SUBJECT MEDIA

A STUDY IN THE SOCIOCULTURAL FRAMING OF DISCOURSE.

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ABSTRACT

This research offers an analysis of social practices and discourses at work in the assessment of Media Studies students following the OCR AS specification produced for 'Curriculum 2000', in its first examination session - January 2001.

The purpose of the research is not to scrutinise the accuracy of such assessment, or its value, but to raise questions about subject identity at the institutional level represented by an awarding body.
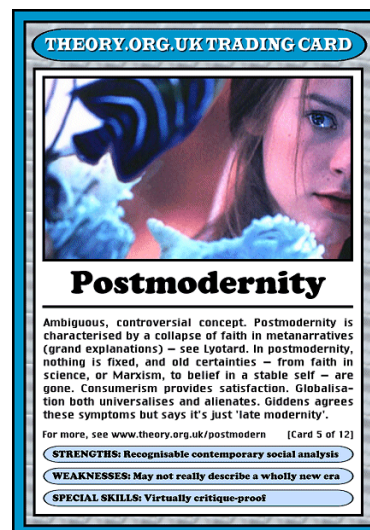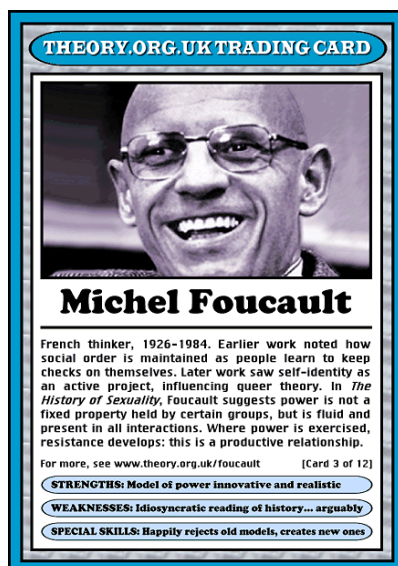
In particular, the intention is to investigate further issues about assessment as a social practice raised by Nick Peim in his analysis of the cultural politics of English teaching. In addition the thesis sets out to 'test' his suggestion that Media Studies might offer an alternative to the cultural problems he identifies within the practices of 'Subject English.'

The method adopted is discursive and theoretical, applying critical discourse analysis, phenomenology and deconstruction. The writers whose ideas and ways of thinking about discourse, language and pedagogy are most significantly 'applied' to data acquired through the research are Michel Foucault and Basil Bernstein.

The conclusions drawn offer a response to Peim's suggestions, and raise more questions about subject identity for Media teachers to consider. In particular, the data analysed lends itself to an analysis of the assumptions, logical inconsistencies and oppositions set up by 'Subject Media' and to a discussion about the relationship between a subject's 'spirit' and the reality of its assessment practices. As such it provides a 'micro' analysis of the boundaries placed around academic and vocational ways of learning, and seeks to question such categories.

In memory of Mike McDougall

(1940 to 2003)

Acknowledgements for support and guidance:

ORDER OF THINGS

THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF MEDIA TEACHING

This project is framed from the outset by Nick Peim's critique of English teaching (1993), and his powerful argument that the institutionalised practices of teaching about language and literature should be understood as a technology for the naturalisation of specific reading and writing practices, particular ways of making meaning and understanding the world which are far from neutral. This range of practices he calls 'Subject English' and this label lends this thesis its title.

Peim has written about the cultural politics of English teaching through exploring the established teaching identities and assessment practices in terms of the 'givens' about readers and texts on which they are reliant. This set of assumptions forms a framing within which discourses reside, and such discourses (ways of speaking and writing about texts in particular) need to be deconstructed and 'de-naturalised' in order for us to understand how they are socio-culturally located (in other words how they are not natural, or simply formed through common sense, but how they are politically and culturally loaded in order to preserve a range of illusions about legitimate knowledge and appreciation of 'great works'). My interest in Peim's work is located in his suggestion that Media Studies might offer an alternative approach to the study of texts, and approach which might represent a departure from such culturally loaded learning practices,

> Theories of popular culture and audience-oriented work in Media Studies … propose alternative models of communications theory, and challenge the centrality of literature in

> educational practices….From a Media Studies perspective, not only is canonical literature oddly exclusive, limited and indeterminate (nobody knows how to draw its boundaries), but its cultural politics are deeply questionable. From a Media Studies perspective, the general category of literature is extremely restricted. The apparently free category of personal response is, in fact, much more constrained than has been represented…. English has incorporated Media Studies into itself entirely on its own terms, without revising its cherished beliefs and practices about text and language according to the alternative perspective that Media Studies powerfully offers.
> (2000, p173)

Peim suggests that this alternative perspective is rooted in the importance afforded to the consideration of audience in Media Studies. This focus on audience response lends itself to a more visibly theoretical awareness of the way in which meaning is negotiated and response is varied (meaning constructed by audience rather than by author).

> Media Studies has a great deal to offer – usefully and positively challenging the premise of the subject's textual orientation. It promises a wide range of texts and of reading techniques and procedures, beyond the current remit of English. (2000, p173)

This research project begins from this suggestion. There is no doubt that Media Studies does offer possibilities for theory that are more restricted in Subject English. However it is less clear how free Media Studies can be, *in practice*, from the same socio-cultural framing of its less 'radical' cousin. The key questions of this thesis will be asking about the tension between the 'spirit' of Media Studies (as described by Peim) and the institutional forms of assessment that frame the social practice of Media teaching, its cultural politics, which we can call *Subject Media*.

RESEARCH

It is difficult to see how the researcher in the field can ever sustain, either at the time or retrospectively, a bracketing of their value positions, so that decisions they make about the parameters of the case they are studying, the methods they use to collect data, and the means they appropriate to analyse and write up these data, do not reflect in a fundamental sense the way they understand the world.
(Usher and Scott, 1996, p179.)

What follows are some stories that provide some context in order for this project to avoid falsely claiming objectivity, causality, linear logical thinking, validity or 'originality' in the logocentric (see Derrida, 1981) sense[1]. The writing that follows in this thesis is always-already informed by a variety of discourses, positions and experiences that must not be marginalised or 'reduced' to footnotes or asides.

The three stories that follow are like 'myths' for Media teachers, oft-repeated narratives that normally attract agreement amongst the community by whom and for whom they are told.

1. During a discussion about whether Media Studies is a 'valid' subject, sceptics concede that 'the media' is incredibly important and powerful and that young people need to be 'aware' of it, or be *media-literate*.

2. Justifying the study of soap opera to a parent, the Media teacher explains that the student is never 'just watching' *Eastenders*, that the subject matter may be far more 'popular' and 'accessible' than, say, a Shakespeare play, but the

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1 Derrida writes that the discourse of logocentric reason is at the heart of binary oppositions such as presence / absence, origin / supplement and speech / writing.

tools of *critical* analysis are the same. The parent is amused but seems convinced.

3. During the summer of 2003 (the 'slow news' period), the *Times Educational Supplement* publishes a report on the intention of the OCR board to introduce a topic within the AS Media Studies specification on computer games and the representation of conflict. Various national newspapers follow up this lead, with varying degrees of scepticism as to the academic legitimacy of such analysis. *The Independent* includes the item in its editorial, suggesting that the power of the gaming industry justifies such classroom attention.

These stories make sense because of a variety of questionable 'common-sense' truths. These include the fact that Shakespeare is intrinsically worthy of study and that the analytical tools used for the purpose are empowering, that *Eastenders* does not instantly present the same degree of richness to the young learner, that 'the media' is a tangible phenomenon which influences us, and that education can be a vehicle for the resistance of such coercion, and that economic success / power demands and justifies academic attention due to a link between market forces and educational needs.

I have become interested in the assumptions that make these narratives make sense, and the extent to which such myths might serve to perpetuate the misunderstandings they attempt to explain.

But besides this interest, why do I research? What is the motivation, and what do I consider to be the benefits of the project, to whom and within what sense of 'benefit'? What do I consider to be the knowledge that will be acquired, and within what interpretative framework will I present such discoveries? How is this research constructed and constructing? Who does it give voice to and who does it leave silent? How does the research write the world, how is it value-laden, and discursive? What claim will I make for narrative authority and with what justification? How will those involved or implicated in this project be empowered or disempowered?

These questions can themselves only be asked reflexively. In other words, why these questions, and what function do the answers have? They are informed by and made necessary as a starting point by an approach to research that takes ideas from theories of the postmodern. Chapter three will establish the motivation for a discursive, reflexive and openly textual approach to research which resists the claims to universals and objectivity of positivism. As a 'beginning', what is needed here is simply a story.

I have been a teacher and worked for an exam board and then become a teacher again and now, at the point of submission I have been appointed as a 'teacher educator'. This moving from insides and outsides of boundaries between institutions and professional positions is an interesting journey to have made. My subject is Media Studies, a derided (see Barker, 1997) and

scapegoated 'discipline'[2]. Students are asked to use theoretical techniques to

analyse texts which operate within the domain of popular culture, such as

television, popular music, film, advertising, radio and the internet. I am using

boundaries between texts and ways of learning under erasure (see Derrida,

1976)[3]. They acquire a body of knowledge about media institutions, learn to

debate 'issues' within a broadly sociological approach, and they learn to

produce media texts and understand how media producers work, what their

commercial imperatives are and how 'the media' construct meaning in a socio-

political nexus.

Or at least these are the intentions or the claims of teachers and those who

shape specifications and assessment models[4].   I have become interested in

the relationship between contact with texts for pleasure and formal learning

about texts and the influence of approaches borrowed from English Literature

on this. I have decided that a close textual reading of the subject's 'official'

documents would be interesting and that there is a need to critique the

assumptions evident in the distinction between academic and vocational

versions of it. I am interested in the various discourses at work in assessing

media learning and the ways in which examiners and moderators are written

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2 The variety of discourses of derision and scepticism are discussed later in this thesis,
informed by Martin Barker's analysis.
3 Derrida uses this term to describe the necessity of using words and phrases without
alternatives, despite awareness of the internal contradictions of such language – in his work he
expresses this dilemma by placing a cross (x) over such words in the text.
4 These 'key players' are those that form committees for both awarding bodies such as OCR,
and the regulatory body QCA. They tend to be experienced teachers who have been in the
past, or are at present senior examiners. In addition, representatives of organisations such as
Skillset and the BFI are often members of such committees. Interestingly, due to the current
organisation of assessment work in the UK, it tends to be the case that the more input a person

and situated by cultural and political locations[5]. And it was convenient for me in my work for the OCR exam board to investigate these issues through a case study scrutiny of the social meanings of Curriculum 2000, representing as it does a key moment in the genealogy of media learning[6].

Information about procedural workings of exam boards is in the public domain, governed as it is by a code of practice[7]. However, access to discursive evidence of examiners' practices is far more scarce. The reason why there is surprisingly little research into 'official' assessment is that exam boards are reluctant to allow scrutiny of anything more than their following of regulations. At the time of writing, exam boards and QCA are recovering from a year (2002) of unprecedented public condemnation of their activities, now described as the 'A Level Fiasco'. In addition, there is great public doubt over the validity of the A Level qualification in the face of competition from the International Baccalaureate and the recent interim report of the Tomlinson working party offers a model for a 14-19 diploma model for the future. But within the domain of the awarding body, the fundamentals, from why grading is considered essential to how specific scripts are marked is taken as a given. Little reflexive activity takes place in such institutions. In this context the access afforded me

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has to curriculum development at this institutional level, the less contact with students she has time for, so many of these 'players' are freelance consultants or retired.

5 Examiners mark exam papers, moderators check the internal coursework marking of teachers.

6 Curriculum 2000 is the label for the introduction of a 'two tier' system for A Levels, featuring an AS qualification gained at the end of the first year, and the opportunity to sit exams and submit coursework in both January and June for all except synoptic units. This change encourages breadth at AS, as it is possible for students to sit up to five AS qualifications and then choose three to progress to full A Level. It also allows for combining AS levels with AVCE qualifications (though the evidence suggests this does not happen in more 'traditional' establishments).

to evidence (albeit evidence collected during the normal course of my duties) is rare. In turn the scarcity of such information or access, and the significant lack of existing research into assessment carried out by exam boards, other than their own introspective research, forms one of the major elements of my project in terms of its 'contribution'.

But what informs these 'interests' of mine?   This can be answered partly by autobiography as above, but there must be a dialogue with a reflexive account of the discourses within which such motivation is formed. In particular, my movement between 'inside' and 'outside' of institutional boundaries, as teacher, writer, researcher, subject officer, examiner and manager, must inform at all times the discourses I am to adopt and at the same time investigate.

The confidence to explore such areas is formed by contact with writings by Apple Bourdieu, Bowles, and Gintis and others who have put into circulation the idea that education is immersed in power relations of various kinds and that the curriculum has both visible and a hidden dimensions. My contact with these texts comes as a result of discussions with my supervisor, himself a researcher whose work on English teaching informs my 'position' on Media Studies to a great extent[8]. He and I share an interest in the work of Foucault, whose interests in power and discipline seem to 'fit' with some of my own concerns about media education and its potential to intervene in learners' understandings of the world by invading the personal domain, as opposed to the clearly

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7 Published each year by QCA.

demarcated territory of the school. My own use of Lyotard's ideas, used in my

Masters Degree dissertation (McDougall, 1994) seem now to appear relevant to

both a postmodern research approach and a close study of educational texts

(and indeed the very idea of assessment), and the kinds of knowledge now

granted performative credibility. Alongside this I have turned to the work of

Derrida in order to adopt a very specific type of approach for such close

reading.

The literature review that comes later is in itself a statement about intention and

interpretation, a tapestry of selected highlights by way of a critique. For now it is

important to summarise the relationship between such selection and the

motivation to research. I must also be honest about the fact that a significant

part of my motivation comes from a feeling, a suspicion or a sense that media

teaching and learning is not quite what it claims to be. This feeling has led me to

analyse the writing about media education and its political potential, to re-

examine such reflexive work with an agenda, to scrutinise it from a position.

This is accompanied by a similar sense, impression or idea gained from

observing examiners' meetings, that there are agendas at work, discourses at

play that might be usefully articulated by investigation[9].

My background as a Media teacher and for a period as a Subject Officer for

OCR means that I am always-already at once inside and outside of the subject

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8 Dr Nick Peim, Lecturer in Education, University of Birmingham, who was also my PGCE in-
centre tutor at Beauchamp Community College in Oadby, Leicester.

and the institution during this project. This may make a deconstruction of these boundaries less or more meaningful. But at all times my interpretation of the world is written by my belonging to belief-games that insist that education should be empowering and that empowerment involves reflection and self-knowing, that assessment is a problem in so much as it serves to brand and divide, that there is a mismatch between the good intentions of teaching and the classification of assessment, and that postmodern ideas about teaching, assessment and research offer fruitful ways of thinking about learning and culture[10].

This autobiography (in itself a kind of writing informed by a set of conventions which remove it from 'authenticity', itself an idea derived from a particular way of thinking about the self and writing) must be read in the context of an 'archaeology' (using Foucault's method of asking questions about history) of schooling and the wider educational world. Kendall and Wickham (1999) identified a set of tasks for the archaeological researcher to work through when researching aspects of schooling. For my purposes, again through selection for my 'needs' rather than any 'natural' summarising process, the following are important aspects of such an archaeology.

It will be useful throughout this project to scrutinise the relations between the sayable and the visible, between statements about curriculum, management, teaching and learning and the physical context of school buildings and the

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9 Formal standardisation meeting, at which examiners are compelled to arrive at a consensus about exam scripts and coursework, and then use these examples as 'benchmarks' for their further assessment work.

timetable, classroom dynamics and other features of the learning context. In this sense words and things exist in a mutually conditioning relationship for learners. Into this arena there are delivered a range of statements from external authorities such as governors, the government and crucially for this project, awarding bodies. The ordering of these statements is important, as is the selection of some statements for repeated use at the expense of other less performative statements, for example statements about results and performance and 'value', as opposed to statements about happiness and creativity. In this environment, a variety of subject positions are taken up, those linked to 'factual' status such as teacher, student, Head of Department, quality manager, personal tutor, examiner, parent and governor, each of which carries a set of acts or expectations of conduct and priority, alongside more judgmental subject positions such as 'good teacher', 'lingering doubt examiner, 'competent student' or 'A grade student'[11]. Within the domains of the school and the family, for exam results and league tables, children are raw material in this sense. Institutions such as the school and the exam board define the limits of discursive activity through the acquisition of authority. The relationship between visible authority – the school and the exam hall – and forms of specification, the vocabularies at work in educational contexts and in educational psychology, is a dynamic that should be considered at the heart of questions about learning. In terms of the autobiographical intention of this opening, it shouldn't be assumed that I exist in any sense outside of these relations.

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10 Media teachers are often in danger of over-stating an 'emancipatory' discourse, as is discussed at length in the 'study' chapter of this thesis.

I hope that this autobiographical 'preamble' might linger in the mind and resurface at moments when the reader experiences the tension between the need to work out what this research is 'saying' or what is being proved either way, and an intention to write in such a way as to resist such claims. Given, though, that this thesis has a status as a text produced by a writer with a will to be judged, to gain a qualification, as opposed to a piece of writing 'for its own sake' (if such a free floating text outside of context can be imagined), this tension will be all the more inevitable and pronounced as we move from chapter to chapter towards the illusion of a linear journey and a destination of sorts.

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11 'Lingering doubt' is a term used by OCR to describe an examiner who is neither harsh nor lenient, but inconsistent - the one trait that cannot be rectified mathematically by the application of a 'scaling'.

QUESTIONS

If we wish to discover the truth about an educational system, we must look into its assessment procedures. What student qualities and achievements are valued and rewarded by the system? How are its purposes and intentions realised? To what extents are the hopes and ideals, aims and objectives professed by the system ever truly perceived, valued and striven for by those who make their way within it? The spirit and style of student assessment defines the de facto curriculum. (Rowntree, 1977, p9)

Rowntree's assertions above rely on some assumptions which are in need of discussion. What kind of 'truth' is there to be discovered about an educational system, whose truth is it and to what extent is it a technology for the maintenance of power relations? What is the 'system', and in what ways can it have values, and how does it reward? And in what sense can assessment have a 'spirit'?

The questions asked by this thesis are,

1. What are the competing ideas in circulation about the 'ideal subject' of Subject Media and the assessment of its learners?

2. What are the phenomenological positions of differently situated statements about Media learning and assessment?

3. How can representative discursive data from teachers and examiners be understood to speak to the cotemporary condition of the subject?

4. How is the professional identity of Media teachers and examiners constructed within determining institutional factors, or coordinates?

5. How are statements about Subject Media and its assessment linguistically coded?

In order to understand the implications of assessment further, it is revealing to explore such truth and spirit with regard to an academic subject which exists at

the very centre of debates about academic / vocational learning, tradition and change, learning and legitimacy, Media Studies. The social context in which this study takes place can best be understood through consideration of the status of Media Studies as a subject leading to formal qualifications in the UK, with a large and increasing take-up of students, particularly at A Level and in higher education in the early twenty-first century, and the concerns demonstrated by politicians, members of the public, employers, parents and academics (including teachers) about the legitimacy of such a discipline.

It will be useful to take some examples of such concerns. John Major, when Prime Minister, made a speech at a Conservative party conference during which he expressed outrage at the inclusion of a hamburger advertisement for analysis in a GCSE English examination. Appealing to the right of centre audience, during his 'back to basics' campaign period, he assured the conference that the flow of such activity would be stemmed with the line '*there will be no GCSE in Eldorado*' (referencing the infamous BBC soap opera since withdrawn from the screen). In The Guardian newspaper (interestingly one of the most vehement and frequent deriders of Media Studies), Jonathon Margolis included the subject as number 29 in the paper's 'Hall of Infamy' series, asserting that,

> Pseudo-science is menace enough to growing minds, but pseudo-social science is something new is the pantheon of puffed-up nonsense masquerading as academic discipline. An appreciation of what's good and bad on the telly and in the print media should be a spin-off of real academic disciplines, not a subject on its own account. Understanding the (fairly obvious) concept that you can't believe everything you read in the papers or see on TV is partly a matter of politics, partly literature and partly sociology. Teach those to the most basic level and you've got automatic 'media studies' without even knowing it. To study the media in isolation, however, is like taking a degree in punctuation instead of English lit, a diploma in socks rather than a degree in fashion.

Such an attack is fairly common in all the broadsheet newspapers (interestingly

less

so in the tabloids / redtops). Lucy Hodges' article '*A degree in futility*' in *The*

Times quotes Professor Alan Smithers from Brunel University who conducted

research into the rise of Media graduates, as saying '*I can see why reading*

Shakespeare provides illumination. I don't see how engaging with Coronation

Street is doing the same thing.'

And in *The Independent on Sunday*, Nick Cohen turned to the author of 'The

Uses of Literacy', Richard Hoggart, himself an advocate of the study of popular

culture who is apparently concerned with the way that Media students have

inherited his legacy,

> Like many parents, he (Hoggart) is disappointed by the way his children have turned
> out. The section on Media Studies in his new book, The Way We Live Now, complains
> about the 'moral cretins' who are frightened of making moral judgements. 'I never
> suggested that the ephemeral and the serious were of equal worth', he said last week.
> 'Too many people in Media Studies are simply fascinated by the media, especially TV.
> All the questions of what it is in aid of seem to evade them. There is a terrible silence'.

Martin Barker (BFI conference paper, 2000) situates these statements into a

framework of 'semantic patterning' – a range of discourses which have various

thrusts (cultural critique, intellectual snobbery, anti-intellectualism, an

employers' critique and the conservative critique), but which all overlap at the

point at which they assume a lack of thinking, of critique, judgement and

intelligence on the part of students, and a 'trendy' irresponsibility on the part of

the teachers. Indeed several articles use mis-spellings such as 'meedja' to

suggest dialect or non-standard English. Barker draws attention to the fact that

he offered evidence to the government from extensive research carried out into

censorship and effects, but this was rejected once his status as a lecturer of

Media Studies was 'outed' to the culture secretary. Barker conducted research into the attacks on the subject in the broadsheet press and found that in 2000, *The Guardian* was the leading attacker, followed by *The Independent*, showing that the liberal press situated themselves the furthest from the subject. In the main, the news articles were about employability of graduates, whilst features were about academic quality. Barker makes various suggestions about how we can understand these attacks – most journalists do not have Media qualifications so there may be some defensiveness about their positions in the context of thousands of graduates with Media degrees, in addition a Leavisite tradition of cultural value has been retained by those in dominant positions despite the broadening of the curriculum to incorporate the study of popular culture. This latter point is evidenced by the amount of times the subject is attacked not for its content (eg soap opera) but for the failure of students to judge the relative value of popular culture.

David Buckingham's 2002 review of Media education included a report on a global survey of media education which found that the UK was a sole provider of a coherent Media Studies curriculum, which may in itself explain the response of concern / outrage outlined above (it's international isolation serves to demonstrate its status as symptomatic of a British cultural decline). At the same time Buckingham suggests that the recent shift in educational policy towards an assessment driven delivery model has undermined the attempts of teachers to generate media literacy outside of the formal curriculum through cross-curricular initiatives. This problem also serves to increase the status of Media Studies as an 'unconnected' practice. However, Buckingham shares

Barker's view that the discourses mobilised by the Guardian and other sources

of derision are really about a more embracing anxiety,

> Media Studies seems to have become a byword for trendy triviality. It is an easy target for critics of 'dumbing down', both on the political right (such as Chris Woodhead or Melanie Phillips) and on the liberal left (such as Polly Toynbee and Richard Hoggart). Government ministers, among them David Blunkett, have also joined the chorus of complaint. Like media violence, Media Studies serves as a convenient 'bad object' on which critics of all persuasions can displace their broader fears about cultural and intellectual decline. (2002, p16)

It is in this context of popularity but derision that this project will investigate the

claims to the possibility of empowerment of Media Studies as a discipline at A

Level, through a study of the AS qualification in 2000, at the launch of the

government's initiative Curriculum 2000, with particular attention to practices

and discourses of assessment as evident in the application of 'standards' to

OCR's new AS units in January of that year.

It is very important to state at the outset that this research looks purely at Media

Studies qualifications designed for the 16-19 post-compulsory cohort. It is not

within the intentions of this thesis to examine either GCSE Media Studies or

Media in English GCSE, nor to claim that the work is applicable to Higher

Education courses in Media.

This research (located within and across fields such as sociology, critical theory

and education) investigates the relationship between the assessment of media

learning and theories of cultural reproduction at a particular time in the

genealogy of Media Studies (the introduction of redesigned qualifications

intended for the 16-19 sector in 2000). It explores the most significant sector for

Media Studies presently, qualifications designed for further education, analysing

the academic and vocational versions of the subject offered (A Level and

AVCE) and deconstructing in more detail the assessment of students for the

OCR AS Level in January 2001. There have been many research initiatives

examining Media Studies teaching practices and the experiences of learners

(Buckingham, 2003), but previous studies have not investigated specifically the

effects of particular specifications and assessment materials, and this project

covers new territory by attempting to identify the various agendas and

discourses operating within such institutional devices[12].

Assumptions based on previous research into the teaching of Media Studies

include,

- Media Studies is taught in different ways by teachers with different

  backgrounds;

- It is influenced by other traditions in that it can be moulded to fit a number of

  approaches;

- There are a number of contradictory views on the role of practical work, the

  place of the text and the importance of teaching about institution, audience

  and technology;

- There is an urgent need for formal teacher training for new practitioners, and

  many institutions are under-resourced.

Assumptions based on existing research into Media pedagogy and its role in

curriculum and relationship with other subjects and the wider society include,

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12 David Buckingham is the most published provider of a contemporary overview of classroom-based research into media learning. There is now a Masters course run by the BFI which offers Media teachers a reflective space for such action research.

- Because of its 'intervention' into the realms of everyday pleasure and consumption (see Richards, 1990), Media Studies needs to be reflexive in practice and the dynamic of the formal study of popular texts should itself be an object of study[13];

- Media Studies operates under attack from a number of discourses of derision which present 'shared concerns' about cultural value, academic standards and vocational relevance (see Barker, 1997) [14];

- The formal introduction of moving image education as a requirement across the curriculum, and the formal separation of Media education across an academic and vocational divide have increased debate about the purpose and validity of Media Studies as an A Level subject existing alongside a vocational equivalent;

- The relationship between Media Studies, English and Film Studies can be understood as a continuum of shared approaches, dependant on the background of teachers and the institutional placing of departments[15];

- The conceptual framework described by Len Masterman in the 1980s is now assumed to be a 'given' for all media courses (see Masterman, 1985), but

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13 An analysis of the relationship between Media teaching and the everyday consumption and pleasure of young people has been provided by Chris Richards, in particular the notion of intervention, as Media Studies perhaps more than any other subject can be seen to 'extend' into the everyday.

14 Martin Barker's analysis of the attacks made in the broadsheet press identified four repetitive discourses at work in these critiques - these are founded on intellectual arguments, responses around cultural value, a suspicion of theory, a conservative response to popular culture and the employer's critique, all of which share a concern about the devaluing of academic work.

15 There has been for some time considerable 'overlap' between these disciplines, as there is a media element to GCSE English, and it is possible to 'double-study' certain topics for both Media and Film (for example British Cinema or certain genres). However, the priority given to one discipline over another is a determining factor in the experience of learners – for example a Media teacher delivering GCSE English may seek to introduce discussion of institutional factors in shaping news agendas, whilst an English teacher contributing to AS Film may feel more 'naturally inclined' to focus on auteurship.

there is increasing disagreement about the status of textual analysis whilst new technologies and convergence threaten to radically outdate this 'traditional' approach[16].

As a case study, this research examines the development of the redesigned qualifications for Curriculum 2000 by the awarding body OCR. It explores theoretical issues underlying institutional practice at three key points. Firstly the development of the new OCR specification for A Level Media. This document was produced to meet the criteria for accreditation purposes determined by the regulatory body QCA (whose responsibility is one of quality control over the exam boards, and whose criteria for qualifications is non-negotiable).   QCA are accountable to the DfEE. The accreditation criteria used by QCA to accredit the redesigned qualifications included very rigid requirements for the relationship between assessment objectives and individual unit content, with particular emphasis on a clear and visible difference between AS and A Level, much less opportunity for generic assessment and a greater need for fixed points in terms of what is studied and when. Secondly, decisions made by teachers about what to teach for options within the new OCR specifications (and what informs / influences these decisions). Thirdly, the first assessment sessions for units from these new qualifications, analysing the relationship between specification, assessment criteria and students' responses, with particular scrutiny of the act of interpretation and influences on examiners' responses to students' written

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16 Masterman's position on how Media Studies should be taught was published for teachers in the 1980s and became almost a 'manual', and his ideas about the subject and its purpose have most recently been manifested in a polemic against the BFI, which is discussed elsewhere in this thesis.

work and production coursework, aiming to identify and analyse particular assessment discourses at work.

For areas that demand the collection of data from teachers, a local sample of teachers in Birmingham are researched in the first academic year of 'delivery' of the new AS specifications. Data from which to investigate assessment decisions is collected from OCR's standardisation sessions in January 2001 for written papers and coursework moderation for the AS Level units, as these are the first decisions made for these qualifications about standards of response and as such they serve as 'benchmarks' for all further assessment.

This research explores the effects on learning of the relationship between various agents in the mediation of an academic discipline / subject. The key agent is the awarding body OCR (one of three examination boards in England, OCR is the result of a merger between the Oxford, Cambridge and RSA boards), who are regulated in all matters by the body QCA (who are accountable to the DFES) and who provide qualifications and assessment for schools and colleges. The three awarding bodies all offer 'traditional' academic qualifications and vocational subjects (the genealogy of such 'strands' is covered in detail in the case study), and are in competition to attract teachers to their specifications (previously called syllabuses). Thus these awarding bodies play a role in setting agendas for teaching and learning, but the greater power for 'framing' the demands, depth and range of courses for students resides with

QCA, who lay down criteria for the design of specifications and the assessment of outcomes[17].

Arguably, since the 1990s, education in Britain at school and FE levels has been increasingly shaped by a results-driven discourse articulated through expressions such as 'delivery' and 'progression'[18]. This has undoubtedly resulted in awarding bodies and government playing a more direct role than before in determining what is taught, and how it is taught. There are a number of historical shifts in thinking about learning that have contributed to such a landscape.

This project investigates these power relations, attempting to discover how for a relatively new and seemingly radical subject, Media Studies (the vocational version is labelled Media, Communication and Production, but Media Studies will be used as an umbrella term here) which is at something of a crossroads in terms of popularity and public acceptance, these layers of institutional influence effect teaching and learning. The outcomes of this investigation will be analysed through an approach which will be at least in part Foucauldian and also Baudrillardian. Which is to say that the ideas of these two 'thinkers' on power-knowledge, discourse and postmodern understandings of 'hyper-reality' provide an interesting context for discussing the genealogy and the current

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17 QCA – the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, a Government quango charged with overseeing the standards of English awarding body specifications and assessment processes.
18 This trend has developed in the post-industrial era increasingly as education has been privatised (FE colleges in particular, since incorporation, operate on business models) and institutions have come to understand themselves as 'providers'. Reform acts, the comprehensive concept, the equality discourse and the new rhetoric of marketplace delivery

'imposition' of a discourse which attempts to theorise and make formal young people's consumption of media texts. My literature review elaborates on the different distinct ideas of these two writers and extrapolates key themes by way of a fusion to meet the ends of this project.

Ian Hunter's work on mass schooling, the culture of the child and role of culture in and as governance is a useful example of an 'application' of Foucault's ideas about surveillance and self-regulation to education. In particular, Hunter's method is to examine specific moments in which new ways of thinking about culture and education come to be accepted. This project attempts a similar approach in that it traces ways of thinking about media as culture and understanding media which have come to be shared within the community of teachers, and, as a result of derision from the wider society, a resistance discourse has developed.

What is new about this study is its attempt to 'apply' such ideas about power, knowledge and reality to a very specific case study that examines discursive operations at an institutional level in the context of the claims made by a new subject to itself, in other words an attempt at a history of the present, to borrow from Foucault.

