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Reflecting on *Languaging The Lion King – An Educational Encounter* - in the context of English Literacy Education

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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in English Education.

Johannesburg 1998

Declaration

I declare that this Research Report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts by Course Work and Research Report in the field of English Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.



Desiree Raichlin

10 June 1998

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ABSTRACT

In this Research Report I present an overview of the connections between ***Languaging The Lion King – An Educational Encounter***, a workbook designed as a literacy learning device for English language learning in contemporary South African schools, and the changing educational and curricular environments facing South African teachers and students - particularly in the area of literacy learning. The introduction of **Curriculum 2005** in South African schools in 1998, in line with the political and social changes taking place in the country, has facilitated increasing linguistic and cultural diversity in Senior Phase education curricula. **Curriculum 2005**'s objective to include rather than to marginalise a range of learners in a range of educational contexts, particularly as articulated in its *Communication, Literacy and Language* learning area, calls for a view of literacy broader than that promoted in previous language-based curricula. These national curricular concerns and the New London Group's International *Multiliteracies Project*, which captures and validates the diversity of people's literacies, provide the theoretical framework for my investigation of the ways in which the workbook attempts to negotiate the literacy practices required by South African literacy learners in the achievement of a new level of literacy competence.

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Annexures

For the reader's reference purposes, *Languaging The Lion King – An Educational Encounter*, the workbook which forms the springboard for the investigation undertaken in this Research Report, is included as Annnexure A.
Annexures B to E serve as further reference material as delineated in the relevant chapters.
Annexure F, an audio-cassette, is attached under separate cover.

- Annexure A: ***Languaging The Lion King – An Educational Encounter***
- Annexure B: *'Nkosi Bhubezi'* By Chris Du Plessis, Pace Magazine, July 1994
- Annexure C: *'Inkosi is a roaring success'* City Press, 26 June 1994
- Annexure D: *'The lion roars again'* By Richard Mkhondo, Star Newspaper Foreign Correspondent, The Star, November 18, 1997
- Annexure E: Questionnaire
- Annexure F: Audio-cassette of interviews with two research subjects.

INTRODUCTION

"Some have argued that educational research should become a design science studying how different curricular, pedagogical and classroom designs motivate and achieve different sorts of learning."

(New London Group: *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies – Designing Social Futures:* 21)

AIMS

The primary aim in this research report is to explore the curricular and pedagogic designs of *Languaging The Lion King – An Educational Encounter*[1], a text produced for use in the English literacy classroom, and to explore to what extent and in what ways it is a suitable vehicle for literacy learning in South Africa - particularly within the *Communication, Literacy and Language* learning area articulated in the framework of Curriculum 2005.

In critically reflecting on a pedagogic text of my own devising, I am attempting to make a **curricular and pedagogic intervention.** The intervention is intended to operate at a number of levels:

- At the level of curriculum as document, involving the policies pertaining to pedagogic theory and didactic practices.

[1] The workbook, *Languaging The Lion King – An Educational Encounter*, hereafter referred to as *Languaging The Lion King*, is attached at the end of the research report as Annexure A.

- At the level of materials development for literacy teaching and learning, involving both the selection of available primary texts and the creation of new literacy-teaching texts.
- At the level of teacher training and preparation for literacy education.
- At the level of learner assessment.

The research questions that will guide this investigation are:

1. What, in contemporary education, comprises/constitutes 'literacy'
    - In a global context?
    - Within South African contexts?
2. What conceptions of English language and literacy pedagogy inform *Languaging The Lion King*?
3. What are the conceptions of English language and literacy pedagogy informing Curriculum 2005?
4. To what extent does *Languaging The Lion King* meet the requirements of Curriculum 2005?
5. What new understandings emerge from the investigation of the *Languaging The Lion King* workbook?

The interdisciplinary nature of the inquiry informing this research report reflects what I see as the dual nature of my role as, firstly, an English literacy researcher and, secondly, as an English language practitioner in a South African educational context. The area of inquiry in this research report intersects and draws from two broader areas of inquiry:

(a) **Literacy** and the rapidly shifting conceptions of literacy that have been emerging both globally and locally over the last few decades;

(b) **Pedagogy, pedagogics and curriculum** in the senior phase of education, particularly as articulated in the new South African educational policy document *Curriculum 2005.*

Whatever the achievements or failures of Curriculum 2005, it is my hope that the place of *Languaging The Lion King,* in any form of educative curriculum in the changing face of educational policy and practice in South Africa, will remain more-or-less constant. For, whatever route the education system in South Africa takes and develops, it will strive to facilitate *the learning of all the skills necessary in and relevant to the achievement of literacy,* and to make the literacy-learning experience *enjoyable.* This is the basic context in which the workbook is geared to operate.

RATIONALE

My rationale in this research report derives largely from two premises referred to in the *Communication, Literacy and Learning* area of **Curriculum 2005**, the new national curriculum unveiled in South Africa in 1997 and implemented in South African schools in 1998 for trialling until the year 2005:

- The **first** is that *learning programmes* (rather than prescriptive syllabi) are to be seen as guides that allow teachers to be innovative and

creative in designing other programmes suitable to and accommodating of the diverse range of learners.

This premise in Curriculum 2005 therefore encourages the creation and production of a relevant literacy learning programme, such as my handbook of materials *Languaging The Lion King*.

- The **second** is that a producer of learning and support material should have clarity as to the purpose of the material, the target users, the way in which the material is going to be used, and the competencies that the users of the material hope to achieve.[2]

This research report will therefore focus on an analysis of the relationship of this particular text to, and within, a reconceptualised version of literacy for an English subject curriculum in South Africa. Such a 'reconceptualised version' of literacy would wish to significantly broaden the concept of literacy to include skilling in the graphic (the visual), the oral and the aural. Literacy now requires multiskilling or, rather, one would have to become skilled in 'multi'-literacies if one is to achieve beyond basic literacy to a competent level of functional social literacy. As Scollon and Scollon (1982:98) put it:

> "We can no longer assume that essayist literacy should be the goal of all education any more than we should assume that all schoolchildren should be ethnically identified with any one dominant group."

[2] Third Draft: Generic Guidelines For The Development of Learning and Support Material 1996.

The research report investigates how broadened conceptions of literacy and what constitutes a suitable text for literacy learning should be at the core of any new and effective literacy curriculum proposed for the democratic new South Africa.

It further recommends that implementation or incorporation of these broadened conceptions of literacy, into any more traditional educational model of classroom practice, would require much adjusting and compromising on the part of existing South African classroom literacy practices. This would include a revision of conceptions of literacy, provision of access to 'reading' opportunities to a far wider range of South African communities than has historically been the case and the development of multimodal literacy-learning materials that promote effective reading activities and reading behaviours.

Constructions of literacy incorporate ideological theories and have important moral and social consequences [3]. In the current South African scenario, in particular, constructions of literacy must be understood in relation to dynamic social, linguistically diverse and multicultural contexts.

In creating the workbook under investigation, *Languaging The Lion King*, I began by considering various sociological and cultural understandings of how literacy is, and can be, used by young learners.

[3] See also Bigum and Green:1990

I worked within what I consider to be the twin goals of literacy learning proposed in the paradigm of 'multiliteracies' offered by the New London Group, that is,

> "Creating access to the evolving language of work, power and community, and fostering the critical engagement necessary for them to design their social futures and achieve success through fulfilling employment".

I looked at the wide range of cultural groups that constitute the 'rainbow' nation in this country, and the wide range of attendant **literacies** that exist in relation to these different cultural groups. According to the Senior Phase Policy Document of the Department of Education (September 1997:43):

> "***Literacies*** stresses the issue of access to the world and to knowledge through development of multiple capacities within all of us to make sense of our worlds through whatever means we have, not only texts and books."

This seemed to be in keeping with what I saw to be the first premise of the New London Group's multiliteracies project [4] – that literacy practices could no longer be seen as being 'homogeneous', but should instead be considered from a multicultural, multilingual and multimodal perspective.

[4] The New London Group (1996) (NLG). A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures. Harvard Educational Review, 66, p60-92.

The workbook's title employs the term "languaging" in a particular sense. The text expands on the term 'language' from its conventionally designated sense as simply a system of verbal language constructions, and extends the conventional connotations of the term. It defines and offers 'languaging' as a process of accessing and expressing an amalgam of verbal, but also visual, oral and aural modes of communication. This is in acknowledgement too of the multimodal nature of what we term 'language' and the multiple language systems utilised in the **Lion King** text.

'*Languaging*' is a term that attempts to take account of different literacies available in, and woven into, the texture of any one text at the same time, that is, acknowledging the text's 'textual multiplicity'.

The workbook offers itself as a site in which the issues of the many and different modes of communication constituting literacy might be considered. This accounts for a further, and in my opinion crucial, premise of the New London Group's pedagogy of multiliteracies – that literacy practices must be cognisant of the wide range of semiotic systems available in society.

The authors argue that the multiplicity of communication channels and increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in the world today call for a much broader view of literacy than that portrayed by traditional language-based approaches:

> "New communications media are reshaping the way we use language. When technologies of meaning are changing so rapidly, there cannot be one set of standards or skills that constitute the ends of literacy learning, however taught."
>
> (New London Group: A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: p7)

My understandings are perhaps most significantly influenced by the New London Group's use of the term 'multimodal', for it relates all the other semiotic modes in 'quite remarkably dynamic relationships'. (NLG: A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: 33). The 'reading' and 'decoding' of multimodal texts thus require the complex application of the multiple codes (conventions) of language. Furthermore, it becomes apparent that multimodal texts are not 'innocent' carriers of meaning. The languages in which they communicate are impregnated with values and attitudes. They actively shape the messages they communicate.

In the *Languaging the Lion King* workbook, the term *'multimodal'* is understood, and used, in the sense of a text whose meanings are encoded in, are realised and are expressed (**languaged**) through multiple *semiotic modes*. It is a question in itself whether any text is absolutely monomodal – constituted of only one semiotic mode. Most texts are by their very nature multimodal in that they comprise a range of modes that can be understood either independently of each other or simultaneously. Perhaps this accounts for the fact that some people say that they 'read' the newspaper, while others say that they take a 'look' at it. After all, to 'read' the newspaper requires the

simultaneous 'looking' at, amongst other aspects, its article and/or picture size and layout, its colour format, its print style and font usage.

Although my use of the term **multimodal** derives from the work of the New London Group, the term is used and discussed in literacy pedagogies emerging from theoretical paradigms from a range of disciplinary areas. Kress and van Leeuwen, in their examination of the ways in which images communicate meaning, use the concept in the disciplinary area of Semiotics. Len Masterman and David Buckingham use the concept in their respective analyses of media issues and texts primarily in the disciplinary area of Media Education.

What these writers share, besides **a common interest in education**, is a belief that the *landscape of communication has shifted*, and now encompasses a range of semiotic modes and systems. They are all of the opinion that to be considered literate in today's world, one has to be skilled in *recognising* and *responding to* a whole variety of semiotic modes beyond simply the traditional three R's-type literacy - namely, reading, writing and 'rithmetic.

Furthermore, it becomes apparent from a reading of the views held by these, and other, literacy and media theorists and practitioner-researchers, that literacy pedagogies and their resultant curricula are by definition the representations and products of particular cultural contexts, institutional conditions and political interests:

> "The educational formation and framing of a literate 'tradition' - ...a corpus of texts, reading and writing practices and events - is not an arbitrary or 'natural' decision, but is an extension of extant ideological, discursive and material relations".
>
> Freebody and Welch (1993: 3)

This inferred 'site-specificity' of pedagogical constructs and effects implies that literacy-pedagogy discourses involve power relations and are realised differently in different institutional sites and/or curricula. Broader political, cultural and social issues lurk within literacy curricula in school English teaching. It is essential to view prescribed literacy curricula in their historical and institutional contexts in the acknowledgement that the production of knowledge and/or meaning is linked to the exercise of political and economic power.

How then is the post-1994, democratic 'New South Africa' attempting to reform, remake or supplement what South African schools, under the control of the National Party and its Christian National Education and Bantu Education policies, have been doing for half a century? How does the 'new South Africa' now articulate, transform and upgrade the goals of education and the desirable outcomes of schooling? How can education practices in South Africa improve on, or supplement what schools already do?

The New London Group suggests that

> " We cannot remake the world through schooling, but we **can** instantiate a vision through pedagogy that creates, in microcosm, a transformed set of relationships and possibilities for social futures; a vision that is lived in schools... and creating communities of learners that are diverse and respectful of the autonomy of lifeworlds."
>
> (The New London Group: *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies*: p.20)

In the South African context, language, discourse and register differences are markers of lifeworld differences, markers arising from and situated in differing socio-cultural settings and contextualised in specific knowledge domains and practices. In the 'New South Africa', as lifeworlds become less polarised by legislation enforcing segregation and separation and therefore less divergent in many respects, their boundaries become more blurred. In this scenario, the central fact of language becomes loaded with a multiplicity of meanings and their continual intersection.

In the light of these statements, it becomes apparent that what Curriculum 2005 **has** succeeded in doing is to alter words such as 'school' and 'curriculum' to expand their conceptual meaning.

In the Curriculum 2005 paradigm, schools have become the focus for providing an understanding of the rapid and sweeping social changes affecting our country at every level of society. The conceptual meaning of curriculum too has increased to include not only the body of subjects or subject matters set out by teachers for students to cover, but responses to a number of societal changes in our conception of knowledge, the learning process and 'the need to link formal school studies with the life of the learner and the changing demands of the larger social scene.'[5]

The Curriculum 2005 Outcomes-based model seeks to bring about change by focusing on outcomes referenced against requirements outside education. South African schools, through Curriculum 2005, now find themselves increasingly responsible for helping learners to interpret, understand and cope with the socio-cultural, political and economic realities of our times:

> "Learners will become analytical and creative thinkers, problem solvers and effective communicators. They will know how to collect, gather and conduct research" [6]

[5] Tanner and Tanner, 1975. Quoted by Carl A. Grant (1977) in *The Mediator of Culture: A Teacher Role Revisited.* Journal of Research and Development in Education, Volume 2, No1.
[6] *Curriculum 2005 – Lifelong learning for the 21st century* (1997). Issued by the National Department of Education.

It becomes the duty of the new National Education Department in South Africa, and all its advocates and service providers, to transmit not only conventionally accepted academic knowledges but to transmit to and interpret for students, the norms and values prevailing, and constantly changing, in our peculiar social context.

As we look towards the end of this century, we can have little certainty about the outcomes of many of the proposed educational changes being made and implemented in South African educational arenas - especially as concerns the complex and many-faceted matter of literacy and its acquisition. Nonetheless, **Curriculum 2005,** in its pursuit of the formation of 'thinking, competent and responsible future citizens'[7] and on the relevant real-life needs of learners, has already done much to promote a new and desirable culture of school learning in South Africa.

METHODOLOGY

Although deliberate, systematic and sustained reflection on the produced literacy-learning text, *Languaging The Lion King,* has been undertaken, as well as on my own experiences of education as both a learner and a teacher, my discussion is investigative rather than exhaustive for the following reasons:

[7] Ibid. p4

Reason 1: Literacy itself is a highly indeterminate concept. As observed by Meek (1991:9) there are different versions of literacy, some much fuller than are others, some more powerful than are others. I will address this issue in some detail in chapters 1 and 2. In brief, however, as I understand it, literacy extends beyond the borders of merely a communication device - it is also about social and cultural power. I align my premises here with those of the New London Group and its Multiliteracies project and with the thinking of semioticians such as Kress and van Leeuwen and the communications specialist, Paul Messaris.

Reason 2: It becomes apparent on researching any text, a multimodal text in particular, that the distribution of realization or actualization possibilities across the semiotic modes[8], and the inherent potentialities and limitations of a particular semiotic medium or text, are, to a high degree, determined socially and culturally as well as pedagogically.

Reason 3: Investigating a materials resource text is often an ongoing intertextual exercise. In developing and designing texts, developers always draw on systems of cultural and sociolinguistic practice as well as grammatical designs and systems. Researching a text therefore is continuous with, and a continuation of, particular histories which link the designed text to other past designs and texts.

Reason 4: Owing to my limited access to a wide range of learners and a diversity of pedagogic environments, my research is limited to a small number of learners and therefore I can make no general claims about literacy and its acquisition, only statements qualified by my own research findings.

The methodology employed in this research is threefold:

- It is, in part, **theoretical** as it involves an investigation of global shifts in literacy studies, predominantly in certain anglophone countries. This investigation is undertaken through an analysis of data collected from a reading of selected contemporary theoretical and pedagogical texts, as well as from curricular documents dealing with literacy as concerns its various definitions, its acquisition and its achievement through pedagogic interventions.
- It is **analytical** as it examines and debates the contrast between the recent past and the present of South African literacy curricula and pedagogies within the subject English. Areas such as curricular and pedagogic aims, objectives and outcomes, materials development, course content, language discourse and learner assessment will be considered, as well as the relationship of these curricula to the needs of learners.
- It is, in part, **empirical** as it implements the workbook with selected groups of students.

[8] By semiotic modes, I refer to any sign systems, including visual, verbal (oral and written), non-verbal (including body language), graphic and auditory signs and signals.

The research report discusses the following:

a) The results of trials on pre-service teachers, who, in turn, trialled it on their own students. The former trials were conducted in a formal academic environment (a tertiary education institution), and the latter trials were conducted in an informal learning environment (that of youth group meetings conducted at a recreation centre) rather than in a formal educational setting. The pre-service teachers on whom I trialled the workbook material comprise third year Education students reading for their undergraduate degrees through the University of South Africa (Unisa) and receiving support lectures at Boston City Campus, the tertiary academic institution at which I lecture.

b) A case study with one particular student, who is a high ranking youth group leader, and who assisted me by trialling some of the *Languaging The Lion King* workbook material on some of his youth group members An interview with the student was recorded on audio-cassette. The results of his trials will also be analysed and discussed.

c) A second case study with a nine-year old school pupil who will be a recipient of Curriculum 2005's literacy syllabus when she enters the senior phase in education within the next few years. I asked the pupil to watch **The Lion King** film text and guided her through the *Languaging The Lion King* workbook before I conducted the interview itself.

A taped audio-cassette containing recordings of both the case study interviews is annexed at the end of the research report.

Although the empirical part of my research is of a limited nature and does not qualify as action-research study, it nonetheless serves an important role in this research report:

- It allows for a drawing from, and a cross-fertilisation of, multimodal research techniques and responses (written, oral, audio and visual) in line with the theories and practices posited and promoted by many of the writers to whom the research report makes reference.
- It draws on research subjects of varying age and gender groups and from a spectrum of formal and informal education situations in ways comfortable and educative to both them and to the researcher.
- In its interdisciplinary approach, the research expanded my appreciation of methodology as more than purely a technical issue – but rather as an issue involving alternative ways of coming to know and understand and to make pedagogic interventions with sound theoretical and practical bases.

The primary concern in the research has been with basic ideas rather than detailed exposition. As the research report assumes no previous knowledge of the *Languaging The Lion King* workbook on the part of the reader, a discussion or a narrative account of the processes of producing the workbook will be provided as the research report progresses with its inquiry.

CHAPTER 1 A Theoretical Overview: Literacy in a Global Context

> *"Literacy is always in the making. Each generation produces its own educational changes..."*
>
> (Margaret Meek)

Although in this research report I will locate myself predominantly within the 'multiliteracies' approach of the New London Group, I will draw from a spectrum of writers and theorists whose theoretical paradigms and literacy traditions are relevant to concerns of my research.

Allan Luke[1], a member of the New London Group, states:

> "Throughout history there have been different literacies for different social milieus...There is no single unitary entity called literacy, but there are different literacies. Therefore different approaches are necessary; there is no single right approach"[2]

Contrary to the historically and commonly held view that 'to be literate' means to 'be able to read and write'[3], it is now being understood that, what it means to be literate is not a label which can be caught, defined or calculated against any one set of criteria.

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[1] Allan Luke is a Senior Lecturer in Language Education and Deputy Dean of Education at James Cook University.
[2] Printed in *Responding to Literacy Needs: Implications for Teacher Educators and Training Consultants – Conference Proceedings.* (Plenary 3) (1991). Queensland Board of Teacher Registration, Toowong.
[3] *The Pocket Oxford Dictionary*, Fifth Edition, 1969, p469.

It is a label which can, and has, changed from culture to culture, from era to era, from field to field and from circumstance to circumstance - if indeed it can ever be labelled definitively at all.

It is also now becoming widely understood that literacy is about *access* – access to discourses and to discourse sites[4] and to membership in an interpretative community. Essentially, what this amounts to is that different literacies will always have different modes of access or that there are different points at which one can gain entry into literacy practices in different contexts.

Joan Duffy, in her MA thesis (1993)[5] contributes a further valuable understanding to the concept of literacy:

> "While one can be classed as literate in one field, and perhaps to a high level of competency, the level of understanding in another area may be minimal."

The emergence of literacy is multifaceted[6]. Literacy emerges not in a systematic, sequential manner, but as a dynamic, learned (self-learned rather than only taught) response to, and assimilation of, the many language modes operating in the social and cultural environments experienced by learners.

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[4] Bigum and Green (1990) in *Literacy in Contexts : Australian Perspectives and Issues* (1993) define discourse sites as including the media, schooling, adult literacy programs, the workplace and policy.(chapter1, p37)
[5] Duffy, Joan (1993) *The Role of Visual Images in the Teaching of Reading and Writing with Adult NESB Low Literacy Students.* University of Technology, Sydney, Australia.
[6] Nigel Hall (1987) in *The emergence of literacy.* Hodder and Stoughton, UK, p.29.

The immediate and the wider cultural environment in which children grow up will be a significant influence on the emergence of literacy.

Although these issues remain undeniably contentious and have not, as yet, achieved more general validity, undeniably, over the last decade or so, educational practitioners (language and literacy teachers, pedagogicians) have been re-thinking what really comprises 'literacy'.

Evidence from studies suggests that an intrinsic part of becoming a literate language user in the contemporary world is to understand the very large range of environmental *print* [7], *audio-visual, visual, auditory and iconographic* text forms, types or genres which surround us. In order for satisfactory participation in the community [8], we need experience in the 'reading' of the multiple text forms being generated in and informing our world.

In today's technologically advanced world, 'literacy' demands a level of sophistication far greater than at any other given time in our past. It now demands the capability and capacity to respond to not only an awesome range of print materials, but to new ways of accessing the knowledge and information constantly being generated by the ever-advancing computer and communication media in the social, educational and corporate contexts.[9]

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[7] See Harste, Woodward and Burke (1984) and Haussler (1985).
[8] An extension of the idea expressed by Francis Christie (1995) (Ed) in *Literacy for a Changing World.* Acer, Australia, p3
[9] See Hinkson, 1991, p6: "...the information and image revolution"

> "The great divide in literacy [now] is not between those who can read and write and those who have not yet learned how to. It is between those who have discovered what kinds of literacy society values and how to demonstrate their competencies in ways that earn recognition." (Meek, 1991:9)[10]

These new understandings of literacy, amongst others, and the new literacy forums that have been created in response to these new understandings have significant curricular and pedagogic implications.

Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist Crisis theorist, saw the production and distribution of knowledge as being central to the construction of a power hierarchy.[11] This notion prompted him to observe the function of schooling and educational systems under state control. His opinion was that schools and school curricula legitimise certain forms of knowledge and certain types of thinking that promote the maintenance of state hegemony. Schools, churches and the media form the ensemble of the power-holders that allow or disallow access to meaning-production as they safeguard political and social hegemony.

Gramsci saw that pedagogical practices had ideological and institutional bases - State intervention into curriculum and classroom ensures that the dominant ideology is maintained.

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[10] See also Bigum and Green (1990, p37): "It is not the possession or otherwise of 'literacy' that defines the literate or illiterate, or that gives them the 'key' – it is the construction of the identity of a literate or illiterate within particular discourse sites that positions the person."

Yet, education is still accepted by the majority as the most significant method for making the 'discoveries' suggested by Meek. Education has always been tied to economic, political and social factors, and accordingly, has had, and still has, a crucial role to play in the acquisition of literacy. The words of Gramsci, Meek and Duffy resonate in our contemporary literacy classrooms, where issues about school, and other literacies, about credibility, consent, legitimacy, ideology and power, are arising on a daily basis and are 'echoed beyond, in the psychology, sociology and politics of literacy'. (Burgess, 1990:107-8)

For much of this chapter, therefore, I will look at some of the pertinent understandings of literacy pedagogy that are currently being articulated by literacy practitioners in certain anglophone countries and from whose ideas and writings I drew in my designing of the *Languaging The Lion King* literacy workbook.

Working with literacy in a specifically pedagogic framework, the New London Group, in their paper *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies-Designing Social Futures* (1995:2) attempt to broaden the understanding of literacy. According to Luke, a member of the NLG, in considering language and literacy education three points must be considered.
Firstly, literacy is a malleable social technology and a commodity that society can reshape according to its needs.

[11] Chantal Mouffe (1985) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy.* Verso, London. In a chapter entitled Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci.

Secondly, literacy cannot be looked at in isolation of larger cultural, political and economic contexts. Finally, there may be no single most suitable or natural approach to literacy acquisition; all approaches are 'artefacts of culture'.[12]

To the Group, 'traditional' curricula and 'traditional' literacy pedagogies have meant teaching and learning to read and write in page-bound, official, standard forms of the national language. Literacy pedagogy, in other words, has been a carefully restricted project -- restricted to formalised, monolingual, monocultural and rule-governed forms of language [teaching and learning].

The Group would wish to broaden, reshape and contemporize what they term as 'traditional' literacy curricula to include the 'negotiating [of] a multiplicity of discourses':

> "We seek to highlight **two** principal aspects of this multiplicity.
>
> **First**, we want to extend the idea and scope of literacy pedagogy to account for the context of our culturally and linguistically diverse and increasingly globalised societies; for the multifarious cultures that interrelate and the plurality of texts that circulate....
>
> **Second,** we argue that literacy pedagogy now must account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies.

[12] Dr. Allan Luke, ibid. p.13

> This includes understanding and competent control of representational forms that are becoming increasingly significant in the overall communications environment, such as visual images and their relationship to the written word – for instance...the interface of visual and linguistic meaning in multimedia."

