**Contents**

**Issue 57, Summer 2015**

2 Editorial

3 Heterosexual Romance, Whiteness and Place in Notting Hill

10 The Macbeth factor in House of Cards

15 Studying Video Games as ‘Texts’

20 Contributors to this issue

21 Your Country Needs You! Part 1

24 Mise en scène in Minnelli’s Madame Bovary

28 Barriers and Thresholds in Learning Media Studies Part 3

37 Close-Up and Personal: Eyes Without a Face

43 Reviews

**MEJ**

The Journal of AMES (Association for Media Education in Scotland) is published twice yearly.

Editorial address: 24 Burnett Place, Aberdeen AB24 4QD

email: desmurphy47@gmail.com

www.mediaeducationscotland.org.uk

Editor: Des Murphy

Editorial group: Des Murphy and Liz Roberts

Thanks to: Douglas Allen

Typesetting: Roy Stafford

Printed by: Thistle Reprographics, 55 Holburn Street, Aberdeen AB10 6BR

AMES is a registered Scottish Charity, number SCO29408

Teachers may reproduce material from this journal for educational purposes only. Written permission is required for any other use. All text © AMES 2015

Images from Notting Hill © Universal, Madame Bovary © Warner Home Video, Les Yeux sans visage © BFI. Scans of book covers/websites © the publishers concerned. Other rightsholders given with images or unknown.

The views expressed in the journal do not necessarily reflect the views of AMES as an organisation or of the institutions where contributors work.

**Editorial**

Last year’s Scottish Referendum, which for the first time gave the vote to 16- and 17-year-olds, was a remarkable political and therefore media event. It has had significant knock-on effects in this year’s General Election on both the SNP and Scottish Labour. The media played an important role in the referendum campaign and there were frequent accusations of media bias. In this issue of MEJ, we turn our attention to a media form where, in the battle for hearts and minds, the message is entitled to bias – the party political broadcast. Tom Brownlee, an ex-apart Scot and former editor of this journal, surveys the battlefield in Part 1 of his article, ‘Your Country Needs You!’ He will follow up in the next issue with an analysis of party political broadcasts leading to the General Election of May 2015, itself a remarkable political and media event.

In this issue we have three articles which involve close textual analysis of film. In ‘Representing Heterosexual Romance, Whiteness and Place in Notting Hill’, Rajinder Dudrah scrutinises the popular 1999 Richard Curtis-scripted and Roger Mitchell-directed romantic comedy. In order to examine the representations constructed by the film, Dudrah makes a close reading of key sequences to examine, in particular, mise en scène and cinematography, demonstrating how it “depicts a limited version of the area of Notting Hill as predominantly white English.” In her contribution to the regular ‘Close-Up and Personal’ series of articles, Tina Stockman relives the experience of first watching Franju’s 1960 horror, Les Yeux sans visage (Eyes Without a Face) and chooses the opening sequence of the film to analyse how Franju and his collaborators achieved the shocking effects that have made her avoid the horror genre ever since.

Colin McArthurs analysis of mise en scène in Vincente Minnells Madame Bovary (1949) is the first of a series on film theory using a single sequence from a film as a way of illustrating particular critical concepts and methods. These reflect discourses on concepts such as structuralism as debated in publications such as Les Cahiers du Cinéma (Cinema Notebooks), Screen and Movie. Many of our younger readers will not be familiar with these debates even though they are very influential in the current practice of film and media studies. As author of several seminal books on Hollywood cinema, British television and Scottish culture, such as Underworld USA, Television and History, Brigadoon, Braveheart and the Scots and the seminal Scotch Reels, McArthur is well suited to this task.

In the next article we turn our attention to television, if Netflix can simply be called television. Mary Birch analyses the first episode of Season 1 of the ‘subscriber video-on-demand’ (SVOD) provider’s House of Cards (2013–), a reboot of the BBC’s 1990 mini-series but set in Washington DC in the current period. She defends the series from some US detractors who argue for its inferiority to the original version and shows the influence of Shakespeare’s Richard III and, particularly, Macbeth in the way that its protagonist, played by Kevin Spacey, is constructed.

Iain Donald has recently written several articles in the MEJ on games as media texts and in this article he puts the teaching of video games in the context of the new National Qualifications in Media. He argues that not only are video games highly suited to the analytical aspects of media but also the creation of media content using available free content-creation tools.

From media content we turn to media pedagogy. When media studies was being developed as a school subject in the 1980s, its aims were radical in both content and pedagogy. Rick Instrell, who was influential in that project, has contributed a number of articles interrogating media (and other) pedagogies. In this issue, he completes the final part of the 3-part ‘Barriers and Thresholds in Learning Media Studies’. He fears that, despite its lofty intentions, Media Studies for many students risks becoming, like many subjects, a boring ritual, subject to rote memorisation, mimicry and plagiarism, and looks at recent research for radical alternative pedagogical approaches.

The 2015 AMES Conference takes place in Stirling on 13 June and the presentations will be reflected in the next issue of the Media Education Journal with, among others, articles on Muslims in popular culture, teaching The Hunger Games, an analysis of the opening sequence of Fight Club and articles aimed at teachers beginning to teach media in both SQA Media and English. Articles should be submitted by the first week in October.
Representing Heterosexual Romance, Whiteness and Place in *Notting Hill*

Rajinder Dudrah

Developed out of teaching film, media and cultural studies, where students often have to come to terms with the difference between appreciating film language for its mere aesthetic beauty and critically appreciating its workings as ideological discourse, this article makes a close reading of key sequences from the romantic comedy *Notting Hill* (dir. Roger Michell, 1999) to illuminate the formal properties of film as an aural and visual medium, alongside some of the ways that moral stories can be told through film. Using textual analysis as a key method, the popular and commercially successful film *Notting Hill* is used to consider how its audio-visual pleasures are articulated alongside its representation of a hegemonic heterosexual romance and how it depicts a limited version of the area of Notting Hill as predominantly white English. The article follows in the tradition of close film textual analysis as a pedagogical tool for bringing to life pertinent socio-cultural issues in contemporary further and higher education classroom settings.

[1] The article ends by considering the implications of doing this kind of work in the contemporary further and higher education context, where film, media and cultural studies teaching itself is often experienced by a range of students from different disciplinary backgrounds other than film or media.

*Notting Hill*

*Notting Hill* is a romantic comedy blockbuster that made over $247 million at the global box office from a production budget of $42 million.[2] It received a number of popular international awards including the Audience Award at the BAFTA ceremony in 2000, and won the Best Comedy Film at the British Comedy Awards in 1999. The film also makes for a useful case study due to its ongoing popularity since its initial release where, in the UK at least, it is often aired on prime time TV slots on terrestrial and non-terrestrial satellite channels during holiday seasons.

Part of the film’s popularity has also to do with the social and cultural issues that it raises through its genre as a romcom, which make it equally fascinating for film, media and cultural studies researchers, teachers and students. The issues of hegemonic heterosexuality and of race and place that the film can be seen to be representing are just two of its topics which can be considered as important socio-cultural ones and not just significant in and of themselves through cinema (i.e. simply to be read off from the film’s plot and narrative), but also to be considered further as to how they are brought to life as representation through cinema’s ability of telling stories in a specific audio-visual way.

The plot of the film revolves around divorcee William Thacker (Hugh Grant) who runs a struggling independent travel bookshop in Notting Hill, and lives in the area with his eccentric Welsh housemate Spike (Rhys Ifans). Through a chance encounter, Hollywood A-listed star Anna Scott (Julia Roberts) shops in the bookstore, where the two lead protagonists meet for the first time. Shortly after, they collide in the street which starts off a casual meeting that
the right place and ultimately rescues Anna from her social isolation. Negra demonstrates how the stereotype of the English gent is thereby produced for and consumed by international audiences and in turn how this secures the repeated familiarity of stock representations of traditional English identities as standing in for British ones.[4] Higson in his account analyses aspects of the film’s mise en scène to argue how it constructs a banal Southern and metropolitan English community in Notting Hill; one that is a middle-class and middlebrow Middle England at the cost of squeezing out other diverse versions of Englishness. [5]

In what follows, and in developing on from these former two readings of Notting Hill, attention will be paid to select key sequences from the film, with particular attention to some aspects of the camerawork, lighting, editing and soundtrack not necessarily covered in any detail by Negra and Higson. The sequences are used to argue how a heterosexual romance is hegemonically conveyed on screen as a taken for granted state of affairs, and how the privileging of white representation occurs in a multi-cultural and diverse area such as Notting Hill. This is elaborated on through the opening credits of the film where the romance between our two protagonists is set up from the outset as a meeting of the ordinary (William Thacker, everyday English gent) and extraordinary (Anna Scott, one of Hollywood’s biggest stars), with suggested assistance from the cosmic order as an explanation for this exceptional encounter. The sequence and relevance of the kiss on their first formal date is then analysed, followed by a discussion of the limited social and cultural representations of Britain and of Englishness that the film depicts, even when its production intentions claim otherwise. This close textual analysis is put forward as part of an endeavour towards a critical and insightful appreciation of the film’s ability to offer particular kinds of audio-visual pleasures whilst also promoting certain kinds of dominant socio-cultural ideologies relating to sexuality, and race and place.

The Opening Credits and the Couple’s first Meeting

The opening credits take us immediately into the diegetic world of the film and the issues that it will deal with. Anna Scott, famous movie star, is centre frame, quite literally, in more than twenty opening shots that make up this credits sequence. She is filmed in close-ups, and each shot follows the next through a series of dissolves, camera flashes, or smooth fades that suggest a seamless flow of images and publicity that surround this leading protagonist. Her head, neck and upper body are emphasised as she is framed in formal poses either in photo shoots, on the cover of international magazines, at a public gathering, on a red carpet making her entrance, getting out of a limousine to attend a premiere, on the set of one her next projects reading a script, and often always with the media and photographers close by to capture her every move. [Fig 1] The audio track that accompanies this montage is Charles Aznavour’s song ‘She’ in a cover version by Elvis Costello, and this features as one of the leitmotifs in the film as it also appears at the film’s climax, as it moves towards its happy ending. This romantic ballad sung from the viewpoint of a male protagonist both celebrates the beauty of his intended affection through the lyrics, as well as attempting to describe and capture her mysteries as a woman.

As the opening sequence and song come to an end a semi-dissolve merges a shot of William Thacker walking through Portobello Road in Notting Hill. A close-
up of Anna’s face remains for a few moments on the right hand side of the screen while we see him in a medium close-up shot on the left of the screen; he is filmed chest upwards and appears smaller in comparison. [Fig 2] She fades away and he carries on walking, the narration voice-over begins from his point of view.

On their first meeting the language of film works to set up their encounter as more than just a mere accident; it is set up to suggest perhaps a fated intervention by unexplainable cosmic forces that are elaborated further on in the film. As Martin, (James Dreyfus) William’s ineffective bookstore assistant, leaves the shop to go and buy coffees, the door bell rings marking the opening of the shop door but also the entry of Anna Scott into William’s world. The ring from the shop’s doorbell registers a mundane ordinariness of entry into and exit from a bookshop, whilst simultaneously acknowledging that something quite extraordinary has just happened – a famous Hollywood film star has just walked into the store. Anna enters dressed in a stylish black leather jacket, white top, a black beret, wearing dark sunglasses, with a black handbag over her shoulder. As she crosses the threshold, a partially out-of-focus shot is used to bring the two characters together. [Fig 3] The camera is positioned close to William’s face in a medium close-up that places him on the right hand side of the screen. This leaves the left side of the screen out of focus and open for the action of Anna walking into the bookstore to occur. As he is in focus in the foreground and she is not, the shot is from his point of view, where he first looks over to the door in his role as shopkeeper to see who has walked in, and then he looks again half-recognising her. Non-diegetic music works over this scene through light wind instruments with gentle piano notes to create an ethereal atmosphere for thirty-five seconds duration. The setting into motion of the ordinary and the extra-ordinary has begun.

The First Date and the Kiss in the Private Garden
The soundtrack of the film also contributes to the language of the film as a social and cultural discourse that hegemonically promotes the ideology of the heterosexual couple as a socially preferred and unquestionable state of being. This is especially the case in the use of the ‘When You Say Nothing At All’ pop song by Ronan Keating.[6] This track is first played non-diegetically over the dinner table sequence at Bella (Gina McKee) and Max’s (Tim McInnerny) house, where they have arranged a birthday meal for William’s sister Honey (Emma Chambers). William brings along Anna as his date and in turn she is introduced to his friends and sibling. The camera follows the guests around the table as they make merry and enjoy each other’s company, whilst laughing and pulling party poppers. The song accentuates the pleasure in the gathering and that love is amongst these friends as they are genuinely fond of each other. Anna is the outsider as she has just joined the circle of old friends but we see her in a medium close-up shot watching them and admiring their camaraderie for each other. [Fig 4] The song is faded out as the scene moves to the dinner guests beginning to talk with each other and to play a game, but not before the implied point having been made about companionship and the need for a significant other in one’s life.

After the party William takes Anna for a walk through the suburban streets of Notting Hill. It is late in the evening and the streets are empty; as such they walk together slowly and comfortably without being seen by, or seeing anyone else. They pass large well-lit houses with bay and forecourts that indicate that they are walking in safe and affluent streets. William points out a private communal garden for the residents of one of the squares. At night the gates are locked but they both decide to climb over the fence and take a stroll. The secretive nature of the garden, enclosed by fences and
covered in shrubs with trees and fences around the perimeter, allows for Anna to make the first move and kiss William – their first kiss whilst on the date and a confirmation to William that Anna is attracted to him beyond mere friendship. [7]

Just before she moves over towards him and initiates the kiss, the “You say it best when you say nothing at all” song is played again, this time from the start with its light musical notes marking the beginning of it as a romantic ballad. A close-up focusing on both of their heads allows them to fill the frame as they kiss. [Fig 5] When they part lips they look and smile at each other. The scene cuts to a focus shot which sees them together in the mid-ground, the trees and shrubs in the foreground and the large expensive houses in the background, on the outskirts of the garden’s perimeter. The camera pans along with them in the foreground. This time the lighting is diffused, coming from the houses as they are lit up strategically to give a white and pink glow in the background as backlight, with the green trees and shrubs in front developing the ambience from the previous scene. Another dissolve merges the next scene with our two protagonists walking towards a garden bench. Anna reads the engraving that has been etched into it:

“For June who loved this garden – From Joseph who always sat beside her.

Some people do spend their whole lives together.”

Anna walks over and sits on the bench with William remaining standing at a little distance from it. As Anna is seated gently lit cocoon around our on-screen couple.

The following scene merges into the next via a dissolve. Here, they are walking side by side filmed in a medium deep focus shot which sees them together in the mid-ground, the trees and shrubs in the foreground and the large expensive houses in the background, on the outskirts of the garden’s perimeter. The camera pans along with them in the foreground. This time the lighting is diffused, coming from the houses as they are lit up strategically to give a white and pink glow in the background as backlight, with the green trees and shrubs in front developing the ambience from the previous scene. Another dissolve merges the next scene with our two protagonists walking towards a garden bench. Anna reads the engraving that has been etched into it:

“Come and sit with me.”

He returns and sits beside her. We are able to see all this action from above as the camera continues to rise in its aerial position until it rests looking down at them and the surrounding garden area. This rising crane shot as it becomes an aerial shot has a suggestive ethereal effect, as if angels have been walking with our on-screen couple allowing them to be intimate and safe in this space together, as they then fly up towards the heavens, keeping an eye on them below (Fig 7).

The notion of a cosmic order that was implicitly suggested upon their first meeting in the bookshop, also through the mechanics of cinema, is developed and elaborated here. All this while, the Ronan Keating song that started with the kiss in the garden has been playing non-diegetically over these dramatised actions.

Aspects of the camerawork, lighting, editing, and soundtrack, as constituents of film language, are of significance in these four aforementioned scenes, articulated together as part of the night garden sequence. The dissolves between the scenes suggest seamless and unobtrusive continuity in terms of time and space within the diegesis, the passing of time occurs as if it were natural and uninterrupted, and the arrangements within the mise en scène are constructed to create an ideal effect of a private garden place becoming the space of a romantic garden for our on-screen couple. Together, camerawork, framing, lighting, editing and sound, hegemonically represent an ideologically dominant version of heterosexuality: our couple have been on a dinner date, they walk and talk, courting each other, and then make their way to a discreet garden in the night where the courting leads to a reciprocating kiss, followed by a brief dialogue that encapsulates elements of life-long commitment and monogamy in a heterosexual union as part of the natural order of things. All the while,
this is audio-visualised in an inviting and taken-for-granted manner, as the spectator is encouraged to immerse him/herself by being sutured into the romantic narrative.[8] The cosmos as unexplainably working around our leading protagonists and possibly bringing them together is elaborated on through the almost angelic-like cinematography, accompanied by a romantic ballad.

White Notting Hill
If Anna and William's relationship is partly achieved through their coming together with the suggestion of the assistance of cosmic forces or out of the ordinary events as natural and meant-to-be, then that relationship is also indicative of a social order in which whiteness is privileged over other non-white ethnicities and representations. [9] The romance as it occurs in and around the area of Notting Hill is almost exclusively shot as if it were a borough of London in which white people were the main social actors and primary residents. From the opening montage of William walking through the Portobello Road with his autobiographical English-accented voice-over situating him and his surroundings "...in this small village in the middle of the city...", this locality of London is depicted as a tight-knit community where everyone appears to know each other. The camera pans across the street and includes a high-angled bird's eye view, as if in documentary mode, giving the viewer a sense of the place and space of this village, as it intercuts between characters who are passing-by and briefly referred to – characters who are also incidentally white. [Fig 8] This small village, then, is alluded to as a white-English village through its mise en scène. There are other multi-cultural non-white characters in it, but you have to look at least twice and make an effort to notice them – they are literally in the background of the frame or not made reference to, even as they pass by and become part of the frame. There are also no lead non-white talking parts in the film, and it can be argued then that these characters, at best, belong marginally in the fictional social world of the film – a conservative version of a romanticised English village. In fact, this version retreats to a traditional and mythic depiction of the English village by giving its main and secondary roles to white inhabitants of and in Notting Hill. Those who visit the area from outside, such as Anna Scott from the USA, are also white. By extension, then, this is an English village that has global connections and participants, but it is one in which white-Englishness (as a stand-in for the rest of Britain), and white-Americans are privileged. This is not a global village that reflects in any depth other inhabitants of the world, let alone makes any effort to depict the actual diversity of the multi-cultural ethnic mix that is the demographic reality of Notting Hill. As Andrew Higson puts it:

Notting Hill... can be read as a relatively self-conscious attempt to project an image of the nation, to represent the nation metaphorically, by focusing on a small, tightly-knit community of people who in their very ordinarness can stand in for the nation. Whether that nation is Britain or England is a moot point.

But there is certainly no denying that the vision of ordinarness with which we are presented is a particularly white, privileged and middle-class version.[10]

The black and other non-white characters that do appear in the film are in minor and arguably less memorable roles. These include a black reporter who is part of a group of journalists who are waiting to interview Anna Scott and the rest of the actors from the film Helix, at the Hotel Ritz; the black nameless actor starring in Helix (Clarke Peters) who is briefly interviewed by William Thacker and who utters a couple of sentences; the Asian city-worker (Sanjeev Bhaskar), who is with a group of white colleagues in a restaurant having dinner, where they make lewd comments about Anna Scott,
This article has argued in the tradition of close screen textual analysis for thinking about the social role of cinema alongside the formal audio-visual aspects of film language. This allows for a critical and deep understanding of cinema's power to tell stories in particular ways - i.e. to unravel those stories some more as textually constituted in specific ways as discourse alongside considering sociological issues. While this article has argued primarily through the primacy of reading the filmic text as one method of analysis, it acknowledges how this work might also be complemented and developed further by interdisciplinary audience studies and inter-media work that looks at the role and function of cinema as an entertainment industry in a given society, and how audiences (actual and embodied, imagined or theorised) might also interact with and beyond the filmic text. [15]

This article can also be seen to be situated in the ongoing critical pedagogical work that we seek to undertake as film and media studies scholars and teachers, where we encounter a new cohort of students each year with whom we work closely to consider both the aesthetic pleasures and social concerns of films along the lines of race, class, gender and sexuality and so forth. In doing so, this alerts us to be aware of and to be in ready and productive dialogue with our college and university students, who can often come from a range of diverse educational backgrounds. Some of these students will have undertaken some formal or informal film and media studies training prior to their further education studies, undergraduate or taught post-graduate degrees; whilst others, and as part of cross School-wide, cross-Faculty or across Liberal Arts and Social Sciences degree programme structures, are also picking and mixing their degree course options from outside their home disciplines where film, media and cultural studies courses are often popular choices. As contemporary scholars and teachers of film, media and cultural studies, we need to be willing and able to engage with the language of film not just simply to appreciate the aesthetic beauty of films as texts, but through discussion with our students be able to incorporate a critical appreciation of aesthetics as part of the language of film. As has been argued in relation to Notting Hill, we need to interrogate how the filmic texts of cinema can be put together as particular kinds of audio and visual mediums of story-telling as they convey ideological meanings and often in hegemonic ways.

Notes
1. On the history of this kind of work and for various examples as published in the pages of the journals Screen and Movie see for instance Annette Kuhn (2009) 'Screen and Screen Theorising Today' Screen, vol.50, no.1, pp.1-12; Terry Boals (2009) Screen Education: From Film Appreciation to Media Studies. Bristol: Intellect; and Victor Perkins (August

unbeknown to them that she is sitting nearby; and the black security guard (Tony Armatrading) who initially refuses William entry to the set of Anna's period drama at an English countryside setting. [11] [Fig 9] All these roles function as subservient parts that only help to propel the narrative forward around our two leading characters and their friends, all whom are white.

Non-white signifiers also feature in the soundtrack, which consists of original music composed for the film alongside a medley of popular music tracks that give further mainstream appeal to the film. However, as with the black and other non-white characters who appear in minor roles to help drive the story around our white Anglo-American couple, the aspects of the soundtrack that can be considered as non-white are used to serve the interests of our couple in conservative racial and ethnic terms. For instance, this can be seen in the hotel scene when Anna's boyfriend arrives and William has to leave the room with a broken heart. The soulful track ‘How Can You Mend a Broken Heart?’, a cover version by the African-American artist Al Green, plays non-diegetically over this sequence as we follow William exiting the hotel. [12] [Fig 10] He is filmed feeling let down and alone, juxtaposed with the hustling night-time streets of London outside the hotel. In one sense, the use of this track allows us as an audience to sympathise with and follow the plight of our hero, quite literally as we see him forlornly leave the building. In another more critical sense, however, and given the use of black parts in the film to construct a particular, almost white-washed and privileged version of Notting Hill (not least where the black actors lack any meaningful speaking parts that might allow us access to their subjectivities and to consider them as bona fide residents of London), the use of this track fits into the tradition of black and non-white audio-visual signifiers as being served up for white characters through the vehicle of mere entertainment. The song here is divorced from any sense of wider community or engagement with the political aspects of the music as soul for black or white protagonists.[13]

This white version of Notting Hill is at odds with the formal intentions of the filmmakers who claim to have wanted to portray, or insist that they have faithfully represented, the socio-cultural diversity that is present in the real Notting Hill. As the ‘Production Notes’ on the DVD bonus feature state, and quoting the films’ writer Richard Curtis:

When choosing the setting for his new romantic comedy, Curtis looked no further than his own doorstep. As a resident of Notting Hill, he thought this vibrant West London suburb an ideal backdrop to his story set against London of the ‘90s. "Notting Hill" Curtis says, "is an extraordinary mixture of cultures. It seemed like a proper and realistic place where two people from different worlds could actually meet and co-exist – that Anna would be shopping there, that William would live there and that Spike might think it was a groovy place to dwell. Notting Hill is a melting pot and the perfect place to set a film." 

As argued above in the analysis of the preceding scenes, it does appear that there is a mismatch between the ‘mixture of cultures’ and ‘melting pot’ version of Notting Hill that the writer claims to know from the real world, and the very limited number of diverse characters and cultural backgrounds that we get to meet and know in any meaningful sense during the course of the film. [14] Notting Hill, then, is a useful case study to consider some socio-cultural issues arising from the film’s narrative and ideological representations around hegemonic heterosexual romance and its limited depiction of Englishness in central London. Paying close attention to the audio-visual language of film and its attendant construction of social and cultural relationships on-screen allows us to amplify and deepen some of our socio-cultural analysis and concerns.