Curriculum 2000, QCA's umbrella term for the introduction of new specifications for A Level and GNVQ for first teaching September 2000) represents a key

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and specialisation can all be seen as contingent moments in the genealogy of this version of the educational encounter.

moment for Media Studies, bringing a new AS level (a new level of assessment between GCSE and full A Level as opposed to the previous model (OCR, 1997) which was a smaller amount of modules at full A Level standard) and the redesign of its academic and vocational versions (A Level converting from a linear structure into modules / units and GNVQ moving towards single-assessment units rather than units broken down into elements - see RSA, 1996). According to teachers using OCR's Media Studies website, and specifically its electronic mailing list to share concerns about these new qualifications, the major implications were as follows (from content analysis of message posted from September 2000 to April 2001) [19],

- Increased prescription of content for AS leading to questions about interpretation of such demands;

- Perceived lack of resources / body of knowledge for new units;

- Concern about content of units and 'motivational' issues;

- Confusion about assessment of new units (how will it work and how should the internal moderation be carried out?);

- Whether particular study areas, production briefs, case studies and/or texts are appropriate for new units;

- Debates over what production equipment is most suitable / financially viable for teaching the new AS?

As well as the immediate need for teachers to consider which new 'product' is most appropriate for their students, this imposition by government and awarding

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19 An email list set up by myself whilst at OCR, to allow Media teachers following the new

bodies additionally provides an opportunity for practitioners to think about the politics of 'Subject Media' (I am using this term to describe the official versions of the discipline at work in exam boards and the effect of this on teaching and learning, as Nick Peim has used the term 'Subject English' in his work - see Peim, 1993), in its institutional forms, such as specifications, question papers and mark schemes, assessment criteria for coursework, examiners' reports and exam board-generated 'support materials' (a form of teacher-training). The dissemination of these institutional artefacts may, indirectly and unintentionally, create a preferred, sanctioned range of approved approaches to teaching, which in the aforementioned climate of results and league tables, marginalise and make 'risky' alternative approaches. Alongside institutional determinism, a commercial agenda exists, as the increasingly mutual interests of exam boards and publishers, and for Media Studies the materials produced by organisations like the BFI and Film Education also serve to mobilise and maintain a range of 'sanctioned' texts and topics. The political implications of this range of 'support' will be questioned here[20].

Nick Peim has examined the relationship between English teaching, schooling and cultural reproduction and argued for a new approach that places greater emphasis on the social, cultural and institutional conditions of the subject. In doing so, he makes positive references to Media Studies as a discipline that

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specifications to enter into an electronic dialogue about particular units and topics.
20 The British film Institute and Film Education both provide resources and teacher-training for Media teachers, specifically on moving image, and most significantly Film education. There is concern amongst some that the agenda to over-emphasise film, and 'skew' teaching and learning towards resources produced around particular films (which may have a commercial implication), is most vehemently demonstrated by Masterman's recent outburst against the BFI.

appears to have more potential for a de-centred approach to learning about

culture and value. For example,

> One important function of English Literature has been to make a clear distinction between, for example, Madonna and itself….The case of Madonna, though, might provide an instance of an arguably complex and important cultural phenomenon…..Madonna may well constitute a text, or series of intertexts, worth attending to, worth looking at from a number of different perspectives, worth thinking about and exploring….A host of challenging and engaging possibilities could be constructed, dealing with texts and textual fields in a number of different ways.
> (Peim, 1993, p184)

Peim's suggestions for alternative approaches to the teaching of English are

informed by the importance of theory as the means by which to investigate texts

and the nature of meaning. This is achieved by using poststructuralist

approaches, deconstruction and elements of postmodernism to examine the

cultural conditions of texts and reading, as opposed to identifying centrally fixed

meanings and the status of texts and their authors. Examples of such

approaches as alternative methods for thinking about Literature include

examining the status of the author, of reading, response, meaning and creativity

in order to expose and question the beliefs and assumptions upheld by teachers

and students. A poststructuralist approach identifies the representational issues

at work in texts and their cultural reception, and examines the institutional

relationships between texts and readers, and the positioning of readers in

cultural contexts that change and differ. Poststructuralism and Postmodernism

are associated theoretical approaches, though the latter is often understood as

a situation or 'zeitgeist'. This investigation will use ideas from Foucault, one of

the thinkers cited by Peim as influential, and in particular his writing about

power, knowledge and social regulation (clearly significant for a study of

educational power relations) and Baudrillard, one of the most 'famous'

Postmodern theorists, whose ideas about the nature of reality in a media-saturated society will be a useful context for the deconstruction of Media Studies as a social practice.

It is necessary at this point to attempt definitions, or at least establish the versions of the above theoretical 'schools' that I shall be adopting. There are popular uses of terms such as deconstruction, postmodernism and hyper-reality and more complex uses of each. For the purpose of declaring intent, I shall describe briefly the use I am making within this thesis of each term.

Deconstruction

There is much deliberation given over to the distinctions between French and American versions of this activity, the latter deemed to be a popularised, 'multi-purpose' variant of the former, which is much harder to describe, operating as it does within an anti-descriptive impulse. In the main, the work of Jacques Derrida provides the most influential examples of deconstruction, and to read texts in a fashion such as can be found in *Of Grammatology* in particular, is to attempt to expose what 'escapes' from logocentric reason, from the assumptions of Western thinking. Derrida seeks to subvert meaning's hierarchies and binary oppositions, to destabilise the notion that writing is a tainted substitute for speech (which is presumed to be closer to original thought). Deconstructing texts requires us to find the points where writing resists the belief in origin and truth, where the margins of a text bring to light the endless difference and dissemination of meaning. In other words, we are

energised through deconstruction to read texts against the grain of their authoritative claims to truth.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism resists neat description, considered as it is by some to describe the present day in temporal terms, adopted as a school in architecture, art and design, analysed in media texts which use pastiche, mix-and-match image and reference, and described as a political and economic state of affairs in which culture and commerce are eclectic and territorial boundaries are redundant, leading to the increased power of multinational corporations and the increasingly secondary status of national state power. But for this project there are two important uses of the term. Firstly, I am working with Jean Francois Lyotard's suggestion that the status of and use of knowledge has shifted away from the emancipatory, consensus models he calls grand narratives. Whist his 'Postmodern Condition' is not simply a temporal phenomenon, since he reminds us that the modern is a part of the postmodern (in fact linear thinking about time and space is subverted in his work), he describes a 'state' of thinking 'after' the modern which resonates with an investigation into a teaching and learning such as this. Secondly, as my 'methodology' section will explain, I wish to pursue a research approach which resists the foundational and self-delusional problems of the positivist methodology, and to do so is best achieved by dialogue with approaches to research that are reflexive, autobiographical and structured around an interrogation of research itself. Such intentions are informed by

researchers who have suggested a postmodern approach to methodology, influenced by the work of Foucault, Derrida and Lyotard.

Hyper-Reality

My use of the concept of hyper-reality is more straightforward in so much as I am interested in considering the rationale of studying 'the media' and its 'influence' in the context of Jean Baudrillard's claims that the real is no longer separable from simulacrum, that our lives are so media-saturated that representation is no longer anything more than presentation, that objects rule subjects and that commodity fetishism is so endemic that the nature / culture distinction no longer holds. My interest lies in the possibility that Media Studies could be considered a reactionary attempt to fetishise the real by re-establishing its presence as truth obscured by media representation. In this sense Media Studies would be an example of what Baudrillard calls the hyper-real, an exaggerated celebration of the idea of lived experience in a world where such is no longer distinct from the screen, the ether or the games console, where all reality is virtual.

Whilst attacking textual authority in 'Subject English', Peim suggests the adoption of ideas about textuality drawn from Cultural Studies and Media Studies. The theoretical approaches used by both disciplines in a broad sense do offer a decentering impulse (or a deconstructive method whereby it is acknowledged and celebrated that the 'inside' of textual meaning is always-already linked to and determined by a chain of associations outside of the text,

resulting in the distinction between the inside and the outside of a text falling apart under scrutiny) and Peim's suggestion is valid in such terms. What is less certain is whether the version of Media Studies established and implemented in pre-Higher education syllabuses and assessment is as satisfactorily detached from textual authority (the political force of the canon and the imposition of cultural value on children as 'given') and the shackles of 'cultural appreciation' as may be assumed by those looking for a more progressive future for English.

Such a demand for 'appreciation' reduces the potential for students to consider what the act of reading might be (equally applicable to television viewing as to reading poetry - a student might more usefully consider how a particular group of viewers respond to an episode of *Eastenders* than learn about how it is constructed to create particular meanings - the negotiation of meaning being the more vital learning focus) and how cultural issues might influence the way we read, and increase the need for students to recognise the methods used by producers of texts and notions of fixed meanings for audiences (i.e. presumptions about 'the effect' on 'the audience')[21].

To a large extent, Peim is correct to identify a different contextual energy in Media learning. Students analysing *Big Brother* in Media Studies would investigate its packaging, institutional and commercial agendas and crucially its consumption (all extra-textual discussion) alongside a deconstruction of its conventions more so than would be likely in an analysis of a Nick Hornby novel

in English (which would still be largely concerned with the writing technique, rather than say the gendered audience). But the question that this study will pose is - does the assessment of media learning, as constructed and managed by awarding bodies and QCA, allow for the subject's 'progressive' nature?

It is useful here to look back (for something like an origin or at least a major influence) at the pioneering work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham in the 1970s and 80s. I have introduced this institution as 'pioneering', because if we are to believe in linear causality for a moment, there is a pervading view that the centre in some way acted as a vehicle for the 'Cultural Studies project', an interdisciplinary endeavour set up to approach the fusion of History, Philosophy, Sociology and Literary Studies. Its relevance to this work lies in its attacking of cultural boundary-making and the division of theory and practice.

As a short-cut to understanding the centre's importance in presenting ways of thinking out of which Media Studies would arise, Stuart Hall identifies four components of the initial break with traditional approaches to the study of communication (as described by Schulman, 1993). Firstly, Cultural Studies moved away from behaviourist stimulus-response approaches to media influence. Secondly, the notion that media texts are transparent bearers of meaning was rejected in favour of a semiotic approach (which at the time was a significant move away from the McLuhan's dominant 'medium is the message'

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21 Issues and debates around media effects on audiences are a staple of Media Studies courses, but ironically specification content for other parts of the subject often appear to treat

view). Thirdly, an active view of audience was taken, looking at varied decodings and the importance of political and social motivation. Fourthly, British Cultural Studies, as mobilised by the centre, broke with the notion of a monolithic mass culture and mass media.

So Stuart Hall's summary of the approaches taken by the centre outlines the break from thinking about the media as directly influencing readers, moving away from behaviourist thinking towards an ideological understanding, and away from notions of messages carried by texts and towards questions of structure, linguistics and semiotics. Crucially, the centre also moved towards an active view of audiences, and understanding that 'decodings' are various and unpredictable (Hall, 1980).

These approaches are clearly 'at one' with the conceptual framework adopted by Media Studies. The assessment objectives for the OCR AS Media Studies specification [*OCR, 2000*] include,

'*understand how meaning is constructed through the language of specific media forms by applying techniques of textual analysis*'

'*demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media institutions, production processes, technologies and audiences and apply this knowledge to issues concerning consumption and reception*'

'*show an understanding of how social groups are represented, and represent themselves, in the media, comparing messages, values and social signification in media texts*'

whilst the AVCE equivalent [*OCR, 2000*] demands that students,

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the audience response as homogenous.

'develop an understanding of the relationship between media products, their meanings, and their producers and audiences'

and crucially (and it may be illuminating that this is not explicitly stated in the A

Level criteria),

'evaluate their own experiences of media products and processes and to represent their ideas through practical engagement and demonstration, reflectively and creatively'.

All of these requirements, stated from the outset in OCR's Media specifications, appear to be more in tune with a deconstructive approach than Subject English has been able to be. However, I would argue now that a preferred academic discourse has been established, derived from a mixture of English and its approaches to texts (analysis of how meaning is created by techniques employed by the author or producers), Communication Studies and its models for ideology and influence (the text with its messages - hidden or overt - heading towards an audience through a channel) and Cultural Studies and its emphasis on the popular (investigating audiences and their uses of various cultural forms) , which may still be largely devoid of the kinds of critical theory that Peim refers to in his rethinking of English.

Media Studies tends to frame the study of texts in the understanding of concepts, a key reason for Peim's suggestions about its potential to be 'other' to English. But it is by no means clear how the application of theories about genre, narrative and representation are any more liberating (in the sense of facilitating a theoretical ability to understand the already-familiar) or do anything to make the conditions of the subject's possibility explicit (as opposed to the 'given'

nature of Literature as 'important' and the associated heritage discourse) if the assessment methods used to judge students' analyses require the assessor to make assumptions about the students' understanding that is beyond the evidence available.

My literature review section will expand on how 'subjects' emerge for reasons related to governance as well as / rather than culture and aesthetics. In particular, Ian Hunter, whose work on literary education draws on Foucault, is a major influence on Peim, traces the genealogy of literary education and finds that the use of literature in the classroom served the purpose of moral supervision and normative correction more than the emancipatory project of cultural enrichment.

Hunter (1988) argues that the same recommendations offered by David Stow as a playground supervision manual in 1850 can be read as a description of the role of the literary teacher, with her 'trust' and ability to offer correction. I will be asking whether the Media teacher, with her intention to empower learners with critical autonomy related to popular texts and everyday pleasure, is as distanced from Hunter's moral supervisor (the guard in Kafka's Law parable or Foucault's panopticon metaphor, both of which I will spend time on later) as she might claim.

Examiners and teachers may 'spot' and reward use of theory without the need to interrogate their own positions (about what 'theory' is for), so that students' ability to understand the way that texts 'use' genre and narrative disguises the failure to use the theory to examine their own responses to texts[22]. The theory becomes a redundant academic discourse that does nothing to encourage critical autonomy if this is the case. An example of this occurs when a candidate in an exam situation is able to articulate perfectly that *Seven* is an interesting text because it subverts Todorov's model of equilibrium/disruption by tricking the audience into the need for a satisfactory narrative closure which hinges on a profoundly unhappy ending, and that the film is an example of a sub-genre which may be called the 'Serial Killer' film, but has a noir-ish aesthetic in which to place the star casting. Here genre and narrative are seen as things which are used by film-makers to create fixed meanings. Without an intertextual approach, or an enquiry that involves the questioning of audience response, the text is taken as given as a thing which has effect, meaning and technique (in the same way as a work of literature may be treated in English).

In making decisions about texts, topics and assignments, in other words when being prescriptive (more necessary than before under the QCA criteria for Curriculum 2000), the subject teams appointed by awarding bodies such as OCR needed to consider the danger of establishing a canon for Media Studies. On the other hand, allowing teachers to choose texts from an open conceptual framework (e.g. the study of genre) may promote the reproduction of 'safe'

22 The 'study' chapter of this thesis analyses responses made by delegates at the June 2000 BFI conference to a workshop on assessment I held.

choices which may become in time a kind of canon, not of 'great texts' but of 'concept-friendly' texts, or resource-friendly texts (which in turn presents an opportunity for media industry to use media education as a form of marketing). There is a need for discussion about what resources are and why they are needed, what status they have.

The result of this may be that the conceptual framework (essentially genre, narrative and representation, because audience is largely ignored in A Level and treated in commercial terms mostly in AVCE) is not used to investigate the nature of readers' responses to texts and issues around cultural categories and meaning as much as to simply identify how 'authors' use genre, representation and narrative as techniques.

Here I will examine the content of the new A Level and AVCE Media specifications and explore the relationship between concept, theory, text and skill in each case, and investigate how units are interpreted and mediated by teachers. The larger question at stake here is, ***what is the relationship between 'Subject Media' and the experience of media learners?*** This is fundamentally a question about the critical foundations of Media Studies, its energy coming from the radical agenda of those who have wished to apply rigorous and serious critique to popular texts, such as Stuart Hall. The question that will be asked here is whether the methods of analysis betray such an impulse, derived as they are from academic models which carry within them their own judgmental assumptions.

Media education is practised under attack from a discourse of derision which is itself a product of an 'umbrella' set of statements about rigour and tradition. Andrew Goodwyn's pilot project (*1995*) researching senior school managers' attitudes towards media education demonstrates the contradictions inherent in its delivery. Whilst the majority of those interviewed were supportive towards the development of media learning and subscribed to the view that studying the media is important for contemporary citizenship, their own views towards media texts and their own consumption habits revealed conservative notions of value and influence. Understanding the negotiation of meaning and representation was seen as less important than proficiency in the use of technologies, skills with immediate marketplace value.

The choice of texts and topics where this is open to teachers (rather than 'set' by the board) may be informed by the fact that there are few A Level Media teachers who are not English specialists, and in adopting the new subject matter they may not engage as much with the difference in approach (see Buckingham in Alvarado,1992 for a summary of this difference). By researching the texts and topics chosen by teachers for the new A Level (choices of production briefs, topics for the study of representation and case study choices for the study of audience and institution), the reasons for the choices made and the implications of them for the subject as an alternative to English are explored. Here the impetus is to discover not only what is chosen but more significantly the reasons for the choices, which may be to do with notions of

what will suit particular student groups (which may involve unfounded assumptions or reveal particular demographic issues), or teacher preference (which may be informed by various different things including resources). What difference does it make to the media learner which institution they attend, and as 'consumers', should they be aware of any key factors in this decision-making process at the point of enrolment? Should the discourses underpinning such decisions be explicit as objects of study?

The vocational version of Media Studies, the AVCE, may be used by teachers in a fundamentally different way, simply because of the 'framing' of the vocational label. Practitioners often see 'theory' differently to A Level teachers, a theory more concerned with craft skills or reasons why industry professionals do things in certain ways. A Level and AVCE students might both investigate the decisions made by journalists under the heading '*News Values'*, but the latter may be less concerned with cultural reasons for the importance of celebrity and more interested in legal issues for journalists. This research investigates notions of theory and practice held by teachers of both qualifications, and investigate where they come from; whose interests they serve and what effects they might have on students.

Here the emphasis shifts away from the influence of the exam board towards the mediating gatekeeping role played by teachers, another layer of power over the learner's experience of a subject. Again, what difference is made to the learner by the philosophy adhered to by the teacher, and do such views about

approach or practice ever have a reductive influence on the ability of a subject to be empowering?

Bernstein's work on cultural reproduction and pedagogic discourse (1996), which will be explored in detail later, can be applied to the current delivery of media education coherently, as demonstrated in Elliot's analysis of the theory-practice discourses in higher education. Elliot (2000) explores the divide between courses which aim to teach media theories and practices in order to prepare students for work in media industries, and those which aim to develop a 'critical disposition' to the media. Elliot's intention is to show how such a clear distinction between the practical and the theoretical is false, as practical learning can engender critical autonomy equally through the development of critical producers. The problem is that the courses designed to equip users with vocational skills are less likely to lead to employment than theoretical courses, due to the former being endowed with more cultural capital. This is due in part to the attitudes of media employers towards education, and is reinforced by 'academic commentators' such as Chris Woodhead[23]. I am referring here to Chris Woodhead's public condemnation of Media Studies as a discipline failing to prepare its students for work in media industries at the same time as lacking a meaningful subject matter, in February 2000, which included an article in the London Evening Standard and an interview on BBC Radio 4. This project

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23 Chris Woodhead was the Chief Inspector for OFSTED, and after resigning from this post he has been a columnist for the Telegraph. He has long been a critic of Media Studies, both for its lack of academic value in his eyes, and also for its failure (in his view, though the statistics indicate otherwise) to prepare graduates for a career in the field. The Evening Standard article and Today Programme interview were examples of his articulation of these views.

examines the plausibility of these academic and vocational discourses in media education.

Martin Barker concluded from research into attacks made in the press on Media Studies that articles (mainly in the broadsheet press and most frequently in The Guardian) can usually be seen to be articulated from or contain elements from several of five dominant discourses of critique. These are the *intellectual* critique, the *cultured* critique, the *anti-intellectual* critique, the *conservative* critique and the *employers* critique (Barker, 2000). The meeting point for all of these critiques, which separately reinforce notions of cultural value, the importance or the futility of theory, academic rigour and substance and vocationalism, is the agreement that there is a 'dumbing down' of education inherent in the attention paid in particular to television, popular music and Hollywood cinema in the classroom.

Barker's scrutiny of these attacks concentrated in particular on the language used, and suggested that the tone taken by writers often assumed that the authors could speak as 'genuine intellectuals', judging the spurious claims of Media teachers, the validity of practitioners always attacked in a well-crafted prose style. The other shared assertion, reflected in articles emerging from all of the five discourses of derision, is that Media Studies reflects in some way a 'bigger' or' deeper' societal problem, or crisis,

> Media Studies is an outgrowth of the 'relevance' boom. When English teachers discovered that children (and possibly they too) preferred talking about last night's telly to more routine subjects, and that less academic children became motivated by something they could 'relate' to, it was perhaps inevitable that we would soon have a whole new subject, however limp and self-evident, on our hands. Media Studies soon

rose to its current status as the great cop-out subject from early teenage onwards for kids and teachers (alarmingly, often media wannabees themselves) who want to spend all the time, not just rainy end-of-term days, bathing in glorious relevance and holding animated discussions on Eastenders.   (Margolis, 1996).

This quotation from Jonathon Margolis's article (for the *Hall of Infamy* series) reveals statements from the discourses identified by Barker - the use of inverted commas for 'relevance', the disparaging comment that English teachers might be interested in television, the use of the word *telly*, the unsupported claim that Media Studies arose out of an attempt to support less academic children (and all of the assumptions about what it is to be academic of course), the words *limp* (as in insubstantial, weak, lacking structure and strength) and *self-evident* (as the material for study is accessible, the outcome of the study is already-obvious, there is nothing 'deeper' to pursue). The idea that the subject is on *our* hands, causing us a collective problem, a shared exasperation that it has come to this. Then of course the more deliberately provocative 'cop out' statement and the use of the word *wannabees* to imply that those that can't teach, adopting the employers' discourse. And finally the reference to rainy end of term days, which the readers will recognise as the time when children do something that is fun but not *real* learning.

It should be remembered throughout this investigation that this is the context in which the subject is taught and assessed. Teachers and examiners who participate in the research are taking a variety of positions not only in relation to their own practice, background and media consumption, but also their feelings about such derisory views. This relates to broader questions about Media education and cultural reproduction, which are informed by Peim's assertion that it is important

to theorise the relations of cultural practices in teaching to cultural practices of learners. As Media Studies clearly intervenes more than English in the everyday cultural practice of learners, who experience the unfamiliar sensation of studying texts they use for enjoyment in the classroom under 'theoretical'; conditions (for example discussing in a 'serious' way the representational issues at stake in *Ali G*'s comedy or gender issues and *Loaded* magazine), it is important that this relationship between learning and pleasure is understood by teachers.

The work of Pete Fraser (1990) on teaching television and Chris Richards (1990) on 'intervention' are both examples of research into this area. Researching teachers and students' attitudes to television, and the ways in which these are articulated publicly by each group under different conditions, Fraser suggested that the instability of adult power and traditional notions of 'reading' are at stake when teachers and students work together on the analysis of television, and suggested that the discourses underlying publicly made statements about television, taste and judgement should be overtly studied in a more questioning and self-reflexive way.

Fraser found that discussions about television between teachers could be categorised by the interplay between three main discourses, the Anti-TV discourse (with right wing, left wing and liberal versions), arguments about quality and concerns about hedonism. He also found that students, when talking about television with teachers, often felt the need to distance themselves

from television, or to adopt the same discourses and ultimately present their pleasures as manifestations of their 'child-selves' as opposed to 'adult-selves'. Thus it became apparent to Fraser that power-relations determine discussions about texts, there is never a neutral space in which the Media teacher can discuss TV with the Media student. But rather than worry about the effect of this on curriculum, he concluded that both students and teachers should be able to,

> identify and question the underlying and often unstated assumptions which inform their own judgements about television and one potential way of doing this would be to make these discourses themselves an object of study in media education.
> (Fraser, 1990).

Richards highlighted the 'troublesome' nature of such intervention, compared to other subjects, as the personal domain of learners is invaded by the curriculum. The nature of Media Studies and its 'sensitivity' makes it fruitful to examine the relationship between assessment, learning and pleasure as implemented by the new qualifications, in order to understand the possibility that Media education may be more regulatory even than English, given that it seeks to channel and sanction through particular language young peoples' understanding of their own pleasures. If Foucault's metaphor of the panopticon (see Rabinov, 1984) serves to illustrate the move to a society hinged on self-regulation of the subject, it is clear that this metaphor can serve us well in dialogue with the work on Bourdieu (1990), Apple (1990), Bowles and Gintis (1976) et al on the school as a preparatory device for work, and the need for the subject to learn self-controlling behaviour, accept hierarchy and alienation and not question its lack of power (these things being more important to the schooling process than the distribution of qualifications). But it is also possible, less predictably perhaps to

see Media Studies as a product of panopticism, if, as Fraser found, it acts, willingly or not to regulate learners' articulation of their pleasures.

Furthermore, if we are to theorise the relationship between the contemporary media and what David Morley (2000) has called a 'suburban medium', then what does the discussion of television in the classroom circulate in terms of negotiated readings.

We can see here the possibility of a highly deconstructive or conservative approach, presumably depending on the preferences of teachers and the readings of students.

For example, Morley argues that our 'ontological security' is reinforced by the 24-hour presence of news television, and by the heavily normative and suburban narratives of sitcoms in particular. Morley, drawing on Foucault, suggests that suburban life (as represented as a norm in sitcoms), combined with the distribution of subjects in space through suburbanisation and the emergence of CCTV as a means of identifying outsiders through surveillance offer an example of television in the home reinforcing the distribution of subjectivity in physical urban planning, which he describes as

> the tendency for patterns of physically entrenched withdrawal and social separation to be replicated in the realm of virtual media spaces (2000, p137).

If students were to consider, whilst studying the OCR AS unit of gender and sitcom, this notion of 'tranquilising' genres, then presumably a theoretical consideration of such a claim could be very easily mobilised in the classroom (as long as the power dynamics investigated by Fraser were considered as a context). However, if the outcome is to learn how sitcoms function in terms of their construction, then one could argue cynically that there is a further

anaesthetising effect of such activity. When one considers the levels of

hierarchy experienced by the media learner throughout the 'intervention'

discussed by Fraser and Richards, we can see that government, exam board,

examiner and teacher are all influential in this regulation of the everyday. What

is crucial in influence, arguably more for Media Studies than any other subject,

is the extent to which the cultural position, values and experiences of the

examiner and teacher serve to impose ideas about cultural value and meaning.

The impossibility of neutrality must have implications for assessment in

particular as it is currently organised (its 'spirit' and 'values,' to return to the

Rowntree quote I began with on page 4).

During the 1990s, a spate of work was produced which attempted to theorise

Media Studies, most prominently coming from David Buckingham at the

Institute of Education (see Buckingham, 1993), Len Masterman at Nottingham

University (see Masterman, 1994) and Cary Bazalgette at the British Film

Institute (see Bazalgette, 1992). There were some central recurring themes /

claims in these books and articles, which can broadly be summarised by five

viewpoints (which is not to say that each view is shared by all three authors or

that these viewpoints do not contrast),

1. *Media education is more political than other subjects because it deals with
   the everyday cultural consumption of learners.*
2. *Media Studies is not a form of English but an alternative approach due to its
   delivery through concept before text..*

3. *Representation is the central concept for Media learning.*

4. *Media Studies should foster 'critical autonomy'.*

5. *The nature of media audiences and their responses to texts should be explored more.*

This research relates the analysis of the content of the new specifications, interpretation of them by teachers and the assessment of students' responses to these viewpoints, in order to gain some purchase on what they mean in practice as opposed to intention.

As we have seen, these statements can be located in the assessment objectives of the new OCR A/AS and AVCE specifications, as follows, which assert that learners will need to show they can,

Understand how meaning is constructed (statements 3 and 5).

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media institutions, production processes, technologies and audiences, and apply this knowledge to issues concerning consumption and reception (statements 2, 3 and 5).

Show an understanding of how social groups are represented, and represent themselves, in the media (statements 3 and 4)

Show understanding of concepts such as audience, genre, representation and form (statements 2, 3 and 5)

Apply skills in media analysis through appropriate use of media terminology,

awareness of representational issues, recognition of genre and understanding

of the principles of narrative structure (statements 2,3 and 5).

Statement 1 is not directly foregrounded in the wording or these objectives, and

indeed it is not overtly expected that learners will engage with a deconstruction

of their own consumption. Therefore the case study research will focus on this

issue to determine the extent to which teachers instigate such reflexivity on the

part of their students.

So this research starts from the premise that Media Studies appears on the

surface to be 'freer' from these problems than English and other disciplines

because of its foregrounding of theoretical concepts derived from Structuralism

(students using theories about narrative and applying semiotics to texts),

Marxism (16-19 Media Studies is still largely preoccupied by a view of ideology

which preceded postmodern thinking about audiences) and Feminism (gender

representation is one of the key areas of study on most A Level Media courses

and it is usually an issue for debate at least on vocational courses, though it

may be considered more as an issue for production – 'how not to offend' and

notions of gendered target audiences).

It explores the relationship between the formal curriculum (awarding bodies'

agendas for learning) and offers an expanded view of the hidden curriculum in

schooling that goes beyond Bowles and Gintis' definition. It may be that Media

Studies is proved on this evidence to be a genuinely progressive subject which does engender critical autonomy and a self-reflexive, postmodern approach to learning which allows students to understand how they are written as subjects. Or it may be that this research exposes some flaws in this thesis, and finds similar constraints operating to those outlined by Peim. These constraints, according to Peim can be removed by a re-evaluation of English not as a 'subject' but as a technology, and a questioning of its assessment criteria, the notions of language it maintains, ideas about literacy, its categories, values and positions. Peim's view is that all of these seemingly 'natural' positions serve to mobilise a particular version of learning about texts and meaning[24].

The relationship between thinking and doing is central for Media Studies, since the A Level includes production work which exists largely as a vehicle for the demonstration of theoretical understanding, which is assessed in the work itself and also through an accompanying written evaluation or log. The purpose of production work has been the matter of some argument since Media Studies became an A Level subject, with Masterman's early work suggesting strongly that students should use production to subvert existing conventions or offer radical ideological alternatives to mainstream texts. Other writers such as Fraser, Sefton-Green (1992), Grahame (1992) and Buckingham have attempted

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24 The word technology is chosen here, from Foucault's responses during interviews in which he talks at length about his notion of technologies, identity and conceptions of the self, which are formative in Peim's critique of English as a social practice and my own reading of 'Subject Media'.

to understand *creativity* in different ways, in particular highlighting the inevitable problems of assessing through interpretation[25].

There remains the danger that making assumptions from production work about the kinds of understanding of genres, conventions etc can lead to mistaken assumptions and large degrees of disagreement, especially as the assessors' own interpretation of the work is itself bound by cultural experience and consumption. Added to this is the preferred academic discourse which is imposed upon students' creativity, so that students become adept at playing certain educational / political games to fit the model required to achieve high grades, evaluating their work in a dubious and dishonest theoretical manner to please the assessor. The fact that the assessor is the ultimate audience for the work makes every production artefact hypothetical and makes awkward the assessment of its 'success'.

Two significant educational theories for this work are those of Cultural Reproduction and the Hidden Curriculum. The former is commonly associated with the work of Bourdieu and the latter with Apple, Bowles and Gintis.

For this project the two phrases are used more generally to approach the investigation of how Media Studies does or doesn't reproduce for society a set of dominant power-maintaining cultural values, despite appearances to the contrary, and how the institutional power expressed by OCR and QCA might be understood as another curriculum alongside the socio-political operations of the

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25 Later in this thesis there is a lengthy analysis of attempts by moderators to make collective senses of students' creative work.

school environment. So that the learner is faced with not only the immediate presence of peers, the school / college itself as a space organised to visibly express power and subordination, the teacher as disciplinarian and authority and the parent as conspirator with such authority, but also with an unseen but constantly threatening power of 'the examiner', increasingly understood as the enemy of even the teacher.