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996:4) in their discussions within the area of semiotics, take a similar view of the need to expand our understandings of literacy. They assert that verbal language and visual communication both realise the more fundamental and far-reaching systems of meaning that constitute our culture. Each form of communication prevailing in a society, by means of its own specific forms contributes to the overall idea of literacy.

Literacy and the use of language depend to a large extent on shared cultural understandings. Visual language, like written and spoken language, is a social product, and (like written and spoken language) is firmly entrenched in the economic and industrial complex that produces our mass mediated culture.

The literacy paradigm or notion of literacy, of the NLG, Luke and Kress and Van Leeuwen supplements traditional literacy pedagogy by addressing textual multiplicity and by creating a different type of pedagogy.
It conceptualises a paradigm much broader than one with a focus on language alone. It is a paradigm that has the capacity to make us look at how we use signs, symbols, pictures and words as message systems for

meaning-making. In such a paradigm, language and other modes of meaning are dynamic representational communication resources, constantly being reworked and remade by their users as they work to achieve and authenticate their various cultural purposes. It also rests on the pedagogical premise that literacy knowledge - taught and/or learned - is developed as embedded in multiple social, cultural and material contexts.

This largely socio-cultural approach to literacy learning is becoming increasingly accepted in South African pedagogic circles dealing with language and literacy teaching and learning. It is now manifest that behind prescribed English classroom texts are the social relations within which literacies are framed, learned and maintained:

> "Language and texts, as teachers know, are not neutral but deeply imbued with values, ideologies and ways of thinking about the world we inhabit." (Quin Et al: 1995:3)

Texts are designed using the range of historically available choices among different modes of meaning. Designers of texts then become authors of meaning and, in some important senses, bear the responsibility of being consciously in control of their transformation of meanings in the process of designing; and of the effects these meanings have on social process, or social progress. A text will necessarily bear the marks of the designer/s' particular lifeworld(s), and will influence, impinge or impact upon the particular lifeworlds of those exposed to the designed text. As Gee argues, 'the

seemingly innocent conception of literacy as the ability to read and write is "no such thing"' (Gee: 1990: 27).

Against this backdrop, that is, that **texts matter**, perhaps what ought to be carefully considered is the statement made by Gunther Kress in *Writing the Future:*

> "A text, any text, is a microcosm of the social world in which it is made. It captures in an irrefutable form a cultural truth about the individual/s who produced it – be it a film, a letter, any written text..."
>
> (Kress 1994:34ff)

Acknowledgement and/or acceptance of this view, particularly when trying to accommodate and cater for learners from vastly diverse backgrounds and socio-cultural groups, such as is the case in South Africa, would involve and necessitate a complete rethinking when prescribing set-work texts.

To date, the selected and prescribed texts in many English curricula, both printed and visual, have acted to exclude and/or even denigrate many students. For instance, students may see the social and/or cultural group to which they belong negatively portrayed or even made invisible or their gender group might be negatively stereotyped.
Historically in South Africa, the meaning systems from which learning programmes have drawn are often not those with which students are familiar or in agreement.

By extension, essentially what also would need rethinking and redesigning are the 'traditional' pedagogies and methods - what Douglas Barnes considers to be teacher-centered, instructional discourse - of teaching these texts and/or of learning assessment.

In any new literacy pedagogy paradigm, the role of the teacher would need to be distinctly different from the traditional 'chalk and talk' approach. This places new and different demands on teachers' pedagogic skills and understanding. Teachers would need to familiarise themselves with pedagogic literacy-teaching models such as the ***critical reading skills***[13] model advocated by Kress and van Leeuwen (1990:4) or Len Masterman's ***critical literacy profile*** (1985). Such models would become essential in any literacy programme if students are to be provided with a set of ordering tools for analysing, critiquing and understanding media communicated messages and in order to promote the learner's ability to decode visually constructed and visually presented 'reading matter'.

Such profiles would further ensure that, when studying a multimodal text, students would have available to them the tools to develop an awareness of how and why mediated messages got there, who constructed them and the underlying motivations and intent behind those constructions. The 'tools' would include practice in how to analyse how camera angles, props, editing

devices, music and issues of accent and dialogue can be used to manipulate the reactions, and ultimately the decisions, of view-readers.

Along the line of recent working paper responses to literacy learning[20], what I am recommending is that in order to avoid the pitfall of, so to speak, pouring new wine into old bottles, teacher education programmes dealing with the 'new' definition of literacy skills, or any new model for the teaching of literacy texts would need to include a wide range of language and literacy resources and would need to engage with a range of genres and discourses from popular culture and the community. Teachers would need to understand the relationship between language and literacy, power and ideology in order to be able to analyse critically approaches to and resources for literacy teaching. They would need to understand that children learn language and literacy skills as they interact with and relate and respond to others within the contexts of the home, the classroom, and the wider community. To do this, teachers would need to develop an awareness of their own personal literacy history and the cultural contexts in which they are embedded.

Margaret Meek (1991), Len Masterman (1985) and David Buckingham (1994), amongst others, have all proposed, *albeit from differing stances*, that besides print literacy, any new understanding of 'literacy' must include multimedia literacy as a serious, interpretative medium in modern cultures.

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[13] Such skills would include being able to account for the text's cultural location, ideological framework and multiple language (semiotic) systems in operation. It would enable readers to apply, extend and innovate from what they have learned from the said text.

[14] Adapted from working group responses to 'What Teachers Need to Know' at the Queensland, Australia, conference (1991) entitled *Responding to Literacy Needs: Implications for Teacher Educators and Training Consultants.*

Multimedia technologies, they all agree, have invented new globally recognised and widely accessible languages. These languages range from simple pictograms to the computer business language COBOL (Computer Orientated Business Language) used by corporate entities worldwide and the many scientific and mathematical computer languages (such as PASCAL and FORTRAN) used from the Information Super-Highway to school-classrooms the world over. To a certain extent, therefore, a new global literacy has been invented. Undeniably, technologically mediated texts have become a vital and integral medium of language communication in contemporary society.

Film, television and, more recently, computers and the Internet have served to expand communication channels at the same time as shrinking the world to what has been termed by McLuhan (1964) as the "Global Village".[15] The *study (teaching and learning) of visual texts and visual language can therefore not be ignored.*

The global pervasiveness of film (the movies) - as with other media - the nature of the messages they convey, and the role that they occupy in the overall cultural system:

[15] McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man.* New York, Mc Graw Hill.

"Makes them significant objects deserving of attention and requiring a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary perspective to be fully understood" (Real, 1977)[16]

Many literacy theorists and practitioners advocate that what should perhaps be recognized is that film and television can even aid students' development in other areas of learning. Maire Messenger Davies says of television in *Television is Good for Your Kids*[17]:

"Every television viewing occasion is a potential source of learning about television, and hence about media forms generally."

Torrey (1969) described how a four year old child learned to read almost solely from watching television and Smith (1976) hypothesized that a young child's ability to recognise and identify advertising logos and print can be learned from watching television commercials.

Len Masterman (1985), working within the field of media literacy pedagogy, proposes[18] that what is needed is a pedagogical framework that will help young literacy learners to better access, analyze, understand and critically evaluate media messages in all forms. In his comprehensive study of media education, Teaching the Media, he makes a significant claim in this regard:

"Schools, sooner or later, will have to recognise the importance of developing in their pupils the ability to examine visual images critically." [19]

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[16] Quoted by Garth Jowett and James Linton in *Movies as Mass Communication* (1980) p17
[17] Quoted by Meek in *On Being Literate* (1991) p220
[18] In light of these understandings and others, as well as from his own extensive research.
[19] Len Masterman, Routledge, (1985) pp 3-11

To this end, Masterman (1980, 1985) and other media literacy theorists (see also Buckingham (1994) on Masterman and Bethell (1984)) have offered their understandings of what has come to be termed the theories of **inoculation and demystification.**[20]

Masterman argues that, for the most part, students are accustomed to treating visual texts as unquestioned sources of entertainment and/or information. If encouraged (and shown how) to become critical readers and viewers who reflect on how texts are constructed, the viewing process will be denaturalized and will allow students to focus on the meaning-making processes at work.

Although working largely in the field of written literacy pedagogy, a field somewhat different, but not unrelated to that of Masterman and media literacy pedagogy, Francis Christie (1990:3), an important contemporary literacy theorist, reinforces Masterman's concerns in her assertion that:

> "We need to develop resistant and critical readers...The most effective way to achieve this will be through educational programmes that cause students to examine the ways language works for the building and ordering of meanings."

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development too considers media literacy as an empowering and critical tool; a constructive and promising tool for 'critical viewing'. The Council caution that in light of the fact that we cannot, nor do we desire to, "turn media messages off" – at least we can

[20] Masterman, ibid. p.191

understand, analyze and interpret them efficiently and thus avoid being seduced unwittingly by their messages.

These above-mentioned theories further offer important methodologies for learning and teaching that will promote reflection and critical thinking rather than cultural reproduction[21]. They offer aids for the student to learn about the ways they are positioned (and propositioned) by texts:

- They provide the tools by means of which a critical study of the influence of context, linguistic structures and features, and interpretative strategies on the meanings produced by readers/viewers can be undertaken.
- This 'Critical Framing'[22] involves the students' standing back from the text under study and viewing it critically in relation to its context.
- Students are enabled to interpret and respond to the social and cultural contexts of particular designs of meaning.
- Students recognise that the meaning of any text is influenced by the contexts of both the producer(s) of the text and the reader(s)/ receiver(s) of the text.

  Meaning is the product of a complex interaction between a text, the text's producer(s) and a reader's *response* to the text. [23]

In opposition to the notion still widely prevalent (and one to which Masterman is perhaps offering a solution), that watching television

[21] Masterman, ibid. p.191.
[22] *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures* ibid. p43

indiscriminately fosters illiteracy among the young and that television-watching hinders children's acquisition of literacy[24], Hodge and Tripp (1986) state that:

> "Children's response to television is typically a complex cognitive act, not the enemy of reading and thought as so widely feared, but so closely akin that it makes sense to talk of reading television"

Meek (1991:218-9) is also of the opinion that, for the most part,

> "Screen reading is not taking over or replacing traditional print literacy. It is developing contexts and styles of its own for which the term 'literacy' is appropriate... in an extended sense..."

As concerns 'television and literacy' or the ability of children to 'read' television, some theorists are of the opinion that children discover how to 'read' television without any 'lessons'.

Children are already literate at a semi-critical level and therefore are able to decode media messages without necessarily requiring a defined critical framework in which to operate (Meek: 1990; Buckingham and Sefton-Green: 1994). Rod Quin (1997), further to this, adds that most students have a well-developed but implicit knowledge of the 'linguistic structures

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[23] See Hayhoe and Parker (Eds.) (1990:16-32). The increasing use of the word 'response' is a recognition of the interaction between a reader and a text wherein the reader is 'busily *making* significance through an active engagement with what is being read'.

[24] Fiske and Hartley (1978:86), quoted by Michael Gurevitch Et al in *Culture, society and the media* (1992), claim that:
"The 'oral' quality of television [is a] compensatory discourse for cementing the 'non-literate' working class into a culture which places enormous investment in the abstract elaborated codes of literacy."

and features' of visual texts, developed outside of school. He advocates that the teacher's task in teaching visual texts will frequently be to make the students' implicit knowledge explicit.

Quin, in congruence (on this point) with Masterman, Christie and Paul Messaris, posits the need in media education to put in place mechanisms for 'discriminating seeing' to obviate the likelihood of being taken in or duped by media messages.

As print texts did in the past, so do mediated or visual texts today. Rod Quin suggests that, in fact, many of the language structures and features of visual texts are the same as those of print texts, especially those of text structure, such as narrative, logical or expository patterns - a further convincing reason for the inclusion of multimodal texts in an English curriculum.

Multimodal text forms, because they are so richly imbued with an amalgam of semiotic codes (print, iconographic, aural, oral and visual codes), give their readers the chance to extend, confirm and/or reconfigure understandings of their social lives. Through a variety of simultaneously presented 'language devices', multimodal texts allow readers access alternative ideas, are given the means and opportunity to accept or reject the lifeworlds of others to whom/which the texts have given them exposure.

Curriculum and literacy pedagogies that afford students the opportunity to study multiple and multimodal text forms, will be offering them new lenses for understanding the significance of society's new and inescapable 'image technologies'[25]. To carry this metaphor a little further, to neglect texts of a multimodal nature is to deny children access to lenses that are now absolutely necessary for a comprehensive viewing of our world.

Such enriched curricula and literacy pedagogies are invaluable particularly as concerns those technologies bearing directly on knowledge production and the relationship between language and learning, that is, the application of various media and information technologies to literacy pedagogy.

As well as discussing the theorist/theories mentioned above, further research allied me rather closely with the pedagogical theories of the authors of the **Primary Language Record** [26] who promote the 'Language Experience Approach' to literacy, which stresses "the importance of using children's first-hand experiences and natural interests in helping them to acquire reading and writing skills."

The pedagogic art, according to the authors of the Primary Language Record, lies in managing both the 'social and curriculum dimensions' of the 'learning environment' creating the contexts which will elicit the various linguistic performances for which the teacher is looking.

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[25] Chris Begum and Bill Green, *Technologizing Literacy:or, interrupting the dream of reason,* (Chapter 1, p5)

[26] Discussed by Bill Green in *The Insistence of the Letter – Literacy Studies and Curriculum Theorising* (1993). The reading of The Primary Literacy Record formed part of the talk delivered

A further point of convergence between the PLR and my thinking lies in the authors' premise that the teacher's authority "derives less from her or his role as representative of the literate culture than from her or his performance as interlocutor, scribe, confidant (e) and guide"[27]. It has been my aim in the workbook, to encourage teachers to act as *conduits,* (carriers) of meanings from their position as more experienced, and hopefully more expert adults, to the students, rather than as authorities on meanings.

This in order that the students themselves become enabled to use interactive, problem-solving process approaches as they consciously reflect on these 'carried' meanings and become alert to the ways in which language, in all its semiotic systems of representation, works for creating and organising meanings.

By way of concluding this chapter, I will confirm the premise set out at the beginning of this chapter. Let me crystallise what I see as the most salient argument common to all the theorists I have been discussing: *where we deny our children proper access to literacy, we deny them capacity to develop as fully rounded persons.* Whereas Christie refers to 'written' literacy and Masterman to 'media' literacy and I refer to 'multimodal' literacy, whatever the differences, the essential issue is the same, that is, literacy, in all the forms in

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at the conference *Literacy for the Twenty-First Century*, The Literacy Centre, Brighton Polytechnic, Falmer, 16-18 July 1990.

[27] James Donald in *The Insistence of the Letter – Literacy Studies and Curriculum Theorising* (1993), edited by Bill Green. P127.

which it might manifest itself, is essential if people are to be able to participate effectively in the home, educational institution or the workplace.

CHAPTER 2 Literacy in the South African Context

> "Designing any semiotic activity will more or less normatively reproduce, or more or less radically transform given knowledges, social relations, and identities, depending upon the social conditions under which the designing occurs"[1].

Contextualising Literacy Pedagogies in the South African Educational Scenario

The teaching of verbal English language discourse is involved at various levels in the production and reproduction of political, social and cultural relations, identities, experience and consciousness. In South Africa today, particular difficulty lies in determining whose cultural contexts, social and institutional conditions and political interests are being, are to be, or need to be, represented in literacy pedagogies and curricula. Furthermore, the necessary negotiation of differences in any attempt to formalize a literacy curriculum (or curricula) will be difficult and often painful, as expressed by James Donald (1985: 120-134):

> "The problem is that in a multicultural society, there can be no one centre of authority...To define literacy as one...is to set in place effective mechanisms of differentiation and discrimination rather than of inclusiveness."

[1] NLG p25

While we well know that all South African school children are now expected to learn to read and write as part of their entitlement to literacy, what needs acknowledgement is the fact that literacy in this country has not been, and is not, the same for everyone.

Literacy learning in South Africa has historically been characterized by wide chasms of difference in economic, social, cultural and political values, and grossly unjust inequalities in educational opportunities. Although it is undeniable that ideology is an essential aspect of any education system, until recently, the South African education system in general and the literacy / language curricula sanctioned by it in particular, carried an excess of ideological baggage. It was a process of continuous structuring of consciousness. For most of this century, South African curricula were significantly manipulated by the dominant and repressive National Party ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 1971: 123-173) to regulate access to orders of discourse – and the relationship of discourses in economic, political, cultural and social spaces. Under the government of the National Party, South Africa's education policies were authoritarian in character – influenced strongly by a Christian National ideology. To use the words of the White Paper on Education (1983), the principles of Christian National Education's (CNE) "fundamental pedagogics and underlying philosophy" is to "mould good citizens" to "fit into ordered society" and to "be obedient to the State" and the values of the existing order.

In such an ideological paradigm, divisions along racial, ethnic, cultural and language group lines were sanctioned in the name of "ordered society". Schools and their state-controlled curricula became important sites for the transmission of the ideology of Apartheid and for legitimating of the "wisdoms" of the Afrikaaner Nationalist state.

In 1995, soon after the African National Congress (ANC) was elected to Government, it claimed in the introduction to its *Policy Framework for Education and Training*, that, under the Apartheid regime, the curriculum prescribed and instituted by Government

> "... perpetuated race, class, gender and ethnic divisions. It emphasized division rather than commonality and denied common citizenship and a national identity.... The curriculum has been unresponsive to changing labour market needs and has failed to contribute to the development of learners who are prepared for the world of work and for active participation in the process of social development."[2]

Its overall effect was that generations of white children were conditioned to accept privilege and separation as part of the natural order, and to undue and unquestioned acceptance of the status quo.

Today, in 1998, 'those days are over' and the National Party government and its curriculum has long been replaced in South Africa by the ANC government and its new vision of curriculum, as is currently being trialled

[2] African National Congress (1995) *A Policy Framework for Education and Training*. Johannesburg, South Africa.

and tested in **Curriculum 2005**. It is, however, naïve to think that politics and power playing can be kept out of education. Education policies, systems and practices in any country and under any political party reflect the political options, histories, traditions and values informing them. Schools have always played, and still play, a critical role in determining student's access to, and acquisition of, literacy skills – and, as such, to future life opportunities.

> "They [Schools] provide access to a hierarchical ordered world of work; they shape citizenries; they provide a supplement to the discourses and activities of communities and private lifeworlds. As these three major realms of social activity have shifted, so the roles and responsibilities of schools must shift."[3]

The complexity of the subject of literacy in the South African scenario is largely embedded in the vastly differing social and educational practices of the differently located cultural and language groups that constitute this multicultural and multilingual 'rainbow' nation. The lack of solidarity on issues of schooling within the South African educational framework up until fairly recently, especially as concerns the acquisition of literacy, has highlighted the fact that classrooms are as much cultural and historical sites (Burgess, 1988: 133--6) as pedagogic or didactic sites. We are only now beginning to approach classrooms as "sites of cultural making" (Hardcastle, 1985: 8-22).

[3] New London Group, ibid. p19.

Deriving from this is a deeper awareness of literacy outside school, or, as Burgess suggests, a view of literacy which is released from the assumption that 'schooled literacy' [4] is the only literacy, or that only one relation to schooled literacy is possible. Once literacy is seen nistorically and as a matter of tradition and different use, questions can be posed about who wants what from literacy and about how the power and social relations within and behind literacy operate and are negotiated.

Waltzer (1983: 120-34) asserts that in complex modern societies, and I classify the 'New South Africa' as an emergent modern, and very complex society, the idea of 'simple equality' – everyone getting the same amount of the same thing in the same form – is neither achievable nor desirable. Instead Waltzer argues for a 'complex equality' – the distribution of different social goods according to different criteria reflecting the specificity of these goods, their social significance, and the variety of their recipients.

Whatever opinion we in South Africa hold, whether it is that 'democracy' in the acquisition of literacy and its distribution is, or is not, desirable and/or achievable, what is indisputable is that literacy is a vital 'social good' or commodity, as expressed so succinctly by Ed Hirsch, (1987:22)

> "Literate culture has become the common currency for social and economic exchange...and the only available ticket to full citizenship."[5]

[4] It might be interesting to note that Margaret Meek has a different understanding from Burgess as to what this term means. To Meek, 'schooled literacy' depends on pupils' understandings of language in interaction with social behaviour.

[5] Reprinted in *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know.* Reprinted in Bill Green (Ed) (1993) *The Insistence of the Letter – Literacy Studies and Curriculum Theorizing*

Literacy herein is revealed both as an instance of participation in the private and the public, the symbolic and the social. It is a "threshold to further participation in the labor market and civil society." [6]

The approaches of many social scientists confirm that a society's institutions produce discourses – that is, their configurations of knowledge. South African schools are particularly crucial sites in which many and various discourses relate to each other. English language and literacy curricula in the South African context in particular have historically been particularly powerful agents in influencing and interpreting, for the young learners, their cultural and social contexts. What Donald (1983) and Green (1986) said of British literacy curricula seems to apply equally to South African literacy curricula instituted and upheld until fairly recently, that they have been:

> "Predicated on a long process of cultural and ideological struggle, in terms of which a particular relationship was forged between literature as a social force and the establishment of the popular compulsory school."[7]

For most of this century, South African literacy curricula (among other curricula) were significantly manipulated by the dominant and repressive National Party ideological state apparatuses [8] to regulate access to what Fairclough (1992) might term 'orders of discourse' – and the relationship of discourses in economic, political, cultural and social spaces.

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[6] James Donald, *Literacy and the Limits of Democracy.* Reprinted in Bill Green (Ed) (1993) *The Insistence of the Letter – Literacy Studies and Curriculum Theorizing* (Chapter 7, pp120-134).
[7] Green: 1986, Donald 1983. Reprinted in Kevin Hart (Ed) (1988) *Shifting Frames – English/Literature/Writing.* Centre for Studies in Literary Education, Deakin University.
[8] Althusser (1971)

In the introduction to its 1995 *Policy Framework for Education and Training*, The African National Congress claims that, under the Apartheid regime, the prescribed education system and its curricula instituted by Government:

> "... perpetuated race, class, gender and ethnic divisions. It emphasized division rather than commonality and denied common citizenship and a national identity."

It is undeniable that 'traditional' (see chapter 1) literacy subject syllabi have, in the past, indeed been used to condition generations of school-goers to accept, as part of the 'natural' order, the marginalisation of certain groups -- particularly along racial, language, cultural and gender lines. These 'traditional language and literacy pedagogies' promulgated the idea that cultures and languages other than those of the mainstream (White Afrikaans and White English) represented a deficit. Through the legitimating of 'hegemony-promoting' texts[9], and the avoidance of texts that might have proven 'counter-hegemonic' in terms of the dominant (repressive?) state apparatus/ ideology, English subject syllabi (as prescribed across all the differentiated SA education departments) manipulated the world-views of all those passing through their passages.

South Africa's recent and ongoing effort to transform schools and schooled literacy must be recognized as a critical part of a larger national and social transformation, for different conceptions of society lead to different conceptions of education and to very specific forms of curriculum and

[9] in the Gramscian sense

pedagogy. It becomes imperative therefore that any literacy curriculum implemented in the New South Africa engages with all students' own discourses, experiences and language orientations, which, in South Africa, are increasingly defined by 'cultural and sub-cultural diversity and the different literacy practices that come with this diversity'. [10]

In the 'New South Africa', a literacy pedagogy is needed that views language and other forms of representation as dynamic, constantly being remade by a host of meaning-makers in constantly changing and varying contexts. In the words of Christie (1988:2-3):

> "Changes in language and literacy are in themselves measures of the constantly changing nature of society. As society changes, so too must its language, as a necessary resource within which change is encoded, promoted and explained".

A curious anomaly, however, has pertained to the teaching of English language and literacy in South Africa. While it has been unthinkable to negate in any way the importance of teaching reading and writing skills in the acquisition of literacy skills, very few English teachers have recognized or have been acquainted with the idea that 'reading' skills are not limited only to the skills of decoding written texts, but are vital for an informed 'reading' of verbal, visual (iconographic, graphic) and oral and/or 'sounded' texts. Until the mid-eighties, when the TED introduced the study of film texts into the Senior High School English syllabus (standards eight to ten), English language and literature curricula (TED, JMB, DET), in most South African schools,

[10] New London Group, ibid p43

continued to be dominated by print. The salience of 'textual multiplicity"[11] was neither recognised nor regarded as being of pedagogic value. In the words of Nigel Hall (1987:88),

> "In too many classrooms, young learners' freedom to engage in meaningful literacy acts was considerably restricted".

It is crucial that if we are to redress the inequalities of the past, any new version of literacy pedagogy in South Africa must consider the socio-cultural, linguistic and affective needs and identities of all learners, of all ages – a tall order for South Africa's rainbow nation in particular. In South Africa, cultural and linguistic diversity is now a central and critical issue and, as a result, the meaning of literacy pedagogy is being forced to change as well. Any proposed literacy pedagogy, by necessity, would have to be open to change if it is to remain relevant to the new and shifting demands of society. Interesting and varied engagements in literacy and literacy teaching must be provided if it is to facilitate for all students the power to access fulfilling employment opportunities, 'which in turn, embody designs for social futures'[12].

This version of pedagogy and curriculum would, by integrating school academics and social economics, move towards addressing the glaring deficits that the ANC Government recognized as existing in the former Nationalist Party Government's curricular conceptions:

[11] New London Group, *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies, p6*
[12] NLG p21

"The curriculum [has been] unresponsive to changing labour market needs and [has] failed to contribute to the development of learners who are prepared for the world of work and for active participation in the process of social development."[13]

The gradual recognition in English and literacy teaching that these aforementioned broader social issues exist within the highly indeterminate concept we term 'literacy' finds particular relevance in South Africa's recent attempts to form a new curriculum, that is **Curriculum 2005:**

"Essentially, the new curriculum will effect a shift from one which has been content-based to one which is based on outcomes. This aims at equipping all learners with the knowledge, competencies and orientations needed for success after they leave school or have completed their training. Its guiding vision is that of a thinking, competent future citizen."[14]

(Professor Sibusiso Bengu, February, 1997)

At present, there is little consensus among planners and stakeholders about the effectiveness and results of the concept of Curriculum 2005. Firstly, because it is too soon to tell, and secondly, because different education theorists and historians of education (working within traditions ranging from the 'liberal' to the 'conservative' to those using the tools of 'political

[13] Quoted in *A Policy Framework for Education and Training.* African National Congress (1995) Macmillan, Johannesburg.
[14] Foreward by the Minister of Education, Professor SME Bengu, to *Curriculum 2005* – Lifelong learning for the 21st century (1997). Printed by CTP Books, South Africa.

economy'[15]) have different views on what the archetypal meaning of curriculum is.