Conclusion

This article has argued in the tradition of close screen textual analysis for thinking about the social role of cinema alongside the formal audio-visual aspects of film language. This allows for a critical and deep understanding of cinema's power to tell stories in particular ways - i.e. to unravel those stories some more as textually constituted in specific ways as discourse alongside considering sociological issues. While this article has argued primarily through the primacy of reading the filmic text as one method of analysis, it acknowledges how this work might also be complemented and developed further by interdisciplinary audience studies and inter-media work that looks at the role and function of cinema as an entertainment industry in a given society, and how audiences (actual and embodied, imagined or theorised) might also interact with and beyond the filmic text. [15]


4. In fact Hugh Grant as William Thacker establishes his star persona by excelling in such performances, most notably after the film Four Weddings and a Funeral (dir. Mike Newell, 1994), made also in part by members of the same production team of Notting Hill.


6. This song was originally a country music track first sung by the artist Keith Whiteley, followed by Alison Krauss.

7. In an earlier scene after William invites Anna into his flat to clean and change her clothes due to a drink spillage, she kisses him just before leaving and asks that he should not tell anyone about what just happened. William is left wondering if anything more might have been possible.

8. In film studies 'suture' draws on the psychoanalytic theory of Jacques Lacan to refer to the processes by which we are stitched into the fictional story-world on screen, i.e. to be drawn in and encouraged to take up positions as subjects within the film, often through identification with the characters and their actions.

9. In this context see the work of Richard Dyer (1997) White. London: Routledge, as an illuminating critique of western cinema and visual culture and the strategies that have been deployed there to construct and privilege whiteness as an ideology.

10. Andrew Higson, 2011 op. cit. p.75.

11. The film being made on Hampstead Heath where the Black security guard is working is an English costume melodrama with an exclusive white cast on set. This further compounds a sense of white nostalgia about London which is also prevalent in the film Notting Hill.

12. The song was originally released by the group the Bee Gees in 1971.


14. On trade press critiques of Richard Curtis' whitewashed screenplay of Notting Hill, and of his 2003 written and directed film Love Actually as lacking black characters or only able to offer token minority representations, see for instance Deborah Orr 'It's Notting Hill, but not as I know it', The Independent (Thursday 20 May 1999), online version at: http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/its-notting-hill-but-not-as-i-know-it-1094619.html, retrieved 3 November 2014; and Roy Williams 'Will black people’s lives ever be as interesting as white people’s?', the Observer (Sunday 25 May 2008), online version at: http://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2008/may/25/whenigototheleatherwhite.

15. Just a few examples of these different kinds of scholarship that draw on interdisciplinary methodologies and tools from across sociology, anthropology, film, media, cultural studies, and new media studies work, include: Jackie Stacey’s audience studies work as an antidote to largely text based analyses in film and cultural studies, see Jackie Stacey (1993) ‘Textual obsessions: methodology, history and researching female spectatorship’, Screen vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 260–74; and Laura Marks (developing a Deleuzeian account of cinema), on the convergence of different media texts as experienced through actual bodies as giving rise to new understandings of haptic visuality, see Laura Marks (2000), The Skin of Film. Durham: Duke University Press; and on the development of cinema and its remediation in the context of the growth of new media as producing new relationships between media, images and spectators see Seung-hoong Jeong (2013) Cinematic Interfaces: Film Theory after New Media. London and New York: Routledge, 2013.
By the pricking of my thumbs, Francis Underwood this way comes: a study of the *Macbeth* factor in Netflix *House of Cards*

Mary Birch

It is February 2015 and on the 27th the third series of Netflix *House of Cards* arrives in its entirety. As with the second season there has been much speculation about what will happen. However, unlike many other TV series, the trailer for the new season leaves little to the imagination in terms of the outcome; Frank Underwood's ambition to become President will be fulfilled.

When the first series of *House of Cards* was broadcast in 2013 it was inevitably compared to the original 1990 BBC series on which it was based. It was not a loose association. Michael Dobbs who wrote the novel on which the British drama series was based and Andrew Davies, who wrote the screenplay for the original, were both in consultation with the writers of the US series.

Although the name of the main protagonist underwent a metamorphosis from Francis Urquhart to Francis (Frank) Underwood there was no real aim to deceive the public into thinking this was a new creation. In fact it was to the advantage of Netflix that the specially commissioned TV programme had the credentials of having a British genealogy as this gave it a certain kudos that anything British has here in the United States. It is only necessary to look at the scheduling of Public Broadcast Service in the US to see that on any given week, British television – from *Call the Midwife* to *EastEnders* to *Downton Abbey* (certainly the biggest ‘star’) – dominates the menu and it seems to be that when it comes to television series – costume drama or otherwise – the mere fact of being a British creation, means that a show is perceived as being innately ‘superior’ viewing.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the reviews that appeared after the broadcast of the first episode of the Netflix *House of Cards* focused very much on comparison between the US and UK versions. Generally, the reviewing of the US series was favourable – and obviously favourable enough that Netflix commissioned a second and subsequently a third series. As well as Golden Globe nominations and awards, the series had the distinction of becoming the first original on-line web TV series to receive Emmy nominations.

However, there was a body of criticism which was particularly harsh in its analysis. This criticism came not from the British media, as one might have been forgiven for thinking, but from the US media. Alessandra Stanley from the *New York Times* was critical of the writing of the series: “Unfortunately, Mr Spacey’s lines don’t always live up to the subtle power of his performance: the writing isn’t Shakespeare”. [1] One article was particularly damning: this was the article which whetted my appetite for writing this review. In the article by Rob Beschizza asserts that when comparing his country’s version of *House of Cards* with the original British offering, he found the US version to be lacking “gravity”. He asserts that,”no matter how bad things get there is always a kind of American optimism.” [2]

He calls this “jauntiness” and argues that the UK version is much bleaker and any comedy in it is “cruel” rather than amusing. For me, his most telling insight, having negatively critiqued the Netflix version, is when he concludes that the UK’s protagonist Francis Urquhart “reminds us that his is the nation whose imagination produced Iago, Uriah Heep and Kingsley Amis’ “Lucky Jim.”” [3]

The reference to Shakespeare’s Iago touches on the Shakespearean theme in *House of Cards*. Dobbs himself acknowledged the fact that his writing of his characters and situation in *House of Cards* in his original novel of 1989 was influenced by his reading of two Shakespeare plays, primarily *Macbeth* but also *Richard III*. The powerful man wanting more power can be translated into any time, any place, which of course is the enduring appeal of Shakespeare’s work. In both versions of *House of Cards* the strong, powerful, successful character who craves even more power is thwarted in his ambition and so takes matters into his own hands. This translates itself into the modern day setting of the corridors of power – Whitehall or the White House, London or Washington DC – where politicians do metaphorical battle. In both versions there is the Lady Macbeth figure – the wife, the ‘power behind the throne’ who is equal to her husband in power, albeit not in the public domain but certainly in the domestic one. In the Netflix version, Frank’s wife, Claire, has a high-profile career as the Director of a NGO and as such, more autonomy and profile than her British
counterpart but ultimately she plays a secondary role. In both versions there are 'Banquo' embodiments in the loyal friends and helpers who are used, abused, manipulated and then discarded as the protagonist’s obsession with power becomes all encompassing. Murder and mayhem ensue as the protagonist pushes to fulfil his ambition.

However, Beschizza’s assertion that the US version does not reach the standard of excellence of the UK House of Cards, belies an inferiority complex in the American psyche which runs along the lines of “. . . yes, we can produce excellent cutting-edge dramas set in US inner-cities like The Wire, but when it comes to taking on something which has more of a pedigree, we are at a loss. and we certainly can’t ‘do’ Shakespeare!” (Despite Al Pacino’s brilliant Looking for Richard (1996) which should have convinced Beschizza’s fellow citizens that Americans can indeed ‘do’ Shakespeare).

On my first viewing of the Netflix House of Cards I might have agreed with Beschizza: the glamorous setting and high quality production perhaps suggested a ‘glossing’ over the unspeakable acts of revenge and betrayal. Kevin Spacey’s portrayal of Frank Underwood at times can produce audible laughter from the viewer as opposed to the wry smile produced by the UK series. As Beschizza asserts, everything in the true American manner is ‘bigger’ than the original, “three times as many episodes and ten times as many plot-twists, sub-characters, shifts of scene.” [4]

The original UK version ran to four episodes whereas its American counterpart consists of thirteen so there is much more room to develop plot lines and relationships. There are also many more sex-scenes which perhaps is just a difference in acceptability factors between Britain in the 1990s when the original series was aired and US public acceptance of such scenes twenty-three years later. As acknowledged by James Fallow in The Atlantic the US version is just “bigger in every way” and he goes to comment that this is symbolized by the use of HD colour which makes the drama appear more modern, more ‘now.’ [5] Michael Dibdin described the Netflix version as “The West Wing for werewolves”. [6]

However, having watched that first series a second time, I felt that the above commentary does a disservice to the US version. My contention is that far from being just a transplanted transatlantic glossy ‘copy’ of the original 1990 series which can be dismissed as populist eye-candy, the Netflix version is a modern interpretation of Shakespeare’s work with many of the elements found in the original Macbeth play and that with attentive watching and analysis it can stand on its own feet.

In this article I intend to analyse the opening episode of Season 1, with particular reference to the opening scene, and to look at other elements such as the difficulty of presenting the supernatural through use of the soundtrack and the concept and interpretation of the concept of Equivocation so integral to Shakespeare’s Macbeth.

Opening scene and the problem of the supernatural
Shakespeare’s Macbeth opens not with the eponymous hero doing battle with the enemy – we have to wait until scene 2 for a description of that – but with a scene of the supernatural – three witches plotting and scheming and planning to meet with Macbeth. Although he is not physically present, the invocation of Macbeth’s name by the witches ‘conjures’ him up. To a Shakespearean audience this embodiment of the supernatural and the association of Macbeth with these elements would create tension and produce disquiet and discomfort. The presence of the supernatural was not in any way ambiguous, as it might be to a modern audience. To a Shakespearean audience the witches represented pure evil. Therefore, no matter how good an account the soldier gives King Duncan of Macbeth’s valour in battle in the subsequent scene the audience cannot erase from its memory the association with witches already established in the first scene – nor the feeling of foreboding.

It would be difficult for 21st century adults to accept the notion of witches or evil in quite the same way as their Shakespearean counterparts. Many interpretations of the play represent the witches in a more modern way. In the film Men of Respect (1990) directed by William Reilly, Macbeth is a Mafia hit man and the ‘ witches’ become a blind man who has the gift of second sight. In the BBC version of Macbeth (Shakespeare Retold) broadcast in 2005, Macbeth, played by James McAvoy, is reincarnated into a master chef, the ‘leader’ of men in the bloody kitchen, the witches are represented by dustbin men and the “blasted heath’ is the wasteland on which they tip the detritus of their lorries. These interpretations are interesting modern manifestations and solve the difficult problem of how you create a sense of the unknown, the supernatural, of paranormal occurrences which will be accepted by a 21st century audience.

Both versions of House of Cards appear to steer clear of the witch ‘problem’ and do not attempt any obvious embodiment of the three witches in their respective opening scenes. Both are similar in presenting the main character away from his ‘field’ of battle, i.e. Parliament/the Senate. Both create a feeling of disquiet and ambiguity – surely the intent of Shakespeare’s play.

In the opening scene of the UK production there is a shot of Francis Urquhart in what appears to be his parliamentary office. It is quiet. Very quiet. A clock is ticking suggesting the passage of time. Urquhart is pensive. He picks up a photo which is revealed to be that of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (Fig 1) and as he smiles and addresses the camera over his shoulder, he says: (Fig 2) “Nothing lasts for ever . . . even the longest, most glittering reign must come to an end some day.” [7]

As, at this point, the viewers would be well aware that Margaret Thatcher had been ousted from tenure as Prime Minister some months before. I would argue that the effect of this scene on
the audience is not completely one of disquiet but more that of knowing, conspiratorial humour. It is unclear, at this point, whether Urquhart was a loyal follower of the former Prime Minister or was actually instrumental in her downfall which does present the viewer with the problem of whether his character is a trustworthy one.

This is exactly the viewer's issue with Frank Underwood in the Netflix version but I feel the opening of the US series creates more of a feeling of discomfort and therefore closer to the opening of Shakespeare's play than its UK counterpart. As in the UK version the viewer does not see Frank Underwood in the Senate exercising his mental agility and 'bravery' but nor do we see him initially in a private setting. Instead the viewer is presented with a seemingly irrelevant scene of a dog being knocked down by a speeding motorist outside Frank's home.

At the outset there are no visuals – just a blank, black screen and the sound of screeching car wheels, a sickening thud, breaking glass and the sound of a whimpering dog. The audience is initially free to use its imagination to impose a narrative on the audio – a narrative that centres on a mystery as, initially, there is no explanation for the car or the collision. A figure of a man (Frank Underwood) appears opening the door from his house to the outside street. He is clearly responding to the sounds the audience has heard. He is bathed in conventional 'hero' light emanating from the hall of his house. (Fig 3) He responds to the incident and is seen running to the injured, dying dog and showing sympathy for its owners.

As the guard goes to alert the neighbours, Frank appears to console the dog by petting him and assurances of "it's ok". He then speaks as if to someone present – the viewer at this point is listening in to his reflections about "pain" and the two "kinds of pain", "the sort of pain that makes you strong or useless pain – the pain that's only suffering."

Then, dramatically, he lifts his head and gazes towards the camera but not quite with direct eye-contact, delivering the quite chilling lines which, presumably, sum up his philosophy on life . . . (Fig 4)

"I have no patience for useless things. Moments like this require someone who will act and do the unpleasant thing, the necessary thing."

The "unpleasant thing" he is referring to putting the dog out of his misery by breaking its neck. "There . . . no more pain. . . [8]

At this point the audience is unsure about the character of Frank Underwood. Our first moments with his character surely create a good impression: here is a character who appears to be genuinely upset by the plight of the dog and enraged by the callous behaviour of the driver. When he kills the dog our feelings and impression shift. Is he indeed a caring, empathetic individual who has a pragmatic, unsqueamish attitude to life and demonstrates the bravery to do the right thing by putting the dog out of its misery? Or, is he someone who appears to be saying one thing when others are around him to witness his fine words but in actuality his actions suggest darker elements of his character? Not only might the viewer be confused and unsettled by what has taken place; I think the use of the camera as a confidant – the modern equivalent of the stage soliloquy – makes it clear that Frank's actions are not what they initially seem. The audience is drawn into Frank's confidence and so, in a sense, this creates disquiet as we become accomplices to what has just occurred and, perhaps, to what is to come. A few seconds later we experience the full direct camera gaze as Frank washes his hands after the incident of putting an end to the dog's life. (Fig 5)

The washing of hands, such a strong motif in Shakespeare's play, surely here must be seen here as a referencing to the original Macbeth.

**Soundtrack**

Although use of sound and sound effects would have been part of Shakespeare's staging of his plays, a memorable soundtrack – an intrinsic part of modern drama series – was something that Shakespeare did not have to consider. Both versions of the House of Cards have very identifiable soundtracks. The original UK version has a quirky, almost 'pompous', measured soundtrack complete with trumpet accompaniment. Its jaunty, march-like pace creates an almost comic effect.

Unlike the UK counterpart, the US soundtrack has a sweeping melody with drum accompaniment. The effect is to suggest a bigger picture – heralding something of epic importance which is about to happen. The use of drums and a bass suggest that what will occur will involve dark deeds.

As stated above neither version of House of Cards overtly deals with the subject of witches or the supernatural. However, in the first episode of the Netflix version there is a cleverly humorous moment
when the politicians and wives at the President Ball take to the dance floor. The music playing is that of Saint-Saëns and the piece is ‘Dance Macabre’ (probably better known to UK audiences as the theme music for the murder-mystery series Jonathan Creek (1997–)). Saint-Saëns wrote it specifically for Halloween when, according the French superstition, Death appears at midnight and call forth the dead from their graves by playing a haunting tune on his violin.

Later in the episode when Frank and Claire appear at a Gala event, the music that is being played is from Vivaldi’s ‘Four Seasons’ – the season that the orchestra is playing is ‘Winter’. I would suggest that it is not a great leap to conjure up Richard III and his ‘Now is the winter of our discontent’ soliloquy. [9] At this point in the drama, Frank is indeed ‘discontented’: his dream of becoming Secretary of State as had been promised by the President Elect is dashed by the appointment of another candidate.

Equivocation
Although the creators of both series have not attempted an embodiment of the witches for the reasons of modern acceptability and relevance, I would argue that the witches themselves, whilst adding obvious dramatic tension to the play, are not physically important to the outcome. What is vital is how Macbeth interprets their words and prophecies and how that links to the nature of equivocation.

At this point it may be useful to outline the notion of ‘equivocation’ and its interpretation both in Shakespeare’s play of Macbeth and in both versions of the House of Cards. Although, technically, the definition centres around the use a logical fallacy and the use of polysemic words to create a seemingly logical (but incorrect) chain of reasoning, in Shakespeare’s play it is generally seen as ambiguity and the mixed meanings which eventually lead to Macbeth’s downfall. This ambiguity is first uttered in Macbeth’s first line in the play just before he meets with the witches: “So foul and fair a day I have not seen”. [10]

The day is ‘fair’ because the battle against the Norwegians has been a successful one for the Scots, but at the same time the day is ‘foul’ because not only because there has been much bloodshed but the weather is unpleasant and harsh. This is echoed later in Act 1, scene 6. King Duncan comments on the beauty of the setting of Macbeth’s castle where he is to stay the night. There is much dramatic irony and little real ‘beauty’ here for the audience already knows that Macbeth, goaded on by the words of the witches and the goading of his wife, intends to kill Duncan. Things are not as they appear to be.

The witches are not as they appear to be. The words they say and the promises they make to Macbeth are not what they seem. Their words they say and the prophecies they make can be interpreted in more than one way. Macbeth comes to this understanding too late. The prophecy that he will not be vanquished until, 

Great Birnam Wood to High Dunsinane Hill shall come

and that

no man of women born will harm Macbeth [11]

are fulfilled in a manner which Macbeth least expects

The tragedy of Shakespeare’s Macbeth is that, at the outset of the play, he is a noble brave, loyal warrior who, as the play progresses, is corrupted by forces and his own ambition.

I am not sure I could assert the same about his modern counterparts in the two versions of the House of Cards: neither seems innocent or guileless at the beginning of each respective series. As there are no witches, per se, the writers of the series in a way embody the concept of equivocation – and therefore it might be argued, the essence of the witches – in the very ambiguity of both of the main characters. The immortal words of Francis Urquhart in the UK series when he could not be seen to agree with a question, 

You may think that – I couldn’t possibly comment.[12]

became common parlance in political circles and quoted in the House of Commons following the series. [13] Perhaps, the phrase became so popular because it represented the inherent nature of modern-day politics; politicians cannot express total transparency or absolute certainty when making speeches or answering questions as they will be held to account on any statement they make later in their political career. In some ways equivocation seems to be the modus operandi of politics. Perhaps this is why an interpretation of Macbeth can so easily be transferred to a Westminster or Washington setting.

However, I would further argue, that the creators of the US House of Cards have captured this concept of equivocation not only in the character of Frank Underwood but also in other ways – through symbolic moments in the drama but also through other characterisation. I return to the opening scene of the Netflix version and the injured dog. In Western society, a dog can symbolise more than one thing. It can be presented as either the ‘dumb mutt’ blindly following its owner’s commands or the ‘loyal companion’ symbolising eternal devotion.

There is ambiguity attached to Frank’s treatment of the dog. The fact is that Frank is compassionate towards the dog but, at the same time, willing to kill it. This could be seen on the surface as an act of mercy to an animal dying and in pain or it could prefigure what is to come – the ruthless betrayal of associates and friend who have shown loyalty but who are in same way ‘damaged’ by political processes that Frank has put into motion. When he says he has no use for “useless things” it is not clear at this point whether he is speaking about pain or about the dog? He has made an assumption about the injuries of the dog and ‘played God’ by breaking its neck.

So, in this opening scene the concept of equivocation is clearly played out: things are not necessarily what they seem. Frank is not necessarily the caring, humane individual he seems to be in his encounter with the guard and the dying dog. Of course, it could be argued that the whole nature of Frank’s line of work (politics) requires the individual at times to appear to be what they are not. The politician is to smile and acquiesce when he/she has not been granted the promotion that was expected. Referencing the original inspiration for House of Cards, this is something that Donalbain, son of the murdered Duncan, expresses when he speaks with his brother about the need to be distrustful of everyone: “There’s daggers in men’s smiles”. [14]

For me the most startling embodiment of equivocation in the Netflix series is the portrayal of the journalist, Zoe Barnes. From the very moment she appears on the screen the audience experiences confusion as to what exactly she
represents. Her appearance comes after a cut from a shot of Mrs Underwood dressed glamorously at the President-Elect’s Ball to an image of what might be mistaken for a child walking along the corridors of the Washington Herald. (Fig 6)

The female on the screen is in stark contrast to Claire Underwood. The latter appears chic and controlled. She is statuesque and exudes confidence. The former is messy and aimless. She is short and petite (just how petite is not fully understood until we see her later talking to the Editor of the Washington Herald). (Fig 7) She is walking in a casual manner. Her hair is tied back in a ponytail. She wears no make-up and sports a hoodie worn over a zipped-up top. Her demeanour lacks gravitas. She looks like a young girl.

Some dialogue ensues in which the viewer discovers that she is not a child as might have been concluded at first glance but a young female journalist looking for work. She has produced a blog which is dismissed as ‘trivial’ by one of the established male journalists. She is touting for business, to try and get more coverage of her freelance work. Her seeming lack of professionalism as she jumps onto the kitchen counter-top (Fig 8) and her overall lack of presence would suggest that she will not be successful. She appears to be like a child, ‘playing’ at being a journalist. Her habit of biting her fingernails adds to the total child-like presentation of Zoe’s character. (Fig 9)

However, we find out later in the episode that this could not be further from the truth. She is not as she appears. Underneath the seemingly casual, nonchalant approach to her work there is a determined journalist who will do what she has to in order to achieve her goals – even visiting, uninvited, the home of Francis Underwood and later, when invited, visiting his bed.

Frank is manipulating the facts – and her journalistic coverage of them. Zoe feels she is in control of the situation although in reality she is not. This is tragically evident in the opening episode of Series 2 when Underwood pushed her to her death on the subway line.

In conclusion then, the US version of House of Cards, far from being a watered-down version of its UK antecedent, has perspectives to offer to the viewer. The writers and directors have taken elements of Shakespeare’s Macbeth and managed to use them to underpin the drama through use of characterisation and soundtrack. The threads of equivocation are sown into the fabric of the first series. It deserves more than a cursory viewing.

Notes
1. ‘Political Animals that Slither’, Alessandra Stanley (2nd February 2013), New York Times
2. ‘Boing Boing’ Rob Beschizza (13th February 2014)
3. op.cit
4. op.cit
5. A Whole New Way to Think About House of Cards: ‘Throwing Like a Girl’, James Fallows, 24th February 2014, the Atlantic
7. BBC House of Cards Episode 1 November 1990
8. Netflix House of Cards Episode 1 February 2013
9. Richard III, William Shakespeare – (Act 1 scene 1), Olgier Shakespeare
10. Macbeth, William Shakespeare – (Act 1 scene 3), The Arden Shakespeare
11. Macbeth, William Shakespeare – (Act 4 scene 1), The Arden Shakespeare
12. House of Cards UK – as above
Studying Video Games as ‘Texts’

Iain Donald

There is nothing new about using games in the classroom! However it seems more likely with the changes to the SQA National Qualifications that their use is to increase. Specifically both the National 5 and Higher Media Courses focus on enabling learners to analyse and create media content, and place a strong emphasis on learners developing their knowledge and understanding of media literacy. While National 5 and Higher differ in the level of content required for these overall goals they provide teachers and students an opportunity to consider the impact that video games can have.

Looking at the specific level of understanding targeted, the National 5 course attends to media literacy in relation to understanding the overall purpose, audience, and context in conjunction with the role of the media in society. [1] The Higher course takes this further by asking the learners to appreciate the opportunities and challenges that occur within the media industry, whilst also developing their theoretical knowledge of the media and the ability to create media content.[2] Video games are well suited for addressing these goals. The availability of free content creation tools and game engines (such as Unity, Unreal, Source 2, and GameMaker) can provide students the opportunity to understand the challenges in creating media content. [2] Video games are well suited for addressing these goals. The availability of free content creation tools and game engines (such as Unity, Unreal, Source 2, and GameMaker) can provide students the opportunity to understand the challenges in creating media content.

Video games and mass media

While this undoubtedly allows more flexibility for both the teacher and learner, it is largely left up to the individuals to interpret what is meant by media. Previously the National Course specification for Intermediate 2 had defined media studied as:

“those of mass, rather than interpersonal, communication. The media texts may be newspapers or magazines, television or radio programmes, cinema films, advertisements, music videos and websites.”[4]

Whilst the new emphasis on flexibility, personalisation and choice is no doubt welcomed it remains an issue that the term ‘games’ does not appear in any of the SQA specifications. The aim of this paper is to introduce some of the approaches that can be used for media analysis of games and to give some examples in regard to one of the most popular game genres, the first-person shooter, and most successful game franchises, Activision’s Call of Duty series.