Bourdieu's central thesis is that power within education imposes meanings as legitimate by concealing the power relations behind them. The imposition of such seemingly obvious and neutral meanings is described as 'pedagogic authority'. This serves to reproduce a version of culture that maintains power relations and inequality through 'symbolic violence' . The way that teaching and assessment make failure inevitable is achieved through the imposition of a language that is more accessible for some than others, and in turn distributes academic and cultural capital unequally. The examination is the ultimate manifestation of the social definition of what knowledge is and should be, in other words the dominant power-knowledge discourse. This project investigates the decisions made and the mechanisms in place for assessment of media learning, and asks whether this subject which seems to operate from a deconstructive impulse is trapped by its assessment methods and the cultural positions of its practitioners.

The 'Hidden Curriculum' is a term now used to embrace a collection of different research and theories all related to the school as institution and the relationship

between the formal curriculum in schools and the day to day experience in classrooms of learners, usually arguing that pupils arrive in the classroom already equipped or lacking the tools and capital needed to succeed, and therefore problematising the relationship between the school and the wider society[26]. Functionalist work in this area has highlighted the social requirements of learning, and the way in which school imposes norms for adult life and this serves as a 'filter' for the workplace in a behavioural more than an academic sense. Neo-Marxist work has offered the 'correspondence thesis' whereby schools function to maintain the capitalist system through competition and hierarchy, and one's gender, ethnicity, sexuality and class determine the experience of education. Apple's thesis offers the view that schools produce rather than just distribute culture. Giroux et al (1989) researched forms of resistance in schools as forms of learning in themselves, and Willis (1979) argued that working class 'lads' who choose to reject the authority of the school system actually learn a great deal about their own relationship to power and social class structures. These writings have in common a perspective on the school as a sort of filtering device to be survived, with the formal curriculum and its assessments and certifications as of secondary importance to the learning of passive behaviour and the acceptance of powerlessness and inequality as the natural order of things.

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26 I am using this term to describe a range of ideas about education which seek to understand the 'illusory' nature of teaching and learning, and to investigate the importance of the sub-text at work in the school / college environment – specifically the transferring of social norms and behavioural expectations which are outside of the formal curriculum.

Bowles and Gintis suggested that the reason for liberal education reform's lack of radical results in terms of redistribution of cultural capital is that it has failed to address the fact that the reorganisation of schooling is impossible without reorganisation of economic life in general, as schooling will always serve to reproduce through the 'microcosm principle' the distribution of power in the wider political society. One conclusion from this is that the meritocracy at work in education is largely symbolic, results and standards obscure the importance of developing the 'correct' personality traits in individual success. Students' lack of control over curriculum content and assessment is described by Bowles and Gintis as the 'correspondence principle', addressing the individuals' corresponding lack of control over labour in capitalist society. The conclusion is that only socialist reorganisation of economic life can mobilise educational reform,

> 'The open conflict between the objectives of corporate employers and other privileged elites to use schools to perpetuate the capitalist system and its structure of wealth and power, and the needs of just about everyone else for a school system dedicated to greater equality and fuller human development has shattered much of the liberal educational ideology' (Bowles and Gintis,1976, p263)

The question for this investigation is whether a subject derived from a Marxist perspective on ideology and power can survive the 'educational encounter' to offer any form of empowering experience for learners, or whether the context of formal education, curriculum and assessment serves to regulate rather than liberate.

Bourdieu, however, asserts that the power of the school in comparison with other institutions which produce culture lies in its 'relative autonomy' and

insularity. Whilst this research is not primarily dealing with teaching and learning within the school, it explores the influence of the syllabus and its assessment on teaching and thus the ways in which a kind of learning is formalised and channelled by a series of power-holding agents, which make the teacher increasingly a 'deliverer' of an agenda imposed from above. In particular, by looking at the moments where teacher-choice is possible, it concentrates on the reasons behind choices made and the extent to which teachers 'play safe' when in this situation (and what influences such decision making).

Foucault's influence on the sociology of education hinges on the relationship between the subject and knowledge, and education as generator of discourse which constrains the possibility of thought which lies outside of its vocabulary. The examination / assessment above all can be seen to disseminate the social appropriation of discourse, through the seemingly neutral reproduction of 'correct' ideas as knowledge. Foucault identifies in various different contexts the systems of differentiation that bring power into play and the institutions that maintain such power. This project investigates the genealogy of myths about academic and vocational kinds of learning, identifies the interests that are served by such categories, whether they are valid and how learners come to understand themselves and their relationship with knowledge and theory according to particular teaching and assessment discourses. Assessment of any kind, according to Foucault, reveals the truth about subjects to themselves. Media learning is concerned with critical autonomy on the one hand and

vocationalism on the other, and the discourses behind such 'truth' in each case need to be questioned.

This project is not concerned with the efficiency or the reliability / accuracy of assessment. It will not 'expose' injustice at the level of grades awarded. Rather it follows Patricia Broadfoot's recent work (1996) in questioning what assessment is and what it is for. Broadfoot argues that existing research most often investigates the role of assessment in teacher-student interaction, the effect of labelling students according to target grades or previous results, and the strengths and weaknesses of particular assessment techniques, but what has been neglected is the purpose and effect of assessment itself, and the reasons for its determining influence on teaching itself, or the political reasoning behind the 'assessment tail wagging the curriculum dog'. Broadfoot asserts that assessment is as important at institutional and national levels as it is for individuals - the teacher assessed on student performance, the school in the marketplace selling itself to consumers, and the drive for improvements in 'national standards'. These criteria form an important backdrop for Curriculum 2000, and the changing relationships between student, teacher, examiner and government.

Broadfoot's influence on the current research resides in her understanding of assessment as a central feature of social life, and her demonstration that changes in assessment reflect changes in the priorities of society. What is usually unquestioned by learners, parents, teachers and politicians is the

continuing reliance on 'rational', technicist procedures to classify individuals in a

postmodern society increasingly lacking rational, centred, shared values.

Jean Baudrillard, the French philosopher associated in particular with

postmodernism, appears less frequently in sociological work on education, but

his ideas are essential for an analysis of education about the media in so much

as it encourages students to reflect on representation, with particular

importance in such areas as 'realism'.   According to Baudrillard, the state of

postmodernity is one in which any desire to gauge the representation, accurate

or otherwise, of an original state of reality, before representation, is invalid as

such a distinction between image and simulation no longer exists,

> The era of hyperreality now begins, what was projected, psychologically and mentally.
> What used to be lived out on earth as metaphor, as mental or metaphorical scene, is
> henceforth projected into reality, without any metaphor at all, into an absolute space
> which is also that of simulation. (1996, interview with Claude Thibaut)

What, then for Media Studies and its desire for students to deal with realism and

representation with ideology and power, with convention and construction?

It might be that a Baudrillardian analysis of Media Studies and its methods of

assessment reveals a technology for the perpetuation of myths about reality

and truth, which, again, would be a reverse of the claims and intentions made

for the discipline.

In short, such a consideration is at the heart of this project, which in summary

reviews literature on Media education which relates to the 16-19 curriculum, and

places this in the context of theories of the hidden curriculum, cultural

reproduction and studies which suggest that certain forms of education have

operated as technology for governance. OCR's A Level Media Studies and

AVCE Media for Curriculum 2000 are analysed in terms of the dynamics

between text, theory, skill and myths about academic and vocational learning.

The current content and methods of assessment are reviewed in the context of

a genealogy of Media Studies, through tracing content and assessment back

through syllabuses and other materials since the first versions from UCLES and

RSA (OCR is a body made up of Oxford, Cambridge - or UCLES - and RSA).

The interpretation of the specifications by teachers in Birmingham (where I live

and where OCR is based for Media Studies) is researched in order to explore

the tensions between formal curriculum / assessment and teacher delivery.

These areas are framed by questions about cultural reproduction and teachers'

own cultural judgements. The formal assessment of media learning is analysed,

in terms of who examiners are, what informs their decision making, and the act

of interpretation in assessment. This is an attempt at a phenomenology of

assessment.

Thus through textual analysis of the subject itself, exploration of teachers'

interpretations of it and analysis of its assessment, in the context of a

Foucauldian-Baudrillardian reading of the discipline, this project scrutinises

Subject Media as a social-political technology.

> Whoever has the power to determine the criteria against which assessments are made
> has the power to influence the priorities pursued by teachers, parents and pupils.
> (Broadfoot, 1996, p8)

This thesis is divided into three further sections, a literature review, methodology and a case study analysis of the OCR AS Media Studies qualification.

TEXTS

There are five areas that together might constitute a 'field' in which to position this project, though it must be stated that this form of labelling is my invention and serves the immediate purpose of this work only and is therefore informed by my interpretation and use / appropriation of the texts. Indeed the very concept of a 'field' is already imbued with a particular discourse that seeks to contextualise 'academic' writing in a manner informed by notions of closure. The areas from which literature has been of interest are as follows,

- Theories relating to cultural reproduction, and applications of such to educational research situations;

- Literature analysing the politics of media education and claims for the subject as alternative or other to mainstream curricula;

- Theories relating to the hidden curriculum and its effect on learners within the schooling environment, and applications of such to external institutional influences on learning, in particular the work of Bourdieu, Bowles and Gintis and Apple;

- Critical theory relating to discourse, power, knowledge, discipline, regulation and textuality - in particular the works of Foucault and Derrida, and Ian Hunter's 'application' of Foucault's work to the study of culture and education;

- Theories relating to postmodernity and its significance to education and to media - in particular the work of Lyotard and Baudrillard, and readings of such work by educational researchers such as Hartley, Usher, Scott and Edwards and others.

Literature specifically relating postmodernity to research activities have also clearly influenced this project, in particular the work of Usher and Edwards. This influence is outlined in the 'methodology' section of the thesis.

To begin with, I shall group together work that relates to cultural reproduction and ideas of the hidden curriculum. Then I shall create a dialogue between this 'field' and writings about media education, which in turn will inform the close reading of OCR's texts to follow. I shall then group together critical theory and postmodernist approaches to cultural texts and the study of. The outcome of this review will be a set of questions to ask of OCR's specifications and assessment, both in terms of textual 'intervention' and the practices of interpretation and classification.

Cultural Reproduction

Bourdieu's thesis is of the most immediate import when considering the social role of schooling. His argument is that the school transmits cultural power, confirming and sustaining the ideas and values of dominant groups (a broadly Marxist position, though Bourdieu would deny this, examining the school as an

Ideological State Apparatus[27]. Like Foucault, Bourdieu asserts that 'real' power

is that which masquerades as non-power by the invisibility of its relations with

the seemingly natural state of things. In this way 'pedagogic action' or 'symbolic

violence' are terms to describe the process of an arbitrary power imposing

arbitrary cultural 'realities' upon each generation through the school as a central

locale within a nexus of ideologically influential institutions. Bourdieu's

examination of education leads him to scrutinise moments where cultural capital

is unequally distributed and exchanged through the necessity of the individual

integrating herself into the school environment, learning the language of the

curriculum (which privileges one group over others) and speaking herself to the

assessor through appropriate and culturally useful methods of interpellation

(again, from Althusser) [28]. The teacher is immersed in a complex system of

signs and symbols that assert legitimation to the learner, her discourse, her

physical position in the classroom, her status and her authority to 'grade'. As it

is impossible to remove one's ability to acquire a language (in the first instance

the language of the country, often referred to as 'mothertongue' and then a

variant of that language, the 'preferred language' of the curriculum) from one's

position with regard to that language, the unequal distribution of educationally

profitable linguistic capital reflects the natural order of capitalist economy. The

school's many social functions, of discipline, classification and surveillance

serve to impose upon the individual a 'will for examination', a need to be

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27 Althusser's work on 'Ideological State Apparatuses' is one of his central themes, that the
ruling class maintain power more through the establishment of common-sense ways of
understanding the 'order of things' than through physical, civic power. In particular, Althusser's
theory of 'interpellation', through which the subject recognises herself through cultural
consumption, is useful in Media Studies for thinking about magazines and gender, for example.

assessed or increasingly to assess oneself (and indeed this is more and more a part of everyday working life in an increasingly performative world), allowing the examination to be the ultimate technology at the school's disposal for legitimation, for truth. The learner consumes the grading process and its subsequent implications as a service[29].

> The examination is not only the clearest expression of academic values, and of the educational system's implicit choices, in imposing as worthy of sanction a social definition of language and the way to show it, it provides one of the most efficacious tools for the enterprise of inculcating the dominant culture and the value of that culture. (Bourdieu, 1990, p142)

The technical function of producing qualifications and assessing 'candidates', both seen as necessary without question as a way of knowing the sum of knowledge acquisition, conceals its social power function[30].

> Rather than being governed by some vision of the just society, the activities of professionals are increasingly governed by the criteria of efficiency. Skilled performance, or competence, becomes an increasing part of the educational agenda and an increasingly important and valued outcome of educational processes. (Usher and Edwards, 1994 p176)

The Hidden Curriculum

Bowles and Gintis' study of American schooling (1976) is often cited as the origin of the term ' hidden curriculum'. Clearly connecting with Bourdieu's idea about capital acquisition and trading, Bowles and Gintis argued that the concept of educational meritocracy is symbolic to a large degree, as what is more importantly acquired or not during schooling is a set of personality traits. These

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28 Bourdieu's work offers many examples of specific research into groups of learners, which inform his more 'macro' ideas about education in terms of the forms of capital.
29 Lyotard describes the status of knowledge in its performative context in his work on postmodernity, and Usher and Edwards have offered a reading of learning in which Lyotard's ideas are applied to vocational education specifically.

relate mostly to the ability to accept boredom, alienation and powerlessness for the sake of the 'natural' hierarchy and the power relations which are essential to the maintenance of the system. For Bowles and Gintis, as long as the economic 'reality' of a given society goes unquestioned by its citizens, then the structure of the school and its social functions will be an equally inevitable reality. The reason why educational reform has been largely ineffective is that it has sought to isolate the school as an arena for change, removed from the context of economic life in which it is always implicated. Hence the school is just one of a number of institutions which provide the basis for inequality, through rewarding submission to authority, docility, passivity and obedience and largely penalising acts of creativity and spontaneity, traits which will not be useful in the workplace. The system of grading is the school's most powerful technology for repression, legitimated by the technical 'need' for standards and measurement.

Bowles and Gintis call the necessary acquisition of 'acceptance skills' the 'correspondence principle'. Learners' lack of control over curriculum content reflects workers' alienation in the workplace, so that

> the social relationships of education - between administrators and teachers, teachers and students, students and students, students and work - replicate the hierarchical division of labour. (Bowles and Gintis, 1976, p263)

Whilst it might be claimed that it has been ever thus, and neither Bourdieu nor Bowles and Gintis would claim that there is anything revelatory in the idea that schools impose dominant values on children, what this work focuses on is the

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30 Teachers tend to describe learners as students, awarding bodies as candidates. During standardisation meetings, it is interesting to observe examiners shifting between descriptions of 'their' students and the anonymous candidates whom they are charged with assessing.

development of values mirroring the power dynamics of industrial modes of production within the school in developed capitalist society, and the failure of liberal reformists to challenge this. Later we shall consider how the recent move towards 'self-assessment' seems on the surface to offer a more liberal and idealist tendency in which the learner is empowered with a reflexive assessment context. However this self-assessment can equally be seen as an intervention of panopticism par excellence, in Foucault's terms (see Foucault, 1975) since it forces the learner to impose criteria, the production of which they are involved in, upon themselves and to confess their weaknesses (indeed for all of its potential, the role of evaluation in learning serves his end), and to accept the 'everyday surveillance' of portfolio-keeping as a norm[31].   For Bowles and Gintis, then, the 'educational encounter' is remembered by people as the experience of coming to accept powerlessness in preparation for work. Indeed, it is the experience of most adults to look back with a sense of nostalgia and embarrassment at their 'radical days', before the acceptance of 'realities' and the acquisition of 'responsibilities'.   Hence the potential of school to empower and offer creative expression for children is already lost.

A key question for this project is - **is it possible to think that within the context of schooling as understood by Bourdieu, Bowles and Gintis, learners might experience more space for reflexivity, equality and creativity?** That a subject like Media Studies, with no canon, itself delegitimised by the dominant group and oft-cited as an example of all that is

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31 Foucault writes at length about Bentham's design for the prison in 'Discipline and Punish'

wrong with expanded mass-education, because of its very otherness to the dominant culture, might genuinely allow learners to set the agenda, to use their own experience in the classroom and to investigate the ways in which they are constructed as subjects? Furthermore that by acquiring a space in which to use new technologies and media-awareness in a context which is graded, they might gain new kinds of more equally distributed capital? Or does the context, the form, the genre of education and assessment, disallow such transcendence through its 'will to impose'?

Media Education and 'Traditions'

The introduction alluded briefly to the development of Media Studies through a historical reference to Stuart Hall's explanation of the relationship between Media Studies and Cultural Studies. It is useful in preparation for a review of issues around media education and its politics as discussed in selected literature to consider a variety of traditions that Oliver Boyd-Barrett has identified as informing media learning.

According to Boyd-Barrett (1992), Media studies should be understood as coming from a social science tradition. Whereas English assumes that texts are best analysed through an interpretive approach, social science is more concerned with 'messages' to be found in texts and the sociological relevance of media messages. Later I will argue that the social sciences as they have been institutionalised make dubious assumptions about epistemology, but for

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especially, and many other writers have used the metaphor to discuss notions of surveillance and identity.

now we will accept such ideas of 'message' and 'effect'. The central debates
(or myths in the sense of shared 'concerns') therefore are to do with the 'power
of the media', ideology and, again, 'effects'. These are not addressed overtly in
English (or at least it is possible to gain qualifications without addressing this).
These 'mass society' notions have a certain amount of common ground with
psychoanalysis, structuralism, Marxism and postmodernism. This approach is
'other', for Boyd-Barrett, to interpretive and creative traditions.

It is by no means clear, especially given the population of English teachers in
media classrooms, that this is a shared view, or indeed that there is one as
regards a coherent 'approach' for the study of media. Neither is there a shared
view of how 'good intentions' to do with empowerment and reflexivity are to be
realised. What follows is a review of literature dealing with these issues in a
critical way.

The Politics of Media Education

In an historical review of Media Education in 1990s Europe, Len Masterman, a
key figure as a Chief Examiner for the NEAB in the 1990s, suggested that
because of the suspicion with which Media Studies has been greeted, its
teachers need necessarily to be at once practitioners and at the same time
advocates, in almost an evangelical fashion. It is possible to 'map' the influence
of various different ideas about the relationship between media texts and young
people in the genealogy of the subject. One discourse in the public arena has

always positioned 'the media' (asserting the idea of a monolithic agency and origin, cause and effect) as agents in cultural decline, another has situated 'media' as a term to describe popular art forms, and another has discussed media texts in terms of representations and symbolic systems (in this discourse there is really no difference between media texts, literature, poetry or works of art), but the existence of Media Studies as a subject which starts from the study of signification and the negotiation of meaning, accompanied by the reluctance of English to consider non-authorial issues, serves to perpetuate the idea that popular culture is more embedded in systems of meaning than texts from 'higher places' which can still be studied in a more insular fashion.

Masterman argues against any approach that might attack learners' own tastes and establish value judgements. An interesting question is - to how extent does the situating of this learning within the context of the school somehow form an obstacle to an honest discussion of tastes? For Masterman, the project for Media Education is to move away from the literary legacy (the majority of Media teachers, at least in terms of A Level, are English teachers) towards a discipline starting with the study of audience, to explore the different sense made of texts by audiences in different contexts. Through the use of the 'key concepts' (genre, narrative, representation), the media teacher must facilitate investigation and not impose cultural values, fostering critical autonomy (what this means is open to debate) so that media learning can be lifelong, topical and opportunistic.

> Media education offers the possibility, not simply of new curriculum content, but of new ways of working. Teaching effectively about the media demands teaching methods which are as lively, open, participatory, democratic and active as possible, if the aim of

> critical autonomy is to be achieved…..media education has a distinctive epistemology in which knowledge is not so much deposited upon students as actively created by them through a process of investigation and dialogue. (Masterman, 1994)

For Masterman, the central objective for the media teacher is to find out what the learner already knows and to be reflexive in thinking about what it is that she wants to add to this knowledge and the difference it will make. The key question for this research is how this can be assessed and the difference that that will make to those intentions.

Cary Bazalgette, a key figure at BFI Education, has been a protagonist in various new initiatives in media education since the inception of Media Studies and is a contemporary of Masterman in terms of having made declarations about the potential of the subject[32]. Thinking through the politics of teaching about the media, she suggested that the subject is more political than others, both in its intentions to reflect upon students extra-educational consumption and pleasures and in its position as an object of concern at governmental level ('*there will be no GCSE in Eldorado*', said John Major famously at a Conservative Party Conference - see Buckingham, 1993). Bazalgette foregrounded a key issue for this project, the tension between teachers as consumers and teachers as making judgements tainted with power. Here the issue of taste is paramount. As literature uses a canon in which taste is discarded (texts are always-already legitimated by their inclusion in the curriculum), media education cannot conceal the relationship between taste,

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32 BFI Education is the arm of the British Film Institute with specific responsibility for 'intervention' into the teaching of the moving image in the UK, this department has been enormously influential (some would say too much so) in the development of Media teachers.

pleasure, subjectivity, inequality and power. Despite herself, there is a sense in which Bazalgette's writing on media education and politics falls back on a 'cultural inoculation' discourse, however. By asserting a citizenship argument to justify media education, that we need to be able to 'read' media texts with critical awareness, the distinction between 'decoding' popular culture and 'appreciating' literature and the arts, is maintained. But this is unfair to Bazalgette in so much as bracketing media as a discipline makes this inevitable, the solution to which would be a more general study of texts without boundaries, a concept that could only come to fruition if countless years of cultural reproduction were somehow halted.

The Practice of Media Learning

Whilst Masterman and Bazalgette (at least in the work selected here) have discussed the wider agenda of media education and its relationship with other curriculum areas and society, David Buckingham has initiated research projects and offered interpretations concentrating more on the process of learning about the media. In a paper intended to offer a justification of media education in relation to new forms of literacy (a similar declaration to those of Masterman and Bazalgette aforementioned), Buckingham directly addressed John Major's Eldorado statement and other examples of the 'cultural value' discourse by pointing out that 98% of the UK population are recorded as watching an average of 23 hours television a week, compared with 2% of young people attending the theatre at all. On the grounds that the everyday is important, then, for Buckingham new media forms (television is hardly new but it is relatively

novel still as a subject for academic study - indeed it is a sign of education's

deep-rooted inability to adapt that television looks likely to be extinct as a

medium in its traditional sense before it is widely accepted as significant for

analysis) make necessary new kinds of understanding, expression and

language, and on these grounds making media learning an aspect of the 'key

skill' of literacy is not only desirable but essential,

> The nature of literacy - or, more accurately, of literacies - is culturally and historically
> diverse and changeable…and we are currently living in a period, like earlier periods
> such as the Renaissance, where the pace of change appears to be accelerating. Any
> contemporary definition of literacy must therefore inevitably include the understandings
> and competencies that are developed in relation to 'new' media technologies as well as
> 'older' technologies such as writing and print. (Buckingham, 1993, p24)

However, for Buckingham Media Studies as it has developed does not

necessarily offer such a contemporary perspective to learners, dependent as it

is on a particular academic paradigm that privileges cultural theory over

research and thus neglects the study of audience, a view which resonates with

Masterman's suggestions and to Bazalgette and the BFI's recent departure

from Media Studies towards a cross-curricular approach to moving image study,

and towards an interest in the International Baccalaureate[33].

According to Buckingham, Media Studies has so far failed to develop an

effective pedagogy that can significantly differ to English, despite its intentions

to be more concerned with cultural production than textual meaning.

A reason for this, should we accept it, might be that much of the writing about

media education, and much of the debate at conferences and INSET has been

concerned with the subject matter and the practice of teaching, and not enough about the power relations always at play in the classroom, an obstacle that might be more damaging for media learning than any other discipline, if it serves to dismantle the constructed claim that the subject offers a more empowering and reflexive experience than others. These power relations have been the concern of different kinds of research by Chris Richards (1990) and Pete Fraser (1990).

For Richards, who uses the word 'intervention' to describe media teaching, echoing Foucault's ideas about regulation and surveillance,

> the marginalisation of the formative social relations in which readers are constituted is perhaps a symptomatic weakness of disciplines which take texts as the primary object of enquiry….interventions which engage with the reading of texts cannot be limited to their deconstruction but must seek to locate and understand their place within specific sets of social and cultural relations, and particularly those which constitute the contexts of a text's consumption. (Richards, 1990, p167)

Richards calls into question the assumptions at the heart of the 'empowerment' discussion to which both Masterman and Bazalgette have contributed. For it is a dubious assumption that the conceptual framework employed by the subject, borrowed as it is from largely from combination of literary theory, structuralism and Marxism, will connect with the spontaneous ideas that learners have about their consumption and the meanings and pleasures they negotiate. 'Subject Media' in this sense constructs a 'false consciousness' and could even be an agent in disempowering students as they struggle to apply an unfamiliar academic language to everyday media texts and technologies on which they may feel they are already experts of a kind.

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33 At the time of writing, some schools are offering the International Baccalaureate, a broader

Pete Fraser's very specific piece of research with his own students offers some insights which are interesting when considered in the light of Richards' arguments.

Fraser, like Masterman is a Senior Examiner of long standing, this time OCR. This is mentioned because both 'straddle' teaching and examining positions and hence inhabit spaces of distance and proximity in relation to 'Subject Media' as an institution. Fraser interviewed teaching colleagues and students to investigate the discourses adopted fully or partially when talking about television. He identified five interweaving discourses, a right-wing discourse speaking concern about the damaging effects of television, a liberal discourse differing from this in its foregrounding of passivity and parental control as the major issues rather than the medium and/or its content alone, a left-wing discourse concerned with the relationship between television and dominant ideology and bias, a 'quality' argument seeking to make distinctions between quality television and 'the rest' and finally a discourse centred on television as an example / a symptom of a crass, hedonistic, throwaway popular culture.

What Fraser concludes from this evidence is that because media texts (and for that matter any texts) are always-already understood through the adoption of such discourses, these 'ways of seeing' should be the starting point for textual analysis. I might extend this further to suggest that as Media Studies has

diploma qualification based on a French model of further education, instead of A Levels.

developed through the key concepts approach, it is rare that this approach is taken. Whilst media learning might be more concerned with the production of meaning than English, crucial questions about the politics of discussing media in the classroom are still marginalised. If this is the case (and the study of Curriculum 2000 that follows will seek to 'find out' by using a similar method to 'extract' discourses at work in specifications, responses to them and to assessment and the act of 'grading'), then the subject might not be able to offer the questioning and reflexive approach that it desires and claims.

The Technology of Assessment

As the sub-heading indicates, the 'thinker' that most influences this project is Foucault, as there appears (if I can appropriate the work to my own ends) to be a great deal of significance for Media Studies in his writings about power and discourse, particularly when we turn our attention to the practices and meanings of assessing media learning, and ask whether Subject Media can be understood as a 'truth game'.

It is difficult to summarise Foucault's work under headings or umbrella terms as his 'contribution' to various fields (sociology, history, philosophy) takes the form of a series of disparate investigations of very specific historical developments or more appropriately, moments. But in so much as the organisation of a this thesis demands review and hence paraphrasing / thematic summary, I will posit that the main Foucaultian ideas for my interests are discourse, power/knowledge, historical contingency and genealogy, and surveillance (in

particular panopticism). All of these are of interest in terms of the construction

of subjects and importantly the self-becoming of subjects[34].

By way of a simplified 'overview', we can understand Foucault as having been

concerned with the rejection of the view that individual human beings have

identity and that some individuals or groups of individuals (perhaps organised

as institutions) have, or possess power. For Foucault, power is not possessed,

it is exercised, it is a practice, not an acquisition, and subjects do not have an

identity within themselves, this is just a way of thinking and taking about

subjects, a discourse. Moreover, where there is power there is always

resistance, not as an adjunct to power, but as a part of it. Foucault was

interested in ways in which power has been exercised as a technology and how

subjects have been constructed and constructed themselves in discourse.

These ideas, in terms of Media Studies' key concepts' represent a shift away

from Marxist ideas about ideology, in which individuals are seen as having

identities which are suppressed and alienated by power-possessing groups who

use a variety of means, including language to dominate. For Foucault,

discourse is a range of statements that can be made at any one time that serve

to provide 'reality' for subjects, and the limiting and repetitions of statements is a

key part of the exercise of power.

Discourse is perhaps the most striking idea for this thesis. At the outset, I

attempted to describe an archaeology of schooling that would serve a purpose

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34 I am using the idea of 'self-becoming' articulated most clearly by Foucault.

as a frame for this project. Such an archaeology helps us understand the
conditions of possibility for ways of thinking about education and the school, the
family, examinations and public life. Discourse describes the underlying rules
that limit the 'sayable' – what can be said within assumed knowledge. What
counts as 'truth' is organised by this limited sayable. Educational research has
been bound up with discourses of modernity, assumptions about the nature of
knowledge and its relation to politics, a belief in progress, and an essentialist
view of the researcher. This perception of research is organised into
accreditation and training for researchers in order for the 'correct scientific
methods' to be applied and reproduced.

For Foucault, the relationship between discourse and power is crucial, though
the two are difficult to separate. Put simply, when subjects are prisoners of their
own perspective, social control is possible. However this not a repetition of
'false consciousness' theories since there is no sense of a suppressed 'true'
consciousness outside of discourse. Discourse has no inside in thought or
outside in phenomena, or in other words we do not have ideas in thought that
are then expressed in words. Every discourse is part of a discursive complex,
and power is at once discursive and material, always-already inscribed in
relation to other discourses.

> It is not enough to say that the subject is constituted in a symbolic system. It is not just
> in the play of symbols that the subject is constituted. It is constituted in real practices -
> historically analysable practices. There is a technology of the constitution of the self
> which cuts across symbolic systems while using them. (Foucault, interview with
> Rabinov and Dreyfus, in Rabinov (ed), 1984, p369)

For Kendall and Wickham, there are a set of approaches we can take in analysing discourses, beginning with recognising a discourse as a set of statements which are organised systematically. We can identify rules for the production of statements and for the delimiting of the sayable, and for the production of new statements (through contingency). This set of methods allows us to understand discourses in the same way as Foucault did with punishment, sexuality and the human sciences. The task for this project is to identify rules for the production of statements about education generally, look closely at statements about assessment and their limits, and scrutinise the set of statements that serve to provide truth for formal teaching and learning about the media.

The following chapter will describe a discursive research approach through attention to the debate between Habermas and Lyotard over modernity and consensus, in order to explain the 'move' to a research method through discussion of its other, what is 'usual' in educational research[35]. Richard Rorty observes, in 'Habermas and Modernity', Bernstein (ed), 1991, that,

> anything that Habermas will count as retaining a 'theoretcial perspective' will be
> counted by an incredulous Lyotard as a 'metanarrative'. Anything that abandons such
> an approach will be counted by Habermas as 'neoconservative'. French critics of
> Habermas are ready to abandon liberal politics in order to avoid universalistic
> philosophy, and Habermas (is) trying to hang on to a universalistic philosophy, with all
> its problems, in order to support liberal politics. (1991, p162)

A similar practice will be explanatory here since understanding Foucault's ideas about power and knowledge is aided by comparison with Marxist (or Hegelian)

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35 These two thinkers represent different positions on the potential of modernity to offer a politics based on consensus, in the wake of claims by Lyotard that the potential for radical

ideas about power and the material. For Foucault, material rules are always about discourses rather than anything outside of those discourses.

In his studies, he found that prison regulations are always about penology and the material of prison structures and prison life, rules about sexual behaviour are always about sexology, biology and psychology and the material of sexual practice. Understood in this way, we can see that teacher training practices, teacher appraisal, assessment criteria and training for moderation and so on are at once about schooling and discourses about learning and at the same time about school life and professional teaching practices. Hence materiality and thought cannot be separated. This constitutes the 'biggest' break from Marxist thinking about power in Foucault's work.   Understood in this way, power is always exercised in a matrix of discourse which always takes primacy. It is never repressive in itself, but productive, most importantly evident in the self-production of subjects, which takes place within discourse. 'Technologies of the self' exercise power. Clearly learning about the media and demonstrating 'skills' to assessors are practices embedded within such technologies.   But we must be careful to remember that Foucault's ideas are not intended to lead us towards an overarching understanding of things, but to locate and examine particular events within discursive analysis. I will attempt to locate Curriculum 2000 and the assessment of students taking AS Media Studies in January 2001 by OCR as such events.

