into the perennial *dialogue* (Bakhtin, 1981; Holquist, 1990) between reader, viewer, listener, re-maker, line, shape, texture, colour or sound − all in equal measure − that accounts for what I argue is a widening fissure in social semiotic research: not seeing beyond the 'text' and its more visible transmodalisations of content, or presenting it as a self-contained entity, oblivious to its creator's more incidental markings, movements and other interactions. One participant from the *Maus* project, *Isaac*, notes that he "used a bit of red mylar over the swastika to have more of a variety of materials" (Simon et al, 2016, p. 437). Though the red tape's association with "death or shooting or blood" is understandable, its very materiality and positioning on the foam support bears little significance in the context of Spiegelman's narrative, nor does it anchor the central, visual-verbal panel in any way. While it is not my intention to discredit Isaac or his work, he may not have adequately *traversed* between read and remade meanings, or been encouraged to do so, or to express such traversals explicitly during reflection. As a consequence, many of these signs are lost on us the viewers, or at the very worst, the sign-maker himself. It would seem, then, if we wish to *know* the mode or what it is doing in-context, we need to scrutinise it more carefully − interrogate its shape, size and positioning, seek out its origins, track its movements − and acknowledge all of the *motivations* (Kress, 1993) behind the agent's use of signs.

Placing modes in a hierarchy of semiotic articulations

But what do modes do, and how do they differ functionally from signs, texts and genres? Comparing current working definitions of the term would be somewhat of a fool's errand; the mode instead needs to be framed as a *lens* through which to view artefactual data, or as is the case in this study, to be appropriated as the very

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scaffold by which the agent explores prescribed content. To make this distinction and otherwise heed against using such terms interchangeably, we need to look at the mode's compositional or constitutive properties, or identify what it tends to contribute within its larger frame, space or context − as I do more thoroughly with the 'stop sign' in a later chapter. It would appear that all semiotic articulations move from the micro- to macrocosmic, with the sign *completing* the mode *completing* the text *completing* the genre, in much the same way that suns and planets make up solar systems, and the latter make up galaxies, and so forth (fig. 2.2 below). While some may discount such a poetic image, I am using it precisely to draw attention to the *universal* importance of the mode in our everyday, text-making lives. It is not the tiniest nor largest entity of meaning, but something in-between; a moon orbiting a planet which in turn circumnavigates the sun, or a larger body overlooking a particular aesthetic, style or body of works.

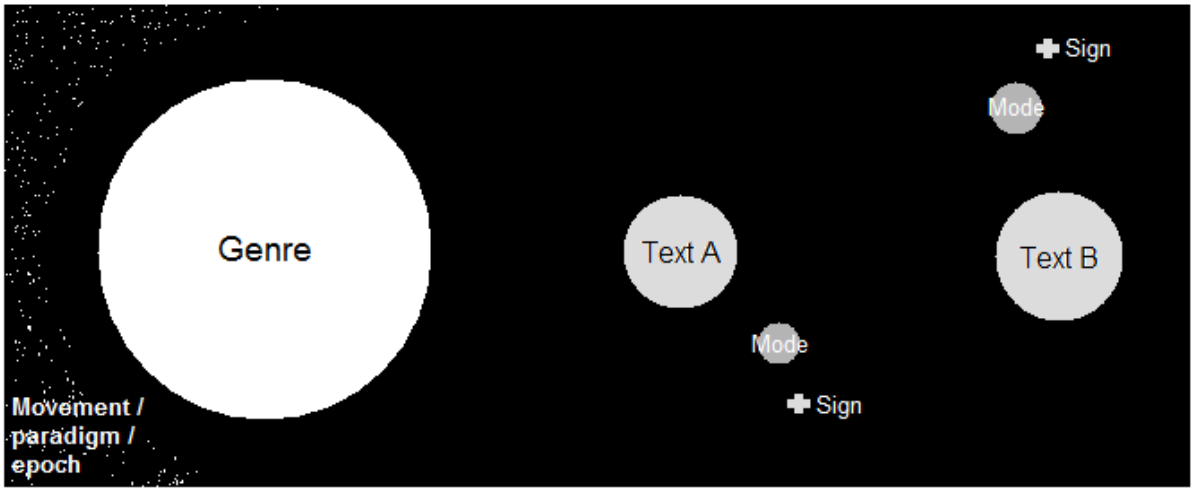


Fig. 2.2: Signs as satellites, modes as moons, texts as planets, genres as suns, and literary movements as galaxies in a 'cosmic' representation of semiotic phenomena. With his *Model for English and Literacy Education*, Andrews (2011, p. 169) takes a similar approach to situating the mode, yet this image better demonstrates its dynamic nature or ability to move across entire texts and genres.

With this model, I ascribe a certain agency or volition to modes themselves. Especially through the process of *transduction* (Kress, 1993) − in this case drawing meanings from the mainly linguistic text and reshaping them visually, multimodally or artefactually − modes seem to emerge with various degrees of familiarity or traceability to their textual origins. The agent may use a particular colour in an early artefact (for example, red letters to lyricise parts of a prescribed novel) only for the

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same colour to reappear in a later, more complex artefact incorporating a greater variety of modes. Though the colour may have been represented or modulated in a different way (for example, blood spatter as part of a figurative drawing), the *meanings* the agent ascribes to this colour has − as is also evident from my interviews with participants − stayed very much intact. The mode (in this case the colour red) had thus *orbited* the source text (in this case the prescribed novel) in the same way that texts move around, or within sight of, an even larger frame or *genre*. Besides this more idealistic function of the genre − to envelop, embrace or support its texts, modes and the tiniest of signs − its use in the older, *autonomous model* of literacy (Street, 1993) − that is, as an umbrella term describing a body of texts alike in either convention, style or cultural origins − still enjoys currency in many fields, and understandably so.

To return to modes, they are our *meaning satellites*; without them, we cannot stay on axis or enjoy the change of seasons, literary eras or epochs, and much less mobilise any interpretations from our readings. Metaphor aside, my participants seemed also to peer through this lens: the mode was the building block of their orchestrations, with the sonic, visual and kineikonic varieties comprising their songs, storyboards and videogame screens respectively. Yet the even smaller signs of lines, colours and sounds were approached as meaning-making entities in themselves, by me *and* the eleven participants. I never taught this explicitly, but the inter-genre approach would facilitate an almost intuitive articulation of such elements to express specific ideas from the prescribed source texts, with an unprecedented level of creative vision and agency. This was also achieved within the confines of a particular, mass-media *frame* or text. To reiterate, “text” is understood here as a broad term encompassing all received and produced vehicles of meaning-making, including songs, films or any other multimodal orchestration − whether its materiality be paper-based or more digitized in nature (Jewitt, 2009). These functioned as scaffolds for learners’ exploration of prescribed narratives, but it was actually the less conspicuous mode − the *means* behind the making of each text − that emerged as true scaffold during our journey.

Simon et al’s (2016) article, discussed earlier, seems to slightly overlook this function of the mode, as something situated *within* texts, within *genres* and the broader

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contexts of history and anthropology. Where this study and my own do find some parity, though, is in a crossing of modes that allows for the unique affordances and meaning potentials of each to emerge with particular clarity, while still forming part of a coherent unit or 'frame'. With the inter-genre project, the visual mode or participants' myriad illustrations seemed to communicate the intangibles of mood, atmosphere and cadence, while the linguistic elements of song lyrics, subtitles or videogame commands situated everything more firmly within prescribed content. True to Barthes' (1967; 1977) seminal findings, the words anchored the visuals and vice versa, making for a certain syncretism or uniformity in meanings communicated. As Abbey, a participant from the *Maus* project, explains:

> "For my project, I painted a panel with Vladek hugging Anja when he arrives home from the war. Anja is showing lots of emotions in this panel and that's why I picked it. […] I thought that the more colours I used, the more emotion it showed. The message is dark but the image is colourful" (Simon et al, 2016, p. 440).

As with my own sample group, this learner seems to realise that meanings not always reside in the pictures or words themselves, but in the way they are combined or *orchestrated* (Bourne et al, 2003). In a sense, the artefact is made 'whole' through a synthesis of semiotic phenomena on both sides of the receptive vehicle − inside and out − in Abbey's case between intention, selection, emotion, colour and darkness. It is not implied here that modes cannot 'mean' in isolation, but it is their sheer proximity in-frame − their *dialogue* with other modes − that may have made for such impactful creations during the inter-genre project, in particular. An awareness of this mutuality between all semiotic phenomena, since the inception of the inter-genre project overall, may also have accounted for participants' viewing of each artefact as *product* of many mental picturings, modes and their materialities. In this regard, and in light of the recent social-semiotic investigations reviewed here (Simon et al, 2014, 2016; Tomlinson, 2015; Batchelor, 2019), I have encouraged my participants to view their modes through a similar, combinatory lens (during the main production and reflection stages), as the linguistic mode alone simply proved insufficient for our exploration of canonical texts.

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An arts-based inquiry into the chain of semiosis

Meanings are not so much static things brought on by external events or stimuli as they are nomadic patterns in the neural pathways of the brain − always changing and progressing until arrested by particular punctuations (Kress, 2000; 2005) in a *chain of semiosis*. The latter is defined as "a process of sign-making in which meaning is materialised in a range of different but linked texts" (Jewitt, in MODE, 2019). This study also draws from Stein's (2008) work with such chains, recognising that meaning is seldom realised in fixed sequences, but rather through a series of interconnected texts over time. During this process, the affordances of particular modes and their materialities − as well as their grounding in social, cultural and aesthetic practices − emerge through the unique anchorings and punctuations of the sign-maker.

Instances where meaning-making is temporarily halted − or rerouted in an attempt to find new meanings or synthesise those previously acquired − are described by Newfield (2014) as *transmodal moments*. More than a mere observable or measurable timeframe for meaning transformation, the complexities of this phenomenon has in recent years spurred on linguists, language acquisition theorists and neuroscientists alike (Wolf, 2007) to explore the actual cognitive and physical processes involved in agentive semiosis. The works of Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) and Pierre-Félix Guattari (1930-1992) have received increased attention in this regard; their descriptions of collaborative meaning-making as "works of art" is particularly relevant within a social semiotic paradigm, though the latter was only formally theorised a decade after Guattari's death.

It may be necessary to consider the image of meaning-making in social contexts as "works of art" more closely. If an impressionist painter, for instance, plans to create a fairly 'accurate' representation of a landscape, it would be logical to first draw the contours, outlines or distinctive shapes of the scene directly onto the canvas. Thereafter, the painter may wish to revisit any preparatory drawings or handwritten notes to ensure that the feeling or "fleeting moment" (Kleiner et al, 2004, p. 869) of the scene had been captured faithfully. Only then will he proceed to mix the paints − making sure that the colour and tint of each is true to form − and apply them while constantly glancing over to his subject, to the canvas and then back again. Here the

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linear yet reiterative nature of meaning-making − of Kress' (1997) *transduction* of the physical world onto the canvas − becomes clear. Much like a learner participating in a task-based, goal-oriented activity in a classroom, the painter had to constantly traverse between visual, lexical (perhaps even gestural) modes to arrive at the final punctuation or link in the chain: the finished painting. As an illustrator or draughtsman myself, I can also vouch for the to-and-fro process involved in drawing things. Also, my exploration of these more *artistic* pathways during the redesign of prescribed literature − as seen in the data analysis chapters below − is in no small part attributable to Deleuze and Guattari's work in social semiotic spaces.

The participants would thus come to regard their lines, shapes, colours and textures in the same light as words or other forms of linguistic anchorage, at least in terms of their in-text *meaning potentials* (Halliday, 1978). Their use of the art elements as near-autonomous signifiers within the larger orchestration of the videogame screenshot, among other genres explored in the project, would yield some surprising results as far as their *semiotic weight* or sheer potential for communicating meaning was concerned. With this decidedly artistic take on the redesign process, a singular trace, inscription or mark left on paper was likened to the more 'visible' structures of written text, as if the outline of a figurative drawing could bear a significance equal to that of a morpheme (word) within a larger unit, like a line from a poem. This confirmed one of my main suspicions as social semiotic researcher: that participants can be *made aware* of modal fluidity − especially between the linguistic and visual − and be guided to use them in a most anchored and complementary way.

Signs: issues of selection, intention and production

The idea of acquired, discarded and altered constructs of knowledge − as perceived by the qualitative researcher intent on tracking a *chain* of semiosis − was first explored by Kress in 1993. In later writings (Stein, 2003; Newfield, 2014; Yamada-Rice, 2015) it was actually applied to the observation of text redesign in praxis (particularly with regards to *materiality*, *genre*, *site of display* and other modal features) and any changes in the semiotic agent's meanings these brought about. A similar approach was followed in this study, though the focus was less on tracking participants' 'chains' and more on an analysis of their work as examples of re-semiotised, multimodal composites − in this case, creative works inspired by

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prescribed texts as well as their thematically 'linked' scaffolds (see fig. 1.1, p. 14, bottom asterisk). Perhaps because the exact neurological processes (Gruhn et al, 2008) required in remaking meanings continue to elude researchers in the social semiotic field, I found *participative observation* (Bloome, 2012) particularly useful during my collection of data. In the *Method* chapter (to follow) it becomes clear how my continuous note-taking of learners' written, drawn, actional, gestural and verbal responses would enable a mapping of *intertextual webs* − a hybrid of the semiotic chain that clarifies how learners had arrived at particular meanings, what they did with those meanings afterwards, and why they had preferred particular meanings above others in their redesigned works.

A similar hands-on and largely qualitative approach to generating raw data − in response to the meaning transformation inquiry − had been followed by Olshansky (2008), Yamada-Rice (2015), Tomlinson (2015) and others. Certain patterns, not only in participants' external behaviour but also in the aesthetic or modal qualities of remade works, seem to emerge in the analyses of such pedagogic scenarios. For one, there is the occurrence of newly constructed meanings which appear to manifest especially in the artistic liberties taken by participants − either in the form of improvised written text, speech or other (text-based) modes, or entirely original illustrations of characters, settings, symbols and other literary devices. Only in Chapters Four through Six below, though, do these patterns become wholly clear.

The semiotic agent's selection of signs is thus not arbitrary (Kress, 1993), but geared towards the communication of meaning through the semiotic resources at his or her disposal. Ever since the publication of Roland Barthes' essay *The Death of the Author* (1967), the concept of 'authorial intent' has caused much debate among linguists from diverse fields. The acceptance of *arbitrariness* (Kress, 1993) as fact, for example, would fall neatly into a theorem of nomadic thought − with its malleable qualities appearing visibly in the transmodalised text as 'random' traces of meaning. The fact that an 'author' has an intended meaning does not mean that the reader will arrive at this same meaning, nor does it mean that the reader is 'at fault' if he or she does not arrive at it. Yet, a more conventional view of meaning-driven, *motivated signage* (Kress, 1993) may recall our attention to the sign-maker possessing at least some predetermined ideas about his or her creation, and wanting to communicate

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these clearly to a prospective audience through written, visual or more performative tropes.

I have taken a similar stance with past research (De Jager, 2017), but here I also wish to emphasise the shortage of classroom research making a clear distinction between agency and intention − that is, the extent to which multimodal texts carry the cognitive, affective and semiotic weight of their creators. My image of *semiotic weight* here, quite paradoxically, brings us back to yet another Barthesian concept: the *anchorage of meaning* (1977) through the written word. A short caption accompanying a picture, for instance, can shape what we actually *see* in the picture. Probably more than any other genre, comic books rely on the combined use of words and images to communicate different moods and character movements within their settings − among many other, complex literary and visual elements − to tell stories (McCloud, 1993). The comic book is typically handled by a team of pencillers, inkers and writers as opposed to a single 'author', so it is imperative for each member to understand how his or her input should complement the other modes, and contribute towards a final multimodal narrative that reads coherently and cohesively. This is a perfect example, I feel, of how primarily *visual* texts can be anchored meaningfully by words. In the case studies − particularly the storyboards in section 4.2 − it was quite interesting to gauge the extent to which participants had anchored their work in this way. Also, what had motivated their use of particular settings, colours, facial expressions, sounds and words in the songs, storyboards and videogame scenarios? Through my talks with learners, conducting of interviews and collection of artefacts, I wanted to discover how these motivated transformations linked with the 'source' as well as 'scaffolding' texts in the study. In as much detail as possible, these discoveries are presented chronologically in Chapter Four.

When one is required to modally redesign or *reshape* a linguistic text, there is thus a sustained interaction between the constructed images in one's mind on the one hand, and one's fingers, body, materials and media on the other (Sakr, Jewitt & Price, 2014). This process, it can be argued, allows one to arrive at "wider concepts" (Pahl et al, 2001, p. 129) or deeper meanings. The meaning maker is encouraged to ask: which type of line, shape, texture should I use for this part, and how will these connect with the next link in my chain? He or she may also want to justify the

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selection of different modes, and ask how they link with the source text. Instead of passively digesting the text, the reader can now actively *engage* with his or her meanings (Sankey, Birch & Gardiner, 2010). It seems that the material redesign of texts is both a bodily and cognitive process: one may contemplate or *visualise* ways of re-shaping the semiotic resources at one's disposal, and produce each link accordingly. At the same time, the words from the source text will be stored by the meaning maker as *reference materials* or *mental images* (Fadel, 2008; Pallasmaa, 2009). Drawing from Lave & Wenger's (1991) and Wilson's (2002) *embodied cognition studies*, I also argue that the meaning maker is highly selective in this regard: he or she will only keep those meanings which suit the materiality or material constitution of the proposed, re-designed text − in this case, a song, film or videogame concept.

2.2.2 Re-semiotisation, re-genrefication and re-making

This section relates to my first research question, as it focuses on *re-semiotisation*, *re-genrefication* and *re-making* as distinctive phenomena of the inter-genre approach to text redesign. Before explaining how these terms have been applied for the purposes of this study, it is necessary to discuss their broader principles as given in current literature. *Re-semiotisation* is understood as an initial, mainly cognitive process of transducing a source text into multimodal artefact; a process of making *new meanings* (Newfield, 2014) through an active engagement with semiotic resources. At the root of this is *semiosis*, described by Jewitt (2003; 2009) as the interpretation (and use of) signs and symbols in order to make meaning, yet the morphemes of *re-* and *-ation* here imply a more reiterative process − of ongoing action, of a sustained application of meaning-making skills towards a particular text, artefact or other receptive vehicle. It would appear that re-semiotisation is very much a 'doing' word, describing a *redirecting* of our interpretations to a more individualised form, a more accessible materiality, or merely a larger site of display. As for *genre*, a two-pronged view is offered above, as it still adheres to the autonomous model's classification of texts according to their staging, purpose or compositional aspects (Street, 1993; English, 2011), yet moves beyond this by providing a midpoint for texts, modes and signs to *move around* in the space of an embodied literacies or artefactual redesign programme. However, the process of

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actually *making* a text − even an entire genre − was a key motivation behind my own participants' representations of individual, literacy identity; an opportunity to express their lived realities in a most tangible and systemic way. The sheer excitement or, more importantly, *meaningfulness* that comes with this process is perhaps best captured by Batchelor (2019, p. 3):

> "[…] transmediation may change the conversation regarding revision, allowing learners to 're-see' their writing throughout the process, thus providing accessibility and meaningfulness that students lacked in previous revision experiences […] conscious mode switching makes for more powerful learning."

This study, though, expands upon this by acknowledging that the remaking of meanings across *genres* (and not only modes) is key to broadening learners' knowledge of both canonical and out-of-school literatures, and providing an outlet for their imaginations. Here the prescribed poem, novel or play is not just remade but *re-genred*, in the sense of it becoming a part of learners' interactions with mass media and digital technologies. Fiona English's (2011) work with first-year students modally "re-configuring" their essays is especially reminiscent of this process. What follows is a brief look at how her theories may have added focus to my application of the inter-genre approach, at all three the research sites.

First of all, English seeks to re-conceptualise the term *genre* so that it does more than classify texts according to their materiality or immediate 'purpose'. Drawing on the work of Kress (2005), Halliday (1978) and others, she arrives at this general definition: "[it is] a category which identifies the shape of a text, or better the framing of a text. It identifies what kind of text it is, that is what to expect from it, and at the same time, it shapes that identity… genre is a term which identifies texts as belonging to a particular type" (2011, p. 77). The author's framing of the terms 'genre' and 'text' here proved quite helpful during my data analysis; it supported a view of texts as vehicles for meaning-making or semiotic resources which could shape our identities, belonging to particular communicative or *social* events. Also significant here is English's *orientation* of genres from the perspectives of their (a) social characteristics and (b) material constitution (2011, p. 88). The former is further divided into *contextual orientation* (which involves *design*, *production* and *distribution*) and *discursive orientation* (which involves *agency* and *discursive*

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identity), whereas the latter is divided into *thematic orientation* (*topics* and *organisation*) and *semiotic orientation* (*modes*, *textual materials* and *media*).

These categorisations of genres according to their social staging, purpose, materiality or thematic properties also seem to underscore my presentation and analysis of data in Chapters Four through Six. They may even have impacted upon the aesthetic outcome of the artefacts. While heeding against the mental "baggage" of such terms (Kress, 1993, as cited in English, 2011, p. 67), I did emphasise that a *genre* could encompass more than, for example, a song, film or videogame. Each of these has a multitude of sub-genres, classes or, as the original French word implies, *types*. There are action, fantasy, science-fiction and horror films, for instance, and the same could apply for concept albums or videogames. Although the scaffolding texts (see fig. 1.1) selected for our redesign journey could also be categorised as particular 'types' of films and so forth, what learners *did* with these was entirely up to them. As English (2011, p. 67) explains, the semiotic agent − as *classifier* and *re-maker* of resources − often makes firm (design) decisions "influenced by… social, cultural, educational [and] personal experiences".

Other discussions in this work which equally informed my data analysis and overall research design include Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2001) four main *interactions* traceable during cases of text remaking (as cited in English, 2011, p. 49). These are *design* (what the teacher envisages as designed 'outcome', and why), *redesign* (how the learner re-interprets this, and why), *production* (how and why the learner produces particular artefacts) and *distribution* (how the product is delivered or received, and what to do next). This model − which has been simplified and schematically represented by English − was extremely useful as a guideline or framework whenever participants' semiotic chains had to be presented chronologically in Chapter Four. Also central to this study was the rethinking of genres as social semiotic *resources* (English, 2011, p. 67; 77). This perspective has shed new light on the genre or *type* of text having specific, practical strengths or affordances when it came to communicating Halliday's (1978) *meaning potentials* within social learning contexts. This theory − as one acknowledging the origins, social purposes and modal relationships of and between texts − clearly supports the idea of an *interconnectedness* between genres in the world today (as outlined in

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section 1.2, p. 11). I did, though, build upon English's framing of *genre* with my own, *inter-genre approach*: to track the movements of modes between many, previously unconnected texts, and to visually, sonically and kinaesthetically reinforce the meanings of said texts.

This raises a few questions: what are *genres*, exactly, how do they differ from modes, and how does one distinguish between a genre and any other semiotically articulated means of expression? Jewitt (in MODE, 2019) defines genre as "the regular patterns of semiotic choices in multimodal communicative objects and events that are particular to specific communities and cultures". Bateman (2008), though, has extended this to include "communicative tasks among a community of users". Drawing more from the paradigmatic expressions of multimodality and less from that of functional linguistics, I argue that the genre *can be made* and is therefore a socially significant activity, tied to the modes made available by a particular medium, social context or communicative purpose. According to English (2011), though, the more traditional conception of genre is still useful as it helps to categorise or inventorise bodies of texts according to their material and literary *identities*.

Still, the term falls prey to inconsistency in its theoretical and pedagogical applications, with a number of new literacies (Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Buckingham, 2003) and multimodal (Batchelor, 2018; 2019) studies using it almost interchangeably with *mode*, *text* and other categorisations of media. Formulating an all-encompassing definition for the term across the discourses is not, however, the focus here, but it is necessary to find its peripheries − to understand what it can *do*, what it includes and excludes, or how it can mobilise the mode − in order to further frame the titular, *inter-genre* element of this study. Also, if the inter-genre approach were to be applied on a wider scale − that is, in the typically overcrowded South African classroom − it would be imperative for learners to know *what they were making*, *what was required to make it*, and *what it was for*. To revisit my metaphor above, the genre was the 'sun' in our system of meaning-making, with the texts their orbiting planets. The modes comprising these texts were, quite fittingly, the moons circumnavigating each planet at a slow but steady pace. By implication, the modes were always in eyeshot of the text − gravitating towards it, complementing it − while the relationship between the text and genre seemed equally mutual.

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In a diagram of a cube, further segmented into smaller cubes, Richard Andrews (2011) offers a similar view of the genre as something comprised of many orchestrations, artefacts, texts and other semiotic phenomena. Yet, my above image of genre as heliocentric entity *above* the mode and *above* the text may call further attention to the intricacies of the redesign process itself, or the need to orchestrate smaller semiotes *around* a central, more ubiquitous vehicle. To use a concrete example from the project, the nine-frame storyboard (based on a prescribed poem) may have accommodated a certain line, colour, shape or texture − the *mode* − within a certain scene − the *text* − within a certain worksheet or drawing template − the *genre*, or more specifically, *genre frame* to guide learners through the entire process. This concentric approach to redesign was never explicitly taught, but a strong focus on what it means to *make things* − on the part of all role-players − may have accounted for the high level of detail and intertextual references in each artefact. My conclusion here is that genres, though at times overlapping certain elements of the mode or text, are best described as the lowest common denominator of all things written, drawn, played or performed. They are the broadest possible *types* of things − as English (2011) would describe it − giving some structure to our categorisation of signs, modes and texts.

When pictures speak: a rethinking of modal 'affordance'

What thus separates genres from modes is their *static-ness*; their proclivity for 'staying put' as they envelop texts and other semiotisations. I reiterate that English locates genre as "a term which identifies texts as belonging to a particular type" (2011, p. 77). It is this "belonging" where the mode differs from the genre, as it displays a certain fluidity or penchant for crossing textual and generic divides. As noted above, the mode needs and very much *wants* to move − to leap from the confines of a frame, artefact or materiality. In the case of my own sample group, many linguistic modes found mobility in the way they were superimposed over existing drawings on the genre frames. The ledger lines used in music notation, for example, could be repositioned on the lyric poster to complement certain parts of a prescribed novel, and camera movement signs (with the director's spoken words) could be pasted below different frames of the storyboard to create different effects. In the videogame genre frames, the visual-modal elements *themselves* − that is, the

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drawings of various avatars from Romeo and Macbeth to Amy Biehl − were *made to move* despite being frozen in time by their paper materiality. This inherent trait of the mode − not only the visual but linguistic, sonic and kineikonic − to leap between, onto, beneath and through one another of course holds strong implications for how the prescribed text is remade artefactually.

One of the most profound ideas in this regard may be that the mode not always does, or communicates, what it is *expected* to. A drawing, for example, may make a sound (without the need for onomatopoeic or linguistic anchorage) while a single word can create colour in the mind of the discerning viewer. This recalls Ward and Simner's (2003) *synaesthesia* or, on a slightly broader note, Jewitt's (2019) *intersemiotic relations* between modes across genres like comic books, film posters, album sleeves, videogame screens and songs. In extreme cases, the linguistic anchor can seem almost invasive to the central, visual feature. In one participant's redesign of Wilfred Owen's war poem *Anthem for Doomed Youth* (1917), the storyboard's nine frames could easily have stood on their own as icons of WWI horrors, which is arguably the intended 'effect' of the original poem also. Quite disappointingly, though, many of the social semiotic studies cited above reveal a pre-occupation with modes as pedagogic 'helpers' and not phenomena central to our mind-and-body interactions − those very mechanisms driving our readings of the word and the world.

A brief framing of the transmodal moment, and implications for redesign

Central to the *remaking* process (which is also the final agentive 'action' listed in research question one) are *transmodal moments* or those instances of transition from one mode to another when engaged in re-semiotisation (Newfield, 2014; MODE, 2019). This concept has already been defined above, but I now wish to identify some gaps in how it is applied elsewhere − in the literature − and to explain how these may have informed my own approach to data gathering and analysis. Firstly, the transmodal moment's sheer profundity as a multimodal semiotic phenomenon is seldom foregrounded in studies tracking the chains of sign-makers (Mavers, 2001; Stein, 2008; Newfield, 2014). This is perhaps due to its abstract nature, or the difficulty of identifying concrete 'moments' of traversal between linguistic, visual, gustatory, kinaesthetic and sonic modes. Rolling (2018), though, does provide some clarity on the visible shifts involved in transmodalisation, with the agent directing his

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gaze towards particular elements of the source and remade text. A typewritten word, a scrap of paper, or a different graphological tool is duly *considered* by the agent, before it is *contemplated* why, how and where to use it, and then *commanded* through the body to become part of a cohesive whole. The common consensus is that all of this transpires within seconds, as per a 'moment' of semiotic resource manipulation (Mavers, in MODE, 2019).

Yet, a few questions surrounding the transmodal moment remain − even on some of the most thorough discourse platforms like *MODE*. Where does the moment begin, and end? Is it from the conception of the *thought* to shift to another mode, or from the more discernable, bodily *act* of doing it? Also, if the transmodal moment is derived from Kress' (1997) *transduction*, and if the latter is such a reiterative and continuous sequence of body-mind interactions, does it ever really end? Is the entire process of remaking not just one, seamless, transmodal event? This issue extends far beyond the semantic, so it is imperative to 'mark' the precise occurrences of transmodal and intertextual traversal if one desires to further understand how agents *remake their readings*. The transmodal moment, it would seem, is different from transduction in that it spawns from a preceding semiotic articulation − a paraphrasing of Shakespearean line on a slip of paper, for instance − before informing a next one, such as pasting the slip onto a genre frame. My representation of the semiotic chain as a spider's web (Chapter Five) highlights that no single thought or act of redesign is isolated, and though the transition from 'out-of-school' modes to prescribed ones are clearly visible in the differently coloured webs, the agent often traverses between modes at such a rate and frequency that a *web* of transmodal moments − as opposed to a linear *chain* − emerges as a representation of what occurs during redesign.

2.2.3 Intertextuality

> "There is nothing new under the sun."
>
> Sister Aloysius Beauvier in *Doubt* (2008)

Relating to the above is the concept of *intertextuality*, and how it had manifested during my participants' redesign journeys. In the simplest terms, intertextuality is the occurrence of a *dialogue* (Bakhtin, 1981; Holquist, 1990) between two or more texts,

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manifesting as either a figural (character-based), contextual or thematic exchange, allusion or interaction. A character from one narrative, for example, may make an unexpected appearance in another, or an author may tell a story through a mélange of extant characters, settings and plot devices. In this study, this phenomenon is extended to 'conversations' between texts from entirely different genres, such as poems and motion pictures. Since the project has encouraged such a sustained engagement with different types of texts, it turns out that participants' works incorporated many of these *intertextual devices* (Kristeva, 1966), which I will outline now.

An *intertextual use of character* and *setting* allows one to tell an entirely new tale by drawing on the works of other authors, poets or playwrights. The best example of this is probably Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) which − though set in Jamaica − includes a secondary character from Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847). Also, a narrative can merely adopt a *different point of view* from an existing one to express new themes, as is the case with Aime Cesaire's *A Tempest* (1969), loosely based on Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* (1611). With *Lord of the Flies* (1954), William Golding has taken his story implicitly from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883), and used the 'stranded boy' characters as a *parody* for a society gone astray. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), Ernest Hemingway uses intertextuality in the title of his novel, *quoting* from John Donne's poem *Meditations XVII* (1624). Other intertextual devices (to be explored further in Chapter Six) are *allusion*, *plagiarism*, *pastiche*, and *metalepsis*.

A clearer picture of what makes the embodied process so 'intertextual'

Besides these devices, I also encouraged my participants to navigate more freely between the modes of their prescribed and non-prescribed genres; genres which may have remained forever 'distant' had they not been synthesised in some way through the remade artefact. Perhaps the most unorthodox among these genres was videogames, the conventions of which would prove instrumental in mobilising Shakespeare's plays, especially. Bakhtin's work, particularly his essays from *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), resonates most with this ethos of *texts begetting texts begetting texts* − not only in the sense of what they include, but also in how they manifest as part of a certain literary or artistic gestalt. The following statement

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(Bakhtin, 1981, p. 93) best captures this other, lesser known mechanism of intertextuality:

> "The topic of the speaker's speech, regardless of what this topic may be, does not become the object of speech for the first time in any given utterance; a given speaker is not the first to speak about it. […] The speaker is not the biblical Adam, dealing only with virgin and still unnamed objects, giving them names for the first time."

At the very earliest stages of the project, a similar holistic or *interconnected* view of all things textual would emerge among participants, as I urged them to draw from any imaginable articulation − prescribed or otherwise − in the completion of each artefact. This in turn led to a conversation between their prescribed narratives, the actual work being done on the genre frames, and their contexts outside the classroom walls; the music they listened to, the films they watched and the games they played. The artefacts, then, were never intended as standalone, self-sufficient 'texts' but polymorphic representations of many, past things: mere convergences of existing literary, artistic and digital phenomena, which would hopefully inspire more ones in the future. Though Bakhtin's seminal essays focus mainly on speech or the categorisation of *utterance* as semiotic vehicle, many of his observations seem to echo my own research, or the overall manner in which the project transpired. In one essay*, The Problem of Speech Genres* (1981), the concept of genre is viewed in a similar light; it is but a spherical categorisation of made and re-made entities − specifically *texts* − which in turn, and in the very broadest sense, equate to orchestrations of signifiers, signs, symbols and modes.

Also, the many phenomena surrounding speech (as thoroughly explored by Bakhtin) seem highly applicable to the plethora of modes employed in this study. Like utterances, my participants' markings on the genre frames may not have been entirely "self-sufficient" (1981, p. 90) in their communications, but they always formed part of a particular, expressive *chain* − with each line, shape, tone, texture and colour harnessing its own "intonation" (p. 90), "addressivity" (p. 95) or "style" (p. 96). Within the larger communality of the genre, the mode and text *move* and − depending on how the agent has applied these in space, time and other such variables − may represent, supplement, conceal, foreground or entirely reinvent other ones. This, I argue, lies at the heart of intertextual discourse: a moving away from the accepted, archetypal categorisation of our creations − literary works, in particular − or the idea

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of texts as impenetrable to *other* texts, modes or genres. Above everything else, it would seem that Bakhtin wanted us to see the text as a mere reverberation of all that has come before; a fleeting response within a perpetual dialogue of pictures, sounds and words.

In the interests of providing a lens for my analysis of data in Chapter Four, it is also necessary to discuss how intertextual theory ties in with English literature − or learners' reading thereof − and how it can be applied as a vehicle for exploring prescribed characters, settings, storylines, themes and symbols. I argue that the contents of a poem or longer narrative (such as a novel) can be extracted, mobilised into the extra-diegetic world, and then returned in situ as a means to highlight particular literary elements of a source text − elements which may have remained forever concealed had they not made such a 'leap'. For a concrete example, one of my participants had treated Shakespeare's Macbeth to a virtual world more akin to *Assassin's Creed* (2008) than a seventeenth-century Elizabethan play. It was through this 'treatment' of Macbeth as a videogame avatar − as one oblivious to the machinations of the player, yet inseparable from Shakespeare's original plot − that the agent could approach his prescribed play with an enthusiasm, ownership and agency never afforded by his teacher's cover-to-cover reading. This has been, in every sense of the word, a *dialogue* between the text and reader, the protagonist and the world of console games. This veritable paradigm shift − from the verbocentric learning of a prescribed narrative, to the more generative and individualised process of transmodalisation − is also privileged in other studies crossing modes in pedagogical ways (Simon et al, 2014; 2016; Tomlinson, 2015; Batchelor, 2019).

It is still questionable, though, whether the scaffolds selected for these studies suit the tastes and textual experiences of the millennial or *digitally native* (Prensky, 2001; 2010) learner. In Batchelor's *Meaningful, Embodied Literacies: Dramatic Play and Revision with Middle School Writers in Warsaw, Poland* (2019), learners' performances of puppet vignettes − based on their own fictional stories − succeed in stimulating the imagination, but the process of embodiment still calls for platforms a little closer to children's digital life-worlds. The puppet shows, presented as "flash fiction pieces" (p. 1) before being transcribed into script form, feel somewhat cyclical

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or inverted as an embodied process. Taking understanding from one imagined text and recasting it into another − though at times useful as a creative outlet − is merely *translative* and offers little insight into how the canonical, authorial and often *static* source text could be *made to move* within the larger spheres of mass media and digital communication technologies. Batchelor's puppets seem very much engaged with themselves − tied to a particular time and space as a live audience watch a fleeting vignette. Though puppetry is still prominent in the performance arts, it is the *digital screen* with its pervasive media streams, avatars and other computer-generated polymorphs that is really piquing learners' interest, in South Africa at least (Uys et al, 2008; Hattingh et al, 2008; Bingwa, 2017).

I also argue that the embodiment of linguistic texts is seldom an osmotic process, nor is it one that will occur naturally should the agent be guided through a transmediation of the canonical, verbocentric or monomodal. The creative redesign process (in any shape or form) is not a means to an end but integral to meaning-making *itself*, that is, if the making of meanings is envisioned as an outcome of one's pedagogy, intervention, or enrichment programme. As the New London Group have posited since 1996, an acknowledgement of our *learners* as the primary readers, interpreters and re-makers of texts is the first step towards increased autonomy and critical-creative thinking in classrooms across the subjects and grades. These are the *new literacies* − those sign systems and texts that move beyond the verbose and reflect a world that is dynamic, meaningful and multidimensional − and this project has in no small measure looked towards them as primary scaffolds for redesign. Some more recent social semiotic investigations (Wohlwend, 2013; Vasudevan, 2014; Rolling, 2018) have echoed this ideal of employing *out-of-school* resources and activities during redesign, yet they reveal several gaps − especially with regards to selection − which could hopefully be crossed with the inter-genre approach suggested here.

To reiterate, the embodied process cannot spread of its own accord through the semiotic space; it needs a *vehicle*. For my approach, this seems to have been intertextuality, specifically Kristeva's (1966) troupe of intertextual *devices*. Simon et al's (2014) pedagogy, on the other hand, feels somewhat lacking in this area as participants were merely expected to "frame" existing panels from Spiegelman's

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graphic novel, *Maus*. Through their very absence of linguistic anchorage − or a more concrete imparting of context, thought or affect to viewers − the frames appear disconnected from both the original narrative and learners' out-of-school environs. Similarly, Batchelor's (2019) puppet vignettes, being based on middle school learners' own fictional stories, reveal little in terms of the *efficacy* of transmodal redesign. While it is not necessarily a limitation (these learners have no doubt grown in confidence and storytelling) it is difficult to track which meanings have been embodied through performance − or which have been discarded, retained or transmediated from the written script into the puppet show itself − and *why*. The inter-genre project resonates closely with these studies in their theoretical under-builds and actual application, but it differs in that it privileges the extant, canonical text as both a 'target' for multimodal redesign, and a source of meanings very much relatable to our lives.

2.2.4 Outlining *The New Literacy Studies* as research lens

The New Literacy Studies (NLS) is another body of work (Brandt et al, 2002; Gee, 2000; 2015; Hull & Schultz, 2001; Pahl et al, 2005; 2006; Prinsloo & Breier, 1996; Street, 1993; 1997; 2005) that links closely with the ideals supported in this study, as it opposes the traditional view of literacy as a mainly 'cognitive' or 'mental' phenomenon. Though I have sought to track participants' *mental images* (Pallasmaa, 2009) through reflective testimony in the preliminary and final interviews (Appendix C), I have also viewed the redesign process as a socio-cultural *act*, or practice. This supports Gee's (2015) framing of the NLS as a movement presenting the written and spoken varieties of language as "a matter determined by the social, cultural, historical, and institutional practices of different groups of people" (p. 44). Continuing this theme is a slightly later movement, *The New Literacies Studies*, which views literacy as pluralistic and highly accommodative of new technologies. Before expanding on how the NLS may have inspired the decidedly 'digital' premise of the scaffolds or *genre frames* used by participants, it is necessary to highlight some key theoretical standpoints − specific to this movement − which served as a lens for my selecting, gathering and analysis of resources.

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The 'mind' debate continues

Most integral to the NLS paradigm − as one that has inspired embodied redesign processes since the early 1980s − is the contention that literacy and meaning-making are things that people do in the world and society, and "not just inside their heads" (Gee, 2015, p. 35). It is perhaps this ethos of *bringing the outside in* that gave impetus to the inter-genre approach initially, as FET learners could for the first time resituate their prescribed narratives in the world of pop songs, Hollywood films and console games. Already in 1993, Brian Street highlighted the importance of situating literacy learning within such everyday "events" or "aspects of social life":

> "Researchers dissatisfied with the autonomous model of literacy… have come to view literacy practices as inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in society, and to recognise the variety of cultural practices associated with reading and writing in different contexts. […] they study these social practices rather than literacy-in-itself for their relationship to other aspects of social life" (p. 7).

While not entirely discounting the role of *thought* in multimodal redesign (there remains a natural affinity between Lave & Wenger's *Situated Cognition Studies* and the NLS) I do concur with Gee (2015) that cognition alone is of little consequence; the machinations of the mind need to be *embodied* somehow to initiate active semiotisation within any space. The following example is particularly effective in demonstrating how our brains' constructions of meaning still result from largely experiential or *world-based* situations:

> "The coffee spilled, go get a mop."
> "The coffee spilled, go get a broom."
> "The coffee spilled, stack it again."
>
> Clark (1993) as cited in Gee (2015, p. 37)

Depending on the linguistic association with coffee in these sentences, one may bear in mind an idea of coffee as either liquid, grains or boxes. This may also extend to how the prescribed text can be resituated outside of the classroom walls or − as Street (1993) would describe it − as *literacy practices* removed from the scholastic or pedagogic domain entirely. "Let's read Macbeth," for example, would no doubt evoke an image of reading the play in its original *book* materiality, while "Let's play Macbeth" may bring to mind a video- or board-game adaptation. "Let's watch Macbeth" may suggest a film, "Let's listen to Macbeth" a song, and so forth. Though

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it is not the aim of this discussion to gauge the effects of diction on meaning, this does demonstrate the extent to which embodiment − or the specific, physical *action* imposed upon any text − may change it entirely in terms of materiality, site of display, audience, function or genre. Gee (2015), Street (1993; 2010) and others have honed in on this gap between what we *read* and what we *write* − as a primarily cognitive response to a certain literacy stimulus or task − and what we *do* with this cognised element in an ethnographic, social-semiotic setting. The NLS had thus been developed to separate, but not sever entirely, the mental processes of decoding, retrieving, comprehending and inferring from the less "psychologistic" practices of literacy and meaning-making in "modern urban settings" (Street, 1993, p. 3).

With no disrespect to the NLS and this much richer idea of the literacies it has helped to purvey, I argue that the redesign process as mere anthropomorphic alteration or movement of semiotic materials (that is, without the consult of things seen, heard and felt previously, and ingrained mentally) is an image that fails to account for the artefact transpiring essentially as an orchestrated thought, vision or dream *made manifest*. As an artist myself, I often 'see' the finished painting in my head well before I have begun to paint it. Of course one should heed against overly philosophical sentiments, but I prefer to describe the thought or mind as the *engine*, and whatever embodiments emerging from this the *bodywork* or vehicle itself. Without the former, the latter will amount to nothing − staying very much immobile − and vice versa. Psychologistic or *mind* matters are, as some of the most experienced neuroscientists (Wolf, 2007) would admit, very difficult to track in any learning situation, but it can still be argued that the embodied literacies, specifically, involve so much more than a social convergence of textual, cultural and (in the very broadest sense) anthropological practices. It is understood, too, that the NLS had shifted our focus to what can essentially be observed, recorded or *ethnographed* in-context (Gee, 2000; 2015). If left in the wrong hands, though, this may be repurposed into some dangerously behaviouristic approaches, or those culturally narrow views of reader-text interaction which the NLS school has sought to supplant in the first place.

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Meaning, it can be argued, still very much resides in the mind, yet this study has taken only a small step towards tracking the agent's 'thoughts' within and between each link of the semiotic chain. When and if the technology becomes available, the next frontier of the NLS might be to see detailed, in-depth picturings of the mind coupled with whatever transpires externally and corporeally.

The NLS and its impact on text / genre selection

Another shift brought on by the NLS is how we select our texts and genres − or elements thereof − in answer to the changing aptitudes, interests and digital backgrounds of learners both locally and abroad (Street, 1993). It can be said that the inter-genre approach, drawing from this same *newer is better* philosophy, has allowed for unprecedented freedom and flexibility in this regard. With the genre frames, participants could choose whatever parts of whatever novel, poem or play to remake − an exploratory technique allowing for a degree of 'control' or 'ownership' over the set work. Also, the very composition of the genre frames followed a design ethic which I knew would elicit a "cool!" response from any learner, regardless of economic, cultural or religious background. The videogame frames proved most effective here; with their uncluttered layout and large spaces for drawing, this group could unbridle their imaginations and include whatever they wanted in each frame − their favourite conventions from adventure, role-playing or fighting games − on the condition that they adhered to the thematic and contextual premises of their prescribed narratives.

To return to the theoretical underpinnings of the NLS and how they tie in with the selection approach, Gee (2015, p. 37) lists four quotes from his contemporaries which best demonstrate the progressive and digitally inclined "flavour" of this movement. These resonate particularly well with my own stance that the embodied redesign process must draw from out-of-school texts − if not whole practices − for it to feel 'real'. Though the improvement of learners' comprehension levels was by no means the aim of my research, the first two quotes by Barsalou (1999), "perceptual simulation is indeed central to comprehension" (p. 74) and "comprehension is grounded in perceptual simulations which prepare agents for situated action" (p. 77), do call to mind the many home pastimes, experiences or practices of the *digitally native* learner (Prensky, 2001; 2010). Whether tapping along to a song on the MP3,

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or scouring the screen for *that* Easter Egg in a new film or game, these learners are engaged in highly perceptive activities within the real, lived space and − however unwittingly − creating an arsenal of sounds, sights and smells to *situate* later within their artefacts. Glenberg (1997, p. 3) then asserts that "the meaning of an object, event or sentence is what [a] person can do with the object, event or sentence". More than anything else, this implies that the best kind of literacy task is one that is *situated* or *goal-oriented* in nature. In the context of the inter-genre project, this "object, event or sentence" may refer to the contents of participants' source texts − the prescribed novels, poems and plays they had to transmodalise − and the "doing with" their making of new meanings. The latter process − of semiosis, of making, remaking and repositioning meanings − is also seen by Glenberg and others as the very catalyst for our reading and writing of texts; if one cannot derive *meaning* from something, there would be little logic in continuing to shape, alter or adapt it.

The final contributor here, Hawkins (2005, p. 96), also cites "perceptual simulation" as the most elevated form of meaning-making − from texts and other semiotic articulations − when engaged in the process of redesign. This recalls Lave and Wenger's (1991) *Situated Cognition Studies* − now a benefactor to the NLS paradigm − which posits that our thoughts are not so much untraceable, abstract particles within the mind as they are dynamic *images* of goal-driven activities, undertaken in the material and social world. They are, if you will, micro-recordings of our interactions between the body, consciousness, and affect (Churchland, 1986; Gee, 1992; Damasio, 1994). This supports one of my own findings in a later chapter − of the semiotic agent drawing from his or her own memories or *mental images* (Pallasmaa, 2009) as main composites to a final work or orchestration. Such instances of cognitive recording and playback, I argue, occur in spaces far removed from the traditionally 'educational', 'social' or 'semiotic'. In the case of my participants, these may have been while they were streaming songs, watching films, playing videogames or merely commuting to school.

Seemingly absent from the NLS oeuvre (Brandt et al, 2002; Gee, 2000; 2015; Hull et al, 2001; Pahl et al, 2005; 2006; Prinsloo et al, 1996; Street, 1993; 1997; 2005), though, is a clear identification of these spaces, texts or experiences − not to mention Glenberg's "objects, events or sentences" − from the out-of-school domain

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which may ultimately inform the agent's selection and manipulation of semiotic resources. In a later chapter, I refer to these unseen elements as the *hollows of the [semiotic] chain*. I argue that these 'distanced' experiences often create patterns of meaning in the mind of the agent, which lie dormant until they are concretised or embodied artefactually.

The out-of-school domain: more implications for literacy learning

To conclude this discussion on the NLS, I add that the physical spaces in which literacy events occur often, if not always, determine *how* and *why* we read or write texts. In this modern communication age, however, it is the ever-growing number of physically separate, yet digitally connected discourse communities − such as social networking sites − that influences what we do with our words and pictures. Provided that the tools are available, anyone can communicate with anyone else in the world, anytime and anywhere. There is no doubt that the visible acts of reading and writing are still central to everyday, human functioning within the domains of school, work and home. Yet, literacy itself seems to have transcended space and time − to a point where these physical domains are no longer essential for communication in *any* capacity, whether it be for social, professional or academic purposes. One may also argue that FET learners (though they keep close to their peers within physical domains) can easily cross racial, cultural, gender and age-based divides through their online activities. This, in a sense, is reading and writing for the twenty-first century: the observation of multimodal texts, filtered through our own values, understandings, feelings and skills, and culturally reshaped or remade to make our voices heard in society.

It seems the type of literacy activities that today's children engage with − particularly in the home environment − has undergone somewhat of a paradigm shift since the early 1980s (Heath, 1983; Snow, 1983). With the advent of the internet, social media and digital forms of entertainment, children as young as three are pre-occupied with texts that seem far removed from the fairytale books, building blocks or dollhouses of old. As a consequence, many of these modern pastimes − though not readily associated with language or literacy learning − have spilled over into school curricula and classroom activities in general. The consensus among literacy (Cope et al, 2000; Jewitt, 2003; 2009; Gee, 2015) and language acquisition (Street,

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1993; Wolf, 2007; Hill, 2009) theorists is that such *situated* activities may do much to improve learner-text engagement, and expedite the acquisition of productive and receptive language skills, especially when applied in *emergent literacy* contexts (Jalongo, Dragich, Conrad & Zhang, 2002). Jalongo et al (2002), however, argue that the print-based, *book*-form springboard for reading, writing, speaking and listening activities will never be obsolete, and I do agree with this. In said study, then, the authors have opted for wordless picture books to support emergent literacy in the formative years (ages 3 to 7), which already hints at the *millennial* child's preference for visually stimulating or more instantaneous modes of communication.

Still, this is only a sweeping observation of current movements in learning propensities or styles, and it would be quite wrong to assume that it applies to all children, from all socio-economic backgrounds or educational contexts. A very erroneous decision on the part of today's educationists and researchers, however, would be to deny the prominence of these technologies in the day-to-day lives of people from around the world − across all literacy, occupational and social domains − and the urgency this implies to modernise learning and teaching practices. As Geertsema and Van Deventer observe in a local case study (2011), even the poorest of communities have seen their schoolchildren using cell phones extensively in class (under the teacher's supervision, of course) as a means to acquire language and literacy skills within real-life situations. This need of the millennial learner to learn in and through the decidedly digitized medium emerges with particular clarity in Chapter Six, with the unseen *hollows* of the semiotic chain proving instrumental in the completion of each artefact.

2.2.5 The multimodal revival of prescribed texts

A recent resurgence of investigations involving the remaking of meanings in both educational and non-educational contexts (Van Leeuwen, 2005; Stein, 2008; Bateman & Schmidt, 2012) has shifted research foci from "nomadic pathways of thought" (Newfield, 2017) to more tangible instances of transmodalisation in socially situated, educational contexts. This implies that relatively abstract or cognitive observations of semiotic behaviour can now be empirically recorded and analysed as true instances of meaning transformation (MODE, 2019). As a direct result of this specific, *pedagogical* train of thought, an increasing number of studies are

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showcasing either verbal, written or visual artefacts produced by school-level participants in response to a repertoire of researcher-designed and goal-oriented literacy learning tasks. Since this study aspires to fall within a similar paradigm, the multimodal redesign of texts was a focal area of investigation throughout my school visits, gathering of raw data and ultimate syntheses of learner-constructed knowledge. This was geared towards understanding the practical implications or *impact(s)* of a multimodal approach to literature teaching and learning in both local and international terrains, especially among more disadvantaged learner groups (section 3.2 will discuss this further).

In a postgraduate seminar called *Moving Across Modes*, held at the Wits School of Education in 2017, I found Prof. Denise Newfield's responses to new *metaphors* surrounding the transmodalisation of canonical works particularly relevant to my own research lens. For one, there is the notion of semiotic "sparkplugs" eliciting self-regulated, creative and quite surprising responses from learners partaking in multimodal interventions − all demonstrative of the affordances of alternative (and especially visual-driven) approaches to language and literature learning. Then there is the image of "lighting strikes" which, in a comparably dramatic fashion to the previous metaphor, instils an immediate "moment of agency" (Newfield, 2017) among participants involved in multimodal interventions, and a "move from darkness into light" with regards to text exploration. This image links closely with the third and final metaphor, "thresholds" which − on a metaphysical level − would involve participants crossing into new "rooms" or territories of literacy learning.

This links with a term that I coined in a past paper: *multimodal revival*, or the reinstatement of disengaged learners' interest in prescribed works through a redesign task or journey (De Jager, 2017). This doctoral study follows a similar (albeit more ambitious) route to improve learner-text engagement in the South African Home Language context, although some very recent findings in the multimodal field may have impacted upon my data analysis and subsequent findings. A renewed interest in Guattari and Deleuze's (1994) essays on the *philosophy* of meaning-making have also held implications for both theory and praxis in the multimodal domain, yet little is made of their *art education* focus or the possibilities of this as an integrated language and literacy pedagogy. Similarly, Duncum (2001) had

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predicted the implications of a *global visual culture* for middle school children at the turn of the millennium − just as *Youtube* and *Google* were about to become household names. This author offered useful developments, definitions and directions regarding educational technologies, but from an art teacher's perspective. As a response to these and more recent works (Mavers, 2011; Huang et al, 2014; Rowsell et al, 2015), I had to consider what contributions this study could make to the budding *multimodal-cum-art* repertoire. One such contribution may be its "practicable solutions to the ongoing issue of learner-text detachment" (p. 107) by drawing from multimodal semiotic theory, to inform an arts-based approach to prescribed literature teaching and learning.