Video games and mass media

There can be little doubt that games are included in mass media. The overall sales revenue, availability across multiple platforms, and increasingly minimal-to-no-cost outlay has ensured that games remain a staple of today’s consumable media content. The latest UK study, commissioned by the Internet Advertising Bureau, revealed that the stereotype of the teenage boy playing alone in his bedroom is well and truly past.[5] Although the overall findings of the survey were picked up on by the mainstream media, they were largely portrayed in a single sound bite as “more women play games than men”. [6] This was a great headline but the survey also revealed interesting data on the makeup of how games are consumed. For example there were more people over 44 years old playing games (27% of the audience) than children or teenagers (22%) and that the combined gamer audience reportedly stands at 33.5 million Britons – 69% of the UK population.[7] The recognition that the gaming audience is huge, but also gender and age diverse can help students in understanding the medium. After all the same survey found that 99% of 8–17 year-olds identified as having played games in the last six months and the age group of 8–15 year-olds played the most, averaging 20 hours a week. [8] On the surface this appears to relate to the fact that for many students games are their medium, and for teachers this can be a daunting prospect.

One of the most obvious challenges is that games are a medium that students often have considerable more experience of and expertise in than their teachers. If the average student is spending 20 hours a week playing games then it is inevitable that it will feel like their medium and that teachers will inevitably feel that they are encroaching upon a medium where their own experience can be extremely limited. However utilising student’s knowledge and recognising the significant role games play in their leisure activities can be beneficial, especially in allowing games to play an increased role in school curricula.

There are significant issues and challenges about the game content of commercial games and unlike film, television and literature a lack of resources for teachers to utilise. Charsky and Mims identified that although Commercial Off the Shelf (COTS) games are created almost entirely for entertainment purposes, some are not absent of intellectual challenges or content.[9] They gave the examples of SimCity, Age of Empires, Zoo Tycoon and Railroad Tycoon. However, there are many more examples such as the Civilisation series and more recently Minecraft. Despite several studies on the subject few have examined the potential educational benefits of the extremely successful commercial games such as the
Fundamentally different forms that make it easier to distinguish between the gameplay aspects are wrapped up and the 'shell' is concerned with how these components: the 'core' considers the that games can be divided into two model. The model conceptualises to benefit classroom discussion.

Analysis. These models can engage directly means of learning. Games can therefore help students to consider more complex material and debate different and difficult issues. To that end it is important to consider how games can be analysed as 'texts'.

Video games as 'texts'
The debate over whether video games are 'texts' has been ongoing for almost as long as there have been video games. In the early part of the twenty-first century the debate focused around whether games should be analysed as a narrative medium (narratology) or as systems of play (ludology). Narratologists argued that games were largely a story-telling medium, ludologists that as games were built around systems of play and rules that they had to be considered differently in any analysis. Over the years, various means of analysing games have been put forward and contemporary game studies and critical analysis generally encompass both the study of narrative and play together. To that end, there are an increasing number of methods by which games can be analysed but there remains considerable debate on how to effectively reconcile storytelling and interaction. As can probably be expected although no one method of analysis has emerged there are several models that can be used for game analysis. These models can engage directly with students' familiarity and expertise with the medium and can be used directly to benefit classroom discussion.

Core and Shell Model
One of the most accessible models for analysis is Frans Mäyrä's core-and-shell model.[10] The model conceptually that games can be divided into two components: the 'core' considers the underlying rules of the game whereas the 'shell' is concerned with how these gameplay aspects are wrapped up and represented within the game world. Mäyrä utilises these structural features to make it easier to distinguish between the fundamentally different forms that make meaning within any game. It is the 'shell' that is generally more easily understood as the narrative or game story is a key aspect of the shell. However the 'shell' also covers many aspects of a game in a similar fashion to a film. Therefore the use of cameras, animated non-playable characters, sets, lighting, and dialogue are all used in order to help convey the story. In the majority of games it is the 'shell' that is used to explain the narrative and justify the player-characters actions. In contrast it is the 'core' that is used to convey the underlying 'rules' of the game world, central to which is the design of the game mechanics. This can cover a wide variety of rules from the actions that a player character can perform, to the scoring system, win-lose scenarios, behaviours of the non-player characters to the basic physics model. In looking at how games can be studied in a classroom setting teachers can use specific scenes to consider the similarities with film of the camera, lighting and set. When it comes to examining the core it is possible to draw parallels with more traditional games and sports. For the classroom, this can be broken down into:

- What is the player character can do?
- What limits or restrictions are placed on their interaction with the world?
- What are all the mechanics that are used?
- How are the mechanics balanced?
- How do the mechanics account for risk versus reward?

In many games the aim of the designer is to allow the player to hover between victory and defeat, or success and failure. However increasingly we've seen designers create games where the mechanic is the message. In those cases games are designed to convey a message through their mechanic. Specifically Brenda Romero's work focuses on the idea that the mechanics (the 'core') can be designed to communicate meaning. As part of her series The Mechanic is the Message, Romero created the table top game Train, which at first appears to be a relatively straightforward game.[11] Players are tasked with loading a railway car full of tokens and transporting it to the other side of the board. However during the game each player discovers that the destinations are concentration camps, and the tokens are Jews. The 'reveal' demonstrates that through the mechanics the players can become complicit and experience emotional journeys in regard to the message the designer aimed to convey. The use of the mechanic is the message has become increasingly popular through indie games such as Thomas Was Alone, Papers Please and Gone Home. However many commercial games use mechanics to enhance the shell, rather than convey meaning. Certainly in the study of games it is important to be aware of both the potential meaning but also the commercial implications that restrict the design. In order to break down mechanics it is therefore useful to examine other approaches of game classification.

Serious Game Classification Project
Whilst the core and shell model can help students break down games into two clear components, breaking down all the mechanics can be a difficult and daunting task. This is especially true in large games, where multiple mechanics are used, throughout the game – 40-60 hours of gameplay. To that end the Serious Game Classification Project (SGCP) provides a simplistic means of breaking down game mechanics. The collaborative classification system was developed as part of an academic research project launched in 2006 by Julian Alvarez and Damien Djaouti, in association with researchers from I.R.I.T. and L.A.R.A. laboratories in the French-based Toulouse Universities II Et III. [12] The project itself was wide-ranging and ambitious and focused on analysing games in a different manner to Mäyrä.

Specifically the project classified that a video game can feature only one of the two gameplay types. Games were either 'Game-based', in that the game title is designed with stated goals to reach, or were 'Play-based', by which a game title is designed with no stated goals to reach. Asides from these two general gameplay types, the project featured a more detailed analysis of the rules defining the gameplay core of each title. In order to do this the project determined and classified games through rules. Core rules were then represented by one of ten gameplay bricks. These bricks referred to rules that either stated goals (avoid, match, destroy) or to rules that defined the means and constraints placed on the player in order to reach these goals (create, manage, move, random, select, shoot, write). These are defined by the SGCP in Table 1 below

It is this concept of gameplay bricks that can assist students in breaking game mechanics down to their simplest component, and is particularly helpful in defining mechanics for non-game players. Although the framework has not been
widely adopted, there is certainly scope for adapting some of the gameplay bricks system to assist students and it provides a useful step towards more complex approaches and frameworks.

MDA Framework
The Mechanics, Dynamic, and Aesthetic (MDA) framework is more widely-adopted approach to understanding games. Developed by Robin Hunicke, Marc LeBlanc and Robert Zubek the framework was developed and taught as part of the Game Design and Tuning Workshop at the Game Developers Conference, 2001–2004.[14]

In the Mechanics-Dynamics-Aesthetics framework each of the terms has a very specific meaning:

Mechanics are the base components of the game – they define how the game is prepared and set up, what the formal rules are, each and every action the player can take in the game; it also covers the algorithms and data structures within the game engine. As with Mäyrä's core and the SGCP these are all concerned with interaction but make a clear distinction between the mechanics and the dynamics. Dynamics are used to specifically describe the run-time behaviour of the mechanics. This is how the rules act in motion, responding to player input and working in conjunction with other rules and mechanics. Games tend to be incredibly complex and have multiple aspects playing out at the same time. Considering the dynamics as separate from purely the mechanics allows for the reflection on how these all interact together to serve the game.

Aesthetics in the framework are the emotional responses evoked in the player. They essentially describe the player's experience of the game. In simple terms, it is what makes the game fun. However for each player how they experience the game depends on where and how they find enjoyment, frustration, fantasy, discovery, fellowship, etc.

The MDA framework focuses on examining the game’s core, and stresses the idea that games are unlike other media and more akin to cultural artefacts. The authors put forward the concept that the core aspect of a game and meaning relates to behaviours, and it is the interaction between designed systems that lead to different experiences. Thus each player can experience the mechanics, dynamics and aesthetics of a game differently. For students it is again a useful framework to consider in that it again places games and game analysis out with the context of other media.

Unit Operations
The last approach this paper will discuss in regard examining games is Ian Bogost’s Unit Operations which is described as a literary-technical framework.[15] Bogost suggests that any medium – from video games to poetry, literature, cinema, or art – can be read as a configurative system of discrete, interlocking units of meaning. Analysis of these mediums therefore encompasses both the programmatic underpinnings of the game as well as the cultural and ideological units, all within the same critical position or action. While there is a great deal of strength in Bogost’s approach and it borrows heavily on employing approaches and logic of both programming and comparative literature, it isn’t as readily accessible. The theory in the approach is akin to the marriage of literary theory and computation. That, then theoretically helps the humanities take technology more seriously, and conversely help technologists better understand video games as cultural artefacts. However the approach can be hard to follow in that it relies on a reasonable understanding of diverse disciplines and critical approaches.

Bogost himself notes at the start of the text, there is a broad and contradictory educational background required to fully grasp all of these elements.[16] The skills and knowledge required for more mathematical and logic-based engineering tends to conflict with abstract thinking, and more arts-based learning and though based processes tend to require more subjective and less objective thinking. Nevertheless the approach provides an important insight for games. Mainly because video games by their very nature can be seen as an artistic medium, albeit one where the narrative (the shell) is required to revolve around mathematical abstractions (the core). In providing a basis of analysis that covers both logic and abstract thinking this could be applied by students that favour different approaches to the wider analysis of games. It helps fit with an overarching aim of using games to help deliver diverse subject material, allowing students to take a more active role in their learning as they develop both the technical and literary skills required to succeed throughout their careers.

Games as ‘texts’
We’ve established that there are a number of methodologies that can be used to analyse games but how does a game actually translate to the study of SQA Media? It is not the intention here to provide a comprehensive case study but provide some examples of how games can fit with the SQA requirements and relating these to one of the most popular game franchises, Call of Duty. Although many of the games are age-rated 18, it is possible to examine the franchise as a media source looking only at appropriate age rated content. The stated aim for 'Analysing Media Content' is that learners must acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding to be able to analyse how and why media content is constructed in particular ways and to analyse the potential use or effect of media content. Games provide both of these and to that end the Call of Duty franchise is a good example because of its popularity there is a good chance students will have played with or at least be familiar with one of main games. The availability of games from the franchise on mobile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gameplay Brick</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoid</td>
<td>asks the player to avoid elements/traps/opponents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match</td>
<td>asks the player to match or to keep one or several elements in a particular state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroy</td>
<td>asks the player to destroy elements or opponents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create</td>
<td>allows the player to express his creativity through the act of assembling, building or creating elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage</td>
<td>lets the player manage various resources in order to perform actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move</td>
<td>lets the player drive/pilot/displace an element or a character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random</td>
<td>lets luck attribute values to the player.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select</td>
<td>lets the player select an in-game element by any input device (mouse, keyboard, gamepad...).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoot</td>
<td>lets the player throw or shoot elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write</td>
<td>lets the player inputs an alphanumerical value.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Gameplay Bricks.[13]
and tablets, with more age-appropriate content, is another reason to explore the series. However it is the themes that the franchise explores and its over-simplification and at times glorification of war that could provide juxtaposition with other media content, both real and fictionalised.

**Media Context**

There are eleven games in main series. Three are based around World War II, another three within the Modern Warfare series, a further three within the Black Ops storyline and a further two focusing on what can be best described as future war. The form for each of these is Video Game and they have a simple proclaimed purpose which is primarily to entertain, and a less proclaimed one that is to make a profit. War games as entertainment provide an interesting angle for study. They are frequently described as simulations and/or authentic experiences. The relationship between the marketing and the development can lead to different messaging. Call of Duty’s Executive Producer Mark Rubin, has previously stated that they see the games as obviously outside the realm of reality.

“There’s an enormous amount of appreciation for what [military veterans] do [but] in no way do we feel we are a representation of what their lives are like.”[17]

However, as stated, the messaging can be confusing and this provides interesting positions for discussion. In the same interview Rubin also states:

“A lot of the stuff that we show in the game has been done by someone, but it’s not representative of what they do or it’s not an equivalent in any way of what they do. We’re just trying to make a fun movie.”[18]

Students can examine the franchise by looking at the gradual use and inclusion of Hollywood stars to enhance the blockbuster appeal of the franchise. Students could also examine the history and rise of the publisher Activision. The developers and development processes, such as the rotation of the development companies, could be examined to understand the challenges of game production. In understanding the franchise’s success, students can study the sales (since 2009 each console version has sold in excess of 6 million copies) and how the day of release of new versions are heralded as the biggest entertainment launches. For example Call of Duty: Black Ops was billed as the biggest entertainment launch in history and in its first six weeks earned $1billion through 25 million sales. Other aspects of the games and franchise can lead to further research that draw interesting discussion topics. From the perceptions of who the audience is perceived to be and who it actually is – Rubin has stated that 24% of the Call of Duty fan base is female.[19] Or even the controversy the game has attracted and the complications of the marketing messages. For example Rubin has stated that “we are trying to be a cinematic movie experience based on authentic equipment and authentic experience”. This raises challenging questions regarding who or what defines the ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ combat experience, and how this relates to controversies such as the infamous ‘No Russian’ level.

**The Shell: Representation**

Using the games within the Call of Duty franchise to examine the shell provides a range of potential analysis for study. The franchise follows the convention of the genre and demonstrates three distinct phases – see Fig 1.

Those games that have used historical conflicts have tended to utilise the clearer moral justifications for war, for example those in the fight against Nazism or aggression in WW2.

Even so, some games have sought to further frame the moral right for the player. For example, Call of Duty: World at War starts its story on Makin Island on August 17, 1942 with Marine Private C. Miller witnessing the torture and execution of a fellow Marine, along with another Marine being beaten by a Japanese soldier. In the games portraying more recent (and future) conflicts those that have lacked a clearer moral right for war have tended to frame the reasons for fighting to the player with clearer and personalised justifications or war, mostly based around saving the world. For instance, Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare, places the player at the centre of a potential plot between Russian ultranationalists and an unnamed Arabic country that might form an alliance and use nuclear weapons against the West. In response to these concerns, the United States and the United Kingdom conduct joint operations to prevent this. Though Modern Warfare was only the first in the story arc, all the Modern Warfare titles have revelled in post-9/11 paranoia, re-inventing eastern European ultranationalist groups and weapons of mass destruction. On one level the Modern Warfare series gives a riveting depiction of the start of World War III; on another they play into the US and UK post-9/11 paranoia and provide examples of overly patriotic storylines.

In looking at the franchise it is possible to look at representation on a higher level and bring these into context with other media. Students can look at how virtual war is represented and place this into context with film and television media such as Saving Private Ryan (1998), The Hurt Locker (2008), Band of Brothers (2001) or Generation Kill (2008). Comparisons can be made to other games such as Medal of Honor (1999) or the rival Battlefield franchise. More mainstream media such as documentaries, newspapers, and other news media can be cross-referenced with novels and diaries. All of these can be used to discuss key questions on the media and how we interact with it. For example:

- How do the games utilise or mirror real-world events?
- Can games really comment on and model those events?
- What assumptions are made about what is important to the game world?
- How do the games reflect or integrate with other media?
- Do the games really enhance or limit our understanding?

Fig 1: Military Shooter Genre Evolution
The aim here is to get students to consider the games and the shell within the wider context, before considering the game mechanics.

The Core: Mechanics
Examining the mechanics within first-person shooters and the Call of Duty franchise is also more interesting and revealing than might be first anticipated. The mechanics of almost all first person shooters are remarkably simple at first glance. See Fig 2:

The basic mechanics of first-person shooters comprise moving and shooting; these may be expanded to include vehicles or team work (via multiplayer). These simple mechanics were effective but were initially still unrealistic, in part they were relatively limited by the initial technological restrictions of creating large 3D environments and ensuring that the core mechanics were not hindered by lag or input delays. As the genre evolved new mechanics were introduced as shown in Fig 3.

For example shooting evolved to include strafing, moving left to right, and as the technology improved, verticality. The early games in the genre inadvertently created amusing exploits that helped to de-emphasise the location and setting. Players then used these exploits for competitive advantage. Two examples are bunny hopping (the use of strafing and jumping controls at the same time) or rocket jumping (where players could gain increased jump height by using explosives without dying). Initially these exploits were incorporated by designers who created additional levels and maps. Games still felt very much as unreal and designers took those opportunities to emphasise the fun through multiplayer.

Over time the simplicity of these early mechanics led to designers focusing on adding detail to the mechanics rather than attempting to provide additional story or to conveying any message. Thus over time the first-person shooter mechanics features have become increasingly complex and more realistic. For example, the ‘shooting’ mechanic has been expanded by additional features focusing on different weapon types, accuracy, recoil, movement, aim-down-sights, bullet drop, and cones of fire. See Fig 4.

The result in this evolution of mechanics was a shift in player emphasis from less realistic hip-firing and running around towards suppressing fire, flanking, taking the high ground and utilising cover. The result has seen the gradual move of the FPS genre move from one of entertainment towards increased simulation; this has resulted in increasing concern on the content, authenticity and influence on player behaviour. To that extent the Red Cross expressed in 2013 there concerns that “not only are games becoming more realistic, but they’re also rewarding players for carrying out acts that in reality would be considered war crimes and subject to international prosecution.”[20] The limited range of the ‘core’ mechanics, combined with the narrative context that the ‘shell’ provides in many first-person shooters and the Call of Duty franchise in particular provide a rich seam of debate for students and can be related to a wide range of other media and concerns.

Conclusion
That games are having a larger impact upon students learning is widely recognised. Recent changes to the SQA National Qualifications encourages greater flexibility in what can be studied and games provide a great learning opportunity in a medium that students are generally more engaged with. The ability of games to enable learners to analyse and create media content, in a context of a medium that feels as if it is their own, could be advantageous for teachers and students. That said there is work to be done in providing clear tools and understanding of how games can be analysed for the curriculum of their use is to increase. The analysis of games can be highly rewarding, providing interesting and diverse correlations to other media but for this to be successful we need more teaching resources if we are to engage students with the medium.

Notes
3. ibid.
Contributors to this issue

**Douglas Allen** has lectured in General/Social Studies and Media Studies and is currently a Lecturer in Psychology and History at New College, Lanarkshire. He has been an Associate Lecturer in Arts, Film & Television History with the Open University since 1986.

**Mary Birch** taught English and Media Studies in Aberdeen City for a number of years and was a member of the AMES committee. She is presently on a sabbatical in the US teaching English to ESL students, involving herself in local government and avidly studying Netflix!

**Tom Brownlee** is Head of Media and RE at Richard Hale School in Hertford where he teaches A Level Media Studies. He has written extensively about the subject for *Media Magazine* and the *Media Education Journal* and is a former editor of the MEJ.

**Jon Davies** was until recently CEO of Wikipedia UK. He tutors in French Film Studies at Morley College in London. After graduating in History at UCL he headed off to Paris where he was a volunteer at the Cinémathèque française in the 1970s and graduating in History at UCL he headed off to Paris where he was a volunteer at the Cinémathèque française in the 1970s and since 1986.

**Dr Iain Donald** completed a PhD in History at the University of Aberdeen in 1999 after which he enjoyed a career in IT and Game Development before coming back to teaching and academia in 2010 when he joined the School of Arts, Media and Computer Games at Abertay University. His principal professional expertise and research interests lie in production and management within the creative industries. He is actively engaged in researching in the field of digital media where he has written and presented on the topics of practice-based teaching, user engagement, collaborative working models and the sharing of intellectual property for the digital media and games industries. Combining his industry experience with his doctoral field he is currently researching the concept of ‘Just War’ as represented in Video Games, as part of the Great War Dundee centenary project and is due to publish a study on the games industry later this year. Contact email: i.donald@abertay.ac.uk

**Dr Rajinder Dudrah** is Senior Lecturer in Screen Studies at the University of Manchester, UK. He has researched and published widely in film, media and cultural studies in international journals and is the author of several books, including: *Bollywood Travels: Culture, Diaspora and Border Crossings in Popular Hindi Cinema* (Routledge, 2012), and *Bhangra: Birmingham and Beyond* (Birmingham City Council and Punch Records, 2007). Contact email: rajinder.dudrah@manchester.ac.uk

**Rick Instrell** was Principal Teacher of Computing at Lasswade High School Centre, Midlothian. He is a founder member of AMES and has co-written Computing and Media Studies courses and units for SQA. He now acts as a freelance educational consultant and CPD provider. Website: www.deep-learning.co.uk.

**Colin McArthur** is former Head of the Distribution Division of the British Film Institute. He has written extensively about Hollywood cinema, British television and Scottish culture. He has lectured widely in the UK, other European countries and the Americas and has been Visiting Professor at Glasgow Caledonian University and Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh. Long retired, he resists the lure of daytime television by working as a ‘barrow boy’ in a London market and, intermittently, as an independent scholar.

**Robert Preece** was Principal Teacher of Geography at Inverness Royal Academy, where he also introduced and taught Media Studies into the curriculum. In retirement he has been writing and publishing material on local history of Inverness, including the first ever history of Inverness Royal Academy. He continues his interest in media studies by acting as Treasurer of AMES, and is also very active as a leader and Commissioner in the Scout Association in Inverness.

**Liz Roberts** taught Media Studies at Aberdeen College where she was Team Leader and Curriculum Manager, teaching SCOTVEC Media modules, HND and NVQ Media Studies. She is a setter for the Reading the Media Paper or Advanced Higher English and a member of AMES Management Committee.

**Tina Stockman** is Treasurer and Publicity Officer of the University of Aberdeen Chinese Studies Group. She has taught Art and Media Studies in Scottish secondary schools for over twenty years.
Your Country Needs You!
Part 1: The Scottish Referendum

Tom Brownlee

On 18 September 2014 Scottish adults voted on the question, ‘Should Scotland become an independent country?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘No.’ ‘No, thanks.’ ‘Are you yes yet?’ ‘Better Together.’ ‘Aye!’ ‘Naw!’ ‘Mibbe?’ However they presented it to the four million registered voters, each side of the Scottish independence referendum campaign employed both new and old media platforms. In the pro union camp – vote ‘No’ – stood the Conservatives, Labour and the Liberal Democrats. The independence cause – vote ‘Yes’ – was led by the Scottish National Party, the Greens and loose network of support groups such as Commonweal and the Radical Campaign for Independence. Indeed, the network of pro-advocates relied on social media and old fashioned canvassing to outflank what it perceived as the pro-union bias of the ‘old media’ of television, radio and the press – 95% of which urged its readers to vote ‘no’ on 18 September. That said, the circulation and resultant influence of Scottish newspapers have seen steep declines in recent years. For instance, the once proud national newspaper The Scotsman struggles to sell more than 20,000 copies each day – a quarter of its circulation at the start of the millennium. While Yes Scotland energised a wide sweep of the nation, its message was ultimately rejected by 55% of those who voted on the day.

So what do we mean by propaganda and how did the two sides try to win over the Scottish public? Wikipedia’s definition is as good as any: “Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view”. In a sense, propaganda’s appeal is to one’s sense of reason (the head) and our emotions (the heart).

In some ways the famous and much imitated Lord Kitchener WW1 recruitment poster has provided a template for propaganda pieces. The message – fight for your country – is communicated through direct address and the use of personal pronouns (Yes. YOU). It further works by establishing relationships of hierarchy and deference; and signifiers of class, position and authority are asserted through the military uniform the flamboyant, hyper masculine moustache, and the fixed male gaze. Combined, these signifiers sought to cement Kitchener’s authority over his male audience. They are ‘hailed’ or interpellated (Althusser, 1972) as British men (cannon fodder?) who naturally defer to their social superiors. The appeal is essentially through the iconography of masculine pride and patriotic duty. It might seem crude now but it established the generic conventions for propaganda for a sizeable portion of the 20th Century and endures today: see Putin.