'micropolitical' action lies instead in the celebration of difference and understanding of the conflictual nature of language and communication.

How, then, can Foucault's ideas be related to education? Ian Hunter (1988) has attempted such an 'application', thinking through schooling and culture as bound up with modern discourses about individuality and the use of time and space through architecture and administration to distribute and order subjects. A series of principles for schooling were mobilised in statements from the nineteenth century onwards that have been taken up by Marxist writers such as Bourdieu, Bowles and Gintis and Apple, whom we have 'reviewed' already. For Hunter, it is evident that discourses about contemporary schooling have emerged from very specific historical concerns about control, and that culture can best be understood not as an entity or an acquisition but as a set of practices aimed at producing a particular kind of citizen, hence culture is an exercise of power. Subjects are products of schooling, they do not exist before it.

Hunter's work on the relationship between culture and government operates by looking at literature education as a form of governance, of moral supervision. Hence he uses a specific example, a genealogy in the Foucualtian sense (a shift, the formation of new ways of thinking about literature and the citizen), to explore a wider dynamic, that of the understanding of and use of culture in modern society. In the same way, I hope to explore the development of teaching and learning about the media to think about popular culture and governance.

Hunter suggests that literary education did not emerge as an attempt to deliver aesthetic culture and logic to society (the formation of aesthetic citizens), but instead should be understood as part of the machinery of popular education providing 'social welfare' through moral supervision. At once we are reminded of Foucault's panopticon metaphor and indeed this is where Hunter takes us with this idea of English teaching as supervision of the self, the formation of specific forms of citizenry,

> The apparatus of popular education in which English emerged has as its object the formation of a highly specific profile of cultural attributes, in fact the attributes of a citizenry. This profile was produced by an historically unprecedented machinery of social investigation and administration, which began to emerge in England during the late eighteenth century and which by the middle of the nineteenth had largely succeeded in constituting the life of the population as an object of government. (Hunter, 1988, pix).

So for Hunter, literary education emerged not as a merging of aesthetic culture and society, but as a technology for normalising, as a technique for moral observation. There is in this analysis a resonance with Usher and Edwards' reading of experiential learning, in that it has the double-face of increased self-expression and increased self-regulation. Literature became a part of the apparatus of governance because of its perceived proximity to lived experience. The appreciation of literature, previously a minority aesthetic experience, became a part of the supervised freedom of the modern popular school. Assumptions underpinning this development will sound familiar to the Media Studies teacher, that English provides a vehicle for personal expression, which is achieved by closeness to experience and the teacher is there to 'draw' from the pupils' interpretations and experiences. For Hunter, there is an ironic and previously unseen connection between the emergence of literary education and

the ideas for the regulation of the popular school playground put in place by

Stow (1850) [36].   The popular school is the place in which techniques of pastoral

surveillance are systematised, and literary education serves this purpose.   The

literary text itself is a supervisory instrument in this context.   A traditional

assumption is that education is a manifestation of culture and that normalisation

and self-expression are opposites.   Hunter, like Foucault, shows us that

normalisation operates as self-regulation *through* self-expression,

> It was in the supervised freedom of the playground that moral norms would be realised
> though self-expressive techniques; and it was in this space that the forms of self-
> discovery organised around the individual would permit the realisation of new social
> norms at the level of the population. (Hunter, 1988, p39).

In Hunter's genealogy of literary education we can trace the same relationship

between freedom and regulation as we can in Foucault's account of discipline

and punishment and Usher, Edwards and Hartley's various responses to

performative self-assessment in the contemporary educational climate.   The

emergence of pastoral regimes and later literary education as a manifestation of

them, at once enabled self-expression and the freedom of the individual in

terms of 'growth' and at the same time introduced general, morally observed

norms of development. English, then, emerged as a part of a new disciplinary

technology, not as a reconciliation of culture and society.   For Hunter, this

history is obscured not through any direct ideological imposition of 'false

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36 David Stow, author of the Training System of Education and founder of the Glasgow Normal
Seminary for the Training of Teachers. According to a history of his life found on the website –
'Memoirs and Portraits of Glasgow men' – his contribution is to 'embrace every opportunity of
impressing on the public mind that teaching was not training, that to make education what it
should be, the child must be trained to do what was right, and not merely taught. This was the
very keystone of all his labours, and is embodied in the sentence which forms the motto of the
two Normal Schools he was mainly instrumental in founding in Glasgow: 'Train up a child in the
way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' The school playground as an
arena for moral supervision is what Hunter describes in his genealogy of education as a
technology for moral 'normalisation'.

consciousness', but instead because our understanding of culture does not allow for such a reading. The general principle of 'cultural growth' appears as a given in historical accounts to the development of literary education to the extent that the arts, including literature are seen to have defined a quality of life that political change could make possible, hence the ideal of the reconciliation of society and its aesthetic ideal. For Hunter, drawing on Foucault, a genealogy shows us that the kinds of dispensation of culture mobilised by Subject English were and are achieved, as technologies, independently of culture, or this idea of culture at least,

> It was in the apparatus of popular education and not in 'man' or 'society' that the elite culture of the self was linked to the machinery for normalising of the population…. The public control of education was thus achieved not through the exercise of class or state power, but through the form in which a governmental technology personified itself in the ethical authority of the cultivated man. It was at this point that the literary text bearing the inaccessible social norms of the classroom could overlap with the text invested with the unattainable goal of aesthetic self-realisation, forming the continuum along which English would emerge. (Hunter, 1988, p106)

Hunter ultimately offers a dual-genealogy of literary education which might serve as a useful model or strategy for my own reading of the emergence of Media Studies. He traces two models, both of which are important as contingencies in different ways and at different times. The model of ethical reconciliation, the understanding of culture as art and the pursuit of an emancipatory culture as exemplified in the work of Raymond Williams (see 1958 - for which educating the people to appreciate literature is a progressive step), alongside the model of theoretical clarification, whereby the understanding of literature can enable the truth of the subject to be revealed to itself from previous societal obscurity. Both of these models support and sustain the notion of a crisis of culture and/or subjectivity which an

emancipatory project can grapple with. However, it is vital to return to Hunter's

major assertion that it is the technique of moral supervision as governance

which mobilises the use of literature in the classroom, not any abstract or

independent notions of culture or enrichment in themselves. Alongside this,

another resonance with Foucault arises from Hunter's claim that the subject's

knowledge of poetry, for instance, allows the teacher to assume knowledge of

the subject in terms of normative ethical and intellectual compliance, so that,

> ….if knowledge of the poem in modern criticism is inseparable from a certain 'clarifying' knowledge of its reader - if the poem is in fact a surface always revealing ethical incompleteness and intellectual failure - this is because literature's predominant contemporary deployment or mode of existence is as a focus and support for these relations of supervision and correction. In short, knowledge in modern criticism is inseparable from the instituted relations and activities through which a special form of aesthetico-ethical power is generated and exercised. (Hunter, 1988, p281).

Hunter's work, and Kendall and Wickham's development of a Foucaultian

'method' for research, both establish an example of Foucaultian ideas providing

a move away from Marxist ideas as education here is not serving to deny or

suppress 'truth' but to produce the self. In other words there is no hidden

agenda, as the Hidden Curriculum thesis has it, or a radical alternative to be

achieved through reform or revolution. As Kendall and Wickham explain,

> The school is a factory-laboratory where children are manufactured out of educational experiments. The intention is not to deny children access to the truth about themselves, but to produce them as functioning and maximised citizens, to produce the truth about themselves. Culture actively works by producing citizens by management – it is not simply a repository of meanings. (Kendall and Wickham, 1999, p138)

Foucault's concept of 'panopticism' serves as a metaphor for the formation of a

society founded on self-discipline and surveillance. In '*Discipline and Punish*'

(1975) the genealogy of penal reform is traced, and Foucault argues that the

exercise of disciplinary power, or the disciplinary modality of power has come to

infiltrate all other modalities. At once discursive and material, discipline as a type of power arises out of historical processes, economic, legal, political and scientific. The panoptic element of power is best understood by spending some time on the source of the metaphor, Jeremy Bentham's architectural invention.

Bentham's plans (1791) were for a new mode of regulation, a totally institutionalised version of control. The structure proposed (which was never actually built) consisted of a circular arrangement of cells from which all prisoners could be observed by a central tower, but more importantly, all prisoners could see the tower but not the observer, or other prisoners. Hence it is not of great import whether observation was taking place, the assumption of observation would initiate self-regulation. The principles of the design, examination, hierarchy and normalising judgement are evident throughout post-Enlightenment educational discourse. For Foucault, panopticism describes the specific movement from a power residing in the 'strength' or superiority of those exercising it to a power-for-itself, an institutionalised, technical power,

> …to substitute for a power that is manifested through the brilliance of those who exercise it, a power that insidiously objectifies those on whom it is applied; to form a body of knowledge about these individuals, rather than to destroy the ostentatious signs of sovereignty.
> (Foucault in Rabinov (ed), 1984, p209)

What this allows is a more economic, effective and administrative form of power, which takes a life separate from the exercise of control. Again, the key shift away from Marxist thought is that whilst this might be crudely understood as bound up with 'ideology', it is not considered an exercise of power in the sense that there is an obscured truth or 'better life'. Here power is exercised

through and by itself by infiltrating all discourses in such a way as to deny a

distinction between the daily life of subjects and the exercise of power. Peim's

application (2001) of Foucault's ideas about the Panopticon as a metaphor

seeks to address the environmental determinism of the physical construct of the

school or college. In particular, he locates the figure of the teacher as an agent

of pastoral surveillance and analyses the proximal relations distributed by the

classroom. In this sense the physical school is a carrier of its metaphorical

status, just as the panopticon design physically embodies the idea of

surveillance. Peim links Foucault to Derrida in tracing the genealogy of the

transition from sovereign power to governmental power (from Foucault) in the

'binary logic' of pastoral discipline,

> Foucault's later development of the idea of power and of the history of the self goes
> beyond the fixity perhaps implied in the 'panopticonic' account of capillary power in the
> condition of governmentality. But it is Derrida's rethinking of the very idea of structure
> and the alternative account that may be derived from it – of the idea of culture, the self
> and of a politics of practice. The 'grammar' of the school, its habitual semantics and
> syntax, will be – like all grammars – provisional and partial. In the light of Derrida's
> approach to language, the grammar of the school will have mobility and difference
> written into itself. Evidence of this mobility and difference can be drawn from the
> tensions between normative practices and the counter-practices they give rise to.
> (Peim, 2001, p12).

For a 'grammatology' of the educational encounter, then, we need to consider,

taking a lead from Foucault and Derrida, the key social practices in which the

self is negotiated through reformation. In this study, the practice of assessment,

and its determining presence in teaching and learning, is under scrutiny. It is

clear that the examination, or the act of assessment, will be a significant

element of a Foucaultian enquiry into schooling and culture. The examination,

above all, mediates the dissemination of discourse, it is the exercise of power

and a form of surveillance, of panopticism. As a rationalising, legitimating

technology, it reveals the truth of subjects to themselves, it creates subjects.

Within the modernist discourse complex of education, the examination is a result of the need for 'objectivity' in the external sense, the objectivity only available to the assessor who does not 'know' the student, or the 'candidate'. The examination exercises the 'mark', the production of a form of knowledge about the candidate, a means by which to inscribe. This is a normalising technology, but for Kendall and Wickham it is important not to see this as a negative power exercise, for the 'amplification of capabilities' lies at the heart of this inscription, tied to discourses of diagnosis and improvement.

How, then to theorise an alternative sense of assessing, or judging learning? Vygotsky's work on the psychology of learning has been widely interpreted for a number of different means, for this project with its emphasis on reflexive learning and the dilemmas of assessment Joseph Campione's (1996) taxonomy of approaches for assisted assessment is useful in so much as it draws on Vygotsky to neatly describe what most assessment doesn't measure. Vygotsky's notion of the 'zone of proximal development' (see Daniels, ed, 1996) is a much-respected theory, yet as we shall see when we come to investigate the format of and assumptions underlying AS Media Studies, there is little space for its adoption in institutionalised formal assessment practices. Vygotsky's model describes the difference between a learner's actual development level (that which is current and can be measured) and her potential development under guidance which is always in flux. The 'zone' is the space between, and many writers including Campione have been interested in trying forms of assessment that might operate within this space. For Campione, traditional

forms of assessment are not simply restrictive, but can also be interpreted as

inaccurate,

> Particularly liable to be misclassified are students who have not had the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge assessed on standard tests. In addition, without any way of articulating the processes that may have operated, or failed to operate, to produce a given level of performance, it is not possible to determine how to devise an intervention to improve that performance. (Campione, in Daniels (ed), 1996, p226)

There is a clear discrepancy between the retrospective testing favoured by QCA

and designed for accreditation by OCR and other boards, and any kind of

measuring which would allow for the demonstration of what Vygotsky calls

prospective characteristics,

> …those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are in the embryonic stage. These functions could be called the 'buds' or 'flowers' rather than the fruits of development. The actual developmental level characterises mental development retrospectively while the zone of proximal development characterises mental development prospectively. (Vygotsky, 1978, pp86-87)

For Vygotsky and those who have attempted to adapt assessment to his ideas,

then, most testing of learners focuses on the actual developmental

characteristics. For obvious reasons, this is culturally divisive as not all learners

begin at the same point, in other words there is no level playing field. The focus

on content and prescription, on defined standards and levels, serves to provide

a common-sense set of assumptions that support such inequality. Whether

Media Studies, with its claims to empowerment, exists in a space protected

from such constraints, is doubtful. The question is whether there are viable

methods for assessment of Subject Media that would allow Vygotsky's 'buds' to

flower.

Returning to the framing educational archaeology, we can understand culture to be a variety of practices, including pedagogical practice, for managing the production of subjects. Schooling and assessment are contingent cultural practices, producing forms of self, knowledge and legitimation. The classroom is a site of production, at once factory in this sense and also laboratory, as educational practice is always experimental, arising out of specific historical conjuncture. Teaching is informed by an eclectic range of influences, training, academic histories and institutional trends as well as externally contingent discourses.   This project shall explore the events of Curriculum 2000 and OCR's AS Media Studies assessments from these perspectives.

Though purists may recoil at the attempt, this project will make use of a 'fusion' or at least a meeting point between the ideas of Foucault above and those of Jacques Derrida on deconstruction and Lyotard and Baudrillard on different positions and themes arising from postmodernity.

Deconstruction

For Derrida, 'deconstructive moves' help us to dismantle conceptual oppositions in order to understand how hierarchical systems of thought operate. That said, like Foucault, Derrida asserts that there is no outside of language. Texts, because of their reliance on metaphor, footnote and assumption, inevitably demonstrate a tension between intention and interpretation. Christopher Norris' definition reads,

> To deconstruct a piece of writing is to operate a kind of strategic reversal, seizing on those unguarded details (casual metaphors, footnotes, incidental turns of argument)

which are always, and necessarily, passed over by interpreters of a more orthodox persuasion. (Norris, 1987, p19)

Using Derrida's 'impulse' (for it resists being 'method') involves identifying the general principle of dissemination, looking for ways of thinking and the assumptions on which 'truths' are founded, and this is achieved by understanding texts and always inter-textual, ravelled in genre and discourse. Whilst it may appear to take us away from the 'point' of this project, it is worth spending some time here on Derrida's deconstruction of Western philosophy for it will inform the close reading to follow.

Derrida's method is 'Grammatology' and one of its most significant features is the scrutiny given to the opposition of speech and writing that has been a hallmark of Western philosophy and can be read in the relationship between Plato and Socrates. For Socrates, who spoke, writing is the dangerous gift of inscription and lacks the authenticity of the voice or of thought. Philosophy itself, then, is mere text (writing), creating in itself and for itself a dilemma, resolved by convenient denial / forgetting of this. Hence the distinction between philosophy and literature has been maintained by scholars, and indeed the same distinction has been upheld between research and literature. At the heart of grammatology (although we should avoid ideas about centres) is the critique of logocentrism, the philosophical will to prioritise the voice and 'the mind' over writing. The metaphysics of presence is the thrust to posit an origin before writing, and inside and outside of texts and claims to authenticity or truth which are tainted and corrupted by the written word.

For Derrida, there is a perpetual double movement in Plato's writings and in Western metaphysics more generally, that is that the positive (speech, thought) is defined in contrast to its negative, to absence. Presence is thus always deferred, disseminated, suspended. Writing is at the same time a threat to authenticity and the means by which to record it. Or as Derrida puts it when writing about Plato, writing is both poison and cure. The crucial 'turn' in deconstruction is the understanding that rather than existing as a 'stand in' for speech, or a representation of thought, language, or writing, is a pre-condition of thought. And it is in the marks made by language, the inscriptions that violate authenticity, footnotes, metaphors, allegories of meaning, 'unintended' interpretations and so on, that deconstructive readings expose (and celebrate) the movement of difference.

The reason why Derrida appears to be such an extremist and so 'difficult' to work with is that his 'contribution' entails an attempt to escape the entire system of logic that philosophy has established as a truth game. Hence, we are condemned to use terms constantly 'under erasure' since we cannot break free of the signifying system, we cannot exist outside of the language we use. The 'metaphysics of presence', put simply, the way we think in the West, assumes that the mind represents nature and the language represents minds. Reality is thus 'safely' reflected in language, which exists as an instrument for representing the world. Media Studies, though informed by poststructuralist theory to a point, in so much as representations are taken seriously as constructions for analysis, is still immersed in such a way of thinking about the

world when 'the media' are given agency to send 'messages' to 'the audience' within the workings of 'ideology.'

When the signified is privileged over the signifier (the signified being the 'deeper' truth beneath the superficial hieroglyphics of signification), the metaphysics of presence dictate that language is derivative of an essence that precedes it.   Derrida's project is not to provide an alternative (again, like Foucault, there is no 'method' here, no ideal of a 'real truth' obscured by the workings of logocentric thought), but merely to think this myth and to deconstruct its operations. By celebrating the moments where language 'contaminates' the ideal of pure thought (as Derrida calls it, arche-writing), we can understand human knowledge in a profoundly *different* way. Deconstructive readings assert that the basis of human knowledge itself is difference and that language is a system of differentiation. Knowledge is always inter-textual, the endless difference of context is the only available universal, should we still think we need such a thing.

> 'The idea of science and the idea of writing - therefore also of the science of writing - is meaningful for us only in terms of an origin and within a world to which a certain concept of the sign and a certain concept of the relationships between speech and writing, have already been assigned. A most determined relationship, in spite of its privilege, its necessity, and the field of vision that it has controlled for a few millenia, especially in the West, to the point of being now able to produce its own dislocation and itself proclaim its limits.   ([Derrida, 1976, p4)

Like Foucault, Derrida's 'body of work' is a series of specific analyses and investigations, though again it is possible to decipher an approach. The application of such an approach, a set of principles for deconstructive readings, to educational discourse, has been 'set up' by Crowley (1989), by way of a

'teachers' guide'. Though inevitably simplified and reductionist at times (as this summary / review undoubtedly is), it is a useful account for this project as it sets up a dialogue between the 'bigger' Derridean issues and the 'raw material' of pedagogy.

Educational writing exists as a web of mediating texts which students read and interpret. Teachers, in various guises, write syllabus materials, assignments, schemes of work, lesson plans, papers and assessment materials, followed by assessment itself as inscription, the mark, an interesting example of arche-writing. If there is such as a thing as a Hidden Curriculum, it is the necessity of the act of continual reading and interpretation by students, an activity which is rarely creative and is always reactive. As Crowley suggests,

> Teachers write the syllabus, the assignments and the daily lesson plans; they re-write the textbook in the sense that they interpret it for their students; and finally they write (revise, edit, grade) their students' papers. Students, on the other hand, spend most of their time reading; they read the teacher, to determine what he 'wants', they read the textbooks assigned to find out what he wants them to know, they read his assignments to determine what he wants them to do. When they 'write' in response to his assignments, they tell him what they think he wants to hear and write according to the rules he wants to see realised in their papers. Almost never do they envision themselves as having something to teach their teachers. (Crowley, 1989, pp. 35-36)

For this project, Crowley's 'he' will be the individuals given sovereignty to write by and for the institution OCR and the teachers 'consuming the product' and their own interpretive writing. A deconstructive pedagogy, for Crowley, would / will bear witness to the myriad contexts of writing by teachers and students. Crucially, educational writing should be analysed with regard to the mythical boundaries assumed to frame them - concepts of containment around books, papers, essays and syllabus materials. These generic boundaries are seen to

present the illusion of totality and closure, denying the endless (and origin-less) intertextual chain of signification.

To quote from Crowley again is useful in that it sets up a key question for the close reading to follow,

> …the knowledge which is preferred and privileged at any given moment is so simply because influential members of the concerned community have subscribed to it. A teacher who was convinced of the force of these assumptions would, no doubt, try to construct a classroom scene where they were daily allowed to come into play.
> (Crowley, 1989, p46)

From this ideal of a deconstructive pedagogy, I will raise two key questions that will inform my reading of OCR's influence over teachers' writing, which are as follows,

1. What is the preferred and privileged knowledge subscribed to by the individuals given authority by OCR?
2. To what extent might a classroom scene in which the inherent assumptions of this subscription are exposed allow for creativity**?**

To this end, I will attempt a 'Grammatology' of Media Studies alongside discourse analysis, towards a meeting point for the ideas of Derrida and Foucault.

Postmodern Games and Conditions

The attempt to establish a methodology informed by postmodern theories that is to follow will establish that Jean Francois Lyotard's ideas about knowledge are an influence. For now, I will summarise Lyotard's 'contribution' (see 1992) to debates over postmodernity by paying some attention (although again a crude simplification) to his 'Postmodern condition' thesis and his interest in 'the differend'[37].

Whilst Foucault, Derrida and Lyotard tend to be treated with sceptical respect, even by those who strongly resist the 'postmodern embrace', Jean Baudrillard is a 'thinker' whose name is often linked with the more 'irresponsible' declarations of the postmodern school. In particular his reflections on the 'end' of emancipatory projects have played into the hands of critics who see postmodernism as having a crypto-fascist totalising impulse that is irresponsible at best and dangerous at worst. However, his challenging approach is interesting and important in our consideration of Media Studies.

For Baudrillard (see 1998), in our postmodern media-saturated society, the distinction between reality and image is a nonsense, there is no space between the real and the virtual. Furthermore, and this has huge implications for the project of modernism, this state of 'hyperreality' effaces even the *contradiction* between the real and the imaginary. This makes the study of 'the media' and reflection on realism and representation problematic to say the least.

Baudrillard asserts that 'the real' has become an obsession because of its elusive impossibility, even its death. The hyperreal is the fetishized, idealised real. We have no option but to play a game for which we do not know the rules, as technology turns subjects into objects,

> One is no longer in front of the mirror; one is in the screen, which is entirely different. One finds oneself in a problematic universe, one hides in the network, that is, one is no longer anywhere. What is fascinating and exercises such an attraction is perhaps less the search for information or the thirst for knowledge than the desire to disappear, the possibility of dissolving and disappearing into the network…. What happens when everything is realised in modernity, when everything is virtually given? It is difficult to oppose the virtual world because it harnesses all the polarity of the system, the positive and negative poles; it absorbs everything. (Baudrillard, 1996, interview with Claude Thibaut)

It will help to move from the 'macro' science-fiction dystopia of Baudrillard's more controversial statements now to his more specific elaborations on the hyper-real, as I hope to establish a link between his reading of fetishized reality, Foucault's ideas about surveillance and self-regulation, and Media Studies' conceptual framework. The theory of the hyper-real describes the self-referentiality of language in the context of social existence in the 'postmodern era', or the epoch of advanced high-tech capitalism. In Baudrillard's work objects have replaced subjects, his project is to think from the perspective of the object, as the era of the representing subject, understood (from Kant) in terms of time and space, causality and truth, is over. Now the subject is no longer a citizen, but a consumer. The key agency is this 'shift' is media imagery (which is not to say that 'the media' exist as an entity possessing power. The 'ecstasy of communication' mobilised through media presents a simulated reality with no referent, operating outside the logic of representation. Modernist forms, such as

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37 The differend is the expression in language of its failure to articulate the lack of any reconciliation between the idioms of competing language games. I have analysed, for example,

surrealism, cannot be seen to offer an alternative to the representational code as they are dependent on the reality they subvert, creating a 'double-effect'. In other words, the distinction between reality and its other, the imaginary, is the determinant for surrealism. The hyper-real removes such a distinction from the equation, it is not dependent on the real, it is at once the real and the non-real, an exaggeration and reduction of the real simultaneously,

> today, reality itself is hyperrealistic…. the whole of everyday political, social, historical, economic reality is incorporated into the simulative dimension of hyperrealism; we already 'live out' the 'aesthetic' hallucination of reality. The old saying 'reality is stranger than fiction', which belonged to the surrealist phase of the aestheticization of life, has been surpassed. There is no longer a fiction that life can confront, even in order to surpass it; reality has been passed over into the play of reality. (Baudrillard, J, 1992, p146)

It is tempting to 'overplay' the extent to which a subject like Media Studies might represent a postmodern departure from traditional forms of pedagogy. However, as we shall see, in many ways the subject matter of Media education is ironically framed by a conservative and traditional approach to teaching and to assessment in particular. So we must be cautious about confusing the content with the discursive framing. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to suggest that the era of 'technoculture' in the West leads us at least towards some new possibilities for space and knowledge that will have implications for pedagogy. As knowledge, Foucault persuades us, is always connected to power, then changing notions of what knowledge is and who can be legitimated in their claim to hold knowledge, will inevitably shift as technology redefines and rearticulates ways of 'knowing' (at its most simple there are many more possibilities for plagiarism and sharing of work for students that there were before the digital era, for example). Usefully, Robins and Webster (1999)

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the abortion debate as such.

provide a dialogue between Lyotard's notions of the postmodern and

Bernstein's analyses of pedagogic codes and framing. Bernstein's interest in

the 'strength' of classifications will be dealt with in detail in the 'study' chapter,

but for now it is suffice to explain that he holds the view that a subject with a

coherent, well-defined hierarchy of knowledge to be acquired (vertical

discourse) will be well-insulated and produce a number of *collection codes*,

whereas a subject (perhaps like Media Studies) with a more equal and 'flat'

number of sources for knowledge (a horizontal discourse) will produce

integrated codes. Robins and Webster saw the late twentieth century as a

period in which there was an emerging shift from collection codes to integrated

codes in pedagogic practice, in common with Lyotard's account of the

increasing differentiation of knowledge,

> What is especially important in Bernstein's argument is his recognition that
> progressivism, which exemplifies the integrated code, reflects a changing relationship
> between knowledge and power. His concern is with the implications for social control
> and social order of a significant transformation in the status of knowledge. As such, the
> direction of his enquiry is very much cognate with Lyotard's examination of the
> postmodern condition of knowledge.
> (1999, p176).

Inevitably such an analysis will come to conclusions about social control and

ultimately surveillance, which have formed a context for my investigation into

Subject Media, with assessment as a technology of surveillance. Robins and

Webster, in their account of 'techno-culture' also turn to Foucault's interest in

Bentham's methods in order to think through the 'politics of cyberspace'. In the

postmodern age, they argue, direct surveillance is replaced by the accumulation

of digitally coded information about subjects. It can be suggested in this vein

that the internet creates the possibility for an 'electronic Panopticon' through

which subjects self-regulate through 'therapeutic' technical imperatives,

'Cybernetics, through its escalation of this panoptic vision, becomes fundamental to the process of social control. We can speak of a 'cybernetic society' in which the moral principle of democratic societies – individual autonomy – becomes more and more anachronistic and is replaced by technical imperatives handed down from the administrative economic spheres. With Bentham's architectural Panopticon cognitive and scopic intrusion ensure power without coercion…. The electronic Panopticon adds (the laws) of cybernetics, of information processing and handling, and in doing so it intensifies the mechanisms of social control. This generalised panopticon operates through individual, and ultimately social, interiorisation of surveillance'.
(Robins and Webster, 1999, p180)

Clearly there are implications for 'Media Studies' if we accept, or even 'run for a while with' this idea of a new non-relationship between reality and representation. For such a 'discipline' engenders in subjects the 'will to 'know' such a relationship. Indeed, the key concepts at the heart of teaching and learning about 'the media' turn on assumptions about audiences' understanding of conventions and significations that carry meanings that construct ideas about reality. How are we to deal with this? Do we deride the subject as regressive, as some in Higher Education have, criticising its structuralist-Marxist tendencies? In this sense we would simply adopt an academic superiority, which in turn would assert the assumption that there is an alternative truth, a freer postmodern 'approach' to the same content for study. More useful for this project to investigate the assumptions made by dominant discourses at work in media teaching to work towards a scrutiny of power-effects, with particular interest in the regulatory impulse that may reside in the transmission of a language game which requires its users to agree on such notions of agency, representation and realism.

Towards a 'Method'

David Hartley (1997) asks what implications cultural shifts arising from postmodernity have for curriculum and assessment. His work investigates the assumptions underlying the 'need' for a National Curriculum, a Framework for Qualifications and the relationship between Post-Fordist economic forces and the technical and instrumental practices of contemporary educational policy. Like myself and Usher and Edwards, Hartley turns to Derrida, Foucault and Lyotard / Habermas to 'set up' such questions, and claims that these shifts in culture, time, space and belief give rise to concerns about society's 'ability to cohere'. Moreover he attempts to read Derrida and then return to the 'matter in hand', the socio-political conflicts at stake,

> In reading the ideas of Derrida and Lyotard, we are left with the conclusion that to talk of 'core' curriculum, or (as is fashionable in some quarters these days) of 'the basics', is to embrace false foundationalism. There is no objective core, there are no basics. Even so, the likes of Derrida appear to make the rather convenient assumption that we can screen off the world of politics and power. However much we may be persuaded by Derrida's linguistic analysis, the fact remains that people can be prevailed upon to act as if there really are basics to the curriculum, as if they really can be structured neatly into aims and objectives. (Hartley, D, 1997, p51)

This appears to be a misreading of both Derrida and Lyotard in so much as neither attempt to deny the 'real' currency of foundationalism, but Hartley is correct to point out, though it is rather obvious, that 'thinking difference' or engaging in deconstructive moves only helps us to challenge such encompassing rhetoric rather than oppose it with an alternative.

Hartley turns to the panopticon to explain the double-effect of surveillance and confession in educational self-assessment. On the one hand, the culture of

league tables, appraisal, results, added value statistics, national standards and accountability, on the other the trend towards self-assessment, counselling, portfolio-keeping, evaluation, action-planning and target-setting, all normalising behaviour and ways of thinking about and constructing subjects. Here are Bentham's principles in effect, on the one hand the 'will to assessment', on the other the continual preparation for such assessment. Students and teachers act under the assumption of surveillance at all times. Power is exercised through instrumental, administrative and technical energy.

The irony, for Hartley is that as postmodern ideas become a part of theoretical currency, such a 'vision' collides with this modernist, technical paradigm. As a 'safety measure' against the dangers of relativism and 'cultural erosion', a discourse concerning standards, parity, and tradition is mobilised. Agencies such as QCA intervene, charged by a government concerned with the 'common sense view', and insist on the preservation of tradition, bodies of knowledge, prescribed content and 'safe and reliable' methods of assessing. This may seem to be a return to a Marxist way of thinking, as this account gives QCA agency and implies a 'false consciousness' argument. However there is a self-fulfilling prophecy at work, those exercising power do so to be popular in order to retain the right to exercise more power. What is 'popular' is what is assumed to be common sense, bound by and lived through discourse, through which subjects are constructed. The common sense view is that there are things to know and things to study that lead to tangible levels of achievement that can be traded for positions in society. What it is to 'know' and where our ideas of what

is 'useful' come from are questions that find no location in educational discourse. Knowledge is performative and yet it is given the status of universal authenticity and tradition.

By way of an attempt at 'closure' on this highly selective summarising, the intention is that what follows will form a connection between a methodology or at least a set of principles provided by writers who have attempted to think pragmatically and differently about postmodern educational research and the focus of my project, a discursive examination of things that are said by, for and to Media Studies at a specific moment.