The project itself (or data collection process) may be seen as a multimodal enrichment programme applied *outside* of the classroom walls. Yet, the findings below are intended − after all − for local *language* classrooms. During data analysis, it was thus necessary to engage with research which applied multimodality to literacy education, or language classrooms specifically. Pahl & Rowsell's *Artifactual Critical Literacy* (2011) was particularly valuable in this regard, as it provided new perspectives on how language skills could be developed through redesign tasks very similar to the ones used here. I did not wish to focus on linguistics, nor language acquisition processes in the study. However, many of the pedagogical reforms suggested by researchers operating in the literacies arena (Cope et al, 2000; Olshanksy, 2008; Hill, 2009; Hague et al, 2010; Janks, 2014; Gee, 2015; Yamada-Rice, 2015) still proved useful for transforming my research sites − a series of *redesign stations* on the school grounds − into spaces for literary text exploration.

What follows is a discussion of key music-, film- and videogame-theoretical concepts and their potential, in-class applications as part of an inter-genre programme. With a few exceptions, the *music* group would remake their novels into songs; the *film* group their poems into storyboards; and the *videogame* group their plays into in-game screenshots or other 'digitized' forms of text.

- **Music**

Arguably the most conspicuous feature of songs, *lyrics* provided my first core group with ample opportunities to construct and *channel* meanings derived from the source

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text, which in most cases was the prescribed novel (see fig. 1.1 in Chapter One). Much like poetry, song lyrics are usually arranged into verses, pre-verses (also called bridges) and choruses which could all be equated to stanzas. I did, of course, brief my participants on these textual (or rather *musical*) conventions before they commenced work on their redesigns. For the purposes of this study, I envisioned the use of a large poster or other 2D support − the *lyric poster* genre frame − upon which they could write their lyrics in bold letters and supplement them with a range of drawings, photographs or found objects relating to the novel. Not only would this make the song more impactful in terms of delivery and *site of display* (Newfield, 2014), but it would also suit the multimedia and indeed multimodal approach of the project. The poster could then be accompanied by participants' singing, rapping or improvisations over a pre-recorded track, as was the case with one participant, Mandy.[3]

From the perspective of modal composition, however, the literacy practice of song-writing is far more complex than this. I also expected my participants to consider the context, setting, characterisation and overarching themes of their novels whilst composing their songs − that is, to transform them into modal features akin to the song medium. In the interests of intertextual linkage, my participants were also encouraged to consider the traditional *music elements* (Alves, 2006; Gelineau, 2004) of beat, melody, tone, tempo, dynamics, rhythm and texture, so that their songs could relate to the source text more closely. For added dramatic effect, they could also include sounds, phrases or elements of dialogue specific to the novel being transmodalised, by *dubbing* them over a recorded track. Pink Floyd's songs, as an ideal example, are often littered with bomb blasts, conversations, doors slamming and other seemingly random noises, which lend them an eerie yet true-to-life quality typical of the progressive rock genre. Similarly, Mandy's song *Forbidden Love* (Appendix B2, on data disc) incorporates whispered sections and 'ghost' samples from the *Music Maker* program, tying it firmly to the more tragic or sinister aspects of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

[3] Pseudonyms used.

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The following elements of music (Alves, 2006, p. 6-29) can also be discerned quite clearly from Mandy's instrumental and vocal performance. Please note that, in future pedagogy, these elements should not limited to the mode of sound, but allowed to branch into the visual (e.g. the *lyric poster* in fig. 3.5 below) and gestural (e.g. an accompanying dance), or a combination of these.

Beat: The rhythmic pattern − made by clapping the hands, stomping the feet, playing the drums or using any other percussive instrument − which underscores the music and forms a foundation for other instruments to build upon.

Melody: Also known as a 'tune', a melody is traditionally associated with the seven notes in a major or minor scale, which are intermittently duplicated throughout a composition to create a pattern or some form of auditory coherence.

Tone: Different tones can be created in a number of ways. A strong and persistent beat, for example, may signify strength or aggression, whereas the more gentle use of percussive instruments (such as the shaker or ghost snare) may impart something more tranquil or suggestive of a calm scene.

Tempo: Tempo, also known as *pace*, basically refers to the speed at which particular sections of a composition is played.

Dynamics: Dynamics in music is usually associated with volume, but it may entail much more than this. How 'generously' a guitar string is plucked, a drum is hit, a flute is blown or a note is sung, for instance, may impact upon the perceived intonation, inflection and overall mood characterising a song.

Rhythm: Rhythm is a term that describes how music is organised in time. This element differs from beat, however, in that it creates *texture* in music, regardless of the instrument(s) being played.

- **Film**

The visual component of the full motion picture, as a multimodal assemblage or *polyglot* (Newfield et al, 2006), is arguably not as central to the channelling of meanings as would be the case with a video- or computer game. In other words, the

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sound, movements, points of view, camera angles and other editing features of a film all contribute towards arrested *punctuations* of meaning-making (Kress, 2000), which may elicit affective, cognitive or even synaesthetic responses from viewers. Although the majority of games today are moving in a similar cinematic direction, Kojima (2015) argues that even the most seasoned developers of 3D titles are still coming to grips with the dynamic camera movements, full-orchestra scores and inherently *human* interactions which make Hollywood movies the modal titans they are today. The player's focus is usually drawn towards particular environmental elements such as doors, pathways, weapons, keys or plot-related items, which need to be used or manipulated somehow to make progress in the current level or *stage*. This remains the case across all genres, from role-playing games and open-world adventures to first-person shooters. In the game genre, the visual mode − which may also include movement and *vectors* (Kress et al, 2001) − is thus paramount to establishing a 'dialogue' between player and screen. However, much needs to be done in terms of context-sensitive music, facial expressions, bodily movements and more subtle, real-life nuances to elevate digital games to the film genre.[4]

At this point, it may be necessary to outline the terminology (film jargon) and cinematographic effects most relevant during my visits to the storyboard group. These call attention to the modal complexities of the contemporary full-colour film, and possibilities for 'linkage' to prescribed poetry. As previously stated, an attempt was made to use *The Wall* film as a scaffold to teach and learn prescribed war poetry. With this and other out-of-school texts, I wanted to provide my participants with a visual reference of the Great War, and inspire them to redesign their war poems into dynamic and meaningful 'short films'. With *The Wall* in mind, I thus briefed them on the following techniques before and during the poem-to-film transmodalisation (adapted from Mayo, 2008, p. 55):

[4] In recent times, even the most banal of game titles have made extensive use of pre-rendered 'cut-scenes' to circumvent this issue. These short clips often pop up in-game to move the plot forward and lend a more cinematic feel to the game-play.

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Sound effects:	Voices (dialogue); music; technical sound effects (synchronous and non-synchronous sound, voice-overs)
Visual effects:	Framing (closed frame, open frame, off-frame, frame within a frame); editing (cut, fade, dissolve, superimposition, cross-cutting, flashback, cutaway); composition (focal point, proxemic range or distance, *mise-en-scene*); line (horizontal, vertical, diagonal); lighting (high key, high contrast, low key, *chiaroscuro*, backlighting, filter light); colour; texture
Camera shots:	Long shots (establishing shot); extreme long shots; full shots; medium shots; close-up shots; extreme close-up shots (zoom); point-of-view shots; two-shots; fading (in or out, dissolve); aerial shots; hand-held shots; over-the shoulder shots; reaction shots
Camera angles:	High-angled shots; bird's eye view shots; low angled shots; worm's eye view shots; eye-level shots
Camera movements:	Panning; tilting; tracking (dolly shot); craning; zooming
Focus:	Soft focus; sharp focus; deep focus; shallow focus; differentiated focus; out-of-focus; freezing of camera shots
Meaning:	Icon; index; symbol; leitmotif

- **Video- and computer games**

What makes videogames such a relevant genre is their integrated use of multiple modes and potential for storytelling in new ways − especially in relation to the gamer's more involved role. A distinction needs to be made, though, between the 'video' and 'personal computer' (PC) formats of digital games. *Videogames* refer to either coin-operated arcade machines or titles available on consoles, which are usually connected to television monitors. The latest consoles (most notably the competing *Playstation 4* and *Xbox One*) are HD compatible, which means they can deliver high definition graphics to any one million-pixel or more (4K) television. The average PC or laptop − though it may not afford the same resolution, sound or inflated image as today's televisions − has remained a popular format for hardcore

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gamers due to its increased connectivity with online communities. This allows for competitive gaming among hundreds (even thousands) of players from around the world, in real time.[5]

Despite these technical discrepancies, the aesthetic and meta[6] features of games appear to be similar across all formats. Whether using a controller or keyboard to play a particular game, any input from the player (through the pushing of buttons or keys, respectively) will prompt a pre-programmed response from the characters on-screen. In-game menus, whether in the form of weapon wheels, inventory lists or *pop-ups* are also presented in a standardised way, regardless of the format the game is played on. At this point of the discussion, however, it may be necessary to delve further into the visual, spatial and multimodal tools of semiosis in today's games − particularly those signifiers that are 'universally applied' or understood by all console and PC users. What follows is a discussion of the most frequently used or conventionalised features that appear in games today, with notes on how they may be applied in future English Home Language classrooms. Taken individually, these features can be replicated quite easily through the more 'traditional' classroom practices of writing and drawing:

Maps − these are usually accessed in-game by pressing the select button on the controller, or an appropriate key on the PC keyboard. Traditionally, the map would ensure that players do not get lost in the ever-expanding, *sandbox* level designs prominent since the early 2000s, with titles like *Assassin's Creed* (Ubisoft, 2008) and *Far Cry* (Ubisoft, 2004) enjoying the most critical and commercial success. With each sequel, though, these franchises have begun to include much more than geographical information or waypoints in their maps − adding rewards, secrets, alternative routes, boss battles and an ever-growing repertoire of side-quests to their map screens as the plot progressed (see fig. 2.3.a below). As a redesign task (with participants drawing and detailing *bird's eye* views based on their prescribed novels

[5] In fact, the record for most players simultaneously connected on a single server was set on 21 January 2013, when 190 541 people participated in a round of *World of Tanks*.

[6] In the gaming world, *meta* refers to the programmed 'mechanics' of a game − the invisible and encoded "bits" (Hattingh et al, 2008, p. 11) that make it run properly.

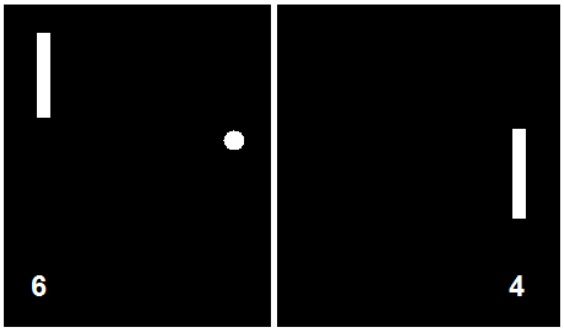
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or plays) the map may have great potential for teaching the setting, plot and character movements within a narrative.

a)



b)





c)





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d)



e)



Fig. 2.3: Some modal-compositional elements used in videogames today, including a) the map screen from *Far Cry* 4 (Ubisoft, 2014); b) the heads-up displays from *Pong* (Atari, 1980) and *Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes* (Konami, 2014); c) the inventories from *Resident Evil: Code Veronica X* (Capcom, republished 2010) and *Revelations 2* (2015); d) the character select screen from Mortal Kombat X (Warner Bros / Netherrealm Studios, 2015) and e) subtitles from *The Last Guardian* (SIEE, 2016).

The heads-up display − often abbreviated as *HUD*, this has always been an essential design feature in games (Savage, 2017). Even the most primordial interactive programs − most notably Atari's *Pong* (1980) − included a counter in each corner to show players their scores, but these have become much more sophisticated over the years (fig. 2.3.b). Basically, the purpose of the HUD is to inform the player of his / her current status in the game world. It may include a health meter or *power bar*, lives count, ammunition count, weapon wheel or any

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other information relevant to the type or genre of game. Some triple-A titles like *Metal Gear Solid* (1998-2015) and *Tomb Raider* (1996-2018) prefer to keep the in-game screen uncluttered and rather assign this information to the pause menu or inventory screen (next bullet). If applied in a redesign task − or if superimposed over an illustrated *screenshot* of the learner's game − the HUD could do much to divulge a prescribed character's physical and mental health, weapons or any items possessed during different stages of the narrative.

Inventories − like the HUD, the inventory is a key feature of many adventure and role-playing games (RPGs). Accessed in either a *time-freeze* or real-time fashion, it shows the player which items, weapons and supplies he or she has (fig. 2.3.c). If different inventories can be drawn for different characters in a novel or play being studied, it may give impetus to the exploration of symbols, objects or even weapons central to the storyline.[7]

The character select screen − the characters available for play − whether in a fighting game, free-roamer or first-person shooter (FPS) − are usually presented in a grid-like fashion, with a zoomed-in perspective or *mug shot* of the highlighted character to further embellish the screen (fig. 2.3.d). Developers often make full use of this screen to maximise the affective and aesthetic impact of their characters, since the selected character is not always visible during the game itself. As a redesign task, a digitally or hand-drawn select screen may be useful for exploring each character's physical traits, attire, carried items − even his or her emotional disposition − as part of a narrative whole.

Dialogue boxes / subtitles − the more epic and cinematic RPGs like *Final Fantasy* (1990-2017) or *Vandal Hearts* (1996) have made extensive use of dialogue to make gamers feel immersed in a fantasy world, or simply to move the plot forward. With these, one can also select one's own responses or attitude towards a particular character (fig. 2.3.e). Using a range of changeable, *stick-on* dialogue boxes in a game format could significantly improve learners' grasp of character actions, choices, plot and other literary devices in a prescribed text.

[7] Think of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (ca. 1597), where Tybalt's sword, Romeo's letter and Friar Lawrence's poison vial all play crucial roles in the outcome of the play.

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Since videogames were so integral to the body of data collected and the project overall, I will now provide a concise review of the literature in this area. This review will focus especially on how videogames are applied in research today for a variety of pedagogies and interventions − particularly in language and literacy learning contexts.

Videogames, in either console or PC format, are not new to the fields of multiliteracies and multimodality. Already in 2002, Griffiths' seminal paper *The Educational Benefits of Videogames* outlined the many uses of games in comprehensive school programmes, to help develop social skills in children and adolescents with severe developmental problems like autism. Moreover, Griffiths positioned the videogame as a highly effective, facilitatory educational aid, with its "visual patterns, speed and storyline" proving central to the development of linguistic, basic reading and social skills among children − particularly those with "serious deficiencies in language and understanding, and social and emotional difficulties" (p. 48). In *What Video Games Have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacy*, Gee (2003) also argues for the integration of common videogame practices and design features into the classroom. Here, thirty-six *learning principles* that are present in − but not exclusive to − the design of good videogames are identified. These are then applied to a progressive multimodal pedagogy which decreases learners' frustration as observed by the author in academic settings, and to develop a spectrum of skills including *text production*, *risk-taking*, *lateral thinking* and *teamwork*. For over twenty years prior to these studies, however, videogames have been used to research individual differences in spatial visualisation ability, memory, attention, self-esteem, goal-setting and other aspects not necessarily tied to the educational domain (Griffiths, 2002, pp. 48-49).

For the remainder of this section, though, I shift to some more recent studies in the *videogame-cum-multimodal* repertoire. I now outline methods and findings with particular currency in the field, commenting throughout how my own research may be positioned therein through its theoretical and practical contributions.

From a critical review of studies investigating the educational affordances of videogames − specifically as scaffolds for the linguistic, visual, spatial and gestural literacies (Beavis & O' Mara, 2016; Burwell, 2017; Bacalja, 2018) − it emerges that

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the genre has now pervaded many aspects of learners' traditionally *paper-based* text interactions in classrooms. Most significant here are educators' and researchers' innovative approaches to teaching key concepts and skills across the curriculum, employing popular titles like *Bully* (Rockstar, 2006) and *The Last of Us* (Naughty Dog, 2013) as complex discursive platforms. While participants' responses to each intervention appear limited to the linguistic modes of interviews, written work or online commentary, the videogame is nonetheless central in their conversations around identity, power, aesthetics, reader-text relations, semiotic systems or just the ways in which people construct new meanings while playing. This has been observed in Australia especially, with one project *Literacy in the Digital World of the Twenty-First Century: Learning from Computer Games* (Beavis et al, 2009) still being cited to help elevate the digital game from its perceived entertainment or 'leisure-time' utilities, to an impactful resource in schools. Bacalja (2018), however, notes that games "have not found their way into mainstream classrooms" despite being ranked as "the third most popular [medium in Australian households], behind television and movies, and ahead of books" (p. 155). This argument is also echoed in my own rationale for importing videogame phenomena into learners' engagements with prescribed narratives, specifically.

Another concept referenced quite frequently in the oeuvre is that of *gaming paratexts*. This term was first coined by game theorist Mia Consalvo in 2007, to describe the texts and practices which surround digital games, such as reviews, online forums, FAQs and fan art. Again, this current positioning of the game as a far-reaching and pervasive text-type − simultaneously drawing from and inspiring a range of *everyday* forms − was integral to my own, inter-genre project in both its methodological and theoretical foci. Marsh (2011) adds that, if scholarship intends to move beyond the "generally accepted characteristics" of games or their uses for "challenge, play and fun" (p. 61), it will be necessary to distinguish between their impact in such media spheres − particularly their increasing popularity in *experiential environments* like schools − and their more immediate function of "providing experience and emotion… to convey meaning". The former, more "serious" impacts of videogames have also encouraged authors like Marsh to position them as such − *serious games* − and to transform fragmented research communities into a cohesive unit, with a common interest in discovery and development. As Kafai and Burke (2016) observe, this

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movement has over the last decade spawned a number of studies scrutinising − in more particular detail − the educational potentials of videogame playing. Still, they argue that one crucial element has traditionally been left out of these discussions: "children's learning through making their own games" (p. 313). The majority of studies that *do* incorporate this, the authors find, focus more on teaching coding or *computational thinking skills* (Weintrop, Holbert, Horn & Wilensky, 2016), and less on the roles of collaboration and identity in the game design process. While their article provides a review of fifty-five studies − from the United States to Europe and Australia − instead of actual artefactual data to support this, it is a constructionist view that lends itself to much richer accounts of how learners experience their life-worlds, with videogames and other, everyday texts as prime representational resource.

> "Every educator must have felt some envy watching children playing videogames. If only that energy could be mobilised in the service of learning something that the educator values… The Constructionist mind is revealed when the wish leads to imagining children making the games instead of just playing them. Rather than wanting games to instruct children, they yearn to see children construct games."
>
> Seymour Papert, *Minds in Play* (1995, p. ii)

Harking back to Piaget's (1951) work, the constructionist ideals of making knowledge one's own, representing one's identity *through artefact* or simply learning from a personal perspective are now pervading studies of this ilk, albeit at a slow and steady pace (Walsh & Apperley, 2009; Kafai et al, 2016). These ideals were pursued in my own research as well, since the inter-genre approach allowed participants not only to express themselves through game-play, but *game-making*. While it can be argued that my participants never designed actual, playable games, they still designed artefacts that drew heavily from the visual display mode of the videogame genre. This brings us to two more salient concepts in the field − *metagaming* and *gaming capital* − which I now discuss briefly in relation to my own work, before moving on to local territories and outlining how games are being applied in South African classrooms.

The concepts *metagaming* (Gee, 2003; Kafai et al, 2016) and *gaming capital* (Walsh et al, 2009) are congruent in their theoretical underpinnings, and relate to the inter-

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genre project on several levels. The former refers to game-play that "extends beyond the game and includes participating in online discussion forums, and even accessing and designing cheat sites to help players more effectively navigate the game" (Kafai et al, 2016, p. 314). Essentially, it is what happens *outside* the diegetic game-world; those player interactions and productions elicited by a particular game, which may then become public entities in the sense of them 'leaving' the school or home domains. The concept seems to recall Consalvo's *paratexts* (2007), but differs in that it challenges persistent assumptions about videogames − and their various multimodal derivatives − as belonging to an isolated body of texts, narratives or practices. As Gee (2003, p. 17) had observed nearly two decades ago, videogames resonate much further through media ecologies − influencing what we see, hear and do in an increasingly digital, "technocultural" world. It is true that, with the inter-genre project, participants were never expected to expand their artefacts in this way. It nevertheless allowed them to rethink the role of videogames in literacy (specifically *literature*) education, as there were many aspects of game-making that afforded a deeper and richer concept of prescribed, canonical texts.

By viewing, playing or making a videogame (or on a more granular level, its familiar screens, interfaces or multimodal features), personal knowledge may thus become *public* and be shared with others. In their discussion on *gaming capital*, Walsh et al (2009) reiterate the importance of this process:

> "We believe the significance of videogames for literacy education is not simply about teaching youth how to 'read' the videogame text, but to be able to critically understand and situate their game-playing practices in a field of knowledge which can move outside the media ecology of videogames, into other tangible forms of literacy practices." (p. 10)

The videogame, then, is viewed as a text-type of distinction in global youth culture − potentially affording one *cultural capital* in the sense of it expanding one's knowledge, skills, discursive and material resources as one moves across a life trajectory. Drawing from Bourdieu's (1984) work where the cultural, economic, social and symbolic forms of capital were first conceptualised, the authors propose *gaming capital* as another form with strong ties to other disciplines, types of entertainment, learning and mass media. Most significantly, the domain that is deemed most suitable − or relevant *right now* − for acquiring this capital is that of literacy education,

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yet this will need to involve "the exploration of risk, possibility, identity and subjectivity… and extend beyond [traditional] reading, writing and visual culture" (2009, p. 2). It is here where I find a particular affinity with my own research aims and methods, as I have always encouraged my participants to forego the accepted uses of *literacy*, *text*, *reading* and other tropes within this domain. My participants, in essence, drew inspiration from extant literature to make their own videogame screenshots (albeit on paper, or through mainly graphological means) and in turn may have acquired a palette of skills in *literacy* − which Carrington & Luke (1997) happen to view as capital in itself. Also of relevance here − particularly to economic capital − is the rapid growth of the E-Sports scene. Willis Walker of the *GINX* Network (2020) contends that this is an indication of the videogame's growing prominence − not only in the home and school space, but some of the largest sports arenas worldwide. For many professional gamers (now recognised as *athletes*), participation in such events is no longer a hobby but a career of limitless potential. In Finland, for example, E-Sports champions are regarded as major contributors to the economy, with some being awarded plots of land and lucrative sponsorship deals.

Still, this may not be relevant to school-leavers in South Africa − where the inter-genre project found its research sites − as E-Sports is not nearly as prominent locally and an economic recession is imminent following the 2020 Coronavirus lockdowns. Long before the pandemic, though, several local studies (Scott, Yeld & Hendry, 2007; Amory, in Erasmus, 2008; Rowe, Frantz & Bozalek, 2012) have positioned not only videogames but also animated television series like *Naruto* (Kishimoto, 2002-2007) as central to children's after-school routine. Such engagements with the apparently *school-removed* text, Professor Alan Amory of the University of Johannesburg asserts, form an integral part of children's literacy identities − how they 'read' the world and situate themselves therein. "Games," Amory stated at the Shuttleworth Foundation's *Games and Learning Indaba* back in 2008, "are useful social construction tools, and any game has an inherent educational value that is there to be exploited". This is echoed by a conference paper from the University of Cape Town (Titus & Ng'ambi, 2014), following an investigation into the benefits of "a gaming innovation… to enhance student engagement" at an undisclosed tertiary institution. A key finding here is that the "marginal popularity of games-based learning in South Africa" needs to be addressed urgently, as most students are "pre-

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disposed to play games outside formal educational settings". It follows that all modes, texts, materials and activities employed − at secondary and tertiary levels − should reflect this shift towards a more *virtual* world, with the youth increasingly dependent on digitised forms of entertainment, communication and learning.

As implied by this final review, a central aim of the project was to *revive* canonical texts by remaking them into more modern forms of digital communication. I argue that, if a long-standing work like *Macbeth* is remade into recognisable mass media texts − particularly *screen-based* ones − it may be revitalised in the sense of finding an enlarged site of display online, on out-of-school monitors, or at the very least on classroom walls. The aim of this is not only to lend authenticity to the school-based, multimodal redesign task, but also to resituate the works of Shakespeare, Golding, Owen and others within the public domain − within the rich discourses of music, film and computer entertainment. Screen adaptations of novels and plays, in particular, have achieved much in this regard, but seldom are learners given the role of launching their set works into the realms of pop music, movies and videogames. It follows that multimodal redesign should not only be concerned with affording learners 'a way into' the literature curriculum, but also with adding *relevance* to the very texts they are still reading. In this regard, Tomlinson (2015, p. 537) observes:

> "Semiosis [also involves] contextualised text-making practices or the ways that texts express cultural knowledge, beliefs and practices… [Out-of-school texts] allow for the engagement and negotiation of different subjectivities, interests, intentions, commitments and purposes among children."

My review of the literature has, however, revealed a certain disinclination − on the part of both researchers and participants − to explore how the redesign process can renew the novel, play, short story or poetry anthology in this way. A school exhibition or online publication of finished artefacts (see Simon et al, 2014; 2016) may not fulfil our learners' need to have them attentively screened, 'played' or committed to a space − be it physical or virtual − that allows for real interaction or a stimulation of the senses. Here, it can be argued, the *screen* and its digital substrates are key − the cell phone, television, PC and videogames console being primary candidates. Yet the inter-genre approach has proven so flexible in this regard that all eleven artefacts, save for Mandy's audio recording, are 'flat' or largely paper-based in their materiality. Also, several online publications on intertextuality

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(Harder, 2017; Wimmer, 2019) seem to distinguish between the diegetic and extra-diegetic realms of books − that is, the worlds on either side of the cover − yet they negate the reader's own, everyday interactions in the 'real' world as equally extra-diegetic. However the inter-genre approach − in the manner of Genette's (1979) *meta-leaps* − has allowed for such interactions or experiences to make their way back into the fictional worlds of learners' prescribed narratives.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter has offered a five-pronged theoretical framework for my analyses of participants' redesign products (Chapter Four) and processes (Chapter Five). In the following *Method* chapter, the theories and overall issues discussed thus far will be kept in mind throughout, to ensure alignment between my research questions, data collection techniques and analysis methods.

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CHAPTER THREE

Method

In this chapter my research design is outlined, and an overview of my research sites, participants, data collection techniques and analysis methods is provided. Ethical issues (especially the measures I have taken to ensure participants' confidentiality) are also explained briefly. Finally, I discuss the issue of *validity* surrounding the inter-genre approach in future English Home Language classrooms.

3.1 Research design

Ethnography can be described as the study of people or cultures − their customs, habits and mutual differences under what could be considered 'normal' conditions (Bloome, 2012; Larson & Marsh, 2015). With its roots in anthropology, ethnography relies on long periods of mainly on-site study to record what people *say*, *do* and − in the case of the artefactual or embodied literacies − *make* in response to a particular stimulus or facet of their environment. It follows that this study, with its bi-weekly visits to participating schools and close engagement with learners at every stage of redesign, will fall at least partially within the ethnographic paradigm of qualitative research. I say "partially" because, though I had made extensive use of the ethnographic methods listed above, my findings emerged more from the comprehensive analyses of participants' transmodalisations, with the field-notes and interview transcripts (obtained during contact time) serving only as secondary data. For increased accuracy and specificity in this regard, it was necessary to relay all participants' interactions with one another and their semiotic resources through an *individual case studies* model (Denzin et al, 1994; Scott et al, 2006), as opposed to a single ethnographic narrative detailing what had transpired over the three-month data gathering period. As a "descriptive and exploratory analysis of a person, group or event" (PressAcademia, 2018), the case study in many ways seems to supplement, or at least overlap, the ethnographic angle taken here − although I have endeavoured to look at my participants as individuals and not merely members of a group.

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As captured in my research questions above (section 1.1, p. 9), this study has aimed to investigate FET learners' levels of engagement with multimedia texts (in the form of songs, films and videogames) and to see how these could be applied as enriching platforms for the multimodal and intertextual exploration of prescribed texts in high schools. It was, as such, not so much an *intervention* as a *multimodal enrichment programme*, performed outside of class time and the classroom itself. While this made the research *empirical* in nature, with its findings "derived from experiences of observable phenomena in an educational context" (Scott et al, 2006, p. 81), it was not conducted within the classroom per se. Larson et al (2015, p. 12) provide further indicators of where my research design could be located within a broader, methodological framework. Of particular value here is their unpacking of *methodology* into *methods*, *analytic framework* (for data) and *representation*.

Firstly, the ***methodology*** followed was qualitative, as my raw data took the form of either written, verbal or artefactual responses from participants (as well as any written observations I had made myself) during our discussions, workshops and interviews. As a qualitative study, words − not numbers − were used to analyse and present data (Knobel et al, 1999). A range of ethnographic ***methods*** were used to acquire this data, as they were most suited for "understanding social behaviour from inside [a] discrete location, event or setting in order to produce what is often described as thick or rich [descriptions]" (Geertz, 1973, in Scott et al, 2006, p. 89). Some of the methods listed by Larson et al (2015, p. 12) relating to my own data collection techniques include *interviews*, *participant observation* (though not in-class), *texts* (as mass media; school set works; and participants' redesigns of those works) and *case studies*. More information on these in section 3.3, p. 93).

To comment briefly on my ***analytic framework*** and the manner in which data will be ***represented*** below, I applied an *individual* case studies model (Bloome, 2012) and focused on the learning propensities, literacy practices and overall interests of one participant at a time. Rather than presenting a single chronological case study, the eleven participants' responses are described, interpreted and analysed separately in the interests of cogency and a clearer focus, allowing space for comparisons to other works, the many *scaffolds* and prescribed texts. Raw data (in the form of participants' redesigns of the three prescribed genres) are thus presented in a

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sequential fashion − from conception to completion − with integrated observations of each artefact's contextual, thematic and modal links to preceding and subsequent links in the semiotic chain (Kress, 2000; 2005). Although chains of meaning-making have been conceptualised as cyclical or circular processes previously, a more linear approach is taken here. However, the generation of qualitative, "rich and deep description[s] of individuals, [meaning-making] events and settings" (Scott et al, 2006, p. 183) will characterise all analyses.

My two main data collection techniques, school visits (section 3.3.1) and collection of multimodal artefacts (section 3.3.2), provided me with the raw data I needed to perform intertextual analyses, and ultimately, to arrive at reasoned interpretations. In Chapters Four through Six, these analyses and interpretations are presented with adequate reference to the most recent thoughts in the social semiotic, cognitive-scientific and artistic fields. With regards to my role as researcher, I took on a *participant-observer* position (Knobel et al, 1999; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) and continuously guided my eleven participants' engagement with their prescribed texts, my *scaffolding texts* and all semiotic resources they required during the song, storyboard and videogame transmodalisations. To guide participants through this process, I had to plan my sessions carefully during the *initial*, *business* and *final* phases of the project (outlined in fig. 3.2 below).

3.2 Research site and participants

As noted above, this study involved the participation of three schools in the Ekhuruleni and Soweto districts. Each school was visited at least nine times to check up on learners' progress with redesigning the source texts into song lyrics, audio recordings, storyboards, game concepts and other artefacts. To reiterate, these served as raw data for my comparisons to both the original, prescribed texts and a range of 'scaffolding' texts. With some assistance from English Home Language teachers, I selected at least three learners from each school based on their perceived strengths, shortcomings and preferences within cooperative learning scenarios. As the sample group came to eleven in total, it was imperative to assess each participant's progress during the three phases listed above.

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Here follow brief descriptions of the schools that were selected as research sites, with notes on their preferred curricula, pedagogies and learning-teaching support materials (LTSMs). The quintile of each school, as classified by the Department of Basic Education (DBE), is also provided. As an essentially *no-fee* institution, a quintile 3 or 4 school receives an annual allocation of less than one thousand rand per learner from the DBE. In reality, this means that these schools will only be able to purchase the bare necessities in terms of textbooks, LTSMs or visual aids such as overhead projectors. In most cases, my participants had Visual Art as an elective, so they at least possessed some background knowledge of the elements of art or principles of design:

- **School A: Music** **DBE class / quintile: 3**

This was a state school in the southern suburbs of Johannesburg, with approximately 1200 learners. It recognised Visual Art as a major subject in the FET Phase. As such, it had a full-time educator teaching Visual Art to Grade 10s, 11s and 12s − with their respective syllabi involving both theoretical and practical components. The theoretical component involved an overview of various, chronologically arranged art movements from Greco-Roman art to Postmodernism, while the practical one required each learner to produce four artworks in the medium of their choice − one per term − for School-Based Assessment (SBA) marks.

- **School B: Film** **DBE class / quintile: 4**

This was a privately owned school in a business district of Johannesburg South, with approximately 500 learners. In contrast with school A, this model C institution had just begun to offer Visual Art as an FET elective, resulting in a small and very inexperienced class. It was, therefore, necessary to seek the help of *Creative Arts* teachers and learners − in this case Grade 9s from the Senior Phase − to produce some of the redesigned texts required. Having taught Creative Arts for six years, I knew that many Grade 9 learners − if not certain Grade 8s − were more than capable of remaking their prescribed poems into complex storyboards worthy of semiotic analysis in the study.

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- **School C: Videogames** **DBE class / quintile: 3**

This was a combined, state school on the Ridgeway-Soweto border, with approximately 1000 learners. Like school A above, it recognised the value of holistic education and offered Creative Arts and Visual Art to Senior and FET learners, respectively, for many years. However, a gross lack of funding and shortage of supplies for the Visual Art classroom − including brushes, paints, easels and LTSMs such as overhead projectors − held some implications for both the reception and outcome of the videogame redesign.

Newfield et al (2006) and Mora (2014) have conducted similar qualitative research with learners in the fourteen- to eighteen-year-old range, resulting in a bulk of data worthy of rich and immersive semiotic analysis. As seen in the data analyses to follow, high school learners are often capable of producing texts that are astonishingly layered in their meanings and, with no disrespect to their primary school counterparts, indicative of a firmer grasp of mass media texts and how they function within different literacy domains. Also, the potentially complex demands from the redesigned texts − in terms of their ability to appeal to the 'viewer' on an aesthetic and meaningful level − may also have warranted the involvement of more mature learners.[8] These are the main reasons why I have selected *high* schools as research sites, but I may also need to explain why I chose these three institutions, specifically. They provided quite a desirable range in terms of socio-economic context, availability of resources as well as the ethno-cultural backgrounds of their learners. Though they were all located in the south of Johannesburg, the schools seemed worlds apart in the ways they *did things* or applied their resources to the teaching and learning of prescribed narratives. The rationale behind such variety − with three different personalities comprising each of the three groups (fig. 3.1 below) − was to optimise the *representivity* of the study, or to make its findings relevant to a wider learner demographic in future.

[8] However, a talent for drawing, singing or acting was by no means a requirement for participation in the study.

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3.2.1 Sampling profile

Context	Participants*	Profiles for at least 3 members
Three high schools in JHB South / Soweto area **Learners 14-18 years, from low to middle income families**	**SCHOOL A: music** Mandy, Razia and Casey **SCHOOL B: storyboards** Misha, Rasheed and Zane **SCHOOL C: videogames** Trevor, Kulani, Somizi, Zoe and Ekta	Member 1: proficient in verbal descriptions / essay writing, but lacks artistic skills / ability to remake words into songs, storyboards or game scenarios Member 2: advanced in the application of music, film and game elements, but prefers to work alone and requires assistance during cooperative learning tasks Member 3: Requires assistance / scaffolding in all stages of the redesign process, from planning to finalisation of songs / storyboards / game scenarios

Fig. 3.1: Broad selection criteria for core groups

The personality 'profiles' here were informed by what I have witnessed high school learners struggle with (or excel in) when engaged with creative redesign tasks, especially in smaller groups where more responsibilities rest upon each member. My sampling method was quite flexible, though I had to retain certain details − such as the approximate sample size or definite profiles of learners − for the sake of variety in terms of how the genre frames would be approached or handled. The teacher, if he or she preferred, could also suggest which learners to call up − a technique known as *purposive sampling* (Dudovskiy, 2014) − though it was not my intention to involve the 'strongest' academic or artistic achievers from each class. The process could also take an entirely *voluntary* route (especially useful if the teacher did not know his or her class that well) with learners coming forward on their

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own. If these volunteering groups were too large, a *simple random sampling* route − where members were selected in a *sweepstakes* manner (Dudovskiy, 2014) − offered the final step in forming the final groups. *Meetings with Teachers* (section 3.3.1 below) further clarifies the sampling process.

Still, the fact that the majority of South African learners speak English as an additional language may not only impact upon the overall direction taken by future practitioners of an inter-genre approach, but also their efficiency in terms of catering for the interests and linguistic backgrounds of what could potentially be very large (and very diverse) learner groups. The mainly coloured learners comprising my *music* sample, for instance, seemed to speak Afrikaans only when in the company of family or very close friends. Also, the mainly Indian learners from the *videogame* and *storyboard* groups almost never spoke Arabic, except during their readings of the Koran in Islamiyaat class. As with all complexities in the South African context, though, this smorgasbord of spoken varieties among our learners will call for quite an inclusive approach in future − whether using an inter-genre approach or any other multimodal strategy.

Three English Home Language classes were indeed the source of the study's eleven-strong sample, whether or not English was their mother tongue. Yet this should have little or no bearing on the approach in future classrooms. I reiterate that the approach is practicable across all socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds, at school level and beyond. This same versatility applies to the texts selected for redesign, sample sizes, resource sets, levels of experience, age groups and other variables. This study only presents a method; a pedagogy; an overview of what *could* be done in terms of text redesign, so it should not be inferred that it is applicable only within English Home Language classrooms, or among children reading specifically English canonical texts.

3.3 Data collection techniques and procedure

Since this study was situated within the social semiotic paradigm, I mainly made use of qualitative data collection and analysis methods. Two data collection techniques were selected and adapted to suit my role as *satellite researcher* (Bloome, 2012): *visits* to the research sites (involving meetings with teachers, as well as discussions,

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workshops and interviews with participants) and *artefact collection*. The term *satellite research* implies that − though I acted as participant-observer in some respects − I was not always present during the redesign and only saw my participants on an intermittent basis. Ultimately, the entire project transpired as a three-layered exploration of *texts*, as they originated from popular culture, schools and, finally, learners themselves. Here follows an outline of each technique:

3.3.1 School visits

After obtaining permission to conduct research from the three schools listed above, I could begin scheduling visits to the eleven participating English Home Language learners. I visited each school at least nine times, over a three-month period (February-April 2019). I was also careful not to disturb learners during exam time.

- *Meetings with teachers*

On at least one occasion, I had to meet with the English Home Language teacher of each school who, along with his or her principal, had granted permission for the involvement of FET learners in the project. As an essential, first step in the *initial phase* of my research, this was done immediately after learners, their parents and Home Language teachers had signed their permission letters and consent forms. Basically, the purpose of these meetings was to inform teachers of my research aims, its duration and participants' roles, among other elements of the methodology. A large part of these meetings concerned selection processes; I had to explain my sampling method (as in fig. 3.1) carefully, so that we could jointly identify the groups in a way that was ethical, contributory to the nature of the study, and not in any way impingent on learners' rights.[9] I assured all teachers that this was merely a multimodal *investigation* − for *enrichment*, as opposed to *intervention* − and as such it would not interfere with their in-class input.

Yet another issue that emerged during these teacher meetings was learners' progress with their prescribed texts (particularly in the case of novels) and how this would affect the purpose, frequency and duration of my visits to the respective groups. Were they in the pre-, while- or post-reading stage of their novels, poems or

[9] Section 3.5 below details all ethical issues considered during the study.

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plays? Although the redesign task was strictly extramural, I had to know which elements of the narrative had been covered, which LTSMs had been used and other factors, so I could plan my visits accordingly. These visits either took the form of one-hour discussions, workshops or informal interviews (see next section). They were conducted after school or, if required, as *mini-sessions* during break-times.

- *Discussions, workshops and interviews with participants*

A total of nine casual *briefing-and-feedback* sessions were conducted to suit the exploratory nature of the study. Spanning less than an hour each, these sessions allowed me to brief participants on their redesign tasks, play excerpts from my scaffolding texts and − through semi-structured interviews − enquire about their overall experiences of the multimodal approach. I had to find a suitable 'redesign station' at each school − preferably on the playground, where there was shade and ample space to set up a laptop, learners' artefacts and other media.

One may ask: *why interviews, and not questionnaires or the use of other print-based data collection instruments?* Due to the multilateral nature of each transmodalisation (the song, storyboard and videogame concept) and the complex processes required for their completion, I had to engage with my participants face-to-face, and offer assistance in cases where semiotic resources were unavailable or difficult to use. Interviews were thus ideal; in contrast with the more rigid questionnaire or *Likert-scale* sheets, I could keep ahead of what today's learners "think, say and do" (Scott et al, 2006, 133) before answering my research questions adequately. All responses from interviews were recorded digitally, transcribed and included as Appendix C below. Herewith further clarity on what was done during each session:

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INITIAL PHASE **February 2019**	**First, ONE meeting with each teacher (1 hour)** **Then at least NINE sessions with each core group (9 x 1 hour after school hours or during breaks)** 1. Introduction of research aims and participants' roles. Brief **DISCUSSION** of research question one 2. **WORKSHOP #1**: presenting our scaffolding texts. Distribution of genre frames 3. Collection of early artefacts and conducting of **INTERVIEW 1**
Early BUSINESS PHASE **March 2019**	4. The way forward: new insights, ideas, challenges. Brief **DISCUSSION** of research question two 5. **WORKSHOP #2**: presenting our scaffolding texts 6. Collection of linking artefacts and conducting of **INTERVIEW 1/2**
Late BUSINESS PHASE **April 2019**	7. Reflection: affordances of MM and implications for English HL pedagogy. Brief **DISCUSSION** of research question three 8. **WORKSHOP #3**: presenting our scaffolding texts 9. Collection of final artefacts / genre frames and conducting of **INTERVIEW 2**

Fig. 3.2: *Initial*, *business* and *final* phases of the project

During these sessions, I wanted to explore participants' levels of engagement with prescribed works, and how these could be remade with the aid of various scaffolding texts and semiotic resources. These resources took the form of genre-specific *frames* − designed by myself and distributed among participants so that they at least had some guidance on the genre, materiality or future sites of display of their redesigns. Participants' use of these frames was optional; they could use other formats or resources at any time, if they desired.

3.3.2 Artefact collection

Artefacts, according to Knobel and Lankshear (1999, p. 93) are "traces or products used by research participants… relevant to the problem area being studied". With an inter-genre approach to literature learning, artefacts may include:

- 3-5 minute audio recordings (a-cappella, freestyle rap, slam poetry or any type of musical performance)
- 3-5 minute video recordings (*Youtube* clips, MP4 or any other digital

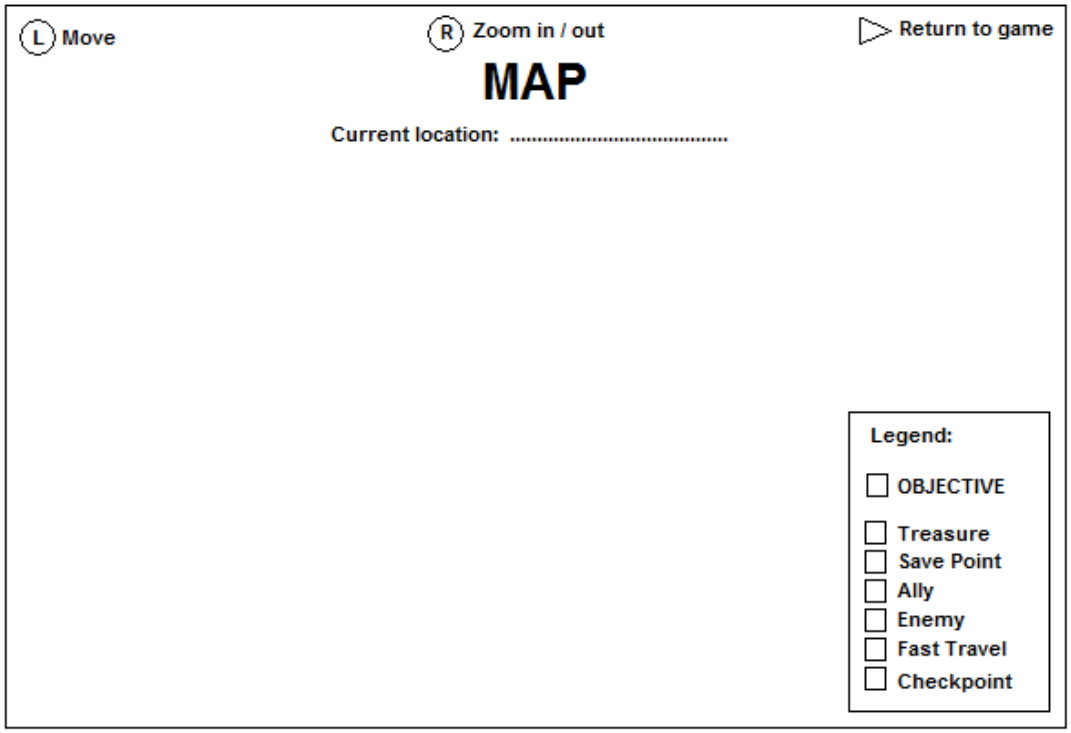
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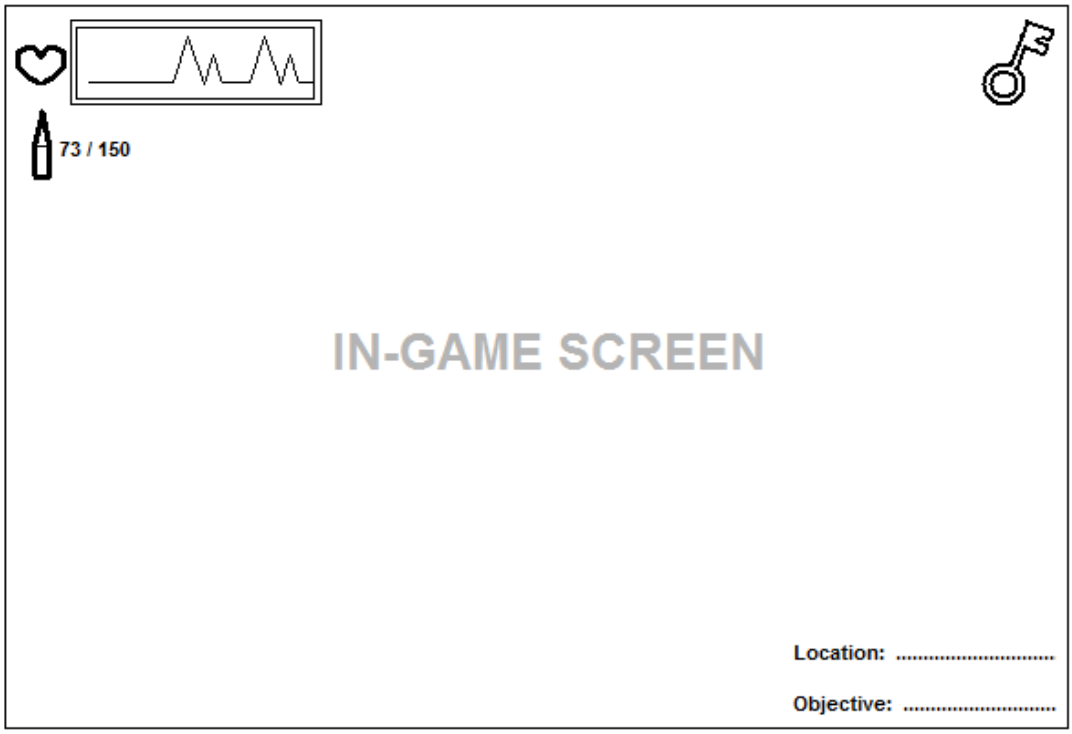
- role-playing game *scenarios* (digital or print-based representations of characters and backgrounds as used in an original videogame, with accompanying speech bubbles and other characteristic modal features) and
- visual artworks (drawings, paintings, collage or any other multimodal installation) as an alternative to the game scenario

Here follow examples of the A3-size genre frames I distributed among participants. Please note that − in applying the inter-genre approach − learners' final artefacts will not always be print- or paper-based. One participant recorded a song and saved it as a Microsoft *Soundwave* file, while another produced a range of CGI portraits on the *Paint* program.