In terms of new media, Twitter and Facebook have played an increasingly important role in shaping public opinion – see Barack Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign or the fake viral video Kony 2012 as examples of bottom up campaign strategies based around social media – and certainly provided a dynamic forum during the Scottish referendum campaign. Ultimately, however, as the historic date got closer most voters seem to have turned to traditional forms, particularly through television, for guidance. The three-minute television campaign...
broadcast remained a powerful tool for each campaign. I will analyse three key broadcasts from the final weeks before the vote.

By using the conceptual framework to deconstruct this sample we will see how a mix of advertising ‘know how’ and political spin can be used to shape opinion. Heavy opinion polling indicated that large sections of the electorate remained undecided throughout the period. Reaching them was the key to success. While the 16 – 17 year olds were enthused to play their important part in the national conversation, they still only represented 3% of the voters. That small percentage perhaps explains why this group appears only peripherally in each of the three broadcasts in question.

1. The Woman Who Made Up Her Mind or #Patronising BT Lady
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-28951673
https://twitter.com/hashtag/PatronisingBTLady
Polling suggested that a sizeable proportion of women voters were genuinely undecided. These swing voters were invaluable to both sides and Better Together’s (BT) August broadcast sought to speak directly to the concerns of this niche demographic. Thus ‘The Woman Who Made up Her Mind’ was born. It starts with her sitting in her kitchen drinking a cup of tea while her husband and children are away. Cast as the embodiment of the ‘supermum’ archetype she confesses that juggling the demands of job, home and family has prevented her from following the debate too closely. By breaking the fourth wall i.e. speaking directly to the camera, the character seeks to create a sense of complicity and identification between herself and the female viewer. Her personal struggle with the decision before opting to vote ‘no’ is supposed to reflect a frank and non-partisan approach to politics. The producers are using the popular advertising technique of personalisation in order to characterise and play to a certain socio-demographic type. Previously market researchers have identified social types such as ‘Worcestershire woman’ or ‘Basildon man’, for instance, as a means to address their values and attitudes. The character in this advert might be called ‘Fearful Fiona’, the average woman anxious about her family and, by extension, her nation’s financial future. She is the modern day expression of kailyard values.

What the BT advertisers failed to anticipate was the scope for a subversive reading of the text. Their representation of the average housewife seems to have stepped out of a ‘70s TV detergent commercial who might be confessing to substandard laundry. BT was swiftly accused of stereotyping Scottish women as politically ignorant, family-obsessed housewives with lower levels of education than men. Yes campaigners pounced on the opportunity for some mischievous satire by creating the ‘Patronising BT Lady’ meme which went viral within hours of the first broadcast. The widely parodied Better Together broadcast wasn’t aired again.

2. Yes campaign: “Look out world: here I come”
(See Yes Campaign on Facebook)
“I can dress myself”, whispered by a wee lassie, establishes independence as the theme of the Yes broadcast. Again, the main message is anchored by a woman (that crucial demographic again) who, symbolically, is a florist – the ‘flower of Scotland’. Speaking frankly to the camera she asks, rhetorically: “Independence. It’s what we want in our lives – so why not for our country?” Bathed in an optimistic glow of bright colours, the chorus of persuasive, aspirational characters delivers a message of sunlit hope. Both literally and metaphorically, the emphasis is on dynamic movement, whether it is within the frame or in panning and tracking shots. This version of Scotland is going places. Each section of society – young and old, male and female, rural and urban – are characterised in the campaign video. To balance the female spokesperson, the producers place a muscular Scotsman (a modern day Braveheart?) seen running through a rugged Highland landscape,

The ‘Patronising BT Lady’ meme went viral.
which has connotations of natural strength, power and virility, both of the land and its people. Overall it echoes Obama’s ‘Hope’ message of 2008 and contrasts with the fretfulness of the previous BT broadcast. “Look out world, here I come,” says a long-haired student, as Highland lochs sparkle, children play happily in the sunshine, and active old folks joyfully dance in a presumably comfortable and fulfilling retirement.

3. Better Together campaign broadcast: Solidarity forever
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-29230269
The subtext behind the final piece is the battle for the traditional Labour vote which seemed to be drifting towards the ‘Yes’ camp. The narrative falls into two portions – past and present – but the message is simple. Choose solidarity, not separation. Montage sequences are used to build momentum throughout the piece. The first minute is devoted to a nostalgic tribute to the sacrifices of previous generations suggested through flickering, black and white archive footage of the labour movement, including millworkers, hospital staff and soldiers. ‘Real’ people are shown in large groups as a metaphor for a social solidarity which transcends nationality or region. In its nostalgic pitch to both older and younger voters, the producers emphasise traditional values, both in the message and in its narrative structure. A male voiceover (voice of God narration) guides and anchors our interpretation of the visual wallpaper on the screen.

The only other spoken words come from the soberly attired (dark suit, navy blue tie) former Labour Prime Minister and redoubtable Scottish MP for Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath, Gordon Brown. Speaking directly to the audience, Kitchener style, this familiar figure offers reassurance to an older and perhaps more cautious target demographic in a way that seeks to avoid the faux pas of earlier broadcasts. It is a classic two-step flow approach which seeks to win over wavering Labour supporters in the final days before the vote. But where Kitchener points at the subject, Brown’s open-handed gesture suggests openness and friendship. He has influence rather than power over his audience. Where the earlier Yes advert stresses aspiration, movement and progress, BT’s brand values are of community, stability and solidarity. ‘Yes’ scored a majority with people aged under 50 while ‘No’ was the choice of the over 55s.

While each side deployed the iconography of the Scottish landscape and buildings, they both resisted the obvious temptation to wrap themselves in plaid. Romantic ‘tartanry’ is the province of Visit Scotland, the country’s tourism marketing agency, and not the reality for the vast majority of people living, working and voting in Scotland today.

Eventually, the majority of Scots voted to keep the country in the UK. After two years of electrifying debate up and down the country, in classrooms and school assemblies, across the internet, in TV debates and in acres of newspaper space, at public meetings, over a pint and over the dinner table, Scotland can boast of having some of the most politically aware and media literate citizens in the UK.

Part 2 of Tom Brownlee’s examination of the role of the media in the political process will focus on the UK General Election held in May 2015. With a rainbow of political parties on offer, how did the media play its part in delivering victory for at least two parties and crushing defeat for others?

References
The concept of *mise en scène* and ‘The Ball’ sequence from Vincente Minnelli’s *Madame Bovary* (1949)

**Colin McArthur**

**A Bit of Personal History**

An undergraduate in English at Glasgow University in the 1950s, I was puzzled that two books ostensibly on the same subject (e.g. L C Knights and G Wilson Knight on Shakespeare) seemed to have no relationship with each other. It took me some time to grasp that the differences lay in the separate critical and/or historical questions the books were addressing, an early lesson in the maxim that it is as important to think about the ways texts are talked and written about as to study the texts themselves. This insight was deepened by the lectures of three outstanding teachers: John Bryce on the seventeenth century sonnet, Edwin Morgan on Milton and John Rillie on literary theory in general and American New Criticism in particular. Collectively they gave me a taste for both macro and micro critical questions, an impulse to engage with large historical forces (e.g. the transition from Neo-Classicism to Romanticism) and the aesthetic structure of particular texts. It would be much later, in the 1970s, that I would identify the relationship between the macro and the micro or how the deeply sedimented forces of history are concretised (or equally significantly, repressed) within particular texts.

In the 1950s Film Studies did not exist in British primary, secondary or higher education, although the relative curricular freedom of further education permitted some such work to emerge there. (My own first attempts at film teaching were with day-release apprentices at Inverness Technical College in the early 1960s.) More generally, libraries, even academic ones, would be likely to have no more than a handful of serious books about the cinema, characteristically S M Eisenstein’s *The Film Sense*, Paul Rotha’s *The Film Till Now*, Arthur Knight’s *The Liveliest Art* and Roger Manvell’s *Film*. What then might someone interested in cinema do in Glasgow in the 1950s? The university film society was not active and showed 16mm films in the less than perfect conditions of the men’s union. An important resource (apart from the major chains) for cinephiles – as we would later style ourselves – was the Cosmo cinema (now the Glasgow Film Theatre) in Rose Street and the screenings put on by the Scottish Film Council in their small cinema in Park Circus. It was at the former that I first saw Eisenstein’s *Battleship Potemkin* and at the latter Wajda’s *A Generation*.

Sitting my Finals in 1961, I was amazed and delighted to find in one of the papers a question on the influence of cinema on modern literature, but it was reading and events outside the curriculum which would be the key influences ushering me into film teaching. Richard Hoggart’s *The Uses of Literacy* had a profound effect on the first generation of working class students to enter higher education, not least as a model of how to write sympathetically yet analytically about working class culture. However, like Marx with Hegel, Hoggart needed to be stood on his head, one of the central defects of his book being its blanket condemnation of American popular culture which Hoggart saw as displacing and corrupting traditional working class culture despite the fact that American cinema, popular music, modes of dress and hairstyles were a source of considerable pleasure to the very class Hoggart was writing about. This “standing on its head” was triumphantly achieved in Paddy Whannel and Stuart Hall’s *The Popular Arts* which – with its careful distinctions between the good and the less good in popular literature, cinema and music – would become a bible for the first generation of film teachers. The other absolutely central influence was the British Film Institute’s annual summer school in the early 1960s. Held at that time jointly with the Scottish Film Council at St Andrews, it offered the luxury of two weeks’ viewing and discussion of films. It was there that I first encountered *Sight & Sound*.

Throughout this period, and largely unknown to us in Scotland, film culture was stirring across the channel, particularly in France and particularly within the journal *Cahiers du Cinéma*. However, that culture did begin to filter through to us by way of several conduits; the magazine *Oxford Opinion*, which would mutate into the journal *Movie* when the undergraduates running it left Oxford, the writings of the American critic Andrew Sarris in the journal *Film Culture* and the New York paper *The Village Voice*, and the brief essays by Lee Russell (a pen name of Peter Wollen) in *New Left Review*. Much of this would eventually emerge in book form as in V F Perkins’ *Film as Film* (Perkins was a co-founder of *Movie*),
Sarris' *The American Cinema* and Wollen's *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*. Although Cahiers in the 1950s was not exclusively concerned with Hollywood cinema (it devoted much space to French and Italian cinema as well [1]) it was its revaluation of Hollywood cinema which most excited the figures and journals named above and which gave them their sharp polemical edge in the face of the bafflement and hostility of British film critics (eg Roud, 1960 and Houston, 1960). The Cahiers critics executed this revaluation primarily (though not exclusively) through two critical concepts, *auteur* and *mise en scène*. To simplify drastically, they tended to divide (Hollywood) film directors into *auteurs*, artists with a central recurrent theme discernible across the whole range of their work, and *metteurs en scène* who (though in many cases talented directors) lacked that recurrent core which amounted to a philosophical stance to the world. The nature of an *auteur*’s vision could be demonstrated in the *mise en scène* of ‘his’ films. John Gibbs defines *mise en scène* as follows:

Literally translated it means ‘to put on stage’... [A] useful definition might be ‘the contents of the frame and the way they are organised.’ Both halves of this formulation are significant – the contents and their organisation... What are the contents of the frame? They include lighting, costume, décor, properties and the actors themselves. The organisation of the contents of the frame encompasses the relationship of the actors to one another (sic) and to the décor, but also their relationship to the camera, and thus the audience’s view, so in talking about *mise en scène* one is also talking about framing, camera movement, the particular lens employed and other photographic decisions. *Mise en scène* thus encompasses both what the audience can see, and the way we are invited to see it. It refers to many of the major elements of communication in the cinema, and the combinations through which they operate expressively.

(Gibbs 2002:5)

Gibbs would probably include under ‘other photographic decisions’ processes which generate meaning such as cuts, dissolves, wipes and fades. The last of these almost invariably signifies time passing or closure and the first two occur between frames so to speak. An example of the cut bearing meaning is to be found at the beginning of *Major Dundee* (1965). At the end of the pre-credit sequence in which an Apache war party take a U.S. Army fort, the leader of the war party raises his rifle above his head and cries “Who will you send against me now?” This is followed immediately by a cut to the credits beginning with the film’s title: that is, the question is answered by the cut. An example of the dissolve bearing meaning occurs in *The Big Heat* (1953) when a shot of the gun used to kill Bertha Duncan dissolves into one of Dave Bannion (Glenn Ford) thereby linking the two characters and effectively telling the audience that Bannion is implicated in Bertha’s murder (McArthur 1992: 75).

*Minnelli and mise en scène*

Although Minnelli had his admirers among the Cahiers critics (see, for example, Jean Domarchi’s ecstatic review of *Brigadoon* in Cahiers No. 63, 1956), he was consistently denied the status of *auteur* by the journal. None of his films figure in its annual ‘Best Films’ listings throughout the 1950s (Hiller 1985: 284-88) and the journal’s overall position is perhaps best conveyed by Jacques Rivette:

... (W)hen you extend the politique des auteurs to people like Minnelli or ten other American film-makers, it becomes an aberration, because it is clear that Minnelli is a talented ‘director’ but has never been and never will be an *auteur*. When you talk about Minnelli the first thing to do is talk about the screenplay, because he always subordinates his talent to something else. Whereas, when you talk about Fritz Lang, the first thing is to talk about Fritz Lang, then about the screenplay.

(Rivette 1961, 2-3).

This is a view to some extent shared on Minnelli’s entry to Anglo-American film criticism. Andrew Sarris asserted that he believed more in beauty than in art and, although his work was respectfully and extensively written about and he interviewed in *Movie*, it did not receive the characteristic imprimatur of auteurist criticism of being regarded as a stylistically and thematically coherent oeuvre. That would be bestowed by Thomas Elsaesser in a piece which appeared originally in one of the lively undergraduate film magazines, *Brighton Film Review*, which arose in the wake of auteurism’s arrival in the UK. Elsaesser writes:

I am concerned with the fundamental unity of Minnelli’s vision. At the risk of displeasing the genre critics and antagonising those who share the view that thematic analysis generally exhausts itself in what has (rather summarily) been referred to as ‘schoolboy profundities’, I would like to look at some of Minnelli’s constant themes and furthermore, conduct some kind of special pleading for Minnelli as a moralist, even though this will mean flying in the face of the ‘stylist’ school – both of the Sarris variety and Movie, who claim for Minnelli as for Cukor that he never writes his own scripts, and therefore never uses other people’s material for the propagation of his own views, that he confines himself to the interpretation, the *mise en scène* of the ideas of others and that, consequently, his work is best regarded as lacking in consistent themes, and rather excels on a supreme level of visual competence.

I think this is a fundamental misunderstanding...

(Elsaesser 1969: 12).

Among the several formulations demonstrating the unity of Minnelli’s vision, Elsaesser describes Minnelli’s characters as engaged in an incessant struggle... for total fulfillment, for total gratification of their aesthetic needs, their desire for beauty and harmony, their demand for an identity of their lives with the reality of their dreams.

(Elsaesser ibid: 15).

While respecting those later Anglo-American critical writings which locate Minnelli more firmly in the commodity production of Hollywood without denying his artistry (e.g. Naremore 1993), I very much agree with Elsaesser’s view of Minnelli and have indeed chosen to discuss the ball sequence (its full 8½ minutes viewable on YouTube) from *Madame Bovary* (1949) precisely to demonstrate the validity of the idea of Minnelli’s coherent stance being realised through his *mise en scène*.

In Flaubert’s nineteenth century novel, as in MGM’s film adaptation, Emma Bovary, of peasant stock, has married a country doctor but is still suffocated by
the boredom of her life. Fed by the sentimental novels she reads, she longs for something different. In the film, as Emma (Jennifer Jones) utters a long monologue about the tedium of their provincial town, a letter is delivered inviting her and her husband Charles (Van Heflin) to a ball at the chateau of a local aristocrat. Arriving at the chateau in an expensive gown funded by the town’s moneylender, she is immediately led onto the dance floor by her host (Paul Cavanaugh) where she becomes the object of admiring glances from the male dancers (Fig 2). Charles, meanwhile, ill at ease in the aristocratic milieu, overindulges in the drinks being freely served. Having danced with several dashing young men, Emma catches sight of herself in a mirror (Fig 4). Visibly beautiful and surrounded by those whom she would regard as the best in the land, Emma experiences an epiphany, reality has come into alignment with her dreams. As Miklos Rosza’s delirious waltz, specially composed for the film, rises on the soundtrack, Emma is swept into the dance by Rodolphe Boulanger (Louis Jourdan), with whom she will go on to have an affair. As the pace quickens and the room and the chandeliers swirl round her, she cries out that she is going to faint whereupon her host orders the windows to be smashed (Fig 5). As the pace quickens yet again, the now drunk Charles stumbles onto the dance floor demanding to dance with his wife and sending a tray of bottles crashing to the floor (Fig 6). Rodolphe bows out and Emma, her face contorted with humiliation, flees the ballroom. (Figs 7 and 8.)

The ball scene (very similar to another ball scene in Hitchcock’s Under Capricorn in the same year) is demonstrably about Minnelli’s abiding theme as outlined by Elsaesser: Emma briefly brings her life into alignment with her dreams only to have the moment cruelly shattered. This may be what Elsaesser has in mind when he calls Minnelli a moralist [2].

The intensity and the poignancy of Emma’s moment are realised through Minnelli’s mise en scène, all the elements John Gibbs refers to being mobilised and cut to the rhythm of Rosza’s waltz. So orgasmic is it at one point that it is difficult to tell whether Emma’s putative fainting is from the heat and exertion or from ecstasy. The cruel fragility of the moment is rendered particularly in the recurrent images of glass in the scene; Emma’s looking at herself in the mirror, the tinkling chandelier brushed by her fan, the glasses shattered by the male guests after they drain them (Fig 3), the smashing of the windows, and the tray of broken bottles.

To illustrate how Minnelli bends the pre-existing novel to fit his own recurrent preoccupation with the tension between illusion and reality (most fully realised in The Bad and the Beautiful, On a Clear Day You Can See Forever and, of course, Brigadoon), let’s take the window-smashing incident. It figures very briefly in the novel which stresses Emma’s catching sight of local peasants gawping through the broken window, causing her to reflect with distaste on her own social origins. In other words, the incident has a class meaning in the novel as opposed to its function in the film as (to use T. S. Eliot’s term) an ‘objective correlative’ of the fragility of Emma’s epiphany. This is not to say that a concern with class is absent from the sequence, but it is conveyed mainly in Charles’ discomfiture among the other male guests of a different class. To illustrate how even the smallest aspect of mise en scène may be mobilised to support the overall meaning of a scene, the ball sequence begins on the black gown of one of the guests. The camera rises to her face as her look is directed off-screen. Other guests follow the direction of her look and a cut reveals what they are looking at, the arrival of Charles and Emma (Fig 1), the latter in her luminous white gown which contrasts with the black gown on which the sequence opens and will continue in contrast with darker shades throughout.

Mise en scène-based criticism is not quite as unique as it holds itself to be. There are clear analogies with other close reading critical practices, for instance the American New Criticism referred to above, the careful scrutiny of texts in the Leavisite tradition and the valorising of ‘poetry’ in the pre-Movie British film periodical Sequence (Gibbs 2001). However, as practiced by Cahiers, Movie and those British and American
media education journal 57

critics influenced by them, it does have a polemical verve, a claim to be saying completely new things in opposition to critical orthodoxies, which sets it apart. It represents a significant moment in the history of film studies, a moment when cinema asserted its autonomy from other arts such as literature and theatre. It would have to fight its corner in the 1970s and 1980s with the rise of structuralist, semiotic, psychoanalytic and ideological criticism, but that's another story.

Notes
1. Emilie Bickerton’s A Short History of Cahiers du Cinéma and the four volumes of translations and commentary on Cahiers, produced under the auspices of the BFI in the 1980s and edited by Jim Hillier, Nick Browne and David Wilson, give a rounded sense of the trajectory of the journal from aesthetics-based champion of particular auteurs, through Freudo-Marxist deconstructor of ‘bourgeois cinema’ to cheerleader of the spectacle, a trajectory analogous to that of the French intelligentsia more generally from Sartrean existentialism through Maoism to liberal democracy and the valorising of human rights.

2. For a more explicitly sympathetic view of Emma, see Robin Wood’s ‘Vincente Minnelli’s Madame Bovary’ (2009), a piece very much influenced by 1980s feminist criticism which foregrounded (among other things) the melodrama and, within it, the ‘woman’s picture’ and sought to understand how women, particularly in the post–World War 2 period, used these films. Wood describes Minnelli’s Madame Bovary as a ‘hysterical text’, hysteria being understood in this context as an entirely appropriate response to the mutually supportive oppressions of capitalism and patriarchy.

References

Fig 5: An objective correlative for the fragility of Emma’s epiphany: the smashing of the windows. The smashing is ordered for ventilation when Emma says she is about to faint.

Fig 6: The tray of smashed bottles – an accident caused by a drunken Charles as he collides with a waiter.

Fig 7: Charles interrupts Emma’s waltz with Rodolphe.

Fig 8: Emma flees the ballroom.

Style and Interpretation, London: Wallflower Press
Knight, A (1959) The Liveliest Art, New York: Mentor
Kracauer, S (1944) From Caligari to Hitler, New York, Princeton University Press
Manvell, R (1944) Film, London: Penguin
Rotha, P (1930) The Film till Now, London: Jonathan Cape
Barriers and Thresholds in Learning Media Studies: Part 3

Rick Instrell

Note that the figures in this article have been compiled into a separate booklet which should be read alongside the article. This should have come with your print copy of MEJ. However it can be downloaded from the resources page of the AMES website (mediaedscotland.org.uk soon to change to ames.scot). A Microsoft PowerPoint of the figures is also available so that those who wish to edit the visualisations can do so with the minimum of effort.

"We need ways of viewing a vigorous but fragmented field of study, if not as a unity at least as a whole.”
Richard Johnson, ‘What is Cultural Studies Anyway?’

Introduction
In the previous article (Instrell, 2014) I argued that we can overcome some barriers to learning by identifying and explicitly teaching threshold concepts (Mayer and Land, 2008). In my own teaching I have found that presenting objects, concepts and relationships in the form of visualisations rather than linear text is a powerful learning tool. Careful selection of a graphic figure for a topic can lead learners to form a mental picture which mirrors the way that the subject expert 'sees' it.

The visualisations in this article are simplified and provisional pictures of a very messy reality. Some are 'structural' and map the patterns of a phenomenon whereas others are 'functional' and try to describe systems through the interaction and influence of their parts (McQuail and Windahl, 1993: 2-3).

They are intended to:

- organise ideas in what can seem a very disordered subject
- provoke thought and critical reflection
- guide the learner to key points
- act as guide to the forming of explanations of media phenomena
- inspire teachers and learners to create their own visualisations.

Before one starts creating a visualisation it is best to have an idea of the range of visual maps in common use and where they are most applicable. I will focus on maps which might aid teachers delivering the Scottish Qualifications Authority Higher Media qualification (SQA, 2014) and which might also assist learners to cross conceptual thresholds.

Visualisations can be used in a number of ways. One can start with a simple communication model (sender-text-receiver) apply it to everyday verbal communications and then start to develop it to include the social context and receiver feedback.

One can present students with an abstract visualisation based on academic research and then encourage student to think of media texts/contexts/use which either fit/don’t fit the model. A model can be developed/presented and then students can be asked to write an explanation of the model, exemplify it and suggest its weaknesses.

One can start a lesson with an exercise such as 'draw the Internet' (!) and from these impressions start to generate commonalities between representations as well as absences (students usually omit any reference to the economic base of the Internet). This might serve as a basis for a multilevel model of the Internet and its affordances.

One visualisation that generally goes down well is when there has been a complex classroom discussion which seems to be going everywhere and nowhere and then the teacher magically comes up with a diagram or metaphor which clarifies everything. Often this generates a collective Aha! moment.

Maps are also invaluable in the planning of well-structured examination answers which integrate the key aspects of media literacy.

Concept maps
In general the standard of visualisations in academic text books is poor. The most common flaw is unlabelled links which may leave the reader to speculate about the precise nature of the link or to dig deeper into the article to find out what it means. Often it is unlabelled due to the writer hedging and not wishing to specify a complex multifactorial relationship.

One type of visualisation is a concept map which represents knowledge in the form of propositions. A proposition is drawn with 2 nodes linked by a labelled and arrowed line. Figure 1 unpacks the concept of a concept map using propositions such as 'a node is a part of a concept map'. Note that the arrow indicates how to read the proposition. Common links are APO ('is a part of'), AKO ('is a kind of'), AFO ('is a feature of') and AEO ('is an example of'). Note that figure 1 gives examples
of concept map structures as a bulleted list rather than six AEO links. This is to avoid a limitation of concept maps – their tendency to spread out and so not fit on an A4 page. Note also how bold text and thickened borders help the intelligibility of the map.