To this 'end', OCR's materials and assessment processes, teachers and examiners speaking about what they do, and discussions in the wider society might be presented in a framework made up of questions about power, politics, language and ontology, informed by the literature reviewed. We can reformulate our questions at this point as follows,

- How can we understand Media Studies through archaeology and genealogy - what is the history of its present?
- How does power-knowledge work in Media Studies?
- How are statements possible / delimited for Media teachers and learners?
- How can Media Studies be understood as modern / postmodern?
- How is Media assessment panoptic?
- How is consensus assumed in media learning and is there an alternative?
- How can we produce new rules in thinking about Media learning?

- In what ways is Media Studies (or Subject Media) *hyper-real*?

These, and other questions, will be approached through a method I feel most comfortable describing as an analysis of 'socio-cultural framing', using ideas about discourse and regulation, most obviously influenced by Basil Bernstein. Later in this thesis, the social practice of assessing students' coursework and exam answers for   OCR's new AS Media Studies specification (in January 2001) is used as a case study for the exploration of such framing.

THEORY

Education does not fit easily into the postmodern moment because educational theory is founded in the modernist tradition. Education is very much the dutiful child of the Enlightenment and, as such, tends to uncritically accept a set of assumptions deriving from Enlightenment thought. Indeed, it is possible to see education as the vehicle by which the Enlightenment ideals of critical reason, humanistic individual freedom and benevolent progress are substantiated and realised. (Usher and Edwards, 1994, p24).

This chapter will offer a critique of a range of approaches to research which, it will be argued, constitute a positivist approach to research, and the gathering and analysis of particular kinds of data which are ascribed different kinds of status. Furthermore, this critique will serve as a justification of a different approach to 'methodology', which will be described for this project as a discursive approach, informed by postmodern theories and intentions. The intention of this thesis is to offer an analysis of the socio-cultural framing of discourse at work in the assessment of Media Studies at the present time. The data gathered is entirely discursive, and as such qualitative. The focus of the study is entirely on social practice and process as opposed to tangible, objective 'matter'. I am seeking to offer a new perspective on the analysis of pedagogy, by emphasising the determining importance of assessment in providing a 'template' which may override the radical potential of a seemingly progressive area of classroom interaction. Thus my intention is to explore local causality in depth. These statements have been inserted here to correspond with the provided bullet points for research students, under the title '*When to Use Qualitative Research Methods*.' (Birmingham University, 1998) There is one point that sits uncomfortably with this project, however, which is '*there is no reason to believe that the author has special biases that would distort his or her view of the phenomenon.*'

I hope my introductory narrative on my positions and identities throughout this research, and my adoption of poststructuralist research perspectives make it clear that I do not believe this to be a safe claim to make. Indeed, any research contribution informed by Derrida's work on classical binaries and Foucault's notions of truth, knowledge and power will resist such ideas of 'bias' as anything other than a precondition of thought.

In proposing a postmodern approach to methodology, I will be drawing upon the work of Usher, Scott and Edwards, Kemmis, Stronach and MacLure, all of whom have written specifically on the implications of the 'postmodern condition' for educational research. In turn, this body of work draws upon ideas about truth, knowledge, discourse, language, writing and interpretation put into play by Derrida, Lyotard, Baudrillard and Foucault. Hence the conventional linear and compartmentalised format of 'the thesis' necessarily creates a certain overlap, or at least cross-referencing, between this establishment of an approach, and the review of literature which influences such a 'position', which came before. My opening 'autobiography' is also relevant in so much as it attempts to provide a context which frames all that follows.

Usher and Edwards' postmodern reading of education draws upon the work of Derrida, Foucault and Lyotard and thus is of great interest to me as I have attempted to harness the common elements of these texts myself for this project. Usher and Edwards outline the implications of postmodern social theory for pedagogy by first establishing a version of postmodernism that aids such an investigation, selecting as I have done (and recognising as I have the arbitrary

nature of such selection) the authors mentioned. They attempt a dialogue

between postmodernism and current educational changes and conflicts, and

establish some principles for using such ideas to reconfigure educational

practices. Particular attention is paid to the potential of experiential learning for

an embrace of the 'postmodern moment'. Importantly, the authors problematise

the notion of emancipation (a discourse I have been open about subscribing to)

and discuss its oppressive assumptions. This critique of emancipation as an

ideal constitutes a significant attack on the premises of modernity.

Usher and Edwards describe postmodernism (whilst acknowledging the

contrariness of the attempt) as a 'contested terrain', and their 'methodology' in

underpinned by a desire to escape attempts to deny such contest, in other

words research that bears witness to different ways of thinking about 'reality'

must celebrate, or at least refuse to 'smooth over' changes taking place in the

production, circulation and consumption of meaning. Postmodernism is

understood in this way to be a 'state' in which the way in which we understand

culture changes, rather than culture itself 'shifting' any more than it always does

/ has. Education is located in the postmodern moment with some controversy,

as the Habermas / Rorty intervention shows us[38]. For Lyotard and others,

education is itself entwined with modernity as an idea. Usher and Edwards

apply Lyotard's ideas thus,

> The very rationale of education and the role of the educator is founded on the humanist
> ideal of a certain kind of subject who has the inherent potential to become self-
> motivated and self-directing, a rational subject capable of exercising individual agency.

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38 Rorty's position is that of the 'micropolitician' in the wake of the collapse of grand narratives,
but like Habermas, his desire is to continue the project of modernity through re-negotiation of
justice and politics.

> The task of education has therefore been understood as one of 'bringing out'; of helping to realise this potential, so that subjects become fully autonomous and capable of exercising their individual and intentional agency. Thus education is allotted a key role in the shaping of subjectivity and identity, the task of making people into particular kinds of subjects. (Usher and Edwards, 1994, pp. 24-25)

The postmodern moment, then, introduces a challenge to such systems of thought so that epistemology becomes fragmented as a concept or a bedrock. Whilst curriculum often includes postmodernism as an object of study, rarely can curriculum become postmodern, as my struggles with this thesis, and my inadequate 'in and out' approach to reflexivity show. This is because the seemingly 'critical' aspects of such a 'spirit' appear to many from the liberal tradition, like Rorty, to leave us with nothing. Usher and Edwards argue that such concern is rooted in 'Cartesian anxiety', a polarised way of thinking that doesn't allow us to think in between certainty or chaos (these are Derrida's binaries). The crux is the relationship between epistemic relativity and morality, and whether one can read many different positions without value. Tension surrounds attempts by educators such as myself to understand that discourses of emancipation are always-already bound up with desire for power, that we are an ally in what we struggle against (as Foucault tells us, resistance is a part of power, not its other). If we accept this 'turn', then we understand without anxiety that the will to agency that education hinges on is a part of a polarity discourse in itself (that we are either autonomous or determined, entrapped or critical). Furthermore, notions of critical autonomy (and there are many in Media Studies' writing about itself) are bound up with ideas about mastery and closure, so that autonomy of this kind is achieved through 'command' of an analytical language. Such a need for mastery is a product of Enlightenment ideals, again, always-

already imbued with the will to power which the discourse of the 'interpretive' mobilises despite itself.

Here we are in 'Foucault territory' again, and Usher and Edwards' reading centres on a Lacanian-Foucaldian mirror metaphor, from which the role of a postmodern juncture would be to question the mirror that education holds up to itself[39]. Understood through this modernity metaphor, my project is to present an analysis of media education which unsettles the image it presents, not to the 'outside world' but to itself, and hence to position teachers and examiners in front of the mirror. The task that Foucault turned to is to focus on 'discontinuities' in ways of thinking about certain kinds of subjectivity, shifts in modes, so that the conditions of possibility for kinds of knowledge are altered. It will be interesting to position ideas about 'media knowledge' here. In particular, as we have seen, the shift in mode from discipline to regulation and self-regulation is of interest in studies of modernity, and as I have said, we can read 'Media Study' as an exercise of power in this way, a terrain which needs to be contested (though under what imperative there is a need to research is another question for the reflective practitioner).

For Usher and Edwards, Foucault and Hunter, then, governance secures itself in education, but we are distanced from Althusserian notions of the 'ideological state apparatus' here because governance is more a fluid energy than an agency with a possible 'truer' alternative. Foucault's power/knowledge thesis

helps us understand that the 'given' idea that education can be the site for the discussion of truth which could be gained from knowledge that represents transparently reality would be possible and desirable if it could be untainted by power, but that this is the always-already. The postmodern turn in education is the discussion of the conditions of possibility for our own 'good intention' discourses. So we need an approach that can articulate a dialogue between analysis of 'imposed' external rhetoric (e.g. the National Curriculum, performance review, added value) and our own internal assumptions about, say, 'enrichment', or for the Media teacher, 'relevance'[40]. A good example is Ball's critique (1990) of the 1988 Education Act, which led to the introduction of the National Curriculum and increased 'autonomy' and self-management for educational institutions. For Ball, a discourse of derision was pivotal in this shift in mode,

> This discourse of derision acted to debunk and displace not only specific words and meanings - progressivism and comprehensivism, for example - but also the speakers of these words, those 'experts', 'specialists' and 'professionals' referred to as the 'educational establishment'. These privileged speakers have been displaced, their control over meaning lost, their professional preferences replaced by abstract mechanisms and technologies of 'truth' and 'rationality' - parental choice, the market, efficiency and management'.   (Ball, 1990, p18)

A discourse of derision has also been in force recently in 'traditionalist' critiques of newer subjects like Media Studies, and what will be of interest in my analysis of Curriculum 2000 is the discourse presented by the subject to itself in defence

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39 Lacan's mirror stage theory developed the idea of three distinct but overlapping orders of human identity – the imaginary, the symbolic and the real. These stages influence each other and work together simultaneously to give most individuals a stable relationship with reality.
40 The National Curriculum prescribes the content of teaching and learning at GCSE. Performance review is a process monitored by OFSTED which requires schools and colleges to analyse factors such as retention and achievement against national benchmarks. Value added is a system based on data introduced by Greenhead College in the mid-90s and now widely used as a measuring tool, in all sectors. This system is based on measuring inputs against

against these. These will be bound up with assumptions about the nature of 'the subject' . In order to be regulated, or to regulate itself through and by discourse, the subject must be constituted as such, through observation, surveillance and critically, assessment. I will be interested in how notional qualities such as 'critical autonomy' are organised, observed and assessed.

Assessment serves to 'find things out' about people, it aims to 'know' subjects in new ways. People are thus categorised and understood as 'types'. Nowhere is this more evident that in the operations of power flowing through the work of the exam board, a body in existence entirely to invent ways to 'know' subjects. OCR constructs, and is constructed as a panopticon, to allude once more to Foucault's metaphor and Bentham's design. Teachers and learners are agents of and subject to various assessment procedures. The process of assessment is never neutral. It functions as a normalising energy, a 'normalising gaze'. Learners behave in ways that are regulated by their will to be 'marked' by this observing technology, the primary effect of which is exclusion. This is not only the case in the traditional 'exam hall' scenario with its particular organisation of space and time, a construction seemingly invented to make the process of 'becoming' as alienating as possible. It is also prevalent in the shift of mode to portfolio organisation and self-assessment in which the learner is regulated by a range of confessional discourses, the internal gaze of the evaluation. Kafka's parable of the man from the country before the Law is of use at this point.

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outputs as opposed to raw achievement data to measure the effectiveness of teaching in an institution, related to the 'starting point' of its cohort.

Derrida (1992) reads this section of *The Trial* as a metaphor for Western

thought and its assertion of a never-tangible origin, a presence based on lack[41].

In Kafka's story a man from the country comes to the city to question the law

but is forever denied by a series of gatekeepers who one after the other keep

him waiting until he realises that he himself is the law, that the law is embodied

in bodies as subjects. Derrida seizes upon the importance of the man's refusal

to allow himself to enter the gates by force (it is the discourse of the gatekeeper

only that bars his way) to unravel another spatial metaphor alongside the

panopticon from Kafka's parable, thus,

> One cannot reach the law, and in order to have a rapport of respect with it, one must not have a rapport with the law, one must interrupt the relation. One must enter only into relation with the law's representatives, its examples, its guardians. And these are interrupters as well as passengers. We must remain ignorant of who or what or where the law is, we must no know who it is or what it is, where and how it presents itself, whence it comes from and whence it speaks. This is what must be before the must of the law. (Derrida, J, 1992, p203)

Thinking about educational assessment with such metaphors in mind, one is

able to consider the desire to be judged alongside the acceptance that the

judges can never be reached and that one must act as guardsman to one's own

desire to enter the law. In other words, modern education operates on the

given that assessors are abstract and assessment is compulsive.

Influenced by the desire to move away from a positivist tradition with its desire

for mastery and closure, the approach I wish to take to the research role is best

read in the context of the debate over knowledge, politics and emancipation

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41 Kafka's parable, within 'The Trial', involves a man from the country who tries to gain access, unsuccessfully to the Law, and eventually realises there is no physical embodiment of the law to

brought about by postmodernism. It is useful here to think about the positions

taken by Lyotard and Habermas over liberal politics as this 'dispute' is

illustrative of many of the dilemmas facing the educational researcher who

wants to embrace difference whilst mindful of the 'will to know'. I will discuss

the implications for ideas about knowledge of what the two have to say about

postmodernity, and then return to issues for educational research in the light of

such.

The argument between Jurgen Habermas and Jean Francois Lyotard arises

from discomfort over the alleged 'end' of various things, including the project of

modernity, the assumptions of which seem evident in virtually all areas of

contemporary education and educational research.

Both of these writers have been cited as key protagonists in debates over

modernity / postmodernity (i.e. is the former 'over' and what is the latter?) that

turn on the classic 'Kantian' enigmas, the status of such concepts as Reason,

Truth, Justice[42]. Their seemingly irreconcilable disagreement involves the

question of whether it is possible to cling to a rethought project of emancipation

(for Habermas a 'theoretical perspective', for Lyotard inevitably a metanarrative)

or whether embracing philosophy as narrative and pursuing heterogeneity

offers more than a counter-emancipatory irrationalism, as Habermas accuses[43].

The importance of this question to this project resides in the immersion in

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discuss matters with.
42 Recent work by Norris has questioned the relationship between Derrida's poststructuralism
in particular (but all postmodern thinking about philosophy) and Kant's 'original' questions.

modernism of educational research, teacher training, assessment and educational policy, schooling and the organisation of time and space in schools. If a postmodern, anti-essentialist ontology is to be claimed, then the impulse for such a claim takes us 'back' to Lyotard's ideas about performative knowledge, language games and parology, and Habermas's refuting of these 'moves'. I will discuss both writers' offerings and consider Richard Rorty's attempts to find a 'third way' of thinking this difference.

Habermas's project is to reinterpret Enlightenment rationality seemingly obscured by the privilege granted to instrumental reason by capitalist modernisation. Habermas should not be labelled a 'modernist', any more than it is sensible to straightforwardly label anybody a 'postmodernist'. The latter term embraces a range of approaches to 'doing theory'. For Lyotard, the postmodern is a shift in the expectations and production of knowledge, but is part of the modern, the *paradox of the future anterior'*. The desire for a clear boundary between two eras, or a clear demarcation between two opposing approaches, are ill-conceived attempts at finality.

In terms of the importance of these questions for a project that is to some extent written by liberal, emancipatory discourses, the significance of liberalism arises. A postmodern analysis of the genealogy and 'intentions' of liberalism would bring forth questions about 'consensus' which must necessarily be contingent

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43 Habermas' concern is based on the danger of postmodern thinking becoming (or already being) inherently conservative in its lack of any counter-political position.

and ever-changing. Clearly modern liberal agreements about knowledge and the passing on of such are problematic from a postmodern perspective.

Habermas argues that any critical theory maintaining as its stake some emancipatory desire (for a 'better' world) must at least retain belief in intersubjective consensus, some sense of 'human nature' that can reside in communication, rather than within the individual as for Kant. For Habermas, every speech act can offer validity claims to truth. The will towards transparent exchange is an 'unavoidable fiction', a transcendental illusion. Normativity and rationality can be created out of themselves because of their immanence in intersubjective language exchange – or the 'ideal speech situation', following Wittgenstein's rules for agreement[44].

For Lyotard, narrative refuses subjective autonomy. In *The Postmodern Condition* (1992) he describes the storytelling of the Cashinahua society. For this society, rather than judge the validity of a story by its 'truth' as defined by prior criteria, the only legitimation is the efficient 'passing on' of the story as it was told to the narrator to the addressee who then in turn becomes the narrator. Lyotard argues that we should see things as so many 'Chinese whispers', and this gets us closer to knowledge and ethics. Thus we are named in language and obliged to interact in rule-governed games, yet the rules are changed as we go along.

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44 Wittgenstein's' rules for agreement are influential in Lyotard's work on 'gaming.'

Language chooses us to be narrators and addressees, for Lyotard. Jewish and Muslim traditions offer ways of understanding obligation and address that are markedly other to the West's insistence on the 'I' as autonomous and free. This assertion brings us to Derrida's attack on western metaphysics and its denial of narrative contingency.

Where Habermas agrees that prescription in communication is the trace of rationality, Lyotard claims that it is the contingency of storytelling itself that determines our heteronomy – we only speak because we have been spoken. For Lyotard, there can be no autonomy. Dissensus, the impossibility of agreement and finality becomes the very nature of language and of 'rationality'. Justice is not impossible, but it must be an intuition within linguistic interaction (and for Foucault, desire for 'justice' is merely a desire for power).

For Richard Rorty, we can find small-scale experimental ways of 'doing justice' by adopting the position of the 'liberal ironist', she who is prepared to forget ideas about universal human nature in favour of contingent language games. Rorty's position is perhaps the most 'applicable' for the educational researcher who wants to work towards an anti-essentialist ontology.

Returning to Usher, Scott and Edwards' critique of the positivist research tradition helps us find ways of 'doing research' whilst reflecting on such 'middle ground' issues as those identified by Rorty through readings of Habermas and Lyotard. This critique asserts convincingly that educational research has too

often been understood as a technical process rather than a constructed

process, allowing researchers and their examiners to neglect important

epistemological questions. It is considered an 'objectifying practice' in which

others are spoken for and order / closure is sought. From the reliance on

'disciplines' and 'fields of enquiry' to the collection of data to the 'orderly' logical

presentation of a thesis like this one, research is judged on its 'correct

application' of given 'methods'. The researcher's objectivity is tested, and it is

assumed that so long as the researcher is careful enough in applying these

methods, and chooses the correct ones from the appropriate paradigm, issues

of power, politics, oppression and authority can be avoided. For Usher et al, the

various micro-political processes at work, the allocation of resources, the

acceptance of proposals, the commissioning of research, the context of 'fields'

construct a web of assumptions that serve to perpetuate domination of

arguments over what 'knowledge' is and what the purpose of enquiry should be.

> When we do research there is a tendency to take objectivity and the procedures for
> attaining objectivity, including the elimination of subjectivity, for granted, as a 'given', a
> necessary aspect of doing research. Consequently we fail to see that in implicitly
> accepting objectivity in this form we are implicitly accepting a particular epistemology
> and all the commitments and assumptions which that contains. (Usher and Scott,
> 1996, p12)

To establish definitions, epistemology is understood as that which distinguishes

different kinds of knowledge claims, and ontology that which is understood to

'exist'. As all research makes knowledge claims, it is therefore always a

question of epistemological issues. Positivist epistemology, for Usher et al,

makes a series of assumptions. It is assumed that the world is objective and

can be observed through 'correct' scientific methods. It is accepted that

subjects can be distinguished from objects, so the 'knower' can know the world

and that agreement can legitimate claims to knowledge. It is a 'given' that the social world can be analysed like the natural world (hence the 'human sciences') as both have order, reason, cause and effect. And thus it is assumed that reflexive thinking about research itself is unnecessary so long as the correct methodological procedures (which are the same for the natural and social sciences) have been followed.

Moreover, it can be argued that educational research, lacking a coherent 'discipline' tends to function on a view of knowledge and its uses that Lyotard calls the 'performativity principle'. This potentially allows for contingency and reflexive approaches since shifting trends in what is 'needed' allow for eclectic, disparate discursive investigation. But this is denied so long as research is considered a technology as opposed to a social activity.

The work of Thomas Kuhn is significant to this discussion because Kuhn introduced the concept of the paradigm, a framework of beliefs, values and techniques within which research legitimates itself[45]. Foucault's 'discourse' would be the set of statements and the rules for such statements (the delimiting of the sayable) that are given currency within such a paradigm.   As ways of looking at the world and interpreting what is observed change, so these paradigms 'shift' and theorists are converted to such new ways which then become 'natural'. In this dialectic view of knowledge is a linear sense of progression and pursuit. Kuhn posits that these new norms become truth and

then exclude alternatives, hence knowledge becomes power in Foucault's terms. Research is then a social and political process of power and resistance.

Again this view of power/knowledge must lead us to question notions of consensus and therefore the Habermas /Lyotard debate arises once more. For Lyotard, Habermas's desire to locate consensus in the 'ideal speech situation' harbours a dominating and power-laden denial of difference. The postmodern approach posits that epistemology itself is preceded by ontology, the subject / object opposition cannot hold, that all research is a practice of textual production. Epistemology itself is ordered by language and there is no possibility of value-free research and knowledge. The researcher celebrates such 'problems.'

Accepting that social reality cannot be extra-discursive allows us to return to the questions asked at the very beginning of the thesis of myself. Why research? What is research, how is this constructed, who is silent, what authority is sought, and who is empowered and disempowered? As a researcher I am not an individual, rather I am located, written and constructed. Usher et al describe the 'move' thus,

> To do research in a postmodern way is to take a critical stance towards the practice of sense-making and sense-taking which we call research. What it focuses on however is not the world which is constructed and investigated by research but the way in which that world is written, inscribed or textualised in the research text. (Usher and Scott, 1996, p31)

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45 Kuhn's scientific model shifted attention from a correspondence theory of the truth, to suggest that 'proof' is merely the assent of peers - a close parallel to the 'linguistic turn' taken by Wittgenstein. Kuhn's ideas undermined the basic idea of scientific progress.

How educational research constructs reality is of interest. Reflexivity becomes 'of use'. Research is understood as a fiction like any other, and we understand that research is always a writing of the self, as attempt at mastery, bound by the will to power, the ideal of truth. Reflexive research brings to light the constitution of the subject in research in writing, and research as a representational practice of itself, a practice of making moves in language. Turning to Derrida again, we think of research here as writerly, not as realism. This move hinges on the status given to the researcher as the 'I',

> Reflexivity foregrounds the implication of the personal within what is 'beyond' the personal; it is as much about the inscribed (written) I as the inscribing I (the I that writes) – the I that is a subject constituted in research as a practice of writing by the languages, discourses and interpretive culture, as against the I that is the author of writing, the self-present, autonomous and author-itative I of scientific and humanistic discourses, positivist-empiricist and interpretive paradigms of research. (Usher and Scott, 1996, p39)

In order to translate this 'intent' into something approaching practice for a project such as this, it is useful to turn to Lyotard's 'parology' as an affirmative response to the demands of a performative understanding of knowledge[46]. Parology involves making a move in the pragmatics of knowledge without constraint from the will to power always invested in legitimation. By accepting that consensus is a constantly retreating horizon, we can embrace the realisation that research conducted within any paradigm is simply the use of an idea, of a conception of reason, but that something always destabilises such a balancing impulse. Parology involves the spirit to create new rules. For an interesting application of Lyotard's use of 'paralogy', we can turn to Ingram (1997),

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46 In my appropriation, I am using a reference to this sense of language as an alternative to Habermas's desire for consensus as the goal of interaction.

> The work of Lyotard extends the narrative position. Parology refers to a quality of conversation in which the imaginative rearrangement of ideas leads to improved understanding. Existing sources and authorities are regarded as stimuli for conversation, not as holding answers. This lead to the formation of the 'little stories,' which are always provisional and always local. Paraological conversation is immediate. Words are defined by the interlocutors, not by the dictionary. The terms of the conversation are based on bricolage, Levi-Strauss's term for using objects close at hand for nonstandard purposes. For example (from Shawver), a patient uses the term 'irritation' to mean 'passing anger.' There is no single word in our common lexicon to emphasize the fleeting quality of anger, but in a specific context, the patient uses the word, 'irritation,' to express just this usage.

Lyotard's 'parological activity' posits that consensus is an act in dialogue but not an end (similar to Derrida's dissemination in which meaning is always deferred). The 'end' is constant parology, the liberation of new moves, different rules. The liberal modernist tradition assumes that it is possible for humanity as a collective subject to regularize the moves involved in communication, and to legitimise statements in the context of the agreed rules for each language game. For Lyotard, this belief destroys the 'gaming' process, as the rules are always in flux. Again, we can relate this to Derrida's resistance to closure, and Foucault's work on power-knowledge (if the assumption of agreement on the rules for language games can be understood as the delimiting of the sayable.) Like Derrida and Foucault, Lyotard asserts that a resistance to 'meta' assumptions necessitates the 'localisation' of discussions about meaning,

> any consensus on the rules defining a game and the 'moves' playable within it must be local, in other words, agreed on by its present players and subject to eventual cancellation. The orientation then favors a multiplicity of finite meta-arguments, by which I mean argumentation that concerns metaprescriptives and is limited in space and time (Lyotard, J, 1992, p66)

Again, education sits uncomfortably with such an impulse for the local, the contingent and the temporary, grounded as it is in ideas about progress, truth, authenticity and origin. Reviewing the 'useful ideas' that we can take from the work of Foucault, Derrida, Lyotatard and Baudrillard leads us easily enough to a

sense of a 'postmodern approach' to critique, but what hope for a 'pragmatic' context in which to teach, to assess, to work with learners? The critics of such ideas as these I have selected point to the impossibility of actually 'doing anything' with what is left standing after the deconstruction is complete.

In other words, what does postmodernism '*do*' to the traditionally modernist processes of research? It amounts simply to a different view of what it is that we are looking for. Or a different set of 'rules' for interpretation, towards the 'end' of questioning what it means to collect data, and foregrounding the desires that move one to do so.   Stronach and MacLure (1997), inviting new ways of reading and writing educational research to 'embrace' the postmodern, offer the following,

> We get to interpretation through processes of data collection (that hunter-gatherer's fantasy of epistemology) and so questions of what constitutes data and method and the subject who executes these manoeuvres and conjures the raw materials with which we interpret, are prime candidates for deconstructive suspicion.   (Stronach and MacLure, 1997, p99)

I want now to turn such suspicion towards my own project, in order to establish a postmodern, discursive methodology for what follows. For Usher and Edwards, then, emancipatory discourses underpin modern education and it is a challenge to say the very least to think outside of such a meta-language, as educators inhabit its nuances and idioms without contest in the main. An alternative project is untenable since it would have to rely on the same totalising assumptions, hence a project of questioning and reflection is necessary, which inevitable runs the risk of being derided as neo-conservative, relativist and ultimately counter-emancipatory (in other words, it doesn't '*do*' anything).

However, Usher and Edwards draw on Lyotard's notion of the postmodern

condition to suggest that this is not a desire but an inevitability since the

collapse of metanarratives and the micro nature of contemporary struggle

means that there is simply no currency for discourses immersed in the language

of modernity, in other words there has been a temporal shift in consciousness

that invalidates much educational thinking. However this thinking still resides in

all areas of practice,

> The emancipation of the people and the speculative unity of knowledge are capable of
> informing the practices of different parts of the provision of education in different ways.
> Initial schooling becomes the primary concern for the state. Later stages of education
> can be left to autonomous institutions. So long as they produce the necessary cadres
> to fulfil the functions necessary to the state, they can be left to get on with the pursuit of
> knowledge. Education is understood as freeing people through the process of learning
> and to be about the pursuit of knowledge which serves that end. Scientific knowledge
> is privileged as the form of knowledge that best achieves this. (Usher and Edwards,
> 1994, p173)

I would argue that this view is out of date now since there has been increased

prescription of content for both further and higher education, driven by the

perceived need for coherence and frameworks, the market and employers, and

a prevailing preoccupation with targets, accountability, competition and

regulation.

Again drawing from Lyotard, Usher and Edwards agree that the performative

context of postmodern knowledge means that to be educated is now to

consume the necessary information for optimising performance, an efficiency

discourse, driven by market economics, now prevails over the emancipatory

discourse of modernity. To oppose this through reinforcement of the

emancipatory language (as Habermas asserts) is to deny the shift that has

occurred in thought. Lyotard's alternative, parology appears more useful in that

it allows for shorter-term consensus (before new rules of agreement are

suggested) that generates struggle without recourse to teleological grand narratives. Hence the postmodern moment allows the ongoing struggle for new ways of speaking, new voices and new ideas.

> In the postmodern moment the 'educational' is recast as the cultivation of desire through experience(s) as a condition of and a response to the economic and social fragmentation initiated by the uncertainties of scientific and foundational knowledge, the limits of technical rationality and the consequent failings of the modern project. (Usher and Edwards, 1994, p195)

Experiential learning, then, is posited as a bridging between the modern and the postmodern (although we should avoid such demarcation since Lyotard reminds us that the postmodern is a part of the modern). Meaning can be constructed through experience and knowledge can be accepted as relative and celebrated as such. However, we are warned that there is a flipside to such a coin, in that such emergences as experiential learning, counselling, performativity, self-assessment, modularisation, flexible learning and portfolio-keeping appear on the surface to be emancipatory in a new way, by empowering the learner with self-control and creativity, freed from the shackles of the traditional examination, the timetable and the rigidity of knowledge content. But we can draw on both Foucault and Baudrillard to see other implications. Clearly new forms of self-regulation and efficiency arise from such liberation, meaning that the learner is in the panopticon, always aware of assessment criteria and the need for evidence (indeed as threshold payments for teachers are introduced, they too are acutely conscious of the need to record details of all activity, framed by their knowledge of threshold criteria) [47]. Hence new forms of governance are mobilised through such freedoms, invisible and hence if we are convinced by

Foucault, all the stronger for such 'absence.' Drawing on Baudrillard, we might see experiential methods as foregrounding the hyper-real, fetishising lived experience in the absence of a shared view of reality. Either way, it is clear that experiential learning is ambivalent in that it is favoured in different ways by a number of groups with very different agendas for education.

A set of impulses for seizing on the opportunities afforded by the move away from the project of modernity are offered by Critical Pedagogy, a term used most famously by Giroux (see Halsey, ed, 1997) [48]. Giroux calls for pedagogy to recognise itself as a process,

> Education needs to be reformulated so as to give as much attention to pedagogy as it does to traditional and alternative notions of scholarship. This is not a question of giving pedagogy equal weight to scholarship as much as it is of assessing the important relationship between them. Education must be understood as the production of identities in relation to the ordering, representation, and legitimation of specific forms of knowledge and power. (1997, p122)

Critical Pedagogy seeks to recognise difference as part of a common struggle, linking education to the more general struggle for radical democracy, thus overcoming the dilemma of attempting to isolate education without attention to the wider political and economic society. The concern is with deconstructing authoritative voices that speak on behalf of others and with reconfiguring the notion of citizenship (itself now a site of governance, as qualifications introduced since 2000 have included explicit opportunities for the acquisition of citizenship and qualifications in citizenship have also been established in their

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47 Teachers need to provide, for their managers, a portfolio of evidence of their capability, ranging from assessment of work, to staff development undertaken.
48 Critical pedagogy is concerned with a transforming pedagogy and is such is political in its 'making visible; pedagogy as a carrier of power or of resistance.

own right, alongside Key Skills[49]). Critical pedagogy establishes a 'language of possibility' for teachers, who become 'transformative intellectuals' in this context.