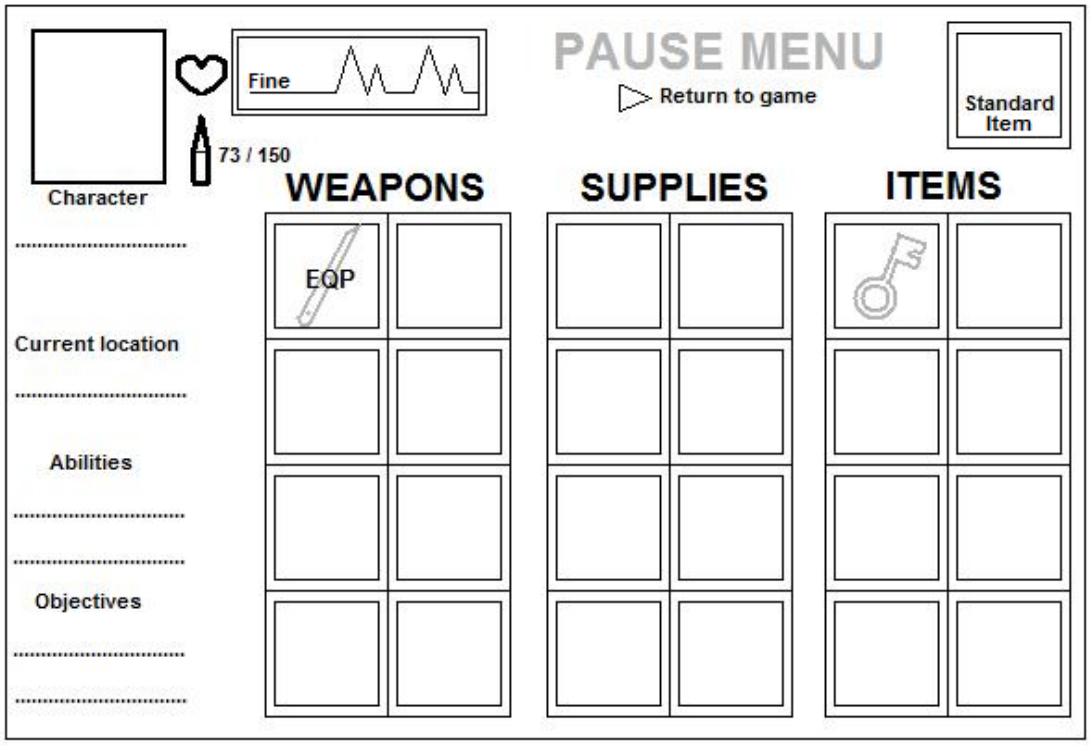
a)



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b)



c)

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d)

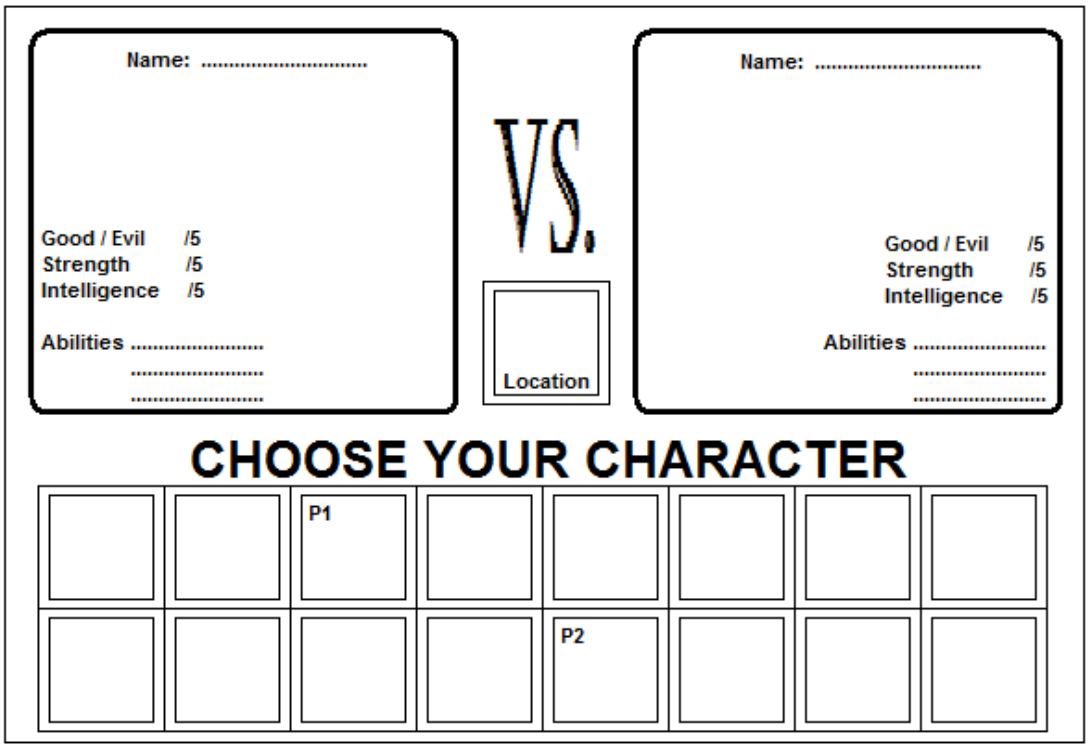
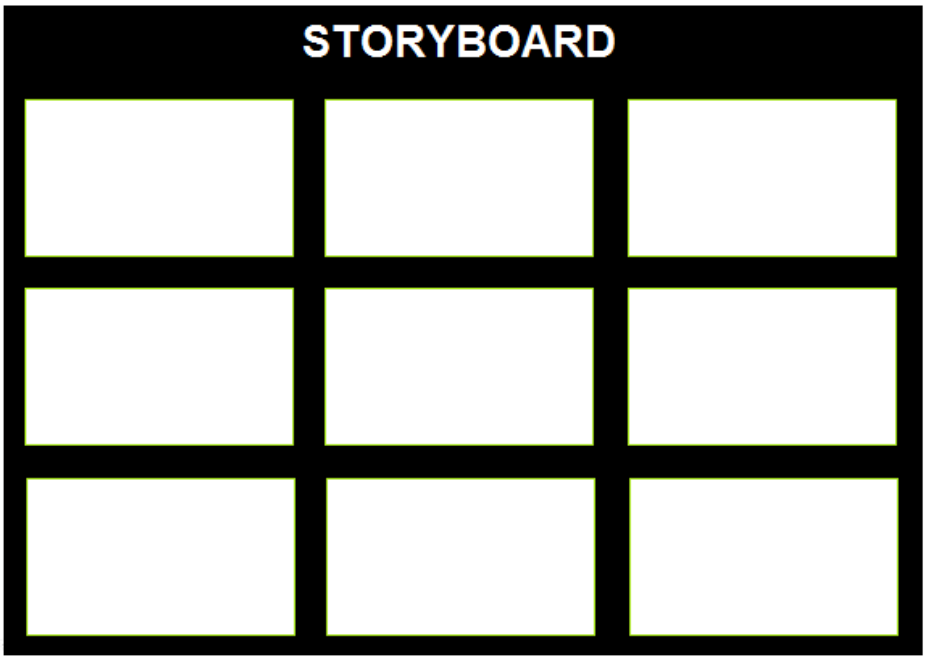


Fig. 3.3: Genre frames for *videogame* group, including a) map; b) heads-up display or *HUD*; c) inventory / pause menu and d) character select screen

a)



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b)

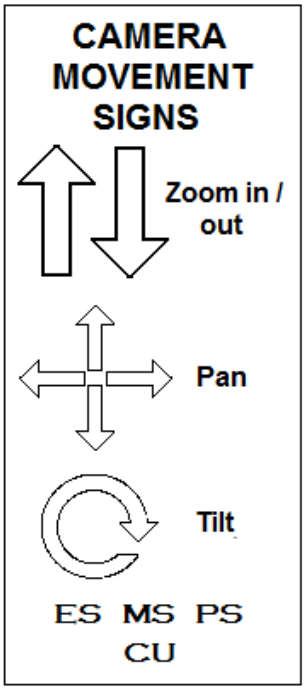
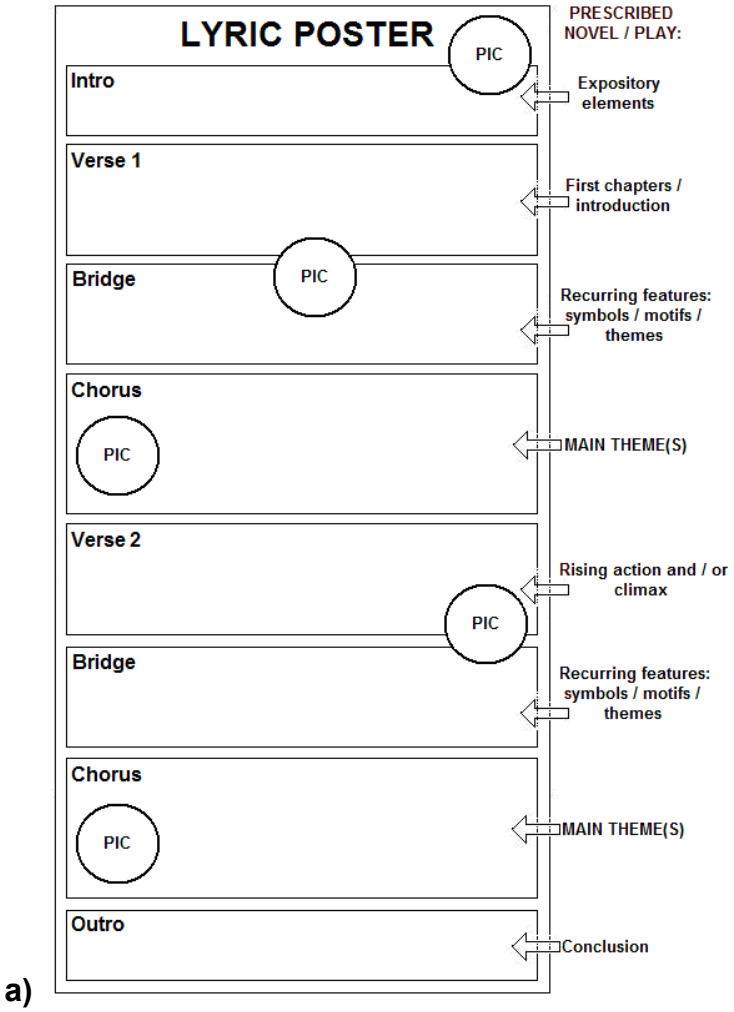
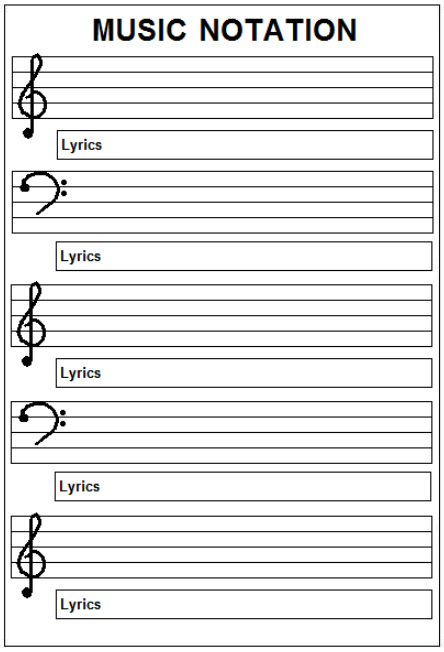


Fig. 3.4: Genre frames for *storyboard* group, including a) nine-frame drawing sheet and b) cut-out camera movement signs

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a)



b)

Fig. 3.5: Genre frames for *music* group, including a) lyric poster and b) optional music notation sheets

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To return briefly to my research rationale, I have observed that genre frames like these could be extremely useful as multimodal platforms to explore the contextual and thematic contents of any prescribed text − be it a novel, short story, poetry anthology or play. Participants were required to select the most appropriate semiotic resources (pencils, paints, photographs or other, digital forms of graphology) to multimodally represent their prescribed texts through song lyrics, storyboard illustrations or more *digitized* forms like videogame stills. For example, the character select screen (fig. 3.3.d) encouraged learners to revisit their plays and identify the most distinctive personality traits of each protagonist and villain. More statistics could be added here to deepen the physical, psychological or emotional profile of each character, and characters from different texts, genres or eras could even be pitted against one another in a series of intertextual 'bouts'. How would *David Lurie*, the conceited Byronic hero from J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999), fare against Shakespeare's pure and just *Portia*? While this may seem trivial in the already tight and constraining FET curriculum, such inter-generic activities may not only initiate some insightful discussions in class, but also reinforce learners' understanding of how meanings can move across modes, stories, texts and whole genres.

3.4 Outline of data analysis methods

Two main methods were used to describe, interpret and analyse the participants' artefacts themselves. I have already outlined the specifications and uses of the label method, in section 1.5.2 above. Herewith, then, a breakdown of what I call the *five C's*:

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3.4.1 The *five C's model of intertextual linkage* or the analysis of modal parallels between texts

If used in conjunction with the label method, my *five C's* could provide a very useful framework for tracking any intertextual links between a source text and its redesigned, artefactual forms. Clark's *four patterns* (2013) and even the widely used *AIDA* (attention, interest, desire and action) principle take similar approaches to the systemised 'decoding' of multimodal texts, but models like these seem to lack the conciseness or specificity for the kind of analysis needed here. Following each 'C' below is the magnetic symbol which will denote either *context*, *colour*, *countenance*, *cadence* or *channelling* during the analysis of participants' artefacts, to be placed over the genre frames and their transparent overleafs.

Context − context includes, but is not limited to, the particular setting described by the paired texts being analysed. At the same time, it should be remembered that the settings established in poetry, prose, video and audio are seldom haphazard or randomly selected backdrops for the more conspicuous character actions to transpire. The geographic setting, timeframe and historical context of a work may have a significant impact on how meanings are perceived − and ultimately transmodalised − by the viewer. For the purposes of this study, though, context can also refer to any lines, shapes, textures, props, background or architectural elements [10] which may have had a significant bearing on the observed text's meanings.

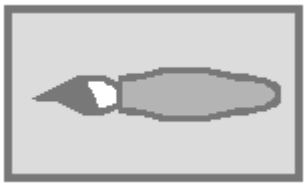
Symbol: 

Most useful for: ● storyboards ● game screens

[10] The elements listed here may be collectively termed the *elements of art* (Kleiner et al, 2004, p. 6-7). Colour should also be mentioned here, but I have treated it as a separate 'C' due to its dominance in mass media today (Kress et al, 2001).

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Colour − this element of art involves more than mere hues and tones reflecting off opaque or transparent surfaces (Kleiner et al, 2004). On a more abstract level, colour may also include particular moods or ambiences generated through atmospheric perspective, blur, dust, smoke or other environmental factors. In fact, it is for the two-dimensional painting's recognition of space and its ability to suggest *atmosphere* that the archetypal Renaissance Man, Leonardo Da Vinci, entered into a heated argument with his closest rival, Michelangelo, about the many affordances of painting not enjoyed by the sculpting medium. In one of Owen's poems, for example, "green gas" (lines 9-10) plays a key role in establishing the sickly, visceral atmosphere of WWI trench warfare − a setting revisited frequently in *The Wall* film.

Symbol: 

Most useful for: ● storyboards ● game screens

Countenance − in this study, *countenance* refers mainly to the facial expressions of characters as expressed through written, audio-visual or other multimodal media. This term is preferred above *expressions* because meanings may be communicated in and through the face, I believe, in more ways than the mere position, strain and size of the eyes, nose or mouth. Countenance also includes any colours, tones, sources of light, perspectives or textures on the faces of characters − such as mud, blood and even facial hair − which may have a significant impact on the meanings communicated at particular moments in the narrative.

Symbol: 

Most useful for: ● storyboards ● game screens

Cadence − the term *cadence* encompasses all sounds, music and onomatopoeic elements communicated through written, audio-visual or other multimodal media. This should not, however, be confused with the next 'C' in the model, *channelling*,

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which refers specifically to the spoken or written *words* uttered by characters in the texts being compared. Although the genres of poetry and prose (narrative writing) may not afford the same auditory stimulation as, for example, a song or film, powerful moods and tones may be communicated through print-based texts which, in turn, can be linked synaesthetically and semiotically to a piece of music. Also, if its exact definition is considered more closely (Merriam-Webster, 2017), cadence should also include the *intonation*, *accent*, *inflection* and *tone* of characters' voices and, on a musical front, the *tempo*, *beat* or *pulse* of a song or film score.

Symbol: 

Most useful for: ● lyric posters

Channelling − as noted, the term channelling should be associated with *words*. Words seem to channel meanings in a more direct or explicit manner than any other mode of communication (Newfield et al, 2006), regardless of the text or medium used as 'vehicle'. On the channelling front, the modal parallels between a poem and storyboard, for example, will involve an investigation into any utterances, idiomatic expressions, exclamations, slang or longer phrases used in both of the paired texts, as well as the similarities / differences in meaning communicated to viewers.

Symbol: 

Most useful for: ● lyric posters ● storyboards ● game screens

These five symbols have been magnetised for the sake of mobilising the caption during artefactual analyses by teachers, researchers or − if the situation requires it − English Home Language learners. They are similar to the red and green annotations of the label method, yet different in that they can be positioned anywhere on the frame with a simple sliding movement. In this way, each symbol can come within

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close proximity of the phenomena of context, colour, countenance, cadence or channelling − especially useful if a completed work and its *modal movements* is being discussed − whilst not burdening it any further with written text. However, a separate worksheet to help learners motivate their strategic positioning of the five C's may, if desired, be attached to the genre frame (as with my inserts in Chapter Four, to follow). This, I feel, is an elegant solution to intertextual captioning which will allow users to move their comments around freely in the manner of a smartboard cursor − to use one example of current digital technologies − without the need for any costly equipment.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Ethics clearance was granted for the research by Wits (HREC protocol number 2018ECE012D) and the General Department of Education (GDE reference number 8/4/4/1/2, 2018/323).

3.5.1 Anonymity and confidentiality

The name of the schools and learners are not be disclosed anywhere in this thesis. All raw data (recordings, interview transcripts, artefacts and final works) will be destroyed within three years from the submission date, as required by the Wits Human Rights and Ethics Committee (HREC).

3.5.2 Informed consent

I had to obtain written consent from all principals, teachers, parents and participants involved, before I could collect any artefacts or conduct any sessions (as noted in section 3.3.1 above). A brief description of the research, its duration, procedures and what the participants were expected to do, was provided in the information sheets sent home for parents or guardians to sign. These also outlined any foreseeable risks, discomforts, side effects or benefits as a result of the research, and included my personal contact details. Consent forms were provided to all willing participants, in which I stipulated the data collection techniques for the study. A friendly tone was adopted in all correspondence with learners and parents, since

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participation in the project was strictly voluntary. Permission to conduct the research was also granted by the three school principals and GDE.

3.5.3 Right to withdraw

Participation in this research was voluntary, and refusal to participate involved no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participants were otherwise entitled. If, for whatever reason, a learner pulled out of the project early, his or her work would not be used as data.

3.5.4 Risks

No risks to participants − be it personal, psychological or financial − had come from the research. If there had to be any risk, it could be categorised as *low* or *inconvenient* (Bloome, 2012), for example participants giving up time to participate.

3.6 Credibility and validity

In addition to my rationale as presented in section 1.5, it may be necessary to expand briefly upon the theoretical credibility and pedagogic *do-ability* of a project of this kind − specifically in local contexts.

Firstly, it widens the school subject of *Art* to include the relatively undervalued disciplines of music and drama − a direction which could not only result in richer or more varied literacy learning experiences, but also one which may better suit the far-reaching, *mass media* spectrum of multimodality. Many classroom-based studies such as Stein's (2003) *Fresh Stories* describe pedagogic interventions based on print-to-visual-artefact transmodalisations, yet very few focus on bodily, gestural or performative modes which could do much to improve agentive participation in diverse learner groups. These may include musicals, plays, puppet shows, pantomimes or tableau − genres which also resonate with the artefacts presented below.

The study then offers practicable solutions to the ongoing issue of learner-text detachment, citing the most current findings in social semiotic fields to substantiate its proposed approach and thus contribute to the multimodal field.

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It includes as research sites a total of three schools from diverse geographic, socio-economic and cultural locales − as opposed to one school, which is often the case with qualitative studies of this kind (Newfield et al, 2006; Mavers, 2011; Mora, 2014). In this way, the impact of the thesis as both a theoretical study and practical guide is expanded to multiple educational settings, albeit within a distinctly South African milieu.

Another issue related to the credibility of the study − of the findings which have emerged from it − is my selection of eleven learners as sample or 'core group'. This number was more than sufficient to gather adequate data and, ultimately, draw reasoned conclusions. Conversely, the collection and analysis of data from *all* willing participants in Grade 10-12 may have detracted from the research in terms of focus or specificity, or have generated a mass of raw data far exceeding the scope of this thesis. To a certain degree, the findings herein are generalisable to other demographics or contexts, with the inter-genre approach hopefully serving as a valuable pedagogic guideline for teachers across grades and phases.

3.7 Coding of participants' interview responses

Throughout the thesis, reference will be made to individual participants' responses in the preliminary and final interviews to substantiate my own arguments, but moreover to clarify key design decisions or compositional aspects of the artefacts. If this is the case, or if learners are quoted directly, the details STUDENT NUMBER (abbreviated as "S") and INTERVIEW NUMBER (as "I") will be provided in brackets, e.g. (S1, I1). Full transcripts of interviews can be found in Appendix C.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, an outline of my research design, methodology or philosophy governing my methods − including my research site, participants, data collection techniques and data analysis methods − was provided, which will serve as a methodological point of reference for the case studies and data analyses to follow.

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CHAPTER FOUR

The *Product* of Participants' Redesigns

Research question one asks: *How do FET learners re-semiotise, re-genre and re-make prescribed canonical English literary texts into scaffolding texts in the form of songs, storyboards and videogames?*

This chapter explores all eleven artefacts from the music, film and videogame groups in terms of their most visible design features or aesthetic outcomes. Each group is represented by at least three case studies, with an emphasis on identifying any thematic, contextual or modal links between participants' redesigns and the original prescribed texts. I have also deconstructed the use of signs in each artefact, by applying my label method and five C's methods.

Chapter Five then tracks participants' semiotic chains, or describes *what they did* with the texts in order to construct new meanings and artefacts. Finally, Chapter Six considers the implications of these processes for classroom practice, that is, how participants' journeys could translate into a viable multimodal approach for English Home Language contexts. Because they are concerned with *product*, *process* and *pedagogy* respectively, these penultimate chapters are closely aligned with my theoretical framework and research questions. Reference will be made to interviews where applicable, but pseudonyms will be used to protect participants' identities.

4.1 Music

> "Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything."
>
> Plato

As already noted, the discipline of music is perhaps most distinctive for its affordance of eliciting *bodily movement* and other rhythmic responses from the semiotic agent, whether currently engaged in redesign or removed from the meaning-making space entirely. Learners across grades seem to be leaning towards a *musicality* − that is, a more rhythmic approach to reading, listening and speaking tasks − with the MP3 player or other non-distracting device now becoming an accepted take-in during practical exams, creative writing sessions or more sensorial instances of learning

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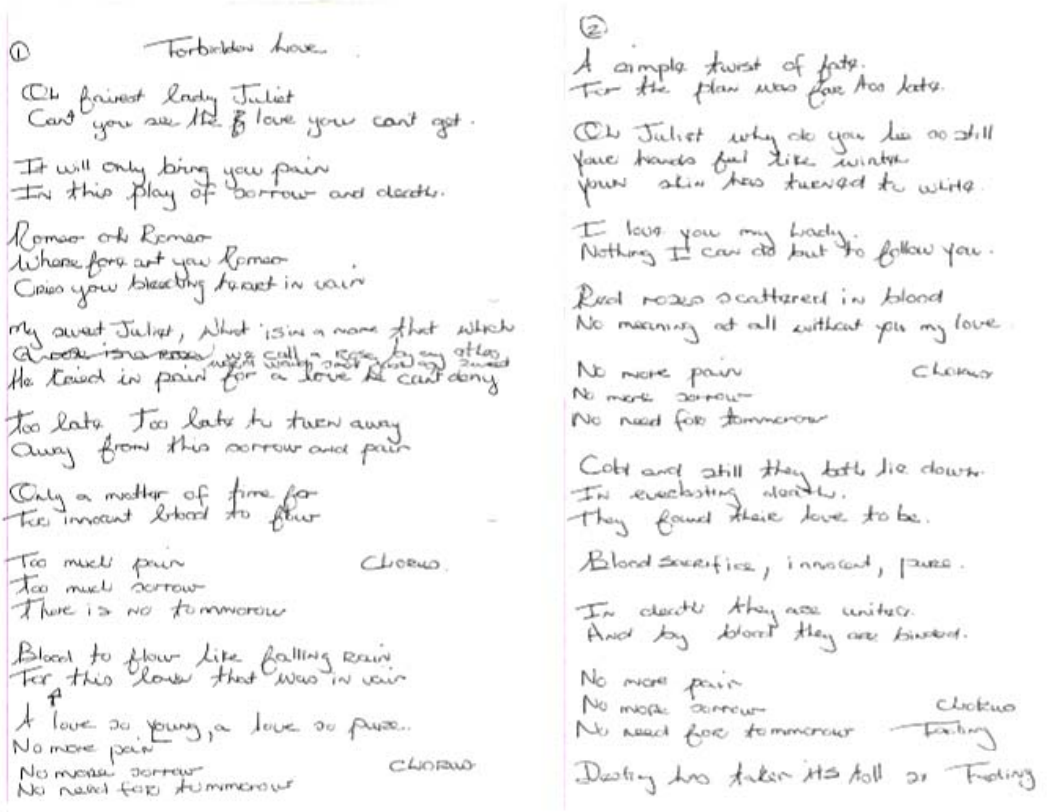
(Bickford, 2011). As first observed by James Asher − pioneer of the *Total Physical Response* (1977; 2012) approach to language acquisition − even children with no musical background tend to move, sing, hum, tap their feet or whistle while engaged in almost any productive or receptive task, to the point of the music becoming integrated, both physically and cognitively, into school-based realia. Below are the case studies for Mandy, Razia and Casey. Like two other learners from the storyboard group (discussed later), Razia hailed from a conservative Muslim family. This meant that her work could not be accompanied by instrumentation, or adapted into any form of audio or video text. This did not deter anyone from the task, though, as each work would merely manifest as a visual-verbal artefact, equally rich in mode and meaning. To begin with Mandy, whose lyrics would indeed evolve into a full-length song:

4.1.1 *Forbidden Love*: Mandy's song based on *Romeo and Juliet*

Romeo and Juliet has always been a popular set work in South Africa (Uys et al, 2008), and it was not surprising to see it prescribed for two of the three schools that I visited. Mandy, an academic achiever in her matric class, approached the play quite differently from the other participants, focusing on the "universal truths" she could find in Shakespeare's famous tragedy. The occurrence of one text over two research sites proved useful to the *inter-genre* element of the study; I could now look for meaning-making parallels between a *videogame* and *song* transmodalisation of the same content. To begin our scaffolding, we used the program *Magix Music Maker* (2001) to lay down a beat and melody suited to the themes, tone and setting of the play. As soon as Mandy could tap her feet and hum to the tune, she began to lyricise the play on regular lined paper, preferring not to use the song genre frame. Although she had not finished reading the play at this time − with her class still preoccupied with paraphrasing Act 1 − she wanted the lyrics "to speak for themselves" and reflect her innermost thoughts and feelings (S1, I2). Mandy preferred a surprisingly simple approach for the first part of redesign, writing her song on simple flypaper, with only minor improvements made later in pencil. The sheer insight and poignancy of her lyrics, though, would more than compensate for her lack of visual adornments (fig. 4.1 below). She especially looked forward to the

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final step in redesign: her actual singing of the words over a pre-recorded track (Appendix B2, on data disc).



Forbidden Love	(Part 1)
Oh fairest Lady Juliet Can't you see the love you can't get?	Verse 1
It will only bring you pain In this play of sorrow and death.	Verse 2
Romeo oh Romeo Wherefore art [thou] Romeo? Cries your bleeding heart in vain.	Verse 3
My sweet Juliet, what is in a name? That which we call a rose by any other word Would smell as sweet He cried in pain for a love he [couldn't] deny.	Verse 4
Too late, too late to turn away Away from this sorrow and pain.	Verse 5
Only a matter of time for The innocent blood to flow.	Verse 6
Too much pain Too much sorrow There is no tomorrow Blood to flow like falling rain For this love that was in vain A love so young, a love so pure No more pain No more sorrow No need for tomorrow.	Chorus

	(Part 2)
A simple twist of fate For the plan was far too late.	Verse 7
Oh Juliet, why do you lie so still? Your hands feel like winter Your skin has turned to white.	Verse 8
I love you my Lady Nothing I can do but to follow you.	Verse 9
Red roses scattered in blood No meaning at all without you my love.	Verse 10
	Repeat chorus
Cold and still they both lie down In everlasting death They found their love to be.	Verse 11
Blood sacrifice, innocent, pure.	Verse 12
In death they are united And in blood they are binded [bound].	Verse 13
	Repeat chorus (fading)
Destiny has taken its toll	(x2, fading)

Fig. 4.1: Mandy's song based on *Romeo and Juliet*; transcript

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Though some of my other participants had relied upon the visual mode to depict the full dramatis personae of *Romeo and Juliet*, Mandy assumes the role of an omniscient narrator to focus on the "star-crossed" lovers only. No direct references are made to secondary characters, setting or plot; we are instead told of the "pain" that "this play of sorrow and death" could bring if Juliet consented to Romeo's passions (v. 1 and 2). At times Romeo is quoted directly (v. 4, 8, 9 and 10), but the narrator's voice dominates as it spells out Juliet's doomed future. As an excellent example of *dramatic irony* (Gouws, 2017), the narrator seems to capitalise on these prophetic abilities and almost scornfully observes Juliet's missteps until it is "too late" in the second part of the song. Already at the earliest stages of our journey, I knew that Mandy's work would reference many of the play's focal meanings − despite her highly allusive and sub-textual style. It is necessary, then, to briefly explore the content of the song and identify any of its thematic or contextual links to the source text, before continuing with her chain in Chapter Five.

Divided in two parts − with the second signalling a "twist of fate" and even darker tone − the song is comprised of several free-rhyme couplets and triplets that loosely follow Shakespeare's storyline. Verses three and four draw heavily from the lovebirds' initial hesitance in the *balcony scene*, where Juliet asks why Romeo had been born a Montague. The final lines of these verses, however, bring an unexpected contrast to the romance with the rhyming phrases "crying in pain" and "vain" with "bleeding hearts", for a relationship outlawed by the two warring families. To stay with the verses, the phrase "too late, too late to turn away" in the fifth may point to *Laurence*'s secret wedding ceremony in Act 2, while the "innocent blood" in verse six is most certainly that of *Mercutio*, *Tybalt* and, ultimately, the eponymous lovers themselves. Part two (fig. 4.1, right) begins with the confusion caused by Laurence's undelivered letter, leading to the suicide scene in verses eight to eleven. Convinced that Juliet has died, Romeo can do nothing but "follow" her into Purgatory (v. 9). After this, the image of "red roses scattered in blood" (v. 10) works well to emphasise the futility of their relationship, and the complete inanity of their deaths. Verse twelve, which is a one-line verse or *monostich*, is particularly interesting. As explained by Mandy in her final interview, "blood sacrifice" refers to "the ultimate sacrifice they had to make to be together… death" (S1, I2). The image may also be seen as a play on Romeo and Juliet's opposing ancestries, now united with this

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“innocent” and “pure” deed (v. 12). The final verse then continues the unity theme, suggesting that the spilling of blood was necessary for the bind to be ‘true’.

It is in the chorus, though, where the song reaches both its interpretive and affective peaks − exploiting the ‘tragic’ element of the play to such an extent that it could suffice as a *pain creed* for all the times, all lovers and people of all cultures, faiths and beliefs. It is probably here where Mandy’s search for “universal truths” rings most true. There are once again no direct links to the play, yet it succeeds in describing its thematic premise and (perhaps on a more subjective level) capturing the pain and hopelessness felt by all those who may have been in a troubled, short-lived − even abusive − relationship. A *Spenserian* or nine-line verse, the chorus certainly did not disappoint as the *hook* (Alves, 2006) of the recording as well, with its cyclical structure sure to be “a hit with crowds” (S1, I2). The opening lines emphasise the *excess* of their fated afflictions − pain, sorrow and a fruitless future − followed by the image of “blood [flowing] like falling rain”. The final three lines are then an inversion of the opening: in death, Romeo and Juliet simply have no need for “pain”, “sorrow” or any form of “tomorrow”. As a semiotic agent considering future audiences, Mandy was thus mindful of the diversity, accessibility and, for lack of a better term, *catchiness* of her song during both its compositional and performative stages.

The redesign task is not only geared towards exploring the content of a set work. Mandy’s actual *process* or chain of redesign, as explored with selected participants in the following chapter, may reveal the potential of such tasks for developing self-expression and problem-solving skills, all whilst encouraging a ‘consultation’ of prescribed content for increased accuracy and authenticity. Mandy’s chain, though, was punctuated by only three texts: the programmed *demo* to establish a consistent beat or measure, her handwritten lyrics as discussed above and her final audio-recording of the song (Appendix B2, on data disc). The recording presented us both with many challenges, and we had to meet quite frequently to find a good syncopation between vocals and instruments. Though the original *Music Maker* (published by British software company *Magix* in 2001) might seem quite dated now, it allows for the programming of eight looped tracks and playback of these in real time − a more than adequate tool for any producer or deejay (Jones, 2001; Gray,

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2001). There are literally thousands of notes, samples, pitches and sound effects to choose from, but the real test − Mandy and I would learn − lies in *how* these elements are combined, or *where* they are laid down as foundation for the vocals. Fashioning ourselves as music producers, we thoroughly enjoyed experimenting with this sonic bounty *on-site*, with Shakespeare's play and Alves' *Music of the Peoples of the World* (2006) serving as our literary and practical guides, respectively. The table below (fig. 4.2) includes my own interpretation of the song, and provides some clarity on how Mandy had selected specific sound effects to evoke key themes and scenes from the play:

Section of Mandy's lyrics	Instruments / effects used (*Music Maker*, 2001)	Ambience created* **GENRE: alternative with classical elements**
Verses 1 and 2: the address to Juliet	Acoustic drums; bass guitar	Light / humorous but with a foreboding undertone
Verses 3 and 4: the balcony scene	Acoustic drums; bass guitar; keyboards	An air of romance, but more eerie with every whispered line
Verses 5 and 6: their fate is sealed	Acoustic drums; bass guitar; keyboards; violin	Ceremonial or reminiscent of a wedding; even more eerie than v. 3 / 4
Chorus	Electronic drums; bass guitar; piano	Quicker pace; a sense of innocence evoked by piano loop
Verse 7: the twist	Acoustic drums; bass guitar; keyboards; sampling	Similar to previous verses, but with added *ghost* sample
Verses 8, 9, 10 and 11: the suicides	Acoustic drums; bass guitar; keyboards; sampling	The sound of tragedy. Sample used is similar to Herrmann's *The Murder* score in *Psycho* (Hitchcock, 1960)
Verse 12: the blood sacrifice / bond	Acoustic drums; bass guitar; keyboards; sampling	More positive due to *trumpet* sample
Verse 13: the unification of families	Acoustic drums; bass guitar; keyboards; sampling	More positive due to *trumpet* sample
Outro	Acoustic drums; bass guitar	Emphasis on the word 'toll' − funeral bells? Fades out gradually

Fig. 4.2: Table comparing sections of Mandy's lyrics with instruments / effects used in the *Music Maker* program, and ambiences created. Instead of applying the *label method* and *five C's* to Mandy's handwritten lyrics − which is primarily verbal in modal composition − this table draws parallels between her words, the instruments or effects used, and the ambiences created each time.

With Mandy taking the lead in this synthesis of rhythm, tone and the literary meanings hemmed into her lyrics, the finished song seems to embody the entire play

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− its progression of moods, tones and colours[11] which may have remained forever trapped within a paper materiality. Though it makes little effort to follow the arc or storyline of Shakespeare's narrative, Mandy's song capitalises on the sonic mode's affordance of *condensing* things; imparting through a four-minute song, for example, the essence of a one hundred-page play, or conveying those human experiences which words alone never could. The best example of music's *expository* ability is perhaps Jeff Wayne's adaptation of H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* (1898), effectively retelling the two hundred and eighty-seven-page narrative in under eighty minutes. Nowhere, though, is the far-reaching power of sound more apparent than the frenzy caused by Orson Welles' narration of the book on New York Radio, in 1938. In its broadcasted form, *War of the Worlds* sounded so 'real' or convincing that it caused nationwide panic, with millions of Americans believing that Martians were indeed invading Earth. While the likes of *Forbidden Love* might never reach such levels of artistic or commercial impact, it is certainly a step in the right direction if we wish to change learners' perceptions of their prescribed works; to boost their sites of display or just broaden their creative horizons.

4.1.2 A foray into font: Razia's lyric poster based on *Things Fall Apart*

Razia's work began as a one-page summary of Chinua Achebe's historical fiction, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), prescribed for grade ten learners at her Muslim school. Her class had finished reading its expository chapters, at least, but a barrage of teacher-led discussions on the novel's storyline, themes and characterisation had − according to Razia − "spoiled" any chance of surprise at Okonkwo's outbursts, and the twists in plot these so often brought about. By the second term, then, most of her peers knew exactly how the story would end, perhaps accounting for their abandonment of the actual prescribed paperbacks, and a subsequent gorging on *Sparknotes* (2019) or *SuperSummary* (2019) to feign understanding in class. Aware of the pitfalls of overusing such online guides, I urged Razia to finish reading the book before we embarked on our redesign journey. Having written "a few love ballads" in her diary before, Razia looked forward to remaking the novel into a song

[11] As discussed earlier, the similarities between music and visual art terminology are rather striking. Words such as *colour*, *line*, *tone* and *mood* are used in both disciplines, and though they are context-specific they share many parallels in terms of meaning.

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through the *lyric poster*. In contrast with Mandy, though, the Shari'a-compliant Razia had reservations about singing or performing the song, so we agreed to focus on the genre frame's affordances as a visual-verbal artefact only.

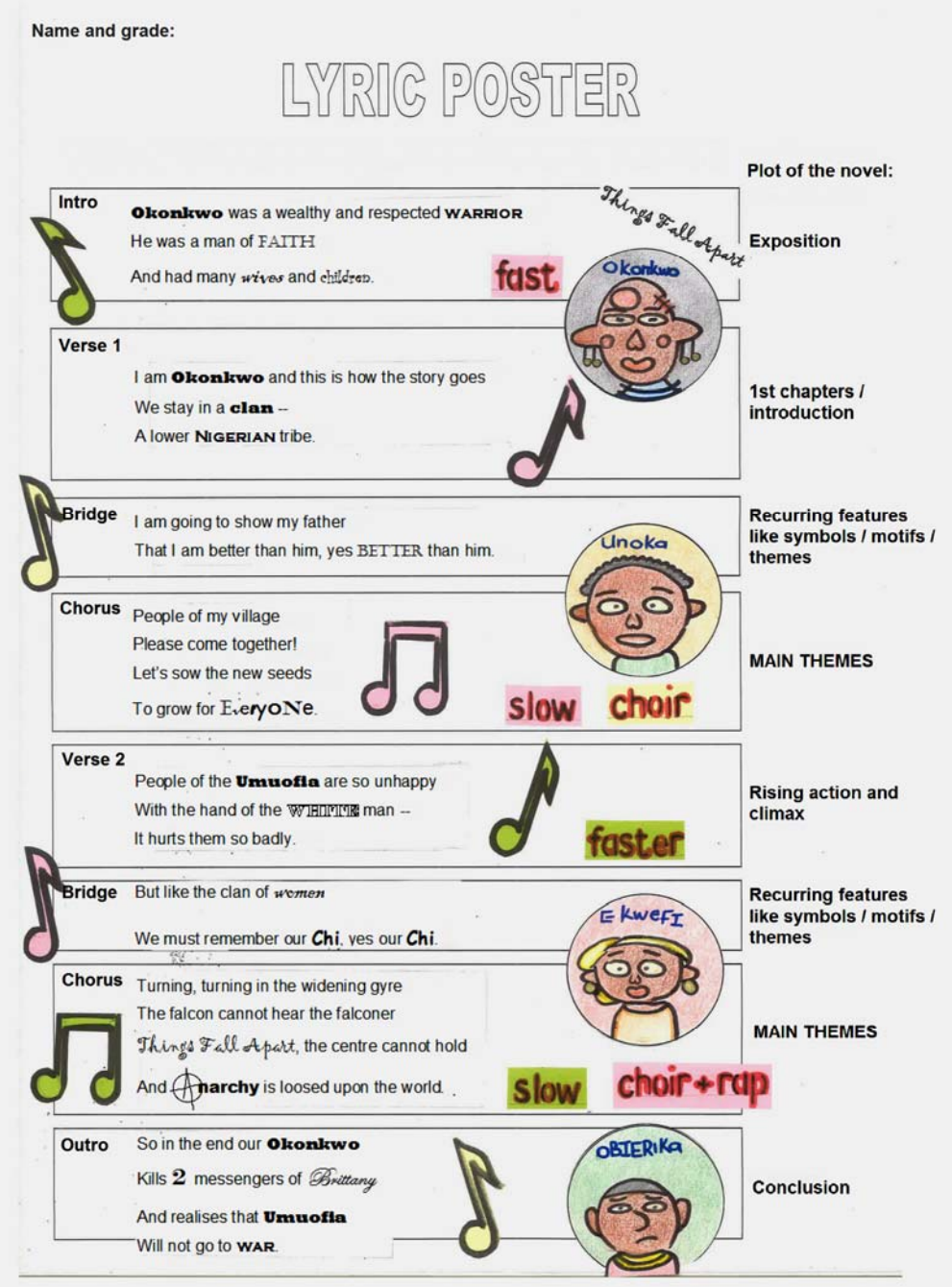


Fig. 4.3: Razia's lyric poster based on *Things Fall Apart.* Pencil, pen and typewritten cut-outs on paper, approx. 29 x 60 cm. I included the *Plot of the Novel* column (right) on the genre frame to assist participants in unpacking the dramatic arcs of their novels − and to write their lyrics accordingly − but use of this was optional as they could structure their songs in any way.

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Arguably the best example of how such redesign genre frames can swiftly and effectively facilitate literature learning, Razia's poster is basically a plot synopsis accommodating a multitude of signs in the linguistic, visual and − should it ever be performed − sonic modes. On the A3-size frame, Razia could include twenty-five lines of typewritten text which seem to encapsulate Achebe's narrative, and four thumbnail drawings of the characters *Okonkwo*, *Unoka*, *Ekwefi* and *Obierika*. Situating it even further in the music genre are the ledger lines, as used in music notation, to indicate the pace and vocalisation of each verse (e.g. *fast*, *slow choir*) and a strategic placement of quavers and double quavers. As a learner with little experience in visual art, Razia may not have created the most aesthetically pleasing work (the thumbnails, in particular, seem quite juvenile in their execution) yet a closer analysis reveals an engaged interpretation of the plot and four characters on display. Okonkwo (top) bares the scars from his many wrestling victories, while his gold earrings signal an accruement of the wealth squandered by his father, Unoka. Unoka himself (second from top) is portrayed as a rather androgynous subject − the effeminate and lazy flute-player whom Okonkwo so despises. One of Okonkwo's wives, Ekwefi (third from top) appears here as *the belle of Umuofia* with her golden headscarf and brass hoops, but she seems somewhat hardened by her husband's many fits of rage. Finally, the wise and reasonable Obierika (bottom) looks deeply troubled. From his placement in the final section, we can assume that this follows Okonkwo's murder of the court messenger in Chapter Twenty-Four.

The musical elements are also not arbitrary; in each 'verse' appears a quaver (articulated as *ta, ta, ta* in music notation) while the more flowing or *legato* double quaver (*ta-a*, *ta-a*, *ta-a*) is reserved for the choruses. With their more lyrical subject matter and slower pace, the choruses rather call to mind a national hymn or song of praise. The first features Okonkwo calling for unity among his *Igbo* tribe, while the second is an extract from a well-known poem by W.B. Yeats. Razia included this extract, as *an intertextual reference within an intertextual work*, after learning that this is where the novel borrowed its title. However, it is in the typewritten lyrics − particularly in the use of different fonts − where Razia's transmodalisations of the source text become most apparent. Here follows a breakdown of her selections:

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Font (Microsoft Word, 1998-present)	Characteristics	Application in Razia's lyric poster
Rockwell Extra Bold	Heavy; authoritative; often used in headlines of old publications	"Okonkwo", "clan", "Umuofia"
COPPERPLATE GOTHIC BOLD	Typical *printing press* font; imposing; often used in cartography; slight serifs	"Warrior", "Nigerian", "war"
CASTELLAR	An engraved look; medieval; *church-like* or reminiscent of headstone carvings	"Faith", "better"
Blackadder	More feminine; free-hand with a slight hesitance to lines; the look of 'antiquity'	"Wives", "women"
Curlsz	Playful; psychedelic; often used on confectionary wrappers	"Children"
ENGRAVERS	Similar to *Castellar*, but more solid	"2" (two), "white"
Comic Sans	Soft and rounded; consistent thickness in line; used in comic books *sans* (without) serifs	"Chi"
Gigi	Similar to *Curlz*, but more mature and sophisticated	"Things Fall Apart"
Arial Black	Conventional; widely used because of legibility; used in media / propaganda to impart a clear message	"Anarchy"
Edwardian Script	Eurocentric; the handwriting of an 'educated' individual; stately and refined	"Brittany"

Fig. 4.4: A comparative analysis of standard word processor fonts, their unique characteristics, and their occurrence in Razia's lyric poster

Razia thus wanted to foreground the meaning potential of individual *words* in her final work. Her choice for each focal word, it seems, is determined by its etymology as well as meaning in the context of Achebe's narrative. As she transformed her initial plot summaries and drafts into a "proper song" on the laptop, Razia displayed a keen eye for the shape, thickness, spacing and movement of different fonts. She

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knew that these qualities could − if used consistently − intensify the message or *audibility* of her words; *Rockwell Extra Bold*, for example, is used for all clan names, while *Edwardian Script* is applied to the word “Brittany” in the outro. The latter font also visually references Achebe’s final chapter, where a British District Commissioner writes *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*, a racist narrative which seeks to trivialise Okonkwo’s suicide. To conclude and further reveal the links between Achebe and Razia’s work, here follows an application of the label method and five C’s:

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4.1.3 *Boys Will Be Boys*: Casey's lyric poster based on *Lord of the Flies*

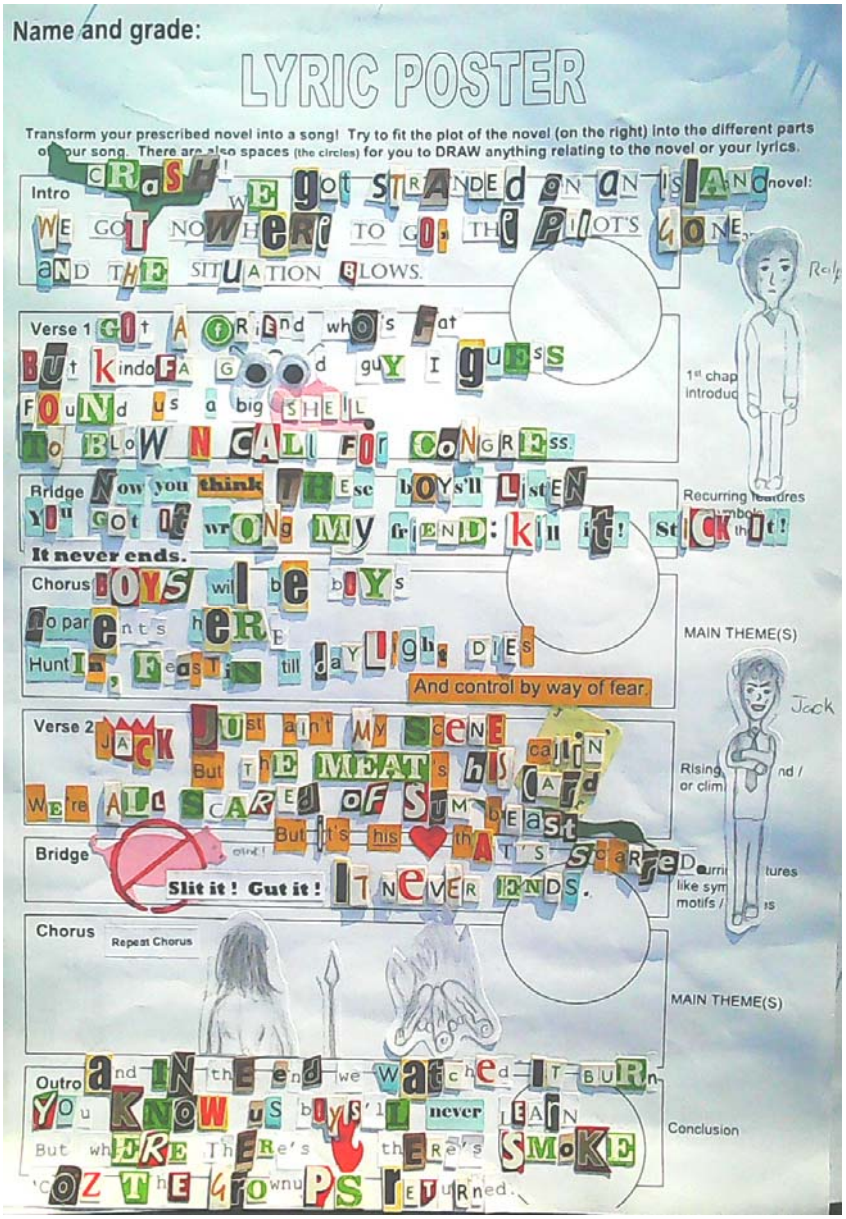


Fig. 4.5: Casey's lyric poster based on *Lord of the Flies*. Paper and cardboard cut-outs, pencil and pen on paper, approx. 29 x 60 cm

This work acts as a primarily visual abstract of *Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1954), as opposed to Mandy's reliance upon the auditory mode to transduce meanings from *Romeo and Juliet* (above). Although it adheres to many of the compositional features of modern songs, the poster rather foregrounds the visible *lyrics* as an artwork in itself. Casey was insecure about his handwriting and drawing abilities, so I suggested the so-called 'ransom note' technique early on. As he began cutting hundreds of letters from magazines, cereal boxes, newspapers and his first

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typewritten drafts, Casey commented on the strenuous demands of the technique. Also, the spatial properties of the A3-size genre frame (not to mention the actual length, diction and tone of Casey's lyrics) would determine the size, shape, colour and font of each letter. The result was a complex collage that not only paid homage to Golding's masterpiece, but also foregrounded the *letter* or *word* as a self-reliant entity, worthy of artistic representation. He wanted each word, as far as possible, to act as visual ambassador for a person, thing or idea. To take this one step further, a series of paper cut-outs − like the bomber plane (intro), conch shell (v. 1) and bonfire (outro) − would serve as *visual anchors*, pasted underneath focal words in the manner of shadows or silhouettes. Again, the label method and five C's will further foreground this dialogue between linguistic and visual modes:

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With such aesthetic strengths, the work may run the risk of downplaying or 'smothering' Casey's actual lyrics. Despite their tongue-in-cheek tone and overuse of slang, these words nevertheless succeed as a synopsis of the novel. Now that we have focused on the primarily *visual* aspect of Casey's work, here follows a direct comparison between his lyrics and Golding's storyline (fig. 4.6). This may provide further insights into Casey's construction of both personal and text-derived meanings:

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Casey's lyrics from *Boys Will Be Boys*		**Corresponding chapters from *Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1954)**
Crash! We got stranded on an island We got nowhere to go, The pilot's gone And the situation blows.	Intro	Chapter One: *The Sound of the Shell.* Expository elements of the novel. It is the height of the Second World War, and while evacuating a group of schoolboys from England, a cargo plane crash-lands on a deserted island.
Got a friend who's fat But kindofa good guy I guess Found us a big shell To blow n' call for congress.	Verse 1	Chapter One: *The Sound of the Shell.* *Ralph*, the protagonist, is introduced. He meets *Piggy* on the beach, and they blow on a 'conch shell' to call for any survivors.
Now you think these boys'll listen You got it wrong my friend: Kill it! Stick it! It never ends.	Bridge 1	Chapter Three: *Huts on the Beach*; Chapter Four: *Painted Faces and Long Hair.* The beginning of the outer conflict. The boys form two factions: one with Ralph as leader, and the other with *Jack*. Jack's tribe, having grown tired of eating fruit, begin hunting pigs for meat.
Boys will be boys No parents here Huntin', feastin' till daylight dies And control by way of fear.	Chorus	Casey's chorus seems to address a focal theme in the novel, *civilisation versus savagery*, which first emerges in Chapter Four and is sustained to the end. Under Jack's leadership, the boys become consumed by feasting and the thrill of hunting − first pigs, then people.
Jack just ain't my scene But the meat's his callin' card We're all so scared of sum beast But it's his [heart] that's scarred.	Verse 2	Chapter Eight: *Gift for the Darkness.* Jack's influence continues to grow, until only Piggy remains in Ralph's tribe. The 'beast' here refers to the serpent-like creature conjured in the minds of the boys, but it is Jack who is the real threat to their survival.
Now you think these boys'll listen You got it wrong my friend: [Oink!] Slit it! Gut it! It never ends.	Bridge 2	Chapter Nine: *A View to a Death*; Chapter Ten: *The Shell and the Glasses*; Chapter Eleven: *Castle Rock.* Jack and his hunters, now having completely abandoned their morals, raid Ralph's camp and steal Piggy's glasses. This eventually leads to Piggy's murder at Castle Rock. Note the progression from "Kill it! Stick it" in Bridge 1 to the more sadistic "Slit it! Gut it!" used here.
	Repeat chorus	
And in the end we watched it burn You know us boys'll never learn But where there's [fire] there's smoke 'Coz the grownups returned.	Outro	Chapter Twelve: *Cry of the Hunters.* Jack and his tribe set fire to the island in an attempt to extract and kill Ralph. The smoke draws the attention of a passing cruiser, and the boys are soon met with a naval officer on the beach.

Fig. 4.6: A comparative analysis of Casey's lyrics and the *Lord of the Flies* plot

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The affordances of the lyric poster as a guiding template or 'frame' now come into plain view. Rather than restricting Casey in his rock song adaptation, the frames and headings encouraged the tracking of Golding's storyline in each 'verse', while the 'bridge' and 'chorus' required careful attention to motifs, symbols and themes. He may still be unaware of this, but Casey has struck a perfect balance between personal experience and plot narration, yet in the vernacular most closely associated with teenagers today. It is in the chorus, second verse and outro, however, where Casey draws most from his convictions, presenting them as 'truisms' or allegories voiced by the protagonist *Ralph*. The phrases "boys will be boys*"* and "us boys [will] never learn" allude to a patriarchal world's continued appreciation for guns, tanks, fighter jets, warheads and other instruments of death (Golding, 1965). "No parents here" then plays on the anarchy associated with the absence of more 'responsible' elders or authority figures.

It would appear that the music redesign journey has been one of immense *depth* − both for myself and the participants − affording a glimpse into the colours and literary intricacies of one play and two novels, at least. With the exception of Mandy, whose lyrics actually made it onto tape, the group's lyric sheets have remained largely paper-based, yet seem to shine now as multimodal abstracts or amalgams of their prescribed forebears. The storyboard task would be just as generative for participants from the *film* group:

4.2 Film

> "There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you."
>
> Maya Angelou

Storyboards are still key to the pre-production stage of any film, whether it is fictional, biographical or animated in nature (Flaherty, 2016). As a multimodal text of the highest order − with its symphony of drawings, verbal anchors, arrows and other such signs − the storyboard seemed to resonate most with those wanting to remake prescribed poetry into something more dramatic or evocative of the rich imagery so central to the poet's creative process. Unlike their *novel* and *play* counterparts, poems are seldom adapted into film, so it seemed fitting that the storyboard group gave these condensed narratives the attention they deserved. The participants

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discussed below − Misha, Rasheed and Zane − may not have committed their works to video, but the task nonetheless allowed them to show how they *saw* the poems personally, at a level far surpassing the original words-on-paper materiality.

4.2.1 Christmas cards for the dead: Misha's storyboard based on *Anthem for Doomed Youth*

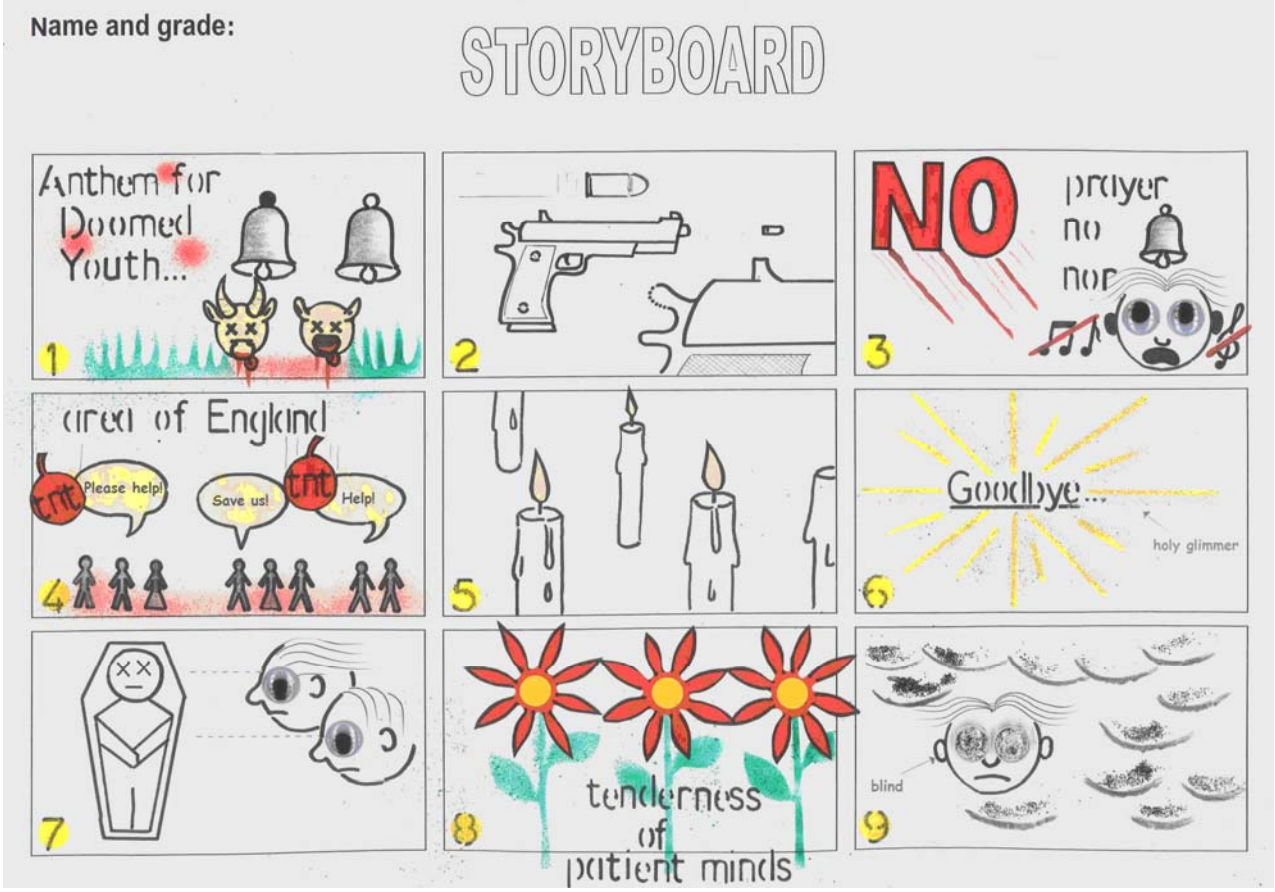


Fig. 4.7: Misha's storyboard for a short film based on *Anthem for Doomed Youth*. Pencil, Koki pen, glitter pen, charcoal and airbrush on paper, each frame approx. 6 x 13 cm.