Curriculum *development* however, signifies a variety of processes including planning and re-planning, design, modification and continuous renewal of the current or existing curriculum as well as its evaluation and implementation. For South Africa and its formulation of Curriculum 2005, such argument implies that existing or new curricula, in any form, can be rarely, if ever, considered as final or completed as noted by Lynne Slonimsky (1996)[16], as a rule, curriculum recontextualizes cultural forms in time and space.

Phillip W. Jackson (1992) has articulated what I see as being the issue for curriculum theory in South Africa at present. It has become one of providing –

> "An orderly, coherent set of experiences, each of which is flexible enough to provide the appropriate degrees of challenge and support to students whose knowledge and skills may differ widely from one another."

With regard to Curriculum 2005 and its concerns with English literacy, there is now a marked ambivalence as regards both identity and purpose of what constitutes an English Curriculum. If we look at various accounts of English teaching in recent times, we find that different versions highlight generally a focus on language or literature studies.

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[15] Michael Cross (1983) *An Historical Review of Education in South Africa: Towards an Assessment* Department of Education, Wits University, Johannesburg.
[16] Lynne Slonimsky is a lecturer in the Department of Education at Wits University, Johannesburg.

However, Bill Green in *Literature as Curriculum Frame: A Critical Perspective*[17] offers a third focus – the notion of **literacy**. Green says that there are strong and weak cases with all three emphases. His personal view is that English is concerned with the network of relations among them:

> "...I see the subject discipline as ultimately concerned with discourse – or language-in-use in terms of which a particular relationship is to be observed between the categories 'literature' and 'literacy'.... In a sense they are 'secondary modelling systems with regard to the 'primary modelling system' of language....The point to make here is that any adequate account of English teaching must deal systematically with a motivated relationship between language and the literature/literacy complex."

Green's model may have a crucial role to play in the processes of self- and social formation and reformation in the genesis of a new English literacy curriculum within **Curriculum 2005** for the current and future generation of South African school learners.

As I understand it, in the *Communication, Literacy and Language* learning area of Curriculum 2005, Government has recognized and realized that, in the 'New South Africa', a knowledge of communication, literacy and its related language skills are multiple and, in their multiplicity, are used and valued for different purposes. These skills are further subject to and dependent on contexts of use.

[17] Reprinted in Kevin Hart (Ed) (1988) *Shifting Frames – English/Literature/Writing.* Centre for Studies in Literary Education, Deakin University.

To this end, there is a greater acceptance by Government in Curriculum 2005 that literacy programs should concentrate upon outcomes [18] as well as inputs.

Curriculum 2005 defines 'outcomes' as follows:

> "These are the results of learning processes and refer to knowledge, skills, attitudes and values within particular contexts. Learners should be able to demonstrate that they understand and can apply the desired outcomes within a certain context."[19]

The concept of outcomes is not new to education and training, but what is now ineluctably evident in South Africa is the massively increased salience and prominence over the past few years of this concept in any discussion about education. As phrased in the NCDC Working Group's August 1996 National Qualifications Framework Working Document:

> Transformational Outcomes-based Education...is a collaborative, flexible, transdisciplinary, outcomes-based, open-system, empowerment-oriented approach to learning. It aims at equipping all learners with the knowledge, competence and orientations needed for success after they leave school or have completed their training. Hence, its guiding vision is that of a competent future citizen...equipped to transfer [success in the learning environment] to life in a complex, challenging, High-tech future."

[18] For purposes of this research report, it might be interesting to note that Lindsay Mitchell, a director of Prime Research and Development Ltd, remarked that the development of outcome statements is also a powerful vehicle in itself in developing reflective practitioners.

The Curriculum 2005 outcomes-based model herein seeks to bring about change by focusing on outcomes referenced against requirements outside education. Through Curriculum 2005, Government intends to work towards the recruitment of all learners' previous and current experiences, as well as their out-of-school communities and discourses, as an integral part of the learning experience. South African schools, through Curriculum 2005, now find themselves increasingly responsible for helping learners to interpret, understand and cope with the socio-cultural, political and economic realities of our times. It becomes their duty, in the New South Africa, to **empower** learners by transmitting to them not only conventionally accepted academic knowledges (if any still exist) but by transmitting to and interpreting for students, the powerful norms and values prevailing, and constantly changing, in our peculiar social context. It further aims to empower learners by allowing them a productive and empowering interchange with pedagogical practices, prescribed texts and even curriculum concerns – giving them the opportunity to locate themselves in terms of teaching and learning practices. This would provide learners with scope to represent themselves and their interests.

To this end, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (October 1996) designed and prescribed eight different outcomes-based learning areas for application by Curriculum 2005:

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[19] *Curriculum 2005 – Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century.* (1997) Issued by the National Department of Education

- Communication, Literacy and Language Learning:
- Numeracy, Mathematical Literacy and Mathematical Science
- Human and Social Sciences:
- Natural Sciences
- Arts and Culture:
- Economic and Management Sciences
- Technology:
- Life Orientation

Government is proposing that, if adopted after the trial period is up in 2005, this outcomes-based model of education and vocational training might well do for South African education what Gilbert Jessup (1995) says outcomes-based education can do for British education:

> "Open access to learning to far more individuals of all ages, it would lead to more efficient and cost-effective learning [and] it would further provide a means of relating and aligning academic and vocational education/training."[20]

As South Africa regains global acceptance and re-enters global markets, school curricula and literacy programmes are facing increasing pressures to achieve parity of esteem between academic and vocational qualifications. If this is to be achieved, the promotion of active forms of learning requiring students to demonstrate a range of cognitive, interpersonal and practical skills, as well as an understanding of the principles that govern them, is of the

essence. In terms of active forms of learning, another urgent issue that is now being addressed in South Africa is the fact that literacy teachers are expected to make school-goers literate in almost immediately demonstrable ways. Upon their entry into the competitive working world, students are expected to be able to immediately use their acquired 'literacy competencies' to 'get on with it' and be of use and profit to society.[21] Literacy in South Africa is thus now seen as a learning product directly related to the economics of production.

This recognition by Government poses interesting policy and implementation difficulties for Curriculum 2005, particularly in terms of designing and/or compiling an English literacy pedagogy and/or curriculum for its multiplicity of learners, for multiple reasons, not the least being in the selection of literacy texts selected for literacy learning.

The Interim Report of the Institute of Curriculum Development (26 September 1996) suggests that such a literacy pedagogy and/or curriculum should essentially and ideally promote a wider range of modes of language use, and intervene in the literacy development of pupils with clear, explicit guidelines of the way language works at all levels of meaning-making. These desires, it seems to me, are of such universal value and relevance. that no matter what the actually implemented literacy learning paradigm,

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[20] Jessup in his article *Outcomes Based Qualifications and the Implications for Learning* printed in Burke, John (Ed) (1995) *Outcomes, Learning and the Curriculum – Implications for NVQs, GNVQs and other qualifications.* Falmer Press, London

[21] Or, as Margaret Meek expresses it: "...adults have become more impatient about their children's learning and demand more **demonstrable accomplishment...**" (Meek, ibid p9)

they can, and will, hardly be negated or ignored. Nor will it negate the influence of the multiple forms of communication today on curriculum.

If the cultural and pedagogic traditions South African English subject curricula and syllabi have perpetuated for so long are to be interrogated rather than simply transmitted, it will mean:

> " {as a necessary starting point} **becoming and being critical, in our various sites** as teachers, a stance from which the intimate relation of ideology and rhetoric can be explored and revealed, so that nothing in the literary tradition can anymore seem innocent."[22]

It is in such a context that I locate *Languaging The Lion King.* It was important to me that the *Languaging The Lion King* text worked towards the meshing of the many and different subjectivities available and existing in the 'New South Africa's' classrooms, with their attendant languages, discourses and registers.

These principles form the basis for the activities developed for the workbook. I wished to harness them as a resource for effective literacy learning.

[22] Lionel Gossman, 1974:31 quoted by Bill Green in Shifting Frames: English/ Literature/Writing. Kevin Hart (Ed) p.64

CHAPTER 3 *Languaging The Lion King* – A Workbook for Literacy Education in South Africa

Theoretical pedagogic paradigms of materials development informing the workbook

Designing *Languaging The Lion King* involved the use of an existing meaning-making resource material - Disney's **The Lion King** - for the making of a new text offering new meanings.

The New London Group's interpretation of the word 'design' motivated much of the design strategy governing *Languaging The Lion King:*

> 'The notion of design connects powerfully to the sort of creative intelligence the best practitioners need in order to be able continually to re-design their activities in the very act of practice...'[1]

The Group proposed to treat any semiotic activity, including language to produce or consume texts, as a matter of design involving three elements: *Available design*, *Designing* and *The Redesigned.'*
I therefore focused loosely on these areas in the designing and developing of the workbook text.

Why did Disney's animated film text The Lion King and its particular orders of discourse[2], rather than any other film text, fit the **first element**, that is, ***Available Design***?

[1] NLG P22

The process of creating the workbook *Languaging The Lion King* involved more a shaping and reshaping of existing, educative[3] (although educationally unexploited) material, than the development of an entirely 'original' text. Essentially, *Languaging The Lion King* is the result of an attempt to harmonise an existing contemporary and widely popular text, Disney's animated film, **The Lion King,**[4] with the current and constantly shifting pedagogic, cultural and socio-political orders (or disorders) surrounding it in the South African educational context. Hence, the process of shaping emergent meaning in the workbook involved the re- articulation, re-presentation and re-contextualisation of an *available design*.

The 1994 release of **The Lion King**, proved to be the most successful animated film in the Disney Company's history[5]. At a technical level, it is a film which probably exemplifies best the integration of computer animation, for example, the startling computer-generated wildebeest stampede, with more traditional methods of animation [6].

At the level of meaning making, it provides an existing or available text heavily pregnant with social and cultural issues currently being debated in South Africa. The structure of the animated film (as with all cinema) is defined by the codes[7] in which it operates and the codes that operate

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[2] An order of discourse may include a mixture of different semiotic systems; for instance, visual and aural semiotic systems in combination with language constitute the order of discourse of film.
[3] Educative in the sense that it is supportive of learning and the development of literacy.
[4] Disney Corporation:1994
[5] Quoted by Richard Zoglin in his article *Lion King – A Different Breed of Cats* printed in Time magazine (Time, August 4, 1997).
[6] Jill Nelmes (Ed) (1996) *An Introduction to Film Studies,* pp. 71-72
[7] Codes are critical constructions –systems of logical relationships. (The codes are the medium through which the "message" of the scene is transmitted.)

within it. A great variety of codes combine to form the medium in which film expresses meaning, namely, culturally derived codes, cinematic codes, acting codes, music, lighting and artistic codes. It is because they are codes –because they have meaning for the viewer outside the narrow limits of that particular scene in the film (or in the general culture) –that they affect the viewers, and need the viewer to decipher/decode the (subjectively) encoded meanings.

For the most part, viewers carry with them a quite unwarranted faith in the integrity of media images and representations, and this applies particularly to the younger viewer. It is indisputable, however that operating within every mediated text is an underlying ideology or discourse deriving from and/or serving the interests of a particular party (parties). Included herein are the financial interests of the producer/s - to the artistic interests of the director/s- to the political interests of governmental agencies. [We could do any amount of permutations of this equation].

The animated film text is a viable literacy learning resource because it is a popular multimodal medium of communication readily available in the popular South African film, television and video circuit culture and to which a large percentage of the school-going generation have access. Considering that the workbook is to be pitched at literacy learners in the senior phase of their school training, I felt that animation might be more suited to the young viewer than would a live action film for many reasons.

Firstly, because of its heavily anthropomorphic (Simba is a typical little boy, albeit a lion cub) cinematic style - much of it is filmed from the viewpoint of the lion cub and the lion cub's reactions are frequently sentimentalized:

> "Films about animals [almost always] appeal to younger students" (J. Howard, 1996)

Because it involves 'drawn' or 'inanimate' characters, an animated film is often less 'threatening' in terms of psychological proximity to 'real life situations and characters' than a live action film. It provides the overtly mediating presence of an artist(s).

The introduction and intervention of this (obvious to most) third party between the subject and observer creates sufficient personal and theoretical distance between what for the young viewer might be seen as 'actual' or 'real life' (willing suspension of disbelief), and that which is 'allegorical' or 'made up'. *Animation*, as the word itself implies, doesn't ordinarily involve the photographing of subjects that move by themselves:

> "The subjects photographed are generally drawings or static objects... photographed in thousands of separate frames (sic).... When a sequence of these frames is projected at 24 frames per second (fps), the illusion is that the drawings or objects are moving, and hence, are 'animated'."(Giannetti, 1987, p103)

This distance or space between the text and the viewer allows for a sufficiently clear representation of reality – but one that does not intimidate or disconcert the young viewer.

In fact, when critics said (when the stage production of the animated movie was in the process of being developed) that the 'death scene' was threatening for children, Michael Eisner, chairman of Disney, said

> "Kids get it quicker than adults. They understand the symbolism instantly; it's very Disney-esque. It was always our goal to create a very positive experience that the family can enjoy together; whether you're eight or eighty, or two, for that matter. "[8]

As the gamut of sophistication in the animated film is as broad as it is in live-action films, the viewer is involved in a study of stylistic techniques such as mise-en-scene or montage equal to, and is provided with a host of camera and photographic processes sometimes greater than, those of the live action film genre.[9] This particular animated film text, like many live action films, has the power to 'language' through its code(s) and context(s) and multiple modes, meanings, sounds, signs and symbols to viewers/receivers of all ages, all races, all cultures and all creeds. (I use 'language' in the sense of 'talking' to the viewer through its multiple meaning-making devices). In a case study of children's use of a product based on the Disney film, *The Lion King*, Audrey Ricker (1996) demonstrated that:

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[8] Taken from an article entitled The lion roars again by Rich Mkhondo (Washington) printed in the Tonight section of The Star Newspaper (November 18, 1997).
[9] Louis Giannetti, (1987) *Understanding Movies – Fourth Edition.* Case Western Reserve University, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey.

> "Regardless of nation or ethnicity or class, children, familiar with the Disney media models, regard themselves as members of what John Thompson (1990, 44) calls a stable, select social group that uses mass-mediated "words and images" to create and sustain social relations."[10]

The Lion King text in particular is an animated film that seemed to invite the participation of multiple audience types. Through Disney's multimedia marketing channels, *The Lion King* text has generated a myriad of interwoven and spin-off narratives and commodities to which children, regardless of race or culture are exposed.

These narratives and commodities further cross cinema, TV, video games[11], printed clothing, bed linen, stationery and crockery (Luke, 1995)[12]. This was an important factor for me for *The Lion King* and its related workbook *Languaging The Lion King,* the texts being studied in the literacy classroom, would have a life outside of the classroom; they would have a place in the 'real life' of the learners.

Finally, through a study of a film text both accessible and enjoyable to young learners, I felt that they could be brought to the understanding that they need not accept a film's view of how things are – they can question it. Even though it is largely aimed at the younger viewer, the workbook claims that it is a popular misconception that animated movies are intended

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[10] ***The Lion King*** *animated storybook: A case study of aesthetic and economic power.* Printed in Critical Arts, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1996, Johannesburg.

[11] For example, Disney's Activity Centre: The Lion King CD-ROM (Developed for The Walt Disney Company by Gryphon Software Corp. 1994)

primarily for the entertainment of children. As previously mentioned, Michael Eisner asserts that the works of many animation houses, Disney included, appeal to both children and adults. Furthermore, animated movies are no less 'simple' than live-action movies in production technique, form, photographic/shot variety or story line. If they are examined in this light, their significance for both child and adult viewers alike becomes evident. This quality is of great significance in the framework of Curriculum 2005 and OBE in that the new curriculum expects to address the needs of, and therefore tries to cater for, literacy learners of all age groups - not only young learners.

The Lion King seemed to offer adequate scope to demonstrate that films do not simply reflect a pre-existing reality, but construct a version of it. Furthermore, animated films, with their manipulation of imagery, are as 'value-laden' as, and are no less 'innocent' as carriers of meaning than are live-action movies. A recent controversy in this regard appeared in The Star newspaper in August 1997:

> **ARABS ANGRY AT DISNEY**
>
> **Cairo** – The Arab League has urged the Walt Disney company to stop making motion pictures Which are insulting to Arabs and Muslims. The League is angry at Walt Disney productions that allegedly make Arabs appear to be aggressive, uncivilized and backward. The cartoon film *Aladdin* caused much distress a few years ago among Arabs who felt the lyrics were racist.

[12] Quoted in Pedagogy of Multiliteracies – Designing Social Futures. New London Group p16.

What is perhaps not fully acknowledged or has not been sufficiently researched by the workbook is the fact that animation encompasses an enormous range of styles - from childlike cartoon figures to 'adults only' type erotic lyricism and cybersex[13]. Not all entirely suited for use in the classroom. Along with animated technologies comes a new set of problems, for, implicit in the animated form is the notion of how 'meaning' is released, controlled and manipulated by the unique vocabulary available to the animator. Czech surrealist animator, Jan Svankmajer sees how this vocabulary can become contentious:

> " Animation enables me to give magical powers to things...Suddenly, everyday contact with things which people are used to, acquires a new dimension and in this way casts a doubt over reality. In other words, I use animation as a means of subversion."[14]

It is *with caution* then, that I recommend the animated film as a literacy learning resource for use in the literacy classroom.

Producing the actual *Languaging The Lion King* workbook qualified under the Group's **second element**, that is, ***Designing***. At this point, I had various ideas held in suspension in my mind. I was conscious of the idea that traditional literacy programmes and their prescribed literacy texts had reinforced particular ways of thinking about the world we inhabit, rather than challenging such ways of thinking.

[13] Jill Nelmes, ibid. p83.

The Multiliteracies paradigm (NLG: 16), with its emphasis on how negotiating the multiple linguistic and cultural differences in our society is central to the pragmatics of the working, civic, and private lives of students, seemed to offer a means of overcoming the limitations of such traditional literacy learning approaches.

I recognised that the literacy classroom, as a microcosm of the larger societal framework, will reflect social and attitudinal differences within the society at large. I therefore had in mind, throughout the process of designing the workbook and creating its tasks and assignments, the desire to, and intention of, affording students the opportunity to construct personal responses to topics such as colonialism, the responsibilities of rulership, social responsibility and socially constructed identities.

Because of the multiracial, multicultural and multilingual nature of learners in South African classrooms, I expected, anticipated and desired divergences in learners' responses to, and interpretations of these issues - both in the depictions/constructions thereof in the movie text and in the concerns of the *Languaging The Lion King* text.

The New London Group asserts that the question of differences has become a main one that we must now address as educators:

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[14] Quoted in *The Magic Art of Jan Svankmajer,* BBC 2, June 1992.

> "As soon as our sights are set on the objective of creating the learning conditions for full social participation, the issue of differences becomes critically important...It may well be that we have to rethink what we are teaching and, in particular, what new learning needs literacy pedagogy might now address." (NLG: 2-3)

In the South African context, what also needs to be acknowledged is that learners are not only going to be struggling with the 'literacy-promoting' concepts being studied in the texts prescribed in the literacy learning classroom. Concomitantly they are going to be grappling with the problematic nature of their own national identity in a multicultural society haunted by racial, ethnic and cultural division.

To this end, I designed the tasks/assignments in the workbook to promote discussion and facilitate debate about the need for tolerance, understanding, acceptance and equality of human dignity.

On the issue of identity, it is becoming widely understood and accepted by many South African English speakers that the English language, which has been used in Africa for nearly four centuries, has been adjusted and exploited in many ways. The language structures and features informing the *Lion King* text are able to generate and facilitate excellent opportunities for a study of issues surrounding the English language with its various accents, dialects and the concomitant socio-political and class distinctions they engender.

Producing *The Lion King*, as with the production of any visual text, involved the selection of linguistic structures from available codes and conventions, and combined these in particular ways. Albeit that only Disney's selections are presented in the film, it nevertheless becomes an interesting exercise for exploring how, and in which ways the English language has absorbed and come to reflect the changing perceptions, conceptions and cultures of those who have chosen to speak, write, represent or communicate in English. Christie (1988: 2-3) makes a significant claim in this regard:

> "Changes in language and literacy are in themselves measures of the constantly changing nature of society. As society changes, so too must its language, as a necessary resource within which change is encoded, promoted and explained."

Her claim becomes all the more luminous in South Africa today where we are witnessing an unprecedented high national interest in multiculturalism[15] and multilingualism and the new meanings they are creating.

Historically, the English language in Africa has been used and manipulated to suit the local environments and world-views of its imperial conquerors. It has been further used and manipulated by its conquered inhabitants and by its constantly shifting hegemonic and counter-hegemonic parties.

How do these multiple forms of English deviate from what has been termed 'British' English, or perhaps 'Standard' English? What has caused these deviations or this multiplicity?

[15] Perhaps in its simplistic sense

What have these deviations resulted in and come to represent? Are there ideological and/or socio-political issues underlying these manifestations/ this interference?

One particularly fascinating aspect of English language usage in this film text is the extraordinary way in which accents and dialect can be seen, and 'read' by students. As pointed out by Beach and Brown (1987)

> "The meanings readers derive from texts vary according to the *prior knowledge of speech-act,* of social, and literary conventions..."[16]
> [Italics my own]

The selected film becomes an interesting forum for one of the most important skill students need to learn to negotiate in a multilingual environment, that is, how regional, ethnic or class-based dialects and variations in register occur according to social context. The code switching often to be found within the *The Lion King* film text, together with its hybrid cross-cultural discourses finds its match among the differing languages, dialects or registers permeating the South African multicultural environment.

Although the issue will be discussed more comprehensively in the next chapter, pertaining to this discussion, one particular requirement set out in Curriculum 2005's *Communication, Literacy and Language Learning Area* helped to confirm my choice of this particular animated film text as a

[16] Quoted by James R. Squire in *Reading and Response* (1990) p.18

suitable *Available Design* around which I could *Design* a viable literacy learning device for use in this proposed paradigm:

> "Learners will be able to show awareness that language varies over time, between contexts and from person to person."[17]

The film text, with its host of different visual (iconic) and verbal media and meaning-makers implicit in, or informing it, facilitates the development of such awareness.

Margaret Meek (1991:17) seemingly would corroborate the application of a film (or video) text for this purpose:

> "Modern sound media allow us to hear a greater number of languages, and many more varieties of our own language, than we could otherwise encounter in our day-to-day lives.
> Most people are now aware of different accents and language forms...We also know that forms of regional speech, dialects, are, in fact, languages... the result of the demonstrations of the great variety of uses that radio and television make possible."

To this end, Disney's film text allowed my *Languaging The Lion King* text to become a viable springboard text for discovering, through its multimodal language use, more about differing perceptions and conceptions of Africa - its cultures, traditions and languages.

[17] *Learning Area Committee Reports – Development and Phasing In of New Pre-higher Education and Training Curriculum for 1998.* (1997: Annexure 3: P.6)

It was of crucial importance to me, as designer, that learners become aware of the fact that, although ostensibly a film about Africa, the text itself is the creation of an American multimedia conglomerate.

The Euro-American representation of Africa, therefore, may be not even remotely close to what an indigenous or local filmmaker's representation of Africa might be. One way of seeing the movie could be as a product of American cultural imperialism, which appropriates African landscapes (Africa as lush Safariland) and wildlife for its own purposes. Audrey Ricker, although not referring directly to *The Lion King* suggests that:

> "For the United States, a nation with declining economic power, the imperialistic spread of images by the nation's image makers may be of more importance now than at any other time in Hollywood's history."[18]

Jonathan Romney (1997: 131) consolidates her assertion in more commercial terms with direct reference to *The Lion King:*

> "*The Lion King* uses whatever meanings it needs to, for quite unashamedly commercial purpose. It appeals to *everyone's* favourite myths, *everyone's* pet paranoias; it wants to make a buck out of everyone, and seems to have succeeded."

It is further ironic that a movie ostensibly about Africa is dominated by non-African accents. The only truly indigenous African accent (that of Rafiki) is associated with 'voodoo, magic and mysticism' or the non-Western 'Other'.

[18] Audrey Ricker is a lecturer in the Department of Language Reading & Culture at the University of Arizona.

The text herein becomes a vehicle for equipping and 'educating' students to 'intelligently read' (perhaps along the lines of the Critical Language Awareness paradigm) and 'process' multimodal texts and the often negotiated truths that they present.

The **third element** of design creation delineated by the Group, that is, ***The Redesigned***, will, by needs, be discussed as a result of conclusions drawn in Chapter 6. The results of this evaluation will, necessarily, lead to a *re-designing* of the *Languaging The Lion King* text – an enterprise that I anticipate and that I welcome.

Practical processes of materials development informing the workbook

The driving force behind much of the *Languaging The Lion King* workbook was my desire to create and provide for literacy learners a visual and aural rather than only a written text, in a productive and empowering educational event, in order to broaden conventional conceptions of literacy. In creating the *Languaging The Lion King* text, I therefore worked to shift from 'a concentration on the process of reading towards an understanding of wider literacy' (Tony Burgess, 1990). I was also cognizant of Bill Green's note (1990) that English teaching "[henceforth] should refuse to separate and to polarize 'literature', 'literacy' and 'reading'".

The activities in the *Languaging The Lion King* workbook were designed with the intention of allowing students to come to an understanding of critical and

reflective concepts of 'reading' and of 'language use' in terms of the new definitions that I have delineated in earlier chapters.

I hoped to achieve this in the workbook by talking about and working with a wide range of images generated by the texts in topic areas which I (as designer) think are of social, cultural, educational, and perhaps even economic, importance.

The *Languaging The Lion King* workbook was designed to call on students to familiarize themselves with the techniques of the different media and semiotic systems available and operating in wider society.

Exercises were designed to shift learners' away from the idea that words (semiotic system #1) and images (semiotic system #2) inhabit different and exclusive domains, and more towards the understanding expressed by Bryson (1991:96) that "there are kinds of images in which verbal and visual elements exactly interpenetrate", though none-the-less remaining distinct in themselves.

Languaging The Lion King focuses on three particular areas for study in order to operate within a defined and therefore contained framework. I found, as a teacher, that it is more useful to focus on one or two concepts at a time and then to establish links between concepts as the students progress through the material.