Perhaps frustratingly, Usher and Edwards point out fundamental problems with such approaches, which makes it difficult for me to simply suggest that Media Studies is rearticulated in dialogue with Critical Pedagogy (or to analyse Curriculum 2000 for its potential and/or resistance for/to it). Their preferred 'method' for embracing the postmodern turn is to inhabit the 'reflexive moment' in a constant, deferring sense, refusing mastery and disrupting but not attempting to overcome power. As far as there is an emancipatory potential remaining in the demise of modernity, it is described thus,

> In questioning the limits and limitations of modernity, its oppressive consequences, it is also possible to argue that resistance is more tangible, even though it might not result in the emancipatory utopia posited by modernity. In other words, the postmodern moment can give us greater critical purchase on the situations we confront and enable us to transgress the boundaries of modernity rather than be constrained within them. In the postmodern moment, resistance and transgression, rather than emancipation, signify the possibilities for challenging dominant forms of power…..in fundamentally questioning the modern project of education, the postmodern moment does not signify a failure to engage in issues of oppression and emancipation but a reconfiguration of the way such issues are conceptualised. Oppression and emancipation are not polar opposites, the one excluding the other, as the logocentric discourse of modernity implies. They are co-implicated in ever shifting patterns, arising from ongoing struggles. It is for this reason that resistance rather than emancipation has become the key to much postmodern discourse. Postmodern resistance is about historically situated subjects reconfiguring the complex and contradictory patterns of emancipation and oppression. Modern notions of emancipation are an 'escape from history'; a denial of the oppressions and exclusions necessary in enabling certain forms of emancipation to be expressed. In this situation, as the boundaries multiply, which side you are on becomes an ever more troubling ethical and political question. (Usher and Edwards, 1994, p226-7)

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49 Key Skills units are prescribed by QCA. There are three core key skills – application of number, communication and information technology, and it is a requirement of specifications that opportunities to demonstrate these skills are 'signposted' within. Students take these key skills as separate qualifications. There is now a GCSE in Citizenship and an A/AS in Critical Thinking, which are optional courses, though in some institutions these are delivered within pastoral programmes as an alternative to General Studies.

There are some key suggestions to draw out from these statements that can frame my analysis of Subject Media. Firstly, Subject Media inhabits modernity / emancipation / culture as enrichment discourses 'despite itself' in the sense that its reflexive impulse rests awkwardly alongside its desire to empower learners with critical autonomy. In assuming such potential to liberate through the notion that an academic pursuit can help learners to understand the media from a more enlightened vantage point, it fails to address the power-desire inherent in such a 'project'. Therefore Subject Media can be understood as an 'escape from history'. However, Media education, due to its subject matter, marginalised status and ever-shifting pedagogical diversity, alongside the migrant status of its practitioners, perhaps provides for itself the potential for reconfigurations and renegotiations of itself as a project. Perhaps even this research is testament to such possibilities. Thus the ethical and political dilemmas that arise from embracing the postmodern turn will be less of an affront to those who inhabit such a fledgling discipline than is the case for stalwarts of the literary education discourses unravelled and interrogated by Hunter and Peim.

Second, the kinds of resistance and reconfigurations suggested by Usher and Edwards must be integral to the research itself. In other words, as well as asking questions about oppression and emancipation, modernity and logocentrism of Media Studies, I must also ask them of my own practices and assumptions. I will struggle to avoid the 'denial of history'.

The qualitative data I gather will be discussed as discursive evidence and will be scrutinised from a number of positions, taking into account my own interpretive practice and autobiographical considerations. In other words, such data will not be assumed to have empirical status that can be observed from a research position without a tapestry of assumptions and interpretations.

My close reading of OCR's assessment texts will attempt the kind of approach suggested by Derrida, in that the internal logic of such documents will be interrogated with the intention of exploring the arche-writing that resides in the margins of such formal and prescriptive texts. In other words, specifications, exam papers and marking criteria will be treated as literature. I will strive to avoid conclusions, or notions of 'findings'. Instead I will raise questions, the answers to which will be deferred.   I will, like Foucault and Hunter, be looking to explore the history of Subject Media's present, to identify and describe ways of talking about media learning that may be shifting, to try to explain how the sayable is (de) limited within the media teachers' communities. It is too difficult for me to resist the desire to be practical, to offer a contribution, a furthering. Like Habermas and Rorty, I am concerned with the 'project', with the 'point' of the research[50]. I want to avoid the perceived dogmatism of an overly indulgent postmodernism that appears to be so concerned to avoid essentialising, foundationalising, oppressing, marginalising and excluding that 'nothing can be done'!

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50 Habermas and Rorty are both concerned with 'the project' of modernity and of forms of emancipation.

I wish to resolve this dilemma by positing that research which provides a study of power in local contexts related to specific historical contingencies, contributes more than totalising discourses which deny their own status. In other words, by investigating power relations and formulations within Subject Media, I will make explicit and not conceal the desire for power and mastery which always-already resides within research activity.

STUDY

> The great oppositions, in education – liberty against surveillance, for example, or the disciplinary against the pastoral, knowledge versus pedagogy, teaching against learning, are inscribed in the form of the institution. In relation to the fundamental features of the school as we know it – the classroom, the teacher, pedagogy – a deconstructive theory may both problematise such oppositions, reveal the relations of complicity that bind them together and redefine the limits of and the boundaries of possibility.
> (Peim, 2001, p15)

It is my most 'central' suggestion that in the twenty-first century in England, particularly in the context of Curriculum 2000, it is important to theorise the relations between the oppositions listed by Peim above, and the increasingly significant opposition between the 'internal' pedagogy of the institution and the 'external' determining context of the assessment regime, and indeed to problematise the notion of the boundaries between these. To this end, the remainder of this thesis turns attention to a 'moment in time' in terms of assessment in order to explore and deconstruct such complicities.

This chapter will offer a case study on seemingly linear but intertwined stages in the 'process' of formal curriculum and assessment.

There are three parts to the case study, and three kinds of 'data' gathered.

1. The history and development of Media education traced through a genealogical account, drawing on research conducted at both a textual level (published reports, syllabuses and specifications, exam papers and advisory documents, as well as published historical accounts) and a personal level (what people involved say about such a history).

2. A close reading of texts produced for the OCR examining board in 2000, for the regulation and assessment of media learning for the awarding of AS level Media Studies (3860). The close reading will interrogate the genre of

specifications (previously labelled syllabuses) and assessment materials /

criteria (question papers, mark schemes, assessment criteria for coursework /

portfolio work), and deconstruct the assumptions underlying the procedures for

the creation of these documents, including the QCA Code of Practice. The

approach taken to such reading is broadly speaking linguistic, influenced by

Fairclough's *Critical Discourse Analysis*[51] and Derrida's *deconstruction*[52].

3. Collected responses to questionnaires and e-interviews are described and

   interpreted. These gatherings allow us to consider the genealogical context

   into which this specification was introduced, and the present-tense

   relationship between specification as framework, the anticipation of

   assessment and media learning. The central questions for these enquiries

   are,

   - what different identities are at work in the development of 'Subject

     Media'?

   - how have academic and vocational versions of learning come to exist

     separately?

   - what informs choices made by teachers in response to specifications?

   - what further layers of mediation for learners are provided by decisions

     made by their teachers?

   - what is the relationship between pedagogy and teachers' own identities,

     political self-worth and tastes?

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51 My 'study' chapter offers a method based on critical discourse analysis as a set of
approaches to application, and a framework for interrogating a problem through the analysis of
discourses.
52 Deconstruction is more of a spirit than a 'practical' set of definitions and approaches, unlike
CDA (see above) which intends to put into practice a framework, or approach.

COMMUNITY AND PRACTICE

I was interested in asking the following questions in order to interrogate the

dynamics of assessing media learning,

- **Who are the agenda-setting examiners and policy makers for Media**

  Studies?

- **Who are the examiners who mark the students' work?**

- **Who are the teachers preparing the students for these exams?**

The 'who' in these questions needs to be constructed and framed by work on

professional identities within teaching communities. Later in this chapter the

research conducted by Avis, Kendall and Parsons and Zukas and Malcolm (see

Avis et al, 2003) are considered in relation to Media teachers' understandings of

self and purpose[53].

'Data'

1. In order to unveil some competing truths about the development of Media

   education in the UK, a number of 'key players' were sent e-interview

   questions, to which free text responses were requested. These respondents

   were all people who have been involved at QCA and / or exam board and

   advisory group / consultation level in the institutional forms the subject as

   taken. In asking for autobiography and accounts of media consumption, I

   wanted here to assess the outcomes in the context of Bourdieu's work on

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53 Avis, Kendall and Parsons conducted research into the experiences and attitudes of new
entrants into further education teaching in the Black Country. Zukas and Malcolm's work
identifies a discourse of care at work in the expressions of identity forthcoming from teachers in

taste and distinction and Bernstein's ideas about discourses. The e-interview data was interpreted through discourse analysis, allowing for various subject identities to emerge.

2. To ask questions about responses in centres, questionnaires were distributed to OCR centres for AS, gathering largely quantitative information about choices made for particular units, and the reasons for choices..

3. To begin to understand the discourses at work within assessment, a survey was carried out with examiners at the first set of standardisation meetings for new AS units, in order to collect statements about examining Media work from those participating in the process. This information was qualitative.

4. Data gathered from non-participant observation work relating to the examining and moderating of students' work for these new qualifications was interpreted in order to describe the various discourses at work in acts of assessing media learning. Discussions about scripts and coursework at examiners' meetings for the three AS units in January 2001 were recorded onto audio cassette and then transcribed. At such meetings, senior examiners are presented with scripts or coursework 'blind' and after a discussion they come to an agreement about marks to be awarded, which are then used as benchmarks for all marking or moderation of that unit. As these were the first ever sessions for these new units, these were hugely significant discussions in that they resulted in establishing criteria for all further assessment sessions.

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higher education. Both are discussed at length later in the thesis, in relation to the responses of Media teachers and examiners to questions about subject identity.

5. The awarding process (framed by procedures and the QCA code of practice) is itself scrutinised (and here my own role at OCR allows me access to some of its hidden assumptions), at which thresholds are set for grades based on a combination of judgmental and statistical criteria, and subsequently the number of candidates achieving each grade is 'decided'. Alongside this the published Examiners' Reports on the units in question is deconstructed, using the same linguistic approach as for specifications and question papers. Thus this account investigates the 'journey' from the framing identities of a discipline to the design of specifications to the production of exam papers and assessment criteria, to the 'standardising' of examiners and moderators to the awarding of grades and the retrospective reporting back to teachers.   I will be asking questions about genre, discourse, power and knowledge, distinction and status and politics, and reflecting upon the relationship between teachers' feelings about purpose and outcome and the actions of individuals collectively involved in formal institutional assessment procedures.

Method

The various forms of material and data collected for this case study will be discussed using a method described as Critical Discourse Analysis, described by Ruth Wodak as,

> fundamentally concerned with analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language (in Wodak and Mayer, 2001, p2)

However this CDA approach will be starting point, and I shall also interrogate the material in the context of ideas about identity and discourse from Foucault, Bernstein, and Bourdieu, and studies in the relationship of language, power and ideology from Halliday, Thompson and Fairclough[54].

This critical discourse analysis method is suggested and demonstrated in the work of Norman Fairclough as a tool in social scientific research for thinking through the operation of language in social practices in 'new capitalism'. Here, language is thought as semiotic, operating within both structure and practice. Teachers do not just have a semiotic style (a way of being seen and heard as practitioners or carriers of various kinds of cultural capital, of markers of distinction) as a product of their given position within the practice of media teaching. Inevitably a position is determined in diverse styles depending on a construction of identity that exceeds this practice. Therefore, like the texts that Media students interrogate, their teachers are at play between and within genres, discourses and styles. As Fairclough states,

> The identities of people who operate in positions in a practice are only partly specified by the practice itself. People who differ in social class, in gender, in nationality, in cultural or ethnic membership, and in life experience produce different 'performances' of a particular position (in Wodak and Meyer, 2001, p123).

The data gathered from e-interviews, questionnaires and recordings is interpreted for its value in showing us such performances by players within the practice, specifically of assessing Media students, which is not the same as teaching media students, or of analysing media. However these practices, as

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54 These writers cannot really be used 'collectively' in any sensible way. The later chapters, 'study' and 'more questions' deal separately with their ideas in relation to media learning, but in this statement I am referring to their respective contributions in particular to sociolinguistics, as

well as the myriad identities of the performers are always connected.   So the

methodology takes the performers' statements as data, from which to explore

competing ideas about the 'ideal subject' of media teaching / learning,

phenomenological ideas about more or less systematic thinking through the

place of assessment in the symbolic order, related to classification of

examiners, qualifications, training and 'background'. Hence the data gathered is

representative in the sense that it speaks the contemporary condition of

'Subject Media.' The professional identity of respondents and participants 'on

tape' and on paper is constructed in each case within 'co-ordinates' - on one

axis the determining institutional factors within the practice, on Fairclough's

terms, and on the other axis their identities outside of the practice. At all times,

their discursive responses need be understood not as truths but as linguistically

coded statements within such co-ordinates. In other words, the discourses

speak the subjects of my enquiry.

Working with this data through the methodology of critical discourse analysis

will involve identifying semiotic aspects of the social practice of assessing

media learning, for example notions of critical autonomy and empowerment /

engagement. The 'given' status of these notions within the genre of media

education, as well as those external givens, bound up with ideas about

standards, parity and benchmarks (the language of the awarding body) present

a network of practices that act as obstacles to tackling the discursive nature of

such semiotics. It can be argued thus that the social order is sustained by the

perpetuation of this 'problem'. The social order of liberal-humanist educational

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opposed to Bourdieu and others who can be considered more as sociologists, if labels are
required.

philosophy is at stake in Subject Media's opaque language games. Fairclough's method requires the identification of creative ways 'past' such obstacles. We might begin by making sense of this data through identifying explicitly what such problems are.

Using Fairclough's 5 step framework for Critical Discourse Analysis (in Wodak and Meyer, 2001 p125), it is first useful to focus on a social problem that has a semiotic aspect. In this case the social problems are many, and interweaving, the social practices of teaching and learning are shifted by a more prescriptive dynamic imposed by government, itself bound up with discourses about standards and achievement which circulate within self-fulfilling networks of ideas about types of knowledge and the testing of evidence. Furthermore such changes arise in a contingent relationship with 'data' identifying weaknesses in Britain's education system and thus concerns about our economic future. However, our social problem is specifically the tension between notions of critical autonomy stated in the rationale section of the OCR specification, and the problem of assessment. This problem is partly procedural (examiners, of whom there are not enough do it very quickly and cheaply with dubious training to prepare them and then a statistical normative procedure is used to set thresholds to determine who gets what grades after the event) and partly philosophical / social. There is no satisfactory consensus evident in mark schemes or other official criteria, or in the discursive evidence I have gathered of examiners at work of how to assess such 'spiritual' concepts as empowerment, autonomy or critical reading, there is no measure of distance travelled available for examiners, and so contradictory moments arise within

assessment texts. Fairclough asks us next to analyse the social problem in terms of obstacles, broken down into the network of practices it is located within (see above, but also consider learning practices within communities, teaching within institutions, parental involvement, peer interaction and the relationship between media pleasure and media learning, itself the subject of a body of work dealt with in part in the literature review part of this thesis), the relationship of semiosis to other elements within the particular practices concerned (here, semiosis will be a complex of linguistic factors but also of social and intellectual signification through exam responses and creative coursework – a moderator's response to a pop video is semiotic), and the discourses at work themselves (discourses of assessment and standards – the language games of the awarding body, in dialogue with the many conflicting discourses of empowerment, knowledge, vocationalism, critique and creativity at work within media education, or Subject Media as Peim would have it. Thinking through the discourses, we need to examine the structure / order of discourses, analysis of interaction, exploration of inter-discursive tension and linguistic and semiotic analysis. Fairclough then suggests examining ways in which the social order (the aforementioned network of practices) needs the problem to continue, and finally to identify possible ways past the obstacles with critical reflection on the analysis.

DISCOURSE

My CDA framework will be mapped as follows,

The social problem, assessment of learning organised around OCR AS Media Studies in 2000.

Network of practices, government intervention in education, awarding body procedures, examining and moderating, teaching and learning, parenting, social practices of learners, media consumption.

Semiosis, languages of assessment, teaching and learning, semiotic interpretation of learners' words and images in relation to the practices above.

Discourses, of media education and of assessment (within wider academic and institutional discourses).

The social order and the problem, the maintenance of ideological positions about achievement, standards and economies of knowledge and its measurement into qualifications, as well as the construction of targets for improvement of education and political impulses to create illusions of increasing the achievement rates of people in the social world.

Categories / boundaries,

Bernstein's work (1990) on the structuring of pedagogic discourse, in dialogue with Fairclough's analysis (1989) of language and power, provide a useful context for the consideration of the various forms of data acquired from this investigation[55]. The exam board provides a secondary structure for teachers and examiners, alongside their more physical daily environment of classrooms, staff room and meeting spaces, there is an external, more abstract and

symbolic structure, interactions within which may take the form of phone

conversations, emails (using the OCR mailing list which is established as a

'virtual community') and less frequently a physical attendance at a conference

surgery, INSET course and / or examiners' meeting. At such times the

'subjects' of my research are adopting positions which are not the same as their

'day job' positions, but have an essential relation to these everyday identities.

Thinking about the classroom dynamic, Fairclough writes,

> The discourse types of the classroom set up subject positions for teachers and pupils,
> and it is only by 'occupying' these positions that one becomes a teacher or a pupil.
> Occupying a subject position is essentially a matter of doing (or not doing) certain
> things, in line with the discoursed rights and obligations of teachers and pupils – what
> each is allowed and required to say, within that particular discourse type. So this is a
> case where social structure, in the particular form of discourse conventions, determines
> discourse. But it is also the case that in occupying particular subject positions, teachers
> and pupils reproduce them; it is only through being occupied that these positions
> continue to be a part of social structure. So discourse in turn determines and
> reproduces social structure. (1990, p38)

Although I do not want to adopt a hierarchical structure in analysing such

qualitative data, it is useful to map out similarities and differences between the

five groups of teachers who responded to my various research activities. These

were, to recap,

- **'Key players'** (people with a historical relationship with formal, examined

   Media Studies at a policy-shaping level, Chief Examiners, BFI

   representatives, writers and freelance INSET providers who have all sat

   on committees advising exam boards) – responding to an e-interview.

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55 Bernstein's work on codes and modalities, and the degrees of classification within and
between discourses are the ideas I am applying most directly to my data.

- OCR **Principal Examiners and Team Leaders** – tape recordings of standardisation meetings for the first ever assessments of the new AS Media units.

- OCR **Examiners** – completing a questionnaire at a standardisation meeting.

- **Media teachers** using the OCR AS specification – completing a questionnaire at an **INSET meeting**.

- **Media teachers** taking part in a **workshop** run by myself at the BFI Media conference – completing a questionnaire during an assessment exercise.

Some of the questions were common to all the activities – these were to do with respondents' own media consumption (I wanted to get a sense of the tastes of this community) and notions about academic / vocational learning. Others were tailored to the groups in question (for example the teachers at INSET were asked about their choices of topics within units and how these choices were made, whereas the recordings of standardisation were non-participant observations of a process in action which would happen regardless of my intervention (although the recording was explicit and permission was given).

Ethical issues should be considered as follows. Although each primary research activity was transparent and respondents in all cases were aware that I was writing a PHD thesis, in every case apart from the e-interview, respondents had a professional relationship with me in another role, and so it is certainly the case that the data gathered is inextricably interwoven with various identities and roles. For example, the INSET meeting at which teachers responded to questions about choices was conducted with myself as Subject Officer for OCR and teachers as consumers of a new product. My BFI conference workshop was more academic in presentation, but participants were also aware of my role in representing OCR, and to this end my questioning of assessment practices may have been confusing and even provocative given my identity at that time as the embodiment of those practices. Examiners being asked to answer questions about the reasons they do the work may have felt the need to add extra reasons in addition to financial incentives because the distributor of the survey was, at the time, their employer for this extra work. Thus my interpretation of discourses about the professional identity of examiners (it can't ever just by for the money!) must be read in the context that the answers may have been different for a different audience.

In effect, then, my access to data that has rarely been available to the researcher, from within the law, as Kafka has it, may have been a mixed blessing in the sense that my closeness and professional relationships / identities may have lessened the 'purity' of my role as observer / neutral

gatherer of data[56]. However, as I have stated from the outset, there is no reason to believe that research is ever not so, and hence the researcher must always be written in as she is always written by the project.

Separating the five groups of data, then, is useful in that it allows me to look for communities within the larger group, before identifying common discourses across and between these groups. Thinking back to Fairclough, our 'social problem' is the assessment of media learning, so I was looking for discourses at work within the social practices of examining and teaching, framed as they are by policy and institutional structure.

Fairclough's theory of language and discourse differs from Saussure's linguistics in that he is keen to deconstruct and problematise the 'classical' conception of langue (the underlying system of language that is seen to exist prior to its manifestation in parole – the individual speaking and / or writing of its subjects),

> Saussure writes as if all language communities, whatever their social conditions had their langues, and for him the possession of langue is a condition for the possession of language. Moreover, Saussure assumes that everyone in a language community has equal access to and command of its langue, whereas in reality access to and command of standard languages are unequal.   (Fairclough, 1989, p21).

Fairclough shifts focus from Saussure's structuralist model (which we might call the structuralism of assumed equality – a modernist principle similar to Habermas' ideal speech community) towards a more politicised view of discourse in which language is socially determined,

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56 Kafka's parable, within 'The Trial', involves a man from the country who tries to gain access, unsuccessfully to the Law, and eventually realises there is no physical embodiment of the law to discuss matters with.

It is not uncommon for textbooks on language to have sections on the relationship between language and society, as if these were two independent entities which just happen to come into contact occasionally. My view is that there is not an external relationship 'between' language and society, but an internal and dialectical relationship. Language is part of society, linguistic phenomenon are social phenomenon of a special sort, and social phenomenon are (in part) linguistic phenomenon. (Fairclough, 1989, p22-23)

Texts such as specifications, exam papers and mark schemes would appear to be the clearest manifestations available of what Bernstein calls 'official pedagogic discourse' (1990, p171). Equally, Bernstein's representation of the power-function of discourse echoes Fairclough's departure from traditional structuralist linguistics in the sense that pedagogic discourses are social phenomena and thus demand a phenomenology of their discursive status. Equally the statements made by teachers about their use of such documents in teaching students, and the evidence provided in recordings of examiners using these texts to judge students' work, would appear to be useful material with which to consider the social activity of such official discourse at work. So it is important to address Bernstein's claim that theories of education that deal with pedagogy and power / social normalisation (like those of Apple, Foucault indirectly and Bourdieu) have tended to explore the role of pedagogy in transmitting power or control, as a vehicle for reproduction. Bernstein's desire has been to consider the relations of power / control within pedagogic discourse, as opposed to the relations of this discourse to something external,

General theories of cultural reproduction appear to be more concerned with what is reproduced in, and by, educators than with an analysis of the medium of reproduction, the nature of the specialised discourse. It is as if the specialised discourse of education is only a voice through which others speak (class, gender, religion, race, region). It is as if pedagogic discourse is itself no more than a relay for power relations external to itself; a relay whose form has no consequences for what is relayed. (Bernstein. 1990, p166).

My interpretation is that Bernstein and Fairclough are asserting the same

principle – that there is no 'between' to investigate, no transmission in the

classroom or the examiners' meeting of something external to make sense of

usefully. Instead we need to interrogate through critical discourse analysis the

internal structuring of the discourse itself.

We can usefully draw on Harry Daniels' work (2002 - on Vygotsky and

Bernstein) on

pedagogic grammar 'in practice' in order to further consider educational

practices such

as assessment[57]. In this context, the practices of teachers when 'bought out' by

awarding bodies to be examiners would fall into the category of 'extra school

relations'. However, unlike the National Curriculum which is an externally

imposed but thereafter stable, tangible framework that becomes internalised in

everyday pedagogic practice, assessment is an ongoing social practice that is

fluid and dual in its articulation, as it only exists in being carried out, in being

spoken in relation to its objects (or subjects) – the 'body' of students' work[58]. It

is a practice at once informed by (and part of) classroom practice and the theory

of instruction teaching is informed by (assessors judge in relation to their

experience of instruction, and what can reasonably be expected at each level in

response to such instruction as my recordings of examiners' meetings shows as

those present constantly refer to their own students and own teaching as a

context for their opinions about the quality of exam answers and production

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57 Harry Daniels' lecture diagrams on Bernstein's codes are not generally available, but were
provided by my supervisor for my use here.

exercises they are charged with assessing). In addition, being a team leader

and thus involved in the practice of standardisation is itself a form of instruction

since these senior examiners, having 'set the standard', then train other

examiners in the application of such standards, using sample work as

'benchmarks'. The school or college organisation is replaced, in Daniels' terms,

by the awarding body organisation, with its hierarchy. So the operation of

pedagogic codes, their realisations and principles need to be understood as

overlapping between internal and external relations, given that examiners are

themselves in the main teachers with their own students.

Classifications of media learning -

Let us now turn to a more direct application of Bernstein's thinking to media

teaching and learning (Elliot's analysis of media courses that reside in either

academic or vocational 'houses'), in order later to more directly apply such a

theoretical approach to the statements made within the communities of practice

I have studied[59].

Bernstein asserts that pedagogic modalities are crucial realisations of symbolic

control and cultural reproduction. Lindahl-Elliot (2000) applies these notions of

framing and recontextualising to media courses, with particular attention to the

distinction between academic (e.g. A Level, undergraduate theory courses) and

58 Harry Daniels' lecture diagrams on Bernstein's codes are not generally available, but were
provided by my supervisor for my use here.
59 Elliot writes at length about the artificial and ultimately destructive pedagogic boundaries at
work in university organisation of media courses. Although I am dealing with courses aimed at a
younger cohort, the issues are the same where huge assumptions are made about A Level

vocational (e.g. GNVQ/ND/ undergraduate production courses) learning. Elliot

argues that the seemingly common-sense polarity / relations at work between

these two models is highly problematic, in the sense that the assumptions

underlying the philosophy of each modality can be easily dismantled and

exposed for the ironic illogic of their own internal givens. The vocational course

is conceived within the market-orientated modality (education for work), whilst

the academic route (of which the OCR AS is one example) resides within the

autonomous modality (critical thinking). The liberal-humanist model of education

within which Media Studies A Level, like any other retains its status as the 'gold

standard' makes a virtue of a strong separation (or classification) between work

and education. This autonomous modality is more involved with broad cultural

economy than the acquisition of vocational exchange value. For Elliot, this

modality has an arrogance in its claim to the moral high ground and indifference

to its own social stratification.

The market-orientated modality, on the other hand, attempts earnestly to deny

the barrier between work and education – this is a necessary evil to be

obscured and eroded at all costs in the name of 'relevance'. However the illogic

of each modality can be understood simply be consideration of the ways in

which vocationalism exists to mobilise a 'widening participation' agenda by

extending the curriculum – by the recontextualising principle working to insert

the horizontal discourse of work into the vertical discourse of college curricula[60].

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students being more academic than their 'vocational'' counterparts, and indeed, these two
labels take on the status of nouns when put before the work 'student'.
60 The widening participation agenda refers to an initiative introduced in the late 90s and since
to increase the number of 'non-traditional' entrants into colleges and universities – mainly from
minority groups and those with 'social disadvantage', as well as the lifelong learning thrust to

However by its very desire to deny the opposition between vocational life and learning, this code serve to reproduce the unequal distribution of the economic and symbolic hierarchy which alienates and denies access to the 'widened participators'. At the same time, the autonomous modality asserts its 'otherness' to the social and cultural marketplace whilst simultaneously situating itself entirely within the economy and circulation of cultural capital.

Departing for a moment from Elliot's fairly recent analysis, it is interesting to look back to a sociological account written under the banner 'Youth Questions' in 1984 by Paul Willis. This work, titled 'The New Vocationalism' was written during the Thatcher era, when new government initiatives in dealing with unemployment were being introduced amidst much controversy (interestingly under New Labour these methods are commonplace at the time of writing, and have extended to the degree that many 'new' universities exist as large institutions offering many vocational degrees to largely local students, and FE colleges are now providing courses for 14-16 year olds on 'secondment' from their schools. Willis and his colleagues were concerned about the policy drive to subordinate schools to the needs of industry, in order to produce better, more disciplined and vocationally skilled workers. Willis's account focussed in particular on misplaced assumptions about the relationships between work, teachers and pupils,

> The new vocationalism has drawn much of its credibility from its apparent bridging of this previous gap. On the other hand, just because we might find ourselves agreeing with an analysis which suggests that the conventional curriculum offers very little to working class youngsters, we should not assume that a near compulsory period of post-school training, or a vocationalising of the whole curriculum, will offer much that is better – or indeed that pupils will not reject such 'relevant' offerings with the same power that they sometimes use to undermine conventional schooling. Nor can we simply assume

increase the number of older people taking courses either at college or through Learn Direct programmes.

that the popular support of parents, who see their children at least getting something that looks like training and holds the possibility of jobs, will be unequivocal, or will not evaporate in the face of cheap labour schemes with a gloss of 'skills training' followed by prolonged unemployment.   (Willis, 1984, p223)

Minds and hands -

At stake most clearly in these classifications are notions of 'theory' and

'practice', a binary I asked all of my research subjects to explain. Generally

speaking, media theory is to do with conceptual thinking about texts, but also

the theoretical understanding of how production methods are used, and how

content and aesthetic decisions are arrived at. An AS course will privilege

theory about convention, audience and meaning, whereas a National Diploma

will prescribe more theory about editing techniques or sound recording

processes. This assumed distinction is at the nexus of all discursive coding

about media teaching and learning[61].

> These two discursive transformations – theory as practice-less theory and practice as theory-less practice – are the result of an empiricist reduction that has a long history in western culture, one that suggests that theory is to do with the mind and practice with hands.   (Elliot, 2000, p22)

The assumption reinforced by most Media specifications (including the OCR AS) is

that both academic and vocational courses integrate theory and practice within

a binary arrangement, as my examiners and teachers usually supported in their

questionnaire and e-mail responses. Elliot suggests that such a binary is not

only problematic but deceptive,

> In different ways and to varying degrees, all theory-practice courses tend to be based on a pedagogic discourse whose official logic is to integrate elements of theory with elements of practice but whose actual logic tends to oppose these two subjects or

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61 National Diplomas are the property of BTEC, now part of Edexcel. They offer industry-related 18-unit qualifications without any exams (unlike AVCEs). In Media, students opt for either Moving Image: publishing or Audio, as their pathway, and as such, the courses are less broad than AVCEs, and there is evidence to suggest that employers give them more credibility as a result. .

Simply, the separation of courses aimed at producing technically skilled young people from courses aimed at the exchange of critical autonomy (thinking from doing) always-already prevents the integration of theory from practice. In schools and, more usually further education colleges in which students are co-existing within departments on these separate programmes of increasingly vertical discourse, the division is physical as well as symbolic. Furthermore, many courses divide timetables into theory 'lectures' and practical 'workshops', marking discursively the separation of territory, domain and atmosphere. The connotations of the lecture (and the status of the lecturer) are inscribed in their difference to a workshop (which may be 'run' by a technician or instructor who is paid less and may wear more casual clothes).   When students enrol on a course with an ingrained sense of the difference between work and education, scholarly activity and making, the organisation of learning around such binaries provides a barrier to integration of hands and minds. This is an example of Bernstein's idea of the encoding of pedagogic discourse; staff, resources, space organised around encoding of activity. In this sense a student at a college following an AS course, aware that the rooms, staff and resources are shared in an unequal relation with ND students (who spend more time in workshops but appear less formally arranged) experience the pedagogic matching of their imaginary (notions about theory and practice, school and work, thinkers and doers) with the empirical (the spatial organisation of the binary). Elliots' pithy summation suggests that,

The pedagogic discourses of both the vocational and the autonomous modalities of theory-practice courses end to promote a symbolic rule of consciousness which

> maintain the very oppositions which theory-practice courses are meant to overcome. (Elliot, 2000, p23)

Bernstein's ideas about recognition and realisation are also useful in this discussion. On a theory course, students' recognition that certain modes of critical thinking are legitimate does not necessarily enable the realisation of such autonomy, and the very notion of required autonomy is itself problematic to say the least. On the other hand, students following a practical course recognise the craft and creativity of production but this does not predetermine their ability to be creative.

It would appear that an application of Bernstein's ideas about discourse, in keeping with our borrowing from Foucault and other 'thinkers' would suggest that the dynamics of space, framing, assessment and coding perpetuate the very traditions, both symbolic and empirical that media teaching *seems to want* to challenge.