'Sadness' is a word synonymous with Wilfred Owen's war poem *Anthem for Doomed Youth* (1917), and it would seem this same emotion underscores Misha's redesign thereof (fig. 4.7). For this final, nine-frame storyboard, she used the white background as a key compositional element, further enhancing the contrast of thick, black outlines and occasional bursts of red, yellow and green. Only at the time of stencilling her final letters and outlining the *Hello Kitty* style faces, though, did Misha learn of the colour's meaning in esotericism and faiths of the Far East (S4, I1 & I2). In Chinese culture, for example, white is not always associated with purity and

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innocence; it is often worn at funerals, ghost festivals and during times of mourning (Hollander, 2009). It can be argued, still, that Misha's redesign is of an unshakably western or Eurocentric text; it is an Englishman's elegy, or a lament for the young British soldiers who died fighting on the Western Front. Yet, the faces in frames 1, 3, 7 and 9 draw heavily from a *manga* or Japanese cartoon aesthetic, demonstrating a love for animated series like *Pokémon* or the clothing merchandise of *Hello Kitty*, which has been popular with young girls since 1974. Later described as "Christmas cards" by Misha − probably for their mistletoe palette and inclusion of bells, candles and glitter − each of the nine frames is surprisingly convincing as a visualisation of the poem's bleak and morbid subject matter. By no means do Misha's drawings come across as a caricature or *Disneyfication* of Owen's imagery; they rather capture the horrors of WWI as witnessed by a small child, who may have drawn them as Christmas cards to commemorate a fallen soldier in the family.

To further explore Misha's unique selection of signs, here follows a side-by-side comparison between the poem and each drawing:

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Linguistic: the poem	Visual / multimodal: Misha's storyboard (numbered 1 to 9)
What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?	1: The title of the poem in black stencilled letters, with the ellipse and 'blood spatter' added for dramatic effect. Two black funeral bells above the heads of a slaughtered bull and pig − Misha's literal interpretation of "cattle". A field of grass, with a red road (or river of blood?) in the centre.
− Only the monstrous anger of the guns. Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle Can patter out their hasty orisons.	2: A profile view of two firearms − though they seem more like modern handguns, not rifles − at the moment of firing. Motion lines are used to suggest rapid movement of bullets; cropping of second gun could indicate sideways panning of camera.
No mockeries now for them, nor prayers nor bells; Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, −	3: Emphasis put on word 'NO' by using a bold red font; parallel lines underneath may suggest dragging of a body or bloody object. To the right: "prayers", another funeral bell and the head of a choirboy, with stick-on eyes for an alarmed expression. Next to his head appear music notes / signs, crossed out with red pen.
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells; And bugles calling for them from sad shires.	4: "area of England" caption used to set the scene. Eight figures, both male and female, bombarded by 'TNT' bombs from above; three speech bubbles "Please help!", "Save us!", "Help!" show their distress. Red airbrush used around figures: smoke? Fire? Blood?
What candles may be held to speed them all?	5: Five white candles. They are lit, but only three are shown in full. Again, the candles are cropped / appear to be exiting the frame; this together with the plain white background may suggest camera movement or the floating of objects in space.
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.	6: Stencilled letters "Goodbye…" in centre of frame, underlined. Surrounded by yellow motion lines, extending outwards in the manner of a bright light. Silver glitter also used by the lines. A label "HOLY GLIMMER" is written in pencil, with an arrow pointing to the centre.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;	7: Two heads, possibly of children, shown in profile. Again, stick-on eyes are used. Downward sloping of their mouths suggests sadness (also see frame nine). Arrows used to show direction of their gaze: body (of a soldier?) in a coffin, shown from above. His hands are joined, his mouth is a mere slit and two 'X' shapes are used for the eyes.
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,	8: Stencilled letters "tenderness of patient minds" superimposed over three red flowers, possibly remembrance poppies. Green airbrush and a handmade stencil used for the stems.
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.	9: Charcoal and black glitter used in the background to suggest a dark setting. Another head, very similar to the choirboy's in frame three. This time, the stick-on eyes have been turned upside-down to suggest the subject's blindness; also the label "BLIND" − some slippage on Misha's part?

Fig. 4.8: A comparative analysis of Owen's *Anthem for Doomed Youth* and Misha's storyboard

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A breakdown of the 'links' between an original and remade text − as seen in the table above − can be quite effective for determining a learner's level of engagement with a set work, or the extent to which this could be transformed into a visual-verbal artefact more representative of a unique interpretation or *reading* (Walsh, 2009). However, such juxtapositions are often overly descriptive; they focus more on the visible parallels between texts and less on participants' intentions, their reasons for selecting particular signs, or the actual processes required during production. As stated, a combined use of the *label method* and *five C's* is one way to supplement such traditional or tabular comparisons − and in fact can be applied to any text or punctuation in the semiotic chain. The use of brief intertextual annotations in the label method, for example, may afford both teachers and learners the opportunity to cross any gaps between *what is read* and *what is remade*, and to further explore the meanings implicit in such representations. Now for an application of these to Misha's work:

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4.2.2 A clear vision: Rasheed's storyboard based on *Shall I Compare Thee* (also known as *Sonnet 18*)

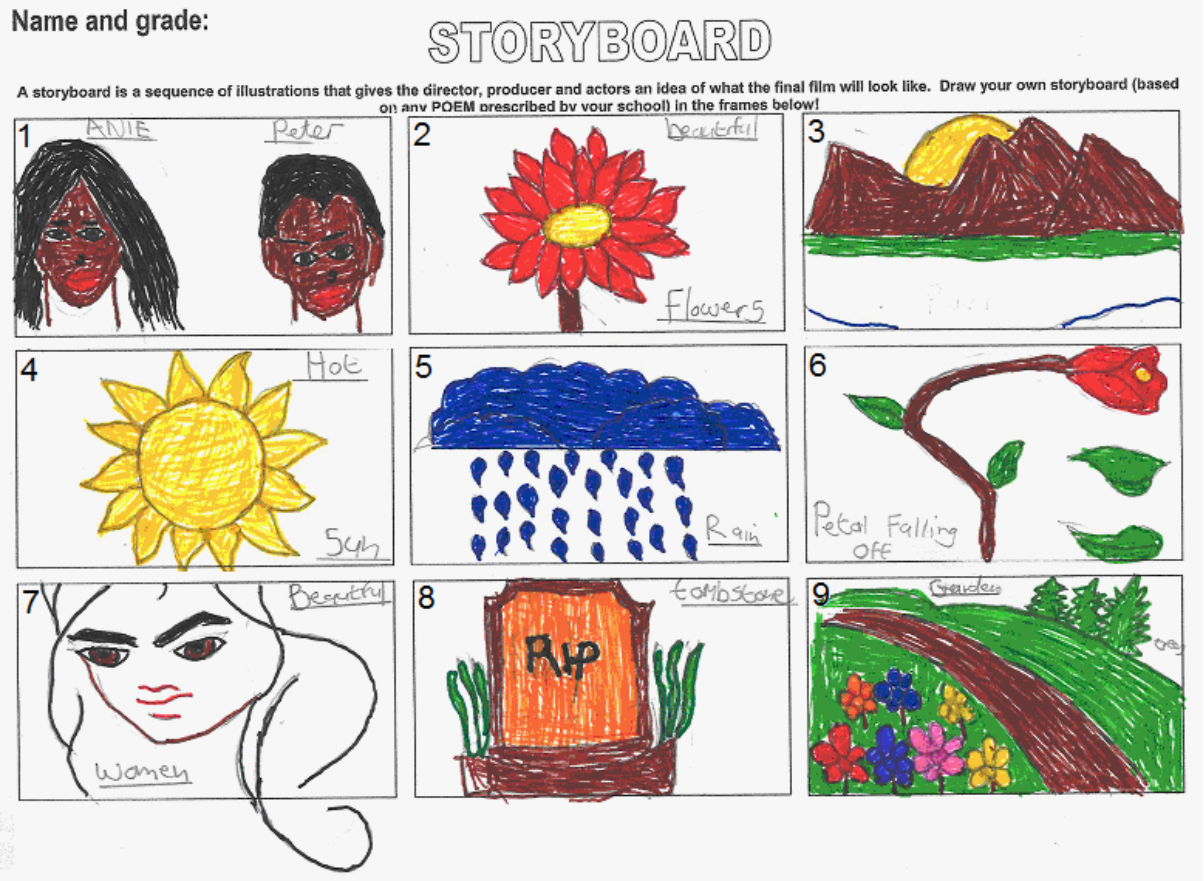


Fig. 4.9: Rasheed's storyboard for a short film based on *Shall I Compare Thee*. Pencil, pen and Koki pen on paper, each frame approx. 6 x 13 cm.

While this storyboard may lack the refinement of Misha or Zane's work (sections 4.2.1 above and 4.2.3 below), it nonetheless demonstrates how the inter-genre approach can be adapted into a more spontaneous or *short-term* class activity for igniting all poetry learners' imaginations, regardless of their subject set or proclivity for drawing. Completed during my first three visits to *Rasheed*'s school, it takes a departure from the war theme and gives a cheerful overview of *Shall I Compare Thee*, one of Shakespeare's sonnets. Rasheed, a grade ten learner who was just coming to grips with his Visual Art elective, took it in his stride to compose each frame as a "movie still" of a poetic image. To clarify how he approached this, here follows a comparison between the texts − first verbal, then multimodal through the label method and five C's:

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Linguistic: the poem	**Visual / multimodal: Rasheed's storyboard (numbered 1 to 9)**
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Thou art more lovely and more temperate:	1: Close-ups of a fictional boy and girl, *Peter* and *Annie*. With this, Rasheed establishes the theme / function of the poem as an address to a loved one.
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,	2: A red flower with a yellow bud. Rasheed uses warm primary colours to evoke the heat or impassioned 'feel' of summertime.
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:	3: It is dusk and the sun is setting behind a tall mountain. Rasheed is calling attention to the transience of seasons − of love and life in general.
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, And often is his gold complexion dimmed;	4: With this simple, *head-on* depiction of the sun, Rasheed is emphasising its intense heat. A bright yellow is used.
And every fair from fair sometime declines,	5: The 'decline' of the sun and summertime is signalled by a dark storm cloud, dripping with rain.
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed;	6: Another sign that summer has ended. We see the same red flower, but it is wilted and losing its petals, as explained by the anchor.
But thy eternal summer shall not fade, Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;	7: A "beautiful woman", most probably an adult Annie, in semi-profile. In this frame, Rasheed leaves her face uncoloured to show the literal 'fairness' of Shakespeare's subject.
Nor shall Death brag thou wanderest in his shade, When in eternal lines to time thou growest;	8: Having realised that Shakespeare is speaking of the permanence of *art*, Rasheed shows Annie's grave. Our lives and loves are fleeting, but we can always be remembered by the things we create: art, music and literature.
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.	9: The climax of Rasheed's 'short film'. A beautiful garden, with flowers blossoming once more. It plays on Shakespeare's promise of immortality to his beloved / the reader.

Fig. 4.10: A comparative analysis of Shakespeare's *Sonnet 18* and Rasheed's storyboard

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As for my face-to-face engagements with Rasheed, our final interview (S5, I2) marked a somewhat revelatory moment for the storyboard as a *general vehicle* for poetry learning − not only in the calm of the redesign space, but also in the broader context of English Home Language classrooms. To have learners interpret and remake poetry in their own ways, I realised, is not an option but a necessity. As stressed by Richard Andrews (1991), a poem never means *one thing*, nor does it bear the same meaning for any two individuals. For Rasheed, who describes himself as a "hopeless romantic" and "mostly visual learner", the task seemed to offer the best of both worlds; he could choose a prescribed text that 'spoke' to him emotionally, then transduce its meanings through a mode that catered for his needs − spiritual, communicative and expressive alike. The actual *process* behind Rasheed's creation is, however, the subject of the following chapter.

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4.2.3 Of war and horror: Zane's storyboard based on *Dulce Et Decorum Est*

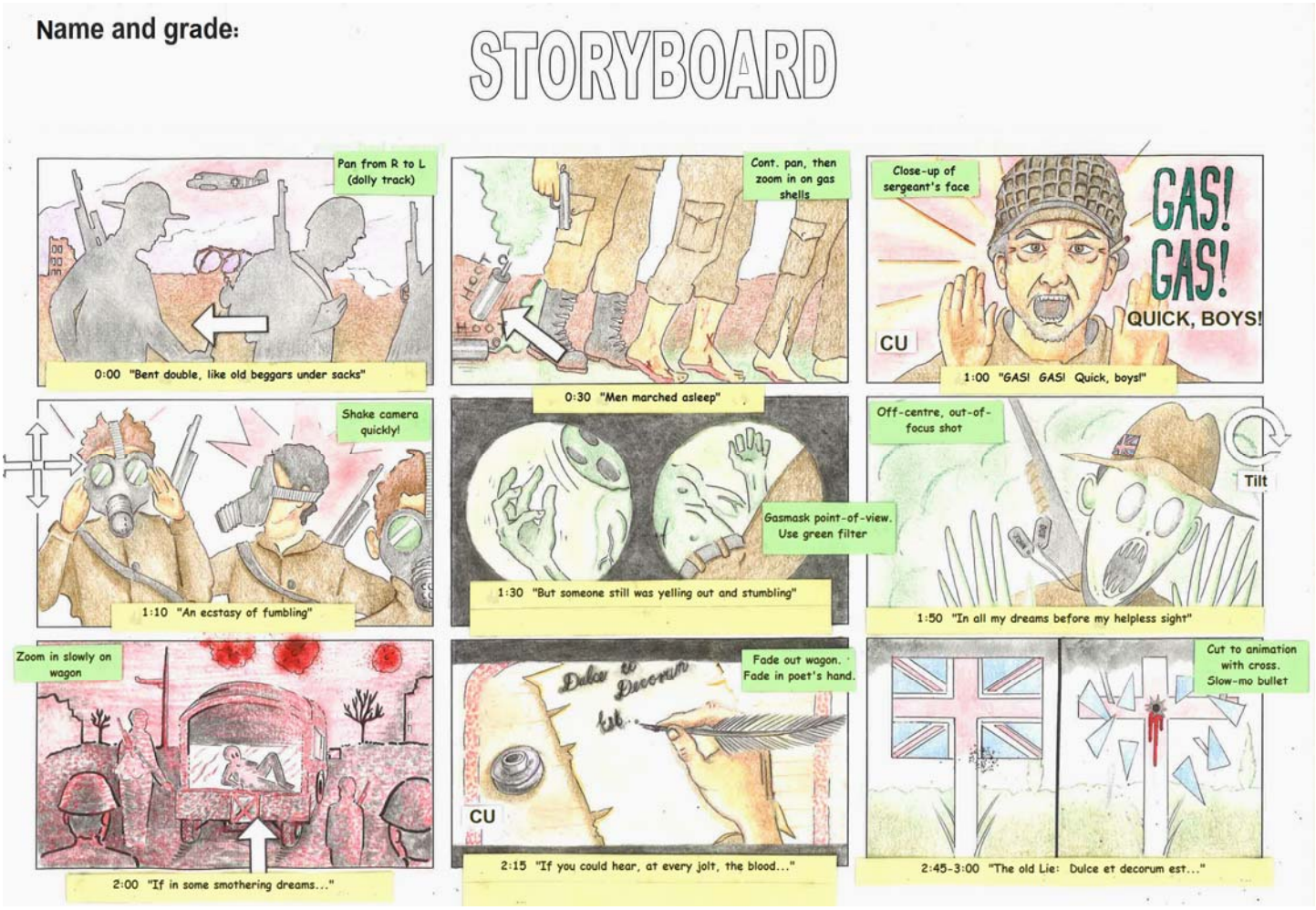


Fig. 4.11: Zane's storyboard for a short film based on *Dulce Et Decorum Est*. Pencil, pen, charcoal, chalk and airbrush on paper, each frame approx. 6 x 13 cm.

Based on Wilfred Owen's masterpiece *Dulce Et Decorum Est* (1917), this storyboard demonstrates both the dehumanising effects of war and the poet's characteristic use of vivid and horrific imagery. After deciding *what* to depict, *how* to depict it and *where*, Zane could proceed with blocking-in his pencils, inks and colours. Before finalising the camera techniques to be used, he also had to decide which line from the poem would signal which scene. In the space of nine small frames, he has doubly managed to condense most of the events described in the poem's twenty-eight lines, and to select what could be deemed Owen's most impactful images − or those narrative 'punctuations' most suited for cinematic redesign. With its moody palette of reds, greens and browns, strong outlines and angles aside, it is actually in each instance of Zane's *anchorage* (the yellow bar below each frame) where the

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storyboard finds its true strength as a considered and convincing representation of the poem. These bars not only quote Owen directly to situate each frame chronologically, but also include clock readings (e.g. “2:45 - 3:00”, frame nine) to bring a precise time progression or *rhythm* to the film − a crucial detail for any director or editor.

Adding to this precision are the director’s commands or cues in each frame, which Zane has written on green cards and pasted strategically so as not to conceal any of the action. These describe a wide range of camera techniques including panning (frame one), zooming (frames two and seven), reaction shots (frame four), point-of-view shots (frame five), focus (frame six) and visual effects like fading (frame eight) and slow-motion (frame nine). From this particular feature it becomes clear that Zane (a reserved grade eleven learner with whom I had revised the different camera techniques on one occasion only) could agentively merge his subject knowledge with a love for colour and poetry. He has created here an artefact quite faithful to the source text and yet, even without their linguistic anchors, the nine frames could stand alone as a representation of the human condition, of terrible flashbacks, or the psychological scars left upon woman, child and veteran alike.

The complexity of Zane’s storyboard is such that a tabular comparison between the poem and each frame may not adequately accommodate a description of his more subtle nuances, signs or intertextual references. Hence, a more ‘narrative’ or fine-grained analysis will now follow the original poem and *label method* insert:

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Dulce Et Decorum Est

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame, all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys! − An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime. −
Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before his helpless sight
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin,
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, −
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The Old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*
Pro patria mori.[12]

Wilfred Owen

[12] Translated from Latin, "It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country".

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In frame one, we see three British soldiers, one only partially visible, as they walk heavily towards a "distant rest" (line 4) − most likely a military hospital or infirmary used during the battle of the Somme. From his research, Zane found that the poet was stationed here at the time of writing *Dulce* (1917), and that he was killed by machine-gun fire a week before the war ended. The figures are drawn in strict profile, but with their lack of detail and flat middle-tone shading, they rather give the impression of silhouettes in a shadow-puppet show; ghostly figures against the pink and purple hues of a flare-lit backdrop. They are deliberately shown to be *faceless* − perhaps a result of incessant, wartime dehumanisation − yet they march on, oblivious to the gas-shells "hooting" softly behind them in frame two. In both these frames, the soldiers face right and indeed walk *to the right*, a conventional vector in the reading and writing of *western* linguistic texts (Kress et al, 2001).[13] Yet, from the director's cues (in green) and white arrows, we see that the camera should move *against* this − that is, from right to left on a dolly track − which further reinforces the rhythm of a heavy "trudge" (line 4) through cloying mud. Adding to this 'muddy' cadence is Zane's use of deep browns and reds for the war-torn landscape in frame one, and the areas between the soldiers' feet in frame two. Even the bomber plane − evidently German from the Teutonic cross on its fuselage − seems to resist the paper soldiers' desperate, left-to-right procession.

The camera then zooms in on the gas shells, still hooting and shaking if one spots the onomatopoeia and motion lines, before cutting to a close-up of the unit leader's anguished face in frame three. Described only as "the sergeant" by Zane − though no such rank appears in the poem − he is clearly an imposing figure, complete with greying hair, cigarette lodged behind one ear and a thunderous voice, judging by the sheer size of the words *GAS! GAS! QUICK, BOYS!*, which are superimposed over the shot. In this frame, gesture and facial expression have become modes in their own right. With the cupped hands, direct gaze and jutting head Zane seems to have repurposed this sole bit of dialogue into a rather complex character; a trustworthy siren, always calling others away from death.

[13] This left-to-right vector is repeated in frame seven with the slightly skewed view of the wagon − though in a much subtler way − and with the actual writing of the poem in frame eight. In fact, most of my participants approached their compositions in this way.

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With direct comparisons to the poem's individual lines aside, it would seem that the borders between linguistic and visual, drawing and poem, prescribed text and artistic liberty may have been blurred. Owen's poem and Zane's storyboard, it can be argued, are now mutual benefactors in the making of new meanings, as opposed to being either 'original' or 'redesigned' texts. In the above analysis of the short film's first thirty seconds, for example, the visual mode aided Zane in describing − in *imagining* or *cognitively concretising* − the first eight lines of a linguistic, typewritten text. On the other hand, reference was made to the poem itself, to identify any sustained or new meanings which he could 'take' from it. Though completely unique in its interpretation, the storyboard *comes from somewhere* and has, among other things, made extensive use of the Barthesian *anchor* (1967; 1977) to present itself as such.

The fourth frame signals the poem's change in tone from the plodding, monotonous march of the soldiers in stanza one, to the frantic fitting of the helmets and gasmasks in stanza two. Frame four also marks a shift towards a more *dream-like* aesthetic − carried through to the end of the storyboard − where the lines between reality and Owen's horrific flashback are crossed. We see the same three soldiers as before (now in a more 'personal' medium shot) moments after donning the alien headgear which would spare them for a while longer. Adding to this sense of fear are the motion lines around their heads and hands, and the "quick shaking" of the camera as is customary in the shooting of such frenzied scenes.

Frame five is an interesting one; the camera assumes a first-person view and actually depicts the horror through the eyes of the poet, though his reality is filtered through the lenses of a gasmask. By Zane's insistence a "green filter" is used here, further supporting the idea of the gas being inescapable and all-consuming. Already we see the hollow, "writhing eyes" and "hanging face" (lines 19-20) of the dying man as he reels through the mud, clutching at the air and arching his back in pain. Though it is quite a simple illustration compared to the others, both Zane and I delighted in its efficacy as an "icon of agony". It should be noted that the soldier's face or *countenance* is heavily inspired by Gerald Scarfe's animations in *The Wall Movie* (1982), which has always been a primary scaffold for my storyboard group.

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In no other scene is the power of fear more apparent than in the sixth, where we see the same soldier − now a ghost haunting Owen in his sleep − "plunging" (line 16) toward us with bared teeth and wraithlike hands. It is the work of abstraction, quite reminiscent of Edvard Munch's *The Scream* (1893), that Zane envisioned. The soldier is now a husk of his former self, with his saucer-eyes, slit nostrils and speaker-like ears seemingly morphing into the gasmask he once so loathed. Only his hat − with the Union Jack patch still visible − and a "John Doe" dog-tag tie him to reality. Here Zane continues the gas theme by drawing billows of green smoke in the background, but it is the tilting of the camera and "off-centre, out-of-focus shot" which perhaps make this scene most menacing.

Frame seven seems saturated by the red glow of the flares overhead, as some of the soldiers pace behind the "wagon" (line 18) that served as a makeshift hearse. Following my suggestion, Zane used red chalk to colour the entire frame, save his initial charcoal markings. The red hue is at its brightest in the three flower-like explosions (top), perhaps alluding to the war's symbol of remembrance − the red poppy (Gosher et al, 2007, p. 123). In terms of camera movement, we are expected to again follow the soldiers' weary gait, focusing on the back of the wagon before honing in on the asphyxiated man. For all its monochrome simplicity, it is possible that this frame best represents the poet's world − a world awash with the blood of his 'expendable' comrades, many of whom would not see their twenty-fifth birthday.

Similar to the gasmask perspective earlier, the penultimate frame or scene is viewed through the eyes of the poet − this time, as he is writing the actual poem. Again, Zane's thorough research into the poet's life comes through: while completing the bulk of his work at Craiglockhart Hospital in Scotland, Owen was known to use a quill pen, Indian ink and batches of parchment. Thus, we see his right hand penning the titular, Latin "lie", with the blots of ink suggesting a certain agitation or swiftness in capturing the memory. At the edges of the frame we still see the outline of the wagon, which should gradually "fade out" as Owen's hand comes into view. With this technique, Zane could not only ease in this contrasting, indoor event (as opposed to using a simple cut) but also imbue the scene with the nostalgia or relative calm of Owen's stay at the hospital.

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The final frame breaks away from the 'real' settings of the warfield and hospital entirely, favouring a near-surrealistic animation of the Union Jack, as it is shot dead-centre and begins shedding its red and blue 'panes' in the manner of a stained-glass window. As the pieces fall, we begin to see a white cross − possibly a grave marker in a war cemetery − with blood oozing from the wound. Again, this was inspired by what is arguably Scarfe's most evocative animation in *The Wall*, but the 'gunfire' element − Zane insisted − had to be added. He felt that the "slow-mo" entry of the bullet would bring a sense of finality to the film, and perhaps foreground the *violence* theme so prominent in Owen's work. In no other war poem, though, do firearms or bullets feature more prominently than *Anthem for Doomed Youth*, as redesigned by Misha above.

If more storyboards like these were to be enlarged and displayed in the English classroom, they would make for highly effective tools to teach and learn prescribed poetry. They may be designed by learners individually, in groups or even jointly by a teacher and willing participant. In a similar way, Jalongo et al (2002) use wordless picture books to support emergent literacy in the formative years, and several published interventions (Stein, 2003, 2008; Sankey et al, 2010; Yamada-Rice, 2015) promote mono-to-multimodal redesigns not unlike those we have explored so far. The storyboard task, however, is arguably the most candid of all in its communication of complex poetic imagery and themes; it *demands* attention to the detail and chronology of a poem, urging readers to re-portray its words with brevity and accuracy. Poetry is not just about conveyance and interpretation though; it is also a vehicle for *feeling* or the most abstract of the human faculties, which words often fail to describe (Uys et al, 2008). The above process of redesigning *Dulce*, for one, has sought to demonstrate the *power of pictures* in expressing such a wordless knowledge.

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4.3 Videogames

> "The obvious objective of videogames is to entertain people by surprising them with new experiences."
>
> Shigeru Miyamoto, creator of *Mario*

I have always thought of the videogame redesign component as somewhat of a *pièce de résistance*, at least in terms of the quantity and quality of data generated. By the time this data was collected, the participants were just as amazed as I by the genre's affordances for mobilising prescribed plays, particularly Shakespeare's. The prominence of videogames in high school learners' lives has already been discussed at some length in sections 1.5 and 2.2.3, but I wish to re-emphasise the *artform* status of most titles today − perhaps comparable to the biggest budget Hollywood films − as opposed to the basic algorithms of *Tetris* (1984) or *Space Invaders* (1978). Today's games should not be denigrated to the pick-up-and-play, "popular mass media texts" affording teenagers an hour of amusement or tempting them into a world of drugs and violence; they should be acknowledged in the highest discourses for their artistic, visual and musical subtleties − which in many cases would make the Renaissance polymath look twice. Five participants, not three, would be drawn in by the generative and spatially complex nature of the videogame frames. Again, these may not have evolved into actual playable demos, but the depth and sheer amount of detail in each videogamification perhaps best demonstrate the pedagogic value of the inter-genre approach proposed here.

4.3.1 A tragic hero's journey: Trevor's videogamification of *Macbeth*

Trevor, a grade eleven Visual Art learner and passionate gamer, approached the redesign task with a clear vision of *Macbeth* becoming "a third-person, free-roaming adventure… with cool graphics and epic battles" (S7, I1). I encouraged this, and looked forward to seeing his impressionistic style applied to a *Shakespeare-cum-Tomb Raider* videogame recreation. After only two preparatory sketches (Appendix A2), Trevor submitted this lovingly-drawn screenshot of the eponymous hero, approaching the Scottish marshland where he and fellow general, *Banquo*, would first encounter the witches (fig. 4.12 below). From the swampy landscape and 'checklist' in the top-left corner, we can assume that these are mere moments before Act 1, Scene 3. By King Duncan's order, the rebel *Macdonwald* has been killed, his

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stronghold has been "purged" and though both generals have fought valiantly, Macbeth is to become *Thane of Cawdor*. Eventually, this promotion would lead to Macbeth's accession to King of Scotland, fulfilling the witches' prophecy.

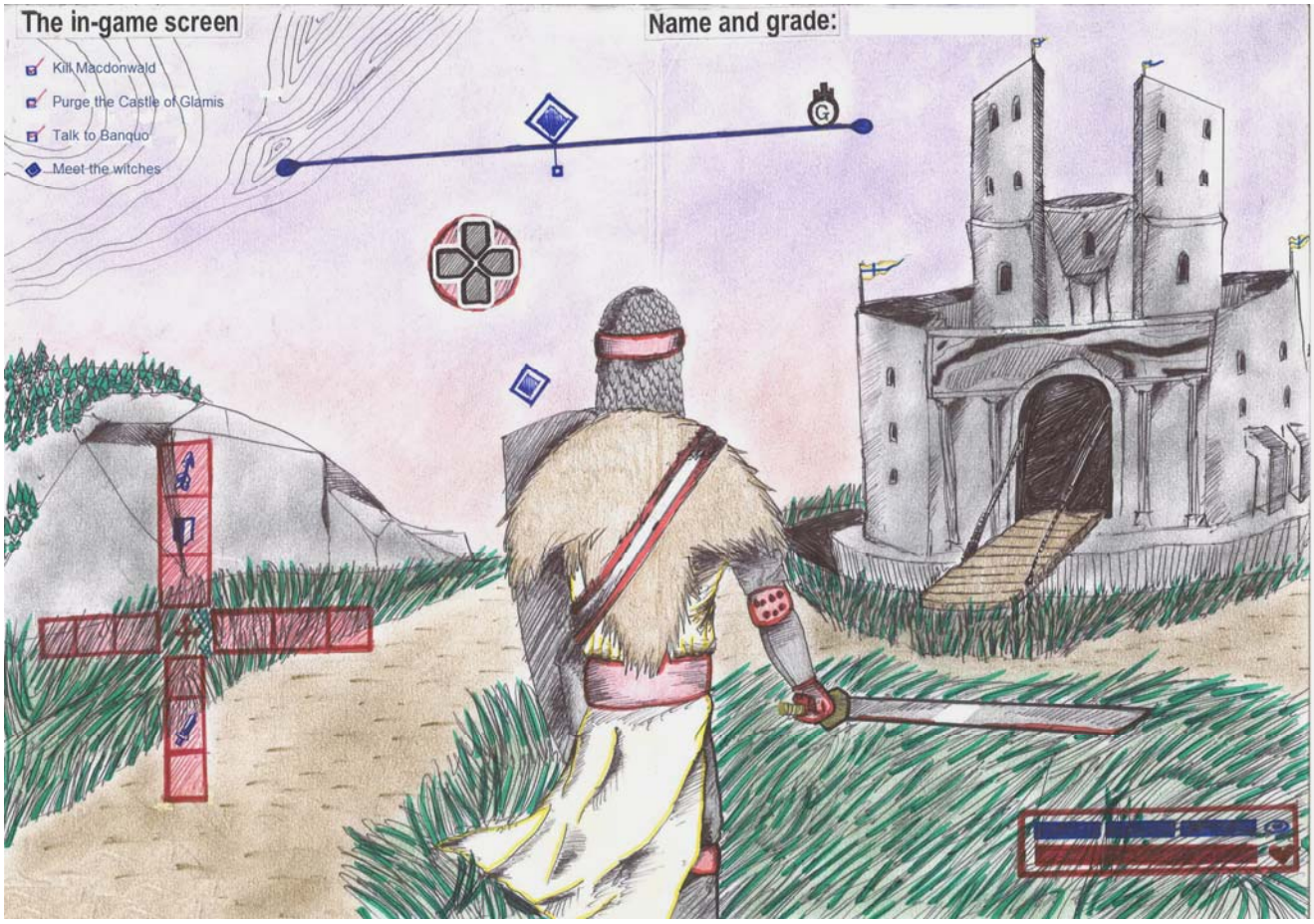


Fig. 4.12: Trevor's in-game screenshot of *Macbeth: The Game*. Pencil, pen, whiteboard marker and traces of chalk on paper, approx. 29 x 60 cm.

Macbeth is viewed from behind, in the medium-long shot typical of adventure games today. Peculiarly, Trevor's description of the game as a 'free-roamer' would imply that players can navigate the landscape freely, completing objectives in whatever order they choose and picking up collectibles, weapons or 'health packs' along the way (Savage, 2017). A *waypoint* in the form of a blue crystal clearly marks our destination − the "heath" where the witches lie in wait − though Macbeth himself would not be aware of this. As in the original play, our hero is left to the fate of an existing narrative; oblivious to his immediate future and in many ways puppeteered towards a tragic outcome. Macbeth's new existence as a videogame avatar only further intensifies *his* oblivion and *our* omniscience, with the player rather cruelly

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steering him − step-by-step − towards certain death at the hands of a mortal enemy.[14] Trevor has rather ingeniously incorporated the subtlest of signs into Macbeth's pose to reveal his hesitant and self-doubting nature; there are no enemies in sight, yet he grips his sword warily and shields himself against the dusky horizon. However, some of Trevor's more subtle signs can only be divulged through an application of the label method and five C's:

[14] In the final scene of the play, Macduff, a Scottish nobleman and challenger to Macbeth's kingship, kills and beheads Macbeth. Malcolm, the eldest son of Duncan (the king of Scotland whom Macbeth had murdered), then takes the throne.

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These annotations reveal what is arguably the most significant feature of Trevor's screenshot: his use of composition, particularly the various videogame conventions, as a 'way into' the meanings of the original play. In terms of setting, for instance, we see the luminous green grass typical of the highlands, and four *Saltires* (Scottish flags) perched on the towers of Glamis Castle. The latter's wooden drawbridge and surrounding moat will have been standard fortifications for the Scots in the eleventh century, not to mention the archer's balcony (centre) to dispel any invaders from England, Ireland and Normandy. The armour and weaponry of Macbeth (who at this time is only Thane of Glamis) also fit well into the historical context of the play, but the red and white of his sash rather call to mind the colours of England. With his chain-mail hood, bearskin cloak, hilted broadsword and steel shield, he is nonetheless the epitome of High Middle Age-innovation.

Then there is the rocky landscape to the left, again with a dash of green foliage. Composed mainly of middle-tone squares and triangles, this hill is reminiscent of the *polygons* used in many videogame environs. A polygon refers to any flat (usually triangular) surface forming part of a larger element within a virtual world, such as a tree, vehicle or body of a playable character. During the development of a 3D game, hundreds of thousands of polygons can be conjoined to form what are known as *wire-frame models* (Anon, 2019). These are then textured and shaded to make them more lifelike, or to suit the look desired by developers. One would think that this particular aesthetic of the virtual world − with its angular objects often coated in visible *pixels* − would go amiss in participants' work, but with *Macbeth: The Game* this is clearly not the case. Note how Trevor, through his almost chiselled treatment of the hill and castle, has emulated the look and feel of past-gen 3D titles like *Tomb Raider* (1996) and *Ape Escape* (1999):

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Fig. 4.13: Detail of Trevor's drawing (left) and screenshots from *Ape Escape* and the original *Tomb Raider* (right). I have outlined some of the polygons used by developers, in red.

Amid this resurgence of *retro* gaming − with learners also using every free minute to play a bout of *Minecraft* (2009) or *Angry Birds* (2009) − it appears we have found a new appreciation for the visibly constructed look of virtual worlds. These are often crude orchestrations of pixels, glitches and blocks which could almost be equated to the charcoal *cartoons* of the old masters (Kleiner et al, 2004, p. 615). Trevor's inclusion of these in his own drawing, however, can be seen as a *sustained meaning* (Kress, 2005) in the play-to-game transmodalisation. A distinctive modal feature of the videogame text has been faithfully retained − not for the sake of imitation, but perhaps to demonstrate an awareness of how visual modes (or the ways in which they are used to construct things) can define an entire subgroup or genre of text. On a more pedantic level, it could also be interesting to determine how such visual cues or markers − the pointed outlines of Trevor's landscape, specifically − are traceable to the actual *content* or thematic premise of the source text. *How*, I enquired, *could his use of line be linked to a specific character, ambience or environmental 'tone' from the play?* For this, Trevor has come up with a surprisingly pertinent response:

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"I included those things, firstly because I like the look of the old games, but also because they remind me of [Macbeth's] setting. It's a rough place… full of death and war and witchcraft… so I wanted [to depict] it like that" (S7, I2). This is another example of how meanings can move across modes − or entire genres − and find their expression in the most unexpected ways.

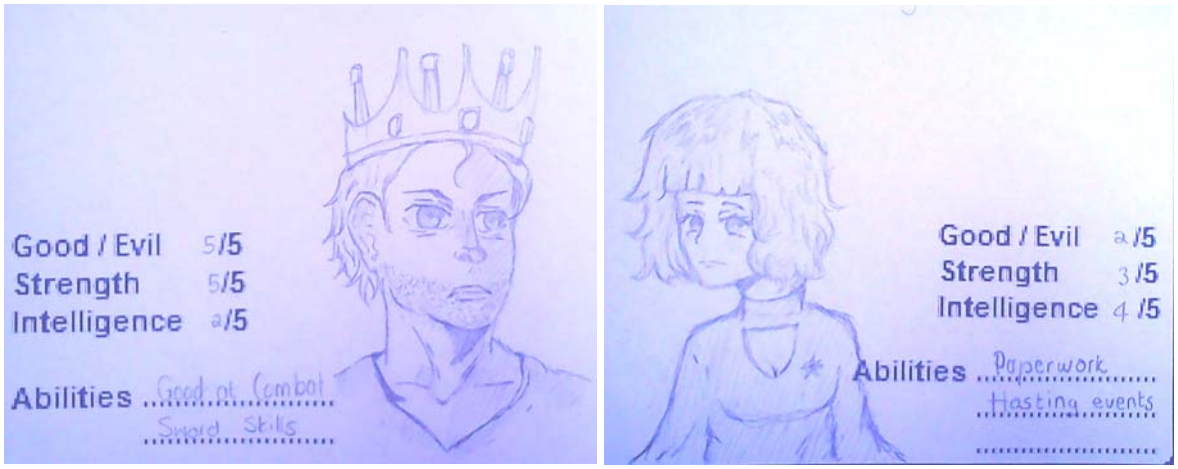


Fig. 4.14: Details from Trevor's character select screen

Trevor wanted to submit another work after completing his in-game screenshot (fig. 4.14). It is a study of the only two playable characters, Macbeth and his wife, who according to Trevor would "send the player on completely different adventures" (S7, I2). In the original play, Lady Macbeth proves instrumental in the tragic fate of Macbeth − it is she, after all, who plans the murder of King Duncan and his chamberlains so that her husband's kingship could be assured. Yet, her actual appearances in the play are few. Besides her manipulation of Macbeth in Act 1, there is only one reference to her suicide in Act 5, apparently brought on by insurmountable guilt. It is possible, then, that Lady Macbeth's in-game "adventure" would involve the daily responsibilities of any queen − the delegation of duties, the signing of contracts or treaties, or perhaps just enjoying the finer pastimes of hosting and horse riding. Recognising the growing margin of female-to-male gamers worldwide, Trevor later called this his "mode for girls". Indeed, if *Macbeth: The Game* were ever developed, this would not only offer a welcome alternative to Macbeth's outdoor warmongering, but also reflect a growing trend in videogames to be more situated or 'everyday' in premise − testing our problem-solving skills in evermore domestic contexts (Anon, 2018).

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The platinum hit *Overcooked!* (2016), for example, involves a frantic search for ingredients and the avoidance of bizarre obstacles to serve meal orders within the allotted time. *The Sims* (2000) − possibly the grandfather of life-based gaming − captivated millions of PC users with its refreshingly 'real' objectives of earning an income, building a house and, ultimately, keeping the family clean and fed. An array of status bars above each *Sim*'s head would indicate hunger levels, body temperature and overall 'happiness' − the depletion of which resulted in death or an agonising respawn. Similarly, Trevor's in-game screenshot shows Macbeth's status in two bars: a three-part blue one for his (quote) "emotional stability", and a red one for his "health" (fig. 4.12, bottom right). Both bars are full, which is significant considering the general's still-clean conscience in Act 1, before being tempted to kill anyone opposing his accession to the throne. Much more than a last-minute addition to sell the drawing as belonging to the videogame genre, these status bars (as well as the item menu or *HUD* to the left) speak of a reader truly connecting with his prescribed work, or exploring what makes characters 'tick' within their paper confines. As stated in Chapter Two (p. 79), the pedagogic application of such videogame features could also offer valuable insights into a character's physical and mental status (among other personality traits) in different stages of the narrative.

4.3.2 Fire and ice: Kulani's videogame screenshot for *Romeo and Juliet*

Kulani's character select screen for a fighting game, based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, can be seen as a visual representation that captures the outward appearances of both the play's primary and secondary characters (fig. 4.15). The artefact soon asserts itself as more than a slavish exercise in portraiture, however, or an attempt to conjure new likenesses from the Bard's often brief and implicit characterisations. It also includes many subtle references to the tone, plot and salient themes in the play. To achieve these delicate intertextual webs between the 'game' and play, Kulani has drawn from an extensive knowledge of in-game conventions, a love for Japanese anime and a keen interest in Shakespeare's oft-medieval aesthetic. Quite an eclectic mix of interests, yes, but one that works well to situate each persona convincingly within the twenty-first century, *digitised* context seen here:

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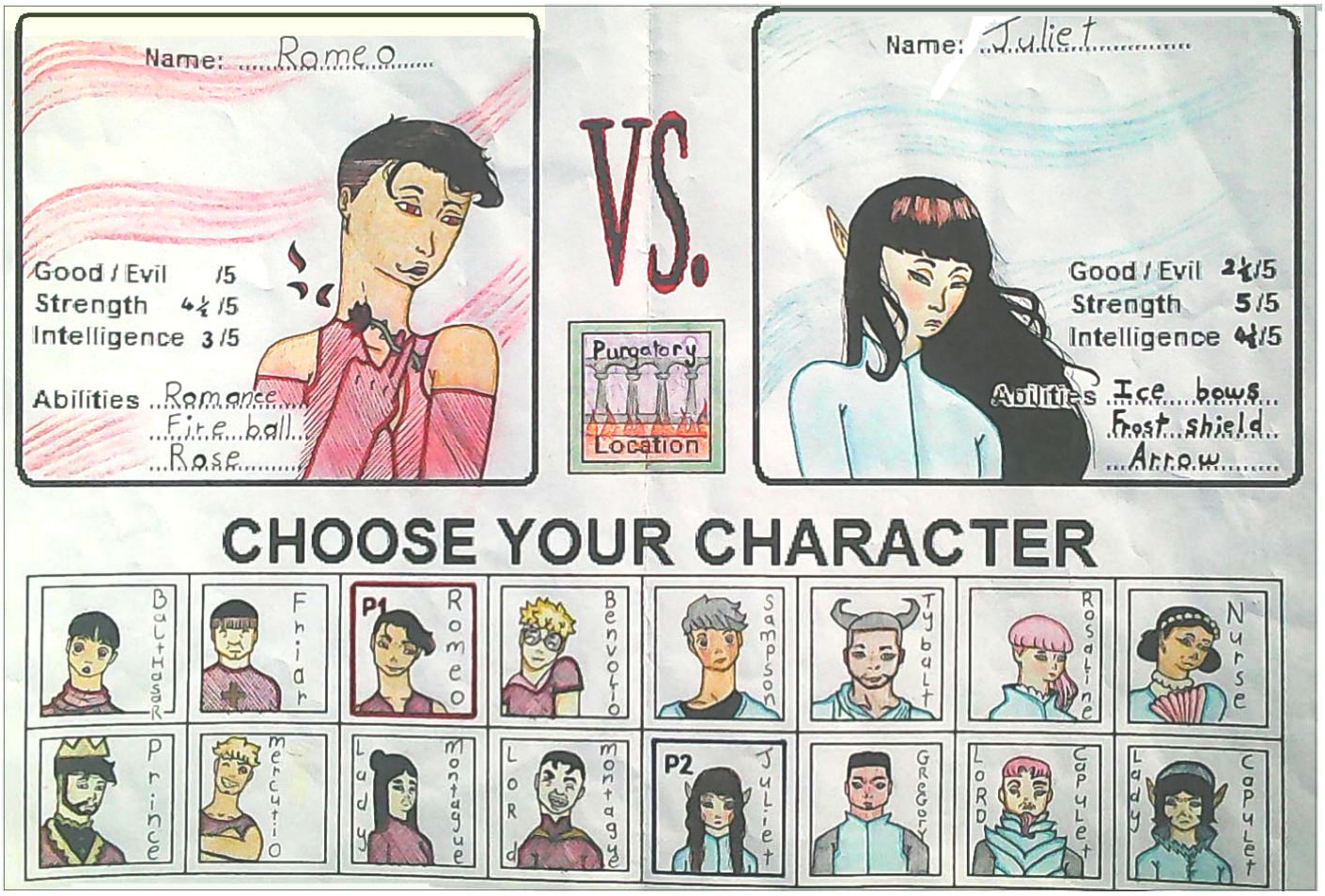


Fig. 4.15: Kulani's character select screen for *Romeo & Juliet*. Pencil, pen and chalk on paper, approx. 29 x 60 cm. Also see his unfinished *map of Verona* and *inventory screen* (Appendix A3).

Juliet (right) comes across more as a vixen from *Daft Punk*'s manga universe, and less as the timid girl in Baz Luhrmann's 1996 film adaptation. With her icy stare, pixie ears and windswept hair she is the rebellious teenager par excellence, whereas Romeo (left) gawks into space, perhaps longing for his love's return. As with Juliet his attire is surprisingly futuristic, with the tight scarlet suit complementing his eyes and the rose in his hand. The flower's petals − perhaps as an omen that their love will never endure − are blown away by an angry wind, suggested here by the red chalk lines in the background. As Kulani commented: "Red is the colour of love and passion… but also of anger… you become this colour if things don't go your way" (S8, I2). Although such observations may seem trivial in the wider context of the play, Kulani may have touched upon Halliday's (1978) *meaning potential* of colour, or the use of a single hue to represent an ambience or theme during text-making. In this case, 'red' effectively situates Romeo as a troubled youth − quick to temper and

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brash decisions − but also as a Montague, since the characters on the left all wear garments of this same, fiery pigment.

As stated in Chapter Two above (p. 79), "…a digitally or hand-drawn select screen may be useful for exploring each character's physical traits, attire, carried items − even his or her emotional disposition − as part of a narrative whole". The table below offers further comparisons between Kulani's work and Shakespeare's *dramatis personae* − or any facial features, mannerisms and dress styles inferable from the play's dialogue.

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Such a juxtaposition between a set narrative's imagery and the multimodal re-imagining thereof − in this case Kulani's videogame − reveals just how generative a facilitated redesign task of this ilk could be, if applied in the classroom space or otherwise. Some text revision and scaffolding (on my account as participant-observer) pre-empted the creation of the final work, yet several visual signs emerged as a surprise to both of us. After re-reading the play, Kulani included many overlooked details (such as Laurence's "ghostly" pallor) at the last minute to ensure "a good connection between the play and [his own] pictures." Interestingly, Kulani also appeared to embrace − without much prompting from my side − the "space" allowed for artistic liberties in each character's re-portrayal, all while not straying too far from the characterisation or thematic premise of the original. Thus, in the milieu of text interpretation and redesign, Kulani's journey seems to have been one of delicate *balance*; of supplementing the *sustained*, foregrounding the *gained* and, in many cases, replacing the *lost* sign with his own symbolism and imagery. Juliet and her mother's pixie ears, Tybalt's horns and Benvolio's spectacles are but a few examples of such intertextual navigations − they are, if you will, silences or emphases from the play *made manifest*, and in this case crucial to the viewing of the work as both person- and text-derived.

Kulani thus took to the given formats with an urgency and inventiveness seldom seen in the completion of more traditional literature tasks, such as prepared speeches or essays. As noted previously, they allowed for increased *personal* input and the making of truly *new* meanings, like the details in Romeo and Juliet's profile blocks (fig. 4.15, top). Even prior to meeting Kulani, I included here the character values of *Good / Evil*, *Strength*, *Intelligence* and *Abilities*, to determine just how learners perceived their heroes and villains. Though these 'statistics' were thoughtfully filled in, they did need some explaining in our final interview. I asked why the *Good / Evil* space had been left empty on Romeo's side, to which Kulani replied: "I couldn't make up my mind. Romeo changes all the time. The one minute he's a good guy, and the next he just goes crazy… he loses control. [This is] a really bad and evil thing in our family, so I left it open" (S8, I2).

Rather than a case of negligence on Kulani's part, the omission of this detail actually demonstrates an engaged and insightful reading of the play. Though assuming the

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role of ‘good’ protagonist, Romeo is forever the *shapeshifter* − a fickle but complex youth whose behaviour changes dramatically across scenes − which may explain the indeterminacy of his ‘good’ or ‘bad’ status here. Juliet on the other hand receives an average score for this (2½ out of 5), yet excels Romeo in both *Strength* (5 out of 5) and *Intelligence* (4½ out of 5). For each character’s *Abilities*, Kulani was quick to emphasise that he drew inspiration from the *Mortal Kombat* series of games (see fig. 2.3.d, p. 78). In this critically acclaimed fighting simulator, the player is offered three basic attacks: a *close-range* or melee hit; a *projectile* or some other ethereal force ejected from one’s hands; and an animated *taunt* to distract or provoke one’s opponent. Romeo’s *Romance* move, according to Kulani, is one such taunt: he “hypnotises you with his sweet words”, just before attacking with a *Fireball* projectile or the “deadly thorns of his *Rose*”. Conversely, Juliet’s abilities continue the Capulets’ *ice* theme with *Bows*, *Arrows* and *Frost Shields*. These are quite reminiscent of the matchmaking tools used by *Cupid*, the Roman god of love (as referenced in II.ii.70) while Romeo’s ‘moves’ all hint at a certain seduction, a fieriness or − as we learn in the final scene − a passion so strong that it costs him his life.

Also of note is the *Location* selected by Kulani for the two lovers’ showdown (fig. 4.15, centre). It is *Purgatory* − in Catholic doctrine, a place where souls are cleansed of their sins before going to heaven − here depicted as a Doric temple of the underworld, complete with lightning strikes and licking flames. This not only links to Romeo’s words right after his banishment − “There is no world without Verona walls, / But purgatory, torture, hell itself” (III.iii.18-19) − but to Kulani’s fierce disapproval of sin, or moral abandon. As quoted above, “It’s a really bad and evil thing in [his] family”. To sum up Kulani’s intertextual traversals through the label method and five C’s:

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From the above analyses, it is clear that our vehicle for exploring a prescribed play − once a blank videogame frame − has encouraged Kulani to spin a veritable *web* of signifiers, characters, themes, settings, texts, genres and (perhaps most importantly) personal convictions. He could thus *transcend* the linguistic monomodality of his set work and repurpose it into a gallery of *Japonaiserie* portraits; a trove of character studies reflecting both his and Shakespeare's perceptions of love, hate, tolerance and prejudice − or perhaps just the inherent traits of mankind.

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4.3.3 Other videogame redesigns

The videogame task proved quite popular with FET learners, so the voluntary sample size soon exceeded the 'trio' that I had originally planned for school C (see fig. 1.1. p. 14). One Visual Art learner, *Somizi*, opted for computer-generated images (CGI) of his three favourite characters from *Romeo and Juliet*:

a) 

b) 

c) 

Fig. 4.17: Somizi's digital portraits of a) *Romeo*, b) *Mercutio* and c) *Tybalt*

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Romeo, Mercutio and Tybalt are shown, according to Somizi, “like they would appear in a console game”, in the cell-shaded style which has seen a major resurgence with titles like *Jump Force* (2019) and *Street Fighter V* (2018). With cell-shading, artists prefer the use of flat-shaded planes or *polygons* with only hints of texture, instead of the high level of realism pursued by most games developers today. The three portraits − composed with a stylus on Microsoft’s *Paint* program − not only demonstrate a deep understanding of Shakespeare’s cast, but also an immense talent for drawing in the digital format. Romeo is forever the besotted blue-eyed boy, here sporting an *Afro* hairstyle and − according to Somizi − strolling down a Johannesburg road. Mercutio, on the other hand, confronts viewers head-on in his usual ‘fieriness’, with a shock of ginger hair and a red glint to the eye. On his way to the Capulets’ ball, he is wearing a “skull mask” − quite eerily foreshadowing his death at the hands of Tybalt in Act 3, Scene 1.