In a concept map if there is no label on a link then it often indicates a temporal and/or causal sequence (‘leads to’). So figure 1 claims that concept maps leads to meaningful teaching and learning, metacognition and lifelong study skills. Figure 2 uses an unlabelled link to illustrate the concept of media agenda-setting.

When creating a concept map a good rule of thumb is to constrain it by only using AKO, APO, AFO, AEO and unlabelled ‘leads to’ links. Such parsimony tends to produce concept maps which are easier to assimilate than those that employ an ‘anything goes’ approach to link types.

Note that maps are abstractions and only make sense when they are applied to examples. This process also leads to critical reflection on the map and the reader may then be able to suggest errors, omissions or alternative representations.

Sometimes a two-headed arrow is used to indicate a two-way relationship. For example in sociology, and hence in media studies, many of the debates revolve around the structure-agency couplet (see figure 3). Structure refers to the norms, rules, organisations, influential bodies and social practices that guide and constrain action. Agency is the capacity for action by agents, be they individuals or groups or organisations or institutions. The two cannot be separated: agents are involved in structures and structures need agents. So structures both enable and constrain and it is through the interplay between structure and agency that power relationships are played out. In media studies this debate can be seen in various guises:

- What degree of freedom do journalists have in creating their reports?
- Is it possible for readers to escape the ideological influence of media texts?
- Is it possible for media creators to escape the expression of dominant ideological discourses?

In class teaching, unlabelled links are acceptable at the beginning of an investigation where the class is gathering ideas and arranging them on a spider diagram with outer nodes radiating round a central node. But by the end of an investigation it should usually be possible to order the nodes in a structured form with labelled links.

Visualisation structures

Figure 1 shows a list of common concept map structures [spider, tree, chain, cycle, matrix and network] and I will give example of these and other structures.

Table 1 shows a list of relationships which one might find between ideas, objects, events and properties. The list has been ordered vertically to move from unstructured relationships to structured relationships where the link can be specified and finally to complex relationships where the links may be multiple, variable and the subject of debate. I will go through this list in sequence and give examples which might be useful for both teachers and students.

### Table 1: Relationships and possible visualisation structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Metaphor</td>
<td>Pictorial representation</td>
<td>Figures 4, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cluster</td>
<td>Bulleted list Spider diagram</td>
<td>Figure 1 Figure 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Comparison</td>
<td>Table</td>
<td>Table 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Taxonomy (‘kind of’ relationship)</td>
<td>Tree</td>
<td>Figures 6, 7, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Partonomy (‘part of’ relationships)</td>
<td>Tree Organisation chart</td>
<td>Figure 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Temporal sequence</td>
<td>Chain Cycle</td>
<td>Figure 10 Figures 11, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Typology</td>
<td>Linear scale Matrix</td>
<td>Figure 13 Figures 14, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Levels</td>
<td>Concentric circles Strata</td>
<td>Figure 16 Figure 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Interactions</td>
<td>Cause-effect diagram</td>
<td>Figures 18, 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. System flows</td>
<td>Circuit Helix</td>
<td>Figures 20, 21, 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Multiple interactions</td>
<td>Network</td>
<td>Figure 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Assemblages</td>
<td>Rhizome</td>
<td>Figure 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Overlapping conceptions</td>
<td>Venn diagram</td>
<td>Figure 26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Metaphor

A visual metaphor uses a familiar image to convey the meaning of an abstract idea. For example, we might use the scales metaphor (figure 4) in discussions of media power in a democracy and discuss the notion of ‘checks and balances’ which
promote balanced power over unbalanced power. With balanced power there is relative symmetry between competing powers whereas imbalanced power has a relative asymmetry (Hearn, 2012: 7-9). In democracies, media regulation attempts to reduce the negative effects of media power. This can be quickly conveyed by a visual metaphor as in figure 4.

2. Cluster
A cluster is an unordered set of items related to a higher level concept. It can be shown as a vertical bulleted list as in several nodes in figure 1. The use of bullets (and hence lack of numerals or letters) indicates that the order is unimportant.

Clusters can also be represented as spider diagrams. For example one might try to map consumers’ images of a brand such as McDonald’s by mapping interviewees’ comments on to a spider diagram as in figure 5.

Radial diagrams are useful devices for brainstorming at the beginning of a class discussion or practical exercise. But by the end of the topic it should be possible for students to produce much more structured visualisations.

3. Comparison
Sometimes a diagrammatic representation is not the most effective way of delivering complex information. When two or more concepts/conceptions are being compared then the most appropriate concept map is the traditional table. For example we could compare three dominant conceptions of the role of media as in table 2.

A good exercise for students would be to order the entries in the table 2 so that common features such as purpose, finance, regulation, conception of audience etc. could be compared across the table. They would need to add a column headed ‘Features’ at the left and then add rows for each feature. In this way the simple table will have been restructured as a matrix.

Table 3 illustrates the threshold concept that values are an inescapable part of debates about the media and media policy. It illustrates the dilemma faced by media policymakers trying to satisfy all stakeholders’ demands. An historical examination of media systems is likely to show that systems reflect the dominant values of the period.

Table 2: Comparison of three conceptions of the media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionalist</th>
<th>Free market (neoliberal)</th>
<th>Public service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Media should uphold traditional values</td>
<td>• Media have responsibility to owners and shareholders</td>
<td>• Media have a democratic responsibility towards society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Media should uphold law and order</td>
<td>• Media can use free market to deliver global wealth, democracy and diversity to consumers</td>
<td>• Media must fulfil social functions of providing information, equal access and a public forum for different viewpoints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Media should uphold ‘family values’</td>
<td>• Public service media should be privatised (e.g. universal BBC license should be replaced by subscription)</td>
<td>• Media collectively should represent diverse social groups and diverse viewpoints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Media can have a harmful effect on society</td>
<td>• Media should be deregulated</td>
<td>• Media should allow access to diverse social groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Media need to be censored in respect of sex and violence</td>
<td>• There should be no barriers to concentrated media ownership.</td>
<td>• Media should be independent from interference from business and government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Media are responsible for ‘dumbing down’ society.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Media should apply self-regulation with regard to content and conduct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Raymond Williams (1981) has provided us with a simple but powerful way of the analysing the dynamics of cultural change. He distinguishes between the residual, the dominant and the emergent in cultural production. The residual is the product of earlier and different societies but lives on as still available significant practices and values. Dominant cultural production uses the most influential practices and values of the present day. Emergent cultural production tries to move beyond the dominant and residual. Looked at historically, a particular cultural phenomenon will emerge, perhaps become dominant and then decline to a residual state or disappear altogether.

For example, looking at the historical development of UK broadcasting, we might identify its first phase as dominated by the paternalistic monopoly of John Reith’s BBC. This paternalism lives on as a residual traditionalist discourse which tries to mitigate negative media effects by upholding ‘family values’. As commercial broadcasting developed there emerged a new liberal pluralist discourse which tried to balance commercial and public service aims. Academic study of the media in the 1970s led to the emergence of a
radical critique of both paternalism and liberal pluralism. In the 1980s a neoliberal free market discourse emerged to drive the move to multichannel broadcasting and became dominant over the residual traditionalism and liberal pluralism. The dominance of News Corp in media markets and the criminal behaviour of redtop editors and journalists has led to an alliance between media academics, concerned journalists, victims of hacking and leftists/liberals. Thus pressure groups such as Hacked Off, the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom and the Media Reform Coalition can be viewed as representing a re-emergence and articulation of earlier liberal pluralist and radical discourses.

4. Taxonomy
Taxonomies show ‘kind of’ relationships and can be represented as tree diagrams with the superordinate category at the top and subcategories underneath. Taxonomies can be mapped as tree diagrams with AKO links. Adding AEO links helps the reader connect the abstract concept to actual examples.

Figure 6 shows a taxonomy of national daily newspapers available in Scotland with examples of titles at the foot. Note that it might be better to use a table to represent this information and one could then add typical features of each ‘genre’ of newspaper.

Figure 7 is a taxonomy of film sound which lacks examples. An excellent exercise for learners is to add examples of these uses of sound from their own film viewing or from a compilation provided by the teacher. Or the teacher could ask students to shoot and dub their own short clips illustrating each technique. The clips could then be edited together and intertitles used to introduce each.

Figure 8 explains the challenging concept of differential decoding through easily understandable examples.

5. Partonomy
Partonomies show ‘part of’ relationships by splitting wholes into component parts. Like taxonomies they may be represented using tree diagrams. In the case of a physical object like a video camera it is better not to use a tree diagram but to use a schematic block diagram which shows the physical layout and linking of parts. However trees are often used in organisation charts to show how an organisation or department is divided up. Conventionally links are unlabelled. On some, arrows show the line management structure. Figure 9 shows the structure of a video games production company. Note that such tree cannot show the flow of project work through the company and it may be preferable to use a visualisation which can show temporal sequences and iterations.

6. Temporal sequence
The most obvious temporal sequence in media analysis is narrative structure. For example figure 10 shows two narrative models represented as a chain (of events): Tzetvan Todorov’s model (Todorov, 1975) and Kristin Thompson’s four act model of Hollywood narrative (Thompson, 1999).

Note that the Todorov model could be represented as a cycle. Figure 11 is a visualisation of Joseph Campbell’s hero’s journey. The hero(ine)’s quest is employed both consciously and unconsciously by many Hollywood scriptwriters (Vogler, 1996).

If we turn to media creation by students then we could represent the sequence of pre-production, production, post-production as a chain. However I think it is better to present the process as a cycle to emphasise the iterative nature of digital media production which makes it technically straightforward to return to previous stages (iterate) in order to revise ideas and then re-create and re-edit content.

For Higher Media it is useful to use a ‘compass diagram’ (figure 12) for planning and annotating media production ideas. It is so-called because it should give direction to a media production as well as encompassing eight of the points which should be considered in an SQA Media practical assessment.

Note that a compass diagram can also be used to annotate observations from an analysis of a professional production and a teacher-led example of this can help students understand the standard required for annotating their own work.

7. Typology
Sociologists often borrow mathematical representations such as scales, graphs, matrices and sets. These can allow us to show patterns in what might seem at first sight a chaotic ‘soup’ of different concepts/conceptions. Figure 13 uses a linear scale to plot different source-reporter relations on a linear scale from low to high independence.

The natural progression from this is to use two scaled axes at right angles thus producing four quadrants. For example in discussion of media ‘effects’ one will wish to distinguish between long-term and short-term effects and between planned and unplanned effects. Denis McQuail employs a typology of news and its effects suggested by Peter Golding:

“He argued that, in the case of news, intended short-term effects may be considered as ‘bias’; unintended short-term effects fall under the heading of ‘unwitting bias’; intended long-term effects indicate ‘policy’ (of the medium concerned); while unintended long-term effects of news are ‘ideology.” (McQuail, 2010: 465)

McQuail uses Golding’s typology to set up two axes: intention (intentional to unintentional) and time (short-term to long-term) as in figure 14 (adapted from McQuail, 2010: 466). Various types of explanations of media effects can then be assigned to one or more quadrants. Such a map could form the basis for class discussion and examples from the media (or classic studies thereof) could be plotted on a blank ‘graph’. Such a grid – with a one or two examples in each quadrant – should also prove an excellent device for planning an examination answer about different kinds of media effect.

The social impact of media has been variously classified as fragmenting or unifying and there have been both optimistic and pessimistic evaluations of these. This suggests a two-dimensional typology with impact and evaluation as axes. Figure 15 shows this (based on McQuail and Windahl, 1993: 129).

8. Levels
Sociologists trying to develop dynamic models of social systems often resort to using spatial metaphors to visualise relationships between different strata or levels. In figure 16, a concentric circles model is used as a spatial metaphor for analysing the infrastructural levels which provide the contexts for the work of journalists (Shoemaker and Reese, 2014: 9).

Shoemaker and Reese’s model does not include the audience. It would be a productive exercise for students to develop a similar model for individuals receiving rather than mediating media messages.

When introducing such analyses to students I tend to start not with the media but with the familiar situation of the classroom and the various structures and
agents that affect teaching and learning. Once we have teased out the levels we can ask questions which explore the structure-agency couplet. Is creative agency possible within restrictive structures such as resource-starved and highly routinised secondary schools? Is creative agency possible with the structures and strictures of SQA assessment?

This suggests that we need to consider more holistic models. The most famous of these is Marx's base-superstructure model. Colin McArthur describes it thus, using an architectural rather than a geological metaphor:

"Marxism, analysing successive kinds of society (slave, feudal and capitalist) describes the social formation as rather like the several floors of a house, the ground floor (the base or infrastructure) consisting of the forces of production and the social relations of production and the upper floors (the superstructure) consisting first of all of the coercive factors of the state and the legal system and, beyond that, of the factors concerned primarily with live experience – the family, religion, education, the arts and the mass media.

The simile of the successive levels of a house is a particularly pertinent one since it poses the notion of a structural relationship among the various levels with the 'ground floor' being the most important in that it holds the others up. All Marxians accept some form of this analytic model although there is considerable debate about the nature and extent of the dependence of the superstructure(s) upon the base: some argue that the economic base is very directly reflected in the superstructure(s), others that the superstructure(s), though 'in the last analysis' dependent on the base, have a great degree of autonomy. This autonomy has the consequence of masking the relationship with the base and of allowing it to be reciprocal, dialectical, rather than the base simply acting in a one way direction on the superstructure(s)." (McArthur, 1980:2)

We could picture this as in figure 17. Such a model only comes alive when one applies it to familiar situations. Again one could use education as context familiar to students and discuss questions such as: How does the capitalist system shape education? Does the education system maintain and legitimate the capitalist system? Can education change the capitalist system?

Once these questions have been tackled (if not answered) one can then ask similar questions of the media.

When considering the question of the relative autonomy of the superstructure we are experiencing the echo of the structure-agency couplet at work in the sociological imagination. The question arises of exactly how the base-superstructure interaction operates and this leads to considerations of media effects and of ideology.

9. Interactions

The dependency model of Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) views effects as being the result of three interdependent elements as in figure 18: the social system (which can vary in terms of overall stability); the media system (which can vary in response to the needs of the society and audiences); and audiences (who vary in terms of their social position, dependency on media and access to media). As a result there will be variable cognitive, affective and behavioural effects on individuals and groups which in turn feed back into the social and media systems. Effects studies tend to look at what the media does to the audience. We need to balance this with considerations of what the audience does to media texts. Figure 19 is a cause-effect diagram which tries to show the complex of factors at work as well as multiple cycles as socially situated individuals develop their media tastes and distastes.

10. System flows

The Higher Media course requires learners to integrate textual key aspects (categories, language, narrative, representation) and contextual key aspects (institution, audience). In order to do this it is useful to have a holistic model which displays these interactions.

Perhaps the most influential holistic model of media is found in Richard Johnson's seminal article What is Cultural Studies Anyway? (Johnson, 1987) On first reading this article can seem obscure but I have found over the years that returning to it is rewarding because of its intellectual breadth and wisdom.

Johnson seeks to answer his question by asking:

- What is the characteristic object of cultural studies?
- What is cultural studies about?

For Johnson the characteristic object is cultural forms or subjective forms. The terms are two sides of the same coin – one social and in the public sphere, the other subjective and in the private sphere of lived culture. For Johnson, cultural studies is about the "subjective forms we live by":

"It focuses on the "who I am" or, as important, the "who we are" of culture, on individual and collective identities. It connects with the most important structuralist insight: that subjectivities are produced, not given . . . " (Johnson, 1987: 43)

Subjective/cultural forms include "language, signs, ideologies, discourses, myths" that we find in and around physical objects as well as media texts. By subjectivity Johnson includes not only conscious cognitive activity but also the unconscious elements or impulses that move us without being consciously known. Unconscious elements will include not only the psychological unconscious (memories, desires and needs) but also socially learned attitudes and behaviour which we draw on without thinking, what Colin McArthur (2003: 6) has termed the 'discursive unconscious'.

Johnson suggests that the two key concerns for cultural studies are:

- The pleasures and use values of cultural forms.
- What are the outcomes of cultural forms? Do they reproduce dominant ideologies and existing forms of inequality? Or do they challenge existing forms of oppression and point to alternatives?

Let's now consider Richard Johnson's circuit of culture model. The word 'circuit' is used rather than 'cycle' to suggest a flow or flows. In this case there is a dual flow of meaning and money.

The simplest version (figure 20) has four nodes:

"All cultural products go through the moments shown in [figure 19], though we can start the circuit at different points. The model fits face-to-face exchanges or forms such as television programmes or useful and meaningful objects such as personal hi-fi."

media education journal 57
Importantly, everyday life is both a starting point (A) and an end point or result (E) of the process. In this model, specialist cultural producers (B) make representations in the form of texts (C). These are read under definite conditions (D) and have consequences at the level of everyday life. There are, however, innumerable cultural circuits, the conditions of which are constantly in process, so they are, perhaps, more spirals than circuits. (Johnson et al. 2004: 37-38)

Perhaps ‘spirals’ is the wrong word and ‘helices’ might be more appropriate because it suggests a third dimension, in this case of time. We might imagine multiple but interlinked cultural helices which take place over regular intervals such as the daily news cycle and others with longer irregular periodicities such as those related to circulations of meanings around social categories such as gender, race, class and age.

An implication of this is that when we analyse a text such as Coppola’s _The Godfather_ in its contexts we need to ‘wind’ the helices back in time to the sociohistorical, institutional, intertextual and audience contexts at the time of its production.

**Key aspects version of the circuit**

Johnson’s model is obviously relevant to the SQA Higher Media course so it seems natural to try to map the key aspects of media literacy on to the diagram as in figure 21.

Many teachers and learners find these diagrams (and their more complex versions) difficult to understand. So, as always in teaching, start where the pupils are. Before thinking about media communication, pupils should explore simple circuit models as a way of thinking about and abstracting the key elements of everyday face-to-face communications such as joke-telling, arguments and classroom teaching. This should bring out abstract ideas such as sender, text, receiver, common culture, feedback, genre, style, tone, multimodal communication and so on.

Let’s now examine figure 21 and paraphrase Johnson’s original text to fit in with the SQA Media approach. In the key aspects model, specialist media producers select aspects of society and create (encode) representations in texts. Genre, style, tone, media language, narrative and representational discourses construct the mode(s) of address and preferred meaning(s) appropriate to the perceived target audience. These are decoded differentially by the audience due to individual and social needs and differences. This process has consequences at the level of everyday social life.

Figure 20 showed a simplified version of the circuit of culture. Figure 22 shows a version which I have adapted from Johnson’s 1987 article. First it suggests that the moment of publication (or publication) of the text involves a shift from the private sphere to the public sphere. For example, the private concepts of a scriptwriter based on her life experience are transformed into a movie and then enter the public realm where these experiences come to represent a more general version of the human condition. Alternatively consider the 2015 claims of PM David Cameron that we are undergoing an economic revival. These appear in the public sphere of internet, television, radio and the press. In evaluating the validity of that claim members of the audience will compare such abstract public sphere claims with their own personal lived experience in the private sphere.

The cultural/subjective circuit can be seen as the circulation of ideological discourses. As Catherine Belsey says:

”Ideology is inscribed in discourse in the sense that it is literally written or spoken in it; it is not a separate element which exists independently in some free-floating realm of ‘ideas’ and is subsequently embodied in words, but a way of thinking, speaking and experiencing.” (Belsey, 1980: 5).

We would want to extend Belsey’s conception to multimodal page-based and time-based texts thus: ideology is inscribed in multimodal ideological discourses.

How individuals respond to ideological discourses is fed back into lived culture via what Bourdieu (1977) has called _habitus_, the embodiment of cultural representations in the habits and routines of everyday life. This process not only reproduces common-sense ideologies and discourses of dominant social powers but at the same time may provoke oppositional ideologies and discourses which challenge this dominance. Following Gramsci (1971) we might say that in stable democratic societies the process of hegemony is a ‘moving equilibrium’ with fluctuations in the relative dominance of ruling class ideologies over those of subordinate classes.

This is of course not just a circuit of discourse but is driven by a circuit of capital. Money is key to the production, distribution, marketing and use of media content. Media production arises from the entertainment, educational and informational needs of users but is exploited for financial gain, thus having a profound effect on the range and content of texts in circulation. Thus Johnson’s circuit is at the same time a circuit of capital and of culture reflecting of course Marx’s base-superstructure conception.

The cycle also represents a transformation of meaning from the private sphere particulars of our individual and social lives to the more abstract debates of the public sphere. Media texts are the primary medium of the public sphere and set the agenda for discussion of social, political and cultural issues in the media and in our everyday lives.

Johnson’s model was developed before the rise of the internet and social media. So we would need to revise such models to take account of media ‘production’ by sectors of the audience which is then distributed via social media as well as by media producers (for example, citizen journalist footage). Some of this user-generated content may become viral and can within a few hours spread globally via innumerable links between old and new media. Trying to visualise this demands new metaphors.

### 11. Multiple interactions

Figure 22 suggests that each of the four nodes in the circuit are affected by other factors. Each stage of the circuit of culture depends on multiple networks of interactions and infrastructure. Following Ognyanova and Monge (2013), when we think about the media and their economic, social and individual roles we need a holistic model which helps us to cope with their textual and contextual interconnections. The media system can be viewed as having four major nodes: institutions, texts, audiences and society and a diverse range of relationships between these nodes. Each node can be seen as existing in a dynamic network of relationships. So the institutional node can be viewed as emerging from a network of internal and external links. Texts can be seen as arising from a complex set of intertextual links. The different audience responses can be seen as arising from a mixture of individual and social differences as well as varying face-to-face and/or
on-line interactions. Society can be seen as a formation of economic, political and cultural institutions which have local, national and/or global linkages.

This separation of the media system into four nodes is a gross simplification. The social is reflected in and constituted via the other nodes. The audience is comprised of not just the target audience but also of media professionals who are looking for talent and innovative practice. Economic, political and cultural institutions have close links to the media institutions.

Such a model needs to be multilevel and we need to think of three levels at least:

- financial: the circulation of capital
- network: the technological, cultural and social links that facilitate the circulation of finance and meaning
- discursive: the circulation of social meanings.

To model this conception probably needs us to move into the third dimension with a set of Lego pieces!

I will resist that and merely suggest ways in which we might visualise the complex networks which shape each node. Rather than nodes and links of computer network diagrams I prefer to use tiled hexagons (which can be created using Microsoft PowerPoint’s Smart Art graphics). I use dotted lines to indicate that the hexagons are not sealed cells but allow the flow of money, concepts, ideologies, content, people and so on. No diagram can fit all cases and should just be a guide as to what to look for in specific situations.

Figure 23 (adapted from Ognyanova and Monge, 2013) shows a network diagram which fills out the Johnson model at each node and views the social system as the context for all intranodal and internodal interactions.

The separation into separate nodes is a fiction created as an analytical aid. The actual situation can only be thought about as a highly complex convolution of linked networks in a state of continual flux.

12. Assemblages

So far the visualisations presented would seem to be capable of enriching teaching and learning in the SQA Media course. Curiously the new course seems far more like academic media studies than the Media Studies qualification it replaced – at least Media Studies as it was in the mid-1980s. And that is the problem for me with the course. It looks as if it was designed in the 1980s; media studies locked in amber like the majority of other subjects. The growth of media education was motivated by a critique of traditional subjects, their pedagogies and assessment methods. This critical cutting edge is in danger of being forgotten.

So what is wrong with the new course? There seem to me to be at least two elephants in the room that have been overlooked: technology and globalisation.

Technology has been dropped as a key aspect which seems astonishing given the way digital communications technology has transformed media production and use since the mid-1980s. And most teachers teach the course from a very ‘UK-US-centric’ viewpoint. We need to adapt our concept of media to the 21st century and the way in which culture is distributed and consumed globally.

P David Marshall (2011) argues that there has been a shift from a ‘representational culture’ to one where we now have a hybrid of ‘representational culture’ and ‘presentational culture’ which he terms (in my view rather unsatisfactorily) ‘intercommunication’.

In representational culture, media forms generally have a collective mode of address, embracing the population as a whole. In politics, politicians represent ‘the people’ and the government is an expression of the ‘collective will’. In the media, broadcasters such as Channel 4’s Jon Snow act on the people’s behalf and hold politicians to account. The use of ‘we’ and ‘us’ (in opposition to a range of ‘thems’) signals that the audience is being invited to imagine a national community, thus legitimating the ideological notion of nation/community. The filter for news and culture are journalists and cultural pundits who select content on behalf of ‘us’. 1980s and 1990s UK television was a highpoint of representational media with television events such as Diana’s funeral and live sporting finals framed as if ‘we’ were all watching the same event.