It is timely that this thesis is written at a time of great uncertainty about standards, educational purpose and the 'robustness' of assessment. In 2002, in the aftermath of the public schools – driven enquiry into the first grading of Curriculum 2000 results, it is as though there has been a departure from some 'safe' certainty about the fairness of grading, some momentary arbitrariness permeating a system hitherto transparent and firm[62]. However this juncture is

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62 In the summer of 2002, the media reported (to the extent of panic about standards and accountability) that awarding bodies had deliberately failed students in some units in order to reduce the inflation of achievement with the new A Level qualifications in certain subjects. In particular, Ron McLone, the Director of OCR was held to account, and the Chief Executive of QCA, Sir William Stubbs was sacked. Shortly afterwards, the Secretary of State for Education, Estelle Morris, resigned from her post and was replaced by Charles Clarke.

an inevitable meeting point of completing discourses at work within policy-making – the desire for an increase in graduates cannot equate with the maintaining of 'standards' year on year. Media education has existed at these crossroads since its inception. Inevitably with its emphasis on the already familiar and its Vygotskyian philosophy of theoretical language transformation rather than the encountering of 'purely new knowledge', its very status as a pathway to graduate status, along with other perceived 'vocational routes' has led to condemnation within rhetoric on standards and the authenticity of educational capital[63].

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63 The Vygotskian approach refers to formal education putting into practice a theoretical re-articulation of the already familiar or known – thus is relates to a negotiated learning as opposed to a 'delivery and transference' of knowledge from the teacher to the learner.

GENEALOGY

Media Studies comes to exist or rather to be practised through a range of contingencies, and as such we should avoid a linear account of its 'development'.

However, it is worth discussing a few moments which are often described as being 'seminal' or having instilled a further move towards a formal subject.

In 1950 the British Film Institute appointed an Education Officer, demonstrating an official governmental relationship between film and education. In 1964 Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel published *Popular Arts*, a book which moved away from the influence of Leavis in order to set up a context for the formal study of popular texts (see Buckingham, 2003) [64]. What was interesting and perhaps problematic about the approach was that the authors argued strongly that the techniques for studying literature could just as well be used to study television, for instance. Whilst the intention here was to dismantle the assumed boundary between art and entertainment, little attention was paid to the assumptions inherent within the techniques of literary analysis, an issue which Hall has since acknowledged,

> We were saying that the method could be applied to popular culture and fiction - many of the media that Leavis would have regarded as debasing cultural standards. So we were trying to associate a practice that had been developed very much in a rather

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64 Buckingham in particular has written about the relationship between the Leavisite tradition in English teaching, and Media Studies proximity / distance to it. My own research supports his view that there is a tendency amongst practitioners to distance themselves from Leavis in terms of the subject matter of their teaching whilst at the same time reinforcing ideas about value and 'protection'. Externally, defence or celebration of the subject can often be founded on an acceptance of Leavisite notions of value and decline. Ted Wragg recently wrote a defence of Media Studies in the TES based entirely on the importance of empowering young people with the skills to understand and: presumably, reject the messages in advertisements and reality TV shows.

> elitist context - Cambridge English - with a set of values which were more democratic in terms of their educational direction. And I do not know whether that exercise was really possible. Methods are not pure things; they do have intentions and goals written into them and I am not sure whether now I really think that it is possible to abstract that in this method and apply it in a more general way (Hall, in Simons (ed), 1996).

In 1967, John Dixon wrote *Growth Through English*, presenting an experiential model of learning about texts, a model highly influential, alongside the *Popular Arts* legacy, with media teachers. In 1973, Murdoch and Phelps published *Mass Media and the Secondary School* , examining uses of and attitudes towards media education in schools. In 1980, Masterman's *Teaching about Television* offered a method for foregrounding the most derided medium within the classroom, and in 1983, the TVEI (Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative) was launched and the DES published *Popular TV and Schoolchildren*. In 1990, the ILEA English Centre was renamed the English and Media Centre and in 1990, A Level Media Studies was examined for the first time. A Level and GCSE syllabuses went through several changes during the 90s, the National Curriculum was introduced and Media in English became a requirement, with new calls for media education to be a cross-curriculum activity. Curriculum 2000 saw the Dearing Report come to fruition with a mass redesign of post-16 qualifications, shortly followed by the redesign of vocational qualifications as vocational A Levels and GCSEs. At this latest stage, QCA played a major role in providing criteria 'from above' for content and assessment for core subjects. Informally, the criteria for English were used to judge the specifications for Media Studies.

At the time of writing (2003), a new Communications Act is in process, a part of which is devoted to education, and to the promotion of 'media literacy'.

OFCOM, the new regulatory body (combining telecommunications and screen-based media) will be duty-bound to engender the following,

- *A better public understanding of the nature and characteristics of material published by means of the electronic media;*
- *A better public awareness and understanding of the processes by which such material is selected, or made available, for publication by such means;*
- *The development of better public awareness of the available systems by which access to material published by means of the electronic media is or can be regulated;*
- *The development of a better public awareness of the available systems by which persons to whom such material is made available may control what is received and of the uses to which such systems may be put;*
- *To encourage the development and use of technologies and systems for regulating access to such material, and for facilitating control over what material is received, that are both effective and easy to use.*
(Communications Bill, 2003)

This section of the bill demonstrates a shift in government legislation towards a commitment to public education about the workings of the media. This is likely to have implications for media education. In particular, there was concern in 1998 that a report published jointly by the BBC, the Independent Television Commission and the Broadcasting Standards Committee called for a government lead to be taken on media education, and in turn the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2001 produced a Media Literacy Statement (but this has not been followed through to the new Communications Bill to date). The concern on the part of media teachers in response to these suggestions has been around the possible future colonisation of media teaching as a form of regulation. It is too early at the time of writing to comment further on these implications.

So in terms of genealogy and history, what is at question here is not how one development led to another, as though A Level Media Studies exists as a

certificate with value out of a developing series of activities, but more how ways of talking about media texts have come to accrue such value in various ways at various times, and how this value has been questioned and defended in various ways at various times. Importantly, statements about vocational and academic media learning reveal that different, competing utterances about this value have been in circulation, so that homogenous declarations about Media Studies are problematised.

The 1990 University of Cambridge Media Studies syllabus is 7 pages in length compared with over 100 in 2000 (comprising of assessment materials in addition to the 'syllabus' itself). In its introduction, it states that equal measure is to be given to '*abilities in critical analysis, media production and theory-based knowledge*' and 'it *incorporates modes of assessment designed to measure most appropriately development of those abilities*'.   The objectives are listed to include '*a critical understanding of selected movements and debates in media criticism and theory*', and the grade descriptions refer to '*critically integrating studies of the media into exercises in the production and processes of the candidates' own media objects*.'

Here, in the earliest syllabus offered by the board who would later become OCR, are three discursive standards for learning about the media,[65]

- Students need to be able to analyse media products and produce them (which are entirely different practices);
- Understanding and analysis must be 'critical';

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65 The OCR exam board is the result of amalgamation, driven by the government's desire to reduce the number of awarding bodies to be regulated by QCA, of UCLES (The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate), MEG (The Midland Examining group) and RSA.

- Production work cannot exist in isolation from 'critically integrated' studies;

In these early days of Subject Media, prevalent voices who are spoken through these assessment materials were those of David Lusted and Len Masterman, both of whom wrote much-used guidance textbooks for the armies of English teachers approaching this new subject for the first time with trepidation. Lusted and Masterman's versions of Subject Media placed great emphasis on sociology and textual analysis, and less on aesthetic and technical competence or creativity. Indeed, the creative work in this first syllabus is explicitly intended to be a vehicle for understanding media practices from a left of centre, Marxist / Structuralist approach. In Masterman's Media Studies, practical work should be radical and alternative, rather than imitative of current media practice. In Masterman's recent self-published monograph attacking Cary Bazlagette of the BFI for alleged moves to subsume Media and Film Studies into the BFI's policy agenda for moving image education, he asserts that the 'integrity' of Media education is under threat and that '*the loss to our educational system, its future students, and the democratic health of our culture will be incalculable*'. (Masterman, 2002, p94).

Twelve years on, the missionary discourse is still evident, though perhaps marginalised. The June 1991 paper 3 pre-release exam paper asked candidates to produce a 3000 word essay from a choice of texts (as we shall see when looking at teachers' responses to my questionnaire about choices for 2000, teachers tend to make 'safe' choices on their students behalf in

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These three organisations specialised, respectively, in A Levels, GCSEs and vocational qualifications.

reality). Scrutinising one of the questions allows us to think through a contradiction inherent in Subject Media ever since (and to my mind a contradiction with Subject English dispenses with more openly). Students are asked to

'*Make a close textual analysis of the graphics, images and sounds that comprise the opening credit sequence of Three Men and a Baby*' and to

'*Situate these sequences* (the opening and another of the student's choice) *in an account of the narrative structure of the film*'

This straightforward textual analysis operation (essentially demonstrating understanding of how the film appears to have been produced, albeit through an academic / conceptual language, is no different to a close study of a novel which has been standard practice in English education for a long time, despite the popularity and lack of cultural value held by the chosen text, very much a classic moment of Hollywood mass-production reviled by the Frankfurt School, ironically so influential in much Media teaching[66]. However, the next question asks for

'*a critical account of the origins of and reactions to the cycle of films which most closely relate to 'Three Men and A Baby*'.

Here there is an ambiguity and a possible contradiction. The student is to research and report on how this genre developed and how audiences, critics and academics responded to these films, through box office statistics, reviews and articles. So far all that is required is knowledge, like for the first question.

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66 The Frankfurt School and Adorno's writing about 'the culture industry' in particular, are interesting for Media Studies since on the one hand this approach offers a left-wing theory of ideology which to many is at the heart of studying popular culture, yet on the other their take

Despite the academic vocabulary required, we are looking at how the film was made, how it came to be made, who saw it and what people thought about it. But the insertion of the word 'critical' into the second question, relating back to the introduction of the syllabus, the assessment objectives, and the wording of the mark scheme which is to be used by examiners to grade responses to this film, throws up a range of unanswered questions and ambiguous assumptions about what the student is required to do.

A dictionary definition of 'critical' (from the OUP edition published at the time of the first Media syllabus) includes many interpretations, including,

making or involving adverse or censorious comments or judgements.

expressing or involving criticism.

skilful at or engaged in criticism.

providing textual criticism (a critical edition of Milton).

Criticism is translated as,

finding fault, censure

the work of a critic

an article, essay etc expressing or containing an analytical evaluation of

something.

 Presumably what is intended for a response to *Three Men and A Baby*, then, is this analytical evaluation. But the word is inserted into a question about the reasons for the film being made and the various responses to it. It is not immediately clear how the student is to transcend the 'uncritical' reporting of factors into an answer that is worthy of the status of the critic. Furthermore,

on popular culture tended to assume a passive audience weakly subservient to the ideological 'tranquilising' of the products of mass culture.

candidates are required to produce four production artefacts for their coursework that demonstrate critical understanding. Compared to English, from which many argue Media studies is derivative, and which some would claim is 'harder,' the Media student is asked to employ textual analysis but also investigate and understand the means of production. At this stage I would argue a positive development of English education is made possible, even a liberation of sorts. The student is freed from the abstract notion of criticism in English that demands appreciation of a text in complete isolation from its existence as a commercial product and divorce from its social function as a figure in the canon. But the media student is then 'reigned in' with the impulse to be 'critical' in understanding the functions of the popular text, and also to be creative in order to express such criticism. How exactly these different practices are to be managed, assessed and valued has never been clear. Buckingham (2003) takes issue with this 'critical impulse' in media education, arguing that although there is clearly capital to be gained by students from acquiring a conceptual meta-discourse, the most interesting moments in his teaching have arisen out of students' talking as consumers / audience members and freeing themselves from the position of the cultural critic, as this position is often invested with a Leavisite negativity about the mass media which is at odds with their own media pleasures,

> Through the powers of analysis, students are seen to move from an unconscious state, from being enslaved by bodily pleasures and emotional responses to being 'rational' and 'sceptical' in their dealings with the media. (Buckingham, 2003, p108).

Buckingham argues very plausibly that the voice of the teacher is often set up as a 'master-critic' for students to imitate. Indeed, if this is so, this would appear to be as far away from 'autonomy; as one can imagine.

In the 'Guidelines for Teachers' booklet produced at the same time as the

1990 syllabus, teachers are given a paragraph entitled 'Notions of Media

Studies' which begins,

> Media Studies is genuinely interdisciplinary, the site and sum of debate in many areas
> of scholarship and education. The subject has its specialists, but the likelihood is that
> this syllabus will be taught at first by teachers – even including those specialists – who
> have been formed by some of the debates but not all.

It is interesting here that the ambiguities and fragmentation that have since

been both celebrated and condemned are presented here at the outset of the

subject in its examined form as simply the order of things. Indeed the great

variety in practice that students will experience as a result is stated as a given.

However the assessment criteria clearly privilege certain ways of studying the

mass media over others. It would be difficult in this context for students to

succeed through high levels of technical and aesthetic competence

alongside a sophisticated knowledge of media industries and working practices

(this kind of learning is still given a subordinate status by examiners, labelled

'vocational', as my questionnaire shows), unless they were able to frame their

understanding and creativity within the discourse of critical analysis that is

formed through English and Cultural Studies. Critical Education is separated

and given its own paragraph in the Teachers' Guidance document,

'*Critical education, arguably has most to gain from an organised and synthetic

approach to media education*'. The paragraph then goes on to encourage the

teacher to read Lusted and Masterman's books on this approach. So despite

the celebration or at least acceptance of the open-ness of the subject at the

outset, teachers who are 'doing their homework' will be approaching their

teaching with this Marxist-Structuralist sense of critical theory in mind, which exists in polarity from the more vocational understanding of media texts and production that many students are more readily able to embrace[67]. Could it be argued that the entire notion of critical thinking at work in Subject Media is some kind of political gesture, a compensation for lack on the part of teachers who feel a tension between their studies and the young people they encounter's happiness to celebrate 'mass produced' media culture? If so, every radical claim of empowerment or autonomy is exposed as illogical, if deconstructed loosely through Derrida's methods, and in Faircough's terms, we can understand the maintenance of the social order to be not the social order of 1990s Thatcherite capitalism but rather the social elitism of Media teachers and their reluctance to loosen their grip on a view of the mass media that is derided from an intellectual suspicion of popular entertainment (which is embraced only as an object of critical study).

The report on the June 1991 examination, produced by the awarding body to help teachers understand better how to approach assessment with their students, suggested the following, with regard to practical work,

'*A minority of centres place too much emphasis on technical finish and ignore the essential critical engagement entirely*.'

And with reference to the *Three Men and A Baby* questions analysed above,

'*Candidates had no trouble in locating a related cycle of films but matters of origin and reaction were often treated as factual matters rather than matters for critical discussion*.'

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67 I am using this term to describe the branch of Marxism exemplified by Althusser's interest in ideological state apparatuses, and subsequent theory such as Barthes 'Mythologies' which

Again, both statements demonstrate a discourse of the insufficiency of knowing or doing, and the importance of knowing or doing in a certain way, described here as 'critical'. Neither producing a pop video that would not be out of place on MTV or demonstrating an entirely accurate knowledge of how 'Three Men' came to exist as a consumed product would be enough for high marks for a Media student.

This report was published in the same booklet as the reports on English Language and Literature exams, which informs of the board's assumptions about audience (an Art teacher might have to seek out the report from the English dept). The opening sentence of the A Level English report reads,

'*It is pleasing to report that many of the candidates displayed an informed enthusiasm for Shakespeare that would gladden the heart of even a Prince of Wales*.'

At first consideration, there would appear to be a chasm of intent between the subjects that these different quotes represent, and certainly the Prince would doubtless be appalled if he were aware that students could achieve some limited cultural capital through an analysis of *Three Men and a Baby*. But the important constant in the order of things is the sense of appreciation and criticism that resides in both reports and prevents the more gifted media practitioner (who understands what the media do) from succeeding but elevates the cultural critic (who understands what intellectuals who lived before the mass media arrived think about what the media do) to the status of the academic.

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is concerned with the structure of myth and how it serves the interests of dominant groups.

The Spring 1990 edition of *Media Education Initiatives*, a journal for media

teachers produced by the Society for education and film and Television (with

an editorial board including David Buckingham and financial assistance from

the BFI), includes an article on Media Education, Technology and the National

Curriculum. The article offers an audit of the use of technology in media

teaching and relates its use to the demands of the NC. The article, written by

Norrie Porter and Judy Bennett calls for more readiness on the part of

teachers to include the use of technology in media teaching,

> Most media education practitioners have a rather foggy notion of what technology actually is. Some confuse the output of design and technological activity, that is the artefacts, systems or environments themselves, with the process as a whole. Others think it is a mechanistic and deterministic application of science. However, technology is a creative process, which should be sensitive and responsive to aesthetic, environmental and cultural factors. Technology should be a creative and integrative curriculum area. (Porter and Bennett, 1990, p5)

The article goes on to suggest ways in which technology education, linked to

media studies might have specific aims, one of which is to 'develop a critical

understanding of technology'. Again, the sense in which the use of technology

for the production of creative, vocationally relevant material, is useful, at least

in 1990 only if critical awareness can be demonstrated, not only of the media

and what they produce but also of the technology and presumably its socio-

cultural implications?

Genealogy of rationales

David Buckingham (2003) adopts a historical perspective which begins with

the Leavisite discrimination against mass culture (the training of critical

awareness) and develops, despite itself into a Cultural Studies approach (with

the aforementioned 'Popular Arts' as the statement of intent) that appeared

anti-Leavisite but preserved cultural distinctions in so much as living culture

was maintained in a binary opposition with produced culture, of which

television remained an academically marginalized format. Screen Education in

the 1970s offered longevity to this defensive position, using theory to demystify

ideological processes, maintaining the 'false consciousness' perspective on

the popular[68]. For Buckingham, the emphasis on 'critical autonomy' in

traditional media teaching has done little to distance the pedagogical process

from the Leavisite agenda,

> Despite the growing inclusiveness of the curriculum, all these approaches seek in
> different ways to inoculate or protect students against what are assumed to be the
> negative effects of the media. Such an approach is implicitly premised on a notion of
> the media as an enormously powerful (and almost entirely negative) influence, and of
> children as particularly vulnerable to manipulation. (Buckingham, 2003, p10)

These various forms of defensiveness (political, in which the media is

scapegoated as the reason for students' bigotry, alongside cultural and moral

arguments) can be seen to resonate with Hunter and Peim's analyses of

English teaching as a form of moral correction and surveillance. Media

Studies, held up as a potentially radical alternative mode for the circulation of

cultural study, is reduced in this tradition to a modern attempt to practise the

same social coercion as Stow's techniques, essentially a 'Panoptical'

agenda[69]. The emancipatory intent of Subject Media can be exposed as not

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68 Screen Education was a journal influential in the 1970s, attempting to guide teachers in the
application of theories such as semiotics, structuralism: psychoanalysis and Marxism in the
classroom. This process has been challenged since for its elitist premise.
69 David Stow was author of the Training System of Education and founder of the Glasgow
Normal Seminary for the Training of Teachers. According to a history of his life found on the
'Memoirs and Portraits of Glasgow men' website, his contribution was to 'embrace every
opportunity of impressing on the public mind that teaching was not training, that to make
education what it should be, the child must be trained to do what was right, and not merely
taught. This was the very keystone of all his labours, and is embodied in the sentence which

only idealistic and naïve / patronising in its claims to liberation, but more as a

technology of adult correction,

> However diverse these concerns may be, the positions that students and teachers
> appear to occupy here remain remarkably consistent. By and large, students are seen
> to be particularly at risk from the negative influence of the media, and are seemingly
> unable to resist this power; whilst teachers are somehow assumed to be able to stand
> outside this process, providing students with the tools of critical analysis which will
> 'liberate them'. In each case, media education is regarded as a means of
> counteracting children's apparent fascination and pleasure in the media and hence (it
> would seem) their belief in the values the media are seen to promote. Media education
> will, it is assumed, automatically lead children on to an appreciation of high culture, to
> more morally correct forms of behaviour, or to more rational, politically correct beliefs.
> It is seen to offer nothing less than a means of salvation. (Buckingham, 2003, pp. 11-
> 12)

However, technological convergence and a familiarity with audience studies

derived from a postmodern approach to media consumption have at least

partly combined to offer new forms of media learning in the 21st century that

might serve to question traditional assumptions about identity in Subject

Media. For example, the distinction between theory and practice explored

elsewhere in this thesis, and consequent,   subsequent boundaries placed

between critical work and creative 'play' might be made more explicit by the

introduction of computer games and digital production into the classroom.

Indeed, the questioning of the legitimacy of the school / college as an

institution is accelerated by possibilities of e-learning and other forms of the

digital reconfiguration of space. Into this equation media teachers consider the

notion of the media as an agent in the erosion of childhood, and the

assumption that young people are sophisticated users of technology, all

serving to challenge the traditional teacher-student dynamic. The traditionally

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forms the motto of the two Normal Schools he was mainly instrumental in founding in
Glasgow:- 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from
it.' The school playground as an arena for moral supervision is what Hunter describes in his
genealogy of education as a technology for moral 'normalisation'.

passive mode of classroom learning is challenged by more dynamic, creative

opportunities for information and creativity available to the affluent outside of

the educational encounter. For all these reasons, it is increasingly unlikely that

the media teacher can ever be successful in an emancipatory or 'protectionist'

project. The question remains, however, one of form – however progressive

the use of digital media might become, a process such as the acquisition of an

A Level in Media Studies remains entrenched in the technology of formal

assessment in which the student is 'shown' to the assessor through the written

word and through creative activity which serves to 'demonstrate' theoretical

understanding. The notion of being 'critical' remains, but there is a lack of

reflection on what this means in a postmodern context. It seems fair to

suggest that the critical voice to be acquired by the student in traditional media

learning has been that of the teacher. This form of 'passing on' is one of the

foundations of the view of the other that circulates in much 'everyday'

discourse about media effects. Individuals are usually keen to assert that they

can demonstrate critical awareness and, for example, enjoy the tabloid press,

soap opera or reality TV with a pinch of salt, but at the same insist that there

are others who cannot. Students themselves will routinely adopt such a

position when discussing media effects, particularly in relation of children and

violence. Equally, cultural capital is afforded to those (often middle class)

students who can distance themselves most vehemently from popular

television. In Bourdieu's terms (1984) this is a clear marker of distinction, and

it is not just students who are anxious to mobilise such manifestations of taste

– the examiners I interviewed were keen to use different markers to articulate

their likings for different kinds of texts ('devotion' to *The Today Programme* as opposed to 'addiction' to soap opera) [70]. The notion of criticality in media education, it seems, has too often been understood in terms of simple negativity and a 'rising above' the very texts it claims to 'radically' interrogate. To return to Peim's suggestion in his study of English teaching that the content and overall intent of Media Studies might offer an escape from the 'enrichment' thesis of Subject English, Buckingham's recent research offers an opposing view,

> There is a genuine risk that the erudite analysis of popular culture will become merely a new, more fashionable form of 'cultural capital' – a new way for the middle classes to display their cultural and intellectual distinction, and to do so in pretentious language that serves precisely to exclude the people who feel that this culture belongs to them. In this respect simply changing the object of study – studying Madonna rather than Milton, or the Spice girls rather than Shakespeare – is far from being inherently subversive. Indeed, it can end up simply reinforcing cultural hierarchies, rather than challenging or undermining them. (Buckingham, 2003, p110)

Buckingham's recent review of Media education moves on from this rather depressing history to a more progressive set of suggestions for alternatives, in rather the same way that Peim's work on Subject English looks to media learning as a way forward. Focussing on the 'playful' options for pedagogy offered by digital literacy, he utilises the 'ludic' dimension of learning found in many postmodern accounts of progressive educational modes and suggests that the kinds of media learning required at Key Stage 3 and after might be reconfigured to draw upon the more playful dimensions of media education encountered by younger children. In particular, 'identity work' might at first be freed from moralistic concerns in order not to constrain self-expression – by adopting and embracing a 'carnivalesque' approach in the classroom (see

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70 Bourdieu's socio-cultural analysis of the formation of 'taste', related to social class and the

Bakhtin, 1986, p15), media educators might yield richer negotiations of critical positions by allowing differences in gender, physique and other forms of identity to be represented and addressed[71].

Such an open-ended approach would almost certainly demand freedom from the traditional conceptual framework for media learning, presently adhered to by all of the awarding bodies, and hence the institutional version of the subject (Subject Media) remains somewhat shackled by its form.

One area in which media learners are able to play with conventions whilst adhering to such prescribed form is the arena of parody, in which imitation of genre conventions (traditionally a site of squeamish reactions from Media teachers, assuming that imitation necessarily suggest adoption of mainstream values) can be applauded as ironic, postmodern negotiation of meaning.

However Buckingham describes a particular example of a parodic production which illustrates the inherent uncertainties in assessing such work, the case of Slutmopolitan. Reading the text alone, Buckingham reports, it is possible to celebrate the sophistication of such a parodic intervention into the genre. However, as production work requires the written account to explain such 'critical understanding' it becomes more difficult to maintain a coherent judgmental response when different members of the group offer different

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acquisition / transference of cultural capital.

71 I am referring here to the subversion of traditional hierarchical arrangements, borrowing from the idea of the carnival and carnivalism in the work of Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, who describes the carnivalesque as that which twists, mutates, or perverts societal norms and standards.

rationales for the parody. Hence the 'mindset' of the assessor in interpreting the intent becomes the hurdle the learners must overcome,

> Slutmopolitan could be seen as an example of the carnivalesque, subverting the respectable through a form of bodily transgression. Indeed, from the postmodern feminist perspective it could be regarded as a kind of celebration and a deconstruction of the masquerade of femininity. From this position, gender is seen not just as a form of behaviour or a personal attribute, but in itself as a form of parody – although even the most explicitly feminist of the authors - and this is a label they would probably all have refused – would not have conceptualised the politics of their project in this way. (Buckingham, 2003, p168)

Texts

The distinction between subject and qualification is important here. Exam boards sell qualifications, or rather assessment leading to certification, to schools and colleges. The subject is assumed to exist 'beforehand', and yet when the board lays down the criteria on which students 'grasp' of the subject is to be judged, the distinction becomes blurred. This close reading of the textual body that stands in for the existence of a subject will be concerned with problematising notions of an inside and outside to such a body, and will attempt to draw from literature reviewed earlier in analysis. Most significantly, Foucault's work on discipline and correction, Derrida and Fairclough on language, and Hunter and Peim on the construction of subject identity (although the 'application' of these ideas will not be linear, rather I shall offer a series of interventions into the 'logic' of the awarding body texts, in order to unravel some of the phenomenological assumptions that underpin such language. In doing this the mentioned 'thinkers' will be an influence rather than a direct 'manual'.

There are three awarding bodies in England, AQA (an amalgamation of previous boards AEB, NEAB and SEG), Edexcel (previously BTEC, although

their vocational qualifications are still labelled BTEC National Diplomas to make them semantically distinct from the more general vocational AVCE and GNVQ options) and OCR (previously Oxford, Cambridge, MEG and RSA). The final acronym, the body with which this research is concerned, has the largest number of candidates for Media Studies, largely due to the success of the old Cambridge syllabus with its priority on practical work. The new Currriculum 2000 specification maintained this 40% weighting on students' production activities, and it has remained the case that teachers making decisions on behalf of their students have assumed that this ratio of practical and more 'academic' work is preferable to the other, more theoretical options. Another determining factor in this equation tends to be the amount of production resources available to students in a school or college. Interestingly, despite the vocational, practical bent of Media Studies, and the derision it receives for its distance from traditional study, it is one of the most popular 'products' offered by the OCR board, an organisation usually associated with public schools and Oxbridge entry (indeed one of the reasons why the organisation was brought into disrepute by the 'marking scandal' of 2002 was that it appeared candidates from more privileged backgrounds aiming for higher grades and to university entry had been penalised by the extreme raising of thresholds to prevent a swelling of achievement at the upper levels of grading). So we can see that for OCR, Media Studies represents a tension between notions of scholarly tradition (Edexcel assumes the identity of the more vocational board) and market forces.

Working to a set of criteria established by QCA (another body recently damaged by political intervention), the awarding bodies produced new *specifications* for 2000 (an imposed linguistic shift from *syllabuses*, which imply more interpretation rather than application on the part of teachers). Alongside these documents, which are organised through a rationale for the subject and its institutional version within its pages, a set of assessment objectives which are then mapped to units of study and to assessment by coursework and by exams, a set of criteria for the teaching of units towards assessments, and finally some examples of exam questions and of marking schemes (as well as a section for teacher guidance, and a set of signposts for the teaching of key skills in communications, numeracy, IT, and three other 'wider' key skills in more social and personal qualities such as 'working with others'). Much work has been done in scrutinising the enormous shifts since the introduction of the National Curriculum in prescribing curriculum, and the QCA criteria for curriculum 2000 intended to leave no ambiguity in what was to be taught, how and to what end.

Specifications, assignments, assessment materials etc are all parts of chains of writing, intertextual and differential. Teachers and students are all active readers and writers of such materials. Teachers see their mediating role as making students sensitive to the institutional contexts of their writing, delivering the skills required to adopt a particular kind of academic writing, a specific discourse. There are a myriad of assumptions underlying this discourse and the social activities of grading and diagnoses that accompany it. Since its

inception as a qualification 'offered' by the Cambridge examining board in 1990, Subject Media has been written in this context.

It is interesting to view the textual nature of assessment in terms of boundaries and relations. Turing to Bernstein (1990), we might usefully consider the structural and interactional relations facilitated by the OCR AS Media Studies specification, its accompanying guidance documents (such as 'specimen' question papers and mark schemes – trail versions of the real thing that are circulated to teachers with the specification before teaching commences), and subsequently the texts of examinations – the question papers, mark schemes and examiners' reports. Like all of the texts produced in the contemporary climate of quality assurance, there is the illusion of a cycle, of a linear cause and effect chain, 'starting' with curriculum development (the experts authoring the specification and 'getting it through' QCA, followed by the production of exam questions at committee meetings, and the review of student performance in response at the standardisation stage. In reality, question papers are produced on a long-term basis which means that the next set of questions have been prepared long before the review of performance takes place. But more significant than this practical aberration is our understanding from Foucault in particular that contingencies mobilise the circulation of technologies such as assessment, but such contingencies are mis-remembered as linear histories, or dialectic progress in retrospect.

Bernstein is concerned with classification, as we see elsewhere in this thesis, where teachers and examiners' responses to surveys are deconstructed with such framings in mind, and in my summary of Elliot's application of weak and

strong classification to academic and vocational boundary-establishment in Media departments.

For Bernstein, the model of pedagogic discourse is designed to relate macro-institutional forms to micro-interactional levels by putting into operation rules of competence in communication. Interactional levels are defined (by Daniels, interpreting Bernstein) as

'*the regulation of the transmission / acquisition relation between teacher and taught, that is, the interactional level comes to refer to the pedagogic context and the social relations of the classroom or its equivalent.*' (2003, p2)

Using an example from the OCR AS specification to examine this interactional level,

we might use the example of new media technologies, a unit that was first examined through a 90 minute exam in January 2001 (my recordings of examiners' discussions include the meeting to standardise this paper). The specification requires students to

develop '*a good working knowledge of the significance of new technologies in the lives of audiences, their value to media industries and their increasing convergence, or 'inter-connectedness'.*' (2000, p36). In itself, there is nothing clearly pedagogic about this instruction since such a 'working knowledge' of, say, how students are using MP3 to download music from the internet would lead easily to an understanding of how the music industry and software designers might be in conflict[72]. Similarly, though the word 'convergence' would need translation, the concept of computers at once offering the use the opportunity to stream music, video, film and still images would be fairly simple

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72 MP3 is a means of storing and transferring music without the need for CDs, by converting reducing music in size by removing the parts the ear cannot pick up, and thus reducing a 60mb piece of music to 6MB.

for most sixteen year olds. So at this point Subject Media displays its status as a 'love / hate' social practice – either radical and empowering since it deals, Vygotsky fashion, with a theoretical / intellectual articulation of the already-familiar, or trivial and too easy since it demands very little in the way of knowledge acquisition on the part of the learner. However, when we scrutinise the texts that come 'later', the question paper and mark scheme, we can more fruitfully apply ideas about pedagogic relations.