Finally, Somizi has chosen an *extreme low-angle shot* for Tybalt, effectively highlighting his domineering personality. With his *Thrasher* tee, sunglasses and windswept bandana he is the picture of *cool*, like Somizi intended. Indeed, Mercutio nicknames Tybalt “Prince of Cats*”* to mock his pseudo-radical behaviour and strict adherence to fashion. One particular feature of Tybalt’s outfit, the butcher’s mask, could reveal his true motive for going to the ball: not to partake in any of the festivities, but to confront the Montagues with murderous intent. For the background, a plain dotted matrix is used to keep the focus on Tybalt, and to situate him further within a virtual or ‘pixellated’ world. To more clearly analyse Somizi’s use of facial expression, gaze and gesture in relation to the meanings of the source text, we once again need to apply the label method and five C’s:

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The scaffolding texts for Somizi included Luhrmann's 1996 film (though he had already watched "parts of it" in class) and an extensive viewing of Japanese role-playing games on my *PS Vita* system. Somizi had used *MS Paint* before, and the worlds of *manga* and *anime*[15] had already permeated his home domain. Yet, he would later admit to this *synthesis* of texts and genres − this convergence of old and new, paper-based and digital − having rekindled his interest in the original play and Shakespeare's work in general. This is *Romeo and Juliet* re-imagined for 2020 *Mzansi*, and a testament to the multimodal revivability of canonical literature.

Zoe's series of portraits, based on the same play, could be seen as less of an attempt to videogamify Shakespeare's characters, and more as a demonstration of their inner and outer traits through an "old-school anime" lens. To ignite Zoe's imagination, we watched a few episodes of her favourite anime, *Naruto*, on the Vita system. This was followed by a discussion on "retro gaming", and how her intense interest in these media could translate to prescribed work. She eventually submitted these as her final:

[15] I have noticed my participants using these two terms interchangeably, but they are quite different conceptually. *Manga* has its origins in Japan, and refers to a cutesy aesthetic found in static media such as toys, comics or drawings. *Anime* has a similar appearance but is by definition 'moving' or animated, as in television series or videogames.

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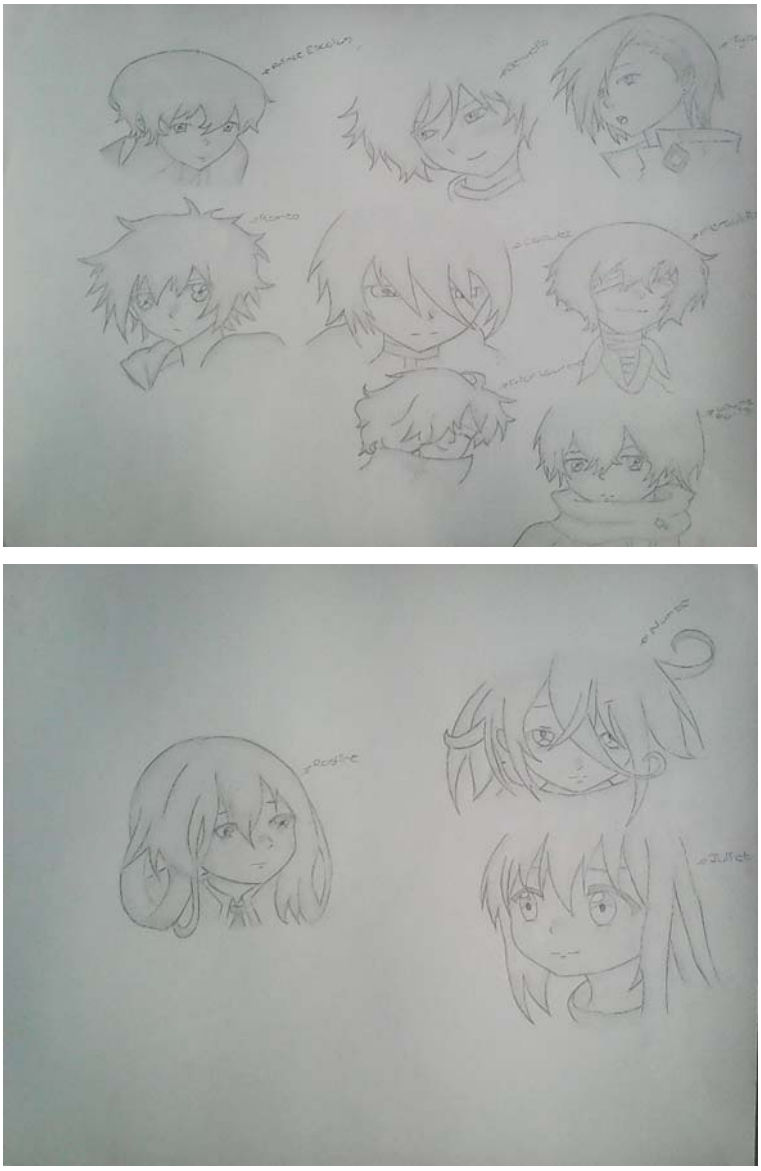


Fig. 4.18: Zoe's character studies for *Romeo and Juliet*. Pencil on paper, each folio approx. 29 x 60 cm.[16]

Executed in extremely light tones with a clutch pencil and blender, these eleven studies bring a modern twist to the citizens of sixteenth-century Verona. With the background left entirely blank, it can be argued that the characters are somewhat de-contextualised or removed from the setting, themes and other literary elements of the play. For the more discerning viewer, though, their eyes alone can speak volumes − especially about their unique reactions to internal and external conflict. It

[16] Also see Zoe's unfinished inventory screen (Appendix A4) illustrating key items from the play. Note the intertextual references to the *Mario Brothers* videogame franchise: the '1 up' signifying an extra life, and the famous 'power-up' mushroom.

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is as if we, the viewers, were granted access to their deepest fears and desires for only a moment − perhaps when they felt most vulnerable, or when no one else was 'looking'. To use *Romeo* (centre row, left) as an example, the large glints and small pupils of the eyes − together with the blushed nose and mere hint of a mouth − speak of a child broken by the prospect of never being reunited with his one true love. Conversely, *Mercutio* (centre row, right) is the picture of confidence, with his smug smile and slight downwards gaze. His dishevelled hair and bandaged eye only add to his "fieriness" (III.i) and may even hint at a prior altercation with the Capulets, though this is not specified in the play.

In true manga fashion, Zoe has applied the semiotic vehicles of gaze, gesture, posture and perspective − particularly in the *eyes* and *hair* of each character − to communicate her own, unique reading of Shakespeare's roles. Now for a larger and clearer display of Zoe's work, with an application of the label method and five C's to explore its finer details:

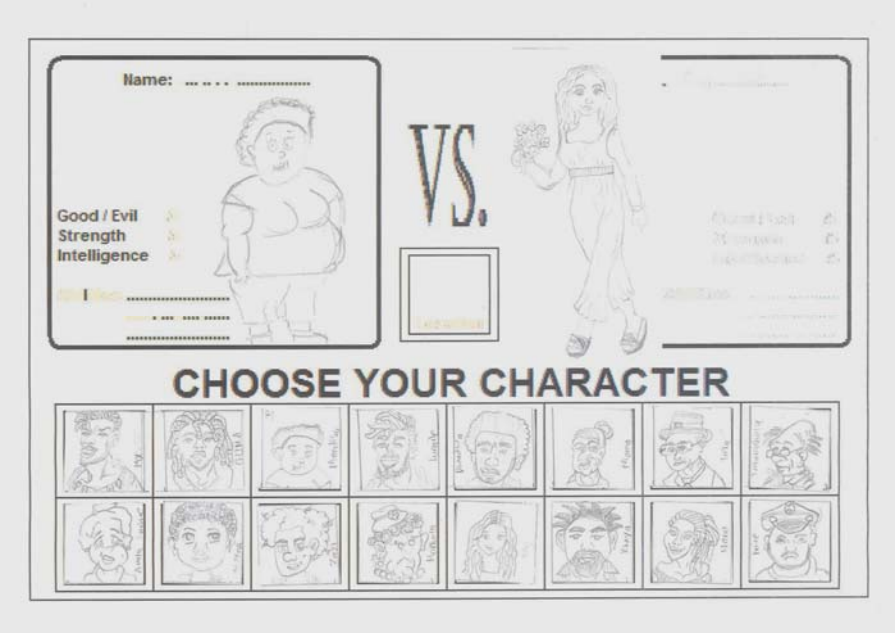
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Only one learner from the videogame group, Ekta, offered to take on Sindiwe Magona's (1998) novel *Mother to Mother* as source material for multimodal redesign. This followed somewhat of a grade-wide resistance to the novel's burdensome themes and − according to some − an implied rationalisation or "justification" of Amy Biehl's murder by the fictional *Mxolisi*. This is not how I understood the narrative, though, seeing that *Mandisa*, Mxolisi's mother, is writing to Amy's mother as a commiseration − a meditation upon apartheid's destructive reach through *all* cultural and social spheres − and not an attempt to defend her son's violent behaviour. I was also looking forward to Ekta's treatment of the novel as "…a boxing game, seeing that it is about racial discrimination, and the violence between blacks and whites during apartheid" (S11, I1). This would provide a new and surprisingly humorous angle to what was otherwise a grave topic, as seen here (fig. 4.19). Drawn with much attention to detail, Ekta's *character select* and *in-game* screens offer a visualisation of all characters − true and fictional alike − as well as the scene of their struggle: a boxing ring set up in the streets of 1990's Cape Town.

a)



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b)

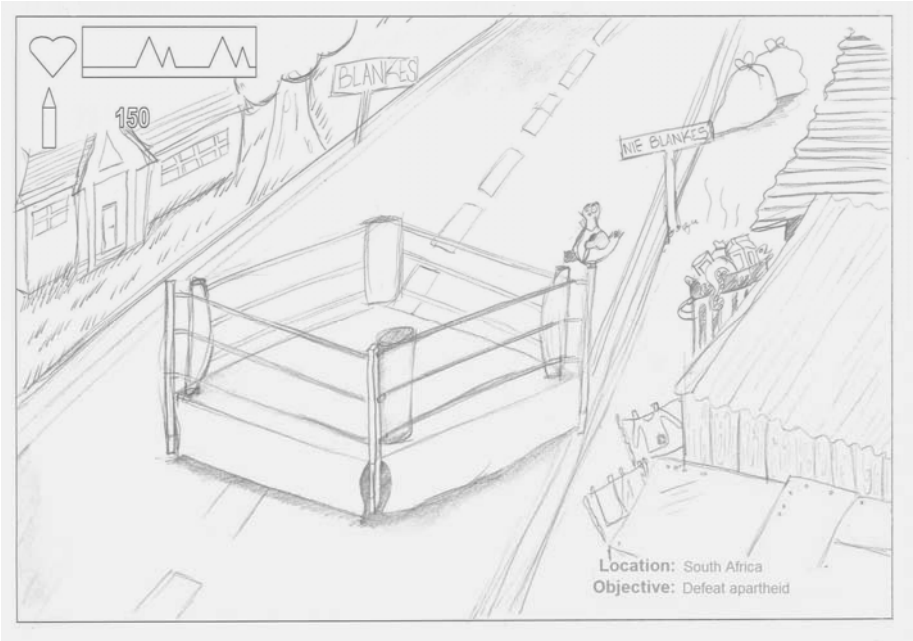


Fig. 4.19: Ekta's a) character select screen and b) in-game screen for *Mother to Mother*. Pencil on paper, each folio approx. 20 x 29 cm.

With such a tongue-in-cheek and potentially *offensive* take on Magona's novel and apartheid in general, Ekta's work can easily be overlooked as an accomplished study of the destructive residue of colonialism; an investigation into the political complexities which may have given rise to such racial tension and violence in South Africa − now and in the past. The in-game screen, in particular, contrasts the poverty of Mxolisi's township, *Gugulethu*, against the opulence of Amy Biehl's suburb on the other side of the road. This is not, however, a work of binary opposites or an attempt to pit 'blacks' against 'whites', but rather an inquiry into our diverse *peoples* − the domestic workers, American exchange students, gang leaders, policemen and others on Ekta's select screen − and the possible reasons for our continued prejudices. The game objective, as Ekta has indicated below her boxing ring, is to "defeat apartheid" or the legacies thereof, regardless of the fighters selected. To conclude the case studies, here follows a final application the label method and five C's to Ekta's work:

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4.4 Findings emerging from data: research question one

So far, this chapter has dealt with participants' artefacts as direct *products* of their engagement with out-of-school scaffolds, formally prescribed classroom texts and any other semiotic resources in the redesign space. The case studies above, then, have sought to track *what* specific meanings were transmodalised, *how* this was done and *why*. What follows are key arguments pertaining to research question one, i.e. the intertextual links between participants' produced redesigns (in the form of songs, films and videogame scenarios) and the prescribed poems, novels and plays they had used as source texts. Here a more *deconstructivist* approach is taken towards signs, before line, colour, facial expression, gaze and gesture are approached as modes. Since this first inquiry has concerned itself so with the final composition or *outcome* of each artefact, the multimodal theories from which I draw below seem to resonate most with an *art* or *creative design* discourse. Meaning-making also features strongly in the following discussion, making it particularly relevant for the language of English subject classroom.

- *Signs are not self-contained entities, but reliant upon a multiplicity of signifiers, modes and materialities to communicate their meanings*

During any redesign process with visual-verbal artefact as desired outcome, it can be argued that the art element acts as a central semiotic resource. Some ground has already been covered on this topic (section 2.2, p. 42), but it needs to be emphasised that − even in the emergent literacy years − much attention is given to each element's distinct affordances or meaning potentials through both the monomodal and multimodal text. The former, for example, may refer to a crayon drawing sans any linguistic content or anchorage, while the latter may transpire as a more complex work, like a labelled diagram or cartoon strip. I have found, however, that the art element always does one thing in participants' works − make meaning − and though this may be discredited as an obvious feature of the redesigned text, I feel it is imperative to elevate the simple art element to the status of its linguistic counterpart, the *word*, if we are to fully understand how our learners communicate through visual, and above all, multimodal texts.

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During visual text analysis − whether the text be a photograph, painting or multimodal narrative such as a storyboard − each element should be perceived as an isolatable code for communicating meaning, instead of a mere component contributing towards the gestalt or completeness of the work. In other words, any single line, colour, tone, shape, form or texture (however difficult to locate or identify as a 'singular' entity) should be seen as a sign in its own right, for it is agentively selected by the sign-maker and applied for its *potential* (Halliday, 1978) within a larger visual context or unit − a framed painting, for example. These tiny entities of meaning, then, are not so much things chosen arbitrarily or *en route* to the completion of a work, but significant codes informed by − among other factors − one's stylistic preferences, emotional state at a particular time, and *what meanings* are ascribed to *what signs, symbols, motifs or patterns.* In the article *Against Arbitrariness,* Kress (1993) questions the apparent 'randomness' behind the sign-maker's selection of images and words, and challenges the view that they cannot denote specific meanings. From a social semiotic perspective, Kress argues that the agent always selects a sign for its aptness to the expression of a particular meaning. Known as *motivated signs*, these also manifested quite frequently during my participants' journeys.

The idea of signs *breaking away* from their larger textual or generic confines does, however, call for some more thought, but for the sake of brevity only the most current view of the *sign* − at least within multimodal territories − will be juxtaposed against my own here. Still enjoying particular currency in the field are the concepts of *signifiers* and *signifieds* (Eagleton, 1983), which at least hint at the compositional element's *independence to mean* within an allocated space or unit. Yet the single line, texture, tone or colour is seldom compartmentalised or viewed in situ, or as symbiotes harnessing their very own meanings. It would seem this insight is the sole property of experienced artists and draughtsmen, with contributors from Loomis (1953) to McCloud (1993) recognising the power of a simple contour line to "say something" to the viewer whose gaze falls upon this line, and this line only. Semioticians like Kress (2010) and Van Leeuwen (2010) have more recently approached the art element − particularly colour − with similar precision, recognising its weight, vector and other properties as main determinants of its *communicated meanings* within an advertisement or other, everyday text. Both Misha and Zane, for

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example, included the red remembrance poppy in their storyboards (the sign as *symbol*). While Razia capitalised on the meaning-making power of different fonts (the sign as digital lettering or *words*), Kulani and Somizi used red and blue in Shakespeare's characters to denote fieriness and coldness respectively (the sign as *colour*). Rasheed used basic circles, ellipses and triangles to depict a variety of natural phenomena (the sign as *shape*), in contrast with Trevor's more realistic renderings of Macbeth and the Scottish castle, with its four Saltires (the sign as *historical reference*).

For the authenticator of a Renaissance-era etching, a small area of hatched lines could carry the same *semiotic weight* as a line in a Shakespearean sonnet. The latter's distinctive vocabulary, iambic rhythm and actual *content* can seem almost indispensable, as the poem would not be complete or make much sense without it. However minute or mundane they may seem in isolation, the hundreds of individual lines in an etching (with the shapes and gradations of light they create) all contribute to something that is clear, coherent and balanced in both meaning and aesthetics. For the purposes of this discussion I will focus on *line* only; its capacity or affordance for making new meanings when applied in text redesign.

Instances in participants' artefacts where lines seem to 'speak' for themselves include the eyes of the slain cattle and fallen soldier in Misha's storyboard − replaced with simple *X*'s to signify their death − and Kulani's undulating chalk marks (fig. 4.15, behind Romeo and Juliet) to suggest violent winds. Also, the motion lines in Zane's storyboard (fig. 4.11, p. 136, frames three and four) seem to effortlessly capture the shock of the soldiers as they are bombarded by gas shells. Arguably the most considered use of line, though, can be found in Zoe's pencil drawings (fig. 4.18, p. 164), with the hair and eyes highlighting each character's innermost fears and desires. While such agentive uses of line may seem unremarkable to the common viewer, they have proven highly functional as *visual embodiments* (Pallasmaa, 2009) of the more verbose subtitle, caption or other linguistic sign.

But how does one determine such similarities between the compositional elements of texts from entirely different modes, materialities, media and sites of display − in the simplest terms, between the *letter* and the *line*? Firstly, it may be necessary to explain what might warrant such an investigation, as a number of works still widely

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cited today − from Chipp's *Theories of Modern Art* (1968) to McCloud's *Understanding Comics* (1993) − rely on the use of simple adjectives to describe and even define the occurrence of lines in graphological media such as prints and pencil drawings. Several others (Pollitt, 1990; Lehner, 1997; Silverman, 1997) have pondered the literal meanings or origins of the earliest pictographic forms of text (Sumerian cuneiforms, Nordic runes and Egyptian hieroglyphs come to mind) yet there is seldom inquiry into how, when and why each line *within them* is used − the pressure required in their application; their dimensions; directions; degrees of colour, texture, weight or width; and the *motivation* (Kress, 1993; 2005) behind the selection of these, if you will, *micro-signs* contributing to an orchestrated composition or polyglot. If the linguist can consider the *situatedness* of a word in-context, its etymological roots, origins or morpho-syntactical function within a larger body such as a sentence or paragraph, then surely the same can be achieved with the elemental constituents of a visual or *visual-verbal* text? The architect or draughtsman has considered the exact length and inclination of his mark; the videographer the hue and saturation of his shot; the sculptor the line of his *contrapposto* hero yet to be "freed from the stone" (Michelangelo, 1501, as cited in Kleiner et al, 2004, p. 624). Can the same be said for any re-maker of written text, into more multimodal or 'everyday' realia?

Painters from the German Expressionist era (particularly Nolde and Kandinsky of *Die Brücke* and *Blaue Reiter* movements) have observed a similar incompleteness if certain elements of a visual narrative are obscured or omitted, not only in its gestalt but also its overall message (Kleiner et al, 2004, p. 966-969). Similarly, Newfield & Maungedzo (2006) have described the *Thebuwa Cloth* as a *polyglot* or orchestration of many visual-verbal artefacts, combined to form a self-contained entity in the same way that several instruments work together to form a symphony or auditory 'unit'. The omission of one element or mode, it can be argued, can cause a perceptible collapse of the whole. However, such a view is not confined to the idea of holism; it should be understood that each sign constituting a larger body of meaning − and, in turn, the tiniest details or *micro-signs* making up these − can carry potential meaning, social situatedness and the agency of its creators. To use the literal example of a stop sign (fig. 4.20 below), it is not viewed as such because of its written content or sequence of the letters S-T-O-P; it manifests materially and socio-culturally as a stop

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sign because of its red hue, octagonal edge, angles, dimensions, pan, tilt, placement in space and a myriad other details overlooked during more *traditional* forms of text analysis (Jewitt, 2009).

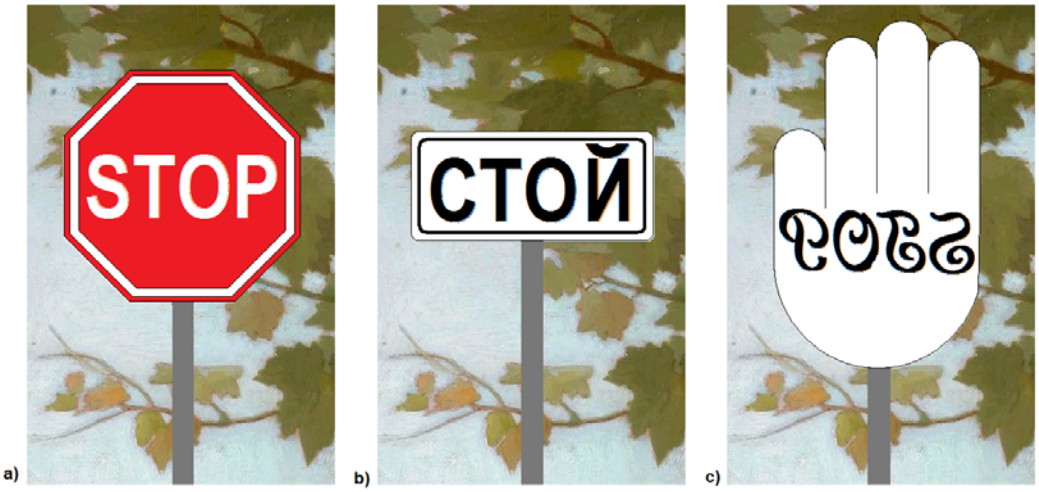


Fig. 4.20: a) The most widely used stop sign today, b) its Russian counterpart and c) my own design using Da Vinci's mirror script. Which 'qualifies' most as a stop sign? According to *whom*, and in what *context*? How many changes to (a) will it take -- for it to no longer *be* a stop sign?

It would appear, then, that it is not so much the stop sign itself communicating meaning as the elements *comprising it*. Would it manifest as such if it were green in colour, half the size, missing a letter and facing the wrong way? This may seem a silly thought, but it does call attention to the sign (and ultimately, multimodal text) as an embodiment of *many* decisions, socio-historical influences, modes and media, and not an enclosed entity projecting a single idea. Note, for example, how the *No Pigs* sign in Casey's work (fig. 4.5, p. 121, bridge two) combines the profile of a wild animal with the more socially situated '⃠' sign. In other works (particularly the storyboards) words and images are synthesised to such a degree that they can seem inseparable in their expression of a particular thing or idea. There are, for example, Misha's falling bombs (fig. 4.7, p. 127, frame four) with their unmistakable fuses and 'TNT' lettering, and Rasheed's tombstone (fig. 4.9, p. 132, frame eight) with its 'RIP' epitaph.

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- *Line and colour: a semiotic weight equal to words*

To continue this theme, line is one of the most important elements that can define an image's shape or form (Kleiner et al, 2004, p. 7). It can be understood as the path of a point moving in space, or a visual *axis*. As noted above, it may prove difficult to singularise lines in both two-dimensional and three-dimensional media (i.e. on flat planes, or free-standing objects) as they can seem unending when continuously following or *contouring* the shapes of things. In this regard, and perhaps crucial to the deepened analytical approach taken here, Kleiner et al (2004, p. 7) allude to the possibility of lines being "invisible", or imagined entirely by the viewer, either as a *vector* or cognitive attempt to gauge the dimensions, mass and distance of objects in space. Despite the unending attempts of artists and architects to concretise lines by drawing or chiselling them onto various surfaces, it can be said that the line is no more than an illusory graphological device; a mere elongated shape with unshakeable weight and width, and thus never true:

> "His way had therefore come full circle, or rather had taken the form of an ellipse or a spiral, following as ever no straight unbroken line, for the rectilinear belongs only to Geometry and not to Nature and Life."
>
> Hermann Hesse, *The Glass Bead Game* (1943)

How, then, did line feature in my participants' redesigned artefacts? The humble line has clearly been used to define the basic shapes of heads, hands, hair, clothing, weapons, animals and all manner of things relating to the prescribed works. They could be very thin, wire-like, and delicate; they could be thick and heavy; they could alternate quickly from broad to narrow; their strokes jagged or their paths broken. In cases where narration or other forms of anchorage were required, the lines could be guided through a stencil, or stylised otherwise to form every grapheme and morpheme. Lines were also applied to situate events within time and space − sometimes sequentially, sometimes not − by forming frames or *gutters* in-between as in comic book jargon (McCLoud, 1993). What follows is a breakdown of Misha and Zane's storyboards − arguably the two works that took the *meaning potential* of line to unprecedented levels in the study. Each concept (in red bubbles) could also be applied as part of a critical-analytical *metalanguage* during our discussion of the final works:

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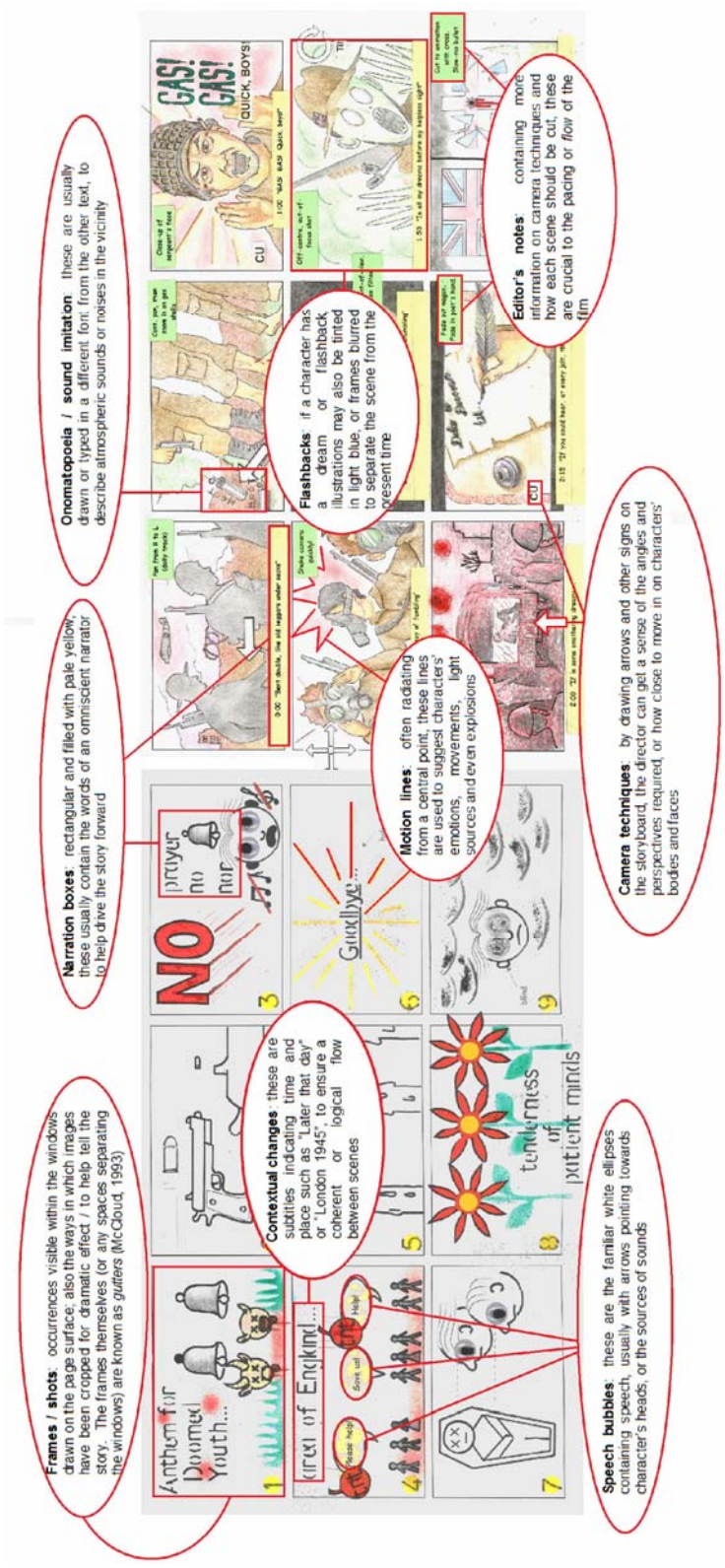


Fig. 4.21: Various uses of line in Misha and Zane's storyboards. Here line can be distinguished from *shape*, *colour* and *shading*, for example, due to its more elongated form or the 'sweeping' motion used to create them.

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Also suggested above (fig. 4.21) are the ways in which lines, in tandem with the other elements, can represent both tangible phenomena and unseen social constructs. Through gesture, facial expression and even handwritten speech bubbles, these lines have conjured archetypes with whom readers can easily identify − despite their literary origins or age − thus becoming a universal code to communicate our deepest thoughts and feelings.

My participants' use of line as near-autonomous signifiers within the larger orchestration of the portrait, map, movie still, computer-generated image − or any other form of text explored during our redesign journey − have thus yielded some surprising results as far as their *semiotic weight* or sheer potential for communicating meaning is concerned. I have here likened the singular trace, inscription or mark left on paper to the more 'conventionalised' structures of written language, as if the outline of a figurative drawing could bear a significance equal to that of a grapheme (letter) within a larger unit like a word (morpheme) or line of a poem, for example. Save for some seminal studies (Baxandall, 1985; Derrida, 1987) alluding to the line's potential as substitute or, if you will, *modal ambassador* for the prescribed linguistic text (or a fragment thereof), I have yet to find a publication on lines as wholly autonomous entities within their larger − often overshadowing − signs, texts or genres.

Colour is another concept listed in the MODE (2019) glossary, but it may be necessary to first outline its uses in *formal analysis* − in art discourse, the visual analysis of artistic form − before proceeding with its relevance to multimodality and participants' redesigns, specifically. Paints and pigments produce their individual colours by reflecting one segment of the light spectrum, while absorbing all the others (Kleiner et al, 2004, p. 7). With the exception of natural light from the sun, known as *additive light*, all things in our world have this 'affordance' of reflecting only one colour or hue to the eyes, known as *subtractive light*. Also, every colour has two basic variables: the apparent amount of light reflected (its *value* or *tonality*) and the apparent purity (its *intensity* or *saturation*). In 1963, optic theorists Josef Albers and Sewell Sillman greatly contributed to our understanding of light with the *colour triangle* (fig. 4.22), showing the relationship between primary, secondary, complementary and neutral hues:

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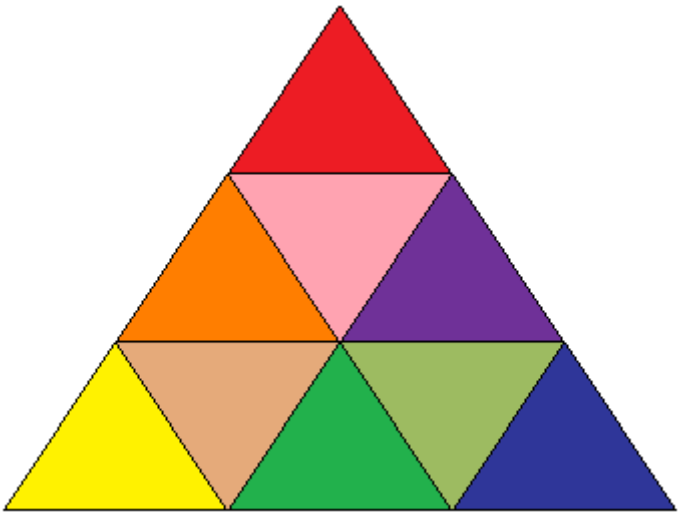


Fig. 4.22: Colour triangle (Albers & Sillman, 1963, as cited in Kleiner et al, 2004, p. 7). Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

It would of course be ideal to precede any drawing activity with a discussion of such elemental theories, but I did not want to place unnecessary "baggage" on my participants' during the initial design stage (Kress, 1993, as cited in English, 2011, p. 67). I found it useful, though, to brief certain participants on the properties − even potential affordances − of different lines, tones, textures and colours, especially in cases where they would emerge as modes or key compositional features of the work. Misha's extensive use of the complementary colours red and green in her storyboard (fig. 4.7, p. 127) may be attributed to our early viewing of the triangle, but this was never confirmed. Her rendering of Owen's wartime imagery would perhaps not have 'popped' to such a degree (or have been so intense in colour) had she experimented with more melancholy tones. For the *Dulce* storyboard (fig. 4.11, p. 136), Zane displayed a much more doctrinaire approach to Albers and Sillman's theories, perhaps accounting for the many realistic gradations between light and dark, bright and dull in every frame. It can be argued that such effective applications of art theory and terminology − to the ostensibly *distant* world of the prescribed text or book − is testament to our learners' renewed appreciation for all things colourful, considered and varied. The proverbial devil is most certainly in the details, and if today's emphasis on *high definition imagery* is of any significance, teachers across grade and subject spectra should aspire to have this reflected in their learners' work as well.

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Not unlike Van Leeuwen in his *Languages of Colour* (2010), I am suggesting here that colour is, in fact, a mode. Before embarking on my fieldwork, I had recognised the power of colour if applied during multimodal redesign, but with works like Kulani's in-game screen (fig. 4.15, p. 152) and Zane's storyboard, its full potential to make meaning − or more specifically, to establish the *theme*, *mood* and *ambience* of the visual-verbal artefact − would soon come into plain view. Though it could be equated to line in terms of its sheer communicative properties, colour is quite different from the other elements of art. It can be used to cover much larger areas of the two-dimensional support, and within a shorter time; it can be blended, contrasted, complemented or even (as in fig. 4.7, p. 127) omitted for dramatic effect; and it can morph into almost any shape, size, font, sign or symbol desired by the sign-maker. It would appear that the seemingly elementary phenomena of line and colour − among many others − are moving extant multimodal discourses to consider *all* semiotically articulated means of expression as 'modes' in their own right, no matter how minute or mundane they may seem in isolation.

- *Our faces − and various representations thereof − are blank canvases for the pressures and pleasures of daily life*

In the *MODE* (2019) glossary of multimodal terms, *facial expression*, *gaze* and *gesture* are also treated as distinct modes of communication, especially in the performative contexts of slam poetry, pantomime or tableau. In my own participants' redesign journeys, however, these three modes had manifested mainly in drawn or *inscribed* form, with Misha's storyboard (fig. 4.7, p. 127) and Kulani's game screen (fig. 4.15, p. 152) being prime examples. Despite the apparent efficacy of these works in conveying human emotion, an overview of extant data on more physical or *bodily* phenomena (Wilson, 2002) may reveal a reluctance − on the part of researchers as well as participants − to 'capture' or 'record' their occurrence through modes other than photography and detailed verbal description. A growing preference for such instant or more 'authentic' forms of data could also imply that the traditional hand drawing − of figures and environments in whichever medium − has become all but obsolete in capturing the fleeting moments of our world. By the turn of the nineteenth century, many pre-modern artists faced a similar crisis; their

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masterpieces were suddenly at odds with the industrialised *west*, where science and empiricism would become the new cultural currency.

Much like the impressionists, post-impressionists, modernists and surrealists that followed, my participants chose to stick to their modal guns and depict the movements of faces, eyes and limbs (and the various *spaces* that surround these) through predominantly paper-based modes or materialities. To a certain extent, this contradicts a key aim of the study − to move away from the glaringly *analogue* text, and towards more modern or digital forms. Yet, the absence of photographs and other 'live-recorded' documents in the data may instead reveal the learners' appreciation for prescribed literature as artistic and *imagined* worlds, and not mechanical mimicries of reality. With no disrespect to photography and its representational powers (especially with the use of *Photoshop*), it is questionable whether Zane would have achieved such wraithlike figures in his storyboard (fig. 4.11, p. 136), or if Kulani's interactions between the wind, characters' hair and petals of the rose (fig. 4.15, p. 152) will have been at all possible, had they used photography or a similar medium. Also, Misha's use of simple lines in the eyes and mouths of her *Hello Kitty* faces has helped to embody Owen's wartime archetypes, while Trevor, Somizi, Zoe and Ekta's videogamifications (figs. 4.17-4.19, p. 160-168) all capture the *virtual* aesthetic that continues to elude the more puritanical photographer.

With a total of forty-three muscles and twenty-four nerve endings, the human face may thus be described as a blank canvas for reflecting the pressures and pleasures of daily life, often undervalued in its ability to impart meaning without any words or vocalisations. Anatomical studies from Leonardo da Vinci (ca. 1505, as cited in Kleiner et al, 2004, p. 618) to Henry Gray (1858) have honed in on its many spatial properties and movements in an attempt to explain why we associate particular emotions with particular expressions. In my own experience as a Visual Art teacher, I have observed first-hand how the slightest of expressional changes − especially in the positioning and relative tension of the eyes, nose and mouth − can determine how we interpret and respond to one's face, whether viewed in person or through a digital medium like *Skype* (also see *Countenance*, section 3.4.1, p. 103). Adding to

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this are textural elements like hair and skin tone, while *external interactions* (Loomis, 1959) can include anything from sunlight and heat to stress and age.

It follows that literature learners (and by implication, re-designers) need to be given ample opportunities to express themselves through their faces. The current *CAPS* curriculum for the Senior and FET phases (2012) do accommodate this to some degree − with tasks such as *prepared speech* and *role-play* forming part of the SBA programme − but the many descriptions of characters' facial expressions in prescribed texts often remain the sole property of narrators or authors; they are seldom illustrated, demonstrated or performed in class. Newfield (2009) had long before recognised the potentials of this uppermost bodily extremity during more *acted* forms of redesign, with participants designing and wearing tribal masks for a silent performance of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Though these masks were unalterable or static in their very materiality, their sheer emotive power or affordance for communicating the human affect did come through in the colours, lines and textures used in their composition, as well as the ways in which they moved on-stage. Works like Ekta's character select screen (fig. 4.19, p. 168) and Zane's storyboard (fig. 4.11, p. 136) do however call attention to the drawn *portrait* as a powerful medium to explore the psychosocial intricacies of prescribed characters.

Gaze and gesture have been used to equal effect in participants' redesigns, especially in the *Mother to Mother* character select screen (fig. 4.19) and *Dulce* storyboard (fig. 4.11). With the select screen, Ekta could easily have presented each character in strict profile, but instead opted for postures, movements and gesticulations most demonstrative of his or her personality. Amy Biehl (top right) is shown in *contrapposto*, clutching a bunch of daisies and appearing almost saintly with her flowing dress and childlike features. The rather stocky Mandisa (top left) is the exact opposite of this, yet she strangely evokes the wisdom that can only come with age and experience. Her feet are firmly rooted in the ground, with her arms hanging unpretentiously at her sides. In other cases (bottom roster), a more forthcoming or innocent air is created through direct gaze and posturing (e.g. *Mama*, *Aunty Puniwe*, *Mzama*, *Amy*), while the semi-profiles used for *Mxolisi* and *Lungile* − among other members of the Gugulethu gang − work well to establish their rebellious and anti-social behaviour.

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Such signs are not arbitrary, but informed by participants' individual interpretations of prescribed content. I would also describe them as combined body-and-mind interactions which, quite ironically, find their optimal expression in participants' drawings of the human corporeal form (see figs. 4.17-4.19, p. 160-168). I have always given serious attention to learners' positioning of the iris, pupil and glint of the eye within the larger 'frames' of the lids or sockets − arguably the visual markers which most effectively communicate the emotions and overall personality of an illustrated figure. In Zane's storyboard (fig. 4.11, p. 136), for instance, the *sergeant*'s eyes in frame three seem to converge on a central point and − together with the slight strain of the temples and forehead − suggest a man dead-set on saving his comrades' lives. In the original poem, though, we only have the exclamation points in "Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!" (line 9) to signify this same sense of urgency, or intensity of character. Similarly, the hands, feet and overall stance of several figures in the finished artefacts − particularly Ekta's and Zane's − can all be traced back to specific descriptions in the original, prescribed works.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has been demonstrative of the redesign artefact − as *product* of participants' intertextual engagements − acting as an effective vehicle or mobiliser for FET learners' prescribed literature. More than a mere description of the aesthetic merits of each artefact, the arguments above have drawn from current multimodal (albeit art-oriented) concepts to show how the art element, sign, line, colour, facial expression, gaze and gesture have become the graphological tools (or more accurately, the new semiotic resources) for learners to explore their set works in more experiential and meaningful ways. Of particular significance here is the potential of non-linguistic modes in communicating extensive parts of the original narratives' literary elements, especially their use of theme and characterisation.

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CHAPTER FIVE

The *Process* of Participants' Redesigns

Research question two asks: *What is the process required in such redesigns, that is, what chain of meaning-making did participants follow?*

This chapter deals with the embodied process of participants remaking their prescribed texts into multimodal artefacts, as observed during my visits to the three research sites. The chains of five participants − Razia, Casey, Misha, Rasheed and Kulani − will serve as focal points here, as their works have proven most 'layered' in terms of texts viewed, modes applied or meanings remade. Through my tracking of each individual chain, the redesign process is conceptualised as a sustained traversal between both prescribed and out-of-school modes, texts and genres − as opposed to a mere 'translation' of literary texts in a vacuum. As noted earlier, chains of meaning-making are often conceptualised as circular or 'cyclical' processes (Stein, 2003; Kress, 2000; 2005), but a more chronological approach will be taken here. I have also found it useful to extend the concept of the chain to that of a *spider's web*, to best illustrate the interconnected nature of texts (and modes) explored by my participants:

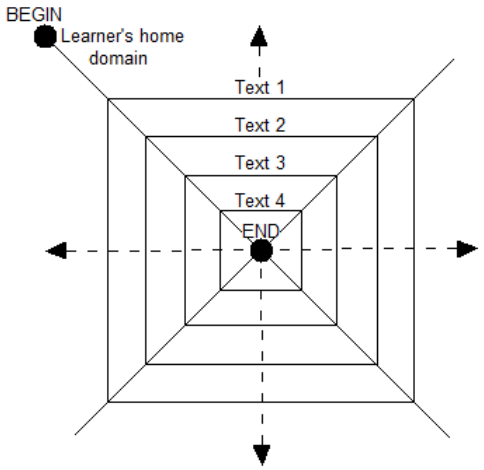


Fig. 5.1: Mapping of the semiotic chain as an *intertextual web*

With this schema I demonstrate how the learner approaches a set work from outside the web, while access to its core meanings is still restricted. Only through the use of thematically connected *scaffolds* (i.e. alternative texts or genres) and a meaningful redesign *task* is (s)he able to reach the core, and link this work with the home

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domain or out-of-school context. The perforated lines represent a revisiting of texts − even a *traversal* between texts, modes and past experiences − whilst in the core of meaning-making. The outermost square (*Text 1*) represents the classroom domain, or the first readings of the prescribed text by the teacher.

The following section will provide detailed analyses of each thread in participants' webs, starting from these outermost areas. As a crucial, second step in my data analysis, these will shed more light on how the inter-genre approach can facilitate an engagement with prescribed literature that is more enjoyable, meaningful and accommodating of FET learners' identities. Following these are specific findings pertaining to the *process* aspect of redesign. As multimodal concepts most closely associated with the semiotic chain (and the researcher's tracking thereof), *cognition, embodiment, drawing* and the studying of *film* will underscore these discussions.

5.1 Razia and her *Things Fall Apart* lyric poster

To track Razia's semiotic chain, we need to explore what she did (quite literally) with Achebe's novel, her scaffolds and the semiotic resources required to produce the final artefact (fig. 4.3, p. 116). Though one could never assume what transpires in the mind of the sign-maker, certain cognitive traversals − or rather, the more *invisible* instances of meaning-making − do come to light during each of the below trackings, especially when viewed in relation to participants' interview responses (see Appendix C). In this combined *body-and-mind* approach to text redesign, it would seem Razia was no different:

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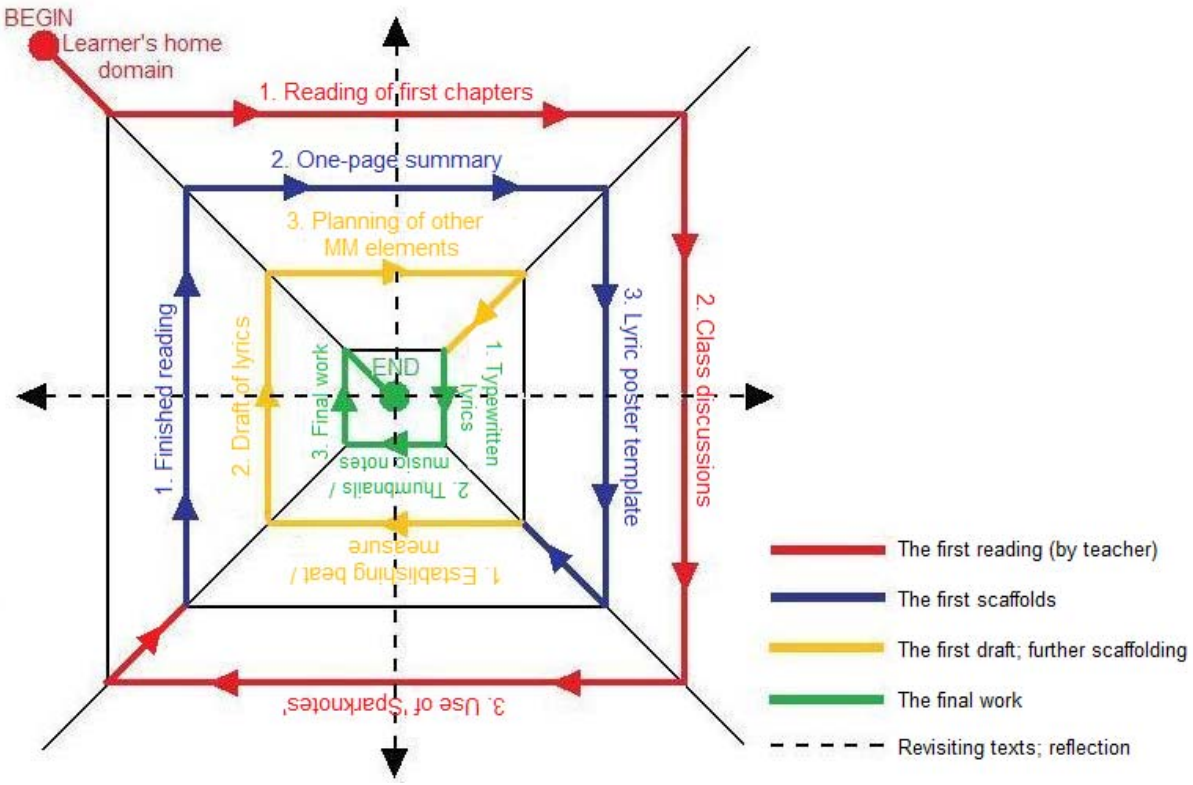


Fig. 5.2: Mapping of Razia's redesign journey as an *intertextual web*

a. The first reading (by teacher)

As noted above, Razia and her peers seemed disengaged from their teacher's explicit teaching of the literary devices used in narratives. Repetitive, teacher-centred discussions resulted in boredom and an ever-widening gap between the set work and learners' life-worlds. Also, the printouts from online guides such as *Sparknotes* (2019) and *Gradesaver* (n.d.) offered little in the way of contextualising the novel's content, with their monomodality actually impeding upon learners' visualisation of Achebe's pre-colonial setting.

b. The first scaffolds

Razia was presented with the redesign task and what it would entail. The lyric poster's appeal to Razia's out-of-school interests − particularly her songwriting pastime − encouraged her to finish the novel and write a one-page summary based mainly on the rise and fall of Okonkwo. This summary was to mark Razia's first *transmodal moment* − her earliest attempt at remaking the canonical narrative into a more personal piece of intellectual property.

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c. The first draft; further scaffolding

This was the main transformative stage of our journey − to plan how Razia's *cultural capital* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Bloom, 1994) or knowledge of songwriting, music notation and the novel itself could be embodied through the lyric poster. Firstly, a beat had to be established for the song, though Razia had decided against a 'performative' end-product. She could then proceed with her first draft (written in pencil on the poster itself) and plan how to later incorporate elements from the visual and sonic modes.

d. The final work

According to Razia, this was the "fun" part; the true beginning of her "appreciation for the novel" (S2, I2). She could now type her lyrics (complete with its strategic use of signs and fonts) before designing an array of thumbnails, music notes and ledger lines. As Razia explained, these were pasted onto the genre frame with *Prestik* only so that they could still be moved around. In her own understated way, Razia had thus considered the prospective audience of her artefact; her characters, plot outlines and tempos were not intended as static anchors, but mobile signs adaptable to the viewer's visual and musical preferences.

e. Revisiting of texts; reflection

In this particular case, time constraints prevented us from exploring the novel's many film adaptations (1971; 1987; 2017). With her demanding extramurals and responsibilities at home, Razia herself described this as a lost opportunity. She nonetheless (quote) "benefited" from our Google viewings of Achebe's characters, though they were only artistic impressions. In our final interview Razia opened up about the affordances of multimodal redesign: "…it's a fun and more interesting way to understand [literature] for everyone" (S2, I2).

While it is perhaps not the densest chain here, Razia's remaking of *Things Fall Apart* does demonstrate the extent to which the canonical novel may be re-appropriated to one's literacy identity or unique, out-of-school practices. Quite paradoxically, Razia loved to write songs but − as a matter of religious conviction − refrained from actually performing them. The inter-genre approach proved so flexible in this regard, though,

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that she could still represent her reading in the way she loved most − as a musical composition communicated through the mainly *written* vehicle.

5.2 Casey and his *Boys Will Be Boys* lyric poster

Now to view Casey's redesign through the same lens:

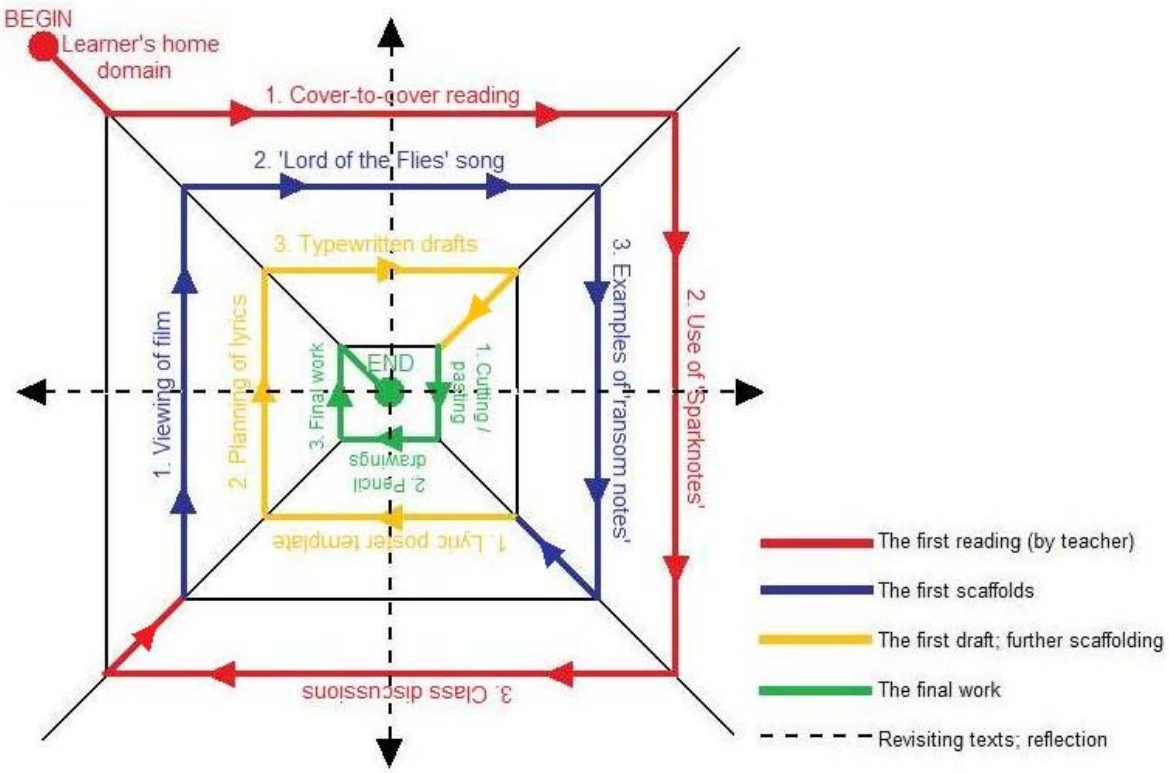


Fig. 5.3: Casey's *web*

a. The first reading

Casey's class had already finished the first two chapters of *Lord of the Flies* by the time I arrived at his school. From our preliminary interview, I could gather that the grade 11s were not overly enthused by the novel's premise, which their teacher had explained through a series of predictive or 'pre-reading' exercises. Readings in class were augmented with various plot synopses and character profiles, mainly in the form of *Sparknotes* (2019) printouts. While this seemed effective as a contextual or explicit teaching strategy, Casey confessed to being "insanely bored" (S3, I1) in class and − like his peers − lacking the motivation to explore its more recent, multimodal derivatives.