Towards the beginning of each unit for study, I delineated the desired learning outcomes for the section. Each area of focus is on a different (semiotic) mode of communicating meaning or of making meaning:

1. Spoken language (words, vocabulary, dialect and accent).
2. Visuals (pictures, iconography, graphics).
3. Music and sound (songs, lyrics, soundtrack).

The choice of these three areas of study was influenced by a number of considerations:

- 'Effective teaching is based on what children already know and can do.'[19] The students' natural familiarity with language, visuals and music makes them able to access (view and read) the text initially, and allows for the teacher's subsequent expansion of their capacities and capabilities in these areas.
- Language, in all the many and various forms it is presented, functions as a means of meaning making.

Through a study of a multimodal text, students are guided towards the recognition that texts, through the languages they employ, are constructed for particular purposes and to appeal to certain groups. Meaning making must be seen as an active and dynamic process, this might explain possible reasons for people's varying interpretations of a text.

[19] Rod Quin et al (1995) *Teaching viewing and visual texts* p13

Study Area One: Spoken Language

English language and literacy learners, through a study of **The Lion King** film text, facilitated through a study of the *Languaging The Lion* King workbook, could be brought to an awareness of the ways in which accent and dialect, presented in the voices of a multifarious host of characters, inhabit the text and how these accents and dialogues give rise to, and manipulate, its multiple meanings. Rod Quin (1995 :11) makes a significant claim in this regard:

> "Students need to be aware of dominant meaning systems if they are to become critically aware viewers and effective communicators. Understanding the ways in which visual texts communicate, opens possibilities for students to question, challenge and change dominant meaning systems."

The prevailing and condoned hegemony in this text is that of American mainstream culture – as defined in terms of the benevolent rulership of 'good king' Mufasa (played by James Earl Jones). The accent and dialect employed by the 'good' characters, such as Mufasa, Nala, Serabi and Simba (played by Matthew Broderick), amongst others, is largely representative of the White, middle-to-upper class, mainstream, American English sector of American society. Although, ironically, both the 'voices' of Mufasa and Serabi are those of black actors, their accents are entirely acculturated and remain in sync with the 'pure wasp' (Romney: 132) of the young Simba.

Characters of more dubious nature are provided with accents and dialects of 'Other' than mainstream American English. Rafiki, the 'sangoma'/oracle monkey-character speaks in the dialect and with the accent of Black West Africa. Immediately we are swept into the landscape of voodoo, magic and mysticism conjured up in both sounds and associated images of marginalisation and Otherness.

The greedy and rogue trio of hyenas (Ed, Shenzi and Banzai) are given to speaking in the lingo, dialect and accent associated with the American Black (voiced by Whoopie Goldberg) and Hispanic (Cheech Marin) 'ghetto cultures' (or sub-cultures?). The third hyena is a gibbering crackhead of indeterminate accent, but blatantly from the 'bad, Black part of town' (Romney, 1997: 130) – in the film, depicted as the elephant graveyard. Before their vile characters emerge visually and thematically, we 'hear' them as being 'off-centre' of what is considered acceptable and normative. The band of hyenas are further given to **' rappin'** – a lingo derived from and associated with the Caribbean reggae and 'Dub' music sub-culture and later almost exclusively with the Black American rap music sub-culture – rather than **'talking'**- the domain of white, mainstream America.

Other examples might include Timon and Pumba, who, although part of the 'good guys' are, because of their typical characteristics of odiferous meerkat and warthog, excluded from communal life. These characters are accented in high-pitched, nasal tones (Timon) or slow-witted, laboured speech patterns (Pumba).

Scar, brother to King Mufasa and the usurper of his throne, has been depicted not in the hegemonic American mainstream dialect of his brother, but in the unmistakable European accented tones of the British Empire (Scar is voiced in the magisterially cynical Jeremy Irons). As the Imperial, British arch-colonizer, he represents the 'destroyer' of the Pridelands on a literal level, but, on the metaphorical level he assumes the proportions of the expedient, manipulative and ruthless colonizer in the ranks of all those who raped and pillaged Africa in the name of 'civilization, G-d and King'.

It would be necessary for the students to note, at this point, that accents and dialects are largely context-bound, for it is apparent that Scar's British accent might, in certain contexts, be considered entirely hegemonic. This is perhaps represented in the voice of the supremely loyal and likeable 'Major Domo' character, Zazu, the hornbill.

Study Area Two: Visual language

Like all texts, the meaning of a visual text will vary among audiences and will be influenced by their understanding of specific conventions and by their attitudes, values, beliefs and ways of thinking, that is, their 'situatedness':

> "Visual images, like all texts, are created for particular purposes...Visual texts are not transparent reflections of reality; rather, they are constructions – the result of a series of choices made by their creators." (R. Quin: 97: 6)

The workbook text therefore might serve to facilitate an understanding of The complex ways in which visual text are *created* and may be *read* and *used* by viewers – both in and out of the classroom.

It is an accessible text to discuss themes and issues, amongst others, of cultural power, racial attitudes and gender values (this latter point generated by the subservience of Serabi and the lionesses, as well as the gay/camp overtones of Scar). It was important to me to provide the literacy students with a text that would facilitate an awareness of the constructed nature of a text, be it film or picture book or billboard.

Construction and producing an image in any of these media of representation involves the selection of an angle, a point of view; an expressed subjective attitude towards the represented participants or towards the viewer. Point-of-view images are not 'innocent' carries of meaning; they are impregnated with values and actively shape the messages or attitudes they communicate[20]. The exercises in the workbook therefore indicated that it is important for students to note that these subjective attitudes might be individual and unique, or socially determined attitudes.

This has important implications, not simply for the analysis of this text, but For pedagogic practices within every classroom, for it makes every viewer a

[20] Masterman, ibid. p20

'producer' of meaning rather than just a 'receiver' of meaning. As Scholes (1987: 24-5) clearly puts it:

> "Our job is not to produce 'readings' for our students but to give them the task of producing their own."

And, as expressed by Hayhoe and Parker (1990: Preface):

> "A reader is not at the mercy of a text, passively absorbing its surface and hidden values and messages."

Study Area Three: Music

Music and sound effects are languages that normally work in combination to create meaning in film and television. Telling a story in words, visuals and music is a way of ordering and re-ordering the meanings implicit in the text. It is generally understood that where pictures and music appear together, the function of the music is to support the viewers' approach to the visual text, to enhance and deepen their understanding of it.

Meek (1991 :115) would hold that this is the case, but, in terms of modern literacy, it is by no means the whole of it. The relation of music to visuals and the nature of readers' interactions with both, are important aspects of literacy, 'too little regarded and even less understood'.

From the magnificent musical opening song (the *Circle of Life*) created by Hans Zimmer, Tim Rice and Elton John, the music in The Lion King is an interesting study of the ways in which the musical forms of Africa (the soundtrack features vocal arrangements by South African musician Mbongeni

Ngema) meet audio electronics and the commercial music industry. Herein, linguistic and audio meanings become intertwined 'meaning-makers'. The exercises in the workbook worked to explain how music, lyrics and sound effects operate together with other textual elements to encourage particular 'reader' responses.

With or without lyrics, **music** can anchor the meanings of film images. Characterization can be made even more precise when lyrics are added to the musical score. Music may even dominate the image on occasion. Beginning with the opening credits, music can serve as a kind of overture, to suggest the mood or spirit of the film as a whole. In the selected film text, the opening musical score over breathtaking African plains, sets the scene for the 'incredible story of the love between the proud lion king, Mufasa, and his son Simba - a curious and naïve cub who must struggle to find his place in Nature's great 'Circle of Life'."[21]

Certain types of music in a film text can serve to suggest locales, classes or ethnic groups. It is the song *'Hakuna Matata'* that was of particular interest to me when creating an exercise around music for the workbook. 'Hakuna Matata', the title words and the words of the enduring refrain of the song, in their very 'Africanness', serve to locate the viewers on the wide open plains of an African landscape; in the verdant Pridelands in which this coming-of-age saga is to take place.

[21] Walt Disney Home Video Company.

Music also functions to control emotional shifts within the scene. The song 'Hakuna Matata', becomes the precipitating force that draws the exhausted, distraught and guilt-ridden Simba out of his misery and into the embrace of the warmhearted and hilarious 'odd couple', Timon and Pumba. Through the song, Timon and Pumba comfort and heal Simba and teach him to sing, and to believe in, the 'Hakuna Matata' philosophy:

> "it means 'no worries for the rest of your days!'
> It's our problem-free
> Philosophy
> Hakuna Matata!"

The workbook proposes that it is this philosophy and song that help Simba – and the viewers - over the difficult patches in the cub's journey toward regaining his rightful place as benevolent ruler of the Pridelands.

The final section (**Test Yourself!**) functions as a summation, a 'putting together parts of the whole' exercise to provide both the learner and the teacher with an outcomes evaluation opportunity. The evaluation exercises were not intended to judge, but to be used developmentally:

> " To guide learners to the experiences and the assistance they need to develop towards further thought and action. "[22]

Opportunities were thus provided to enable students to demonstrate achievements across a range of contexts, purposes and semiotic systems, the analysis of which, in term of the concerns of Curriculum 2005, will form the content of the next chapter.

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[22] New London Group, *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures* ibid. pp. 40-41

CHAPTER 4 *LANGUAGING THE LION KING* AND CURRICULUM 2005

This chapter examines the effectiveness of *Languaging The Lion King* as support material for South African junior high school, or, in terms of the requirements of Curriculum 2005, for senior phase students in schools in South Africa in the 1990s. The chapter explores 'questions' that are central in the new conceptions of literacy discussed in chapters 1 and 2, and the pedagogical implications of those conceptions, as discussed in the preceding chapters. Chapter 5 will describe, examine and report on the empirical results of trialling the materials in two situations.

QUESTION 1

Into which Learning Areas (if any) of Curriculum 2005 does *Languaging The Lion King* fit?

Although I am of the opinion that *Languaging The Lion King* finds particular location for itself in the Language, Literacy and Communication Learning Area of Curriculum 2005, in fact, it can be considered cross-disciplinary as it draws from, and is in keeping with, four learning areas articulated in Curriculum 2005.

To elucidate upon such learning areas, I have used the words of the documents[1] themselves, followed by an exploration of how the workbook applied itself to the delineated learning area.

- **Communication, Literacy and Language Learning:**

  "People interact with the world and each other through language. The more we are able to communicate, the better we are able to understand each other... Learners should be able to successfully demonstrate their a..ility to communicate effectively using visual...and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation...Improved communication can only lead to a South Africa free of intolerance, misunderstanding and prejudice, which is the focus of this learning area."

- "People interact with the world and each other through language. The more we are able to communicate, the better we are able to understand each other..."

The tasks in the workbook simulated language relationships (personal and semiotic) to be found in most of South Africa's emerging multicultural, multilingual and multi-media infiltrated public spaces. Exercises 1-4 in Section 1 (Words - as conveyors of Meaning in a Film Text: Let's Look at how Accent and Dialogue Work in this Text!) clearly assumes an existing knowledge of social conventions on the part of learners.

[1] [1] *Curriculum 2005 – Lifelong learning for the 21st century (1997).* Issued by the National Department of Education. Printed by CTP Books, South Africa. P. 14 and a shortened version of the Outcomes document.

The fact that these are collaborative activities – both in recognizing the accents/ dialects/ stereo -types and in the subsequent gauging of others' readings of them – is crucial to the success of this section. They are activities that involve reflection on and interaction between a number of different 'language modes' – and here I include the visual language of the film, the workbook text and the way people in society dress (non-verbal language), as well as talk and writing.

A further motivation for locating the *Languaging The Lion King* workbook in this learning area is that, as well as relating to the concerns of Curriculum 2005, it picks up on the NLG's similar focus on multilingualism. Although I prescribed the English language version for study purposes, this popular film is also available in indigenous languages. It has been translated into Zulu – *Inkosi Ibhubesi* (Annexure A) and soundtrack uses the vocal arrangements of a South African popular musician. This is in acknowledgement too of Professor Bengu's assertion that Curriculum 2005 will:

> " Foster learning which encompasses a culture of human rights, multilingualism and multi-culturalism and a sensitivity to the values of reconciliation and nation-building."

In South Africa, this makes it more readily accessible for a 'reading' by a large group of English Second Language speakers, albeit that some of the accent and dialect issues fall away (see Annexures B and C).

> "Learners should be able to successfully demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively using visual...and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation."

Notwithstanding the huge discrepancies in the literacy levels of, and the opportunities for, literacy acquisition offered to South Africa learners as a result of the legacy of Apartheid, it does seem clear that films, which have been part of the South African culture since prior to the entrenchment of Apartheid, are conducive to ready comprehension by all levels of literacy learners, albeit on an elementary level.

Although perhaps in their statement Jowett and Linton (1980: 90) seem to omit mentioning material conditions and economic determinants, they make a salient point when they say that:

> "It is precisely because motion pictures deal with a mass of individuals of widely varying educational and cultural backgrounds that they find a common responsiveness on this elementary level"

In the light of Buckingham's and Meek's idea that most young people are basically literate at an elementary level without being 'schooled' in the 'reading' of visual texts (as discussed in chapter 2), by utilizing a text form that recognizes the skills and knowledges that people already have, the spectrum of learners who are able to access the workbook text became widely increased. This further raises learner confidence and gives them a flying start in the new textual analysis upon which they are embarking.

Critics attribute the success of **The Lion King** film to many factors, including the narrative, the visuals, the sympathetic characters and the music. The workbook worked through the film in its various semiotic systems through exercises and assignments that employed, and called for a variety of semiotic skills including, but not limited to, "modes of oral and/or written presentation". This is in keeping too with Curriculum 2005, which calls for a view of language approached in its broadest sense, as a system of sounds, structures, symbols and meanings with which we make, express and negotiate meaning:

> " The study, teaching and learning of languages are also approached from this broad view: it is mainly done through whole texts as discourses with the potential for varied interpretations leading to sustained interactions. Texts can be written, spoken and audio-visual."[2]

- **Human and Social Sciences:**

  "South Africa needs responsible citizens who are able to operate in a culturally diverse democratic society. Human and Social Sciences is therefore an important area of study. Here people will learn how to interact with each other and with their environment. "

This learning area concern was to an extent facilitated through the workbook's demand for collaborative efforts at meaning-making between teacher and students, and among the students themselves as together they analyzed the film text in terms of the workbook's requirements.

[2] Annexure 3: Learning Area Committee Report: Communication, Literacy and Language Learning (1997) p.2

In its didactic structures, the workbook further meets the demand in Curriculum 2005 that:

> 'Teaching will become learner-centered, *with emphasis on group work* and developing the ability of people to think critically and research and analyse things for themselves."

The film viewing 'experience', around which the workbook was created, is overwhelmingly a group experience. All parties involved are encouraged to become consciously aware and accepting of each other's personal and/or socio-cultural interpretations and representations of the issues generated by the film text and the set tasks in the workbook. Exercises in *Languaging The Lion King* were intended to confront learners with a variety of frameworks for making sense, not only of the given text, but also of themselves and the social world around them.

Exercises 1-4 in Section 1 (Words - as conveyors of Meaning in a Film Text: Let's Look at how Accent and Dialogue Work in this Text!) clearly assumes an existing knowledge of social conventions on the part of learners. The fact that these are collaborative activities – both in recognizing the accents/ dialects/ stereo -types and in the subsequent gauging of others' readings of them – is crucial to the success of this section. These activities involve an interaction between a number of different 'language modes' – and here I include the visual language of the film, the workbook text and the way people in society dress (non-verbal language), as well as talk and writing.

Essentially, students are informed, on entering the workbook's space that they are invited to become part of a learning community. They are also invited to contribute to a visual/ aural/narrative tradition so much a part of wider society. Moreover, tasks in the workbook were designed to allow the learners to take the 'information' generated by their responses and to apply it to, or place this information in, a wider context. That is, to relocate understandings gained in the classroom into their wider communities (school and beyond) and into society at large.

- **Arts and Culture:**

  "Culture and the arts are important areas of life. Through developing creativity and exploring the diverse cultures that exist, the spiritual, intellectual and emotional aspects of our personalities will be promoted."

The movie viewing experience itself (be it at the cinema or on television and/or video) is a significant cultural activity. Moreover, in South Africa, it is a cultural activity in which a large portion in our division-riddled society has participated in at one time or another. It can therefore be deemed a literacy-learning vehicle to which the greater part of the multicultural community has some form of access. Furthermore, **The Lion King** film text has been adapted to the stage (both locally and abroad); increasing its availability in multiple cultural forms to multiple audiences.

Languaging The Lion King perhaps herein meets the specific Outcome set out in the Learning Area Committee Report (1997) for the Development and Phasing In of New Pre-Higher Education and Training Curriculum for 1998, Annexure 3, that is, that:

> "Learners will be able to experience and appreciate the aesthetic, affective, cultural and social values of language... Learners will be able to experience, respond to and enjoy the artistic effects of a wide range of texts with reference to their cultural and social contexts...[to] critically relate experiences based on texts to their personal lives...[and to] evaluate critically and appreciate texts."[3]

- **Technology:**

  "Pupils are required to demonstrate an understanding of technological processes, systems and products; to demonstrate an understanding of how technology might reflect different interests and biases, and to make responsible and ethical decisions concerning the use of technology."

The textual approach largely adopted and promulgated in the *Languaging The Lion King* text encourages learning in a wide range of locations and by different methods, including of a technological nature. Most of the exercises in the workbook utilized, or called on the learners to utilize, some form of technology, be it the use of television and/or video, working with cameras, employing music tapes and/or CDs and Personal Computer multi-media packs (CD ROM).

[3] Learning Area Committee Report: Communication, Literacy and Language Learning (1997) p.6

The workbook attempts to emphasize both the 'how to' as well as the 'about' of the technological devices that they are using in their learning. I would add that unfortunately, neither the proposed Curriculum 2005, nor my workbook, put any structures in place in this learning area, to prevent or avoid what Begum and Green (1990) term '...the pitfall of allowing the technology to become a ready scapegoat when claimed educational outcomes are not achieved'.

Question 2

In what other ways does *Languaging The Lion King* meet the requirements of Curriculum 2005?

The concerns of this question might best be addressed by looking at some of the concerns of Curriculum 2005 and the NQF and GNVQ frameworks so integral to its conception, as well as at the workbook's learning and assessment processes.

Since its inception in 1986, an important aspect of the General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) model – upon which Curriculum 2005's National Qualifications Framework (NQF) seems to be broadly modelled – is that students take greater responsibility for their own learning:

"...The approach of GNVQ harnesses **this motivation and enthusiasm** by developing the abilities to **manage their own learning, understand learning goals and plan courses of action to achieve them**, to engage in self-assessment and to assess the quality of their achievements... It promotes independence when learning and the skills of self-presentation and of evidencing claims of achievement."[4]

- 'To **harness motivation and enthusiasm':** As the literacy workbook is designed around a contemporary and popular animated film, it is a medium that seems to have the capacity to activate and motivate most classroom learners. It meets the criteria of both an educational encounter and yet also a recreational experience. This perhaps qualifies it as an 'edutainment'-type text.[5] In an 'edutainment'-type text, the targets of learning become more relevant and relate more to the needs of the learners as learning is, in their minds, is less equated with 'academic', 'classrooms', 'boredom' and 'failure'[6].

Even if it is not immediately apparent to them, students usually consider what they are learning to be, in some way, in their interests if the value to themselves of what they are learning is made transparent at the outset of the learning event.

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[4] A recent commentary on GNVQ science by Chris Edwards of the School of Education, University of Leeds (Edwards, 1994, p.9).
[5] Audrey Ricker (1996) described 'Edutainment' as 'interactive software that is educational but also entertaining to use'.
[6] I take the liberty of appropriating for my own purposes Jessup's note (1991) on the NVQ's approach.

To this end, in order to aid learners to understand the learning goals in *Languaging The Lion King*, and to assist them in managing their own learning, the workbook sets out for both teachers (TCM) and learners (LCM), at the beginning of each learning unit, those skills and competencies to be either acquired or utilized in the unit.

Learners are therefore supported by an induction note at the beginning of each learning unit (in the section introduction and in the LCM introduction) through which they become familiar with the unit's requirements and action or Outcome objectives. Jessup (1991) in his influential Outcomes Model sees this as essential for effective learning:

> "Whether pursuing general or specific objectives, individuals will learn more effectively if they are clear about the targets or outcomes they are trying to achieve"[7]

Further, learners are encouraged to manage their own learning experience in a manner that recognizes their preferred styles and modes of responding to the learning experience. For example, the LCM exercise in Section 2, learners are invited to respond to the exercise utilizing any 'pictures, free-hand drawings, photographs, fuzzy-felt, cut-outs or any other material you feel is suitable to create your landscape'. Or, in Section 3, students are called on to utilize multiple languages and a variety of 'musical' responses to the creative writing exercise. *In situ,* therefore, the teacher is seen rather as a facilitator than a transmitter of knowledge.

[7] Jessup (1991) quoted by John Burke (1995) in his article *Theoretical Issues in relation to Jessup's Outcomes Model* (p.70).

Motivation is enhanced because relevance (which resides in the perception of the learner, not only in content or in the teacher) is made clear.

Concomitantly, *Languaging The Lion King* is broadly based on the South African NQF paradigm informing Curriculum 2005 and on the British GNVQ Outcomes model [8] in its learning and assessment processes. Both the British NVQ model and the South African NQF model are seemingly also ideal for the accreditation of prior learning.

Understanding the process of evaluation raises fundamental questions about the aims and methods of education. Buckingham (1994: 145) suggests that:

> "In order for teachers or students to evaluate their work with any degree of confidence and consistency, they need to have explicit criteria for what counts as evidence of learning."

John Burke (1995:28) suggests further that:

> "Assessments must ensure that learning matches the objectives set for the course. *It must ensure that performance, in terms of both skills and knowledge, has reached an appropriate level, and it will be used to grade that performance* (italics, my own). Evidence of achievement will need to be sought from a wider range of skills and knowledge than has been the case previously."[9]

[8] Particularly Jessup's (1992) formulation of the *Outcomes Model of the Curriculum.*

[9] John Burke (1995) in *Outcomes, Learning and the Curriculum – Implications for NVQs, GNVQs and other qualifications,* (p.62) quoting from the recommendations about assessment made by The Royal Society's Council (p.28).

The workbook's development and recording of core skills was modularized into units designed to promote the development of a range of cognitive skills and a body of knowledge and understanding, as well as practical skills.

Activities in the workbook, especially as concerns its visual element, were therefore *scaffolded*[10] to allow for learners to gradually but systematically build up and on meanings, knowledge, skills and competencies as they progressed through the workbook. In line with the NQF and GNVQ frameworks, classroom study and the use of the film text and workbook text supplemented each activity.

The priority given by Curriculum 2005, the NQF and the GNVQ to cognitive skills is signalled by the emphasis the workbook places on the core skills of communication and information technology[11] and on the need to demonstrate these skills for the purposes of assessment.

Analysis of *Languaging The Lion King*'s evaluation and assessment techniques according to an NQF model yielded that the workbook conceives of, or perceives assessment as continuous monitoring through a variety of assessment methods. It predominantly utilized on-going, situated, contextualised assessment of learners and the learning process devised for them –so as to be able to continually upgrade or reformulate the learning process and to constantly maximize learners' potentials.

[10] I understand this concept to operate along similar lines to that of Vygotskii's *Zone of Proximal Development.* (1962, 1978).

All the assessment exercises – bar Section 4, the summative testing assignment (**Test Yourself**) - measured the learner's progress against the section's defined outcomes rather than against the learner's performance, therein also opting for a 'process' rather than 'product' approach.
For this reason, there was no passing or failing. Learners who did not meet the Outcomes criteria could be re-assessed after further application to the tasks at hand. In the context of South Africa's implementation of the Outcomes-based Education (OBE) approach:

> "OBE requires teachers and trainers to focus on the outcomes of education rather than merely teaching information. The teacher will plan all activities around these outcomes. Assessment will be on-going"[12]

The workbook's primary method assessment, that is, of continuous assessment, providing that the students' performances can be assessed over sustained periods of time, works largely within the OBE framework Such assessment might, however be problematic considering the limited amount of time currently allocated in English syllabi to each setwork text. Another cautionary note is that it creates a lot of work for the students, although, generally, most of the work is completed within the framework of the classroom lessons.

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[11] As delineated by John Burke (1995) in his Introduction and Overview to *Outcomes, Learning and the Curriculum – Implications for NVQs, GNVQs and other qualifications.*
[12] *Curriculum 2005 – Lifelong learning for the 21st century* (1997). Printed by CTP Books, South Africa. P.5

The summative assessment exercise was the only exercise provided with a grading 'score', being Fifty (50). This may also be problematic in the sense that numerical scores leave the students to deduce from their given score, what they can about the quality of their work. As the workbook is dealing with multimodal meaning-makers, this is perhaps an inappropriate method of assessing, since it offers students little useful information about the quality of their cognitive achievements. According to Christie, the only time a numerical grading score can be helpful is where it "...is offered in association with a careful statement about what the score represents as a measure of achievement".[13] That is because it can provide students with some measures of 'where they are at', and some corresponding sense of 'where they might go'.

In order that students would be able to demonstrate a range of outcomes at the end of the *Languaging The Lion King* learning event, **all** the outcomes reflected in the units required achievement by the learners. However, because of the continuous assessment throughout each unit rather than only the summative assessment at the end of the workbook, learners were given the opportunity to accumulate information and evidence towards the achievement of each outcome over the period of the entire learning event. Assessment herein affirms the assessment characteristics of the GNVQ:

[13] Christie, ibid. p. 203

> "Assessment is not designated to differentiate between students at a point in time, but as a continuous process by which students build up evidence until they have sufficient quantity and quality to meet the required standards... and the accumulation of the evidence presented, and judged against refined standards."

Or, as Jessup (1995: 44) says in his Outcomes model," [T]he starting point is having clear specifications of the outcomes sought i.e. what must be assessed and to what standards."

It becomes apparent on review that the assessment exercises in the workbook endeavoured to promote active learning towards specific outcomes through different forms of assessment to *reflect different forms of learning outcomes* as further advocated by Cairney (1991):

> "Assessment, which defines success and failure for students and teachers alike, if it wants to be equitable and fair, should be: '[A]ctivity-centered, assumption challenging, and functional, and should involve process reflection'."[23]

In *Languaging The Lion King*, these active learning approaches included individual, pair and group work efforts in research projects, class assignments and discussions, and investigative activities set out in the units in some degree of detail, and requiring oral, written, picture-based and/or gestural responses.