The explosion of multichannel pay television with Sky (and now BT) buying up major sporting rights has expanded the numbers of viewers globally but reduced the numbers who watch such events nationally. The convergence of broadcasting with interactive media and the internet has led to a personalised mode of address – ‘you tv’ rather than ‘we tv’: you are individually offered content you watch any time or in any place or on any device. This has resulted in the emergence of a presentational culture where the personal becomes the channel and the filter of media and communication. This individualization of address has been given added impetus by the rise of social media such as Facebook and Twitter which allow each user to present an online identity. As Marshall says, “presentational media implies the public performance of self through the accoutrements of links and commentary.” (Marshall, 2011: 12)

Representational media created a mythical public sphere addressing the nation. This was attractive to journalists, soap scriptwriters, advertisers and politicians. The individualised address of presentational media and its linking facility has meant that the ‘public’ has now fractured into myriad ‘micropublics’ inside and across nations.

The rise and rise of presentational media has not replaced representational media. What we now have is a complex two-way flow between the two: both regimes share links and allow content and comment to flow between them. Blogs feed off newspaper and broadcasting content and in turn journalists and broadcasters exploit online content. Content from either regime can go viral, be shared across the globe and generate more content. This implies that media communication models such as the circuit of culture developed prior to the Internet need to reflect the flows and impacts of social media and user-generated content.

We also need to change our conception of the institutional operations of the media industries. What is required is an understanding of how media corporations satisfy our needs for entertainment, information, education and social interaction using representational and presentational media whilst they meet their own commercial and/or public service and/or promotional goals.

Let’s now consider globalization. Arjun Appadurai says that its central problem is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenisation and that this cannot be understood in terms of traditional sociological models. Instead the new global cultural economy has to be understood as highly complex with both conjunctive and disjunctive effects. Appadurai (1990: 297–301) proposes a basic framework for examining these disjunctures which comprises five dimensions or ‘scapes’:
Ethnoscape: "... the landscape of persons who constitute the world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups and persons" and which "appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree."

Technoscapes: "the global configuration, also ever fluid, of technology, and of the fact that technology [...] now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries."

Finanscapes: the complex "global grid of capital of currency speculation and capital transfer."

Mediascapes: "image-centred, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality" which "constitute narratives of the 'other' and proto-narratives of possible lives, fantasies which could become the prolegomena [introduction] to the desire for acquisition and movement."

Ideoscapes: like mediascapes, "concatenations of images" which are "often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counter-ideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power or a piece of it." The Euro-American master narrative of the Enlightenment, with its master term democracy and satellite terms like freedom, rights and sovereignty may be understood in very different ways in different countries and cultures of the world.

Appadurai argues that the global de-territorialised flows of people, technologies, money, images and ideas "occur in and through disjunctures" between the five scapes:

"[B]ecause of the disjunctive and unstable interplay of commerce, media, national policies and consumer fantasies, ethnicity, once a genie contained in a bottle of some locality (however large), has now become a global force, forever slipping in and through the cracks between states and borders." (Appadurai, 1990: 306)

The suffix 'scapes' signals that these are perspectival constructs "inflected very much by the historical, linguistic and political situatedness of different sorts of actors: nation-states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as sub-national groupings and movements (whether religious, political or economic) and even intimate face-to-face groups such as villages, neighbourhoods and families. Indeed the individual actor is the last locus of this perspectival set of landscapes." (Appadurai, 1990: 296)

Disjuncture seems to me to express the current UK zeitgeist. The old local and national certainties are gone. Most UK citizens grew up in a nation-state 'imagined community' with national media providing a unified (if mythical) public sphere for rational debate. But the impacts of globalization, immigration and personalized digital communications (not to mention of the possible break-up of the Union) has led to a transformation of the conception of the public sphere.

Marshall argues that within the nation-state, interactive media have allowed the creation of local, regional and national 'micropublic spheres' which conjoin with and clash with the dominant frames of the national public sphere. Furthermore Appadurai (1996) says that the international flow of people, fuelled by their search for a better life, has led to the emergence of multiple 'diasporic spheres'.

An overall effect of all these conjunctions is a shared general sense of disjuncture as cherished certainties of the Enlightenment (democracy, equality, debate, free speech) come under multiple attack. Appadurai comments, "one man's imagined community is another man's political prison." (Appadurai, 1990: 295)

How can we visualise this? French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980) utilise the rhizome concept from botany. A rhizome describes the multiple, horizontal, open dynamic growth of underground tuber systems such as bulbs and common weeds which flower from the root rather than a stem. They pose the rhizome as a concept in opposition to the tree (see figure 24). For example the oak tree has a single foundation, a tap root, from which, by a process of binary division, the whole structure emerges. The tree metaphor is used as a metaphor for Western philosophy with its preference for roots and trees over flows and rhizomes. The former assumes that multiplicity emerges from a single source whereas, with the rhizome concept, multiplicity is substantive and not simply derived from a single source. The technical infrastructure of the internet and its emergent social structures are areas in which rhizomatic analysis has been applied.

Roger Griffin has also applied the rhizome concept to the analysis of fundamentalist and antidemocratic terrorist groups:

"the concept 'rhizome' throws into relief its dynamic nature as a polycratic movement by stressing that it does not operate like a single organism such as a tree with a tap-root, branch and canopy, and with a well-defined inside and outside, beginning and end. Instead it behaves like the tangled root-system of some species of grass and tuber, displaying 'multiple starts and beginnings which intertwine and connect which each other', constantly producing new shoots as others die off in an unpredictable, asymmetrical pattern of growth and decay. If a political network has a rhizomatic political structure it means that it forms a cellular, centreless, and leaderless network with ill-defined boundaries and no formal hierarchy or internal organisational structure to give it a unified intelligence." (Griffin, 2003: 9-10)

Griffin concludes that their combined effect is "to act as a pervasive 'dark matter' latent within the liberal-capitalist cosmos" which "could help ensure that the centre of gravity of western democracies stays firmly on the right, an invisible counterweight to visions of a shared humanity and social justice for all." (Griffin, 2003: 29)

Is it possible to map this? One can see elements of both Marx's base-superstructure model and Johnson's circuit of culture, but rather than strata and circuits we would seem to require a highly convoluted constantly shifting formation of intersecting scapes producing highly disruptive perspectives.

Figure 25 tries inadequately to represent Marshall's and Appadurai's arguments. Given Appadurai's use of a landscape metaphor it is surprising that he does not include the environment or the 'enviroscape'. I have added this to make six scapes.

Despite its flaws I find figure 25 instructive because it seems to relate to the world we currently live in. One can see in it echoes of all the economic, political, technological, environmental, religious and ethnic struggles that we see reflected in today's media texts. It registers some of the changes that the media have gone through over the last two decades. It seems to me to provide some footholds
and handholds to scaffold discussion with students about recent historical events as well as the changes in media and society.

13. Overlapping Categories
One problem of using nodes in visualisations is that on the page they separate what are in fact overlapping ideas or categories. However Venn diagrams can be useful for picturing overlap.

Let’s apply this to the notion of the public sphere. The public sphere, as an informed public arena for the discussion of collective issues and concerns, is seen as a cornerstone of a civil society and the media are viewed as its main locus. This of course raises concerns over access to, representation in, and commercialization of, the public sphere. However as Bart Cammaerts notes:

“media have evolved even more into a heavily contested battlefield for meanings to make sense of the world, as well as for competing ideas of what citizenship — from a national, but also increasingly also from a regional or global perspective — entails. From this perspective the image of a unified rational and consensual Habermassian public sphere is difficult to sustain.” (Cammaerts, 2007: 4)

Rather than a single public sphere we need the notion of multiple public spheres (such as the micropublic and diasporic spheres previously discussed) existing alongside a dominant public sphere represented in a nation’s broadcasting and press as in figure 26 (adapted from Cammaerts, 2007: 4). It uses a Venn diagram to visualize these multiple public spheres. We could divide the alternative public spheres into those that are autonomous from the dominant sphere and those that are oppositional to it and seek to intervene in rational debate.

We need also to distinguish between civil society and uncivil society. There are hate spheres outside or on the margins of civil society which promote hostility and violence towards others. Some of these (for example, the British National Party) may enter the oppositional sphere or even the dominant sphere (seeking election as an MP). However other hate groups may mutate rhizomically into fundamentalist terrorist groups such as ISIS which operate across state boundaries. This implies that we have to consider public spheres as being not just intranational, but also international.

Conclusion
Media studies is a subject which should have a life beyond the examination hall. I suggest it can do this in two ways:

- by using visualisations which aid reflective thought and learning in any subject or area of life
- by using texts CONTEXTS which tackle the key issues of the present and future (climate change, economics, technology, global flows of people, media, ideologies).

It would be a lie to suggest to students that we will ever fully understand the complexities of the social world. But the least we can give them is tools for thinking that allow them to visualise fields of enquiry in complex, interconnected and holistic ways. And such visualisation skills should prove invaluable in crossing learning thresholds throughout their lives.

References
Facing Up To Franju: Les Yeux sans visage (Eyes Without a Face)

I have only seen one horror film. Its powerful imagery and unforgettable soundtrack remain with me to this day. I don't need to see another horror film as this one, which I first saw in 1965, has continued to haunt me for nearly fifty years and returns, rather like chronic indigestion, to haunt me in my blackest moments. Writing this article has forced me to re-watch the film and ensure that I will remain haunted forever.

I am speaking of George Franju’s influential masterpiece Les Yeux sans visage, (1960). Franju gathered together a team of extraordinary talents to create this film. It was based on a novel by Jean Redon, with a screenplay involving both Franju and Redon as well as Claude Sautet, Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac (aka Boileau–Narcejac). Starring Pierre Brasseur, Edith Scob and Alida Valli, it was shot in black and white by Eugen Schüfftan. The soundtrack was by Maurice Jarre and I can assure you, once heard, never forgotten. In Les Yeux sans visage, Franju’s tightly disciplined direction and Schüfftan’s amazing cinematographic imagination combined with Maurice Jarre’s unnerving soundtrack creates a masterwork that somehow blends directorial restraint, lyricism and poetry with stark horror.

The film opened to mixed critical success but has since become revered as an influential cult film inspiring directors such as John Carpenter (Halloween 1978), John Woo (Face/Off 1997), Jesús Franco (Gritos en la noche 1962), and more recently Pedro Almodóvar (La piel que habito 2011) to name but a few.

That the film is so restrained – and so disturbing – in its depiction of horrific events is not quite by chance. As a cautionary measure, for fear of upsetting the sensibilities of European censors, the producer, Jules Borkon, advised Franju not to show animals being abused (British censors), mad scientists (German censors) or too much blood (French censors).

Consequently, we see – or think we see – the murderous, crazed doctor having his face ravaged by justice-driven dogs (ah!), the murderous, crazed doctor having a caring, softer side (aah!) and a single, five minute, climactic scene of incredible, unforgettable gore (aaaaaaaaa!)

In the grand tradition of mocking that which you fear, I’ve begun by being flippant about this excellent film simply because laughing about it makes me less scared. Perhaps a modern audience, ‘inoculated’ against such fear by programmes such as Botched Up Bodies (Channel 5 2015); Pete Burns’ Plastic Surgery Nightmares (ITV 2006) and even TOWIE (ITV 2011 - eternity) would find Les Yeux sans visage very tame fare. Indeed, I noticed an article in the Times of 20 February, 2015 about a new medical drama series, Critical. The article, headlined ‘Critical does more medicine in an hour than any other medical drama’, was accompanied by a still from the series showing a group of medics performing surgery on the face of an unconscious patient. It was eerily reminiscent of the infamous face transplant scene in Les Yeux sans visage, deemed so horrific that seven members of the audience at the 1960 Edinburgh Festival première fainted – yet here was a similar scene presented on the arts pages of a popular newspaper. I must say that my media studies students managed to stay conscious throughout the film – their main reaction being to direct a cold-eyed stare of horror-starved disappointment towards me at the end.

Synopsis

Dr. Genéssier, (Pierre Brasseur) a skilled and successful doctor has suffered two personal tragedies. After the death of his wife, he accidentally disfigured the face of his daughter Christiane (Edith Scob) in a reckless car crash. Motivated by guilt or possibly professional ambition, he embarks on an obsessive mission to repair his daughter’s face by grafting the faces of beautiful, kidnapped and – importantly – living girls (the ‘heterograft’) onto her ruined face. His devoted assistant, Louise (Alida Valli), indebted to him for restoring her face to its original beauty, is assigned the task of ensnaring attractive young women for his fanatical (and unsuccessful) attempts to reconstruct his daughter’s face. Using the faceless corpse of a victim of a botched operation, Genéssier fakes Christiane’s suicide. The desolate, Givenchy-gowned Christiane, the open wound of her father’s home/hospital/laboratory longing for the release of her face concealed under an expressionless mask, glides through her father’s home/hospital/laboratory longing for the release of death. She comforts herself by befriending the caged lab dogs held in the basement and making silent telephone calls to her erstwhile fiancé, Jacques Vernon (Francois Guérin). Jacques, a hitherto trusting student of Genéssier, becomes suspicious and calls the police. The police, impressed by Genéssier’s professional status and imperious manner, remain convinced of his innocence and go away leaving the girl they have deployed as a decoy at his...
mercy. By the very nature of the ‘heterograft’ Christiane is forced, along with the audience, to witness the grisly removal of the girls’ faces. Eventually she can stand it no more and overwhelmed by a mixture of pity and retribution, she stabs Louise, releases the latest victim and frees the dogs – which immediately set about mauling her father to death (face first). The film ends with her wandering through the grounds of the house, doves fluttering around her.

Comment
The film lends itself to many forms of interpretation and it is gratifying that it has at last been given the recognition it deserves. I can only make cursory reference to the ever growing body of theoretical discussion and argument it has provoked in the fields of history, politics, gender and body studies, sociology, psychology, philosophy, anthropology as well as film and art theory and criticism.

I looked first to the comments of Pauline Kael and Roger Ebert – among the best known and reliable of film critics. Kael (1964) saw it as a symbolist attack on science and the ethics of medicine, “... a horror film that takes itself very seriously, and even though I thought its intellectual pretensions silly, I couldn’t shake off the exquisite, dread images”. Like me, she found it repellent – yet beautiful and memorable. Ebert (2003) was more enthusiastic and found himself riveted by the story, stating that “... Franju constructs an elegant visual work: here is a horror movie in which the shrieks are not by the characters but by the images”. Of course, by the time Ebert was writing, hospital operations were the fodder of popular entertainment and the audience was immune to the horror of the ‘actual’ face transplant and more susceptible to the implied horror of medical malpractice. Other commentators on the film include the horror novelist Patrick McGrath (2002) – who has more experience than most of madness and threat as his father worked as a forensic psychiatrist at Broadmoor – and for a wildly enthusiastic review of the film, view Mark Kermode’s ‘Cult Film Corner’ on Mark Radcliffe’s mid 90s Radio 1 evening show, which includes a deliriously OTT description of the scariest scene of all (www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYawnNqZf4o).

Out of a number of books, journals and on-line articles and reviews, I found work by specialists in film and gender studies, Kate Ince (2005) and Elizabeth Cowie (2009), especially relevant. Elizabeth Cowie describes the disturbing and lasting effect the film has had on her personally. She alludes to Jacques Lacan’s (1973) concept of jouissance (loosely, the blurring of boundaries between pleasure and pain) in relation to the lure of the horror film which engages “... us in a compulsive return to look, to watch, to know what we dread, share us in the uncanny, in the pleasure/unpleasure of repetition”. Cowie compares Franju’s comment about the film being “... horror in homeopathic doses”, with Lacan’s view of anxiety “... it is necessary to canalise it and ... to take it in small doses, so that one is not overcome by it”.

Kate Ince (2005) tackles the enigma of Franju’s “displaced relationship to film history”. She gives great insight into Franju’s work and attitudes by first looking at his early documentary works and examining them “through the prism of genre”. She then analyses and expands the more frequently researched field of Franju’s cinematic aesthetics. However, it was her final chapter, encompassing gender identity, family structure and sexuality, that drew my particular attention, not only because I considered these the pivotal issues of Les Yeux sans visage but also because it is relatively recently that feminist film criticism has been applied to Franju’s work.

Ince is not without her critics. Michael Du Plessis (2007) argues that, “Ince’s account of Franju feels less like an argument and more like the assertion of questionable personal preferences for realism over the apparently troublesome aesthetic interzone constituted by Franju’s work”. Troublesome not just for Kate Ince, I would suggest.

A number of specialists in film studies allude to the film’s historicoo-political aspect, with particular reference to the complicity of France in the horrors of WW2. Donato Totaro, (2009) writes that Les Yeux sans visage was one of the first horror films to elicit references to military torture. He senses that there is a direct, yet subtle, reference to the Vichy regime and French collaborators in the scene where a female patient (actually a police accomplice) asks if Dr Génessier is going to shave her head before operating on her. He replies, “I hope not. It would be a shame”. Totaro sees this as a direct reference to the shaving of the heads of women accused of fraternising with the Germans during the Liberation. The film came out during the Algerian War (1954-1962) and Totaro also argues that, alternatively, the scenes of horror might also refer to this war.

Some writers differ over Totaro’s interpretation and argue that Franju did not make the film with the explicit intention of commenting on France’s history. Curtis Bowman (2002) challenges the opinions of three commentators on the film, Reynold Humphries (2002), Joan Hawkins (2002) and Adam Lowenstein (2002). He suggests that the film is open to non-political interpretation and that although, “facts about occupied and post-war France are relevant to understanding the film ... we should turn to them only as a last resort”. I found Bowman’s argument simplistic but it did bring my attention to the interesting work of the commentators Bowman appears to reject and it is well worth going to the Kinoeye on-line film journal and reading their contributions.

David MacDougall (2005), ethno-graphic filmmaker and film scholar, has written widely on the connection of film to anthropology. He has considered the relationship between the photographic image of the body and the human body itself from the stance of the viewer as well as the body behind the camera. When writing of Les Yeux sans visage in his book of essays he provides a graphic comment on the ‘heterograft’ operation scene: “The banality of everyday life surrounds these proceedings. Here the viewer is also implicated, drawn closer to the bodies by the doctor’s fumbling attempts and failures. Their agency of this film is like a contagion.”

I found myself taking an oblique look at literature not directly concerned with the film but of great value in enhancing my understanding of it. As both Elisabeth Cowie and Kate Ince had referred to psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, I did some – minimal – background exploration. Lacan was an associate of Andre Breton, Salvador Dalí, Georges Bataille and Pablo Picasso. Not surprisingly, I was struck by the aptness of Lacan’s psychoanalytical writings (1966) regarding Les Yeux sans visage, particularly his observation that a child forms the first impressions of self and identity by looking in a mirror, ‘the Mirror Stage’. As I read this, I was reminded of Christiane gazing at her ravaged face and mourning not only the loss of her identity as a beautiful adult woman but also her future identity as a wife and mother. Psychoanalyst...
Susie Orbach (2009) discusses, ‘beauty terror’, seeing it as the struggle of women, ‘to recorporealise our bodies so they become a place we live from rather than an aspiration always needing to be achieved’. The current urge to have slices carved off the body or injected with toxic substances in the quest for perfection is further discussed by sociologist Debra Gimlin (2002).

It was as I was trying to work my way through each of the one hundred and twenty one IMDb external reviews of Les Yeux sans visage while flipping through a copy of Pierre Bourdieu’s book, Masculine Domination (2002) and wondering where I could relevantly include comments from Stefanos Geroulanos (2013), David Kalat (2013), Tim Lucas (2008), Patrick McGrath (2013) and Mary Pharr (2008) that I realised I had to stop. I had far more references than I could possibly include in this article and could have continued for months discovering information from the copious analytical literature now associated with this fascinatingly complex film.

**Analysis of the opening sequence**
The character in this sequence is Louise, Dr. Genéssier’s faithful assistant. As this sequence is at the start of the film, the audience don’t yet know this but I refer to her as ‘Louise’ rather than ‘the woman’ etc. for convenience.

**Shot 1 (00:00:00 – 00:02:04)**
*Image:* The film is shot in black and white. The opening credits appear in a clinically white Roman typeface over a tracking shot of a road, lit by a car’s headlights and fringed with bare and ghostly pale trees. This ominous background establishes the tone (sombre), genre (horror) time period (20th century) season (winter) and place (remote countryside). Fade out to black. I’m frightened already. The misty shades of grey (more than 50) and forbidding shadows lend a tragic, desperate air at odds with the tinkling soundtrack. The disparity between the straight tracking shot, the merry-go-round music and the apparently random appearance of the credits is disconcerting to say the least. The POV (Point of View) is that of a driver looking through a car windscreen. Twice, the driver appears to negotiate a curve in the road.

*Sound:* Non-Diegetic (ND) After 15 seconds of silence, three harsh chords are struck. In the following rather tinny music, reminiscent of a fairground carousel or hurdy-gurdy, one can detect (staccato) violin; accordion, organ, clarinet? saxophone? and a compulsive percussion. In ¾ time like an old fashioned waltz or German ländler, it hints at circular motion – in contrast to the linear nature of the shot down the avenue of trees. The credits do not appear in time with the music or follow its rhythm. Music slows and fades to silence as the scene fades to black.

**Shot 2 (00:02:04 – 00:02:18)**
*Image:* Fade in from black to exterior MCU of the brightly lit, uneasy but flawlessly handsome face of a woman who (we later learn) is Dr Genéssier’s assistant, Louise, her eyes wide with anxiety, framed by the windscreen. Shots of Louise tend to be shot at eye-level, creating an almost collaborative feeling for the viewer. POV shifted to exterior viewer. The back seat remains in shadow. The windscreen wipers are stuck in a halfway position, cutting obliquely across her face – disturbing. The lower part of the windscreen is misted up and Louise wipes it anxiously with her black-gloved hand. Franju’s desire to create an ‘anxiety’ film is evident from the start. Everything is so unsettling. Here we have an omniscient POV, with the car and its passengers being viewed from outside. Is that windscreen condensation caused by Louise’s breath – or something else? How big Louise’s eyes appear. The jingling music is at odds with her soberly elegant dress and tense expression.

*Sound:* ND: The music restarts quietly and grows gradually louder. Although retaining the undulating rhythm, there is an added air of anxiety suggested by slight change in tempo.

**Diegetic (D):** Sound of a car on road surface.

**Shot 3 (00:02:18 – 00:02:23)**
*Image:* Cut back to the road, its surface lit by the car headlights. Travelling shot from Louise’s POV within the car. The shifting POVs are unnerving. This time it is Louise’s POV looking through a car windscreen. Twice, the driver appears to negotiate a curve in the road.

*Sound:* ND: . . . music – no break from previous shot (music bridges the transition). The undulating rhythm continues . . .

**D: Continuing sound of a car on road surface.**

**Shot 4 (00:02:23 – 00:02:30)**
*Image:* Cut to an exterior, profile MCU, with sporadic light and shade crossing the windscreen. Louise’s expression clearly becoming more tense. Shift to omniscient POV, looking into the car to the ever more jittery Louise – her anxiety conveyed not only by her expression and general mien, but also by the madhouse music . . .
desperation now suggested by swirling sounds punctuated with staccato notes, increased tempo, variation in volume, sustained chords . . .
D . . . sound of a car on road surface diminished.

Shot 7 (00:02:48 – 00:02:58)
Image: Interior mirror shot as Louise adjusts the interior rear view mirror with her gloved hand. MCU allowing a glimpse of the upper body of a slumped, figure with a man’s hat pulled over the face, rocking with the motion of the car. Shift to backseat POV as Louise adjusts the mirror, allowing us to realise that we are not alone . . .
Sound: ND: No break in music but its volume and clarity are diminished by . . .
D: Sound of car movement on the road

Shot 8 (00:02:58 - 00:03:12)
Image: Cut to interior MCU of Louise’s fully-lit apprehensive face as she becomes aware of the headlights of another vehicle coming into view behind her car. She turns to face the oncoming lights, turns back and determinedly drives on as the car approaches. Before we can learn too much about the figure in the backseat (beyond its hat) we are back outside looking in as a lorry starts to come into view behind Louise’s car. I wish she would keep her eyes on the road – she might kill someone . . .
Sound: ND: No break in music. As if reflecting Louise’s mounting trepidation it increases in volume and clarity as the camera returns to the interior of the car and focuses once more on Louise . . .
D: Considerably increased road noise, indicating the imminent presence of another vehicle.

Shot 9 (00:03:12 – 00:03:17)
Image: Cut to interior MCU of slumped figure, back-lit by the headlights of the approaching vehicle. It can now be seen to be wearing a man’s trench-coat as well as a man’s hat. POV a passenger? Camera appears to be in the front seat beside the driver, looking back at the body. The dazzle of the overtaking vehicle’s headlights in the rear window, the mix of non-diegetic . . .