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b. The first scaffolds

"How would you feel," I asked Casey, "if I told you that *Lord of the Flies* had inspired several graphic novels, a *manga* comic, a videogame, two Hollywood movies and a song by one of the world's biggest rock bands?" Immediately, his eyes lit up. Casey made it clear to me, though, that he had finished reading the novel "a long time ago", and actually grew to love it. The problem, then, resided not in the narrative itself but in the way it was repurposed as a memory-testing tool − a dusty tome which according to Casey needed "finishing" before year-end exams. Any engagement with a literary work begins with a cover-to-cover reading − that much is true − but I felt that *Lord of the Flies* was essentially severed from Casey's home domain or out-of-school, literacy *acts* (Snow, 1983; Street, 1993). Thus, I introduced him to Harry Hook's 1990 film adaptation, *Iron Maiden*'s 1995 song with the same name and − bearing our redesign in mind − a selection of 'ransom notes' from the internet.

c. The first draft; further scaffolding

With Casey's renewed interest in the dark aesthetic or *feel* of the novel, our work on the lyric poster could begin in earnest. Iron Maiden's *Lord of the Flies* (Appendix B3, on data disc) had enlightened Casey as to the structure or *sound* of a modern rock song, while the film may have led to his inclusion of yet another visual element: the pencil drawings of Jack and Ralph (fig. 4.5, p. 121, right margin). Here, Casey's use of gesture and facial expression work well to depict the boys' conflicting personalities: the narcissistic Jack with his crossed arms and smirk, and the more reserved Ralph with his unassuming pose and indifferent gaze. Now, with a firmer grasp of the novel's plot, characterisation and salient themes, Casey could write his lyrics not as a regurgitation of prescribed content, but a critical and agentive *reflection* thereof. After a quick edit of the typewritten draft, he could finally begin extracting letters from magazines, food packaging and other everyday texts.

d. The final work

Besides including many subtle references to the imagery and symbolism in *Lord of the Flies*, the finished work makes some surprising nods to popular culture, social media and other domains not necessarily linked to the narrative. Casey insisted on

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using the *Facebook* logo (a circled 'f' against a blue background) for the word 'friend' in verse one. This operates on several levels. Firstly, it is at once recognisable as the symbol for *online friend* − possibly the most accurate description of Piggy's relation to Jack, if they had access to today's technologies. It may also call attention to the substitutive power of letters and symbols − in the digital domain especially − where it is seldom required to encode entire words or ideas. This same principle applies to the 'heart' in bridge two and 'fire' in the outro. Other references include Piggy's spectacles in verse one ("…kindofa g-OO-d guy I guess"), the 'no pigs!' sign in bridge two, and the silhouettes of the plane, conch shell, serpentine beast and Jack's "callin' card", which not surprisingly is the *Fool* or *Joker*.

e. Revisiting texts; reflection

In retrospect, Casey was quite vocal about the "understandings" he had acquired through our multimodal enrichment programme − both in terms of the source text and his personal life (S3, I1 & I2). As for my own, new 'understandings' as a teacher and researcher, there is the sheer cognitive and physical input required from learners like Zane and Casey during processes of redesign. Selections must be made by the agent in terms of drawing and writing tools, techniques and desired effects, and when these are actually applied to paper they must be orchestrated in a way that *speaks back* to the prescribed text, however subtly or explicitly. All of this requires mental and physical exertion, but it is an endeavour that can open up learners' set works in the most fruitful ways.

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5.3 Misha and her *Anthem for Doomed Youth* storyboard

As one of two participants from the storyboard group discussed here, Misha's chain is characterised by quite an array of multimodal texts:

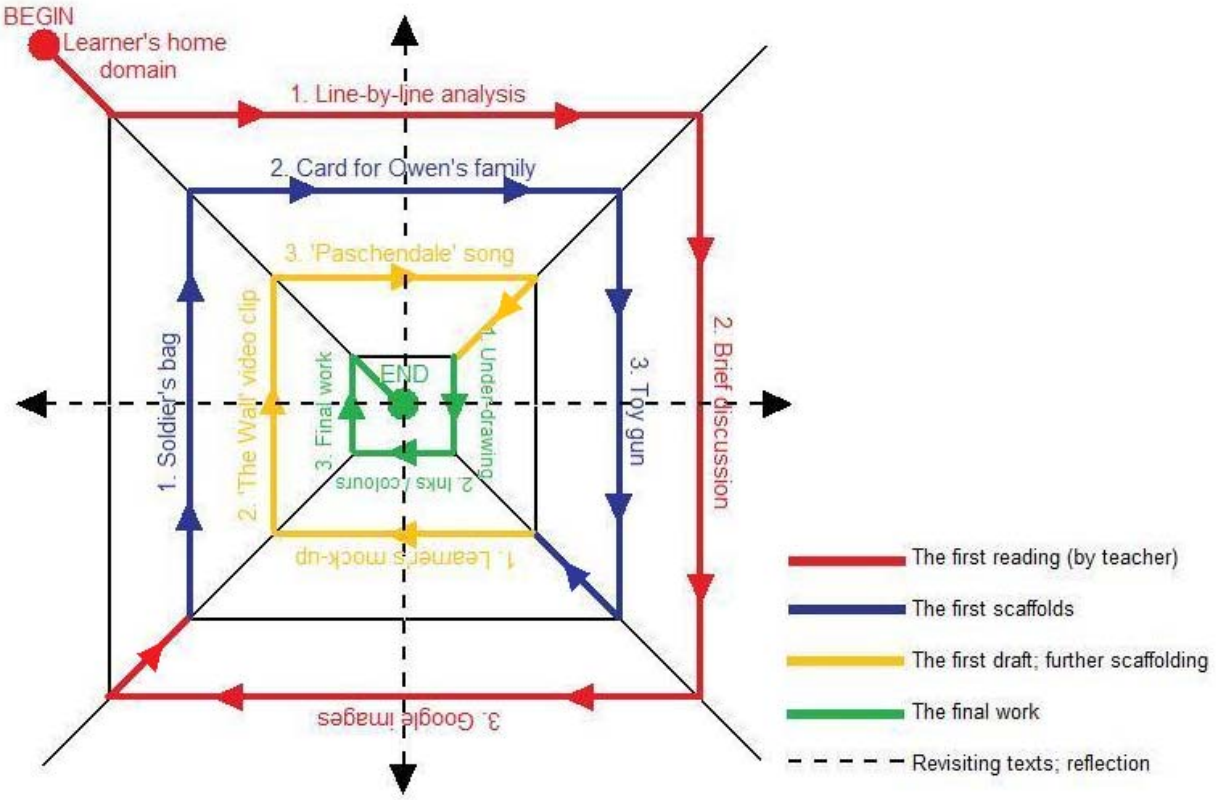


Fig. 5.4: Misha's *web*

a. The first reading

In Misha's Grade 10 class, *Anthem for Doomed Youth* was set for the first term. At the time of my first meeting with the three-member storyboard group, her English teacher had already begun a line-by-line analysis of the poem, explaining any "difficult" words and providing "some background" on the war and its historical context. Early on in our meeting, however, Misha exclaimed that she "[did] not enjoy reading the poem at all", as she found the First World War "so difficult to imagine". This needed some clarification. Her inability to "imagine" the war, it turned out, spawned not from its gruesomeness or the lucidity of Owen's poem, but rather from an absence of audio-visual supports in the classroom. Aside from her teacher's use of *Google Image* printouts of WWI, Misha explained, there was very little to connect

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the poem (particularly its first, more descriptive verse) to a certain wartime aesthetic or zeitgeist.

b. The first scaffolds

My participants had to *feel* − and *participate in* − their prescribed poetry if there was to be any possibility of a renewed and engaged reading, or a meaningful connection between text and reader. In no way, however, was this a contest between myself and English Home Language educators. Misha's school rather welcomed our extramural "shenanigans", as they were often called, as supplementary to both literature and language syllabi. Indeed, this was a group with diverse needs; Rasheed wished to use a Shakespearean sonnet for his storyboard (discussion to follow hereafter), while Zane suggested another of Owen's works, *Dulce et Decorum Est*, as source text. Here focusing on my work with Misha, my 'soldier's satchel' worked particularly well as a kinaesthetic stimulant or, if you will, *situated scaffold* to pique her interest in the war:

i) 

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ii)

ATT: Brigadier Sassoon, Craiglockhart Hospital. To be returned to Mr. Owen's relatives as soon as convenient. Priority: [redacted].

Personal effects of Wilfred Edward Salter Owen, MC, killed in action 4/11/1918. Our condolences.

- **1 x Colt 9mm standard firearm, no magazine**
- **1 x journal, letters and (?) poetic works**
- **1 x military issue sword, property of unknown Japanese cadet**
- **1 x Military Cross (awarded 1915 for Joncourt Action)**
- **1 x National transistor radio**
- **1 x tag, helmet and uniform, no boots**

Fig. 5.5: The first scaffold in Misha's redesign journey, including i) contents of the soldier's satchel and ii) attached card. I designed this card to foreground wartime censorship and 'disposable heroism' − among other themes − as well as the final events of Owen's life.

c. The first draft; further scaffolding

Misha was clearly excited by the WWI memorabilia on display, particularly the replica of a *Katana* sword[17] and *Beretta* BB-gun − though the latter may have been too modern in appearance for the era. Later, and by her request, the toy gun was used as a model for frame two of the final work (fig. 4.7, p. 127). At the time of our second meeting, though, Misha had already drawn a mock-up of her envisioned film (Appendix A1), basing each scene on what is usually an isolated image or couplet from the poem. In contrast with the strict chronology or timing of the *Dulce* storyboard (fig. 4.11, p. 136), Misha has adopted a much looser approach here, visualising her ideas in a style more akin to comic strips. This is also retained in the final − there are, for example, no indications of 'elapsed time' for each scene, nor are there any clues as to how the camera should move, what role audio will play, or what each element should be 'doing' in the shot. The mere spaces in-between frames − however inadvertently − seem to *bring things together* though; like the gutters in a comic book (McCLoud, 1993), they suggest various lapses in time, changes in

[17] As recent as the pre-World War II build-up, the *Kyu Gunto* was still produced by only the most skilled swordsmiths, for use by all Japanese enlistees. Distributed in batches as small as one to twenty-five, this military standard weapon was intended to maintain Japan's treasured sword culture.

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context or − in the case of a storyboard − a simple cut in the recording. It would seem that Misha was quite confident in the coherence of her frames, or their capacity to be viewed in the 'correct', top-left-to-bottom-right order, or there might have been a more extensive use of anchorage. Though this was not confirmed in our meetings, both the mock-up and final work seem to communicate a particular cadence or *rhythm*, suggestive of a ten second shot per frame, or perhaps a ninety second running time in total.

Looking at her preparatory work with some disdain, Misha complained about it being too crudely drawn or "not good enough". I assured her that this was a normal (if not essential) part of the creative process, and that the aesthetic strengths of the final would come through naturally provided that some refinements were made to her materials and techniques. To keep her engaged, I also decided upon the following two scaffolds (Appendices B4 and B5, on data disc), and was delighted to learn that she did have some knowledge of their authorship:

- a recording of *Anthem for Doomed Youth* by Grammy Award-winning lyricist, singer and songwriter Bruce Dickinson, used here as the intro for Iron Maiden's *Paschendale* (2003);
- an animation from Alan Parker's *The Wall* (1982) showing a 'struggle' between two flowers, possibly representing the Allies and Central Powers of WWI.

d. The final work

It was only in the core of the web − that is, the final stages of redesign − where Misha's draughtsmanship as a Grade 10 Visual Art learner emerged. With its assertive outlines and maximum use of negative space, the work acquired an uncluttered, almost serene appearance. The flower motif and mask-like faces were borrowed from Parker's film, while the audio clip had prompted Misha to stencil selected phrases over her drawings − in large, black letters very suggestive of Dickinson's bold and foreboding voice.

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e. Revisiting of texts; reflection

As illustrated in the web above (fig. 5.4, black arrows), Misha used our final meeting to reminisce about *all* of her encountered texts − whether extant or remade − and to decide how these may have impacted upon her understanding and appreciation of the poem. *Anthem for Doomed Youth*, she explained, was now *hers*, and though she could not negate the initial, explicit instruction of her teacher, she admitted that "just another class" may have made for a mundane and meaningless experience (S4, I2). There are arguably some glaring instances of slippage or 'lost meaning' in Misha's final − the misinterpretations of "cattle" and "blinds" (frames one and nine), and the misreading of "dusk" for "dust" (frame nine) being two of them. Still, *it works*, albeit as a two-dimensional scroll of proceedings − a white void wherein Owen's realist subjects are abstracted into naïve outline-avatars, with the children's faces appearing modern yet timeless in their simplicity.

5.4 Rasheed and his *Sonnet 18* storyboard

Rasheed's apparent zeal and dedication to the redesign task − to the sheer idea of *drawing his reading* − meant that his web transpired more as a single yarn, spun swiftly but sturdily towards the centre (fig. 5.6 below). I did not want to 'force' any scaffolds upon anyone, so Rasheed's journey called for minimal assistance during the first reading and interpretive stages only. For this, we used Gosher and Pannall's widely read anthology, *Inside Poetry* (2007). With its emphasis on understanding each work as a holistic *document* of an individual's observations or feelings, the book offered a welcome alternative to the photocopied poem distributed days before in his Home Language class. Sadly, the latter revealed the teacher's line-by-line or grossly translative approach to Shakespeare's work. To familiarise Rasheed with the atmospheric colours and line styles that could be used, we also concluded our first meeting with a Google viewing of high-quality, Hollywood-style storyboards. These included *Tomb Raider: Chronicles* (Eidos, 2000) and *The Angel of Darkness* (Eidos, 2003).

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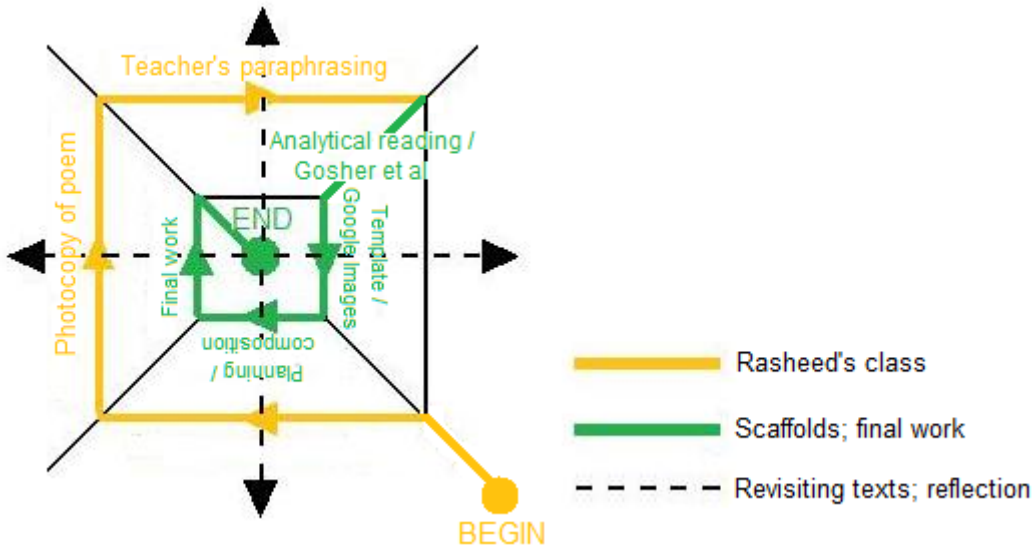


Fig. 5.6: Rasheed's *web* (clockwise from bottom right)

At the time of our second meeting, Rasheed had already completed his pencil under-drawing. Even without colour or the assuredness of line which would characterise his final work, the nine sketches seemed almost unapologetic in their dream-like abridgement of Shakespeare's words. I was particularly struck by his treatment of the poem's *twist* − the inevitable decay of everything, as described in lines seven and eight. He had included the fictitious *Annie*'s grave, followed by an evergreen "garden" in the last frame. It would seem that our perusal of *Inside Poetry* had paid off; Rasheed clearly understood the poem's universal themes of impermanence and mortality, contrasted by the promise of eternal life in its final couplet. Here, Shakespeare boasts that his work − the poem itself − will forever "give life" to the reader or his beloved.

The final overlay of inks and colours on Rasheed's storyboard did not, however, come without its fair share of tweaks and alterations. Frame six, which now shows the wilting flower, was originally placed after frame four, which made little sense in the chronology of the poem (see fig. 4.9, p. 132, second row). I suggested that he switch his fifth and sixth frames, thus strengthening the contrast between his "hot sun" and "rain" scenes and ensuring that line eight − "*By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed*" − was better represented by the flower's dwindling petals. This is film editing in its most banal form, but still illustrative of the genre's stringent demands in terms of pacing, arrangement and transitions in *context*, as represented by the gutters between frames. If one can overlook Rasheed's harsh

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colouring and crude delineation of objects − which are surprisingly typical of grade tens' work − the storyboard not only functions effectively as the "cameraman's eyes" (Bronnenboek, 2005, p. 157), but also incorporates a refreshing variety of shots and angles. *Annie* and *Peter*'s direct gaze in the opening scene grabs the viewer's attention. Like the flower (frame 2), sun (frame 4) and tombstone (frame 8), their faces are depicted not as poetic metaphor but the austere design of nature − *up close* and without the distraction of background detail.

Also, the unpredictable nature of Rasheed's visual narrative is quite reminiscent of a postmodern film aesthetic, particularly in the fantasy or fairytale genres. It seems to follow an *avant-garde* or, as described by Dedré Victor (2011), an *anything goes* approach to imagery and editing. The close-up of the flower, for instance, cuts straight to an extreme long shot of a river and mountain (frame 3), before focussing on the sun as if it were an autonomous character in the film. With the sun personified as "the eye of heaven" with a "gold complexion" in the poem (lines 5-6), it is understandable why Rasheed would want to depict 'him' in the same, objective light as his human subjects. The least scientific view of nature, however, is offered in the final frame. With its heavily outlined flowers and warped road almost violently entering the viewer's space, this simple landscape recalls the later works of Vincent van Gogh (1853-1990), a post-impressionist painter who contributed greatly to the postmodern aesthetic.

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5.5 Kulani and his *Romeo & Juliet* game screen

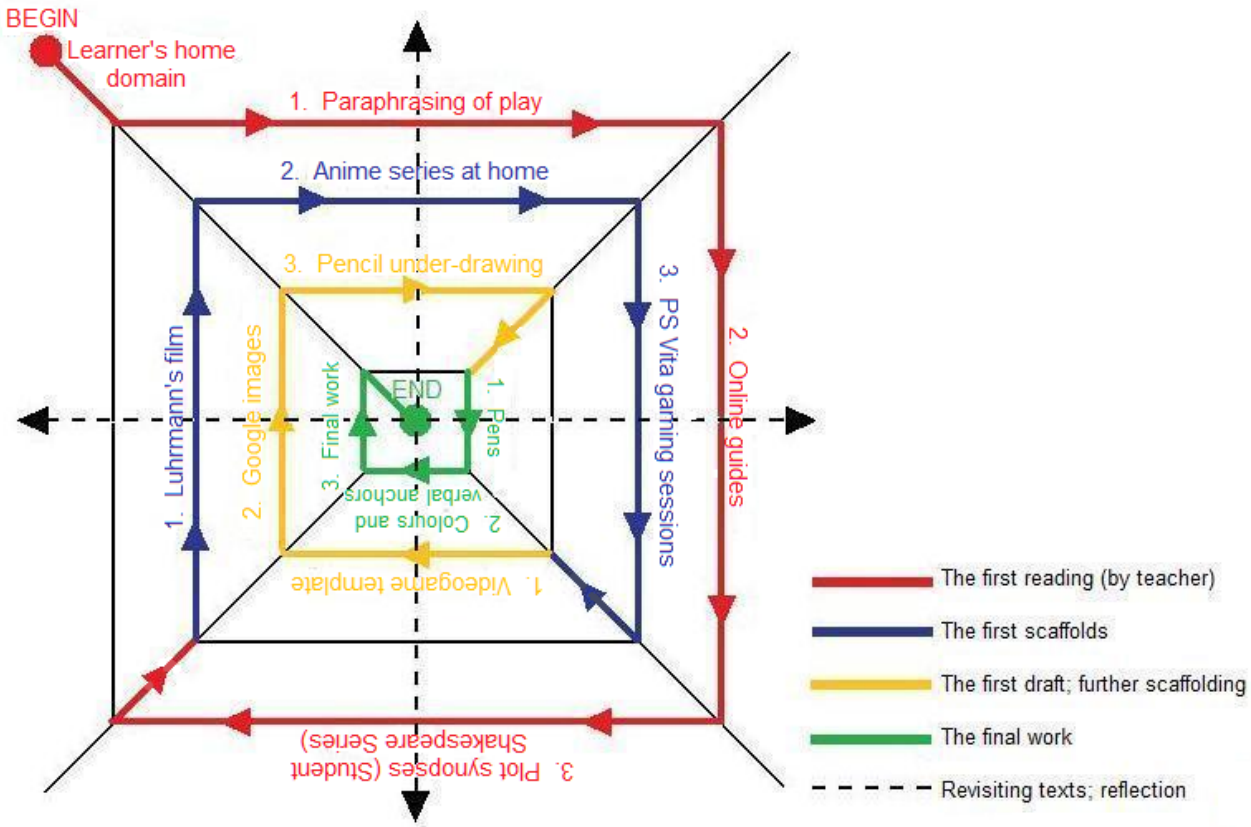


Fig. 5.7: Kulani's *web*

a. The first reading

A tendency among teachers of Shakespeare − in many high schools both locally and abroad − is to paraphrase each act or scene from a play before supplementing learners' readings with handbook explanations, printouts from online guides and other, largely paper-based resources (Uys et al, 2008). One preliminary interview (S8, I1) reveals that this was also the case in Kulani's Home Language class. He insisted from the outset, though, that he "wanted more" from the play than what could be offered by its monomodal materiality, or typewritten *contents*. After viewing my blank *character select screen* (fig. 3.3.d, p. 99), Kulani admitted that *Romeo and Juliet* had many exciting colours, rhythms and connections to an outside, primarily digital world that could still be explored.

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b. The first scaffolds

As with Somizi, Baz Luhrmann's film adaptation *Romeo+Juliet* served as a foundational scaffold, to at least provide Kulani with a visual reference for the eighteen portraits to later fill his preferred genre frame. Though many of these would hint at Luhrmann's own character treatments (Laurence, Nurse and Juliet's parents in particular), the most pervasive aesthetic here seems to stem from Kulani's love for fighting games, and anime series like *Naruto* or *Dragonball Z*.

c. The first draft; further scaffolding

Since they formed a large part of his "after-school routine", many of these decidedly digital texts were viewed by Kulani at home. I did have to supplement this, however, with a few facilitated sessions on the Vita system, on-site. I wanted Kulani to see − in a fighting game like *Jump Force* (2019) for example − how the characters moved and interacted on-screen, and how this would translate to the two-dimensional medium. Though he never submitted a first draft, Kulani's first underdrawing incorporated many of these rhythmic elements, from the gushes of wind behind the eponymous heroes to the off-centre poses of Mercutio, Benvolio and others.

d. The final work

The *MODE* glossary of multimodal terms (2019) lists *drawing* as another concept integral to the process of text redesign. It is defined here as the making of traces and lines "for expressive, informational and communicational purposes". Though it looks to social semiotics, literacy studies and other fields to conceptualise drawing and its affordances for meaning-making, the site seems to overlook certain details to the process − observed during my years as an Art teacher and researcher − which may need attention here. To better understand the complex cognitive and physical processes involved in the agentive use of pencils, pens, pastels and paints, it could be useful to track Kulani's drawing through the more exclusive lens of an artist, or 'draughtsman':

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- Any work of art − regardless of the planned medium or stylistic approach − requires preparation and, to some degree, an *intent* in terms of aesthetic outcome and meanings communicated. Kulani is drawing these portraits from memory, so the visual elements of our many scaffolds may have been stored *mentally* (Pallasmaa, 2009), to be drawn upon when needed.
- Kulani uses a hard-lead pencil (either 2H or H) to draw the planned outlines of each figure. Characterised by the use of basic shapes and spontaneous lines, this is known as *blocking*.
- Once he is satisfied with the spatial positioning, size, proportions and gestures of each figure (mainly the bodies), Kulani uses softer leads (HB, B and up) to make the outlines darker and more assured.
- This is followed by more precise details such as the eyes, noses and mouths, being careful to capture the expressions desired. More detail is added to the clothing and other, character-specific features.
- Kulani then uses *Koki* pens on his strongest outlines, and the interiors of selected shapes. All shading is achieved with colouring pencils, using a rubbing technique with the soft, fleshy part of the ring finger.
- Usually the subtitles, captions and other forms of linguistic anchorage succeed instead of precede the finished drawing. This is also true of Kulani, who only writes down the characters' names and 'abilities' upon completion of all portraits.
- The finishing touches include more shading and a line clean-up, and in this case a few last-minute anchors to further situate the work in prescribed content.

e. Revisiting of texts; reflection

While these steps may seem specific to the media and techniques of Kulani's work, they reflect a somewhat conventionalised approach to figure drawing − tried and trusted among Visual Art learners. Kulani required little assistance as far as the actual execution of his portraits were concerned, preferring a more spontaneous approach to the inclination, hue and weight of each mark left on the A3-size frame. Whatever the case may be, Kulani in his final interview (S8, I2) commented on what the inter-genre approach meant for him, both on an educational and personal level: "current technologies… [are] more educational and help us to learn life skills. They allow us to… create different atmospheres. I feel that videogames have taught me a lot. The project took a lot of work and needed a lot of thinking out, but it was worth it."

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5.6 Findings emerging from data: research question two

- *Drawing occurs as an agentive mind-to-hand-to-paper process, informed by mental image, transduced meaning and past experience*

In her bestselling book *The Artist's Way* (1992), Julia Cameron explains the unique kinaesthetic properties of drawing as both a meaning-making tool and literacy act, for once focussing on the science behind the draughtsperson's physical processes − *outside* of the paper or other two-dimensional support − and not on the aesthetic merits of the work itself. As a surprisingly under-researched topic in both the humanities and sciences, the exact ways in which we give physical form to our words and pictures may provide further insight into both the *content* and *aesthetic outcome* of learners' redesigns. In the emergent literacy years, for example, much attention is given to the child's grip or clutching of writing instruments, so as to ensure optimal control over the forming of shapes and signs in the visual mode. Although there is no 'correct' way of holding a pen or pencil, many artists, sculptors and expert calligraphers claim that a strong merge between one's hand and whatever graphological tool (not only on a physical level, but also *cognitively* and *emotionally*) is the first, crucial step towards forming dexterous and precise markings. Also, the distinctive *sounds* made by the receptive vehicle − whether it be a canvas, piece of paper or the cuneiform tablets of old − remain integral to the act of making and remaking texts.

Quite recently, there has been a resurgence in media calling for the reinstatement of such traditional writing and drawing practices in schools (Pieper, 2011; Mangen, 2018; Swain, 2018), attributing the marked decline in learners' coordinative and sensory skills to the keyboards, touch-screens and other *plasticized* input mechanisms pervading our lives today. To a large extent, the inter-genre approach supports this view, despite the digitization of prescribed texts being one of its organising principles (more in section 6.3, p. 224). Although works like Kulani and Trevor's in-game screenshots seem to engender these digital aesthetics or more progressive modes of communication, they are still handmade artefacts at heart, and will easily fulfil any 'analogue' criteria if applied in pedagogy.

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I thus posit that drawing occurs as an agentive mind-to-hand-to-paper process, informed by mental image, transduced meaning and past experience. The acts of drawing and painting are not so much physical exertions as they are transductions of meanings latent within the mind of the sign-maker − inscribed, traced or marked embodiments on the two-dimensional medium, which may only come to us through an active observation of external realia, a drawing from memory[18] or some other form of combined body-and-mind improvisation. The draughtsman − in whatever context or capacity − does not guide his mark with the hand or wrist per se; the latter body parts are mere tools for embodying webs upon webs of meanings from "specialised visual areas of the brain" (Wolf, 2007, p. 92). Artists from Loomis (1959) to McCloud (1993) have observed a similar autonomy or 'effortlessness' in the movements of the sign-making hand: "the hand does not do the drawing or writing… as much as the mind does" (Loomis, 1959, p. 21). This has also been true of my own participants. Multimodal theorists from Jewitt (2003; 2009) to Bezemer (in MODE, 2019), however, allude to the many challenges in tracking these more *invisible* instances of cognition as they occur within chains. Quite effective in circumventing this, I believe, are my many comparative tables and trackings of learners' chains − remapped here as *intertextual webs* − which rightly foreground the drawing as product of many mental picturings and readings.

- *The completed multimodal artefact is a series of mental images, newly embodied*

Another phenomenon closely related to the multimodal field is that of *embodiment*, or physically materialising one's meanings into a concrete form through various processes of transmodalisation. Although social semiotics had been outlined previously − as the branch of semiotics most relevant to the aims of this study − the *embodied text* now requires special attention, since my participants' journeys all reflect this materialisation of the prescribed texts' meanings into multimodal artefacts, worthy of deep and critical analysis. Before commencing with a discussion on how

[18] Note the double meaning acquired by the word "drawing" when used in this context. As observed by Mavers (in MODE, 2019), to draw also means "to pull out" − as in Pallasmaa's (2009) drawing from one's cognitive faculties or *mental images* during instances of text redesign.

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learners like Misha, Zane and Casey had achieved this, it may be necessary to highlight some current (often conflicting) views on the concept and its implications for pedagogy − in literature learning contexts and otherwise.

The *MODE* site's rather elementary conceptualisation of embodiment, as the agentive and sustained manipulation of semiotic resources made visible or *material* (2019), still seems to resonate with many studies that aim to track participants' modal traversals − between the linguistic and visual, especially. In the broadest sense, to *embody* is to introduce the invisible or metaphysical into the extra-diegetic world; to materialise the unseen faculties of thought, dreams and imagination into something more concrete or tangible.[19] Stein's *Fresh Stories* (2003), for example, had a series of *Nguni* dolls as the final punctuation in participants' chains, while Newfield and Maungedzo's (2006) study in a Soweto high school had culminated in the *Thebuwa cloth* − a large, two-dimensional support displaying learners' desire to combine prescribed poetry with their socio-cultural experiences, or traditional writing practices at home. The latter study quite literally foregrounds the *human body* − particularly its affordance for movement, gesture and rhythm during dance − as yet another vehicle for meaning-making in the classroom and other, more performative contexts. Contributors to a more neuroscientific discourse, though, argue that embodied vehicles are never as clear-cut or discernable during one's tracking of the chain, and instead focus on the cognitive 'sparks' or impulsions that give rise to outward physical exertion and, eventually, the manipulation of semiotic resources. In studies of my own (De Jager, 2014; 2017), however, I have observed *embodiment* to be a combination of such cognitive and physical exertions. In fact, embodiment as product may best be likened to Bourne and Jewitt's (2003) image of artefacts as *orchestrations* of their creators' intentions and interpretations.

Participants were thus working towards a redesigned text − as an embodied meaning-making vehicle − during the *intention*, *redesign*, *production* and *distribution* stages of interaction (Kress et al, 2001, as cited in English, 2011, p. 49). Also, if their pertinent responses during the interviews are any indication, they were always fully cognisant or 'aware' that their gained meanings needed a representational

[19] Czech author Franz Kafka (1883-1924) also used the term for the spirit's possession of all things physical, eventually adopting or *becoming* it (from *The Metamorphosis*, 1915).

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medium (a visible text or multimodal conduit, if you will) to make themselves heard in the school space and beyond. Interestingly, this particular function of the multimodal enrichment programme was never explicated to learners; the embodiment of meaning through artefact rather occurred as a fluid and autonomous process, informed only by their interpretations or *readings* of several, interrelated texts. Themes, settings, symbols and characters specific to each prescribed text could now be 'aired' through the enlarged *sites of display* (Newfield, 2014) of the song, storyboard and videogame genres. Mandy, for example, exalted in the sheer experience of putting pen to paper, with the play's tragic premise and the audible *sounds of writing* (Cameron, 2005) amounting to a visceral and highly emotional experience. This body of words then evolved into *Forbidden Love*, a complex musical arrangement which further concretised the emotive power of Shakespeare's work.

Their artefacts have thus manifested as an *extraction* − and subsequent body-and-mind *transformation* − of quite specific or atomistic meanings from the source text. This specificity in the agent's selection of "meanings to be remade" is quite evident in works like Rasheed's storyboard (where each frame can be traced to a particular line in Shakespeare's sonnet) and Casey's lyric poster, which seems to thrive as an abstract of Golding's narrations. Such *textually situated* and *embodied* forms of cognition, I have also seen, are prerequisites for the musicalisation, film adaptation and videogamification of prescribed content.

To conclude, it can be said that the multimodal artefact manifests as a complex chain of mental images, made concrete or *embodied.* As for the process behind this, it seems to have transpired fluidly and autonomously, with participants' unique interpretations of many, interrelated texts serving as reference. In my re-imagining of the semiotic chain and elsewhere (Chapter Six) it is argued that learners draw heavily from their out-of-school texts and experiences to complete their school-based literature tasks. Described as the unseen *hollows* of the chain (since many meanings are apparently made outside of the classroom or other 'educational' domain) it is the television room, car interior, cinema, restaurant, roadside or − in Umberto Eco's case − shower that seems to optimise our syntheses of everyday texts into singular thoughts or resources, ideal for redesign. If my participants'

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inspired responses in the final interviews are of any indication, these are the spaces where FET learners construct their richest audio-visual patterns or mental images of fictional characters, settings and objects − to be embodied later through whatever genre.

- *A comparative analysis between source texts and remade artefacts are most effective for tracking learners' embodied and situated forms of cognition*

The term *cognition* is applied in many disciplines, from neuro- and cognitive science to psychology and education. In essence, cognitive studies concern "the nature of human thought, in particular how people attend to, process, understand and remember information that others convey" (Price, in MODE, 2019). For the purposes of this discussion, however, I will make reference to two of its most recent strands only − *embodied cognition* (Wilson, 2002) and *situated cognition* (Lave & Wenger, 1991) − as they seem most relevant to my own data analysis approach (Chapter Four) and the multimodal approach in general. The former involves the observation of body-world interaction, as a key component of human cognitive functioning. The latter is closely related to this, but foregrounds the everyday or *situated* actions of agents (especially within the different literacy domains) as central to their acquisition of knowledge.

Should each of the eleven case studies above be viewed in isolation, a similar emphasis on combined *body-and-mind* interactions with semiotic resources − not to mention the participant's artefact as embodied vehicle for meaning-making − seems to emerge as a presentational or analytical framework. The many comparative tables in Chapter Four, for example, do not aim to demonstrate the 'faithfulness' of each representation, but rather track agents' *interest* or those meanings transduced through sustained mental and physical *application* − to the redesign space, materials, content of the source text and our enrichment programme overall. Cognition within the context of multimodality − with its focus on the different modes and their influence on human interaction, attention, perception, interpretation and meaning-making − had thus informed my approach to data presentation as well as all preceding engagements with learners. Here follow specific instances of embodied and situated cognition in my participants' redesign journeys. These were either

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observed during our many transmodalisations at the *redesign stations*, or disclosed during interviews.

Mandy's creation of the *Forbidden Love* song arguably transpired more as an extension of an everyday *literacy act* (Street, 1993) − that is, her writing of love songs in a journal whenever she could find the time − and less as a literature 'task' facilitated by the researcher (see fig. 4.1, p. 111). Also, she had used the performative element of redesign (her singing and recording of the song on the *Music Maker* program) as a way into her prescribed play and its literary elements. As another embodied vehicle for literary text exploration, Razia's song based on *Things Fall Apart* also capitalised on the situatedness of songwriting among more *aural* learners (Fleming, 2012), affording a more holistic view of Achebe's narrative with its concise verses and strategic use of word-processor fonts. It was clear from the outset, though, that the 'videogame' branch of our journey would facilitate the creation of artefacts most proximal to learners' out-of-school engagements or situations. Early on, Mandy noted that she "would like to see more [videogames] integrated into schools (S1, I1), while Casey opined "it would be more interesting to learn if it [were] done in a way that appeals to me… [using] videogames" (S3, I1).

Zoe, in particular, took to her *Romeo and Juliet* videogamification with relatively little guidance or scaffolding, determined to infuse each character with the anime aesthetic she so admired. Similarly, Trevor, Kulani and Somizi's in-game screenshots all speak of canonical literature *newly embodied*; wholly recognizable forms or genres which could finally afford a concrete articulation of their readings − of set works and otherwise. Finally, Misha and Rasheed's poem-to-film transmodalisations (here in the form of nine-frame storyboards) perhaps demonstrate how the 'movie' has pervaded almost every space of our lives, with local curricula now placing emphasis on film studies as key to literacy development (Bateman & Schmidt, 2012). True to the findings of Lave et al (1991), it would also appear that my participants had approached the process of text remaking as an almost intuitive traversal between body, mind and space − a testament to our current learners' need to situate their prescribed work fully in the here and now.

From the above it becomes clear that an analytical juxtaposition between source texts and remade artefacts is key if one wishes to track learners' embodied and

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situated forms of cognition. With this comes a significant finding to add to the broad field of cognitive studies: nearly all visual-verbal elements of participants' artefacts may mobilise, or move into plain view, the ostensibly *invisible* constructs of tone, theme and identity latent within prescribed narratives. This undisputed affordance of the visual mode, in particular, to almost instantaneously impart text-related meanings has been a focal point in my data analyses, with the visual mode or *orchestration* detailing a narrated event in a much more succinct manner than, for example, a linguistic treatment of said event. Newly cognisant of the fact that line could 'do' many things that its more verbose counterpart − the word − could not, the participants and I saw such modal differences as central to both the practical applications and theoretical underpinnings of the inter-genre approach. A large part of my participants' cognitive processes would thus involve the transduction of prescribed, text-related meanings into more visual or multidisciplinary forms to be analysed later, quite cyclically, through the use of 'labels' in Chapter Four. In this study, redesign and the remaking of meaning have thus come full circle − from the reading of the original typewritten text; to its *picturing* through the multimodal artefact; to its written analysis via the label method and five C's; and back again to its 'reading' − only this time, as a more individual or independent interpretation of the original.

- *Film may be key to encouraging learners' visualisation of prescribed content, to promote a sustained interest in (and improved comprehension of) novels, poems and plays*

Despite this noted emphasis on kineikonics or the *moving image* in the millennial classroom (Burn & Parker, 2001), a rigid distinction remains between films and more 'analogue' texts as part of learners' literature curricula. In other words, *film study* and its associated concepts are reserved for just this − to study a prescribed film or the literary work(s) that had inspired it − and are seldom applied as scaffolds or avenues into the complexities of other, solely typewritten materials. Bateman et al (2012) observe a similar paucity − among FET teachers especially − in the application of camera shots, angles and movements to prescribed texts, with learners lacking the skill or confidence to traverse between the *film* and *book* materialities (also see section 1.5.1 above). More than a mere metalanguage

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belonging to a particular genre or subgroup of the visual mode, I believe such concepts can optimise the interpretation and redesign of almost any text, provided that teachers and learners *look beyond* poems, plays and novels as static or authorial entities. In Zane's storyboard based on *Dulce*, for example, a number of camera techniques including panning (frame one), zooming (frames two and seven), reaction shots (frame four), point-of-view shots (frame five), focus (frame six) and visual effects (frames eight and nine) are integrated into every scene, affording a much more holistic grasp of the poem's content than a more traditional, line-by-line analysis.

The song and videogame genres − as equally removed from the prescribed book materiality − can also provide the perfect segue into the themes, storylines, settings and characterisations of learners' set works. Despite their supposed differences from film in terms of audience, terminology and overall aesthetic, *songs* and *games* seem to share many parallels with *storyboards* in my participants' final redesigns. Razia's lyric poster, for example, details the rise and fall of Okonkwo in chronological order − or as a synoptic narrative − in much the same way that Misha or Zane chronicle their poems through the more 'visual' storyboard. Also, Trevor's in-game screen demonstrates a tendency among modern developers to cinematise nearly all aspects of game-play, to such an extent that we become the camera or eyes of our avatars (Bronnenboek, 2005, p. 157). Its inclusion of a heads-up display and other videogame conventions does little to detract from its cinematic feel, or function as an *interactive movie*. As excellent examples of *intersemiotic relativity* (Jewitt, in MODE, 2019), these artefacts demonstrate how one genre's features and terminology (e.g. film) can be applied to another (e.g. prescribed poetry) as a useful technique during text redesign. The learners' songs and games have done here what their films have, and vice versa.

Film may thus be key to encouraging learners' visualisation of prescribed content, to promote a sustained interest in (and improved comprehension of) novels, poems and plays. The 'prescribed poem as movie' seemed an exciting prospect for my three-member *storyboard* group of participants, as observed throughout section 4.2. It would allow them, in Zane's words, "to give that poem or book more meaning, or to tell the world about it" (S6, I1). Responses like these − and there were quite a few −

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operate on several levels. They call attention to our learners' growing awareness of prescribed narratives as latent cultural commodities; seemingly outmoded tomes which − if they were to be adapted into film or given the so-called *Hollywood treatment* − could gain much prominence in both the artistic and socio-cultural discourses. Giving a poem or book "more meaning", though, is possibly Zane's way of describing the affordances of the visual mode in exploring and remaking a prescribed text, in this case *Dulce Et Decorum Est* by Wilfred Owen. A rather innovative perspective adopted throughout the study, though, was the film as *outcome* of learners' redesigns (section 4.2) as opposed to a mere pre-reading scaffold or support material.

5.7 Conclusion

Four phenomena with particular currency in the multimodal field − cognition, embodiment, drawing and film studies − have served as springboards for my above discussion on the *process* of participants' redesigns, or semiotic chains representative of their resource manipulations, text engagements and meaning-making activities. With Misha and Rasheed, we have seen how the film and its conventions − this time not as a scaffold, but actual outcome of redesign − could facilitate the remaking of poetry into visual-verbal polyglots, while Kulani from the videogame group demonstrated how drawing could embody the bulk of characterisations from a Shakespearean play. Razia and Casey, on the other hand, capitalised on the affordances of both pictures and words in their lyric posters, breathing life into Achebe and Golding's narratives respectively. What is uniformly present in participants' processes, though, is a cognitive traversal between *what is read* (input) and *what is remade* (output), and the subsequent embodiment of these traversals in and through the multimodal artefact.

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CHAPTER SIX

The *Pedagogic Implications* of Participants' Redesigns

Research question three asks: *What are the implications of these redesigns for classroom practice, that is, how can participants' products and processes be translated into a viable multimodal pedagogy?*

So far I have dealt with the issues of *product* and *process* in multimodal redesign, so the focus will now shift to *pedagogy* or the translatability of participants' journeys into a more concrete approach for future English Home Language contexts. Arguably one of the most distinctive features of the study − particularly the data collection process − was that it was so generative of new and diverse learning experiences. As I began collecting data from two provincial districts, three schools and eleven learners from such dramatically different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, I became aware of a widespread thirst among FET learners to explore their set works in more exciting ways.

The inter-genre approach, I found, could readily accommodate this diversity of spaces, learner interests and contexts, accounting for my focus on question three here and in the following *Reflections* chapter. *How viable or do-able*, I ask, *is this approach in the wider context of South African language classrooms*? For clarity on this, I will first revisit earlier findings (the key discussions following my data in Chapters Four and Five) and comment briefly on their implications for multimodal pedagogy, or English Home Language praxis in general. I will then focus on *materialities* (and their associated *affordances*), *semiotic chains* and *intertextuality* to further explore the viability of the approach for literature teaching and learning. Here I argue that all materialities are inherently fluid in their ability to harness and communicate meaning, and that their affordances are limited only by the sign-maker's capabilities, or interests. I also expand upon the idea that meaning-making, to a large degree, occurs outside of the semiotic chain (as conceptualised by Kress in 2000) or within the *hollow* of each link. As for intertextuality, I posit that the inter-genre approach affords an unprecedented synthesis between texts on either side of the classroom walls. The participants' works have demonstrated a traversal between many modes, texts, genres and experiences − as opposed to a singular reinterpretation of prescribed content − so reference will be made to them throughout.

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Finally, I will discuss the seven tenets or *organising principles* of the inter-genre approach to further situate it in the classroom.

6.1 Earlier findings, related data and implications for practice

- *Art elements as building blocks of visual-verbal narratives*

I have argued that the elements of art (line, colour, shape, form and texture, in particular) often become central resources for meaning-making during embodied processes with the multimodal artefact as desired outcome. In artefacts like Misha and Zane's storyboards, for example, many of these elements have been carefully orchestrated to reference the prescribed texts explicitly, or on a more subtle level. The implication is that English Home Language teachers and curriculum developers will need to foreground the sheer potentials of these elements, or even elevate them to the status of graphemes or morphemes, if they wish to provide learners with a useful, semiotic *toolkit* to explore the meanings of their prescribed narratives. The art elements and their uses − from imparting feelings and ideas to merely embellishing a work − will also need to be taught explicitly as part of the language and literature curriculum. This might seem quite a departure from the linguistically oriented reading, paraphrasing and note-taking session characterising the − say − Shakespeare lesson, but learners will have to their benefit the knowledge that these elements are powerful visualisers of literary meanings.

- *Line and colour: the new words?*

Traditionally, line and colour would be categorised under the elements of art (Kleiner et al, 2004, p. 7), but they have been treated as distinct and powerful signifiers throughout this study, as particularly evident in Chapter Four. In fact, I have equated them to modes, with the storyboards (by Misha, Rasheed and Zane) and videogames (by Trevor, Kulani, Somizi, Zoe and Ekta) being especially demonstrative of their expressive and communicative potentials. Again, teachers and learners need to harness these − not only during more 'artistic' redesign tasks, but in the classroom in general − for reading and writing activities to evolve into something more than pen-on-paper sessions. Activities such as *write the picture*, *paint the poem* or even asking learners to draw a scene, passage or stanza on the

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blackboard (while it is being read) may further reinforce the idea that the *linguistic* is only one of many modes that may be used to communicate meanings from a prescribed narrative.

- *Hands, eyes and faces: the unsung heroes of two-dimensional media*

For the learner who will always protest "But Sir, I can't draw," there will always be those signs that are perhaps less aesthetically pleasing as an element in the finished composition, but still quite potent in communicating a particular feeling, expression or reaction to external stimuli. It is true that 'performative' or 'dramatic' are not the best words to describe the data presented above, yet many of the *bodily* modes have found their way into my participants' ostensibly *flat* artefacts. Razia's lyric poster, Misha's storyboard and Ekta's game screens are perhaps most exemplary of the affordances of facial expression, gaze and gesture in exploring prescribed literary texts, especially if one considers how apprehensive these learners were (at least initially) of *drawing their readings*. Their works thus speak of a fluidity of modes across materialities; the paper- or print-based artefact may be equally expressive of movements in the face and body, provided that facilitators encourage an attention to detail during drawing activities. The actual *physical* body may, of course, be used as vehicle if a text is transmodalised through song, dance or drama, but I have witnessed many learners lacking the confidence to do so or, on account of their religious beliefs, steering clear of such performative tasks entirely.

- *To draw is to embody one's thoughts − in this case, one's reading of prescribed literature*

Drawing is described above as an agentive mind-to-hand-to-paper process, largely informed by what the agent has seen, experienced or chosen to transduce. My participants' drawings are, therefore, not so much arbitrary or extemporised marks left on the two-dimensional medium as they are extensions of their readings of the *word* (i.e. texts) and the *world* (i.e. the spaces and experiences surrounding these). Teachers across subjects and grades should take advantage of the fact that there exist *latent* meaning possibilities (Gibson, 1979, as cited in MODE, 2019) within the most banal of sketches; the contents of these should thus be explored, down to the last line. If relevant, comparisons should be drawn between the sign-maker's

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selection and use of art elements, the prescribed text and its literary elements as well. As seen in Chapter Four, the *label method* and *five C's* have proven particularly effective in this regard. One implication of using such methods, though, is that the genre frames will need to be fairly standardised if one wishes to compare learners' work in terms of the content they transmodalised, or the signs they used. Perhaps moving towards an 'assessment' of learners' frames for either formative or summative purposes, the facilitator may then place a transparency over each as I have done and − using different colour markers − outline, label, caption and anchor its elements to see how the source text is represented. Facilitators may thus analyse each frame without blighting it in red ink − that is, in a non-invasive and multilayered way.

- *A relevant film or video clip: the visual reference text-makers need*

Discussed above are films like *The Wall* (Parker, 1982) and *Romeo+Juliet* (Luhrmann, 1996), which may have inspired and even provided the impetus for some of my participants' redesigns. Though they can provide learners with a reliable visual foundation in terms of characters, setting and so forth, the screening of a movie is simply not enough to sustain an active and agentive reading of prescribed literature. As we have seen with Kulani, Zane and others, such films were used in tandem with my genre-specific *frames* and other scaffolds punctuating the semiotic chain. It is implied that films − though they can be useful for helping learners get to grips with longer narratives − must be used as a foundational scaffold only, with the facilitator screening certain parts or scenes at opportune times. Since they were only complementary to my participants' making of meanings, the same could be said of song and game scaffolds.

- *Yet another affordance: meaningful instances of cognition and embodiment*

With regards to cognition and embodiment, I have for the most part associated the former with participants' *mental imaging* of signs, modes, texts and genres within different spaces or situations; and the latter with the subsequent *drawing* or physical inscription of these images onto paper. The MODE (2019) site makes a similar distinction, but there seems to be a lack of studies investigating the relationship between children's drawings and their cognised realities − in the literature classroom

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specifically. I wanted to address this gap through my label method and five C's in Chapter Four, which perhaps demonstrate a closer correlation between what learners *read* and what they *remake*, write or draw. All eleven artefacts presented in this chapter, I feel, demonstrate what could be achieved if learners are encouraged to *make visible* their readings of prescribed literature. In order to provide clear instructions and feedback on this process, however, future facilitators must ensure that their learners have a firm grasp of the multimodal terms or *metalanguage* of text-making. Providing a glossary of 'action' terms like *transduce*, *embody*, *transmodalise* and *redesign* at different points of the journey will be most useful in this regard, and achieve much in moving multimodal discourse into the English Home Language classroom. The organising principles of the inter-genre approach, as stated in section 6.3 below, further explain how this can be done.

6.2 Key findings: research question three

- *The affordances of different materialities are not rigid, but fluid and adaptive to sign-makers' interests*

Price (as cited in MODE, 2019) describes *materiality* as the "material, physical stuff" that comprises a text or semiotic resource. From the case studies in Chapter Four, it is clear that the transformation of prescribed novels, poems and plays (as they occur in their traditional, paper-based materialities) into more contemporary or technological *stuffs* is an endeavour that lies at the heart of the proposed approach, and multimodality in general. Though some studies (Oliver, 2005; Kress, 2010) warn against the idea of certain modes possessing expressive or semiotic *potentialities* not enjoyed by others, it is difficult to ignore the role the visual mode, in particular, has played in 'opening up' prescribed material for my FET participants. Their set works have been *mobilised* − as Newfield et al (2006) would put it − in the sense of each redesign becoming a vehicle for meaning-making in the facilitated literature learning context, and beyond. At the risk of sounding fanciful, it can be said that Owen's shell-shocked veterans, Golding's choirboys and the Bard's medieval heroes − among other literary archetypes − had no choice but to leap from their paper confines into the enlivened, out-of-school spaces and texts of the millennial learner, or *native* (Prensky, 2001; 2010) of the digital world.

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During each stage of redesign, these new iterations of prescribed texts were largely perceived as unprecedented − as *postmodern* or more accommodating of the sensoriness permeating our present life-worlds − and may have been the driving force behind participants' engagement with semiotic resources. This was never explicitly stated, but the sheer remaking or re-*orchestration* (Bourne et al, 2003) of things would never be the by-product of a pedagogy, but a practice in and of itself; a cutting-and-pasting, interpreting-and-picturing, singing-songwriting mess of interactions, perhaps more demonstrative of meaning-making than any 'finished' product or artefact. Such transmodalisations do however come with their fair share of constraints and challenges. The self-doubting Misha, for example, required extensive and hands-on guidance during the actual, *physical* inscription of her signs onto the storyboard frame (fig. 4.7, p. 127), while Casey grew tired of the *ransom note* technique on more than one occasion (fig. 4.5, p. 121). Some critics − perhaps ignoring the many affordances of such artefacts as exploratory vehicles − may also argue that the finished product provides too much of a narrow or atomistic view of prescribed content.

To return to affordance, several empirical studies (Olshansky, 2008; Sankey et el, 2010; Yamada-Rice, 2015) seem to subscribe to the idea of modes and materialities possessing specific sets of potentials only, with little capacity for meaning-making outside of their largely 'linguistic' or 'visual' properties. Though a traversal between modes is now regarded as key to meaningful learning (Jewitt, in MODE, 2019), the supposed rivalry between pictures and words − in their overall ability to impart meaning − is a theme that underscores many such studies, removing the linguistic sign or *word* from the realms of colour, gesture and rhythm. If a single letter cannot do what a facial expression can, or if the meanings of a Shakespearean line continue to elude a sung lyric based upon it, then the concept of *intersemiotic relations* (Bourne et al, 2003; Flewitt, 2006) may still be a contradiction in terms. In other words, modes (within their larger materialities) are not rigid in their affordances; *what they do* communicatively and aesthetically depends more on their proximity to or juxtaposition with other modes, or the unique ways in which the sign-maker has used them. Drawing from the interactionist perspectives of James Gibson (1979, as cited in MODE, 2019) where the term has its origins, it can be argued that *modal*

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affordances are nothing but meaning-making possibilities latent in space, limited only by the sign-maker's capabilities, or interests.