[23] Dr Cairney's advice recorded in the conference proceedings of the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration, Toowong, Australia, 1991.

I attempted in the summative evaluation in Section 4, to move towards the creation of an assignment that facilitates, for teachers and students alike, the following outcomes:

- An awareness of the value of animated film texts as a learning resource - a resource readily available in our popular film and television culture.
- An embracing of the wider significance of visual texts and an understanding of the complex ways in which they may be *read* and *used* by viewers - both in and out of the classroom.
- A productive interchange with a multimodal text.
- The promotion of the development of *critical reading skills* as concerns visually, aurally and orally constructed and visually presented 'reading matter'.
- A means of equipping and 'educating' students to 'intelligently read' and 'process' these texts and the often-negotiated truths that they present.

With reference to the point concerning the development of critical reading skills, I offer that these abilities, although admittedly only gently touched upon in this workbook, should allow the students to look beyond the particularity of this specific text, namely, Disney's **The Lion King**, towards some general principles which are relevant in the analysis of similar texts.

By constantly checking the workbook against the Curriculum 2005 *Communication, Literacy and Language* learning area profile, I tried to ensure that students were being given the opportunity to achieve valued outcomes[15] in the literacy classroom.

Essentially, what I hope to have achieved in this summative evaluation assignment, is an exciting and encouraging learning encounter for each learner but, above all, an educative engagement with 'reading' - in its fullest and finest sense.

[15] The primary benefits of the outcomes model can be summarized as access, flexibility and relevance (Burke, 1995).

CHAPTER 5 TRIALLING *LANGUAGING THE LION KING*

In this chapter I reflect on my trialling of the *Languaging The Lion King* workbook with learners of different ages and in three different settings. My role is that of practitioner-researcher. I, as an English literacy teacher and materials developer in a certain setting didactic setting, report on my pedagogic actions and the learners' reactions within the settings in which my trials of exercises from the *Languaging The Lion King* workbook took place. It is my opinion that practitioner-research is not synonymous with the conventional research[1] which requires rigorous, systematized inquiry within a circumscribed or *particular discipline* or academic field of study.

Practitioner-research requires more of an interpretivist point of view and may be, as it is in the case of this research report, *inter-disciplinary.* It explores what kinds of acts constitute[2] and animate didactic (teaching and learning) literacy activities in order to gain knowledge of what informs what we, as teachers, do, and allows us, as reflective practitioners, to participate in and improve on, that knowledge. Practitioner-research expands on and adds value to the role of a teacher from being simply that of a 'doer', to becoming a creator of knowledge and information.

The trialling and test procedures of the workbook material that I discuss in this chapter are considered in the context of mainly adolescent pedagogic

[1] In terms of the disciplined inquiry, within the parameters of a defined academic field of research, as set out by D. Goswami and/or L.Stenhouse.
[2] Nigel Hall (1987) ibid. p67.

environments, as those are the target learners of the workbook and the most likely places of use experienced by users of this workbook. (I believe that the workbook could be used in other situations where adults or pre-adolescents are participating in literacy programmes; however, I did not trial my materials in these settings.).

The **trialling** took place in three particular contexts: two relatively formal testing exercises and one less formal trial. The trials were designed to test the efficacy of the workbook as a literacy learning device primarily within the scope of theoretical assumptions delineated by, but not limited to, *Curriculum 2005* and the NLG's *Multiliteracies Project.*

The **analysis of the data** (collected from the trials) in this research project is informed by the key performance areas and statements of intent underlying *Curriculum 2005* in terms of its *Languages, Literacy and Communication* Learning Area, and those of the New London Group's *Multiliteracies Project:*

Curriculum 2005 – Languages, Literacy and Communication Learning Area

- ✓ Learners make and negotiate meaning and understanding.
- ✓ Learners show critical awareness of language usage.
- ✓ Learners respond to the aesthetic, affective, cultural and social values in texts.
- ✓ Learners access, process and use information from a variety of sources and situations.

- ✓ Learners understand, know and apply language structures and conventions in context.
- ✓ Learners use language for learning.
- ✓ Learners use appropriate communication strategies for specific purposes and situations.

The New London Group – A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: *Designing Social Futures*

- ✓ Human knowledge is embedded in social, cultural and material contexts. It is developed as part and parcel of collaborative interactions with others of diverse skills, backgrounds and perspectives in a community of learners engaged in common practices centered around a specific (historically and socially constituted) domain of knowledge.
- ✓ The school should be used as a site for mass media access and learning to stimulate work relations of collaboration, commitment and creative involvement.
- ✓ Curriculum needs to recruit learners' previous and current experiences, as well as their extra-school communities and discourses, as an integral part of the learning experience.
- ✓ A discourse is a construction of some aspect of reality from a particular point of view. An order of discourse may include a mixture of different semiotic systems (for instance, visual and aural semiotic systems in combination with language constitute the order of discourse of film).
- ✓ When learners juxtapose different languages, discourses, styles and approaches, they gain substantively in meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic

abilities and in their ability to reflect critically on complex systems and their interactions.

- ✓ Meaning –making is an active and dynamic process.
- ✓ Of the modes of meaning, the Multimodal is the most significant as it relates all the other modes in quite remarkably dynamic relationships.
- ✓ The new multimedia and hypermedia channels can and sometimes do provide members of subcultures with the opportunity to find their own voices.

The purpose and scope of the trials on which I report in this chapter are as follows:

- I report on my own trials of implementing the *Languaging The Lion King* workbook and analyse the data collected from practical assessment exercises carried out in my own classroom (a formal academic setting).
- I analyse and assess data from trialling exercises undertaken by my students on their own students in various South African informal pedagogic settings.

My subjects and the testing frameworks comprise the following:

- ♦ Trialling of the workbook's exercises, procedures and its expected outcomes was conducted on my young adult students who were studying towards their Bachelors' degrees through Unisa[3] and receiving support lectures at Boston City Campus, the tertiary academic institution at which I lecture.

[3] UNISA – University of South Africa, a correspondence university based in Pretoria.

I carried out these trials in certain Education 3 seminars designated to me by the Arts Faculty of Boston City Campus for research purposes.

This third-year group of students was training to enter the workforce predominantly as teachers and educators in various formal and informal educational fields. The group included students from a fairly wide range of cultures and races; however, the ratio of males to females was not equal.

With the consent of my employer and the Education 3 class, I utilized a double lecture (of +-90 minutes duration) to introduce my students to an outline of both my research report on literacy and the *Languaging The Lion King* workbook and to explain to them what practical and/or theoretical exercises I would require of them. We agreed to devote a double lecture once a week, for a one-month period, to question-and-answer sessions and to trials I set up for them on the workbook's exercises.

My first class-based research study session with the class was devoted to a video screening of Disney's animated film, **The Lion King.** My second class-based research study session followed a particular procedure:

- I divided the class of twelve students into three groups of four students each. The groups were racially mixed of the students' own arrangement. As only two males were taking the subject, the distribution of males to females was rather lopsided; however, by using this class I remained in keeping with Curriculum 2005's call for a view of language approached in

its broadest sense, that is, as a system of sounds, structures, symbols and meanings *with which we all can make, express and negotiate meaning*:

- Each group was provided with a draft copy of the *Languaging The Lion King* workbook for review and discussion purposes. I gave the groups approximately fifty minutes in which to review the workbook and to discuss their first impressions of it. I asked them to regard the workbook as a literacy learning device from which they might be required to teach.
- The remainder of the session (+- forty minutes) was allocated each group providing +- 12 minutes of feedback to the reassembled class.

- Some of these students trialled the workbook material on their own students, who comprised youth movement members and extra lesson students (aged between 13-19) over whom they took charge.

- **Case Study 1**

A particular student, Ilan Osrin, is a high-ranking leader of a youth movement. He trialled some of the *Languaging The Lion King* material on his adolescent youth group members. His trialling followed a similar procedure to the procedure I had used with him and his colleagues in my Education three seminars. A discussion of the results of these trials constitutes one of the two small case studies.

The audio-taped interview with Ilan yields insight into his and his youth group's media practices and reading behaviours. His comments on multimodality, as well as his comments on adolescent media practices

facilitated worthwhile and interesting research information. The written questionnaire deals with issues of literacy, media and meaning in *Languaging The Lion King.*

- **Case Study 2**

A nine-year-old Johannesburg school pupil who is currently being educated within the proposed Curriculum 2005 paradigm was interviewed on audio-cassette in order to assess the workbook's potential availability to a learner in the junior phase of education.

As the child concerned has recently been 'mainstreamed' from a 'bridging' class (a class for students in some way learning-challenged), she felt more comfortable using the oral rather than the written mode of communication for purposes of our discussion. The interview was conducted in my home in one, two-hour session. I organised the interview around a series of mostly open-ended questions about the learner's reactions to the workbook and the animated film on which it was based.

I acknowledge that some of the questions I asked in the interview with Ayala might be considered 'leading questions'. These questions were either intended to help the learner acclimatize herself to the unfamiliar testing procedure or to help her overcome her shyness of the taping of her answers.

The research findings are discussed by working with the responses and reactions yielded from my own classroom-based research and from the two

case studies, together with those yielded from the trials done within the youth group setting. By organising the research findings in this combined manner I mean to provide a less fragmented set of findings from across the different trial groups by matching similar, or contrasting dissimilar, research findings.

I work around specific questions in order to organize the results of the research inquiry. The first two are as follows:

- What emphasis did the *Languaging the Lion King* workbook place on key Curriculum 2005 pedagogic concepts, current literacy perspectives and a range of semiotic skills as it attempts to deliver critical, practical and analytic skills and competencies necessary for analyzing multiple literacies in an emerging multicultural democracy?
- To what extent did the tasks in the workbook simulate language relationships (personal and semiotic) to be found in most of South Africa's emerging multicultural, multilingual and multi-media infiltrated public spaces?

The written questionnaire and two taped interviews that constitute part of the research are attached as Annexures E and F respectively.

I shall discuss to what extent the above-mentioned aims of the workbook were achieved in the trialling exercises.

As indicated earlier, the analysis of the collected results of the trialling sessions works largely within the scope of the aforementioned key principles of the *Multiliteracies Project* of the New London Group and by matching findings against key criteria of the *Curriculum 2005* paradigm.

All the research trialling exercises were intended to confront learners with a variety of frameworks for making sense not only of the 'language' of the given text, but also of themselves[4] and the multicultural, multilingual and 'multi-mediated' social world around them. Tasks were designed to allow the learners to take the 'information' generated by their responses to the film and workbook texts and to apply them to, or place this information in, a wider context. That is, to relocate understandings gained in the classroom/learning group into their wider communities (school and beyond) and into society at large.

Notwithstanding the limited nature of these trials of the *Languaging The Lion King* workbook, it is apparent that the workbook meets at least one of the essential criteria set out in the *Learning Area Committee Report (1997) for the Development and Phasing In of New Pre-Higher Education and Training Curriculum for 1998, Annexure 3*, that is, that:

> "Learners will be able to experience, respond to and enjoy the artistic effects of a wide range of texts **with reference to their cultural and social contexts...[to] critically relate experiences based on texts**

[4] Wells (1982:39) suggests that texts discussed in a way which encourages learners to reflect upon their own experience and imaginative exploration of the world created through the language of a text, are probably the best way of helping children to develop the abilities to 'come to grips with the symbolic potential of language'.

> **to their personal lives**...[and to] evaluate critically and appreciate texts."[5]

For the most part, this criterion holds true for my third-year Education students at Boston City Campus who were enthralled by the concept of teaching an animated film in a school syllabus and readily involved themselves in the issues raised by the *Languaging The Lion King* workbook. (Anecdotally, a few of the students left the class humming '*Hakuna Matata*' and imitating the strutting, lop-sided walk of Simba and his cohorts, Timon and Pumba.)
It also holds true for the youth group members who were able to both critically evaluate and appreciate the workbook, and for the junior-phase learner, Ayala, who relatively easily managed to relate the 'experiences' of the film and workbook texts to her personal young life.

My demand for each group's collaborative efforts at meaning-making and then for a class feedback session was intended to reflect the workbook's similar demand for collaborative meaning-making between teacher and students, and among the students themselves. This was done in order to encourage all parties involved to become consciously aware and accepting of each other's personal and/or socio-cultural interpretations and representations of the set tasks. This followed the Curriculum 2005 demand that:

> " The study, teaching and learning of languages are also approached from this broad view: it is mainly done through whole texts as

[5] Learning Area Committee Report: Communication, Literacy and Language Learning (1997) p.6

discourses with the potential for varied interpretations leading to sustained interactions. Texts can be written, spoken and audio-visual."[6]

The group exercises in my own classroom setting seemed to have facilitated a 'sustained interaction' between the various group members and between the three groups themselves and me, the facilitator. In the more informal youth group setting trials, it seems to have worked for my student, Ilan and a wide group of his youth group members.

The research findings pertaining to the two research questions articulated towards the beginning of this chapter, came firstly from Ilan, the subject of Case Study 1, and secondly from his youth group applications of Section 1 of the workbook text (**Words – As Conveyers of Meaning in a Film Text**).

Ilan Osrin (then 21) is a youth leader of high rank in the Bnei Akiva [7] youth movement and was scheduled to deliver a speech at a national conference a few days after the second of my Education 3 class-based research sessions. His speech provided me with some valuable information on the effect and impact of the workbook. I will briefly relate the gist of his speech as he told it to us at our next (third) class session.

Concepts raised by film text and the workbook informed the extended metaphor he used to discuss issues of kingship, leadership and responsibility

[6] Annexure 3: Learning Area Committee Report: Communication, Literacy and Language Learning (1997) p.2
[7] A Jewish youth movement in South Africa

in a speech dealing with Zionism and the return of the Jewish people to their 'Pridelands' - the Promised Land of Israel.

He began by describing the scene in which honourable and good King Mufasa, with his recently chastised, recalcitrant son, Simba, seated closely beside him, looks out over the landscape of the magnificent Pridelands and promises his son that all he sees before him will one day be his. Ilan equated this scene with the biblical promise The Lord of Israel made to Abraham the patriarch [8].

Ilan went on to compare how Simba needed to *earn* his place as ruler of the Pridelands besides just through his right of succession. Thus with the children of Israel. As Simba was exiled from the Pridelands, so were the Jewish people exiled from the Promised Land. A return to his rightful place as King required of Simba a period of bewilderment, trial and tribulation, leading to his eventual clarity of understanding as to the immense responsibilities of leadership and authority, rather than just its rich rewards. As Simba had to learn to remain fair and benevolent, yet vigilant, if he was to deserve his continued Kingship, so too with Israel's rulers.

Finally, as in the film Mufasa and Simba looked out over the magnificent Pridelands landscape, color-washed in hues of gold, so too would the children of Israel look out over Jerusalem of Gold. Ilan contextualised this by means of the 1948 declaration of the State of Israel, and inferred that until the Jewish

[8] Old Testament, Pentateuch, Book of Exodus.

people understood the significance of, and fully appreciated, God's bequest to them, perhaps they did not merit the State of Israel.

He further equated the proximity of the Elephant Graveyard, a place of danger and home of the threatening hyenas, to the Pridelands, as the proximity of her hostile neighbours to Israel.

The fact that the understandings gleaned and yielded from the *Languaging The Lion King* text by this particular individual (as well as the findings from his *Bnei Akiva* adolescent group aged 13-15 discussed further on), derived from a particular religious, ideological, cultural, and social background and perspective is significant. That is, that the *social production*[9] of meaning was influenced by his/their location in a traditional, Jewish South African framework and from his/their being educated predominantly at South African upper-to-middle class Jewish Day schools. It is highly likely that learners from other backgrounds would have a different interpretation of both the film and the workbook, and may well challenge Ilan's and the Bnei Akiva members' interpretations from th ir own socially produced positions.

In his youth group trials of Section 1 of the workbook text, Ilan found that, at first, the students were hesitant to 'play at accents', that is, to comment on, 'put-on' or make judgements about, the various forms of South African English accents existing in both the actual learner group and in their social

[9] Buckingham (1994)

communities at large. This hesitance is ascribed to the learners' fear of being labelled 'racist'.

However, when allowed to locate themselves in the 'legitimate learning space' provided in the workbook text and the film (Section 1, exercises 1 and 2), they opened up to discussion about these issues *in* the text. From there, the move into their personal society and contexts (Section 1, exercises 3 and 4) flowed readily and easily. As their understandings grew from exercise to exercise, so did the momentum of their responses.

The results yielded from the application of the exercises in Section 2 of the workbook (**Visuals /Images – As Conveyers of Meaning in a Film Text**), in the same learner group, addressed the first of the aforementioned questions. (What emphasis did the *Languaging the Lion King* workbook place on key Curriculum 2005 pedagogic concepts, current literacy perspectives and a range of semiotic skills?)

The workbook' exercises and assignments employed and called for a variety of semiotic skills and required written, iconographic and oral responses in all three sections, which were consolidated in the evaluation section – which unfortunately was not trialled.

Learners were able to access and understand the point of view exercise with relative ease and a great deal of interest. **However**, it emerged, after fairly heated debate and direct reference to The Lion King video (much rewinding

and fast forwarding included), that the second picture in section 2 is, like the first, in fact a low-angle shot that shows the viewer Simba from below. The 'camera eye' would be situated behind and below the hyenas to get the shot. As it is situated in the picture, the camera icon that I inserted corresponds to Simba's point-of-view, not to the intended angle of the shot.

The fact that the learners were able to identify this error shows that the learners looked discriminatingly at the text and its offerings, and had gained sufficient tools, by exercise 2 of this section, for a critical analysis of the said exercise.

In my classroom-based research trials, the learner groups, overall, met Section 3 of the workbook (*Music – As a Conveyer of Meaning in the Film Text*) with great delight. Further inquiry into why learner reception was so enthusiastic in this section yielded the following:

- The learners indicated that they felt that the popular songs and music of the film are 'contemporary', 'meaningful' and 'of particular excellence' (especially popular were the songs *The Circle of Life* and *Can You Feel the Love Tonight*).

In the adolescent youth group trials, the popularity of this section is ascribed to the following:

- These younger learners felt that as the film was 'made for us kids to enjoy', the music spoke to them personally.

Buckingham and Sefton-Green corroborate this expressed attitude in their assertion that:

> "Much of the pleasure of popular music for young people lies in the sense that it 'belongs' to its listeners, that it is 'theirs' and not 'ours'" [adults and/ or teachers].
>
> Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994: 62)

The learners' readings of and responses to the concerns of Section 3, Exercise 1 no. 3, were particularly significant, (*What do the words 'Hakuna Matata mean to you? Can you come up with any other words or phrases that would explain what these words mean? You might find that these words or phrases come from another language – which is fine too!)*

In exercise 1, no.1, after discussing what Pumba and Timon are telling Simba i.e. finding meaning location in the movie text, the learners managed to then relocate meaning into their personal contexts and language groups (English, Hebrew and some French and Yiddish).

Furthermore, in response to the final creative exercise, Ilan's youth group members built on their responses to no. 2 of the discussion exercise (Do you think that the song is a more effective way of communicating than simply speaking? If it is, explain why you think so.). The question yielded mostly a 'Yes' response and the creative exercise expressed, in their songs/ jingles, an assortment of tastes and identities ranging from Hebrew folk to reggae.

What I gathered from analysis of their various responses was that music provided access to a complex system of symbolic meaning and 'symbolic communication'[10] for the learners. As Simon Frith (1983, 1992) argues, young people use music as a means of locating themselves socially, historically and politically. Or as put by Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994: 64):

> "To claim particular tastes in popular music is thus to claim a particular social identity – or, in some cases, *multiple identities*."

This was certainly the case with the defined learner group, for whom the music of the text proved to be part of ongoing dialogue with the rest of the film text, the workbook itself, with the media, with Ilan as their adult leader and within the group itself.

The audio-taped interview with Ayala (aged 9) yielded an interesting response in terms of the above-mentioned Learning Area Committee Report (1997):

> "[Learners should be able to]... critically relate experiences based on texts to their personal lives".

Ayala's response was typical of the Piagetian *Concrete Operational* phase of childhood development, with its concentration on the egocentric nature of the child during this phase. Ayala's sympathies, she indicated, lay with Simba, the lion cub character, as she related her own experience of being part of a two-parent family to Simba's loss of his father and therefore his family-structure. She was able to contextualize the concerns of the film text into her personal life quite easily.

[10] Lull (1987) quoted in Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994) p.64

Ayala further clarified for me a concern I had raised in an earlier chapter of this research report, that is, that the animated film is less 'scary' or intimidating to a child viewer than is a live-action film. Ayala felt that the film was not scary, 'because it was just like a cartoon". She did, however, add, "it could happen in *real* life".

- Is the text able to motivate learners to learn, and do learners believe that they will be able to use what they are learning? Are the workbook and its concerns in some way in their interests?

The literacy workbook was designed around a contemporary and popular animated film, a medium which has the potential capacity to activate and motivate most classroom learners as it meets the criteria of both an educational encounter and yet also a recreational experience. This perhaps qualifies it as an 'edutainment' text.[11] In an 'edutainment'-type text, the targets of learning become more relevant and relate more to the needs of the learners, as learning, in their minds, becomes less equated with 'academics' and 'classrooms', and more with the agendas and devices informing 'real life' outside of the classroom.

[11] Audrey Ricker (1996) described 'Edutainment' as 'interactive software that is educational but also entertaining to use'.

Such a text possibly facilitates what Professor Bengu[12] had in mind when he said:

> "The new curriculum will begin to integrate education and training – incorporating a view of learning which rejects a rigid division between academic and applied knowledge, theory and practice, and knowledge and skills. "

Although perhaps Bengu's assertion relates more closely to the issue of vocational training, it works just as well in terms of the majority of responses from the research groups, that learning from a multimodal literacy text breaks out of the regular 'academic' mould. It has a life in both their practical understandings and in their theoretical knowledges. Essentially, the workbook, *Languaging The Lion King,* was considered, as Ayala put it on tape, 'really cool' learning material.

- Did the *Languaging The Lion King* workbook and the **Lion King** film text on which it is based, hold greater appeal for certain gender, racial and/or cultural learner groups?

I had expressed trepidation in an Education 3 tutorial class about the differences of appeal that the film and workbook might have to boys and to girls. A questionnaire handed out to each learner in my tutorial group and a classroom discussion of the answers to the questions yielded that all my students (aged between 19-22), regardless of gender, had responded equally favourably to the idea of *teaching* this material. I wondered, however, about the suitability of this animated film for a considerably younger *learner* group.

[12] Professor Sibusisu Bengu is at present the South African Minister of Education.

Within his adolescent learner group, Ilan found that, unlike some other animated films, The Lion King appealed as much to boys as to girls[13]. In his opinion (refer to taped interview), as unqualified or ungeneralisable as it may be, he felt that the material could work as effectively across gender groups as it would in different cultural group of learners. He based his opinion on a consideration of both the film text and the workbook's multicultural vision - especially as concerns the use of such a diversity of characters.

A full account of the questions-and-answer investigation is available on the annexed audiocassette.

Despite their limited nature, these trials comprise an investigation of some of the essential perspectives and practices, both narrative and visual, presented in the various semiotic systems constituting *The Languaging The Lion King* workbook.

The final chapter suggests some of the understandings that I have drawn from the research questions around which I have been working for the last five chapters. I also discuss some areas that, on review, I feel the workbook omits or does not sufficiently address.

[13] This matches the findings of Hofmeister: 1994.

CONCLUSIONS

> "In an economy of productive diversity, in civic spaces that value pluralism, and in the flourishing of interrelated, multi-layered, complementary yet increasingly divergent lifeworlds, students [sic] are ideally creative and responsible makers of meaning." [1]

In this chapter, I discuss the achievements and problems of the workbook in terms of my particular implementations of it. I refer to the guiding research questions and the primary aim set out in the Introduction to the research report to ascertain the extent to which the workbook coheres with, or omits to cohere with, Curriculum 2005's *Communication, Literacy and Language* learning area and the work of the New London Group. I also consider some implications of my research for teachers and learners of the *Languaging The Lion King* workbook.

What literacy-learning value does *Languaging The Lion King* offer within the contemporary South African educational context?

The *educational potential* of both the literacy-learning resource text *Languaging The Lion King* and the animated film, Disney's **The Lion King**, on which it is based, is considerable; however, whether the workbook itself taps into all these potentialities is less obvious.

[1] Appropriation, with changes, of the New London Group's statement in *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures*, page 44

I make this statement in light of the fact that on investigating the resource text, my particular research questions in the areas of global and local trends in literacy teaching, modulated themselves into new questions, not all of which I am able to sufficiently address at this stage.

In terms of the extent to which *Languaging The Lion King* meets the requirements of Curriculum 2005, my assessment is that the workbook and its activities do serve to promote "not [only] a search for right answers, but discussion, debate and disagreement".

Languaging The Lion King does meet certain specific outcomes articulated in Curriculum 2005, these are:

- To develop in learners a critical awareness of the complexity and sensitivity of the multilingual South African context.

Languaging The Lion King is a multi-media text based on a film that has proliferated into a host of musicals, TV spin-off children's programmes and computer games available in South Africa in English as well as in indigenous black languages. The research indicates that the workbook's concern with issues of accent and dialect promoted in the learners an awareness of, sensitivity to, and tolerance or respect for, the many variances in accent and dialect existing in English language usage in South Africa. In this respect, *Languaging The Lion King* exhibits the potential to meet a further specific outcome of Curriculum 2005, namely, to facilitate a continuing interest in language in all its forms.

It offers the potential to do what Quin (1997) recommends that a literacy-learning experience should do, that is, to facilitate " A desire to understand and play a role in influencing the processes of communication within our society."

My second research question guiding the investigation asked what *conceptions of English language and literacy pedagogy informed the Languaging The Lion King text.* The research responses to this question will be discussed in two parts.

1. What approach to language development does the workbook adopt?

In its theory, *Languaging The Lion King* adopts the approach recommended in Curriculum 2005, that **language is a social construct**, and in its practice, *Languaging The Lion King* utilizes and employs the four macroskills of reading, writing, listening and speaking delineated by Christie (1990: 172). It introduces two further skills, those are, observation and visual/iconographic appreciation. The workbook views these *six* skills as interlinked and mutually reinforcing. It is for this reason that I suggest that the dominant approach to language teaching in the workbook is that of **an integrated approach. It is also why I consider it suitable for the Curriculum 2005 classroom** with its emphasis on multiskilling.