Shot 6 (00:02:42 – 00:02:48)
Image: Cut back to exterior, profile MCU, with sporadic light and shade crossing the windscreen. Louise’s expression grimmer still and the mist on the windscreen more in evidence. Shift to outside looking in. Louise looks tenser than ever. The road noise increases . . . why is the car so misty on the inside?
Sound: ND . . . no break in music. Sense of anxiety and
and diegetic sound create an even greater sense of confusion anxiety - and a growing sense of horror and menace . . .
**Sound**: ND . . . no break in music which continues to increase in volume and dramatic urgency for this interior shot of the slumped body . . .
D: . . . increased road noise at end of this shot as second vehicle approaches, continuing over to next shot . . .

Shot 10 (00:03:17 – 00:03:25)
**Image**: Cut to interior MCU of Louise in semi-silhouetted profile. The approaching vehicle is seen through her side window as it overtakes and passes Louise's car. Louise is visibly relieved and drops her head briefly into her left hand. POV omniscient. The harsh gravelly sound of the overtaking vehicle brings a sense of reality after the surreal nature of the score. Louise should really keep her eyes on the road!

**Sound**: ND . . . music diminishes but continues
D . . . sound of overtaking vehicle virtually drowning out the music . . .
ND . . . music returns and increases in volume once vehicle passes Louise's car.

Shot 11 (00:03:25 – 00:03:44)
**Image**: Cut to dimly-lit interior CU of slumped figure, which flops to one side with the uneven motion of the car. Cross dissolve from car to river bank. POV shifted to front seat again, looking back at what may be a guy - in all senses of the word. The sudden lurch of the body is shockingly scary . . .

**Sound**: ND: . . . music continues . . .
D: . . . road noise just detectable.

Shot 12 (00:03:44 - 00:03:57)
**Image**: Wide angle exterior LS of a fast flowing weir. Headlights of a car appear in the road beside the river. It draws forward and stops, revealing the full exterior of Louise's Citroën 2CV.

**Sound**: After the almost dream-like journey to the accompaniment of Jarre's score, it's back to the 'real' world. There is no non-diegetic sound in this and following exterior shots.
D: . . . continuous sound of rushing water, sound of car drawing up by the river bank.

Shot 13a (00:03:57 - 00:04:27)
**Image**: Cut to side LS of the car. Louise emerges through the driver's door in her shiny raincoat. She pauses briefly, turns and opens the back door. She stoops, drags out the figure from the back seat and hauls it forwards.

Shot 13b (00:04:27 – 00:04:38)
Light, entering from left of screen, proves sufficient to show it to be a female corpse with bare white legs dangling below the trenchcoat. The camera follows Louise as she manoeuvres the
inert body towards the river. They move to the left until only the river bank is in view. **POV** shifts to exterior, omniscient view and remains there to the end of this sequence. How efficiently Louise deals with the disposal of the corpse. Has she done this before?

**Sound**: D: . . . continuous background sound of rushing water; front door slams as Louise emerges from car; sound of Louise opening the back door to extract the body; door slams shut once body is removed.

---

**Shot 14** (00:04:38 – 00:04:56)

**Image**: Cut to medium shot of Louise. The camera tracks her as she continues to lug the body along the river bank. The two figures are illuminated as Louise, turning away from the camera, heaves the body towards the river. Louise manages to stay elegant and unsullied even when dragging a lifeless adult body on a damp river path. She (the character) must be physically and mentally strong to perform this terrible action.

**Sound**: D: . . . continuous background sound of rushing water; Louise's footstep on the river bank; slight sound of the drag of the body.

---

**Shot 15** (04:56 – 00:04:59)

**Image**: Brief cut to medium OTS shot showing Louise actually pitching the body into the water. The shot is dark with specks of light catching Louise's coat and the splash of the water. The general darkness of the scene, the rushing water, the occasional glint of light, make this scene coldly terrifying.

**Sound**: D: . . . continuous background sound of rushing water; the splash as Louise pitches the body into the water.

---

**Shot 16** (00:04:59 – 00:05:11)

Cut to MCU of Louise's starkly lit face expressing both relief and guilt. She backs away, staring at the point in the river where she flung the body, before turning and walking back to her car. We now have all the information we need to know there are horrors ahead. **We**, the audience have eyes – but no face. Fade to black.

**Sound**: D: . . . continuous background sound of rushing water; Louise's retreating footsteps as she walks back to the car.

---

**References and further reading**


Geroulanos, Stefanos (2013) 'Postwar Facial Reconstruction: Georges Franju's *Eyes Without a Face*, *French Politics, Culture, and Society* 31


Ince, Kate (2005) *George Franju*, Manchester University Press

Kael, Pauline (1964) 'Are Movies Going to Pieces?' *Atlantic Monthly*, December


Pharr, Mary (2008) 'The lab and the woods: science and myth in *Les Yeux sans visage*, *Science Fiction Film & Television*, Vol 1

Totaro Donato (2009) 'Martys: Evoking France’s Cinematic and Historical Past', filmstudiesforfree.blogspot.com
In view of my professional involvement in both media education and pastoral care, the Clearinghouse Yearbook 2014, *Young People, Media and Health, Risks and Rights*, a collection of inter-disciplinary academic articles edited by Professor Cecilia von Feilitzen (Sodertorn University) and Johanna Stenersen (Örebro University) is of great interest to me personally – and, I would suggest, to all those involved in the care and education of young people.


As the book makes reference to a number of significant initiatives and organisations, it does require at least some passing background knowledge and awareness of the following:


2. The multinational research network, EU Kids Online, funded by the EC’s Better Internet for Kids, [www.lse.ac.uk/EUKidsOnlineFinalReport](http://www.lse.ac.uk/EUKidsOnlineFinalReport)


5. NORDICOM, [www.norden.org/](http://www.norden.org/)

Here is some brief information regarding the above.

1. The “Strategy for a Better Internet for Children” proposed a series of actions to be undertaken by the Commission, Member States and by the whole industry value chain. It is hoped that these actions would provide benefits for:
   - The children – by improving their digital and media literacy skills and encouraging creative and educational online content;
   - Parents and children – by developing effective and accessible tools for reporting abuse, age appropriate privacy settings, content classification schemes and parental controls;
   - Society at large – by providing better procedures for identifying, notifying and taking down online child sexual abuse material.

2. EU Kids on Line is a multinational research network that seeks to improve and disseminate:
   - knowledge of children’s online opportunities, risks and safety. Using multiple methods, it maps;
   - children’s and parents’ experience of the internet, in dialogue with national and European policy;
   - stakeholders.

3. UNCRC – with particular reference to articles 12, 13 and 17 which state respectively that:
   - Every child has the right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.
   - Every child must be free to say what they think and to seek and receive all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.
   - Every child has the right to reliable information from the media. This should be information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.

4. The 8 Millenium Development Goals are to:
   - eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
   - achieve universal primary education
   - promote gender equality and empower women
   - reduce child mortality
   - improve maternal health
   - combat HIV/AIDS/malaria and other diseases
   - ensure environmental sustainability
   - create a global partnership for development

5. NORDICOM is a co-operative knowledge centre specialising in media and communication research. Although having roots in the five Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden -
NORDICOM’s research has global significance as it encompasses a wide network of contacts and collaboration with researchers, the media industry, politicians, regulators, teachers, librarians, etc. Regarding research on young people and the media worldwide – a key aspect of the centre’s work – Nordicom started the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media in 1997, at the request of UNESCO. The work of the Clearinghouse concerns young people and their use of the media and provides a basis for decision-making, a contribution to public debate and the promotion of young people’s media and information literacy.

I do not normally provide an item-by-item outline of a book containing edited articles but in this case I considered it worthwhile as the wide ranging articles could be of interest to an equally broad range of researchers, carers and educationalists. I found all the articles readable and informative but some will be of particular significance to specialists within the field.

After a detailed foreword and introduction by the editors, section one, ‘Media Use and Health Risks’, begins with ‘The Relationship between Offline and Online Risks’ by Leslie Haddon and Sonia Livingstone. This article uses findings from the EU Kids Online project to examine the effect, harmful or otherwise, of children’s use of the internet in twenty-five European countries. ‘Socially Disadvantaged Children, Media and Health’, the second article, written by Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink and Jasmine Kulturer, offers findings from an Austrian study on the role of the media for socially disadvantaged children. Cecilia Fellitzen, in ‘Mediated Violence and Related Risk Factors. Examples and Reflections’, presents recent findings on the risk factors associated with media violence – one of the most heavily researched of media issues. Set against a background of the Egyptian revolution 2011, Ibrahim Saleh, in his article, ‘Stealing Children’s Innocence in Egypt: Media Literacy, Human Rights and Roads of Violence’, reflects on the interplay between the role of the media and other influences on familial violence and external socialisation processes.

Jeanne Prinsloo, in ‘Sexualisation and Children’s Relationship with the Media’, considers structuralist and post structuralist approaches to the much discussed issue of the media’s role in the sexualisation of young people. This half of the book also includes two medical articles by paediatricians, one being from The American Academy of Pediatrics, with Victor C. Strasburger as lead author, which presents a summary of international research on ‘Children, Adolescents, Obesity and the Media’. The second medical article by Markus Dworak and Alfred Wiater expands the issue of the ‘Impact of Excessive Media Exposure on Sleep and Memory in Children and Adolescents’. In ‘Too Many Screens, Too Much Stuff, How Media, Marketing and Commercialisation Are Harming Children’s Health’, Susan Linn discusses the effect of the excessive use of screen media and associated marketing methods on problems such as childhood obesity, early sexualisation, depression and the decrease in creative play. Finally in this section, Moniek Bijlzen, Esther Rozendaal and Simone de Droog discuss in the article, ‘Food Marketing and Child Health’, how food marketing techniques can impact on children’s weight and risk of obesity.

The second section, ‘The Right to Participation – Communication for Health and Social Change’ begins with an article by Rafael Obregón and Angela Rojas Martínez, ‘Communication and Health of Children and Adolescents, Toward a Child and Adolescent-centered Approach’ in which they discuss the importance of the media in the process of change and the right of the young to participate actively and positively. They discuss the concept of communication for social change (CFSC) illustrating its principles using two case studies from Colombia. In the next article, by Johanna Stenersen, ‘Body Politics and the Mediated Body: Young Women in Nicaragua Talk about Sexual and Reproductive Rights’ demonstrates how a local radio show produced by young women illustrates the significance of community based communication in highlighting sensitive issues such as gender equality, discrimination and oppression.

Arvind Singhal’s article, ‘Youth, Media, and Respectful Conversations about Health: Lessons Learned from an Exemplary Project in Nepal’, analyses a long running Nepalese radio initiative which allows youngsters to openly and honestly discuss important issues such as sexual health, relationships, education, careers and citizenship.

The third article in this section, by Susan Goldstein, ‘Children as Agents for Social Change: Soul Buddyz and Soul Buddyz Club’ deals with a long-standing education initiative for young people in South Africa, which covers health-related issues such as bullying, gun safety, sexuality, HIV, alcohol use, HIV, etc. Finally, in Bu Wei’s article, ‘Talking about Violence with Children: A Case Study of Children’s Participation in the Communication Plan on Stopping Violence against Children in China’, she writes of a workshop run for migrant children in a Chinese village, supporting the development of a communication plan for preventing violence against children.

The third section, ‘Statistical Indicators on Children in the World: Demographics, Economic Indicators, Education and Media & Health’, presents a selection of indicators based on data gleaned from UNICEF and the WHO. The statistical indicators fall into four groups, i.e. demographic, economic, education and media, health.

Although I can only make comments with any kind of confidence on those articles which address my professional concerns, I reiterate that I found all of the articles readable and relatively jargon-free. I refer not only to the technical language of media studies but also to that of the social and medical sciences. This makes the book of interest to a lay reader and also facilitates inter-disciplinary communication. My professional interests tend to make me regard the findings presented in the first section of the book, Media Use and Health Risks, as the most significant. I was particularly drawn to the article about ‘The Relationship between Offline and Online Risks’ by Leslie Haddon and Sonia Livingstone and was oddly reassured by the figures demonstrating that the UK does not top the league in offline and online bullying and accessing pornography. However, you will have to read the article to discover...
which nation does! Other articles in this section raise awareness of the physical, social and mental health risks associated not only with exposure to violence, pornography and aggressive marketing techniques but also to the health risks induced by over use.

There will always be a tension between the risks involved in allowing young people to access the internet and the risks of denying them that access. European and American governments appear to fret over the negative aspects of access whereas in parts of Latin America and Asia, as this book demonstrates, the problem may be either insufficiency or denial of access. I was particularly moved by Susan Goldstein’s article, ‘Children as Agents for Social Change: Soul Buddyz and Soul Buddyz Club’. It has a great sense of optimism and faith in the abilities and potential of young people.

This collection of articles does not make for comfortable reading and it made me question if sincere governmental attention is being paid to the issues raised here. Concern seems to be expressed regarding the risks posed by the internet through exposure to cyber bullying, access to pornography, child-targeted marketing ploys, etc. but those in a position to offer protection appear to have divided loyalties. This sense of doubt was fuelled by a chance viewing of a discussion in the House of Lords, November 20th 2014, on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: Digital Impact. Baroness Floella Benjamin sounded forth dramatically on the protection of children from the evils of the internet. Her (very long) speech ended with her saying that, “If the UK is to fulfil its UNCRC obligations to children by creating ... an environment where they can grow and reach their potential, we must all do what we can to help them understand this digital world”. Baroness Benjamin is associated with many worthy groups and initiatives and is the chief executive of a company producing children’s programmes.

Another speaker who drew my attention was Baroness Shields, making her maiden speech. Baroness Shields has been involved at executive level in companies such as Google, Facebook, Bebo and AOL. Her message was that the new technologies should be welcomed with open arms (I am tempted at this point to interject and misquote the late Mandy Rice-Davies by saying, ‘Well, she would say that wouldn’t she?’) but went on to say that of course every effort should be made to make them safe, ‘by design’. The response to this speech by Baroness Lane-Fox, “To have more women in this Chamber is essential, but to have one with such digital smarts is a dream come true”, actually caused me to experience a sharp pain!

I suggest that this book makes an excellent starting point for teachers, students and researchers in media studies, social studies, ITC, marketing or economics at both secondary and tertiary education levels. I would also add that the work of Professor Sonia Livingstone OBE, Professor of Social Psychology LSE, executive Board member of the UK Council for Child Internet Safety and a contributor to this book, is essential reading for anyone choosing this area of media studies for research or teaching purposes. Some of her work on how children are using the internet can be easily accessed via the LSE Social Science Space website (www.socsci.space). If you wish to share my sharp pain, I recommend going to www.publications.parliament.uk where you can find the whole of the House of Lords debate, mentioned above. Tina Stockman


I recently saw the Young Vic’s powerful production of A View from the Bridge, streamed live to us lucky provincials in our local cinema, and realised that a play I knew well had taken on an added resonance thanks to Christopher Bigby’s identification of the close parallels between Arthur Miller’s Eddie Carbone and David Chase’s Tony Soprano. These two Italian-Americans share a distorted sense of honour; both are equally able to rationalise wrong actions in defence of the integrity of their names. It is no surprise, then, that David Chase freely acknowledges the influence on him and his writing of Death of a Salesman and A View from the Bridge and that there is a clear line of descent from Eddie to Tony.

Never averse to reading about The Sopranos (my appetite for a fresh approach whetted by this connection), I found Franco Ricci’s study compelling, innovative and even, surprisingly, moving. His day job as Professor of Italian Studies at Ottawa confirms both his academic and personal credentials, his ethnicity reflected in the acknowledgements in English and Italian, of his debt of gratitude to those in both Canada and Italy who helped him finish his Sopranos project, especially the team of doctors and nurses (“truly angels in comfortable shoes”) who cared for him in the cancer ward of Ottawa General Hospital and taught him to move from under his own “bad sign”.

This bilingual opening sets the seal of authenticity on what follows – an analysis (albeit from an academic perspective) of the issues relating to identity that are at the heart of the characters in The Sopranos by someone who understands the Italian-American experience from the inside.

No character is more focused on this “volatile identity quest” than Tony Soprano, whom Chase initially conceived as simply “a middle-aged gangster in therapy”. Tony’s story, however, quickly became “a crucible that percolated humanism, nihilism, racism, honesty, cruelty, predation, identity, redemption, all coloured with the infamy of the Mafia and tinged with the heart of darkness”.

Ricci’s own quest to complete his manuscript, culminating in ten years’ work, must have required its own discipline. The resulting volume comprises four chapters of critical analysis, an appendix and a brief conclusion.

He begins with ‘Inner Sanctums’, examining the way that Chase employs physical settings, “especially the location of artwork and related objects...
extensions of the storyline. The first two of these five "sanctums" are the anteroom and then the office of Tony's analyst, Dr Melfi. Here Ricci explores the relationships between art objects, in this case statues and paintings, and the character of the protagonist, as we first meet him, with an appealing combination of insight and humour.

For example, the first scene of the pilot episode (and subsequently of the whole series) begins unconventionally with a shot of James Gandolfini (the subject of Ricci's third acknowledgement) sharing screen space with a large green statue which "dominates the frame, while the camera's crotch shot captures Tony sitting firmly ensconced within the thighs of this brazen nude female sculpture". Ricci draws attention to the way in which the statue's "upward thrust and naked strength threaten semiotic upheaval in a realm that is intrinsically masculine", before pointing out that the view of this Mob boss "framed within the triangle formed by the statue's legs is equally novel and visually appealing," particularly since between a woman's legs is one of Tony's favourite places. The Sopranos is a series that will require viewers to interpret symbols; in contrast to Tony, whose resistance to and fear of the messages embodied in the imagery manifests his fear of revealing his inner self.

When Ricci comes to consider the Soprano home, which significantly contains no ethnic mementoes connecting it to the peasant roots of many Italian-Americans, he is particularly persuasive in his semiotic analysis of the large mural behind the matrimonial bed. 'The Visitation of the Virgin and St Elizabeth' is a study of four women: the two named are centrally placed, gazing deeply into each other's eyes, while the other two are witnesses of their meeting. There is, Ricci claims, "a silent anti-linguistic grid at work within the composition", which mimics "the social subterfuge" necessary for the very survival of the Soprano family. There aren't four angels at the corners of Tony's bed but four women behind him as he sleeps. The viewer is trusted to actively interpret or, more probably, passively absorb the meaning of such signs. This caused me to realise, shameingly late, the double meaning implied in Ricci's subtitle "Born under a Bad Sign". This is more than merely the "bad luck" referred to in the original 1960s Blues song (which also features a "big legged woman"); it also highlights the semiotic significance that Ricci rightly attaches to the visual signs and symbols that deepen our understanding of character and situation in The Sopranos.

When he moves from the divine virgin and adoring saint to the sleazily secular strip club, Ricci's analysis of the Bada Bing is so perfectly on target and skillfully expressed that the following extracts cannot hope to do it justice:

“If Tony's home is his castle, his backroom offices are his fiefdom . . . It's the characters that move through its interior that set the mood in these niches of moldy manhood.”

“Interestingly, Tony's inner sanctum at the Bada Bing has walls of hammered stained glass, an anomaly of sorts, given the Bing's business and the usual use of stained glass in churches.”

By contrast with Dr Melfi's office ("a hallowed ground of emotional self-knowledge"), Tony's place of business “can only be termed sacristies of slime”.

In the next chapter, amusingly entitled 'When I Grow Up I Want to Be An American', Ricci turns to address questions of ethnicity, asserting that it was how Chase handled this issue that enabled him to face down his critics from Italian-American groups, with their accusation that The Sopranos was “yet another caricatured image of the Italian-American Gangster”. Certainly, the series does not hide its "Italionicity", but Ricci argues that the manner in which “the individual's sense of self-in-nation is configured . . . in multicultural empowerment" makes it part of an "impulsively fluid American mythology of wealth and prosperity that openly privileges greed’.

Gender is the subject of 'God Help the Beast in Me', where Ricci addresses the consequences of the “introduction of the feminine principle into the encrypted and closed world” of the Mob. In his concise résumé of how gender roles are defined in western culture, Ricci draws a distinction between the masculine “dispassion which is indispensable for killing” and the feminine “binding love” which acts as a constraint. This gives the reader a better understanding of why (historically) the Mafia, “in its efforts to remain undiluted and masculine, violently negated anything remotely reminiscent of weak, passive and unsightly feminine attitudes.”

But what effect has this had on Tony Soprano, a man whose dysfunctional relationship with his mother has almost certainly led him into therapy? This is a man who was and is essentially orphaned, who displays a fragility at odds with masculinity and “consolidates an aberrant sense of sexual identity”.

In this chapter Ricci opens up, for this reader at least, a whole new aspect of Sopranos scholarship, focusing mainly (but not exclusively) on Tony himself, which he follows up in the next chapter, entitled 'Two Tonys', with an examination of key scenes that reveal the ambiguities represented by the paintings and emblems that "swirl around him".

Nowhere is this more evident than in the doomed relationship between Tony and his nephew Christopher, whom Ricci describes as "an incompetent loser, a tainted putative punk". That relationship is symbolised by the painting of two tigers behind them as they come to blows. One of these is larger, "his arched back poised in a threatening stance, claws and teeth at the ready" as he "looms over the smaller tiger": This picture, according to Ricci, is "a visual analogy" to the fight scene: "Like the frothing behemoth of just collared his younger nephew . . . further lethal action is anticipated”.

The irony is that, unlike Tony, we grasp the message implied. We anticipate, even dread, what is signalled here – impending doom, ultimate destruction, the inevitable killing of the smaller beast by the larger, dominant one. Here Ricci displays his deep encyclopedic knowledge to its greatest advantage, a near obsession documented in elegant prose.

Returning to the opening scene, Ricci extends the significance of
that initial impression of Tony as an “emasculated, flinching, befuddled and classically petrified male: a prisoner frozen in time” by comparing the scene to a novel that begins with a ‘silent stage’ set for the story’s characters. Here too we have a static scene – a strange opening for a Mob series – where the viewer is “enveloped in a prolonged descriptive silence”. Within this setting, Ricci points out, Dr Melfi will be “seduced by Tony’s bacchanal sloth and enticed by his subversive cultural message”. It is only at the very end that she can “rationally and intellectually undo her imagocentric attraction to the likeable bad-boy mobster”.

But what does Ricci make of the controversial end of the series? This famously avoids closure, leaving the audience and critics with frustratingly unanswered questions, most obviously about Tony’s fate. Was Holsten’s Diner, that most banal of settings, Tony’s Golgotha, his place of execution? Would he die with the rest of his family, would he take them all with him? Would this modern day Greek tragedy end traditionally in blood?

What Ricci does is to credit Chase with the trust and confidence he places in the viewers, allowing for such speculation while asserting that the “only certainty, the centrality of Tony as malevolent Mafioso may have been vouchsafed; but the phantasmagic construct is engulfed, at series’ end, by the final image of total ineluctable darkness”. This is Ricci’s own crashing finale: Tony has been on the brink of darkness throughout the series, such threshold moments taking him, not into light, but still deeper into wanton corruption.

However we choose to interpret the ending, Tony Soprano’s “bright day is done” and he is “for the dark”. One wonders if Ricci’s incarceration in the Bone and Marrow Transplant Unit of Ottawa General Hospital, a prisoner of illness cut off from the world, his magnum opus unfinished, if such isolation enabled him to reach this degree of understanding of, and even compassion for, Tony Soprano. Together “under a bad sign”, they stand on the edge of darkness.

In his tribute to HBO as trail blazer for “shortening the distance between television and cinema screens,” Ricci displays a generosity which was sadly not reciprocated when HBO refused him permission to use screen grabs to illustrate his book. Shame on them! However, the cover image of what appears to be the New Jersey Turnpike, a hot contender for the title of most depressing place on the planet, may well be Ricci’s riposte to their ingratitude – the word “CASH” prominently displayed over three of the lanes carries its own semiotic. But the absence of pictures cannot detract from this rewarding, carefully-crafted study by an academic who genuinely loves a series which has established itself in the Pantheon of high quality, ground-breaking television drama, Liz Roberts

Vienna has always been a marvellous location city for film-makers exploiting its quirky visual splendours, from Carol Reed with The Third Man (1949) to Richard Linklater with Before Sunrise (1995). Up a narrow street in the Jewish quarter is a less visited Viennese location, with a simple plaque ‘In diesem Hause lebte Billy Wilder in den Jahren 1914-24’. It reminds us that one of America’s sharpest and most humorous satirists was – like much of Hollywood – a central European Jewish immigrant, who in films such as The Major and the Minor, The Lost Weekend and Sunset Boulevard (or Blvd. to be exact), ruthlessly dissected the American condition.