To put forward data in evidence of this, Casey's embracing of the grapheme or *letter* − as phonemic building-block of most western writing systems − seems to enable a reading of the word as much more than linguistic signage, and an amalgam of many things, people, places and spaces. Quite similar to Van Leeuwen's (2010) approach to colour as a mode in itself, these written, pasted or drawn signs could now move towards increased autonomy or, if you will, an *independence to mean*. The same could be said of Razia's fonts, Trevor's lines and Zane's colours; despite their basic compositional functions they can easily stand alone as modal orchestrations. Also − to use the two storyboards based on Owen's poetry as examples − the lines between linguistic and visual anchorage may not be as distinctive as once thought, with Misha's stencilled letters (fig. 4.7) and Zane's green directorial cues (fig. 4.11) becoming as much *a part of* the visual content as any line, tone or colour. In line with Barthes' (1977) *relay* hypothesis, the written word has here completed the picture and vice-versa, with their mere proximity proving crucial on both a meaning-making and aesthetic level.

Reiterating an earlier implication, English Home Language learners across grades and phases should at the very least be made aware of such concepts − *affordances*, *potentialities*, *constraints*, *limitations* − whether or not they are currently engaged in multimodal redesign. This will be the responsibility of teachers, curriculum developers and, perhaps most crucially, designers of resources such as the *English for Success* (Burt, Ridgard & Botha, 2012) series of handbooks, widely used in SA classrooms today. Upon my arrival at the three research sites, learners had no knowledge of these terms, nor did they seem to understand the communicative properties of, for example, sounds, pictures or words. Should they be familiarised with the meanings and applications of such metalinguistic terms, it is likely that they will select their modes with a clearer agency and intention, perhaps using them in a way that allows for the *fluidity* of modes and materialities described above.

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- *Meaning-making in the negative: the semiotic chain occupies space, but is also enveloped and influenced by it*

"I could work in the shower if I had plastic paper."

Umberto Eco

Already in the very first stages of fieldwork, I observed this fluidity typifying also the participants' selection and use of modes during instances of redesign. In this regard, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) draw attention to meanings (in whatever way articulated through the visual, linguistic, sonic or spatial modes) as inherently *mobile* entities; forever moving and adapting in accordance with particular social spaces, and reflecting even the most transitory shifts in the meaning maker's intentions or interpretations. As explained earlier, these shifts would become known as *transmodal moments* (Newfield, 2006; 2014) and mark the exact points of traversal between modes in a chain of semiosis. This conceptualisation − it is worth noting − has effected a profound shift in both the multimodal and literacies discourses (Stein, 2008; Jewitt, in MODE, 2019). We now know that meaning-making occurs as a perpetual, often *cyclical* navigation between resources, spaces, modes and other agents, and not only as isolated responses to texts in educational spaces. As such, it *precedes* as well as *succeeds* production, greatly influencing our selection of signs, and taking routes often unforeseen by the most meticulous of meaning makers.

It can be argued, then, that all chains share two attributes: there is the intermittent occurrence of texts or *punctuations* (Kress, 2000) − whether these be extant or redesigned − as well as the *moments* in-between, the duration of which will depend upon the meaning maker(s) involved. Newfield may have enlightened us as to the transitional aspects of each punctuation − seeing that the maker often shifts from one mode to another during redesign − but it is the exact nature of the *hollows* in-between which has intrigued me most as participant-observer in this study. The learners' seemingly fluid traversal between modes, resources and texts − as highlighted above − is one thing, but what exactly had guided or inspired these entirely unique interpretations of canonical literature? What, besides the scaffolds, had inspired these complex amalgams of line, shape, texture and colour − with only the monomodal, prescribed texts as source?

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Within such hollows of the semiotic chain, it can be argued that FET learners draw heavily from their out-of-school texts and experiences to complete their school-based literature tasks. This may be equally true during the *design*, *redesign*, *production* and *distribution* stages of interaction (Kress et al, 2001), as outlined in Chapter Two. Already in 1983, Snow had made a similar observation with regards to the ever-widening gap between the home and school literacy domains, partly due to changes in household technologies such as videogames consoles, walkmans and walkie-talkies. Before the advent of cell phones and the internet, the early 1980s prompted many shifts in perspective (especially among toy manufacturers and their largely adolescent consumer base) with an emphasis on *interaction* or connection to an outside, increasingly media-driven world. In 1977, Atari launched their *2600* console − the first to bring the arcade experience into people's homes − and more traditional toys such as dolls or action figures were now moving, talking, reacting to external stimuli and, perhaps most surprisingly, referencing works of literature, votive texts and ancient mythologies. A good example of this is the *Masters of the Universe* line of action figurines and animated series. Produced by American company Mattel, these dominated store shelves and television screens for a large part of the 1980s. As complex reinterpretations of the *monomyth* − with its many references to the Norse and Greco-Roman deities of old − the series has been the subject of several academic studies. Although the appeal of such 'physical' toys has lessened drastically in recent years, Mattel continues to produce the *Barbie* line of dolls and play sets today.

Realising that children's interest in such elevated discourses were for the most part unanswered in educational domains, some of the earliest proponents of multimodality and multiliteracies (NLG, 1996; Cope et al, 2000) began calling for a large-scale revision of language and literacy curricula. In my own experience, though, I have found that the home reading, viewing, gaming or playing pastime remains just that − a pastime − and seldom informs the selection process among other factors shaping learners' day-to-day experience of the language classroom. Published back in 2008, this position statement from the US National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) supports this view (as cited in Mayo, 2008):

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> "Selecting materials requires in-depth knowledge; not just of students' backgrounds and learning experiences, but also of their abilities, interests and learning styles; not just of educational objectives, but of the best practices and range and quality of materials for meeting them; not just of the particular work being considered, but of its place within the medium, genre [or] epoch…"

The inter-genre approach had thus allowed − if not relied upon − these out-of-school texts and experiences to inform both the content and aesthetic outcome of each redesign. As analogised above, any chain of meaning-making consists of links (or those productions resulting from the manipulation of semiotic resources) and the 'soldered' areas where two links touch, or where the transition between modes is most discernable. Still, many of the social semiotic studies reviewed above (Simon et al, 2014, 2016; Tomlinson, 2015; Batchelor, 2019) seem to overlook the *hollow* of each link − if you will, the negative spaces within and around it (fig. 6.1 below). It seems one can only equate these to crucial preparatory work, premeditations on the following link, or perhaps all the *unseen* reconfigurations of everyday sights, sounds, smells and surfaces whenever the agent is removed from the redesign task at hand.

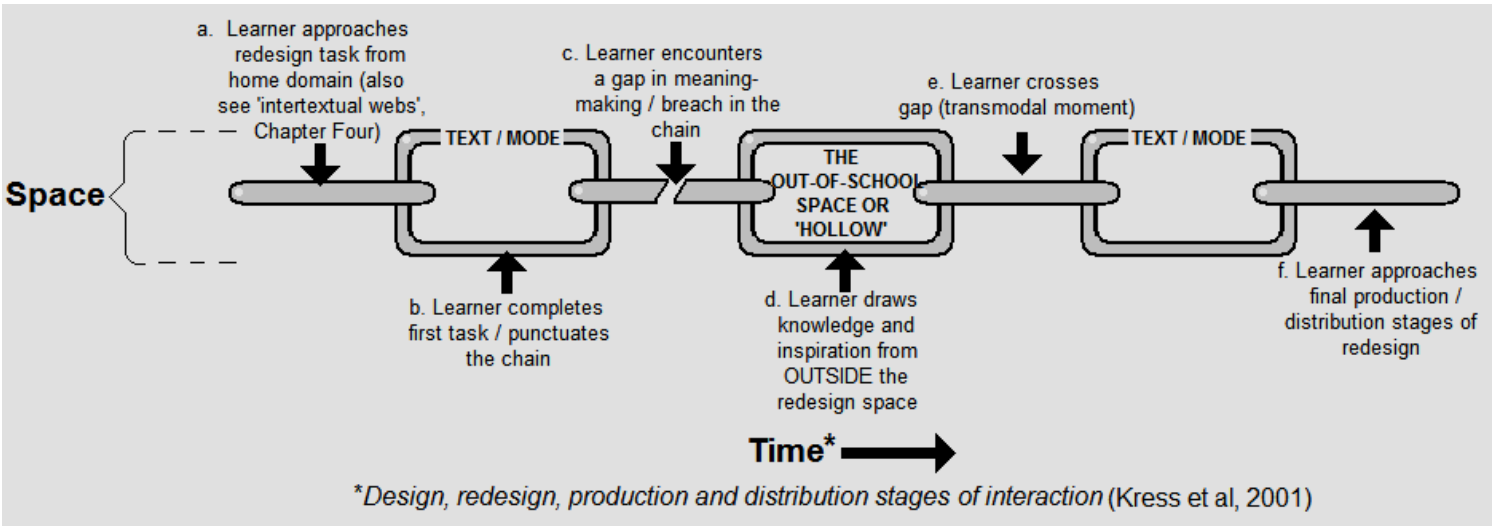


Fig. 6.1: Visual representation of the semiotic chain in an educational context, with 'hollows' to show learners' drawing from out-of-school texts and experiences to complete the redesign task

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It follows that the cognitive and physical interactions of meaning-making not only occur at the redesign space[20] or under the watchful eye of a task facilitator, but also in our commuting from one space to the next, whilst viewing everyday texts, or during the seemingly passive habits of eating and sleeping − even prayer and meditation. Italian novelist, literary critic and semiotician Umberto Eco once told of his first *muse* arriving when he had least expected it − whilst taking a shower − as if the day's sensory inputs had converged into a single concept or thought, ideal for redesign. From the follow-up interviews, it is clear that my participants had many of these epiphanies, but it could be their sustained engagement with popular mass media texts (especially through the digital screen) that had the greatest impact on the overall content of their transmodalisations. As stated by Razia: "[digital technologies] help us with a lot with things, like projects and homework. [They] make us smarter and stimulate us" (S2, I1). I need to emphasise that participants could not, as a matter of ethics, complete their redesigns at home, so it may have been their daily, *mental imaging* of the task which prompted such enthusiasm during our meetings, or the impetus to compose their works as impressions of their out-of-school identities. In this regard, Zane notes that his imagination "kept growing" as he was creating (S6, I1).

Kulani's viewing of Japanese animated series − in his own words, "a religious after-school routine" − also seemed to permeate his remaking of Romeo and Juliet (fig. 4.15), while Casey's keen eye for food packaging found its way into the *Boys Will Be Boys* poster (fig. 4.5). Razia's love for writing "love ballads" after school features prominently in her *Things Fall Apart* lyric poster. For his storyboard, Rasheed drew from his "hobbies at home", including "drawing realistic faces of people… and wildlife animals" (S5, I1). In his redesign of Macbeth, Trevor included a *heads-up-display*, *waypoint* and *health bar* − possibly text conventions that he had committed to long-

[20] In line with Dixon's work (as cited in MODE, 2019), I define *space* here as the actual, physical environ in which meaning-making and learning occurs. This would also include the semiotic resources available to the agent at any time, whether they are integral to the space itself (e.g. furniture, light sources, blackboards), intentionally brought in (e.g. stationery, scaffolds, alternative support materials) or more intangible in nature (e.g. thoughts, ideas for redesign).

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term memory, from his many gaming sessions at home. Then there is Misha, who looked to her own, *Hello Kitty* casual wear to enthuse her work with a manga or *cutesy* aesthetic. Despite my own attempts to cross such textual, experiential and contextual gaps in the meaning-making process (especially with the mapping of *intertextual webs* above), these are the unseen spaces or *hollows* of the semiotic chain − a concept which could certainly use some further inquiry in the field.

Herewith, then, the implication of my *hollow chain* hypothesis: what is perceived in the redesign space itself − be it inside the classroom or at an outdoor 'station' as was the case here − will never account for the multitude of resources (be it physical, mental, material, artistic or literary) that agents gather *on the outside*, and bring into this space to be re-appropriated as semiotic resources. The NLS, in particular, has endeavoured to focus mainly on the embodied or more *observable* aspects of literacy learning (Gee, 2015), but I assert that any tracking of the semiotic chain needs to acknowledge also the things we do, make and remake − what we *sense*, essentially − when removed entirely from an empirically observed or *ethnographed* domain. These apparently 'recreational' texts and experiences, I feel, will need much focalisation in future studies if researchers wish to know the full spectrum of phenomena informing learners' recreations.

- *An inter-genre approach fosters a dialogue between texts, and hence, deeper and richer readings*

In this study, with its promotion of an inter-genre approach to literature teaching and learning, the *intertextual* phenomenon could easily extend to dialogues between texts from entirely different genres, such as poems and motion pictures (as explained in section 2.2.3, p. 58). From the outset, I had encouraged a sustained engagement with a plethora of texts and genres, so my participants' artefacts soon incorporated many of the *intertextual devices* outlined by Kristeva (1966) and her successors today (Holquist, 1990; Harder, 2017; Wimmer, 2019). What follows is an outline of these devices in participants' works. Each occurrence should be viewed in terms of its future implications, if not potentials, as part of a multimodal redesign or embodied literacy programme:

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Zoe's inventory screen based on *Romeo and Juliet* (Appendix A4) is arguably the most daring work here in terms of its references to a videogame − in this case, the *Mario Brothers* series by Nintendo. As an excellent example of ***allusion*** in intertextuality, Zoe seems to effortlessly incorporate items specific to Mario's world (including a *1 UP* sign and *power-up* mushroom) into the symbolism of the play. Similarly, Zane has drawn from film imagery for his dramatic conclusion to the *Dulce* storyboard (fig. 4.11, frame nine). Bordering on ***plagiarism***, the scene of the wounded cross borrows from an animated sequence in Parker's *The Wall* (1982) film. It seems my participants' cross-textual references could also extend to the digital domain, or modes used exclusively in cellular technologies and social media. Some examples of this are the *emoji*-like faces scattered across Misha's storyboard (fig. 4.7, frames one, three, seven and nine), and Casey's re-imagining of Piggy as a Facebook friend in his lyric poster (fig. 4.5, verse one). The latter work can also be described as a ***pastiche*** of the shapes, symbols and signs of modernity, representing a world far beyond Golding's island.

During the structuralist movement of the 1930s, Barthes and his contemporaries sought to identify many of these and other "anomalies" during reader-text interaction. Gérard Genette, for one, first defined ***metalepsis*** as "any intrusion by the extradiegetic narrator… into the diegetic universe" (1979, p. 234-235). Metalepsis, then, is the rarely seen *leap* of an author (from his own real world) into the world of his own creation or narrative. I found this to be the case with Mandy's song (fig. 4.1, p. 111) and Trevor's in-game screenshot for *Macbeth: The Game* (fig. 4.12, p. 145), though on a much subtler level. Here, it seems the text-makers themselves could assume an omniscient position − always present and silently observing the missteps of their heroes − to the point of 'ticking the boxes' until their fates are sealed (fig. 4.12, top left corner). To further substantiate metalepsis as a useful device in artefactual redesign, there is the intrusion of Yeats' poem in Razia's lyric poster for *Things Fall Apart* − as if the omniscient narrator *knows* this is where Achebe lifted the novel's title (fig. 4.3, p. 116) − and the sergeant from Pink Floyd's *The Wall* universe making his way into Zane's storyboard for *Dulce* (fig. 4.11, p. 136). When writing *Forbidden Love*, Mandy also relied upon several ***quotes*** from the play to situate her work more firmly within Shakespeare's universe − another effective, if somewhat overlooked, device used in intertextual narratives (fig. 4.1, p. 111).

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Despite these many occurrences of the intertextual device in participants' artefacts, it can be argued that the bulk of their work transpired more as an "integration of different semiotic resources in multimodal texts and communicative events… via rhythm, composition, information linking, and modal density" (Jewitt, in MODE, 2019). As it contrasts so with the 'assessment' of artefacts for their intertextual content, I feel this description of *intersemiotic relations* better captures my own research aims, and those of the multimodal approach overall. In keeping with Jewitt's definition, I wished to track "the relationships across modes in multimodal texts" and "the relationships between a given context, and the configuration of modes in a text or situated interaction", instead of focusing on learners' works as mere conduits of intertextual phenomena. A distinction, then, needs to be made between intertextuality as a diegetic *dialogue* between two or more texts (Kristeva, 1966; Bakhtin, 1981; Holquist, 1990) and "an expression of the complicated dependence of literary works on all the literature that has come before them" (Wimmer, 2019). Though I was cognisant of both these functions throughout my research, I refrained from using the term loosely (see *intertextual webs* in Chapter Five). In our current *post-structural* zeitgeist, though, it would appear that intertextuality (as originally conceptualised by Bakhtin and Kristeva in the 1960s) had permeated the realms of education and multimodal pedagogy − in a sense, it had leapt from the pages of the 'book' into our very redesigns, our ways of engaging with texts, even our vocabulary.

It can also be said that learners' redesigns are essentially products of a sustained 'webbing' (Eagleton, 1983) within and between modes, texts and whole genres. So far, this section has outlined the occurrence of intertextual devices in participants' works, with *metalepsis* being a key player in, for example, Mandy's song and Trevor's in-game screenshot. I have observed these as occurring *intuitively* and as a result of prescribed-text-to-artefact transmodalisation − not an explicit instruction from the researcher or task facilitator. Above and beyond participants' use of *metalepsis*, *allusion*, *plagiarism*, *pastiche* and *quotation*, the bulk of their work also demonstrate Wimmer's (2019) awareness of extant literary texts and the ways in which these are connected. I have also sought to capture this drawing from diverse modes, texts and entire genres − and the subsequent syntheses of these into multimodal artefacts − through the mappings of *intertextual webs* in Chapter Five.

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These have extended the semiotic chain to a hither-and-thither traversal between multiple signified bodies, as opposed to a linear or 'regimented' engagement with given reading materials. In addition, many of the redesigns incorporate clear nods to the postmodern-cum-structuralist ethos outlined in section 2.1, with a foregrounding of the *paradoxical* elements so central to texts like *A Clockwork Orange* or *Spawn*. For more examples, Misha's storyboard treats Owen's war poem to a cheerful and Christmassy colour scheme, while Casey's lyric poster draws from his engagements with the everyday food package to put a fresh spin on *Lord of the Flies*, a work published more than five decades ago.

All of this holds implications for future literature learning scenarios, especially in terms of lesson planning, the types of support materials used, and the ways in which prescribed texts are approached generally. It follows that teachers of English Home Language should allow their learners to explore many alternative texts or artefacts, however unrelated these may seem to the prescribed text, its literary elements or 'contents'. Learners may, for example, bring their own games, music albums, movies, found objects, toys, items of clothing, photographs, talismans, works of art and other artefacts to class, and at the very least discuss how these relate to their prescribed works on a thematic, contextual or modal level.

The lyrics sheet, storyboard and videogame genre frames could be particularly useful in this regard, and grant readers increased access to their prescribed, fictional worlds. The study's strong emphasis on intertextuality has shed further light on the multimodal artefact as a gateway into the experiences and spatial interactions of characters within their fictitious or *diegetic* environs (Genette, 1979). In a surprisingly tangible way, Trevor could use his in-game screen to make the *metaleap* from his own world into eleventh-century Scotland (section 4.3.1, p. 144), and Mandy could use her song to pervade the everyday *space* or *consciousness* of Juliet as she fulfilled her unshakeable − if not authorially imposed − fate in the play (section 4.1.1, p. 110). These are just some examples, I believe, of my participants taking full advantage of the redesign as a means to walk in the shoes of their prescribed heroes; to see the world through *their eyes* and, in some cases, to react accordingly.

Besides this more well-known function of redesign − particularly the completed multimodal *artefact* − as expounder of learners' interpretive and creative abilities, it

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can also offer teachers a welcome avenue into lesson preparation, resource design or merely an alternative to the chalk-and-talk approach to literature teaching. By analysing the genre frames via the label method and five C's, teachers may improve their own knowledge of locally prescribed texts, as this will encourage a revision of its subtexts, intertextual references or finer details. Should the frames be mounted on the classroom walls or, most ideally, uploaded onto *Octopus* or *Easiteach* for display on the smartboard, they could make for very useful scaffolds indeed. This proactive *re-use* of the artefacts may not only instil a sense of artistic pride and ownership among learners, but move our schools − in whatever small way − toward a more sustainable or 'green' mindset. In South Africa, the public school system discards up to three million tons of paper and cardboard every year − consisting mainly of assessed papers, posters and other projects. Around 10% of this is recycled, but most of it ends up on landfills (Afrika et al, 2016). In this study, a call is thus made for a repurposing of this work into more permanent teaching and learning aids, to be given due credit by teachers, parents and school management.

6.3 Towards a viable pedagogy: the seven organising principles of the inter-genre approach

a. Identifying the need

Not all literature learners might benefit from the inter-genre approach. Teachers, however, need to ascertain during the early *while-reading* stages which of their learners are experiencing palpable difficulties with prescribed material − whether these concern the interpretation, appreciation, or overall comprehension of a particular work. This can be done via a simple questionnaire, which should elicit truthful responses about the appeal and accessibility of each work's themes, plot, characterisations, settings and other elements.

b. Selecting useful and relevant scaffolds

As emphasised earlier, the nature and scope of scaffolds selected for the redesign journey are limited only by the teacher and learner's imagination; a thematic parallel between the prescribed work and (preferably out-of-school) scaffold is really the only requirement for a successful 'pairing', as explained in section 1.2 above. Media such

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as songs, films and videogames *move* learners to action, and often form the contextual, aesthetic and thematic bases of their remade artefacts.

c. Planning the intertextual web

If there has to be any strict criteria for selecting scaffolds, they would include aesthetic appeal (aiming for colourful and picture-dense modes), practicality (considering length, mobility, cost and any technologies required) and, of course, appropriateness for learners' age and level of development. The facilitator must also plan *when*, *how* and *why* each scaffold is introduced to the semiotic chain, to ensure a coherent link between prescribed and out-of-school content.

d. Complementing prescribed readings with out-of-school texts and experiences

One must keep in mind that such scaffolds are merely a means to end; they should never overshadow the original text, nor inhibit the completion of longer narratives like novels or plays. I encouraged Razia, for instance, to finish reading *Things Fall Apart* despite her boredom in class and the ever-present temptation of online guides. Razia, though, took such inspiration from her song-writing pastime and other *home* experiences, that she finished the one hundred-and-fifty-page narrative well before submitting her *lyric poster* (fig. 4.3).

e. Distributing genre frames where, and if, needed

It is argued here that what learners *see*, *hear* and *feel* from television screens, MP3 players, games controllers or whatever has pervaded their out-of-school spaces will constitute the bulk of their raw *mental imagery* (Pallasmaa, 2009), to be embodied later through the redesigned artefact. The genre frames used in Chapter Four are mere suggestions; teachers can design their own, as long as these (a) adhere to the more recognisable conventions of out-of-school texts or genres, and (b) adequately accommodate the multimodal remaking of a prescribed text in terms of size, space, positioning of frames and dotted lines for anchorage.

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f. Facilitating the actual redesign, and applying the *label method* and *five C's*

Undoubtedly the most important tenet here, the actual facilitation or *watching over* of learners as they write and draw on their genre frames can be quite a rewarding experience; you soon get to know your learners' innermost thoughts, fears and desires − what makes them 'tick' as individuals, and the unique ways in which they interpret prescribed content. Learners will need all manner of graphological media − pens, pencils, pastels, paints and paper − but a lack of resources should never impede upon the creative exploration of set works. Upon completion, the genre frames may be annotated or *labelled* by teachers and learners to further explore their intertextual features.

g. Providing feedback and opportunities for reflection

With every intertextual web (see Chapter Five), I have represented learners' reflections upon any previously viewed modes, texts and genres with perforated lines that radiate from the core and span the length of the web. This implies that participative reflection − prompted by constructive feedback from the teacher or facilitator − is a continuous process; learners should occasionally *take a step back* and consider how the prescribed text may have informed the perceived meanings of their redesigns, and vice versa. Again, post-reading questionnaires with guiding questions similar to those in our final interviews may be quite effective in this regard.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to expound some of the major implications of adopting an *inter-genre* perspective on literature teaching and learning, by drawing from both multimodal-pedagogic theory and specific examples of participants' artefacts. In turn, the viability or *practicability* of the approach in the English Home Language classroom − in whatever cultural or socio-economic context − could be further scrutinised. With regards to the *product* of redesign, I have found the ostensibly visible phenomena of lines, colours, facial expressions, gazes and gestures (as inscribed onto two-dimensional media) to come forward as the new, if you will, resources or tools for meaning-making during text redesign, as opposed to an exclusionary use of words or other linguistic modes. An investigation into the

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processes behind these products revealed what exactly was required of participants to make meanings in such 'wordless' ways − as they spun their veritable webs of signifiers and signifieds − while section 6.3 may have revealed just how fruitfully the approach and its theoretical underpinnings could be integrated into everyday literature activities.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Reflections on the Inter-Genre Approach and Multimodal Pedagogy

The three months of participative observation and data collection were an eye-opener for me in terms of researcher-learner relations, as well as the many affordances of a multimodal approach for diverse literature learning scenarios. To begin with research question one − in essence, how my multimodal scaffolds and subsequent redesign task could accommodate and even provide the impetus for FET learners' learning of prescribed works − it needs to be said that some issues may remain unresolved until a more *intramural* or classroom-based investigation is undertaken. This would give insight into how the approach can work for larger learner groups, within the classroom walls, or as an enrichment programme running adjacent to an already brimful language curriculum. The eleven participants here, at least, approached the programme with much enthusiasm and agency. Their oft-unsung passions for the worlds of pop music, manga, anime and virtual reality could now be mobilised *in* and *through* the genres they so admired at home − as if their engagements with each song, film or videogame were key to exploring the depths of their respective set works.

Still, we had to work with existing texts, many of which were thoroughly canonical in nature and none of which were younger than sixty years (save for Magona's *Mother to Mother*, published in 1998). The issue here is that such set works − especially considering their age − run the risk of completely missing FET learners' contextual mark. The perceived inaccessibility of Shakespeare's Elizabethan-era English, for one, has been the subject of intense debate for decades (Uys et al, 2008). Despite its compatibility with the videogame genre, my participants were initially troubled by the fact that *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet* have been public property for nearly half a millennium. Another text, *Lord of the Flies,* allegorised the horrors of WWII through a group of white, British schoolboys, while *Things Fall Apart* − with its themes and characterisations so firmly rooted in pre-colonial Africa − must have seemed all but alien to my mainly Muslim sample group. The question, then, is whether these texts − over which we had no power in selecting − still fit into a postcolonial South Africa, and if they do, whether there is still room for *reviving* each in the interests of staying relevant to a rapidly evolving youth.

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A resounding “yes” is the answer to all of this − at least when drawing from this study’s findings − but it would seem the very embodiment of prescribed material is key to exploring the worlds of Golding, Achebe, and the Bard himself. The inter-genre approach, in this case, has liberated learners in their remaking of this material, their completing of the genre frames, and their engagement with prescribed literature in general. Most conventions of the digital text, I have found, could be emulated easily by using paper-based resources and stationery which are relatively affordable. Although the play-to-game transmodalisation focused on visual text production with electronic ‘screens’ as its envisioned materiality or sites of display, the learners’ works did not need to manifest as such. As is required of any researcher tracking the semiotic chain, the emphasis here was on *meaning* − the agentive construction thereof, with reliance on and reference to set works − and not the mimicry of existing technologies.

As for my sampling process, the core groups were admittedly small, but this has allowed for a more fine-grained analysis of data. Still, there do remain some unexplored factors − including gross learning gaps, an unfamiliarity with digital technologies, or even learners with special needs and disabilities − which may impact upon both the application and efficacy of the approach. These are just some of the realities faced by our teachers every day, but it would be unwise to disregard entirely the many affordances of *out-of-school texts* as learning scaffolds across the grade and subject spectrum. In fact, noted scholars like Stein (2003), Newfield and Maungedzo (2006) had looked towards learners’ (often impoverished) home spaces and experiences to do just this − to cross the gaps between the real and fictional; the diegetic and extra-diegetic; the analogue and digital. As noted in sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 (p. 19-21), digital technologies should not be seen as hindrances to learners’ engagement with the literary canon; they are merely tools that can aid in the exploration of a work’s contents, contexts and origins. As Trevor, a learner seemingly content with the most rudimentary of technologies at home, would later explain: “I think [digital technologies] are very useful tools to interpret something − something that could not be interpreted usually… they make things easier and more [ef]ficient to work with” (S7, I1).

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7.1 Participants' reflections

In the interest of further consolidating my findings, here follow participants' final views on the inter-genre approach's impact upon their *selection*, *remaking*, *performance*, *embodiment* and *contextualisation* of prescribed as well as out-of-school resources. Especially in their final interviews (Appendix C) they commented on the many affordances − as well as some potential pitfalls − of the approach:

7.1.1 On text selection

The forward-thinking Razia seemed at odds with her teacher's explicit unpacking of the literary elements in *Things Fall Apart*, the novel prescribed for her grade. Before she was introduced to my inter-genre approach and *lyric poster* for the novel-to-song transmodalisation, Razia and many of her peers pulled no punches in expressing their "boredom" during literature lessons, with the novel's seemingly extraneous plot and subject matter only adding to their frustration. Upon completion of the poster, though, her interest in Achebe's work − and historical narratives in general − seems to have been rekindled: "This is the book that we are reading in school and in the beginning I really did not like reading it at all. But now that I've turned it into a song, I kind of get it" (S2, I2).

Asserting from the outset that he had "more of an understanding of moving pictures" than the comparatively *static* book or paper-based text − and that these were "easier to relate to" − eleventh-grader Zane took to the project with a clear idea of what *Dulce Et Decorum Est* would look like if it were a "dramatic movie… "focus[ing] on the morale of the soldiers" (S6, I1). Though he had experienced several drawbacks similar to those of Misha and Rasheed during literature lessons − the teacher's line-by-line readings being one − Zane insisted that it was always "fun to read prescribed poems", and rather saw the storyboard task as an opportunity to exhibit his fine drawing and colouring skills. For Zane, the project nonetheless "gave the poem more meaning", and made him reflect "about how bad war is… how it just destroys people's lives" (S6, I2).

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7.1.2 On text (re-)making

Despite being one of the top academic achievers in her school, Mandy admitted to the plot of *Romeo and Juliet* being "complicated", and with her teacher's reliance upon paraphrasing to explain every act or scene, many of her peers would soon share the sentiment. Mandy remained steadfast in her remaking of the play into a song, though, seeing it as an ideal opportunity to investigate and abridge the storyline, themes and main characterisations of the play. Of the inter-genre approach and multimodality in general, she had this to say: "It was so much fun to change those difficult scenes into a song. It made so much more sense, because I could visualise everything and become more connected to the play" (S1, I2).

For Misha, the video clip, song and soldier's bag worked well to establish the tone of the Great War, before she could begin planning and designing her storyboard based on *Anthem for Doomed Youth*. In contrast with her teacher's usual line-by-line analysis, the inter-genre approach seemed to elicit a certain spontaneity or *boldness* within Misha − in the way she approached, interpreted and ultimately redesigned prescribed poetry. Despite following the poet's general train of thought, her nine-frame visual narrative takes some serious artistic liberties with Owen's symbolism and imagery. This agency to *make new* the canonical text − to siphon it into one's own intellectual property − is best captured by Misha's concluding remark: "I could understand the poem better by using the pictures… the pictures that *I* made up, and that *I* drew" (S4, I2).

7.1.3 On text performance, and embodiment

During his interviews, Grade 10 learner Rasheed made some surprisingly assertive comments on the feasibility of literature learning through more 'digital' formats; the general affordances of a multimodal (specifically *inter-genre*) approach; and the changing landscape of education both locally and abroad. Positioning himself as a "curriculum designer" at one point, Rasheed described how he would make his lessons more stimulating and meaningful for learners: "I would turn the [prescribed] poem into a movie so that I can get it out to people, so they would know what it's all about and how it ended. If I was teaching *Macbeth*, I would have the students read [each] scene… then have them watch the movie, and then have them act it out" (S5,

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I1). I feel such responses not only demonstrate a renewed appreciation for canonical texts, but also an awareness of the broader 'performative' functions or sites of display afforded by the multimodal artefact.

Trevor was one of the few participants who admitted to not having the "latest of devices at home", but nonetheless created an artefact demonstrative of a keen interest in (and expansive knowledge of) various videogame phenomena. With his screenshot for *Macbeth: The Game*, Trevor wanted to "show the medieval times like they really were", requiring him to "[do] research on what [the knights] wore, and what the castles looked like" (S7, I2). As a prime example of *situated embodiment* through the redesign task, this also highlights the potential of the approach to encourage a deeper reading into the cultural and socio-historical contexts of prescribed narratives.

During my interviews with Somizi, Zoe and Ekta, several shortcomings of the inter-genre approach would come to light, but these were aired more as "suggestions for improvement" by each learner, and less as a critique of its pedagogic value or feasibility (S9; S10; S11). Zoe, despite finding the majority of her literature lessons "really boring", did not "see a problem with the way things [were]" in the literature syllabus. Prior to engaging with the scaffolds and other redesign materials, Zoe also thought of her "anime" and "videogame" pastimes as quite peculiar additions to "language [learning] in general". By the end of our journey, though, she admitted to the project having "stimulated [her] imagination", making her "see the play in a new way" and helping her "grow as a reader". Ekta, on the other hand, commented merely on the videogame task as a potential distraction from the "storyline" of a prescribed work, while Somizi highlighted the ever-present time constraints in his Home Language class.

7.1.4 On the contextualisation of prescribed works, by drawing from out-of-school texts and experiences

In contrast with Mandy and Razia, Casey had grown quite fond of his prescribed novel, *Lord of the Flies*, after foregoing his teacher and peers' in-class efforts and reading it on his own at home. As noted, though, he was "insanely bored" in class and struggled to relate to the work "emotionally" (S3, I1). As Casey had already

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familiarised himself with the plot and themes of the novel, I thought it could be useful to redirect his focus to the songs, films, videogames and multitude of other, multimodal texts inspired by Golding over the years. Such a creation of *intertextual webs* (as powered through the inter-genre approach) would later motivate Casey to partake more freely in class, and to complete his *Boys Will Be Boys* lyric poster. The latter work no doubt embodied his love of Golding's work, as well as his newfound commitment to text redesign: "It has made me look at prescribed books differently. I feel much closer to the book now" (S3, I2).

One of the most conspicuous elements of Kulani's videogame redesigns, I believe, is their subtle references to *morality* or what it would require of a person − in this case a Shakespearean character − to be seen as 'righteous' or 'respectable' in modern society. As noted in his case study, Kulani intentionally left Romeo's *Good or Evil* rating blank, as said character's "loss of control" and frequent outbursts of anger were seen as "really bad and evil thing[s] in [his] family". Kulani later confirmed that the project − and videogames in particular − had "taught him a lot" with regards to "life skills" and "staying strong" despite some difficult circumstances at home (S8, I2).

7.2 Questions and answers

The three research questions have given rise to many findings, as outlined in Chapters Four through Six above. Herewith, though, some conclusive remarks on these findings and their future, classroom implications:

How do FET learners re-semiotise, re-genre and re-make prescribed canonical English literary texts into scaffolding texts in the form of songs, storyboards and videogames?

The PRODUCT question. Much has been said about the visual mode (and art elements in particular) acting as vehicles for the remaking of meanings as embedded in prescribed narratives. To reiterate, the genre frames proved more than effective in the mobilisation of such literary meanings − meanings which may have remained forever trapped in their original 'book' materialities had they not been transmodalised through the inter-genre approach. How exactly these link to the prescribed texts is, however, the subject of Chapter Four. One final assertion could be that the approach can be applied anywhere, with almost any resources and among teachers

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of almost any disposition. While the product of redesign will always be different, it will always result in a deepened and more meaningful engagement with prescribed narratives.

What is the process required in such re-makings, that is, what chain of meaning-making did participants follow?

The PROCESS question. Regarding the chain of semiosis or actual process of redesign, one could argue that the inter-genre approach had fostered a sustained engagement with both out-of-school and formally prescribed modes, texts and genres − this at a level far surpassing the traditional *reading and viewing* lesson (CAPS, 2012). As mapped out by the intertextual webs above, it involved a range of interactions − at times involving the entire body − but these were always relatable to the source texts in either context, theme or mode. Again, this is the subject of an earlier chapter, but a closing statement to research question two may be just this: our redesign journey had been one of subtle balances − between intention and selection, cognition and embodiment, reading and redesign − but with the prescribed narrative always serving as reliable 'source' or semiotic bedrock.

What are the implications of these redesigns for classroom practice, i.e. how can participants' products and processes be translated into a viable multimodal pedagogy?

The PEDAGOGY question. The research was conducted outside of the classroom and formal curriculum. Yet, its findings and contributions are geared towards for what could be done *inside,* as part of the language and literature syllabus. Because the completion of this syllabus is such a high priority among teachers, the inter-genre pedagogy should primarily be used for *enrichment* purposes. In this way, it can easily run along with the annual teaching plan (ATP) or whatever transpires intramurally. There is one implication, though, that pertains especially to future research and praxis. The approach proposed here allows for unprecedented fluidity between phenomena on either side of the classroom walls − most significantly between *what is read* and later *remade*, between what exists *inside the school* as well as *out there*, where meaning resides most often in the mass media, digital or screen-based text. As such, it is a more than worthwhile enterprise for any teacher who wishes to enrich his or her learners' experience of prescribed narratives.

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7.3 Limitations

It is evident that an inter-genre approach would require the availability of many multimodal and digital resources, not only for use in the programme itself, but also as part of learners' out-of-school (specifically textual) engagements. As such its feasibility may be called into question, but it has been emphasised that access to advanced digital technologies (cell phones being one) is by no means a requirement for participation. The inter-genre approach is one of malleability, both in terms of tools and time, and can be applied to virtually any space. One limitation, however, could be its tendency to overly *narrow down* participants' focus in terms of the actual prescribed content being transmodalised. Though this can be prevented by setting minimal redesign requisites beforehand (an entire chapter, set of themes or characters to be remade, for instance) learners may still become preoccupied with a particular scene or contextual element from the narrative, leading to an apparent 'neglect' of its other literary devices or details.

The final artefact, then, may be seen as a mere portioned representation of a diegetic universe; unable to capture fully the expanses of time, space and movement as contained within the original, linguistic text. The facilitators of several other multimodal interventions (Gelineau, 2004; Olshansky, 2008; English, 2011) have observed a similar gap between what is read and later remade through performance, artefact or any other orchestration of modes. In their defence, though, it can be argued that any remaking of text − be it cognitive through silent reading, or more physical through artefactual redesign − is by implication *a thing of the present* and its immediate surrounds, forever locked into a momentary gaze or perspective. Trevor's Macbeth (fig. 4.12), for example, is essentially an image of a knight approaching a medieval castle, but through its very intertextual webbings may become something much more − an icon of Shakespearean tragedy, or the Middle Ages filtered through the eyes of a twenty-first century gamer.

I have noted earlier that − though it may call into question the study's representivity or replicability in future literature learning spaces − the small sample size of eleven did allow for a more fine-grained analysis of the genre frames, with a sustained focus on their specific redesign constraints and affordances. Such methods have proven somewhat of a double-edged sword in qualitative methodology, with researchers

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having to weigh up the use of fewer participants (or sites) against the more generalisable data produced by entire learner groups or demographics (Scott et al, 2006). This study, though, has sought to demonstrate what *could* be done (at least redesign-wise) with almost any learner profile, space or set of resources. The replicability of the inter-genre approach had thus been duly considered, but it would seem the *experiences* of individual learners (as opposed to the value of an intervention programme as quantified by numbers) had enjoyed preference in nearly all aspects of the research design and its application. Conversely, this particular 'limitation' highlights what could be deemed a key strength of the approach overall: cooperative learning among learners, across modes, texts and genres.

All eleven participants preferred to complete their artefacts individually, despite belonging to genre-specific groups. Still, there was some interaction between learners at their redesign stations; resources were shared, ideas exchanged, and in rare cases, verbal assistance offered with difficult 'parts' or elements. My research questions, in particular, did not seek to further explore the implications of these interactions for future literature learning − and this was intentionally so − yet one cannot ignore the many meaning-making opportunities that might emerge from such a sharing of things both tangible and unseen. With the formally prescribed novel, poem or play as source, an out-of-school vehicle for redesign could be chosen individually or more collectively as a class, followed by an almost osmotic spreading of ideas and meanings. In future − depending on the teacher or task facilitator's preferences − group allocations may be informed by interest, intention, level of agency or even talent. My own groups of participants did not find a common interest in their prescribed texts, however, but in their out-of-school genres: songs, films and videogames. This only added further, though, to the multiplicities of modes and meanings that could be communicated.

Some detractors may argue that the redesigns themselves, whatever artefactual forms they take, would have little pedagogic value or functionality by the time the process is completed. It is also true that the inter-genre approach, specifically, would demand much time and attention from all role-players, with the danger of learners losing interest or digressing from source material well before their genre frames are filled in. To circumvent this, though, learners must be reminded that their

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artefacts could serve as useful scaffolds in future, or be repurposed into support materials like posters and worksheets. Teachers could also improve their *own* knowledge of prescribed literature by applying the label method and five C's to each artefact. These two methods encourage an active traversal between original and remade texts, so they could function as either a teaching, learning or data-analytical tool. Gaps may be identified, parallels drawn and suggestions made − all on transparent overleafs as in Chapter Four. In this way, the original aesthetic properties and overall integrity of learners' works may be preserved, and with the magnetic five C's symbols, the caption may for the first time be mobilised or *made to move* within every frame.

7.4 Possibilities for future research

The data presented above is primarily paper-based, despite the digital nature of many of the genres used as scaffolds or even outcomes of learners' redesigns. The next logical step, then, would be to further develop these embodiments of learners' imaginations; an actual *putting into movement* of the storyboards and videogame screenshots, especially (see sections 4.2 and 4.3, p. 126-169). The storyboards, for instance, could be developed into actual short films or the *animatics* used in film studios, while the videogame concepts could finally be coded through game-creation software. Programmes like *Yaroze* (1998-present) are now used extensively in Japanese schools, but it is still unclear whether these can be applied meaningfully in the teaching of prescribed literature. It is nonetheless in this area − in the kineikonic modes of moving pictures, animations and interactive computer programmes − where I feel future studies will reside. With my findings above perhaps serving as impetus, such studies could also be more firmly situated within an anthropological or art-historical discourse, perhaps tracking the changes in our ways of seeing and representing through the ages, not unlike the work of Berger (1972) and McCloud (1993). To do this, and to adequately tie such discourses to the realms of education or pedagogy, further investigations need to be conducted in countries that follow ostensibly unorthodox practices, such as Finland and Japan.

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7.5 New insights, new contributions: a final engagement with the literature

At this final juncture, it may be necessary to consolidate what has been said in the earlier *Questions and Answers* section and arrive at some final conjectures about the inter-genre approach and its contributions to the multimodal field. To do this, I will not revisit the final artefacts or unique responses of participants (as was the case in Chapters Four through Six) but rather draw from key readings encountered over the three-month data collection period. This will be coupled with several broader, albeit personal convictions as multimodal researcher − at the risk of blighting some of the established principles of 'empirical' research − since these had initiated and informed the project in the first place.

Regardless of one's social, economic or cultural background, a multiplicity of sensory experiences (as largely mobilised through multimodal texts) are now central to one's way of seeing and representing the world (Berger, 1972; Heath, 1983). In retrospect, this project not only sought to track the decisions and actions of high school learners as they embodied these experiences through artefactual redesign, but also the implications of a global, *interconnected* awareness of text conventions for future literature learning (Braud, 2003). However small or unrepresentative of the local learner demographic it may seem, my entire sample could draw heavily from their out-of-school listening, viewing and playing experiences in the completion of their genre frames, to the extent of these becoming interwoven with formally prescribed materials.

> "Imagination is more important than knowledge."
>
> Albert Einstein

While Einstein's words here should not be taken out of context − learners are assessed on their *knowledge* of texts after all − it is *how* they arrive at this knowledge that matters. To put it quite sweepingly, the considered integration (if not synthesis) of the diegetic and extra-diegetic, mono- and multimodal, analogue and digital, in- and out-of-school, real and imagined is paramount if we want our learners to engage meaningfully and steadily with their school set works. This seems to most adequately address my *so what* question, as required of any empirical research, or what this study could really contribute in terms of resituating the home literacy *acts* of

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learners into the English subject classroom itself. Hopefully, such engaged acts of listening, viewing and playing will no longer be regarded as add-ons to an already overloaded curriculum, but as semiotic bedrock to prescribed literary content − content which may become learners' *own* intellectual property through agentive text-remaking. The prescribed poem can thus become a modern pop song; the novel a storyboard or animatic for a Hollywood movie; and the play an adventure game on console − not for artistic liberty or the fun of it, but for reviving the stories of old for future generations. For something to continue existing it needs to be made new; a primarily hands-on process that involves not only a material remaking but a collaborative *webbing* (Eagleton, 1983) of cognitive traversals and embodied imaginings. It is this re-imagining of the otherwise institutionalised narrative into more contemporary forms which has driven forward the project in most areas − in its rationale, application, final composition as well as envisioned contributions − and hopefully this will inspire future studies as well. Building on previous research (given in brackets), here follow some wholly new ideas for the field. These are not findings, but mere conclusive waypoints for future research:

- schools need not be removed from learners' mental mappings of the 'home' or recreational domain; the experience of learning through rhythm, gesture, play and other performative modes should as far as possible be integrated into the literature learning space, specifically (Snow, 1983; Walsh, 2009; Pieper, 2011; Gee, 2015)
- through music, film and more interactive texts like videogames, learners may be *made to move* (Asher, 1977; 2012); not always physically, but in a way that synchronises them cognitively and even spiritually with prescribed literary content
- this, in turn, might encourage an elevation of the largely monomodal poem, novel or play from static and authorially imposed entities, to sources of fluid and malleable meaning (Kress, 1993; 2000; 2005; 2010; Huang et al, 2014)
- colour and rhythm − often reserved for the discourses of art − are arguably just as important to the solely typewritten text as they are to films or videogames, yet such phenomena seem to be suppressed by the paper or 'book' materiality (Newfield et al, 2006; Olshanksy, 2008; Mavers, 2011)

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- learners across grade and subject spectra need to be made aware of this, and be given ample opportunities to draw out such visualisations from prescribed narratives (Stein, 2003; Jewitt, 2003; in MODE, 2019)
- these may then be embodied into literally any kind of artefact − the size, materiality and display site of which will be limited only by the text-maker's imagination (Guattari et al, 1994; Gelineau, 2004; Pahl et al, 2011; Bezemer et al, 2016)
- as a final affordance of the proposed approach (though this was not a research objective), such remakings may lead to improved comprehension of prescribed content, and ultimately, better examination results (Walsh, 2009; Sankey et al, 2010; Yamada-Rice, 2015).

7.6 Closing thoughts

In Muromachi period[21] Japan, it was customary to display the most exquisite ink paintings in the emperor's chambers, while music was played by a Tiako ensemble close-by. It was believed that the music would help each painting *reveal itself* to viewers, with every beat of the drums prompting a change in perspective, viewing position, or focus on particular strokes made by the priest-painter's brush (Kleiner et al, 2004, p. 782). On special occasions, geishas would add a dramatic or more performative element to the proceedings by burning incense, serving tea to their masters and complementing the broken-ink landscapes through traditional song and dance. As a highly visceral experience making the most of the senses, this resonates with the most ambitious of text engagement scenarios today. The seemingly *separated* modes of the visual, verbal, sonic and olfactory can now become one − inseparable in their fluidity, yet distinctive in their ability to communicate different things at different times. On a more personal note, I have experienced this same congregation of the elements − of a silhouette in a painting meeting a synthesiser loop, meeting a lyric, a scent, a taste from that elusive, rainy day years ago − while listening to a classic record, and scanning every detail of the sleeve artwork so caringly composed by the painter or photographer:

[21] Late fifteenth century. Most of the ink painting masters were Zen monks, with Toyo Sesshu (1420-1506) and Kano Motonobu (1476-1559) being the most celebrated.

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Fig. 7.1: Depeche Mode's album cover for *A Broken Frame* (Brian Griffin, 1982). This completely unaltered photograph, taken on a basic Polaroid camera in the Russian farmlands, has won numerous awards including *sleeve of the year*.

This image, not unlike the ink landscapes of Renaissance-era Japan, can be seen as an artistic extension of a place, a period and its peoples. Despite its many nods to the Romantic era, it captures the feel or zeitgeist of the early eighties − a time of political turmoil on either side of the Iron Curtain − in much the same way that the songs, films and videogames of today have captured learners' imaginations, and hearts. I have touched upon this *universality* (McCloud, 1993) or inherent *feel* for the sign and its applications in all manner of modes, media and materialities elsewhere (section 1.5), but I could not foresee the sheer agency and virtuosity with which my participants would approach their everyday spaces, the texts within these and, ultimately, their multimodal artefacts. The latter would serve as syntheses or embodiments of such *lived* states; of things seen, heard and felt not only through an engagement with prescribed texts, but with family and friends, out-of-school spaces and the many digital technologies now pervading these.

The findings presented earlier are specific to my three research questions and are well aligned with my theoretical framework and methods, but I feel observations like these best capture my aims as a researcher and facilitator of multimodal pedagogies. For me, the most profound finding from this study may be this capacity for *meaning*

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(and our various makings and remakings thereof) to cross all texts and experiences, and by implication all people, places and practices. Line, colour and other art elements came into their own as modes for communicating learners' cognised realities, while the *pictured* forms of gaze and gesture worked well to describe bodily action through the relatively flat, *paper* materiality. Human faces, their movements and contortions − in this case, in response to war and its dehumanising legacies − have been regarded in equal measure, with learners like Zane surpassing their mere mimetic affordances and acknowledging them as central to the war poet's imagery. Perhaps one of my most significant (if somewhat unorthodox) observations though, had been the blurring of lines between *sign*, its constituents or *micro-signs*, and the ways in which an omission or addition of one could entirely alter one's interpretation thereof:

> "Would [a stop sign] manifest as such if it were green in colour, half the size, missing a letter and facing the wrong way? This may seem a silly thought, but it does call attention to the sign (and ultimately, multimodal text) as an embodiment of *many* decisions, socio-historical influences, modes and media, and not an enclosed entity projecting a single idea" (p. 174).

With regards to the process involved in multimodal redesign (question two), it would soon emerge that Lave and Wenger's (1991) *situated cognition* preceded, guided as well as followed each part of participants' text-to-artefact transmodalisations − including the intention, redesign, production and distribution stages. Probably best described as an active *painting of memories*, I now acknowledge learners' artefacts as embodiments of multiple readings and experiences, in both the school and home domains. Film − or the paper-based 'storyboard' interpretation thereof − served not as a distant scaffold or thematic derivative of prescribed material, but the actual outcome of learners' remakings of poetry. This was achieved through drawing, re-conceptualised here as a sustained traversal between mental images (Pallasmaa, 2009), live observations of reality, and extemporised markings of the graphological tool upon a receptive vehicle − in this case, pen or pencil on paper.

The third question has offered avenues into the exploration of affordance, materiality, chains of semiosis, intertextuality and other concepts related to pedagogy − multimodal or otherwise. It seems the affordances of different modes and materialities emerge with particular clarity during an interdisciplinary exploration of

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literature, facilitated here through an *inter-genre* approach. Regarding the efficacy of the genre frames, each lyric poster, storyboard grid or game screen could clearly grant readers full access to the worlds of their prescribed heroes and villains. I also found that, though it occupies space, the redesign process is forever enveloped and influenced by it, dubbed here the *hollows* of the semiotic chain. Finally, and arguably most crucial to the study, its aims and outcomes, was my recognition of each artefact as a sustained 'webbing' (Eagleton, 1983) within and between modes, texts and whole genres.

To conclude, the social-semiotic investigations of mulitimodal luminaries like Stein (2003; 2008) and Newfield (2009; 2014; 2017) have contributed to this work in no small measure; it is after all their hypotheses and findings that continue to inspire studies of this kind. Still, there remained an *itch* in my resolve as researcher − as Hansen and Machin (2018) would call it − to further investigate the feasibility of a full-on merging of texts on either side of the classroom walls. Some may deem this irrelevant, but I can say with certainty that "it worked" and even exceeded my expectations of Johannesburg learners; of their agency or sheer willingness to communicate through the *multimodally revived* text. I envisioned them exploring their set works in ways that were perhaps more fun, daring or imaginative than a traditional literature lesson, and if the data generated is of any indication, this is exactly what happened.