Although the activities in the first three sections of the workbook may be designed to focus on one or other of these skills at different times, overall, it continually reinforces the utilization of the six aforementioned macroskills in an interrelated manner. The summative assignment of Section 4 calls on the 'vocabularies' of each of these macroskills towards the expansion into multiple semiotic domains, of the literacy learners' understandings of the underlying structures of the English language.

Essentially what *Languaging The Lion King* is proposing is that to be truly English language-literate in the contemporary South African context, with the progressive shift from the verbal[2] to the visual[3] taking place in many of its social, corporate and academic arenas, one will of necessity have to achieve fluency in the *reading* (in its broadened sense), in the *processing* and in the *production* of texts.

My concerns about whether the workbook provides sufficient grammar-based activities seem tangential to the pedagogical concerns of literacy learning and teaching dealt with both in Curriculum 2005 and the New London Group's Multiliteracies Project. Although my research did not focus on this aspect of literacy teaching, I do take cognizance of this issue in terms of the point Max Harris (1988) made when he quotes the British radio broadcaster Frank Muir [4] as saying:

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[2] Referring to the skills of reading, speaking and writing.
[3] Referring to the rapid introduction of visual technologies, such as CD-ROM, the [illegible] video-conferencing, as well as moving billboards and digital displays into social and [illegible] vironments
[4] Quoted in Christie, ibid., pp. 200-201

> "Teaching children English without teaching grammar is like giving somebody a soup spoon to change a plug"

Although perhaps there is the need for exercises working more definitely around issues of grammar and syntax, literacy is now so different from that of the recent past, and is going through so many changes in the South African educational scenario, that it is difficult to decide just how much or how little to include or to exclude when designing a literacy text for use in the English literacy and language classroom. I feel, however, that innovative teachers still have the opportunity to conduct grammar-based exercises within the framework of the children's written and oral responses to many of the workbook's exercises and assignments.

As a reflective practitioner in the present, essentially disparate, South African literacy context, I choose in this research report to focus instead on the assertion of Halliday (1969), who wrote that

> "Teaching the do's and don'ts of grammar to a child who is linguistically unsuccessful is like teaching a starving man how to hold a knife and fork."[5]

That is to say, traditional grammar teaching with, as Christie (1990: 201) terms it, 'its preoccupations with the parts of speech and the rules of syntax...' is perhaps not entirely relevant to many children in our South African schools today. Christie makes a further claim that:

'Functionally relevant approaches to the study of language start with issues of meaning,'

This leads into the second part of the discussion of the question.

2. Does the workbook address ways in which language is used to transmit and shape socio-cultural issues, ideas and values?[6]

As the literature review in the proposal for this research report suggested, the workbook draws from a number of different disciplines and areas of research, namely, Materials Development theory, Visual literacy and Media studies, Education and Curriculum studies, all of which informed my thinking.

The workbook posits that it is a text that readily avails itself for a study of many issues that a teacher of English language, literature and literacy might consider important in the promotion, as well, of 'English socio-cultural literacy' in the South African classroom (and in general). I believe that largely, *it does what it claims to do.* The workbook however, chose rather to promote an *awareness* of the power relations between different languages and between varieties of the same language rather than allowing itself to get into *arguments* of cultural power - although such arguments do exist and are important. These arguments were rendered in the workbook in a marginal way.

[5] Halliday, M.A.K. (1975) *Learning how to mean: Explorations in the development of language.* Edward Arnold. London.

An exploration of the following conceptions and perceptions that inform both the texts of **The Lion King** and *Languaging The Lion King* might be worthwhile, rather as concerns the framework of Curriculum 2005 than the New London Group's Multiliteracies Project (the two frameworks within which I have largely been working)*:*

- **Issues of coloniality and post-coloniality**

The issue of the English language and Imperialism was peripherally articulated in Section 1 of the workbook (the section on accents and dialect). However, many other issues concerning the 'articulation of Africanness' and African identity and 'what is Western' seem to reside in the **Lion King** film text and in the *Languaging The Lion King* text's material - especially around issues of meaning and meaning-makers – and bear particular significance for South African literacy learners.

- **Issues around gender constructions**

Although referred to in connection with the suitability of the choice of *The Lion King* as the text for study, for the most part, little work was done in the actual workbook on the gender constructions evidenced by the film itself, for example,

[6] This question is taken directly from the Department of Education's September 1997 *Senior Phase Policy Document.* LLC: 19.

- Issues concerning the scenes of 'domestic violence', in which Scar beats Serabi for failing to secure sufficient food for his cohorts, the hyenas, and
- himself, might have been tapped into with great success – and a little discomfort for some of the learner group perhaps?
    - A discussion of the overwhelmingly important role of Nala in returning Simba to his rightful place as ruler of the Pridelands might well have been an empowering exercise for many learners – of both genders
    - A discussion around Serabi's capitulation to the usurper, Scar, demands that she and the lionesses hunt for food for the hyenas as well as the entire pride.

<u>On the workbook's methodology</u>

In the analysis of 'composite' or multimodal texts, the question arises whether the products of the various codes should be analyzed separately or in an integrated way, that is, to quote Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 183),

> "...Whether the meanings of the whole should be treated as the sum of the meanings of the parts, or whether the parts should be looked upon as interacting with and affecting one another. "

It is apparent that the workbook pursues the **latter option**. Its methodology therefore operates on two levels:

- The objective at the **first level** is to provide a brief theoretical framework to the concepts to be explored – *the parts.*

- On the **second level**, the objective is an approach that looks at some practical textual reading practices – *interacting and affecting one another.*

First level...'The parts':

Here the workbook considers how, confronted with various determinants[7] that give a shape to the film text, filmmakers make choices in order to communicate the complex network of meanings inherent in the moving images and sound tracks that constitute a film text. They employ a wide spectrum of language systems (*semiotic modes)* to inform this multimodal medium of communication.

Second level...'Interacting and affecting one another':

The workbook considers that this has important implications for the analysis of a text, it emphasizes that the process of reception requires that every viewer have the power to access and interpret these embedded attitudes and should be a 'producer' of meaning rather than just a 'receiver' of meaning. As it broadly operates within the premises of the Reader-Response paradigm[8], the workbook considers viewers as exponents of their own, personal ways of responding to the text. Both learners and teachers are considered as vital participants in meaning-making processes as the text is 'languaged' verbally (including speaking, singing and writing), iconographically (pictures and drawings) and physically (dramatic work and role-playing).

[7] By 'determinants' I refer to functions of production and/or of consumption.
[8] See Barton (1994) and Hayhoe and Parker (1990).

The practical lesson component provides a forum for an interaction between the viewers and the text, which will yield the creation of mutually created meanings and yet allow for the unique elements of personal meaning.

What about Curriculum 2005 and the workbook's assessment processes?

For the most part, continuous, criterion referenced assessment took place. Within the General Education and Training (GET) Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and Outcomes-Based Learning (OBL) approaches, the workbook has no promotion requirements. It continuously assesses learners against specified assessment criteria. The assessment procedures call for and rely more on 'supportive intervention'[9] than on passing and failing.

What demands do I therefore see the workbook resource text making on teachers/ facilitators?

What literacy teachers need to possess if they are to act as effective 'guides' in the *Languaging The Lion King* encounter, is a knowledge of language, literacy and language education that will allow learners to embrace the following:

- The interrelationship of language and culture and the purpose(s) language can play in a society;

[9] **Senior Phase Policy Document** (September 1997). Department of Education, South Africa. Pp35-6.

- The interrelationship of language and other sign systems i.e. modalities, through an engagement with a range of genres and discourses from popular culture and the community;
- The relationship between language and literacy, power and ideology;
- To be able to analyze critically approaches to and resources for literacy teaching as a basis for curriculum decision-making and to have opportunities to engage in and recognize the value of reflection on teaching materials and teaching practices; much as I had the opportunity to do in creating this workbook.

What demands do I see the workbook resource text making on learners?

My understanding and use of the word 'reading' denotes and connotes differently to that of Louise Rosenblatt (1938) in her influential work on reading and the child-learner's acquisition of reading skills, *Literature as Exploration.* However, she articulates what I see as imperative for learners about to involve themselves in the *Languaging The Lion King* encounter:

> "Readers [sic: **must**] come to the text [s] with a variety of human concerns and experiences that are an important and necessary part of reading."

Students are to realize that the workbook is not only about a syllabus-prescribed English setwork, or about teacher-derived meanings, but is all about *their* meanings.

They are at the centre of the learning process as the workbook refrains from imposing standardized meanings on them in favour of making possible and acceptable a plurality of meanings [10] to and from them.

According to David Barton (1994:147), in this way literacy becomes implicated in the creation of *ways of thinking*:

> " There is not one way of reading. Reading is not extracting *the* meaning from a text; rather, there are different ways of taking from the text, of taking different meanings from the text."

Of value with regard to my investigation of learners' *making and negotiating of meaning* from a text is the data I collected from the taped interviews with Ilan and Ayala – interviews that investigate theories of reception in terms of their respective reading behaviours and reading activities.

Concluding Note

One of the primary aims of *Languaging The Lion King* was to create a space for itself in the *Communication, Literacy and Language* learning area within the proposed *Curriculum 2005* paradigm - an area and a space in which the issues of print literacy, oral literacy, visual literacy, media literacy and schooling might interconnect and inter-relate. To me, the workbook's designer, this space could best be located in an English literacy curriculum, a site where significant modes and media of public communication available in South Africa could be taught, learned, analyzed and debated.

[10] Postman and Weingartner (1969) mentioned by H. Rosen. Read in a handout given to students of the BA (Ed) course (1986) at the University of the Witwatersrand.

However, if the workbook were to be translated into any one of the indigenous African languages of South Africa, as has been **The Lion King** film and the theatre production (*Inkosi Ibhubesi),* this space would be widened.

In essence, *Languaging The Lion King* was designed to operate as an effective source of support material to facilitate the English literacy learning process. The results of the trials would suggest that, for the most part, it does meet its objectives.

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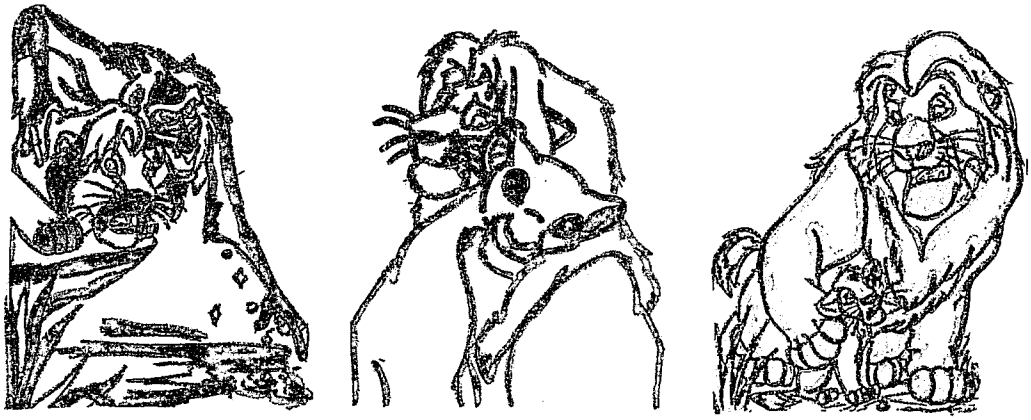
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ANNEXURE A: *LANGUAGING THE LION KING – AN EDUCATIONAL ENCOUNTER*

LANGUAGING THE LION KING - AN EDUCATIONAL ENCOUNTER.



DEVELOPED BY DESIREE RAICHLIN:

FOR SUBMISSION TOWARDS AN MA IN ENGLISH EDUCATION - TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AELS - FOR THE THEORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF MATERIALS OPTION.

JUNE 1997.

LANGUAGING THE LION KING

- AN EDUCATIONAL ENCOUNTER -

A TEACHING & LEARNING GUIDE FOR USE IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

A WORD OF WELCOME

MEMORIES OF MY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL DAYS

"I remember, as a girl in school,
movies as being really cool,
we watched them when Ms Teach was sick
-or if we studied really quick
-or if we earned some just reward
for doing well, not getting bored,
-or if we'd finished our 'real graft'
-or if the school was understaffed
and we needed to be kept amused -
at those times, then, a film was used.

Yet little did our teachers think, or know
(perhaps they were a little slow?)
that from the image, sound and word
that every movie text conferred
upon each growing mind and thought
- a wealth of wisdom was being taught.
We learned of social values, cultures, norms,
of worlds and ways and styles and forms
-and all that the syllabus forgot
we found in movie-sound and plot
-in moving pictures, sound and light
the learning game felt really right,
and real and proper, entirely good -
oh, had our teachers understood!"

I am a teacher now, and I understand
that the 'learning through movies' way is grand,
and more and more, I really try
to teach through films in junior high,
and so I offer Disney's 'Lion King'
in the hope that we can do 'the thing'
that our students want and really need:
to learn to see and write and read
and learn and know and understand
-in ways accessible and planned-
the meanings that in a moving text reside
and the fun in learning not beside!



TCM

INTRODUCTION TO LANGUAGING THE LION KING

Why have I selected *The Lion King* as the particular text with which to work?

Well, primarily because it is a text that avails itself to a study of certain issues that I, as a teacher of English language and literature, deem important in the promotion of 'English literacy' in the classroom (and in general) for many reasons:

*It is evident that the English language, which has been used in Africa For nearly four centuries, has been adjusted and manipulated in many ways to suit the local environments and world-views of its users - environments which themselves are constantly changing and adjusting.

*Particularly in South Africa today, with the national interest in multiculturalism and multilingualism, it might be an interesting exercise to research how, and in which ways the English language has absorbed and come to reflect the perceptions, conceptions and cultures of those who have chosen to speak, write, represent or communicate in it. How do these forms of English deviate from what has been termed British English? What caused these deviations? What have these deviations resulted in and come to represent?

**Mother-tongue interference* will be a feature of English in its spoken/written/visual/ iconographic usages by all those whose first language is not English. How do these mother- tongue interferences manifest themselves in speech, visuals and writing? Are there ideological and/or socio-political issues underlying these manifestations/ interferences?

This resource- materials workbook attempts to focus on some of these issues in English language usage and I firmly hold that the selected text, which avails itself so hospitably to a study of a variety of dialect and pronunciation influences in English language usage - in the junior high classroom in particular - might prove to be valuable.

The Lion King, Language and Culture studies

The Lion King avails itself to a study of a variety of cultures, traditions, landscapes and semiotic systems in particular contexts and conceptions. Walt Disney's animated movie provides a landscape for the exploration of the different 'Englishes' (amongst others, Scar's Queen's English, Shenzi and Ed's American ghetto-slang English, Serabi and Nala's Standard American English and Rafiki's Carribean/West African English) employed by the animated characters drawn from and spanning a broad spectrum of differing national, cultural, political, economic, ethnic and ideological paradigms.

From the magnificent musical opening created by Hans Zimmer, Tim Rice and Elton John, over breathtaking African plains, Disney's animated movie tells the story of a proud lion ruler, Mufasa and his naïve and curious cub, Simba, who must struggle to find his place in nature's "Great Circle of Life". Befriended by a multifarious host of characters, Simba experiences both glorious moments and arduous challenges in his quest to take his rightful place as ruler of the Pride Lands which have been usurped by his machiavellian uncle, Scar.

Learning Engagement and Enjoyment

Furthermore, I believe that an essential part of any learning experience is its enjoyment value. *The Lion King* entertained scores of children, young adults and adults alike when it came on screen in the early 1990's, proving that although many might view it as a 'kiddies' movie, in fact, it's appeal reached out to people of all ages. Perhaps the reason for this is that although ostensibly an animated film, a genre that is considered by many to be the exclusive terrain of children, in fact, *The Lion King* communicates at a level beyond the 'child', albeit not overtly. For these reasons, I make a case for it to be takes seriously at secondary school level, or for that matter, at college level.

FOREWORD

This workbook has been designed for the student teacher who wishes to utilize a *multimodal* approach to English teaching. I use the term ***'multimodal'*** in the sense of any text whose meanings are realized and can be understood through more than one ***semiotic mode****. The following material may be of use in understanding how films communicate the complex network of sign (visual), sight and sound (verbal) systems they employ (semiotic modes). Each entry will work with some aspect of the various language systems and some aspect of the spectrum of techniques used by filmmakers in conveying meaning. These entries do not presume to be exhaustive, they are essentially starting points for student teachers and learners in the process of understanding how the moving image, the music and the verbal languages of a film text work on us and how this communication can shape our understandings and values.

In the analysis of 'composite' or multimodal texts, the question arises whether the products of the various codes should be analyzed separately or in an integrated way, that is, to quote Kress and van Leeuwen,

> "whether the meanings of the whole should be treated as the sum of the meanings of the parts, or whether the parts should be looked upon as interacting with and affecting one another. "**(1)**

I will pursue the latter option and therefore the workbook will operate on two levels : the **first** level is aimed at the student teacher and its objective is to provide a brief theoretical framework to the concepts to be explored on the **second** level, that is, a more student-centered approach which looks at suggested practical lesson plans and classroom practices.

Although a specific animated film text has been selected for purposes of this workbook, (a choice I will discuss a little further on) the concepts, contexts and constraints that will be dealt with as concerns reading this film text, and the desired outcomes of the learning experience around this text, can be applied to almost any animated text. This assertion comes in the light of the claim that the integration of different semiotic codes is the work of an overriding code whose rules and meanings provide the multimodal text with the logic of its integration. And what finer genre than that of the animated film could better express this idea? The animated text has the power - in its every code and context, in every mode and meaning, and in every sound, sign and symbol - to reach out, in some or other form, to viewers of all ages, all races, all cultures and all creeds.

It is with this understanding that I employ the title's term "languaging", for, rather than seeing 'language' as merely a system of word constructions, I take it, and offer it, as a process of making intelligible an amalgam of visual, verbal, oral and aural codes or modes of communication - hence, the understanding of a text's multimodality.

You will be guided through the workbook by a series of ICONS which will indicate for whom the material is intended:

By *semiotic mode* I refer to any sign system, including visual, verbal (oral and written), non-verbal (including body language), graphic and auditory signs and signals.

TCM =TEACHER CENTERED MATERIAL
LCM = LEARNER CENTERED MATERIAL
GTM = GENERAL TEACHING MATERIAL

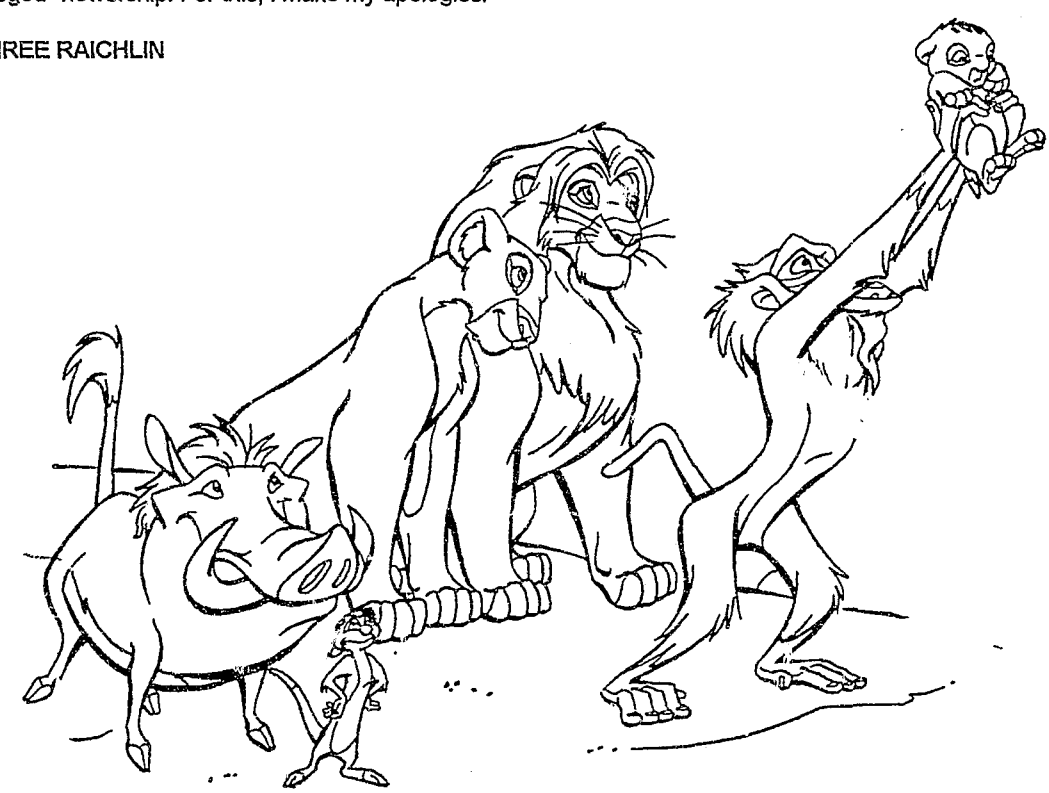
INTRO (Cont)

The resource-file entries will focus on these issues in activities that work from text to classroom and from celluloid screen to personal situation. It is my opinion that such issues are relevant to the life-worlds of South African students in particular and to all students in general. The aim of this unit is not to present teachers-in-training with a definitive work-book, it aims rather to provide them with some resource materials that will generate interesting and imaginative learning material and educationally valid lesson plans.

In order to operate within a defined and therefore contained framework, this unit will be divided into and primarily concentrate on three aspects of the text, each focusing on a different mode of communicating meaning, namely ,the following semiotic modes:
(1) how spoken language (words, dialect, accent);
(2) visuals (pictures, iconography);
(3) and lyrics (music, songs);
operate as conveyers of meaning, that is, work as meaning-makers in a study of the given text.
The final section, **Test Yourself!**, will function as a summation, a 'putting together parts of the whole' exercise and will provide both the student teacher and the learner with an outcomes evaluation opportunity.

Two important assumptions must be stated at the outset:
Firstly, I am presupposing that teachers-in-training who are to work with this unit are basically familiar with certain 'knowledges' and concepts - such as the debates around issues of hegemony (perhaps, though not necessarily, in the Gramscian sense), post-coloniality (and possibly notions of hybridity) and a working knowledge of filmic devices and/or camera techniques (such as particular camera angles and shots.) However, to aid the teacher, I have, before each section, included a brief note concerning any theory and/or concept that might be unfamiliar. A bibliography and reading list will be provided at the end of the unit.
Secondly, the activities in the workbook are directed at learners who have seen, or who have access to, the movie-text of *The Lion King*. This might preclude a number of potential learners, however, albeit unfortunate, I see no alternative, for the text is, by its very nature, available only to a 'technologically privileged' viewership. For this, I make my apologies.

DESIREE RAICHLIN



GTM

SECTION 1

WORDS -AS CONVEYERS OF MEANING IN A FILM TEXT

> "Cinematic sound is that which does not simply add to, but multiplies, two or three times, the effect of the image"
>
> Akira Kurosawa

There are three classifications of sound in movies: **sound effects, music and spoken language (dramatic dialogue).** These three classes of 'sound' can be employed independently or in any combination.

This entry will deal with the latter of the three classifications, that is, spoken language or dramatic dialogue - and will focus, in particular, on the **devices of dialect and accent.**

In a film, the audience is provided with two types of information, one concrete (visuals) and the other abstract (narration). Because speech can reveal a character's class, region, social status, etc., the director does not need to establish these facts visually.

Dialects can be a rich source of meaning in movies. Depending on the dramatic context, accent and dialect can be exploited to suggest other ideas, totally independent of the apparent meaning of the words. Louis Gianneti, in his comprehensive work entitled Understanding Movies, claims that : "By definition, speech patterns deviating from the official dialect are generally regarded as substandard... since dialects are usually spoken by people outside of the 'Establishment', they tend to convey a subversive ideology." Gianneti provides examples of the jivy idiom of America's black ghettos; 'talkin' country'; and the robust earthiness of working-class British Cockney.

It is with this background theory that I approach the first entry point to our study of *The Lion King.*

I will try to outline some of the *desired outcomes* that we should work towards achieving in this section:

(1) To facilitate an awareness in students that in film texts, there is often an 'ideology' (essentially, a motive) behind 'accenting' characters in a particular way.
(2)To develop in the student a basic critical awareness of the ways in which dialect and/or accent in films may serve to represent, create or maintain certain social stereotypes.
(3) To provide students with access to 'the language of film' to help them organise their 'experiences' in the text (and in their personal arenas) in a new, or different way.
(4) To activate the students to participate in the learning experience as fully and as willingly as possible by showing them that the 'meanings' brought out in these lessons (such as understandings of social stereotyping) are 'meaningful to them', both in and out of the classroom.
(5) To promote the students' levels of 'visual literacy' by assisting them to 'read' a film text with greater awareness and proficiency.

TCM

ISSUES AROUND HOW ACCENT AND DIALOGUE FUNCTION AS MEANING-MAKERS IN 'THE LION KING'

One fascinating aspect of English language usage in this text is the extraordinary way in which accents and dialect can be seen to represent both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic devices. In relation to this point, the child's interest in THE LION KING can be used as a springboard for discovering more about Africa, cultures, traditions and languages.

The prevailing and condoned hegemony * in this animated movie is that of American mainstream culture - as defined in terms of the benevolent rulership of Mufasa. The accent and dialect employed by the 'good' characters, such as Mufasa, Nala, Sarabi and Simba, amongst others, is that of White, middle-to-upper class, mainstream, American English.

Characters of more dubious nature are provided with accents and dialects of 'Other' than mainstream American English. Rafiki, the 'sangoma'/oracle monkey- character speaks in the dialect and with the accent of Black West Africa. Immediately we are swept into the landscape of voodoo, magic and mysticism - *(see symbolism : Rafiki's tree and Rafiki's rock art, rituals and magical stick)* - and the associated images of marginalisation and Otherness.