What is often forgotten is that in these films – and half a dozen more – he had a collaborator, Charles Brackett, who is long overdue recognition for his share of the incisive scripts. That’s one of the aims of his grandson Jim Linklater with his book. Shame on them! However we choose to interpret the ending, Tony Soprano’s “bright day is done” and he is “for the dark”. One wonders if Ricci’s incarceration in the Bone and Marrow Transplant Unit of Ottawa General Hospital, a prisoner of illness cut off from the world, his magnum opus unfinished, if such isolation enabled him to reach this degree of understanding of, and even compassion for, Tony Soprano. Together “under a bad sign”, they stand on the edge of darkness.

In his tribute to HBO as trail blazer for “shortening the distance between television and cinema screens,” Ricci displays a generosity which was sadly not reciprocated when HBO refused him permission to use screen grabs to illustrate his book. Shame on them! However, the cover image of what appears to be the New Jersey Turnpike, a hot contender for the title of most depressing place on the planet, may well be Ricci’s riposte to their ingratitude – the word “CASH” prominently displayed over three of the lanes carries its own semiotic. But the absence of pictures cannot detract from this rewarding, carefully-crafted study by an academic who genuinely loves a series which has established itself in the Pantheon of high quality, ground-breaking television drama. Liz Roberts

Vienna has always been a marvellous location city for film-makers exploiting its quirky visual splendours, from Carol Reed with The Third Man (1949) to Richard Linklater with Before Sunrise (1995). Up a narrow street in the Jewish quarter is a less visited Viennese location, with a simple plaque ‘In diesem Hause lebte Billy Wilder in den Jahren 1914-24’. It reminds us that one of America’s sharpest and most humorous satirists was – like much of Hollywood – a central European Jewish immigrant, who in films such as The Major and the Minor, The Lost Weekend and Sunset Boulevard (or Blvd. to be exact), ruthlessly dissected the American condition.

What is often forgotten is that in these films – and half a dozen more – he had a collaborator, Charles Brackett, who is long overdue recognition for his share of the incisive scripts. That’s one of the aims of his grandson Jim Moore in commissioning the publication of excerpts from Brackett’s diary and writings during his years in Hollywood and his central collaboration with Billy Wilder (1906-2002) through the 1940s. With his privileged academic East Coast upbringing, Brackett (1892-1969) did not appear to be a natural writing partner for the pugnacious, streetwise, extroverted incoming, and one turns eagerly to find the historic date when they came together. And there it is, 17 August 1936, when they were both scripting for Ernst Lubitsch, who “thinks we might jell.” (p.86) “I am to be teamed with Billy Wilder, a young Austrian I’ve seen about for a year or two and like very much. I accepted the job joyfully.” (p.86)

Throughout the rest of the book we get a vivid impression of the many sides of Wilder – some of them distinctly politically incorrect from our advanced perspective – but always laced through with sharp irony and wit. What is possibly most fascinating about the book is its insight into the operation of Hollywood in the golden years of the studio system, with Brackett casually dropping name after distinguished name as he does the daily rounds – Marlene Dietrich, George Cukor, Hedda Hopper, Dorothy Parker, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Adolph Zukor and dozens more make guest appearances (often “dropping in for tea.”)

Thankfully there is a twelve page index to allow you to browse and alight on the names that catch your attention, probably the best way to approach this packed volume. I can’t see it being employed too much in the classroom, but for giving an insight to its era and locale, it can’t be beat.

Douglas Allen, New College Lanarkshire (Motherwell Campus)

The feature about Norman McLaren in the last MEJ gave welcome coverage to the agit-prop short film he made with Helen Biggar at Glasgow School of Art, Hell Unltd. For those who want to know more, here is the long-awaited account
of the life and times of Helen Biggar (1909–53), the sculptor/artist/film-maker at the epicentre of Glasgow’s cultural left through the 1930s and 1940s.

Written as a labour of love by Helen’s niece Anna Shepherd, the biography combines a wealth of material from the family archives with a detailed account of the context of the 1930s Depression, 1940s World War and the activities of Glasgow’s left, especially the Communist Party. It covers Helen’s fruitful collaboration with Norman McLaren, which resulted in one of the landmark interwar political films Hell UnLtd, now hailed as possibly the greatest film produced by the left.

The book details Helen’s filmmaking with the communist film group Glasgow Kino; her part in nourishing the talents of the radical refugee artists of wartime Glasgow – names like Josef Herman and Jankel Adler as well as home-grown rising stars like Joan Eardley and Tom MacDonald; and her design skills, which led to many collaborations with the Glasgow Workers’ Theatre Group and Unity Theatre through the ’30s and ’40s, and Ballet Rambert in the ’50s. Helen’s successes are doubly impressive for being achieved in the face of a lifelong disability that affected her growth, the result of a childhood accidental fall. It is good to see recognition at last for this versatile Scottish artist and filmmaker who, up until now, has been rather ‘hidden from history’.

The book costs £12.00 plus £1.65 p&p (cheques payable to Anna Shepherd), and is available from: Billie Love Historical Collection, 3 Winton Street, Ryde, Isle of Wight, PO33 2BX, U.K.

Douglas Allen, New College Lanarkshire (Motherwell Campus)

A still from Hell UnLtd

that affected her growth, the result of a childhood accidental fall. It is good to see recognition at last for this versatile Scottish artist and filmmaker who, up until now, has been rather ‘hidden from history’.

The book costs £12.00 plus £1.65 p&p (cheques payable to Anna Shepherd), and is available from: Billie Love Historical Collection, 3 Winton Street, Ryde, Isle of Wight, PO33 2BX, U.K.

Douglas Allen, New College Lanarkshire (Motherwell Campus)

The book details Helen’s filmmaking with the communist film group Glasgow Kino; her part in nourishing the talents of the radical refugee artists of wartime Glasgow – names like Josef Herman and Jankel Adler as well as home-grown rising stars like Joan Eardley and Tom MacDonald; and her design skills, which led to many collaborations with the Glasgow Workers’ Theatre Group and Unity Theatre through the ’30s and ’40s, and Ballet Rambert in the ’50s. Helen’s successes are doubly impressive for being achieved in the face of a lifelong disability that affected her growth, the result of a childhood accidental fall. It is good to see recognition at last for this versatile Scottish artist and filmmaker who, up until now, has been rather ‘hidden from history’.

The book costs £12.00 plus £1.65 p&p (cheques payable to Anna Shepherd), and is available from: Billie Love Historical Collection, 3 Winton Street, Ryde, Isle of Wight, PO33 2BX, U.K.

Douglas Allen, New College Lanarkshire (Motherwell Campus)


There have been a number of books about the cinema in Scotland published in the last thirty or forty years, such as the one on Scottish cinemas and their architecture reviewed in MEJ 55, or Colin McArthur’s book, Scotch Reels, from 1982. However much more has been published south of the border under the guise of ‘British’ cinema, but probably often really ‘English’ cinema.

This book is rather different from earlier ones, as it is an academic study by an Edinburgh University lecturer in economic and social history, and it includes very extensive notes and a comprehensive bibliography. The author is one of the leaders of the AHRC-funded research project, run jointly by Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities, on ‘Early Cinemas in Scotland, 1896–1927’, the work of which was outlined in an article in MEJ 56. This project is attempting to engage with schools and communities to let them discover about early cinema in their area. Two teaching packs for schools are in preparation on the theme of the Great War, with a pack for younger pupils to come.

Griffiths uses a vast array of archive documents from individual cinemas, Board of Trade reports, trade magazines and personal diaries to both survey Scottish cinema, and wherever possible compare and contrast the Scottish perspective with that for the rest of Britain. However, frustrating both to the author and the reader are the records which have got lost or never existed from cinemas in many of the towns and (to a lesser extent) the cities of Scotland.

In view of the cut-off date of 1950, a large proportion of this book looks at the silent era, and the transition to the ‘talkies’. Seven of the eight main chapters look at issues such as the emergence of the Scottish cinema, regulation and censorship, the debate on opening cinemas on the Sabbath, and the non-commercial cinema in Scotland.

Using statistics from cinema profit and loss accounts, a decline in cinema attendance during the Depression in the 1930s roughly coincides with the introduction of the ‘talkies’, which to some commentators of the time were going to be a ‘nine-day-wonder’.

Other statistics show the increased attendances after the end of the Second World War. Patterns of attendance during a typical week are also examined, showing a bias towards larger audiences towards the end of the week. Some of this relates to more screenings on Saturdays, and many operators’ finances were helped by higher admission charges in some cinemas that day. At some periods the decline in cinema attendance in cities during the summer was at least to some extent offset by larger audiences in cinemas in holiday resorts.

Another issue covered in detail is the ‘British quota’. At least one cinema reported that showing the quota of British films, as required by law (rather than imported, mainly American, ones), tended to depress takings. Some British films were seen as too ‘English’, something Scottish audiences did not like. However another cinema manager declared that his best weeks were when British films were being shown. Perhaps the social make-up of the audience was behind this anomaly. Some parts of Scotland preferred the ‘Western’ which was often the B-feature, rather than topping the bill.
The non-commercial cinema is also considered, both for documentary film and for film societies. Some of these were established within groups with like-minded politics, especially left-wing groups with leanings to Russian-style Communism; other societies included, at one stage in the years after the end of the Second World War, six scientific film societies, providing educational programmes, often on a monthly basis. As this reviewer was a member of the Edinburgh Scientific Film Society in the early 1950s, it was interesting to see how this group fitted in to the regulations on cinema openings on Sundays, where some local magistrates and church-based organisations could take up quite extreme positions on what they saw as an attempt at the erosion of the ‘traditional’ sanctity of the Sabbath for commercial gain. The significance of the Highlands and Islands Film Guild (surviving until 1970) is also highlighted.

The eighth chapter is on a rather different tack, namely the production (or rather the lack of production) of Scottish feature films before 1950. It reminds us of the paucity of production north of the border in the period under review. A few examples have survived, such as Mairi, the Romance of a Highland Maiden (produced in 1912), which still gets an occasional airing, in a re-edited form, in its home town (or city these days) of Inverness. It was produced by local photographer Andrew Paterson, and shot in the Black Isle. However Football Daft, made in 1921 and partly filmed in Sauchiehall Street in Glasgow, and originally promoted as ‘the best all-Scottish comedy yet produced’, seems to have got lost in the mists of time. The documentary movement, rather than feature film production, will remain as Scotland’s film legacy, from the time around and between the two World Wars.

This book, then, fills a void in the study material on Scottish cinema. If the social and economic history of the cinema is a topic that interests you, this volume is one worth reading and keeping on your bookshelf. Perhaps at a later date Trevor Griffiths will produce a similar book about the cinema in Scotland in the second half of the 20th century.

Robert Preece


Ben McCann’s study of the 1939 film Le Jour se lève is part of the series of French Film Guides edited by Ginette Vincendeau, with the aim of being ‘authoritative and entertaining’. In my view it does both and serves the casual or more specialist reader.

Le Jour se lève was Marcel Carné’s last film completed before the Second World War and has become overshadowed by his magnum opus Les Enfants du paradis which was shot during the occupation and regarded by many as one of the greatest French films of all time. McCann makes a good case for Le Jour se lève being just as important and in fact a crucial and sophisticated work not just in Carné’s career but also in the history of French cinema particularly in relation to Poetic Realism.

The book divides into sections on the context and planning of the film, its technical construction, the performances and their political ramifications and finally its critical reception at the time and later both in France and overseas. In so doing he covers everything relevant and even strays from time to time into some interesting rabbit holes most noticeably the way Hollywood re-made the film as The Long Night in 1947.

The book is well researched and led me to some new discoveries for instance the Hollywood appearance of the film’s young female lead opposite Mickey Rooney in one of the Judge Hardy crowd pleasers. The production background is comprehensive and I especially liked the table analysing composer Maurice Jaubert’s use of different musical instruments for different scenes demonstrating his versatility and sensitivity to the film’s moods and structure. It reminded me that Birdman was by no means the first film score to put its drums in the foreground.

McCann doesn’t just repeat the mantra that Le Jour se lève sits squarely under the label of Poetic Realism. He challenges and tests this with some interesting insights into how the term evolved and developed and what it meant in reality. He picks up on André Bazin’s essays that post-war re-focused critical attention on the film and helped bring it to the forefront of critical acclaim taking the number 7 slot in Sight and Sound’s 1952 critics’ choices of all time best films beating La Règle du jeu, also made in 1939, into 10th place, a film that now regularly makes the top three. He reminds us, and it is easy to forget this, that films labelled Poetic Realism made up only a very small part of French film output; Le Jour se lève was competing for audiences with a very broad range of comedies, thrillers and musicals. Although most of these other films will be largely forgotten and will never have a book written about them McCann reminds us that this was a popular film that filled cinemas and to do that it had to entertain mass audiences not just a future generation of critics by keeping its feet on the ground, as Bazin said:

“Le Jour se lève is perfect in that its symbolism never takes precedence over its

Jean Gabin and Jacqueline Laurent in Le Jour se lève

The documentary movement, rather than feature film production, will remain as Scotland’s film legacy, from the time around and between the two World Wars.

This book, then, fills a void in the study material on Scottish cinema. If the social and economic history of the cinema is a topic that interests you, this volume is one worth reading and keeping on your bookshelf. Perhaps at a later date Trevor Griffiths will produce a similar book about the cinema in Scotland in the second half of the 20th century.

Robert Preece


Ben McCann’s study of the 1939 film Le Jour se lève is part of the series of French Film Guides edited by Ginette Vincendeau, with the aim of being ‘authoritative and entertaining’. In my view it does both and serves the casual or more specialist reader.

Le Jour se lève was Marcel Carné’s last film completed before the Second World War and has become overshadowed by his magnum opus Les Enfants du paradis which was shot during the occupation and regarded by many as one of the greatest French films of all time. McCann makes a good case for Le Jour se lève being just as important and in fact a crucial and sophisticated work not just in Carné’s career but also in the history of French cinema particularly in relation to Poetic Realism.

The book divides into sections on the context and planning of the film, its technical construction, the performances and their political ramifications and finally its critical reception at the time and later both in France and overseas. In so doing he covers everything relevant and even strays from time to time into some interesting rabbit holes most noticeably the way Hollywood re-made the film as The Long Night in 1947.

The book is well researched and led me to some new discoveries for instance the Hollywood appearance of the film’s young female lead opposite Mickey Rooney in one of the Judge Hardy crowd pleasers. The production background is comprehensive and I especially liked the table analysing composer Maurice Jaubert’s use of different musical instruments for different scenes demonstrating his versatility and sensitivity to the film’s moods and structure. It reminded me that Birdman was by no means the first film score to put its drums in the foreground.

McCann doesn’t just repeat the mantra that Le Jour se lève sits squarely under the label of Poetic Realism. He challenges and tests this with some interesting insights into how the term evolved and developed and what it meant in reality. He picks up on André Bazin’s essays that post-war re-focused critical attention on the film and helped bring it to the forefront of critical acclaim taking the number 7 slot in Sight and Sound’s 1952 critics’ choices of all time best films beating La Règle du jeu, also made in 1939, into 10th place, a film that now regularly makes the top three. He reminds us, and it is easy to forget this, that films labelled Poetic Realism made up only a very small part of French film output; Le Jour se lève was competing for audiences with a very broad range of comedies, thrillers and musicals. Although most of these other films will be largely forgotten and will never have a book written about them McCann reminds us that this was a popular film that filled cinemas and to do that it had to entertain mass audiences not just a future generation of critics by keeping its feet on the ground, as Bazin said:

“Le Jour se lève is perfect in that its symbolism never takes precedence over its
realism but rather the one complements the other.”

Indeed McCann makes it clear that this was a film that Carné intended for a popular, and that would mean largely working class, audience:

“With its class fraternity and community solidarity, it was imagined on-screen as a way of targeting spectators and provided them with recognisable images of themselves.”

The film was meant to reflect a French social reality and Carné and his team worked hard to ensure that the settings and décor did this by making sure they were “anchored to a recognizable reality”.

McCann provides just enough information about the key collaborators and the leading actors to put the film in the context of Carné and French Cinema.

In his appreciation of the leading technicians, he is pointing out, quite accurately, the international reach they reflected and the way Carné built a team of trusted colleagues. He explains the background to the leading players, Gabin, Arletty and Berry, and why their presence would have resonated with audiences and brought certain expectations.

Being critical, I think McCann gets a little close to his subject at times, making suggestions that seem exaggerated. For instance his suggestion that the cycling acrobats in the music hall act, circling round on the stage, are used to remind us that Gabin’s character is going nowhere? On a small stage with their unicycles what else could they do? More importantly does Jules Berry’s music hall character really represent the French bourgeoise in his clash with working class Gabin? I also worry that he may be working too hard at his analysis of the historical context. Certainly those involved in the production knew war was coming and this led to a certain air of pessimism on set but can we really see Neville Chamberlain’s powerlessness in the face of Hitler in the fate of Gabin’s character, and does the film really chart “the rise and fall of optimism engendered by the 1936 Popular Front government”? All in all a very satisfactory read which would give those unfamiliar with the film a good sense of its background, history, critical reception and most importantly its narrative structure, innovation and feeling of claustrophobia. For those of us more familiar, lots to think about.

Jon Davies

**Nationalism and the Cinema in France: Political Mythologies and Film Events, 1945-1995**

Hugo Frey, Berghahn Books, 2014, £60.00, 250pp (also available as an e-book)

ISBN 9781782383659

Hugo Frey has written a fascinating and illuminating set of readings of French films through various prisms affected by aspects of French nationalism and political identity. His stated aim is to open up new readings of French Cinema that discuss nationalistic subtexts, sometimes explicit, but more often than not, nuanced in tone. “A work of politically informed cultural history” as he puts it.

He does this by taking a series of themes, for example, representations of the Occupation, films depicting revolutionary France or anti-semitism, and linking them to films that are often not classically associated with such themes. The book also covers the representation of “modern chic” as he calls it with a French cinema showing France and audiences overseas that it is recovering from the war with a modern and progressive society. Apparently even the French Catholic Church approved of the affair in *Un Homme et une femme* (A Man and a Woman); an affair it may be but not too hasty and between two people unencumbered by living spouses! I particularly enjoyed his analysis of the film in terms of a Gaullist depiction of 1960s France. He explains that de Gaulle ordered a special screening and sat with Lelouch muttering approval throughout. He is convicing in his arguments that this film “a seemingly commercial work, a pure entertainment, did impact on the conventional realm of politics”.

His section on *La Nuit américaine* (Day for Night) in terms of “the political myth of clash of civilisations, between the French and the non-French”, rang largely true and he could have added to his international argument by mentioning that Truffaut actually colonised a set at the Victoire studios originally built for an American film.

Whilst reflecting the work of people like Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson he has his own clear and imaginative ideas and a terrific eye for the detail of what has made the films he discusses special to the French audiences who saw them primarily as entertainment. He is clear in acknowledging that ‘French Cinema per se exists in an international context and addresses its relationship with Hollywood with humour and verve.

I particularly enjoyed the chapter on the search for national unity through cinema and his discussion of films depicting the Occupation is the best I have read for many years, succinct, accurate and referencing films such as *La Grande Vadrouille* (Don’t Look Now . . . We’re Being Shot At!) that have been disregarded too much in the past. It will, I suspect, be photocopied by many teachers! His discussion of *L’Armée des ombres* (The Army of Shadows) is also really excellent investigating why it was heavily criticised on release and where it sits in the journey from the eulogising *La Bataille du rail* (The Battle of the Rails) to the hard edged *Lacombe Lucien*.

I am not quite as convinced by his argument that Lelouche and Rohmer constitute a deliberately conservative cinema addressed at youth and countering the influences of 1968 but he made me think.

His research has dug up some wonderful gems, although I wonder if de Gaulle ever said that “Grenoble was only two stages of the Tour de France from Moscow”. Reference please as I’d love to believe he said it but 3,000 kilometres seems a long way for two days of cycling! Using contemporary press cuttings offers an immediacy that would be lost by simply quoting other academics. Best of all he remembers his readers and offers
us clear and non-jargon English which will make this accessible to a wide audience and, unlike another book I review here, when he uses a quote in French he puts the translation underneath.

A really enjoyable and thought provoking read that will appeal to general readers, academics and students form A Level upwards.

Jon Davies

**French Comedy on Screen**

by Rémi Fournier Lanzoni

Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, £60 (hb) (also available as e-book), 272pp, ISBN 9780230338425

This book attracted me; there has been little written looking at the genre of French Comedy and a one-volume approach to the subject is overdue. He has arranged his book into chronological chapters that take the reader from the earliest films of the silent period, through the thirties, the post-war period and up to what he calls the modern era and then a final chapter on ‘French Comedy Today’. This ends with a sudden full stop with *Bienvenue Chez les Ch’tis*.

Sadly I was very disappointed with what he has produced. For me it fails to take the broad view of the genre as it promises to do in the introduction, and often meanders along some very strange backwaters ignoring much else that would be more worthwhile.

As a prelude he writes a section defining ‘The Theories of Comedy’ having admitted that there is “no clear explanation of what comedy is and how it works that seems to be enunciated to this day”, thus wasting quite a few pages and reader patience. His differentiation between categories such as ‘Parodies’ ‘Satires’ ‘Irony’; ‘Farce’ etc. are unclear and unhelpful.

What I did find rewarding was how he brings some interesting insights into lesser-known French silent comedians such as André Deed and AKA Boireau, and he brings focus on some films that are normally overlooked, *Le Corniaud, Le Petit monde de Don Camillo or Les Trois frères* for instance, while not forgetting *Roman d’un tricheur ou Le Visiteurs*. Of course it was always going to be impossible to include everything but nothing about Pierre Etaix?

For me the book read like a first draft and needed serious editing; Fournier Lanzoni needed someone to help him focus on what was most relevant. And at a more detailed level it annoys. Apart from the spelling mistakes, Diane Kurys loses her final ‘s’ at one point, grammatical errors, repetition and factual errors, *La Grande illusion* was made in 1937 not 1997, the ‘avances sur recettes’ subsidies were introduced in the 1960s not 1980s for instance. The book is prone to sweeping statements, such as comedy is “the backbone of the entire French Film industry” or, talking about the thirties: “Without this generation of comic actors, much of an entire decade of filmmaking would have fallen into oblivion”, or “Poetic realism dominated French Cinema in the 1930s”, or “the 1970s began with an assertive trend to promote women in French society”. Sloppy.

And there are exaggerations. “During the immediate postwar years many filmmakers accused of collaborating . . . were blacklisted.” In fact, as most studies show, the numbers were particularly low, especially in comparison to other areas of the arts such as theatre and radio.

There is frequent opinion dressed up as fact. For example, referring to *La Cage aux folles*, a film that still angers many in the French LGBT community, he says “spectators did not laugh at the gay protagonists or at Albinis’s temperamental outbursts and his narcissistic hypochondria, but instead they were given the opportunity to laugh with him” and then finds it surprising that “the film and the play were both criticised by gay associations who essentially saw the staging of two caricature figures and effeminate homosexuals rather than the elaboration of multifaceted performances. . . . Neither character is made to seem ridiculous or the butt of any jokes”.

What irked me most were the long digressions such as into some military comedies of the 30’s or *Volpone* which owes more to a theatrical tradition than French cinematic comedy. These took away from the main drive of the book and used space that could have been used to paint a more complete picture.

And one final niggle: he sometimes translates his French quotes into English, sometimes puts the translation in the footnotes at the end of the book and sometimes offers no translation at all. For non-francophones this will make the book extremely annoying.

In conclusion a missed opportunity – the history of French screen comedy remains to be written.

Jon Davies

---

**Association for Media Education in Scotland (AMES)**

AMES is the subject association for media studies, media education and related disciplines. Its objectives are to promote media literacy, to support media teachers and to raise the status of media education.

AMES is a grassroots organisation set up by classroom teachers to promote media education on a national level while also providing support and advice to media teachers themselves.

AMES is active in lobbying and negotiating with education planners at all levels in Scotland. Membership of AMES will enable you to have a say in the future direction of media education in Scotland. To join, contact Des Murphy at the address on Page 2. Members of AMES receive free copies of the bi-yearly *Media Education Journal* and the AMES newsletter.

AMES is a non-profit organisation and registered charity and is funded through membership subscriptions and subscriptions to the *Media Education Journal*. It holds a yearly conference in May/June at which the AGM takes place. As a charity, AMES is overseen by OSCR and examined by an Independent Examiner.

AMES’ website is at [www.mediaedscotland.org.uk](http://www.mediaedscotland.org.uk)
Print copies of the current issue are available at £12. We also have back copies at £5. The complete set covers almost 30 years of debate, theory and practice. See page 2 for contact details.