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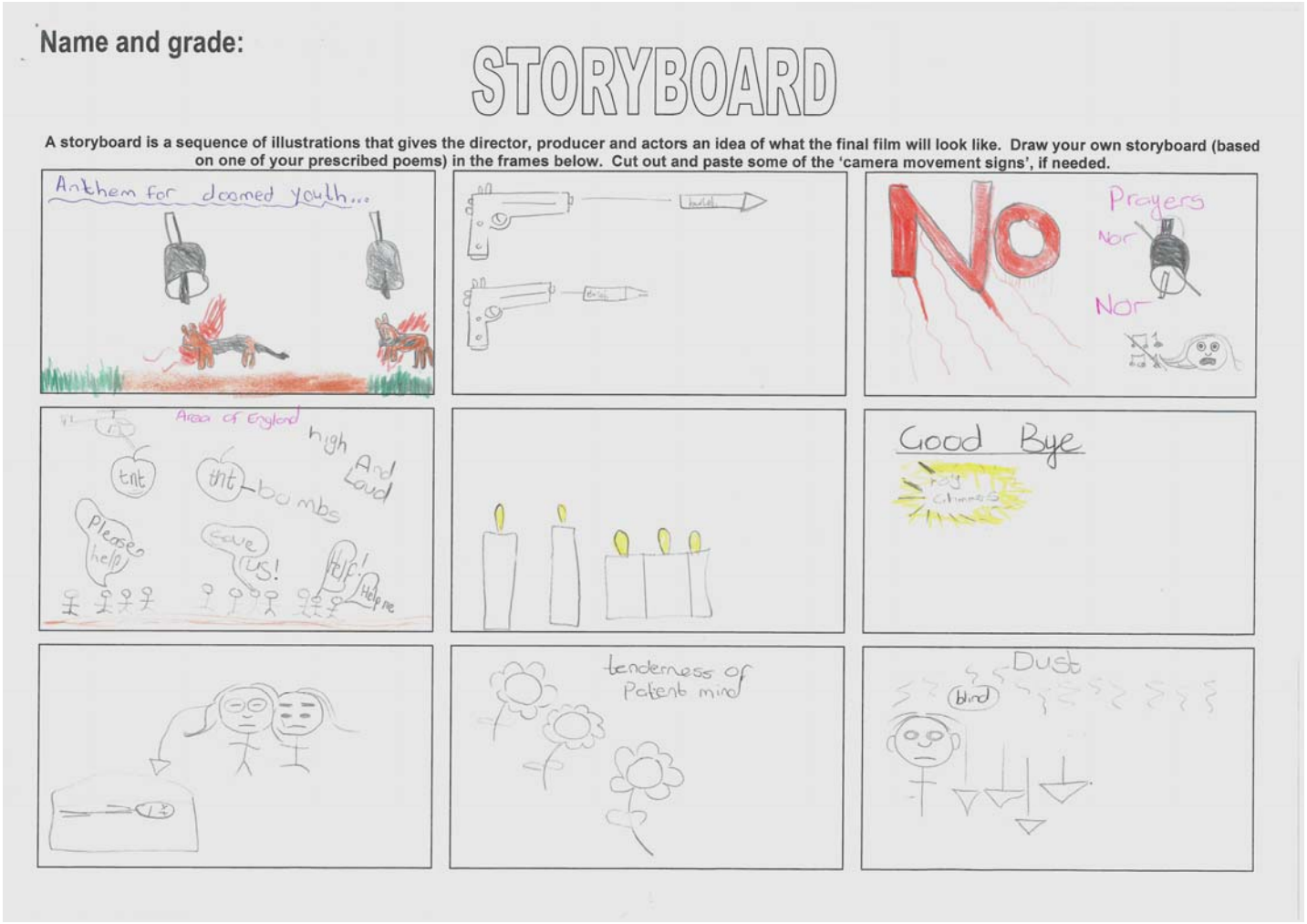
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APPENDICES

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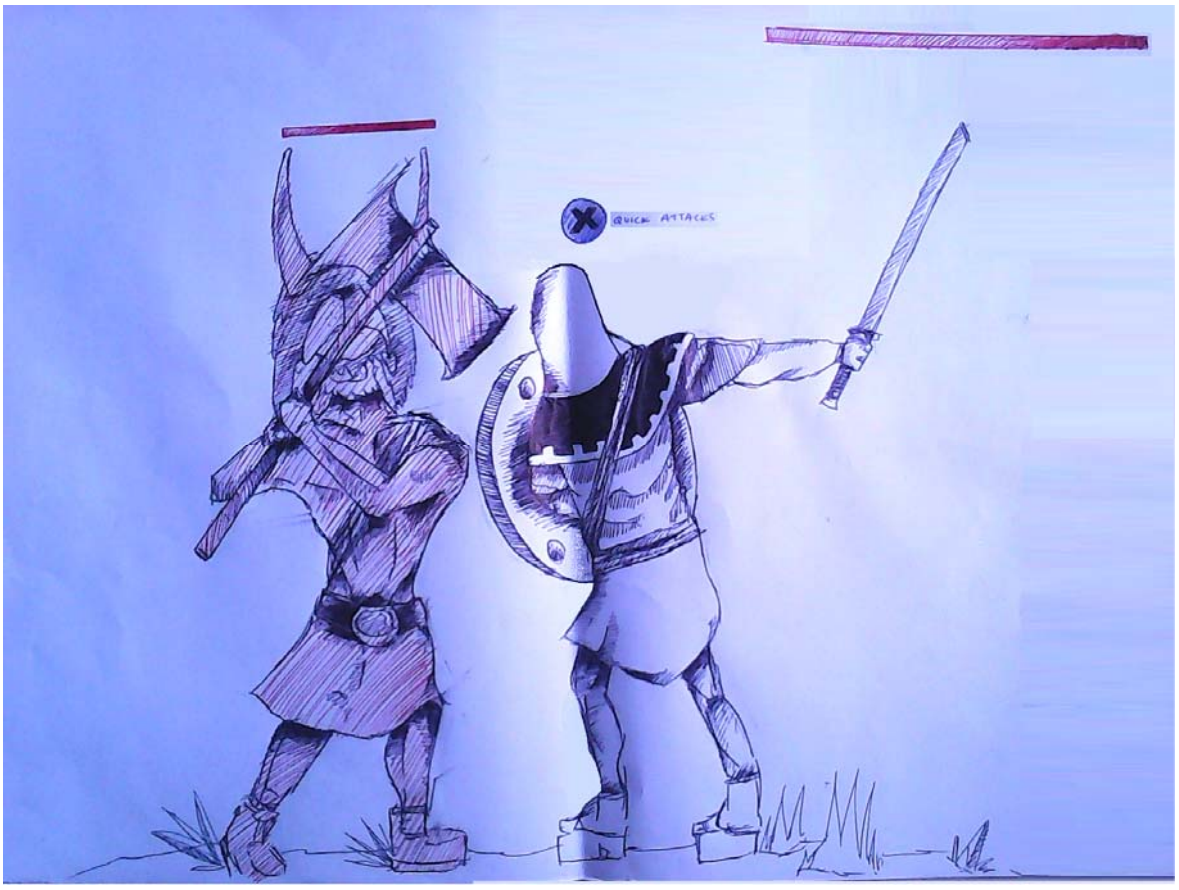
APPENDIX A: SECONDARY DATA

A1. Misha's preparatory drawings for *Anthem for Doomed Youth*



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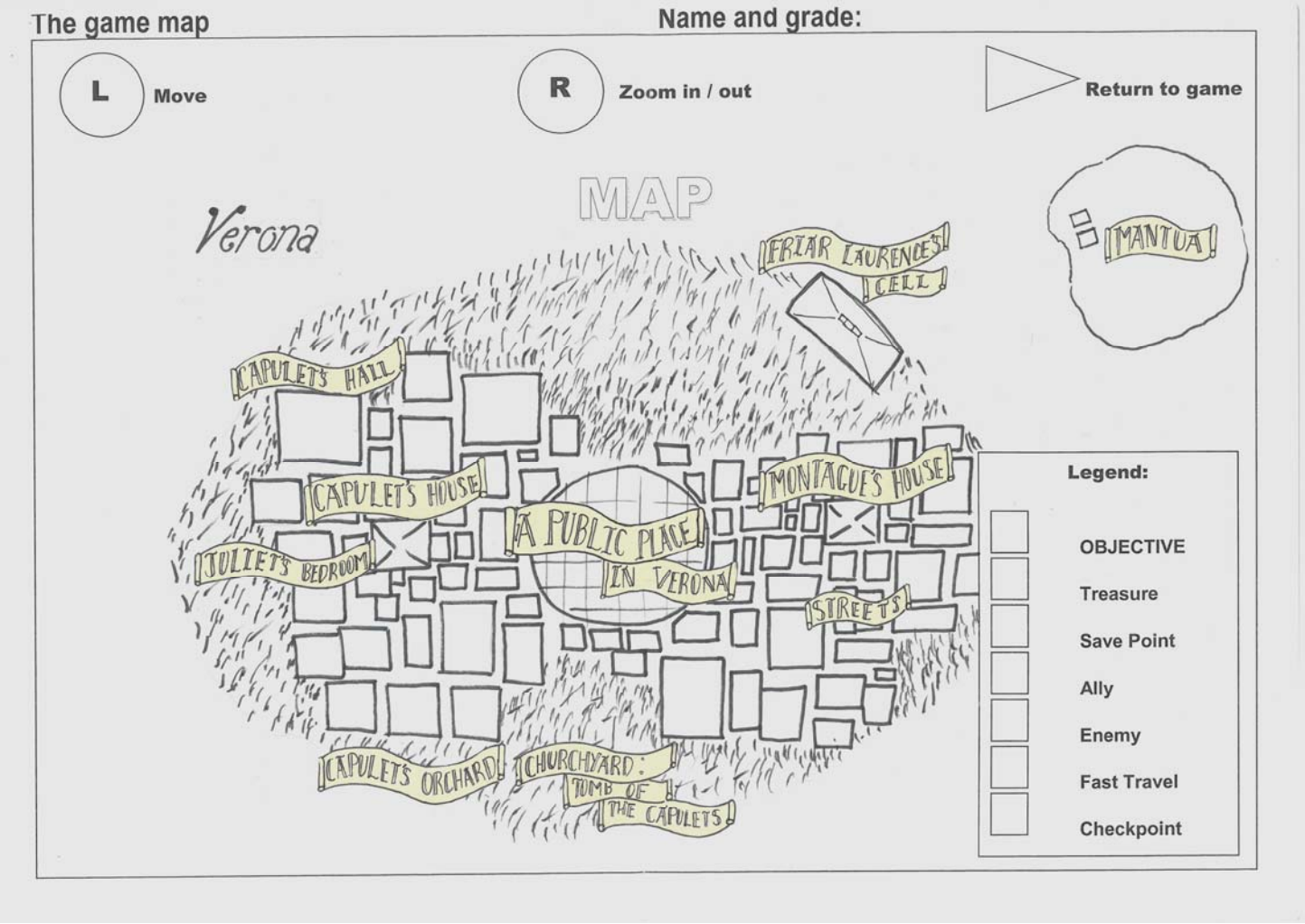
A2. Trevor's preparatory drawings for *Macbeth: The Game*



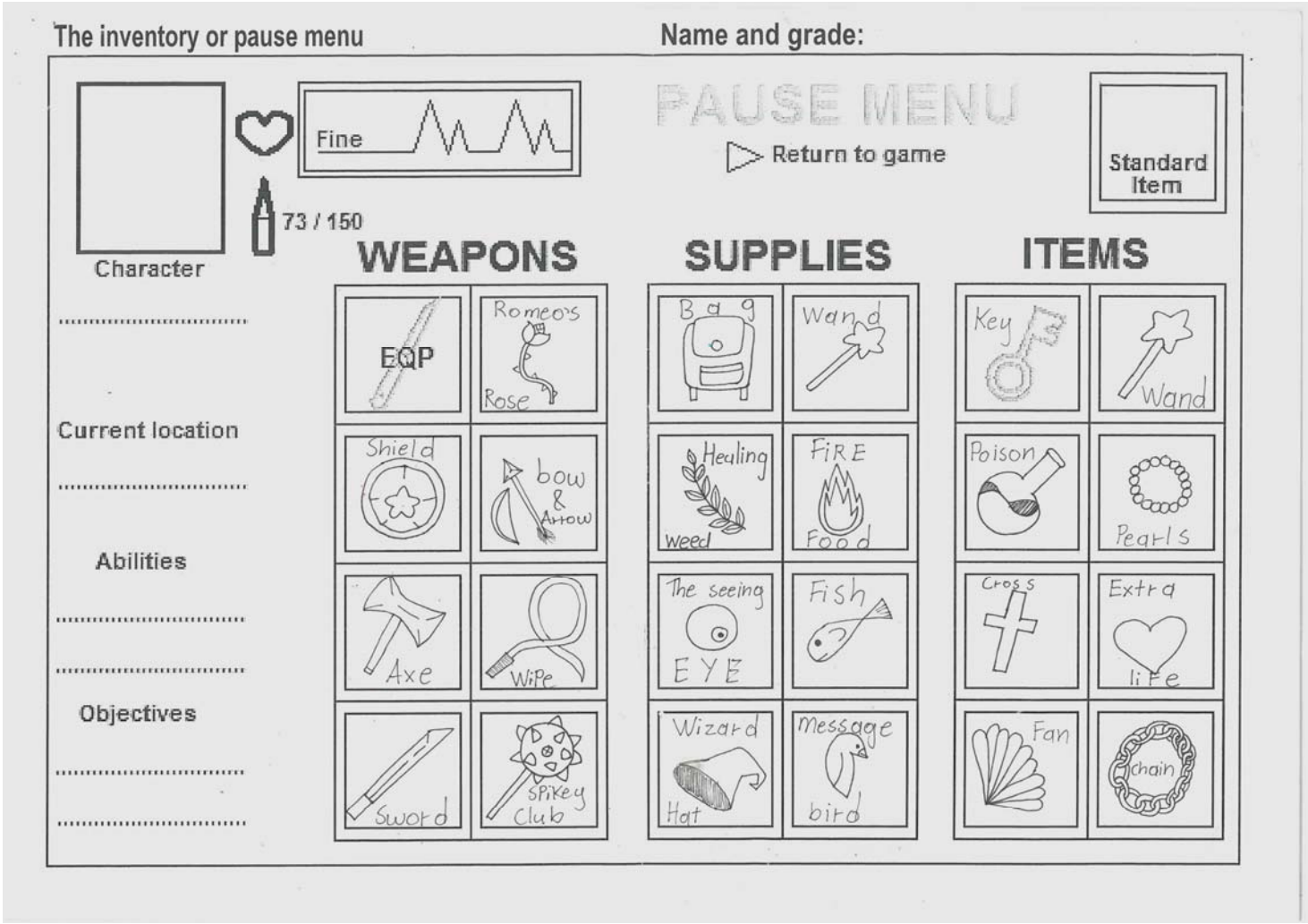


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A3. Kulani's map of Verona and inventory screen for *Romeo and Juliet* (unfinished)

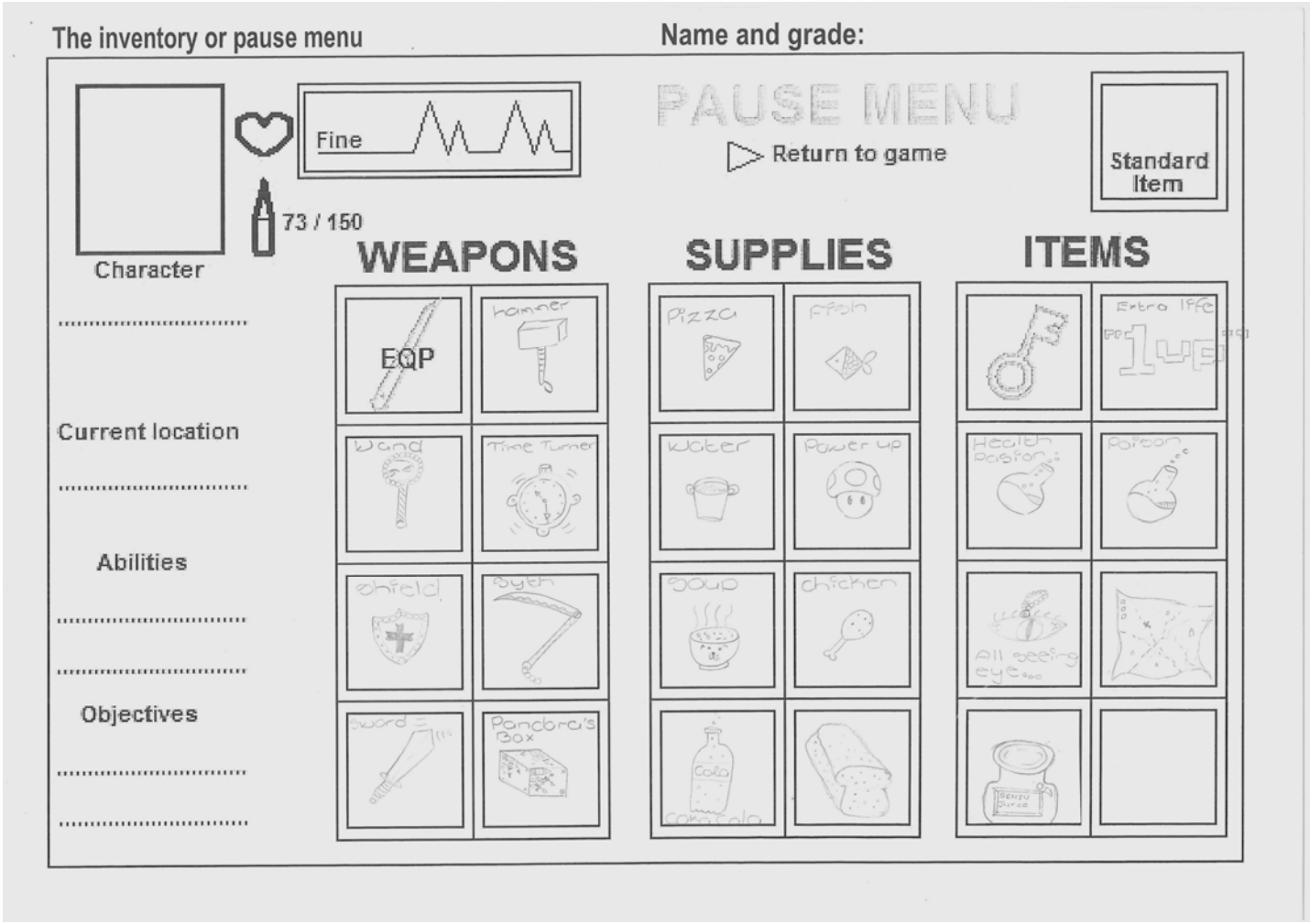


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A4. Zoe's inventory screen for *Romeo and Juliet* (unfinished)



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APPENDIX B: DIGITAL DATA / SCAFFOLDS

(SEE ATTACHED DATA DISC)

B1. Clip from *Hugo* (file 1)

B2. Mandy's song *Forbidden Love* (file 2)

B3. *Lord of the Flies* by Iron Maiden (file 3)

B4. *Paschendale* by Iron Maiden (file 4)

B5. Clip from *Pink Floyd: The Wall* (file 5)

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APPENDIX C: TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS

What follows are verbatim transcripts of INTERVIEW 1 (see before page breaks) and INTERVIEW 2 (see after page breaks). Some responses have been edited slightly for added clarity, but in no way have the original opinions or views of participants been altered. To ensure consistency in data generated, my questions were also standardised and remained largely unchanged across sample groups and research sites.

Student 1: Mandy

1. *What are your interests (hobbies) at home or outside of the school? Would you like to see more of these integrated into the language classroom? Please motivate.*

Videogames, music and movies. Yes, I think I would like to see more of these integrated into schools.

2. *Do you know of any novels, poems, plays, etc. that have been adapted into songs, movies or videogames, or the other way around? Did the 'meanings' of these works become clearer to you after viewing their movie adaptations? Why / why not?*

A lot of plays, novels and so forth have been adapted into movies. *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*… and then the games *Tomb Raider* and *Resident Evil*. Yes, their meanings became clearer to me in movie form, because it was more visual.

3. *If your prescribed novel, poem or play for this term were a song, movie or videogame, what would it sound like, look like, or what would you be required to do?*

It would be fun to turn prescribed plays into songs, even videogames. You would be required to sing and play the song, like on *Guitar Hero* or…

4. *Do you think the advanced digital technologies in use today (online music and movie streaming, file sharing, social networking, etc.) are making us smarter or dumber as individuals? Do they stifle or stimulate our imaginations? Please motivate.*

Our generation is far more advanced than [that of] our grandparents, due to technology. TV games develop your brain and reflexes, and the internet helps a lot with school projects.

5. *What place, in your opinion, do these technologies have in SA's Home Language classrooms? Imagine that you were a curriculum designer for high schools. Briefly describe how you would incorporate a song, movie or videogame into literature lessons to make it more stimulating or meaningful for learners.*

It would be much easier and more interesting to see *Romeo and Juliet* in visual form as a game or storyboard, or in music form as a song. You would be able to visualise and understand it, and it will also be more fun.

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……

1. *What prescribed work did you choose to remake? Do you enjoy reading it?*

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare. It's okay, I guess, but the plot can get complicated.

2. *Briefly explain <u>how</u> you created your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What materials or techniques did you use?*

I mostly visualised the love scenes between Romeo and Juliet, but I also followed all the tragic events that led to their suicide. I used the program *Music Maker* for the background, and then just sang my [lyrics] over it.

3. *Briefly explain <u>what</u> elements of your prescribed work have been put into your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. Any specific themes? Characters? Symbols?*

There are a lot of symbols from the play, I think, and then all the colours have meaning, too. I focused mainly on the balcony scene and the tragic ending.

4. *Briefly explain <u>why</u> you have chosen specific words, lines, shapes, colours, etc. for your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What are they supposed to mean?*

I used "red" for the roses to symbolise love, but I also used "blood sacrifice" to symbolise pain and death. It's the ultimate sacrifice they had to make to be together − death. The white used for Juliet makes me think of her lifeless body, but it's also a symbol of her purity. I wanted the words to speak for themselves and to be, like, a hit with crowds, you know? Especially the chorus…

5. *Do you think this is a 'doable' project for literature teaching and learning in South African high schools? Why / Why not? What could be improved, for example, on the 'genre frames' you were given?*

Yes! Yes! Because with all the new technologies, children do not like reading that much anymore…

6. *Should learning of prescribed literature be FUN, or should we go back to more 'old fashioned' styles of teaching and learning? Is it about striking a balance, maybe?*

No, they should make it fun. There are so many new technologies; why not use them in schools?

7. *What dangers, if any, do you think a continuous exposure to music, film and videogames could hold for FET Phase learners in particular?*

I do not believe that music really holds a danger for people. People often use music as an excuse to do bad things though.

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8. *Lastly, please share any of your thoughts on the impact that this project may have had on you − on an emotional, psychological or intellectual level.*

It was so much fun to change those difficult scenes [from the play] into a song. It made so much more sense, because I could visualise everything and become more connected to the play.

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Student 2: Razia

1. *What are your interests (hobbies) at home or outside of the school? Would you like to see more of these integrated into the language classroom? Please motivate.*

Listening to music, playing netball, and swimming. I love swimming, and I also love music and writing songs. I don't think you could use them in the language classroom, no. It just wouldn't be possible!

2. *Do you know of any novels, poems, plays, etc. that have been adapted into songs, movies or videogames, or the other way around? Did the 'meanings' of these works become clearer to you after viewing their movie adaptations? Why / why not?*

I have not seen any novels, poems, plays or other things change. I would really like to see them, and see if I like it or not.

3. *If your prescribed novel, poem or play for this term were a song, movie or videogame, what would it sound like, look like, or what would you be required to do?*

If my prescribed novel were a song, I think I would really enjoy it and I would like to hear how it goes.

4. *Do you think the advanced digital technologies in use today (online music and movie streaming, file sharing, social networking, etc.) are making us smarter or dumber as individuals? Do they stifle or stimulate our imaginations? Please motivate.*

It helps us with a lot with things, like projects and homework. It makes us smarter and stimulates us.

5. *What place, in your opinion, do these technologies have in SA's Home Language classrooms? Imagine that you were a curriculum designer for high schools. Briefly describe how you would incorporate a song, movie or videogame into literature lessons to make it more stimulating or meaningful for learners.*

It has a lot to do with homework projects, or just doing research about the work you need to know.

……..

1. *What prescribed work did you choose to remake? Do you enjoy reading it?*

Things Fall Apart. Nah, I don't enjoy reading it.

2. *Briefly explain <u>how</u> you created your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What materials or techniques did you use?*

I used the lyric poster. I used the music notes and I used the drawings of the characters. I also used Google if I was unsure about something.

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3. *Briefly explain <u>what</u> elements of your prescribed work have been put into your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. Any specific themes? Characters? Symbols?*

The basic plot, and then *Okonkwo* kills himself in the end. [I have included] the characters *Okonkwo*, *Unoka*, *Ekwefi* and *Obierika*.

4. *Briefly explain <u>why</u> you have chosen specific words, lines, shapes, colours, etc. for your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What are they supposed to mean?*

This is the book that we are reading in school and in the beginning I really did not like reading it at all. But now that I've turned it into a song, I kind of get it. I just like writing songs!

5. *Do you think this is a 'doable' project for literature teaching and learning in South African high schools? Why / Why not? What could be improved, for example, on the 'genre frames' you were given?*

Yes, it's a fun and more interesting way to understand literature for everyone. The genre frame was fine just like that.

6. *Should learning of prescribed literature be FUN, or should we go back to more 'old fashioned' styles of teaching and learning? Is it about striking a balance, maybe?*

It should be fun, and high school learners should not struggle to understand their [prescribed] stories.

7. *What dangers, if any, do you think a continuous exposure to music, film and videogames could hold for FET Phase learners in particular?*

Videogames can cause growing pains [and] hearing problems. There's too much violence and fighting sometimes.

8. *Lastly, please share any of your thoughts on the impact that this project may have had on you − on an emotional, psychological or intellectual level.*

It taught me that I can make [prescribed texts] interesting, and that it doesn't have to be boring.

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Student 3: Casey

1. *What are your interests (hobbies) at home or outside of the school? Would you like to see more of these integrated into the language classroom? Please motivate.*

Music, movies and videogames. Yes, I would like to see that, because it would be more interesting to learn if it's done in a way that appeals to me.

2. *Do you know of any novels, poems, plays, etc. that have been adapted into songs, movies or videogames, or the other way around? Did the 'meanings' of these works become clearer to you after viewing their movie adaptations? Why / why not?*

Yes, *Lord of the Flies*. I got many more understandings after watching the movie.

3. *If your prescribed novel, poem or play for this term were a song, movie or videogame, what would it sound like, look like, or what would you be required to do?*

It would be a brutal tale that would be a harrowing experience, and it would be very emotional.

4. *Do you think the advanced digital technologies in use today (online music and movie streaming, file sharing, social networking, etc.) are making us smarter or dumber as individuals? Do they stifle or stimulate our imaginations? Please motivate.*

I believe that, in a way, it's doing both. I believe that making things so easy to find is making us lazier in a way, but the resources we have could be used to help educate us.

5. *What place, in your opinion, do these technologies have in SA's Home Language classrooms? Imagine that you were a curriculum designer for high schools. Briefly describe how you would incorporate a song, movie or videogame into literature lessons to make it more stimulating or meaningful for learners.*

I would definitely use a song, movie or videogame in a lesson, in a way that the kids would remember it, and relate to it. At the moment, I'm just insanely bored in class…

……..

1. *What prescribed work did you choose to remake? Do you enjoy reading it?*

Lord of the Flies. Yes.

2. *Briefly explain <u>how</u> you created your song / short film / videogame screenshot. What materials or techniques did you use?*

I thought of the general concepts of the book and applied them to a song. I used the ransom note technique where you cut and paste the letters, one at a time.

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3. *Briefly explain <u>what</u> elements of your prescribed work have been put into your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. Any specific themes? Characters? Symbols?*

I focused on the plot of the novel and how those boys struggled to survive. It's seen from Ralph's [perspective].

4. *Briefly explain <u>why</u> you have chosen specific words, lines, shapes, colours, etc. for your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What are they supposed to mean?*

I wanted to tell the story again, but in my own way and [by] using the letters from magazines and cereal boxes. I found it really interesting.

5. *Do you think this is a 'doable' project for literature teaching and learning in South African high schools? Why / Why not? What could be improved, for example, on the 'genre frames' you were given?*

Yes, it is a good way to learn the basic outlines of stories.

6. *Should learning of prescribed literature be FUN, or should we go back to more 'old fashioned' styles of teaching and learning? Is it about striking a balance, maybe?*

I believe it should be both.

7. *What dangers, if any, do you think a continuous exposure to music, film and videogames could hold for FET Phase learners in particular?*

I think it could confuse certain learners.

8. *Lastly, please share any of your thoughts on the impact that this project may have had on you − on an emotional, psychological or intellectual level.*

It has made me look at prescribed books differently. I feel much closer to the [Lord of the Flies] book now, like emotionally.

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Student 4: Misha

1. *What are your interests (hobbies) at home or outside of the school? Would you like to see more of these integrated into the language classroom? Please motivate.*

Listening to music, watching cartoons, drawing. Yes, I think school would be much better if they integrated [activities like these] into the language classroom.

2. *Do you know of any novels, poems, plays, etc. that have been adapted into songs, movies or videogames, or the other way around? Did the 'meanings' of these works become clearer to you after viewing their movie adaptations? Why / why not?*

Yes, I've seen a lot of novels, poems and plays and other [texts] changed like that, but I can't remember any specific ones now. What can I say? Sometimes [the adaptations] work, sometimes they don't.

3. *If your prescribed novel, poem or play for this term were a song, movie or videogame, what would it sound like, look like, or what would you be required to do?*

Yeah, I would love to turn one of my [prescribed] poems into an animation or something.

4. *Do you think the advanced digital technologies in use today (online music and movie streaming, file sharing, social networking, etc.) are making us smarter or dumber as individuals? Do they stifle or stimulate our imaginations? Please motivate.*

It's making us smarter. It's more interesting than most of the [resources; texts] used in schools, because it stimulates [our] imaginations.

5. *What place, in your opinion, do these technologies have in SA's Home Language classrooms? Imagine that you were a curriculum designer for high schools. Briefly describe how you would incorporate a song, movie or videogame into literature lessons to make it more stimulating or meaningful for learners.*

It helps you do research for homework, projects, for a speech or anything else you need to know.

……

1. *What prescribed work did you choose to remake? Do you enjoy reading it?*

Anthem for Doomed Youth. I like [the poem] more now, but I would like to learn more about the [First World] War.

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2. *Briefly explain <u>how</u> you created your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What materials or techniques did you use?*

I visualised what my short film would look like, then I mostly used the poem and my imagination [to complete the storyboard].

3. *Briefly explain <u>what</u> elements of your prescribed work have been put into your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. Any specific themes? Characters? Symbols?*

The theme is [the] brutality of war. The "passing bells" are funeral bells. A lot of the characters [in the storyboard] are in shock because of the war and what it's doing to them.

4. *Briefly explain <u>why</u> you have chosen specific words, lines, shapes, colours, etc. for your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What are they supposed to mean?*

Red equals blood. Yellow equals light. No colour means death. Black also means death, so I used black for all the bells. I also wanted to make it more cartoony, like what you see in anime or *Hello Kitty* stuff.

5. *Do you think this is a 'doable' project for literature teaching and learning in South African high schools? Why / Why not? What could be improved, for example, on the 'genre frames' you were given?*

Yes, it's better to use pictures [when studying] poems. They make you understand better, and without them it will be just another class.

6. *Should learning of prescribed literature be FUN, or should we go back to more 'old fashioned' styles of teaching and learning? Is it about striking a balance, maybe?*

It should be fun and more interesting. Everyone should [be able to] understand.

7. *What dangers, if any, do you think a continuous exposure to music, film and videogames could hold for FET Phase learners in particular?*

None. People are all different in their own way.

8. *Lastly, please share any of your thoughts on the impact that this project may have had on you − on an emotional, psychological or intellectual level.*

I could understand the poem better by using the pictures… the pictures that I made up, and that I drew [slight emphasis on *I*]. It feels like my poem now.

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Student 5: Rasheed

1. *What are your interests (hobbies) at home or outside of the school? Would you like to see more of these integrated into the language classroom? Please motivate.*

My hobbies at home [include] drawing realistic faces of people, and also drawing wildlife animals.

2. *Do you know of any novels, poems, plays, etc. that have been adapted into songs, movies or videogames, or the other way around? Did the 'meanings' of these works become clearer to you after viewing their movie adaptations? Why / why not?*

I once read a *Harry Potter* book and then I saw different movies of it. If I watch the movie, I understand it better because I'm a mostly visual person.

3. *If your prescribed novel, poem or play for this term were a song, movie or videogame, what would it sound like, look like, or what would you be required to do?*

My poem would sound like a love song, as if I had a beautiful girlfriend [laughs]. I will then turn my song into an album for the public to buy.

4. *Do you think the advanced digital technologies in use today (online music and movie streaming, file sharing, social networking, etc.) are making us smarter or dumber as individuals? Do they stifle or stimulate our imaginations? Please motivate.*

It makes us smarter as individuals because it helps teenagers to focus and concentrate on what they are doing. It stimulates our imaginations so that [our] brains can run wild; it helps us to figure out everything.

5. *What place, in your opinion, do these technologies have in SA's Home Language classrooms? Imagine that you were a curriculum designer for high schools. Briefly describe how you would incorporate a song, movie or videogame into literature lessons to make it more stimulating or meaningful for learners.*

I would turn the [prescribed] poem into a movie so that I can get it out to people, so they would know what it's all about and how it ended. If I was teaching *Macbeth*, I would have the students read the scene with the witches, for example, and then have them watch the movie, and then have them act it out.

…….

1. *What prescribed work did you choose to remake? Do you enjoy reading it?*

A poem by William Shakespeare, *Sonnet 18*. Yes, very much because it's about love.

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2. *Briefly explain <u>how</u> you created your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What materials or techniques did you use?*

I first watched the movie *Shakespeare in Love* until the end, for inspiration. Then I acted out [my storyboard] to my family by using body language and facial expression, and then I read the poem again so that I knew I did it right.

3. *Briefly explain <u>what</u> elements of your prescribed work have been put into your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. Any specific themes? Characters? Symbols?*

I wanted to make my storyboard as interesting as possible, with the characters Annie and Peter, and also when Annie is all grown up. In the poem, she's described as very beautiful.

4. *Briefly explain <u>why</u> you have chosen specific words, lines, shapes, colours, etc. for your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What are they supposed to mean?*

I mostly used bright colours to make the storyboard fun and enjoyable. If you look at the poem, it's about love and desire and beauty, but it's also about the separation between two people. So it's got a romantic and [passionate] feeling, but it ends with the death of the beloved Annie.

5. *Do you think this is a 'doable' project for literature teaching and learning in South African high schools? Why / Why not? What could be improved, for example, on the 'genre frames' you were given?*

Yes, I think so. The children will understand the poems [more clearly]. The genre frames could be bigger, so that there's more drawing space.

6. *Should learning of prescribed literature be FUN, or should we go back to more 'old fashioned' styles of teaching and learning? Is it about striking a balance, maybe?*

Literature should be fun, enjoyable and easy to understand. No, [teachers should not use] completely old-fashioned styles, but rather get a balance between the two.

7. *What dangers, if any, do you think a continuous exposure to music, film and videogames could hold for FET Phase learners in particular?*

They could become just as violent as some of the films, because the films are controlling [the learners] physically and emotionally.

8. *Lastly, please share any of your thoughts on the impact that this project may have had on you − on an emotional, psychological or intellectual level.*

Yes, it was very emotional, especially at the end [of the storyboard], when Annie dies.

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Student 6: Zane

1. *What are your interests (hobbies) at home or outside of the school? Would you like to see more of these integrated into the language classroom? Please motivate.*

Soccer, squash, badminton and athletics. No, because they never talk about sport in the English Home Language class.

2. *Do you know of any novels, poems, plays, etc. that have been adapted into songs, movies or videogames, or the other way around? Did the 'meanings' of these works become clearer to you after viewing their movie adaptations? Why / why not?*

Macbeth, *Captain Underpants*, *Batman*, *Harry Potter* and *Twilight*. Yes, because I have more of an understanding of moving pictures; it's easier to relate to.

3. *If your prescribed novel, poem or play for this term were a song, movie or videogame, what would it sound like, look like, or what would you be required to do?*

It would be exciting, its visuals would be very detailed, it would have good quality sound and it would focus on the morale of the soldiers.

4. *Do you think the advanced digital technologies in use today (online music and movie streaming, file sharing, social networking, etc.) are making us smarter or dumber as individuals? Do they stifle or stimulate our imaginations? Please motivate.*

They make us smarter because people are getting paid to be digital designers. They stimulate us, because our imaginations keep growing as we create.

5. *What place, in your opinion, do these technologies have in SA's Home Language classrooms? Imagine that you were a curriculum designer for high schools. Briefly describe how you would incorporate a song, movie or videogame into literature lessons to make it more stimulating or meaningful for learners.*

You could make a poem or book into a movie or song, to give that poem or book more meaning, or to tell the world about it.

……

1. *What prescribed work did you choose to remake? Do you enjoy reading it?*

Dulce Et Decorum Est. Not sure.

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2. *Briefly explain <u>how</u> you created your song / short film / videogame screenshot. What materials or techniques did you use?*

I turned it into more of a dramatic movie, and I used pencil and pen and other [media] to make it look more real.

3. *Briefly explain <u>what</u> elements of your prescribed work have been put into your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. Any specific themes? Characters? Symbols?*

The interesting parts for me were the close-up of the sergeant and the part where [the poet] is dreaming. It came out like a horror movie, because the poem for me is like a horror movie.

4. *Briefly explain <u>why</u> you have chosen specific words, lines, shapes, colours, etc. for your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What are they supposed to mean?*

I chose a realistic style, which I am good at. It's basically realism through shading. It's supposed to make it serious and more [life-like].

5. *Do you think this is a 'doable' project for literature teaching and learning in South African high schools? Why / Why not? What could be improved, for example, on the 'genre frames' you were given?*

The concept is really hard, but yes, I think it is a doable project. My line-work could improve.

6. *Should learning of prescribed literature be FUN, or should we go back to more 'old fashioned' styles of teaching and learning? Is it about striking a balance, maybe?*

Yes, it is fun to read prescribed poems. Yes, it kind of is.

7. *What dangers, if any, do you think a continuous exposure to music, film and videogames could hold for FET Phase learners in particular?*

Games have violence. Music has vulgar [lyrics]. Films have both, so it depends on what you buy.

8. *Lastly, please share any of your thoughts on the impact that this project may have had on you − on an emotional, psychological or intellectual level.*

Emotionally, it made me happy because I finished it. It really made me think, you know? About how bad war is, and how it just destroys people's lives.

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Student 7: Trevor

1. *What are your interests (hobbies) at home or outside of the school? Would you like to see more of these integrated into the language classroom? Please motivate.*

My hobbies are skateboarding, drawing, dancing and designing. Yes, I would love [for] that to happen. I feel my hobbies will make it easier to participate; they can bring people together and provide [useful] skills.

2. *Do you know of any novels, poems, plays, etc. that have been adapted into songs, movies or videogames, or the other way around? Did the 'meanings' of these works become clearer to you after viewing their movie adaptations? Why / why not?*

Yes, I know a lot. Yes, I am more of a visual type of person, and it is more enjoyable to see how they can interpret the play through the game; seeing everything properly and not [having to use] your imagination all the time.

3. *If your prescribed novel, poem or play for this term were a song, movie or videogame, what would it sound like, look like, or what would you be required to do?*

I would make sure the story fits in perfectly, not leaving anything out or trying to fit an entire act into one hour of game-play, and I would make sure it is aesthetically pleasing. The graphics, sound [and] everything must meet current standards. It would be a third-person, free-roaming adventure, with cool graphics and epic battles.

4. *Do you think the advanced digital technologies in use today (online music and movie streaming, file sharing, social networking, etc.) are making us smarter or dumber as individuals? Do they stifle or stimulate our imaginations? Please motivate.*

I think they are very useful tools to interpret something − something that could not be interpreted usually, without the use of digital technologies. They make things easier and more [ef]ficient to work with.

5. *What place, in your opinion, do these technologies have in SA's Home Language classrooms? Imagine that you were a curriculum designer for high schools. Briefly describe how you would incorporate a song, movie or videogame into literature lessons to make it more stimulating or meaningful for learners.*

I would incorporate many of these [technologies] into my lesson to make it more stimulating. I would do research on the latest [media] that my students can relate to. I would first traditionally explain the concept, like verbally, then show them a visual form to give them different views and perspectives on the matter, making the lesson fun too.

……..

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1. *What prescribed work did you choose to remake? Do you enjoy reading it?*

Macbeth, yes it is quite interesting.

2. *Briefly explain <u>how</u> you created your song / short film / video game screenshot. What materials or techniques did you use?*

Through quick sketches, and the materials I used are the clutch pencil, pens and some colouring pencils.

3. *Briefly explain <u>what</u> elements of your prescribed work have been put into your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. Any specific themes? Characters? Symbols?*

I wanted my game screens to show the medieval times like they really were, but with Macbeth as the main character. You can play as Macbeth, but you can play as his wife too. Depending on what character is chosen, it would send the player on completely different adventures.

4. *Briefly explain <u>why</u> you have chosen specific words, lines, shapes, colours, etc. for your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What are they supposed to mean?*

They are supposed to represent the medieval times, but in a videogame [format]. I did some research on what [the knights] wore, and what the castles looked like. I included those things, firstly because I like the look of the old games, but also because they remind me of the setting. It's a rough place, full of death and war and witchcraft, so I wanted it like that.

5. *Do you think this is a 'doable' project for literature teaching and learning in South African high schools? Why / Why not? What could be improved, for example, on the 'genre frames' you were given?*

Yes, if the teacher makes use of more visual materials [he or she] will convey the message more clearly, making it easier for [the] learners to understand.

6. *Should learning of prescribed literature be FUN, or should we go back to more 'old fashioned' styles of teaching and learning? Is it about striking a balance, maybe?*

No, change is good and I feel that if literature is made more fun, learners will be more interested in learning and have a [better] learning experience.

7. *What dangers, if any, do you think a continuous exposure to music, film and videogames could hold for FET Phase learners in particular?*

None whatsoever.

8. *Lastly, please share any of your thoughts on the impact that this project may have had on you − on an emotional, psychological or intellectual level.*

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It has made me quite excited to see how teaching and learning will be done in the future. It was tough, but it gave me something to do visually.

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Student 8: Kulani

1. *What are your interests (hobbies) at home or outside of the school? Would you like to see more of these integrated into the language classroom? Please motivate.*

Drawing, painting, digital art.

2. *Do you know of any novels, poems, plays, etc. that have been adapted into songs, movies or videogames, or the other way around? Did the 'meanings' of these works become clearer to you after viewing their movie adaptations? Why / why not?*

Yes, it became easier [to understand] after seeing it.

3. *If your prescribed novel, poem or play for this term were a song, movie or videogame, what would it sound like, look like, or what would you be required to do?*

[I would include] like a 3D anime effect. I just want more from [Romeo and Juliet] than just the play, you know?

4. *Do you think the advanced digital technologies in use today (online music and movie streaming, file sharing, social networking, etc.) are making us smarter or dumber as individuals? Do they stifle or stimulate our imaginations? Please motivate.*

Smarter. They allow us to see how different technologies can create different atmospheres.

5. *What place, in your opinion, do these technologies have in SA's Home Language classrooms? Imagine that you were a curriculum designer for high schools. Briefly describe how you would incorporate a song, movie or videogame into literature lessons to make it more stimulating or meaningful for learners.*

I would relate [the prescribed texts] to more current technologies, and then compare it with the technologies.

……..

1. *What prescribed work did you choose to remake? Do you enjoy reading it?*

Romeo and Juliet, which I remade into a *Naruto*-style fighting game.

2. *Briefly explain <u>how</u> you created your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What materials or techniques did you use?*

With pen and other [media], in an anime style.

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3. *Briefly explain <u>what</u> elements of your prescribed work have been put into your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. Any specific themes? Characters? Symbols?*

The anime, Japanese drawing style combined with the classical period look.

4. *Briefly explain <u>why</u> you have chosen specific words, lines, shapes, colours, etc. for your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What are they supposed to mean?*

I chose Japanese fantasy and the medieval times to show how much they have in common. For the colours, I put red behind Romeo [and the Montagues] and blue behind Juliet [and the Capulets] to bring out their personalities. Red is the colour of love and passion, but also of anger… you become this colour if things don't go your way. [Regarding the omissions in Romeo's profile] …I couldn't make up my mind. Romeo changes all the time. The one minute he's a good guy, and the next he just goes crazy… he loses control. [This is] a really bad and evil thing in our family, so I left it open.

5. *Do you think this is a 'doable' project for literature teaching and learning in South African high schools? Why / Why not? What could be improved, for example, on the 'genre frames' you were given?*

Yes, many children learn from videogames. We had a teacher here, *Mrs. B*, who used *Command and Conquer* to teach Geography.

6. *Should learning of prescribed literature be FUN, or should we go back to more 'old fashioned' styles of teaching and learning? Is it about striking a balance, maybe?*

Yes, the new stuff is more educational and helps us to learn life skills.

7. *What dangers, if any, do you think a continuous exposure to music, film and videogames could hold for FET Phase learners in particular?*

Children could get kidnapped, or other bad stuff could happen to them if they use social media in the wrong ways.

8. *Lastly, please share any of your thoughts on the impact that this project may have had on you − on an emotional, psychological or intellectual level.*

I feel that videogames have taught me a lot. The project took a lot of work and needed a lot of thinking out, but it was worth it.

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Student 9: Somizi

1. *What are your interests (hobbies) at home or outside of the school? Would you like to see more of these integrated into the language classroom? Please motivate.*

My hobbies are drawing and watching anime, and yes, I would like to see more of these in the classroom.

2. *Do you know of any novels, poems, plays, etc. that have been adapted into songs, movies or videogames, or the other way around? Did the 'meanings' of these works become clearer to you after viewing their movie adaptations? Why / why not?*

Yes, I know of a few games that have been turned into books, and the other way around. Yes, most of the stories did become clearer.

3. *If your prescribed novel, poem or play for this term were a song, movie or videogame, what would it sound like, look like, or what would you be required to do?*

They would look more intense because we would be able to see how the characters actually are.

4. *Do you think the advanced digital technologies in use today (online music and movie streaming, file sharing, social networking, etc.) are making us smarter or dumber as individuals? Do they stifle or stimulate our imaginations? Please motivate.*

Smarter, because of all the puzzles out there. The games help us [develop] problem-solving skills.

5. *What place, in your opinion, do these technologies have in SA's Home Language classrooms? Imagine that you were a curriculum designer for high schools. Briefly describe how you would incorporate a song, movie or videogame into literature lessons to make it more stimulating or meaningful for learners.*

They help to explain and express the characters we read about, and help us understand the [literary] concepts more.

……

1. *What prescribed work did you choose to remake? Do you enjoy reading it?*

Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet*. At the beginning I wasn't sure, but now I do enjoy reading it.

2. *Briefly explain <u>how</u> you created your song / short film / video game screenshot. What materials or techniques did you use?*

I started reading the play more carefully, to get a better idea of the characters and the characteristics of the characters.

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3. *Briefly explain <u>what</u> elements of your prescribed work have been put into your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. Any specific themes? Characters? Symbols?*

Romeo, *Mercutio* and the troublesome *Tybalt*. I have drawn them with an anime vibe.

4. *Briefly explain <u>why</u> you have chosen specific words, lines, shapes, colours, etc. for your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What are they supposed to mean?*

I see them as part of the characters' personalities.

5. *Do you think this is a 'doable' project for literature teaching and learning in South African high schools? Why / Why not? What could be improved, for example, on the 'genre frames' you were given?*

Learning this way could make working in a class easier, and much more fun. One bad thing that I can say about it, is that it could take a lot of time, especially in the English class.

6. *Should learning of prescribed literature be FUN, or should we go back to more 'old fashioned' styles of teaching and learning? Is it about striking a balance, maybe?*

Yes, it should be fun because then students would pay more attention.

7. *What dangers, if any, do you think a continuous exposure to music, film and videogames could hold for FET Phase learners in particular?*

No dangers, really. It would allow us to express our opinions and [be more critical] of forms of art.

8. *Lastly, please share any of your thoughts on the impact that this project may have had on you − on an emotional, psychological or intellectual level.*

It helped me to perfect my drawing, but still stressed me out a bit.

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Student 10: Zoe

1. *What are your interests (hobbies) at home or outside of the school? Would you like to see more of these integrated into the language classroom? Please motivate.*

Reading, watching anime, playing videogames. Reading already is [integrated into the language classroom], but I don't really see how the other two would benefit language [learning] in general.

2. *Do you know of any novels, poems, plays, etc. that have been adapted into songs, movies or videogames, or the other way around? Did the 'meanings' of these works become clearer to you after viewing their movie adaptations? Why / why not?*

Yes, movies are enjoyable to watch because they're like summaries of the books and things they're based on.

3. *If your prescribed novel, poem or play for this term were a song, movie or videogame, what would it sound like, look like, or what would you be required to do?*

It would be like a fighting game, but with a story mode.

4. *Do you think the advanced digital technologies in use today (online music and movie streaming, file sharing, social networking, etc.) are making us smarter or dumber as individuals? Do they stifle or stimulate our imaginations? Please motivate.*

It stimulates us. Weirdly enough, you actually learn a lot and it even helps you grow as a reader. It shapes you as you go along, you know?

5. *What place, in your opinion, do these technologies have in SA's Home Language classrooms? Imagine that you were a curriculum designer for high schools. Briefly describe how you would incorporate a song, movie or videogame into literature lessons to make it more stimulating or meaningful for learners.*

I would turn them into different things like videogames, but use references that are linked to either the poem or play we're doing.

……

1. *What prescribed work did you choose to remake? Do you enjoy reading it?*

Romeo and Juliet. Yes.

2. *Briefly explain <u>how</u> you created your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What materials or techniques did you use?*

I used a clutch pencil, eraser and blender. Usually this is what I use; I don't like painting that much.

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3. *Briefly explain <u>what</u> elements of your prescribed work have been put into your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. Any specific themes? Characters? Symbols?*

I wanted to turn *Romeo and Juliet* into a kind of *Street Fighter* game, but with an old-school anime vibe.

4. *Briefly explain <u>why</u> you have chosen specific words, lines, shapes, colours, etc. for your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What are they supposed to mean?*

They are all representations of the characters in the play.

5. *Do you think this is a 'doable' project for literature teaching and learning in South African high schools? Why / Why not? What could be improved, for example, on the 'genre frames' you were given?*

I guess, it does stimulate your imagination. And it makes you see the play in a new way.

6. *Should learning of prescribed literature be FUN, or should we go back to more 'old fashioned' styles of teaching and learning? Is it about striking a balance, maybe?*

I do not see a problem with the way things are. But yes, sometimes our classes are really boring.

7. *What dangers, if any, do you think a continuous exposure to music, film and videogames could hold for FET Phase learners in particular?*

Common criticism amongst teens.

8. *Lastly, please share any of your thoughts on the impact that this project may have had on you − on an emotional, psychological or intellectual level.*

It stressed me out on a whole new level, but I kind of really enjoyed doing this.

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Student 11: Ekta

1. *What are your interests (hobbies) at home or outside of the school? Would you like to see more of these integrated into the language classroom? Please motivate.*

I'm mostly interested in sewing but I do draw more than I sew. I would love if the language lessons included more pictures as well as colours, as it will make my class more interesting as well as motivate me to study.

2. *Do you know of any novels, poems, plays, etc. that have been adapted into songs, movies or videogames, or the other way around? Did the 'meanings' of these works become clearer to you after viewing their movie adaptations? Why / why not?*

The videogame *Tomb Raider* was adapted into a movie which gave me a better understanding of the game, as the characters' histories and aims were set [out] more clearly in the movie.

3. *If your prescribed novel, poem or play for this term were a song, movie or videogame, what would it sound like, look like, or what would you be required to do?*

The prescribed novel for Grade 10 this year is *Mother to Mother*. It would be a boxing game, seeing that it is about racial discrimination, and the violence between blacks and whites during apartheid.

4. *Do you think the advanced digital technologies in use today (online music and movie streaming, file sharing, social networking, etc.) are making us smarter or dumber as individuals? Do they stifle or stimulate our imaginations? Please motivate.*

I believe that it makes an individual smarter as it is scientifically proven that people who play videogames develop better reflexes. So, depending on what app is being used, it educates you on that subject each time.

5. *What place, in your opinion, do these technologies have in SA's Home Language classrooms? Imagine that you were a curriculum designer for high schools. Briefly describe how you would incorporate a song, movie or videogame into literature lessons to make it more stimulating or meaningful for learners.*

In this day and age I feel that learners are more interested in technology and music as well as movies. I would rather make the poem or story in the literature class [into] a catchy song for the students to remember, as well as incorporate a full analysis of it in[to] the song.

……

1. *What prescribed work did you choose to remake? Do you enjoy reading it?*

Mother to Mother and no, I don't really enjoy reading it.

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2. *Briefly explain <u>how</u> you created your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What materials or techniques did you use?*

The book that was given was mainly about apartheid. So I took that topic, seeing that it was about racial discrimination, and made it into a boxing fight.

3. *Briefly explain <u>what</u> elements of your prescribed work have been put into your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. Any specific themes? Characters? Symbols?*

It is a boxing game and I included all the main characters from the novel.

4. *Briefly explain <u>why</u> you have chosen specific words, lines, shapes, colours, etc. for your song / storyboard / videogame screenshot. What are they supposed to mean?*

I used a boxing ring, as this game is about a player who's [up against] player two. A boxing game is exactly the same. So the game will be about the apartheid people versus the freedom fighters.

5. *Do you think this is a 'doable' project for literature teaching and learning in South African high schools? Why / Why not? What could be improved, for example, on the 'genre frames' you were given?*

Yes, it is a doable project. I think the videogame [task] could make learners forget about the storyline sometimes. So I think [one should] maybe add a storyline to the game.

6. *Should learning of prescribed literature be FUN, or should we go back to more 'old fashioned' styles of teaching and learning? Is it about striking a balance, maybe?*

I feel that prescribed literature should be fun; in that way it will encourage children to learn more.

7. *What dangers, if any, do you think a continuous exposure to music, film and videogames could hold for FET Phase learners in particular?*

It could lead to laziness as well as a few possible physical damages, such as loss of hearing or eyesight.

8. *Lastly, please share any of your thoughts on the impact that this project may have had on you − on an emotional, psychological or intellectual level.*

This project has made me realise that there are other, more fun ways of learning [prescribed literature].

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