The greedy and rogue hyenas (Shenzi, Banzai and Ed) are given to speaking in the rap-type lingo associated with the American Black 'ghetto' culture; such that before their vile characters emerge visually and thematically, we 'hear' them as being 'off-centre' of what is considered accep'able and normative by the American mainstream English language group. *(see symbolism : the Shadowlands with their skulls/ elephant graveyard).*

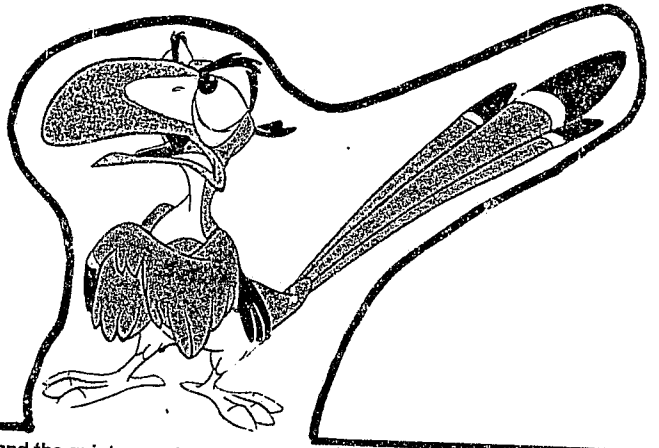
Further examples might include Timon and Pumba, who, although part of the 'good guys', are, because of their typical characteristics of odiferous meerkat and warthog, excluded from communal life. *(see landscape and/or symbolism of the jungle).* These characters are accented in high-pitched, nasal tones (Timon) or slow-witted, laboured speech patterns (Pumba).Once more we witness how language functions as a means meaning-making.

Scar, the usurper, has been depicted in the unmistakably accented tones of the Imperial, British arch-colonizer. He represents the 'destroyer' of the Pridelands on a literal level, but, on the metaphorical level he assumes the proportions of the expedient, manipulative and ruthless colonizer in the ranks of all those who raped and pillaged Africa in the name of 'civilization, G-d and King'.

- Hegemony : leadership; dominance of one world-view over and amongst others.
- 'Prevailing', in this particular text; a text arising out of the conventions promoted by, and conceptions conceived of and condoned by, a mainstream American film industry.

It might be interesting for teachers and students alike to note, at this point, that accents and dialects are largely **context-bound,** for it becomes apparent that Scar's British accent might, in certain contexts, be considered hegemonic and not represent a marginalised language group. I do not wish to get into arguments of cultural power, although perhaps this might be tackled by individual teachers who wish to do so, suffice to say that such arguments do exist and are important, but that this workbook concentrates rather on the representation of mainstream American English as the dominant hegemonic language group.

LET'S WORK AROUND ISSUES OF ACCENT AND DIALECT IN THE FILM AND EXTEND THESE ISSUES INTO THE MULTILINGUAL, MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOM.



Zazu - the hornbill and the quintessential British Major Domo -

- 'accented' in the formal and officious tones of the loyal, royal 'butler';
- 'spoken' in the familiar voice of the 'Belvedere' or 'Jeeves' - type, English Gentleman;
- the voice of the trusted and trustworthy royal attendant to His Majesty, the King.

LCM

LET'S LOOK AT HOW ACCENT AND DIALECT WORK IN THIS TEXT!

Accent: A tone or modulation of the voice which characterizes the manner of speaking.
Dialect: The mode of expression (idiom) of a language peculiar to a particular province, place or environment.

EXERCISE 1

1. It would be best to work in groups of 4 for this exercise.
2. Each group is to work with the following 4 characters:
   1. Mufasa 2. Scar 3. Ed 4. Rafiki

3.Discussion on accent:

Consider these issues:
(i) Identify the accent in which the character speaks, for example, we would say that Zazu speaks in an upper-class British accent, or that Nala speaks in a regular (mainstream) American accent.
(ii) In which cultural group or in what type of society would you expect to find a character with such an accent?
(iii) Discuss how each character's accent influences your opinion or understanding of this character. For example, does the character's accent make you think more, or less, of the character? Would you, for example, think any differently of Zazu if he spoke in the accent reserved for the hyenas? What if Scar spoke like Rafiki?

4.Report back:

Select a spokesperson (or more than one) to report back to the other groups on your group/s findings.

EXERCISE 2

ORGANISE YOURSELVES INTO ANOTHER 4-PERSON GROUP!

2. Discussion on stereotypes:

(i) Do you think that the film is suggesting that certain accents are more acceptable than others? If so, which accent is seen as being the most acceptable and which the least acceptable?
(ii) Is the film, by playing around with different accents and dialogues, setting up STEREOTYPES?

A '**stereotype**' is a '**fixed picture**' in one's mind that **certain types of people have certain characteristics or attributes,** for example, '**all people from Sweden have blonde hair**' or '**all Italians eat garlic**'. Very often these stereotypes are not true, fair or accurate, but **become accepted by** most people in a society as being true.

(iii)On which particular stereotypes, if any, do you think the film is relying?
(iv) Is it not true then that the film assumes that you too stereotype people in this way? Do you?!

3. Role plays:

These will consist of a 5 minute class presentation by every group to be prepared now and presented to the class in a later lesson.

(i) Each member of the group is to 'adopt' an animal character from the film.

(ii) Imagine that your animal character wore clothes. How would your character dress? You may dress up as the character would dress, or you may draw the character in appropriate clothing.

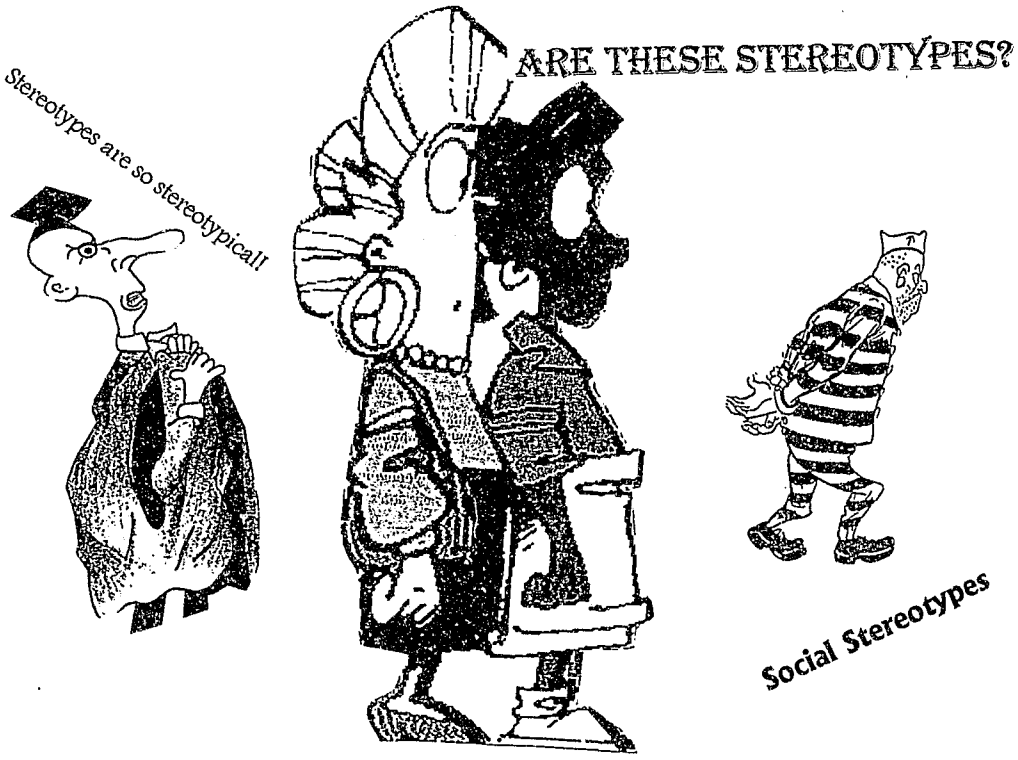
(iii) Select and provide a piece or a type of music or a song that suits your character's personality. (You may bring in a tape-recording, you may sing it, play it on an instrument or any other method with which you feel comfortable.)

(iv) Be able to talk about why you have chosen to dress your character in such a way and why you feel that the music you have selected is suitable to your chosen character.

4. Wrap-up to lesson

As a homework exercise, look at the way in which the presentations relied on, or did not rely on, stereotypes. In your discussion, try to analyse some stereotypes of your own making, that is, try to recognise any stereotypes that you see operating around you in society. Do you agree with these stereotypes or do you feel that they are largely unfair/ untrue?

In a paragraph (1/2 to 1 page in length) discuss the ways in which society sets up stereotypes and the extent to which these stereotypes can influence our own ways of looking at things and people.



GTM

SECTION 2

VISUALS (IMAGES) - AS CONVEYERS OF MEANING IN A FILM TEXT

"The filmmaker writes with his camera as a writer writes with his pen"
Alexandre Astruc

"One must compose images as the old masters did their canvasses, with the same preoccupation, with effect and expression"
Marcel Carne

Undeniably, over the last decade or so, educational practitioners have been re-thinking what really comprises 'literacy'. Given the constantly increasing volumes of visually displayed information and visual materials that surround us in so many social and educational contexts, it has become apparent that to be considered truly literate in today's world, one has to be skilled in *recognising* and *responding to* a whole variety of semiotic codes beyond simply the traditional **three R's**-type literacy - that is, reading, writing and 'rithmetic. This idea significantly broadens the concept of literacy to include skilling in the graphic, **the visual**, the iconographic, the representational, the oral and the aural, that is, **literacy requires multiskilling,** or rather, one has to be **skilled in multiliteracies.**

When dealing with and 'reading' the visual / pictorial, it is essential that the reader be able to ***discriminate*** between visuals that encode an objective attitude (maps, charts, diagrams and/or technical drawings - and even here one needs to assess each visual carefully) and visuals that are subjectively encoded (that is, the visual presents a particular point-of-view, whether such is immediately apparent or not.) Further, to 'read' a point-of-view image is to recognise the ***motivation*** behind and for the image. The skill of being able to 'critically read' visuals /visual texts is therefore a prerequisite skill in the achievement of 'literacy' in the broadened sense of the word.

Desired learning outcomes for this section:

(1) To facilitate in the students an awareness that visuals /pictures are meaning-making devices.
(2) To develop the students' powers of discrimination as regards the 'reading' of visual materials, in this instance, using the film text of *The Lion King.*
(3) To extend the borders of literacy to include visual literacy.

TCM

POINT OF VIEW

This entry deals with 'PERSPECTIVE' and how the camera is carefully placed to create images that bring about relationships between represented participants in the text and the viewer/audience. Producing an image involves the selection of an angle, a point of view, an expressed subjective attitude towards the represented participants or towards the viewer. It is important to note that these subjective attitudes might be individual and unique, or socially determined attitudes.

Point-of-view images are not 'innocent' carriers of meaning, they are impregnated with values and actively shape the messages or attitudes they communicate. This has important implications, not simply for the analysis of a text, but for pedagogic practices within every classroom, for it makes every viewer a **'producer'** of meaning rather than just a **'receiver'** of meaning.

It is important to facilitate the students' understanding of point-of -view shots as this is another meaning-making device in film texts.

LCM

UNDERSTANDING POINT-OF-VIEW

When we talk of point-of-view, we are talking about the way in which the director of the film deliberately (on purpose) places the camera at certain angles to do one of the following two things: (a) To express the way in which a character sees something/someone, that is, the camera looks out from the eyes of the character and we see things the way in which the character would see it;

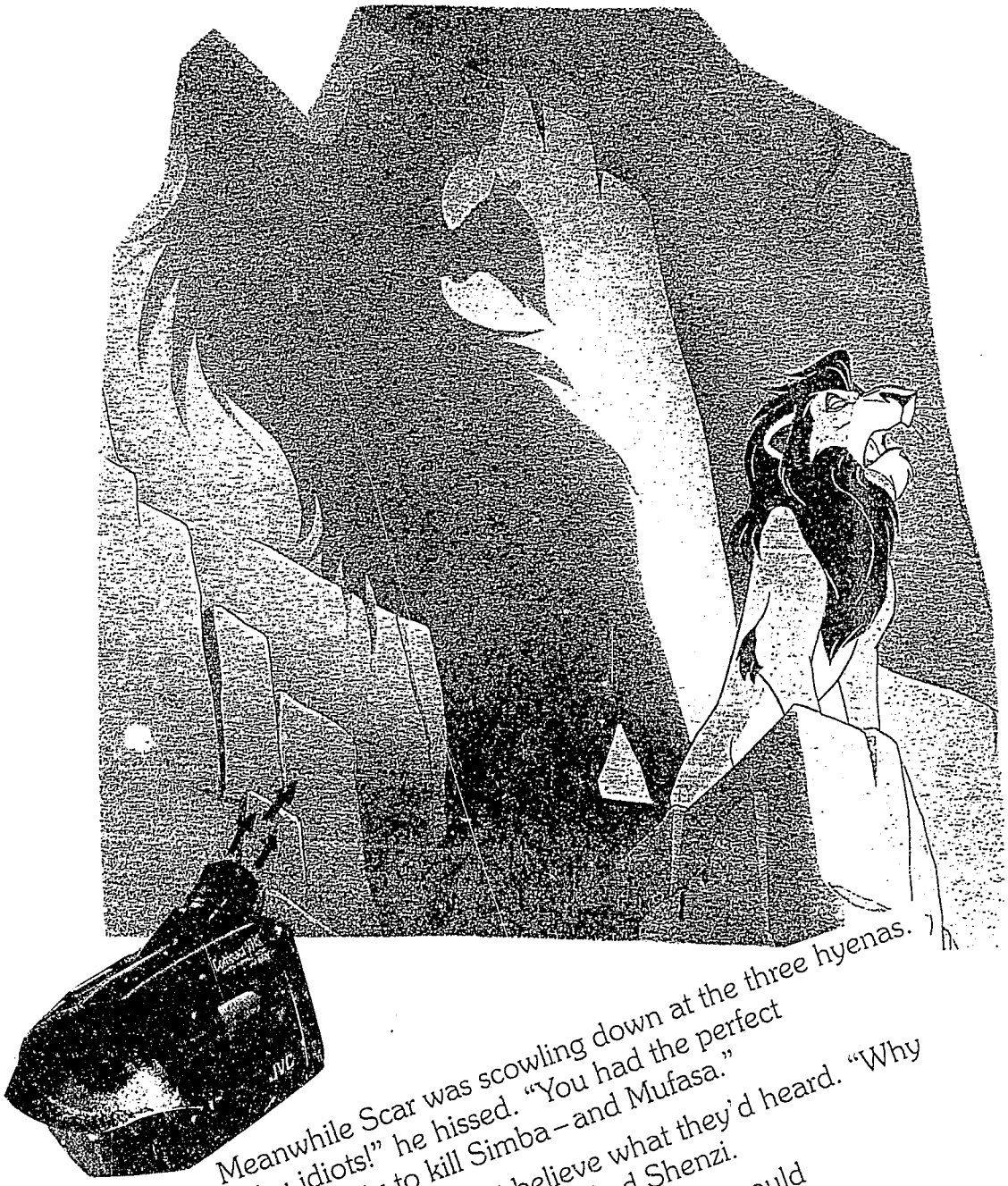
(b) To express the director's own perception or way of looking at a character or at an event;
(c) Sometimes these two ways of seeing things, or these two points-of-view can coincide (be the same) and we see exactly that which both the character and the director see.

Very often, what creates a point-of-view shot is the angle at which the camera is placed, for it forces us to see the scene in a particular way.

Let us look at some camera angles and the ways in which they create a particular point-of-view:

1. **The low-angle shot:** The camera is placed below the character and looks up at the character. Look at the picture below: describe the feelings that this picture of Scar evokes (brings out) in you. Would you like to come face-to-face with Scar, or his shadow, at this moment?!

Can you see how Scar appears more menacing (dangerous) and powerful because we are forced to look up at him? Do you feel the power that the camera angle has given to his shadow?



Meanwhile Scar was scowling down at the three hyenas. "You idiots!" he hissed. "You had the perfect opportunity to kill Simba—and Mufasa."

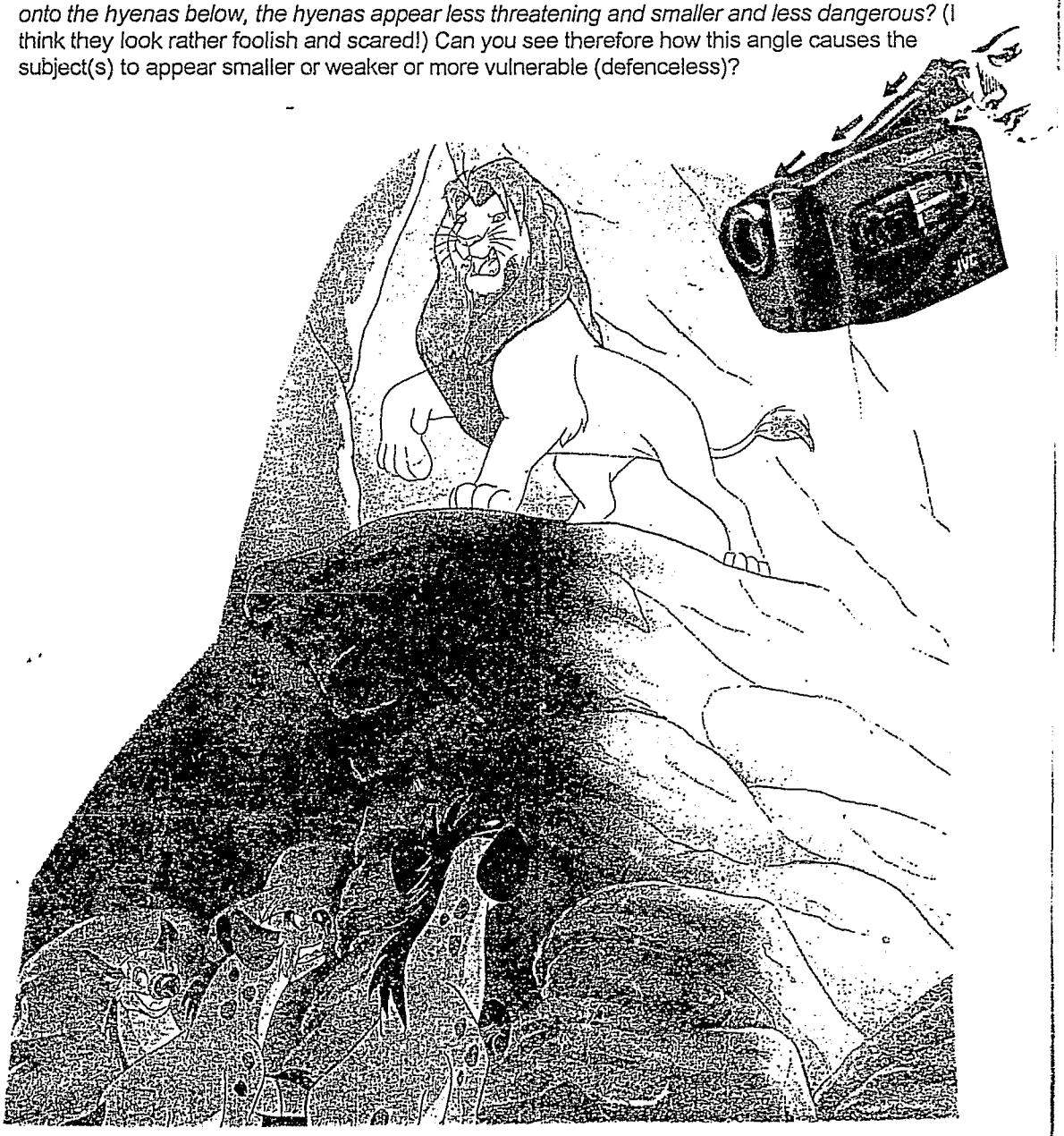
The hyenas couldn't believe what they'd heard. "Why should we kill Mufasa?" asked Shenzi.

"Because with *both* of them gone, *I* would become the new King!" replied Scar. "So, stick with me and I'll make sure you're treated well."

2. <u>The high angle shot:</u> The camera **tilts downwards** so that the eye looks down upon the **shot** (a camera situation that makes up the frame) or the subject(s). Look at the picture below:

Do the hyenas appear threatening to you in this shot? Do they intimidate (put fear into) you?

Can you see how, because we are looking through Simba's eyes, from a position of height down onto the hyenas below, the hyenas appear less threatening and smaller and less dangerous? (I think they look rather foolish and scared!) Can you see therefore how this angle causes the subject(s) to appear smaller or weaker or more vulnerable (defenceless)?



NOW YOU ATTEMPT THE FOLLOWING POINT-OF-VIEW EXERCISES PLEASE!

LCM

POINT OF VIEW

EXERCISE

These three pictures present scenes of similar 'situatedness' in the film. All the characters are positioned at the top of Pride Rock overlooking the Pridelands. What each character *sees,* however; their *point of view* or *subjective* (individual or personal) *attitudes* all differ:

Picture 1: we see Rafiki holding up the new-born prince Simba for all the inhabitants of the Pridelands, all King Mufasa's subjects, to bow to and to greet.

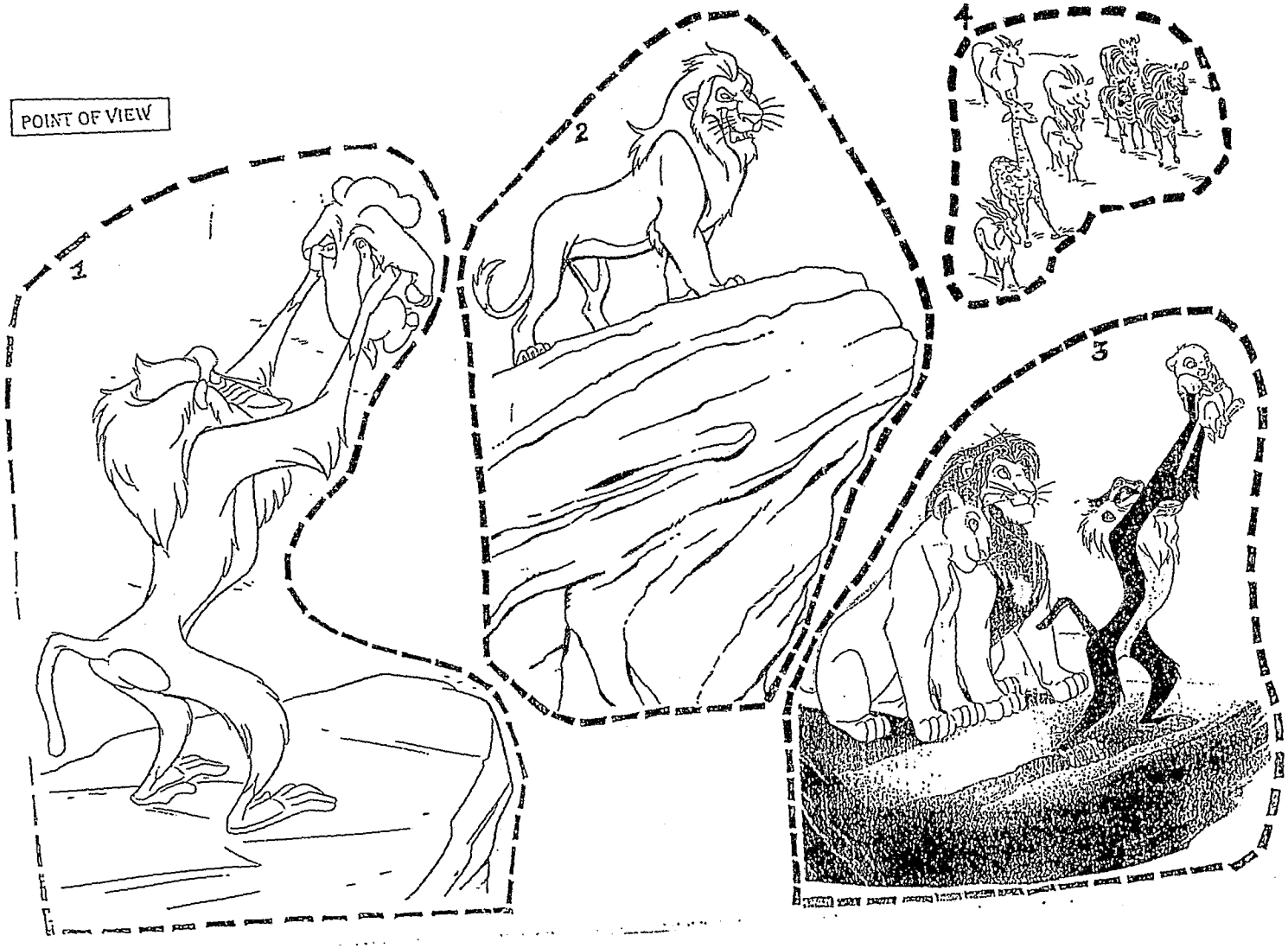
Picture 2: we see Scar, now King of the Pridelands, surveying his kingdom.

Picture 3: we now have Rafiki presenting the new- born cub of King Simba and Queen Nala to their loyal subjects who have once again gathered from all over the Pridelands.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. It would be advisable to work in pairs or small groups for this exercise.
2. For **picture 1,** you are to create the scene that you think that **Simba the cub sees** as **he looks out** over the Pridelands.
3. For **picture 2,** create the scene that you think **Scar sees** as **he surveys** the Pridelands.
4. For **picture 3,** create the landscape **that meets the eyes of Simba, Nala and their cub** as Rafiki holds their cub up to the Pridelands.
5. Cut out each picture along the dotted lines and position the picture, one per page, on an A3 piece of paper. You may position each picture wherever your group feels is most suitable.
6. To create the landscape, you may use pictures, free- hand drawings, photographs, fuzzy-felt cut-outs or any other material you feel is suitable to create your landscapes.

POINT OF VIEW



SECTION 3

MUSIC - AS A CONVEYER OF MEANING IN THE FILM TEXT

"A frequent function of film music is to underline speech ..."
Louis Giannetti

"Directors must know what they want from music dramatically : it is the composer's business to translate these dramatic needs into musical terms."
Aaron Copland

With or without lyrics, music can anchor the meanings of film images. Characterisation can be made even more precise when lyrics are added to the musical score. Music may even dominate the image on occasion.

Beginning with the opening credits, music can serve as a kind of overture, to suggest the mood or spirit of the film as a whole. In our selected film text, the magnificent musical opening score - 'The Circle of Life', created by Hans Zimmer - over breathtaking African plains, sets the scene for the 'incredible story of the love between the proud lion king, Mufasa, and his son Simba - a curious and naïve cub who must struggle to find his place in Nature's great 'Circle of Life'." (Walt Disney Home Video Company).

Certain types of music in a film text can serve to suggest locales, classes or ethnic groups. It is the song ***'Hakuna Matata'*** to which we can now turn our attention. 'Hakuna Matata', the title words and the words of the enduring refrain of the song, in their very 'Africanness', serve to locate us, the viewers, on the wide open plains of an African landscape; in the verdant Pridelands in which this coming-of-age saga is to take place. Furthermore, the music also functions to control emotional shifts within the scene as the song is the precipitating force that draws the exhausted, distraught and guilt-ridden Simba out of his misery and into the embrace of the warmhearted and hilarious 'odd couple', Timon and Pumba, who comfort and heal Simba and teach him to sing, and to believe in, the 'Hakuna Matata' philosophy : 'Aint no worries for the rest of your life'. It is this philosophy and song that help Simba (and us, the viewers!) over the difficult patches in the cub's journey toward regaining his rightful place as benevolent ruler of the Pridelands.

Desired learning outcomes for this section:

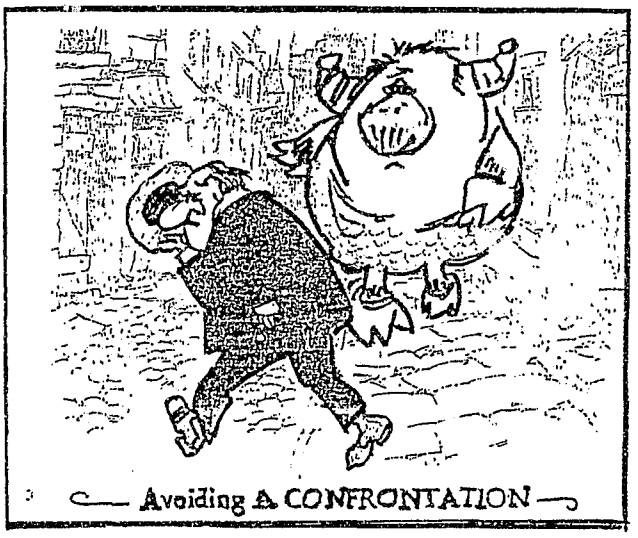
(1) To introduce the students to the idea that music in a film text is more than just a 'backing sound', it is, in fact, very often a meaning-making device of equal magnitude to the words and images of the text.
(2) To promote a 'critical listening' approach to music in a film text.
(3) For the students to analyse a further aspect of the multimodality of this text,
(4) As most young people are so fond of music and songs, this learning experience should be made as pleasurable as possible for the students.

TCM

THE LANGUAGE OF MUSIC AS A SECONDARY LANGUAGE TEXT

How, and the ways in which, music operates to create meaning in a film text is a vast and interesting study in itself, however, for purposes of this entry, we will limit ourselves to working with ways of teaching about how music enables students to engage with and to reflect upon a multimodal text. This reflects the argument that texts are 'read' in the context of their relationships with other texts **(2 - Buckingham).** It is important to be aware of the fact that, and to make the students aware of the fact that, music may provide access to a more complex system of symbolic meaning than that which is available through reading, writing or talking systems.

Note of warning!
If students bring in their own music/songs, the issue of differing personal tastes in music is bound to come up. Remember that the pleasure of music for young people - popular or otherwise - lies in the sense that it 'belongs' to the listener, that it is precisely the listener's and not 'ours' (teacher's). Furthermore, music is not just a matter of personal taste - it is also a culturally influenced phenomenon. Often, to claim a particular taste in music is to claim a particular social identity or set of identities. Our objectives in facilitating such discussion is primarily to encourage the students to acknowledge another form of 'language' operating in this text and to be able to 'read' the text on a variety of levels - while enjoying the educative encounter in a non-threatening environment!



LCM

HAKUNA MATATA - NO WORRIES!

WATCH THE SCENE IN THE FILM THAT DETAILS THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE AND LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THE SONG:

After the death of Mufasa during the wildebeest stampede orchestrated by Scar and the hyenas, Simba fled. Terrified, hot, thirsty and unable to go any further, little Simba fainted. When Simba regained consciousness, a skinny meerkat called Timon was pouring water into his mouth while a fat warthog, named Pumba, looked on.

"You nearly died," Pumba told Simba "We saved you."

"Thanks," said Simba, "but you shouldn't have bothered. It doesn't matter whether I live or die."

"That sounds serious," said Timon. "Put your troubles behind you and live in the jungle with us. ***Hakuna matata*** - no worries! That's what we say!'

Simba thought for a moment. "All right," he agreed.

The music and song ***hakuna matata*** is really important in the film as it provides us with another way of understanding the film text, it is also a form of language that we listen to in order to make sense of the film, in this case however, it is the language of music and not of speech.

EXERCISE 1
(You may work in pairs or small groups)

DISCUSSION:

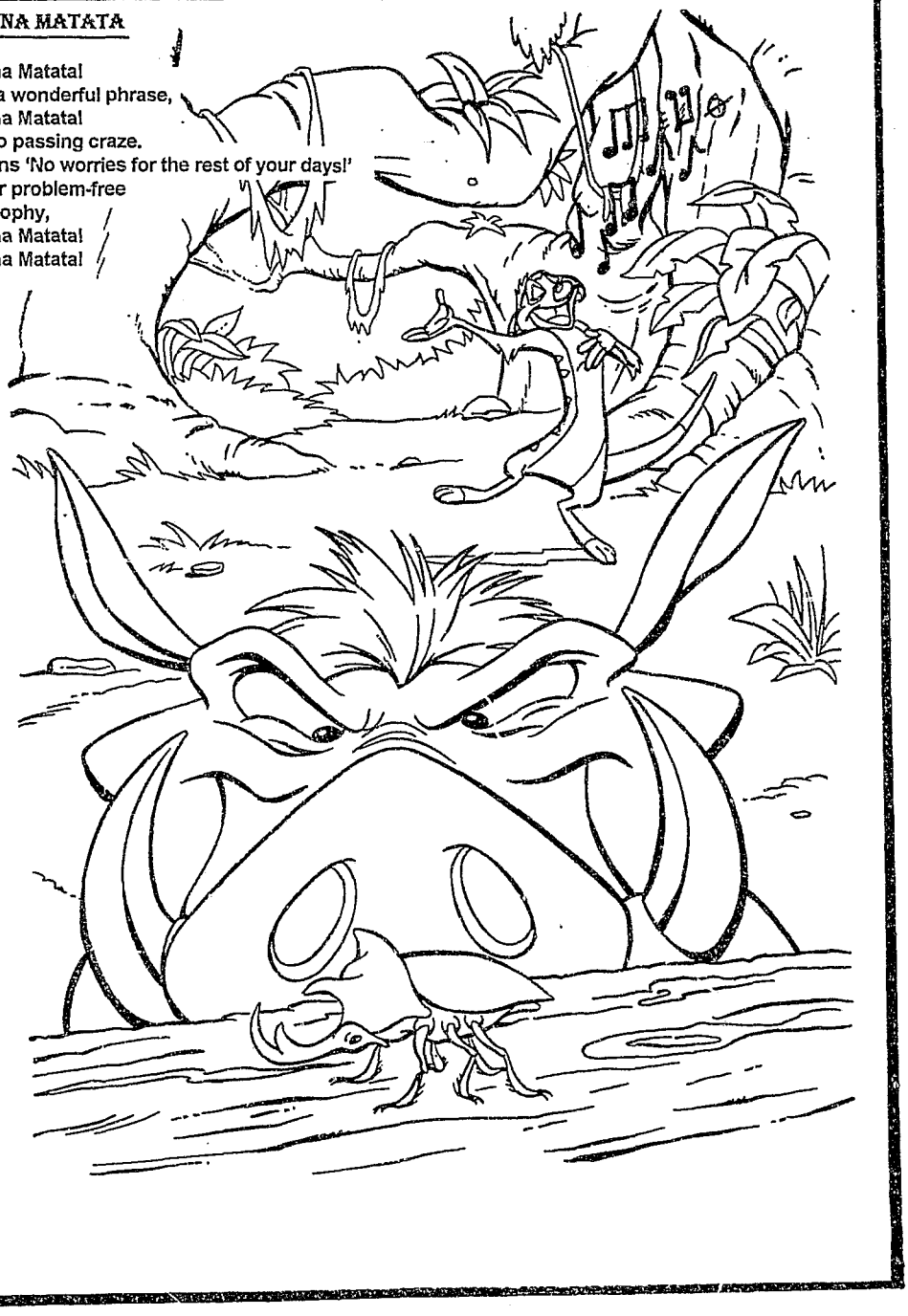
1. What is the message of the song? In other words, what is it that Timon and Pumba are telling Simba when they teach him this song?
2. Do you think that it is a more effective way of communicating than simply speaking? If you think it is, explain why you think so.
3. What do the words 'Hakuna matata' mean to you? Can you come up with any other words or phrases that would explain what these words mean? (You might find that these words or phrases come from another language - that's fine too!)

CREATIVE WRITING:

1. Try to create a short jingle or song around the words or phrases that you have come up with, or, if you prefer, find a song that you feel captures a similar meaning to "Hakuna matata".

HAKUNA MATATA

Hakuna Matata!
What a wonderful phrase,
Hakuna Matata!
Aint no passing craze.
it means 'No worries for the rest of your days!'
It's our problem-free
Philosophy,
Hakuna Matata!
Hakuna Matata!



LCM : EVALUATION ENTRY

TEST YOURSELF! - THE LION KING AND THE CIRCLE OF LIFE.

PROCEDURE:

1. This is a **two** hour learning assessment paper.
2. Please complete the tasks on the provided sheet of paper.

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

1. One (1) **test paper** comprising an **instruction sheet.**
2. A **storyboard** and two **picture-sheets.**
3. Pens, pencils, glue/paste, scissors, eraser, ruler, khoki-pens.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Imagine / pretend that you are going to produce a play or a slide show or a child's reader or picture-book of this film.**
2. **As producer / director of this production, you have to edit / summarize/ shorten the film as it is too long for your purposes. You do not want to leave out any important parts or moments in the film.**
3. I have provided each of you with a storyboard and a set of pictures (frames/ stills) from the ***The Lion King.***
4. At the centre of the storyboard you will find the lyrics to the song *"The Circle of Life".* **Read these lyrics thoroughly before you begin.**
5. Encircling the song on the storyboard you will find a 'journey-map' with empty picture blocks.
6. **Using the storyboard, create your edited version of the film by beginning at the first picture-block and working your way around the circle in a clockwise direction.**
7. **Construct what, from your point-of view, adequately illustrates the 'circle of Simba's life' by cutting out pictures from the provided picture-sheets and pasting them into the picture-blocks on the storyboard.(as I have done in picture-block 1).**
8. You will have to **select only a few** of the provided pictures, depending on **the significance** (importance) **that you attribute** (give to) **the issues, events and concerns detailed in each picture and the importance it has in your representation of Simba's 'circle of life'.**
9. **In the comment box above each picture-block, write short notes explaining why you selected that particular picture, that is, comment on why you feel it is significant** (special or meaningful).
10. Work chronologically, that is, **follow a proper time scale through the film and through Simba's life** as you fill in the storyboard.
11. If you feel that there is no provided picture for what you consider to be a meaningful moment in the circle of Simba's life, **write the picture out in words** in **the picture-block** and **explain the significance of the moment in the comment block above it.**
12. In the rectangle below the journey-map, write a few sentences to explain why you feel that the song **"The Circle of Life"** is important to our understanding of the film.

Relax and enjoy this test - Hakuna Matata!

GTM

SECTION 4 : EVALUATION ENTRY

The activities in this workbook have been designed with the objective of creating for the students the necessary learning opportunities and learning experiences which will indicate the dynamic interaction which occurs in the reading of a multimodal text (or in the multimodal reading of a text). I have tried to include a consideration of the practical methods and media which can be used to reveal the particular learning content to the students in the most effective way.

Although evaluations and/or examinations and tests are tedious and unpleasant for most learners, there is no way of assessing whether aims and objectives have been attained other than by these processes. This **evaluation exercise** will work around questions of what teaching results can be and, in fact, are attained through the course of this learning experience. I have used the term 'evaluation' rather than 'examination' because 'evaluation' is a more comprehensive concept as it implies both a quantitative (test scores) and a qualitative (students' reception of learning experience) assessment.

How a teacher chooses between different evaluation techniques will be determined mainly by the field of study which is to be taught and by the scholastic level of those taught. As long as the evaluation method/technique selected by the teacher manages to forge a link between theoretical reflection on the prescribed text and the practical implementation of the concrete results of such reflection, the actual or particular method selected is discretionary on the part of the teacher. For purposes of this workbook, I have essentially selected the SUMMATIVE evaluation technique (that is, to evaluate the 'end-product'), although I have tried to include 'process' (rather than 'product') evaluation exercises during the course of each of the three sections /entries.

TCM

SECTION 4 : EVALUATION ENTRY

(1) The following evaluation entry should carry a score of FIFTY (50).

(2) Desired learning outcomes in the evaluation entry and allocated maximum scores:

- For students to 'evidence' that they have paid close attention to the concerns and issues raised in the taught text, that is, they should be able to integrate the three meaning-making devices studied during the course of the workbook (WORDS, PICTURES and MUSIC), into their final assessment exercise. **(15)**
- For students to produce and validate their own representations of the content material rather than reproducing the teacher's ideas. **(15)**
- For students to forge, in their completing of the evaluation entry, the link between practical work (the placement of the visuals) and analytical activities (the comment boxes). **(15)**

* Neatness and legibility of presentation carries the final **5** marks.



AFTERWORD

A curious anomaly pertains to the teaching of English language and literature in South African schools today. While it would be unthinkable to in any way negate the importance of teaching **reading skills** as an essential part of the syllabus, very few English teachers recognize, or are acquainted with the idea, that **reading skills**, in actuality, are **not limited only to the skills of decoding written texts,** but are vital to the **reading of visual and verbal** (oral and 'sounded') **texts.**

In our world, in which images are fast becoming the most influential and widely disseminated modes of communication, the English language and literature curriculum in most South African schools continues to be dominated by print. Len Masterman, in his comprehensive study of media education in his book entitled **Teaching The Media** (Routledge, 1985), makes a significant claim:

> "Schools, sooner or later, will have to recognize the importance of developing in their pupils the ability to examine visual images critically."

I have attempted in this workbook to acknowledge this position, and to move towards the creation of a **'set-work'** for inclusion into the English syllabus that facilitates, for both teachers and students alike, the following:

- an awareness of the value of animated film texts as a learning resource - a resource readily available in our popular film and television culture.
- an embracing of the wider significance of visual texts and an understanding of the complex ways in which they may be *read* and *used* by viewers - both in and out of the classroom.
- a productive interchange with a visual, rather than a written, text.
- the promotion of the development of *critical reading skills* as concerns visually constructed and visually presented 'reading matter'.
- a means of equipping and 'educating' students to 'intelligently read' and 'process' these texts (and the often negotiated truths that they present).

With reference to the point concerning the development of critical reading skills, I offer that these abilities, although admittedly only gently touched upon in this workbook, should allow the students to look beyond the particularity of this specific text, namely, Disney's *The Lion King*, towards some general principles which are relevant in the analysis of similar texts.

Taking the cautionary words of Masterman into account that the distribution of realisation possibilities across the semiotic codes is determined socially as well by the inherent potentialities and limitations of a particular semiotic medium or text, it is with reservation that I recommend (but recommend I do) the following animated film texts as alternatives for study in the English language and literature classroom:

- **The Jungle Book** - Walt Disney Classic
- **An American Tail** - Steven Spielberg
- **Beauty and the Beast** - Walt Disney Classic

Essentially, what I hope to have achieved in this workbook, is an exciting and encouraging learning encounter but, above all, an **educative engagement with reading - in its fullest and finest sense.**

Desiree Raichlin

FOOTNOTES

(1) Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen in Reading Images : The Grammar of Visual Design ((Routledge, London, 1996) p183
(2) David Buckingham and Julian Sefton-Green in Cultural Studies Goes To School (Taylor and Francis, London,1994) p63

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(4) Disney, W (Co) The Lion King (Ladybird, Leicestershire, 1996)
(5) Disney's The Lion King - A Big Coloring Book (Golden Books, Wisconsin. USA, 1994)
(6) Giannetti, L, Understanding Movies - Fourth Edition (Prentice-Hall, Inc, New Jersey, 1987)
(7) Disney's Inter Active Activity Centre - The Lion King (Version 1.1/GB, Microsoft Corporation, Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Montaigne, France, 1995)

ANNEXURE B: *'Nkosi Bhubezi'*

By Chris Du Plessis, Pace Magazine, July 1994

Showbiz

'Nkosi Bhubezi'

This year's must-see movie

BY CHRIS DU PLESSIS



The movie *The Lion King* is a wonderful new film from Walt Disney which has a very special interest for South Africans. For the first time ever, we will see a top class international film which has been dubbed into Zulu. And what makes this even more exciting is that the world premiere is to be held in South Africa.

This full-length film, which is in cartoon form, tells a fascinating tale of a young lion cub called Simba and his journey to claim his rightful place as king of all animals. Set against the majestic backdrop of Africa, the film brings to our screens an array of unforgettable animal characters. Apart from Simba, there's his father, the powerful King Mufasa. Plotting against Mufasa and Simba is the king's evil brother Scar with his three hyena henchmen. Then there are an assortment of animals who come to Simba's aid like the lioness Nala, Zazu, the hornbill, the wacky warthog called Pumbaa and the wise baboon Rafiki.

For the first time ever, Disney will release a film in this country with its English soundtrack as well as the Zulu one and Eric Nxuli has done a wonderful job of translating the dialogue, jokes and stories into Zulu. The voices behind the cartoon characters in English belong to a number of top stars including James Earl Jones, Jeremy Irons and Whoopi Goldberg. Local actors have been used for the Zulu soundtrack. To provide a number of entertaining songs, rock 'n roll legend Elton John teamed up with Tim Rice, the award-winning songwriter of *Aladdin, Evita* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Carmen Twillie sings the powerful gospel-flavoured song called *The Circle of Life*.

The film is unique in that it's the first time Walt Disney Studio has based the cartoon background on actual landscapes. Several of the film-makers travelled to East Africa to observe and sketch scenes so that they could capture the beauty of Africa. In order make the cartoon as realistic as possible, over a million drawings were created for the film. It took the five-member computer imagery department two years to create the incredible two-and-a-half minute scene showing a wildebeest stampede.

Although this film is in cartoon form, don't think it's just for kids. Young and old will be glued to their seats as they share in the story of how the cub Simba defeated his enemies to become the Lion King.



One of the "hyena henchmen" who are young Simba's enemies.

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Reflecting on *Languaging The Lion King - An Educational Encounter*

- in the context of English Literacy Education

ANNEXURE C: ***'Inkosi is a roaring success'***

City Press, 26 June



City Press
26-6-94

CELEBRATION ... of local film talent. And Connie Chiume and Jerry Mabuza were there. *Inkosi Ibhubesi* proved beyond doubt that black South African actors and crew can hold their own with the best in the world.

Inkosi is a roaring success

BY NOMVULA KHALO and SANDILE MEMELA

EVEN before the world premier of the historic Zulu version of Walt Disney's film The Lion King, a ripple of excitement ran through the large auditorium at a glitzy, invitations-only function in the northern suburbs this week.

Few would disagree that the hundreds of celebrities and special guests who attended the launch of Inkosi Ibhubesi had every reason to smile and be filled with pride.

Although the much-publicised attendance by Zulu king Goodwill Zwelithini and Prince James Mahlangu of KwaNdebele proved to be a marketing gimmick, the launch was a definite statement about what local actors can do – given a chance.

The historic dubbing of the Lion King into Zulu proved that South African actors can easily match world standards. Many top local singers, actors and voice-over artists, including Mara Louw, Victor Ntoni, Kumbi Sangweni, Dominique Twyawa, Lillian Dube, Bham Ntabeni, Fezile Mpela and Linda Sobezo, featured in the production. Its world-class standard is a testament to their resilience and courage amid all the obstacles, not least of them a film industry which has kept black talent on the outskirts.

Disney Characters and Voices vice-president Blake Todd said he was astounded at the talent available in this country, and which had been hidden from the world for so long. "I must confess I have been bowled over by the very high standard and professionalism."

ANNEXURE D:

'*The lion roars again*' By Richard Mkhondo

Foreign Correspondent, The Star, November 18, 1997

Theatre

The lion roars again

BY RICH MKHONDO
WASHINGTON

In a feast of ingenious stage techniques, a hybrid of costumed actors and full-sized puppets, the Broadway adaptation of the hit movie *The Lion King*, featuring award-winning musician and actor Lebo M, and several of his fellow South Africans, is sold out for the next two years soon after opening at New York's New Amsterdam Theatre.

Fresh from rave reviews at a tryout in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the new Disney musical, in which humans, not furry animals, play out in live action the traumatic life-and-death issues, is already a hit with young and old theatre lovers across the American East Coast.

"We are all excited to be drawing crowds here on Broadway, the centre of theatre in the whole world," said Lebo M who, together with Disney's Hans Zimmer, won a Grammy for the arrangement of *The Lion King*'s soundtrack two years ago.

Lebo M (surname Morake) – whom Don Hahn, producer of *The Lion King*, praised as "forever the spirit and voice of *The Lion King*" – is the musical's co-producer, choral director, arranger, composer and actor.

Other South Africans featured in the musical include Tshidii Leloka, Nandi Morake, Faca Kulu, Ron Kunene, Lucky Ngema (younger brother of Mbongeni Ngema of *Sarafina* fame), Ntombikhona Dlamini, Lindiwe Dlamini and Lindiwe Hlengwa.

The Lion King tells of the epic adventures of a young lion cub named Simba, as he struggles to accept the responsibilities of adulthood and his destined role as king.

Performers use a wide array of masks and puppet techniques to portray the story's 13 principal characters, as well as dozens of other animals.

The production has a wholly original design and is not an attempt to recreate the animated look of the award-winning feature film.

So far audiences – who at the recent debut included Zinzi Mandela-Hlongwane and South African ambassador to the US Franklin Sonn – seem to respond to the score's Africa-inspired sounds as much as to the Elton John/Tim Rice song *Circle of Life*.



Proud ... Tshidii Leloka is in Broadway's *The Lion King*

African-Americans attending the show said they were particularly pleased by the way the show celebrated African culture through the design and choral arrangements. (Lebo M's music from his debut album *Rhythm of the Price Lands* went gold in February 1995.)

Morake played a major role in incorporating the South African element into the production, including casting; weaving together Zulu, Sotho and English languages; and creating a powerful African chorus.

The musical marks Disney's third venture into legitimate theatre after *Beauty and the Beast* and the world première concert event *King David*.

Though the company refuses to confirm or deny numbers, *The Lion King* budget is estimated at more than $15-million, easily the most expensive Broadway musical ever.

Theatre critics said when the stage production was in the process of being developed from the animated film, there was a lot of speculation that the "death scene" was going to be threatening for children.

But Walt Disney Feature Animation and Walt Disney Theatrical Productions said they were not worried about the scene in which the young lion cub Simba, played by Scott Irby-Rannlar, weeps uncontrollably over the lifeless body of his father Mufasa (Samuel Wright), thinking he has caused his death.

"I never worried about children's responses, because we stayed within the boundaries of fable: the structure of a child, separated from a parent, who has to find his or her own path to reconnect with the community," said Thomas Schumacher, Disney's executive vice-president.

"I don't think children have a problem with that. It's the classic story, from *Hansel and Gretel* to *The Lion King*," he said.

Michael Eisner, chairman of Disney, said: "Kids get it quicker than adults. They understand the symbolism instantly; it's very Disney-esque.

"It was always our goal to cre a very positive experience that family can enjoy together, whet you're eight or 80, or two, for t matter.

"On film, you can do anythi the challenge of the stage is *marry what technology you h* with the imagination." – *S Foreign Service*



Now for the stage ... award-winning arranger Lebo M

ANNEXURE E: Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE: ***LANGUAGING THE LION KING***

Please complete this questionnaire in English.

Please complete this questionnaire in writing. There is no prescribed length per answer.

Please complete the personal information section first.

Personal Information Section

Name: ILAN OSRIN

Age: 22

Occupation (teacher, student, youth group member etc.): Youth Group Leader student

Language Preference: ENGLISH

Question 1

In your opinion, what does it mean to be 'literate'?

It means first of all to be able to read and write, but moreover I think it also means to be able to comprehend and understand, noise, signs, and pictures, thus making the things one reads, hears and sees meaningful

Question 2

Did the workbook help you to gain any new perspectives on how film texts operate? If yes, please enumerate on these new perspectives.

Yes. It brought out issues of language, accents and dialogues that I had never really noticed before, I used to concentrate more on what was said, but now I understand more about what is said in context.

I also have a greater understanding of visual effects, their use and power in conveying a visual message. It extended my understanding of visual literacy

I now have a general greater knowledge and understanding of how film texts operate

Question 3

Would you ideally like to teach/learn from a text such as *Languaging The Lion*

Yes, certainly -
I feel that the 'Lion king' is a movie that so many students of many diverse age groups and cultures can relate to. It has so many 'lessons' and valuable messages for people to learn from and internalise - therefore I would like to teach from such a text - As a student I would be delighted to learn from and study such a text aswell

to learn from and study such a text aswell

Question 4

Do you feel that the text is entirely academic or can it apply to life outside of the classroom? Please justify your answer if possible.

It can definetely apply to life outside of the classroom. The messages and morals in the 'lion king' are those which society at large can learn from and benefit from - It can certainly help with life inside the classroom, but it leaves one with a feeling of 'empowerment' in the sense of going out to 'fix up' the world at large.

Question 5

In your opinion, which of the following literacy devices (semiotic modes of communicating) did the workbook call on or make use of? Please put a cross (x) in the relevant block.

- [x] Writing/print
- [x] Speaking/oral
- [ ] Drawing/iconographic
- [x] Reading print/visual
- [x] Reading pictures/visual
- [x] Moving/Body Language
- [x] Looking/visual

ANNEXURE F: **Audio-cassette under separate cover**

Author Raichlin D
Name of thesis Reflecting On Languaging The Lion King - An Educational Encounter In The Context Of English Literacy Education Raichlin D 1998

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