An important premise to establish is time-related, and offers another riposte to the linear illusion of the assessment 'cycle', since the starting point for the teaching of a particular unit of study is usually the previous year's exam, but a 'second guessing' takes place on the part of teachers since they assume the examiners will not cover the same specific areas twice in succession. So teachers are attempting to use the content of the previous assessment texts as a basis on what not to cover, as well as for practice and framing for what is to come. The January 2001 question for this topic area was in the form of an article from The Guardian's Online supplement on 3G phones and their selling points for potential consumers. This extract was followed by these questions,

1a) Name FIVE things that the 3G phones will be able to do.

1b) What is meant by 'users will pay a big premium'?

1c) What do you think the LAT factor is 'the main selling point' of the video phone?

2a) The passage suggests that there will be 'an explosion of phone / personal organiser devices'. Give two reasons for this.

2b) In what ways might 3G be seen as an example of media convergence?

3 Is it true to say that consumers always want all their media technology to be small and portable?

4 'New media technology is having a much greater impact in the making of media products like films, TV programmes and websites than in the consumption of them by audiences.' Discuss this view.

In terms, then, of interactional relations of transmission and acquisition, there is a gap between the open-ended nature of the specification and the outcome required in the exam. The student must acquire the ability to respond to a piece of broadsheet journalism by essentially finding the answers to the questions in the words on the page (but this is only possible if the student is practiced in reading such prose, or has acquired sufficient cultural capital to be able to 'decode' such journalism), and then to respond to an instruction to 'discuss', which is code for demonstrating knowledge of two conflicting positions in response to the same question. So in this most seemingly 'free-spirited' of subjects, where students are required in the words of the specification to develop 'a working knowledge' of the relationship between their own consumption of media technologies and a theoretical framework for understanding it, the outcome required to expose this to the examiner is a combination of the most traditional of methods for judging understanding – comprehension and discussion. In Bernstein's words, there would be weak classification here, not in terms of insulation between subject teachers as we might expect for Subject Media, but instead between classroom and examination. The teacher can only adequately transmit for acquisition at the

interactional level if s/he effectively translates the wording of the specification through scrutiny of the examination structure, and prepares / trains her students for such an experience by attempting to transmit the confidence to perform such operations in response to unseen, new printed material. The form of social relation created then by pedagogic discourse in this case is the traditional relation of passing on cultural capital – the teacher is likely to 'know' how to cope with such an examination structure, and likely (as my evidence of teachers and examiners' media consumption evidences) to be familiar with the style of writing published by The Guardian. Equally teachers with a background in the kinds of liberal humanities evidenced by my data are likely to have encountered the notion of 'discussion' under exam conditions many times. The task for the teacher in transmission then, is more about the passing on of cultural capital through reading and decoding / use of language than it is to do with facilitating expression about technology and identities, for example. Given that Media Studies has no PGCE course through which teachers can absorb a strong classification, and many of its practitioners are, as we see in my data, English teachers or from industry with little in the way of a common 'pedigree,' we find in this example a double-weakening of classification. I would argue that in the case of this topic, there is weak classification between the 'deliverers' (teachers will arrive at a scheme of work about new media technologies from a wide variety of positions, using contemporary examples from newspapers, magazines, television and the internet which will all be written for different audiences, in different styles and in different registers, and they may rely heavily on students using the internet

to find their own research sources – these are not criticisms, merely observations of loose classification). In addition, as I have shown, there is a very weak classification between the 'spirit' of the unit and the assessment of learning in response to it.   Considering the framing of the pedagogic communication at play here in terms of physical location takes us into a discussion of recognition and regulation in response to this example of the 3G phones topic.

Firstly, let us be clear about definitions,

> Recognition rules create the means of distinguishing between and so recognising the speciality that constitutes a context. Realisation rules regulate the creation and production of specialised relationships internal to that context.   (Bernstein, 1981, pp. 328-329)

Communication in pedagogic discourse is framed by the selection, organisation, sequencing and pace of communicators (and by non-verbal aspects of meaning such as dress, posture and position). Equally, it is framed by physical location (we can think here of the work of Stow, Hunter and more recently Peim on the features of physical environment and their determining imposition in education, and on to Foucault and the panopticon). Power resides in classification within and between categories which generate *recognition*, and control (framing) is *realised*. So two aspects of pedagogic communication which are essential counterparts to one another are – instruction (for example the transmission of comprehension skills with which to demonstrate, ironically perhaps, understanding of the impact of new media technologies) and regulation (social order and identity as reinforced through awarding body – teacher – student identities).

I think that the example of the 3G phones question demonstrates perfectly the function of pedagogic grammar, itself a form of social semiotics. We can see through this example how pedagogic grammar operates to allow a '*dominating distribution of power and principles of control to generate, distribute, reproduce and legitimise principles of communication'. (*Daniels, 2003, p1). The principles of communication, through the 'double-weakening' I have identified, secure the reinforced recognition of long-established boundaries of language use and practices. Relations within and between social groups are regulated and maintained through this 'binding' of the potentially radical in the liberal-conservative (liberal on conservative terms) mode of comprehension and discussion. And these 'bound' principles produce a traditional distribution of forms of pedagogic consciousness, not despite the weak classification at play in this unit / discipline but indeed through such loose, or 'slippery' relations. The social practice at work in this topic is the (perhaps unlikely) reinforcement of the traditional activity of using semantic patterns to 'discuss' or to 'comprehend'. These practices are learned and function socially, they are institutionalised patterns of language use. This is what must be learned in Subject Media in the case of this example, despite the illusion or claim to a 'progressive' spirit.

By far the most entertaining explanation of classification Bernstein offers is his lavatory analogy,

> Imagine four lavatories. The first is stark, bare, pristine, the walls are painted a sharp white; the washbowl is like the apparatus, a gleaming white. A square block of soap sits cleanly in an indentation in the sink. A white towel (or perhaps pink) is folded neatly on a chrome rail or hangs from a chrome ring. The lavatory paper is hidden in a cover and peeps through its slit. In the second lavatory there are books on a shelf and

some relaxing of the rigours of the first. In the third there are books on the shelf, pictures on the wall and perhaps a scattering of tiny objects. In the fourth lavatory the rigour is totally relaxed. The walls are covered with a motley array of postcards, there is a various assortment of reading matter and curios. The lavatory roll is likely to be uncovered and the holder may well fall apart in use. We can say that as we move from the first to the fourth lavatory we are moving from a strongly classified to a weakly classified space, by a space regulated by strong rules of exclusion to a space regulated by weal rules of exclusion. (Bernstein, in Halsey, 1997, p76)

I am arguing, then, that Subject Media, has rearranged itself, perhaps without intention, from a relaxed lavatorial space to a far more domestically-minded arrangement.

TEACHERS

Data – e-interviews

E-interview questions were sent to ten people who had agreed to take part in this research[73]. The ten were selected on the basis that I had worked with them at OCR, and they were aware of my motives, and that they have all been Principal Examiners or moderators, curriculum advisers, authors of written work about the subject (as opposed to text books for students) and / or teacher trainers. Put another way, the seven respondents are some of the 'big names' or 'key players' that tend to be on 'the bill' at the main conferences, make up advisory and senior examining panels, and appear on the shelves of Media teachers' offices. Whilst their individual responses to questions about history, consumption and motives are treated with anonymity, their biographies are listed here (beginning overleaf to establish a context for the 'data' yielded from these emails.

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73 I sent a list of questions to the group of 'key players' who had agreed to take part and deliberately gave no further instructions as to the nature of the response required. I asked for responses within a week to avoid too much deliberation.
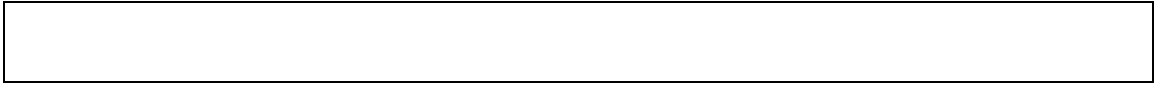
[Name] – reader, Media Education, Institute of Education. Author

and editor of several seminal books on teaching Media. Own background -

[Name] – English and Media Centre, who produce teaching resources and run INSET and conferences for Media teachers, also publish magazines for English and Media teachers and students. Own CV –

[Name] – Chief Examiner for A/AS media studies, OCR (curriculum 2000 specification), and Head of Media Studies at Long Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge (one of the largest centres in the country for the subject).

Own summary -

[Name] – Education Officer, British Film Institute.

[Name] did not offer an autobiography so this is my account towards a resume of his current work –

[Name] – author of *The Media Students' Book*, best-selling students textbook for several years. Senior examiner for several boards, including current Principal Moderator role for OCR GNVQ and AVCE Media.   Editor and publisher of in the picture magazine for media teachers. Freelance media educator and teacher trainer, organiser of conferences, BFI Associate Tutor board member. Own history –

[Name] – Head of Education, British Film Institute. Own CV –

[Name] – chair of examiners for AQA Media, author of several student text

books.

Own summary –

As a methodology, asking for email responses to open questions is not traditional, or 'safe' in any positivist sense. Respondents may chose to take minutes, or months over the responses. The written word is produced with more caution than verbal response, perhaps, and there is further research to be carried out on the status of email utterances. It should be stated also that these were not interviews in the sense of a pressured present tense environment for thoughts manifested in statements. The answers were not produced as 'live,' therefore these findings arise more from a questionnaire delivered and returned by email. However the intention was to set no limits or boundaries on the length of response nor parameters for the style or tone, as can be seen from the range of detail and formality in the 'CV' responses above.

It is more interesting to begin with the respondents' own media consumption. Two of the 'key players' opted not to respond to my question about media consumption and the distinction between work and pleasure, and I have no way of knowing whether this was an oversight or a deliberate choice. The remainder did offer a paragraph each, of which the following is a summary, *ER*, *The Guardian* (which several respondents disclaimed as 'predictable'), Radio 4 (which interestingly was not reflected upon) and Jonathon Coe's *The Rotter's Club* were the only texts mentioned by several respondents. There were statements from most about busy work lives impeding media consumption (thus a distinction between teaching about media and enjoying media is established – references to falling asleep whilst watching or 'trying to' go to the cinema proliferate). In some answers, people discussed 'their' music

and their children's' music in different terms, for example '*I listen to a lot of music, mainly because this definitely ISN'T work, nearly all obscure contemporary jazz – I have very elite tastes – though I also clock in to my kids' mother-fucker music*.' There are three insights residing in this statement. Obscure jazz is situated outside of Media Studies, presumably due to its status in between popular culture and high culture, or because of its lack of resonance with Media learners. The disparaging labelling of the children's' music might also be revealing not so much in the ownership ascribed to it (which may mainly be to do with age rather than cultural value judgements) but more in the necessity to remain in touch with it.

Most respondents mentioned specific texts or genres, apart from the internet which most listed but few were more exact about, interestingly considering that it would have been surprising for a respondent to simply list 'television'. No distinctions between work and pleasure were explicitly stated, though several mentioned 'slipping into work mode' or 'reading fiction to switch off the world at the end of the day'. A BFI representative asserted that films are only viewed at the cinema as other formats have the wrong ration and poor quality. Texts mentioned by these respondents and by my own students at the time of writing (from their 'My Media' induction activity) were *Coronation Street*, *Eastenders* and *The Simpsons*.   The former is described as an 'addiction' by one respondent.

I was interested in comparing the accounts of how the subject came to be in its various forms, with the official version outlined above, and also with examiners and teachers statements from my other surveys. I was concerned with the

degree of consensus, and whether I could link any dominant discourses about the subject with any prevalent views on assessment and on the academic / vocational distinction. I was essentially trying to establish strands of identity within Subject Media, in terms of the academic backgrounds, personal tastes and values of those engaged in its social practices, from subject teachers in the guise of consumers at INSET meetings, to examiners at meetings being 'trained' and by experts at standardisation meetings, and finally the 'key figures' who have shaped the institutional versions of the subject over a period of time. I was interested in inter-discursive relations between, within and across these communities.

The first post-16 academic course remembered is A Level Communication Studies, which preceded Media Studies by a few years. However, O Level and CSE Film Studies Mode 3 courses were in existence in the mid 1970s. before then, Film was taught within General Studies, and it is claimed that Film was taught about (or against, within the Leavisite tradition) within English in the 1930s. One respondent talks of integrating media work into FE General Studies teaching in 1975, another reports moderating O Level Film Studies for AEB in the mid 1980s, and there is a reference to teaching Mode 3 GCSE syllabuses in media-related areas in 1979. Also, media teaching was achievable within CSE Social Studies and O Level Sociology. Also mentioned is an ILEA / Bfi sixth form Film Studies courses that may have been accredited in the late 1970s. In terms of energies and impulses, Leavis and Thompson are cited as developing an interest in media texts in the 1950s, and then Whannel and Hall's 'Popular Arts' (1964) is mentioned in the same or next

sentence in several responses. As my 'official' history also suggests, this period of ten to fifteen years has now come to be understood as a linear influencing, to some extent. In the 1970s, the Murdock report into media texts in the classroom, the development of the Society for Education in Film and Television (SEFT) and Screen Education (respondents were unable to remember which came first) are outlined as contingencies in the establishing of film and media courses in higher education, or as one of the 'key players' has it, '*lots of academics shuffling up into their newly built ivory towers and pulling the ladder up behind them*'. It appears, according to the summaries offered that the newly established English and Media Centre, the ILEA, the Institute of Education, and the BFI created a 'critical mass' of interest in media education as part of English in the later 1970s. It is claimed later that the BfI 'played a key role in securing the status of media education in the National Curriculum, by organising a Commission of Inquiry into English and Media in 1993, at a time when David Pascall's National curriculum review threatened to remove media from English. Again, a missionary flavour pervades some of the responses that reminds me of Len Mastermans' monograph, ironically given the BFI's victory in the nineties might be seen as an early moment in the strategies he now seeks to oppose. Film, then is separated by most respondents from Media Studies, the latter having less of an established history separate from English before 1990. One respondent offers a history broken down into key moments in genealogy. First cited is the development of the ILEA English Centre in 1976 (now including Media in its title), which is said to have been influential for London teachers in putting the reading of pictures

onto the agenda in the English classroom. This centre then continued to

support the teaching of Media as a separate discipline, labelled here as the

'emergent Media in English phase', followed by the interventions of the

'Cockpit Cultural Studies team' in the mid 70s to mid 80s, manifested in the

publication of '*Schooling and Culture*' with its emphasis on cultural identity and

self-representation and its emphasis on working with community media

projects. This phase was supported b technological developments as access

to portable VCR, smaller cassette recorders and cheaper Polaroid cameras

made resources for audio-visual creativity easier to acquire. This is alongside /

followed by in this account by the 'mode 3 phase' (late 70s to mid 80s) which

provided a context for teachers interested in media networking, enabling the

production of teachers' own syllabuses (the antithesis of today's QCA-

prescribed criteria). An extract from one response is useful to elaborate,

> There was a huge variety of stuff from vocational style courses (including how to turn
> the TV on, literally) through to watered down versions of high theory, courses
> organised around ideological positions (for example the Mayfield syllabus which was
> deadly worthy and PC) and those that tried to do it all. No real conceptual base, no
> common core curriculum, most of these courses were taught medium by medium and
> very heavily text-focussed. We all sensed we ought to teach about media ownership
> and institutions, but couldn't because there was no way of accessing the information
> (though actually, this was still being claimed by media teachers in 2000, preparing for
> OCR's new Audiences and Institutions paper, responding to my INSET questionnaire).
> The BFI was highly film-centric and academic, but not much of a presence in schools.

Next, it is recalled that a more reflective period emerged in which teaching

about the

media became a subject of enquiry in itself, with conferences (in London,

again) run on the role of the media in teaching and the emergence of media

across the curriculum (though this demised quickly). From the mid 80s to the

early 90s, the BFI are reported to have dominated the subject, developing

books and teaching materials that are still widely used, and running INSET for

teachers (or '*ordinary classroom teachers rather than academics*', as one respondent puts it). During this time, in which Len Masterman's 'manifesto' also becomes a key part of the 'zeitgeist', syllabuses at A Level are developed alongside (and it seems inevitably overshadowing) vocational projects in schools such as TVEI and CPVE which used development money to set up new courses linked to the acquisition of new studios and edit suites along much more of a training model (without much evidence of the demand for 'criticism') [74]. At this time, respondents recall the circulation of concerns about television and its supposed conflict with education, developing into moral panics about soap operas and Shakespeare that are still prevalent today. In the late 80s, the introduction of A Levels in Media leads to a large growth in the professionalism and expertise of Media teachers, and great development in INSET and conferences. However PGCE courses offering Media as a specific subject have remained few and far between, a key factor in the continuing 'Englishness' of the subject. From the mid 1990s, the growth in digital technology has led to an enormous increase in opportunities for media creativity, but there is a lack of consensus between respondents on the degree of this in reality / take-up, with some suggestion that the amount of moving image production work emerging through digital resources is exaggerated by the BFI.

Respondents with more of a foot in the vocational camp offer insights which add to or contradict parts of this version. One 'key player' talks of involvement with '*those appalling City and Guilds radio, journalism and video courses*'. It is

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74 TVEI was the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative, and CPVE the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (both 1980s initiatives providing resources and opportunities for

also suggested that QCA have little interest in media courses at GCSE and A

level but a firm grasp at GNVQ and AVCE, which is interpreted as predictable,

perhaps as QCA have an agenda to further divide the academic from the

vocational (described by one respondent as '*tick boxing versus name*

dropping'.)

This separation of strands within media education are usually interpreted as

being divisions between skills-based learning and concept based learning, or

as practice as construction versus practice as deconstruction. One respondent

challenges the use of 'media education' in my question, arguing that my

interest is in Media Studies which is not the same thing (media education is

cross-curricular in this understanding). The difference is again described as

being to do with the emphasis on production as opposed to critical theory, but

it is argued that there is a lack of 'truly vocational' courses in media at Levels

2 and 3 ('*pre-vocational maybe*'). However, one response argues that new

possibilities are allowed by technology for rethinking these established

oppositions,

> One of its problems is that it hasn't changed enough, teachers are still too dependent upon theoretical work done in the 1970s. It is remarkable how similar the present syllabuses are to what was being proposed right at the start. The big change we are starting to see now is that DV changes expectations of practical work (both by teachers and students) and of the relationship between critical and practical work.

Another response offers much more detail about vocational projects, detailing

the emergence in the 1970s of City and Guilds courses in closed circuit TV,

radio and print journalism and also opportunities for teaching media within the

'General and Communication Studies' unit of Technician Education Council

courses from 1976. The C&G courses had little if any media theory in their

technical media programmes).

criteria, but it is not stated whether this was an issue[75]. In the 1970s, three

different technician education boards are remembered (TEC, BEC and

DATEC), offering diplomas often taught alongside Art college courses as part

of 'complementary studies'. These courses continued with less of an

established theoretical content until the mid 1980s when the City and Guilds

TV and video certificate emerged alongside the first BTEC National Diploma in

Media (which I studied for in 1985). One 'key player' argues that one crucial

development has often been ignored, and this is the CPVE initiative in the

early 1980s, following two reports, 'A Basis for Choice' in 1979 and 'Vocational

Preparation' in 1981.

> A Basis for Choice was the great liberal document that didn't survive Thatcherism, but
> its attempts to deal with the problems of 17 year olds staying one year post-16 was
> revolutionary. What then happened was more instrumental, but the CPVE proposals
> and the money made available through TVEI in the mid-1980s prompted many
> teachers in FE to try to develop media courses.

One of the respondents recalls how the BFI opposed the introduction of

Communication Studies at A Level as it offered a less interesting version of

ideas

SEFT had formulated about a new Media Studies qualification. Labour had

planned to revise A levels (labelled the N and F proposals) in a similar

structure to the A/AS divide now, and Media Studies was planned within such

a reformulation, but the election of the Conservative government in 1979

meant that these plans never came to fruition. It is claimed also that

Communication Studies at A Level arose through discussions with HE rather

than SEFT, the BFI and existing Media teachers.

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75 The City and Guilds awarding body offer courses in Radio and Television Techniques, and
a variety of other technically orientated courses that offer much more discrete specialist

This respondent, clearly more involved historically in vocational versions of media education, offers a useful summary of the 'tick boxes versus name dropping' opposition,

When GCSE and A Level Media first appeared at the end of the 1980s, it wasn't clear that they would storm ahead of vocational media courses. GNVQ was a major factor in curtailing vocational media work and making it likely that most centres would go for A Level at post-16. GNVQ Media never took off as expected. On the one hand it was too prescriptive for regarding kit and too complicated for centres regarding assessment, but also not vocational enough for existing centres to accept conversion. The pithiest way to make the distinction is to suggest that academic work uses practice to 'prove' or to illustrate theory, whereas vocational work uses theory to help develop practice. The original GNVQ definition of 'skills, knowledge and understanding states something students might gain from a good vocational course. Academic courses offer perhaps a narrower overall range of these three, but possible greater depth of knowledge and understanding? I like to think that I see both as being of equal value, but quite clearly in UK education culture generally, the academic is valued more highly.

Returning to the issue of the reason for the introduction of Media education, one contributor offers a triangulation between the desire to inoculate, the wish to '*recognise greatness in the popular arts'* (itself inoculation in a canonical sense) and an attempt to '*engage the reluctant learner'* within an explicitly left wing agenda, which still dominates today as an elitist anti-media position, despite the move more towards practical work as an expression of theory and an interest in pleasure. Market forces are also discussed in this response, which resists the missionary flavour of some narratives of the subject's history,

Key factors recently have been bums on seats and the need for institutions to respond to that (even if they were snooty about it before) plus changing media and changing technology for production in the last few years as IT is transforming possibilities for video more even than DTP did for print. The threats from government are now largely gone as it is too big to stop.

Summary

There are moments of consensus amongst respondents as follows,

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content than AVCE, ND or A/S courses.

1. The distinction between academic (A Level, GCSE, O Level) and vocational (GNVQ, AVCE, ND, C&G, CSE, TVEI and CPVE courses) is that academic courses are more concerned with theory rather than production, analysis rather than skills, assessment through examinations rather than portfolio moderation, prescribed content rather than briefs set within centres and deconstruction through concepts and critical theory rather than construction through technical competence.

2. The development of post-16 qualifications (ie A Levels) in Media Studies represented a watershed moment in the professional status of Media teachers and the resources available for the subject, and it also led to a marginalisation of vocational media education.

3. Film Studies has existed in various forms for longer, and media teaching has a long tradition, especially in London within other courses in a liberal / humanities tradition and within English.

4. There is no clear relationship between personal media consumption and the professional life of a Media educator.

5. It is difficult to find the time to consume the media texts one would like to.

6. Media Studies as a subject has a set of key 'stakeholder' groups concerned with shaping its institutional agendas through policy and also through training and developing media teachers and influencing their practice. These groups' roles are further given import due to the lack of a formal teacher training course in Media Studies, and subsequently the

need for in-service training of new Media teachers, many from an English background.

There are moments of disagreement over the following issues,

1. The role of the BFI

2. The academic value of vocational courses, especially City and Guilds qualifications

3. The importance, and/or purpose of practical work within Media Studies

4. The distinction between Media Studies, as a formal academic subject and Media Education as a more general term or a term for cross-curricular teaching

5. The relationship of Film Studies to Media Studies (interestingly, the respondents were not asked to include Film Studies in their historical narratives, but all did.)

Data – teacher questionnaires

Questionnaires were distributed to Media teachers at OCR's INSET events for the new AS qualification, held in November 2000. Teachers in this context understand themselves to be both practitioners, some experienced, some new to teaching the subject or the level, and also as costumers of the specification – a 'product' in this sense. In my role as Subject Officer, I was able to elicit responses to my questions using my 'function' as exam board administrator. Indeed, although the difference this makes may be negligible in any case, no distinction was made on their part between myself as researcher (within an

academic or theoretical habitus) and as administrator[76]. This as helpful in the sense that respondents may have wished to 'project' a sense of their own expert identities if they had thought differently about the functions of their data. As it was, they saw the exercise as a routine 'customer service' exercise. I found that the ability to shift within the discourses of academic research and 'product development' offered me an invisibility as a researcher which might have been used within a positivist 'non-participant' justification. However it is more interesting to consider the different moments of participation (or not) from an understanding of the difference the guise of the researcher makes.

The data gathered was largely quantitative. I was seeking to identify a narrowing of choice on the part of student experience. In other words, specifications are written to satisfy QCA criteria which involve an element of breadth and choice. But no distinction in made at such levels between teacher choice and student choice. I suspected that a subject like Media Studies with its radical empowerment claims might reveal itself to be more controlling than it would think at the level of teacher choice (of topics, of texts and of practical activities).

Firstly a short overview of the layout of the specification and how it was different to the previous syllabus from OCR is necessary. This difference was a key issue in the minds of respondents at the time, most notably and

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76 Bourdieu and Passeron use the term habitus to describe systems of schemes of perception, thought and action.

contentiously as regards the increased prescription of the new units, at the request of QCA.

Foundation Production – worth 40% of the AS, this is a practical unit for which candidates work in groups in response to a choice of 6 briefs set by OCR across a variety of media (e.g. the opening sequence of a thriller film, or 3 TV ads for a confectionary product). The marks awarded are for planning, construction and evaluation. Teachers award these marks and OCR moderators agree or adjust them.

Textual Analysis – half of this examined unit involves responding to an unseen video extract (from TV quiz shows or game shows in the first year), the other half asks students to compare two texts in a particular genre within a prescribed study focus (e.g. American films and social class / status, or Celebrity and the Tabloid Press)

Audiences and Institutions – famously media teachers' least favourite area (perhaps due to its lack of a textual focus and hence its distance from English), this paper requires learners to learn about either New Media technologies or Media Ownership and then relate generic questions to their own knowledge acquired through taught case studies.

Major differences with the previous OCR A Level Media syllabus –

- Practical work briefs were not set

- There was no unseen material

- Genres, texts and study focuses were not prescribed for textual analysis, nor was this unit taught – it replaced a research / analysis unit for which candidates chose any TV, film or print product and then answered generic questions.

- It was possible to avoid any explicit knowledge of institutions in the previous syllabus.

Quantitative data from teacher questionnaire (46 complete responses),

My intention is to use this data as a vehicle for discussion about discourses within teaching communities, and thus this section will offer a simple description of answers to questions, with elaboration on issues that arise. Although the sample is relatively small (46 teachers attending two INSET events ran by OCR to prepare teachers for the new units – see rationale and issues outlined about my identities above), each teacher represents a different 'centre', with numbers of students ranging from 9 to 198.

In total, the choices made by these teachers about topic and textual choices, would, directly, determine the experience of 'Subject Media' for approximately (some respondents gave an approximate figure) 2481 students. Because some respondents were teaching larger numbers of students than others, it will not be appropriate to use percentage figures. For example, to say that 75% of teachers were opting for one topic rather than another might be misleading in that it might create an impression that three quarters of the 2481 learners would be following that route through the AS qualification, when in fact that is

not the case. Therefore the number of teacher respondents will be detailed, and the reader is therefore asked to consider degrees of teacher activity rather than mass numbers of students.

33 teachers opted to continue entering candidates for exams in June only (the new Curriculum 2000 framework offers assessment sessions for coursework and exams, with the exception of 'synoptic units – those that draw on accumulated skills and knowledge and thus can only be tested at the end of a course – in January and June). Of the 13 teachers entering students for one unit in January, almost all were opting for The Textual Analysis exam, which is perhaps more suitable as an induction unit, given that the skills of analysing texts using the standard conceptual 'toolkit' has been the bedrock of media courses since they were first developed.

Of the 6 Foundation Production choices, 22 opted for the video brief, making the opening sequence of a thriller film, 19 chose print advertising and 16 another video option, the production of a TV advertising campaign. Video is a 'catch-all' medium but students are required to observe the conventions of the broadcast or exhibition medium.
The least popular choices were radio, for which 7 teachers opted and New Media (a web design brief), with 8.

33 out of the 46 teachers made these choices on behalf of their students without consultation. 6 gave students free choice, whilst 7 gave students a

limited range of options (e.g. thriller or TV ads). Therefore only 6 schools or colleges represented in the sample made their students aware of the choice offered by the specification. This is interesting not in any profound sense, but merely as it illustrates the degree of teacher-mediation at work, and the institutional barriers to differentiation. A specification, following the QCA criteria, might be produced in order to cater for a wide range of learners and in a subject like Media there might be an intention to offer a range of learning opportunities that draw on students own knowledge and media pleasures, but in reality the gatekeeper of this 'spirit' is Head of Media who makes decisions based on resources, teacher expertise or a 'best fit' solution with exam results in mind.

For the section of the Textual Analysis unit where students compare two texts of their choice within a study focus, 28 out of 46 respondents had chosen American Cinema and Social Class / Status, with the reminder shared equally between Lifestyle Magazines and Consumerism and Celebrity and the Tabloid Press. Nobody had opted for Minority Interests and Radio (again, radio being the 'neglected' medium – in my experience at OCR the majority of students working in radio were from centres for the visually impaired).

Significantly, every respondent reported that the topic had been chosen entirely by teachers without consultation with students. Here then we can reasonably assert that it is possible that a Media student with a passionate interest in, say, pirate radio, or indeed Hollywood cinema, would in all

likelihood have no awareness that there were options in the specification which might draw out their existing understanding. Again, this is not intended as a criticism, merely an observation which is important in the light of claims made in rationale and introduction sections of the specification (and in the work of Masterman, Lusted and many others since) about the possibilities created by Subject Media to empower learners through a 'critical understanding' of their own consumption.

For the third unit, the Audiences and Institutions paper for which students could study either Media Ownership or New Media Technologies, there was a split of 24 to 22 in favour of the latter, but again all 46 teachers had made this decision unilaterally.

Perhaps it is interesting that students from 22 centres were 'made' to engage with issues about ownership (which requires political and historical understanding of what has changed since de-regulation especially) rather than to demonstrate their awareness of how digital technologies provide new opportunities for both production and consumption (one might speculate that students are more likely to know about this, and teachers far more likely to have views about Murdoch and the role of the BBC?).

'From Oasis to Schubert' – examiner questionnaires

A further source of paper data (in the form, again of questionnaire responses) was

the feedback of examiners gathered at the first standardisation meetings. These

meetings were held the day after each of the Team Leader meetings, from which my

audio recordings were obtained. Some clarification of awarding body

procedures is necessary to set the scene, and reading such procedures with

Habermas' notion of ideal speech situations in mind affords us an interesting

theoretical aside, in so much as the QCA code of practice, and the OCR

procedures that serve to ensure compliance with it, are a perfect embodiment

of what Habermas describes as the problem with the unfinished project of

modernity – the question of how to deal with the omnipresence of difference

within the desire for 'common ground[77]. The notion of standardisation taking

place within four walls on a given day in order to 'set the standard' for

assessment is a folly in both a philosophical sense and also in a pragmatic

procedural sense. First, it serves to maintain the normative principles of

Hunter's English and Foucault's institutions[78]. The examiner is called upon to

accept the standard or withdraw from the assessment process. On a more

practical level the folly is still evident in that the meeting the day before, at

which more experienced examiners look at selected work and agree marks,

serves to decide beforehand on the marks the examiners will 'agree' at

standardisation. Thus the illusion of democracy masks, thinly, the practice of

training, or of being told. Furthermore, whilst it is not the desire of this thesis to

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77 The Ideal Speech Situation represents Habermas' central notion of the universal potential for human consensus.
78 Foucault's work on discipline focuses in particular on the prison and the asylum. The school is analysed by both Hunter and Peim, informed by Foucault's work.

become immersed in discussion of standards and accuracy, clear as it is that the entire discourse of such is a fiction at play to maintain the justifying myth of 'parity; in order to brandish the educational mark (again, from Foucault) upon its subject, it is nevertheless worth stating that the recorded data from the meetings places in front of us the 'truth' of the political nature of judgements made. Work is marked by team leaders at a certain level in order to set a standard that should yield a set of results acceptable to OCR, QCA and perhaps more importantly the centre-right media. At the time of writing this chapter, Estelle Morris resigns mainly in response to this construction of standards being exposed as though it were ever not at work, and thus consoling us with the notion that standards were temporarily made fiction.

The questions asked of examiners were intended to elicit qualitative data in the form of utterances about identities and desires to be understood in particular ways. I was asking for reasons, ideas and values, expressed through responses to why and how questions (as opposed to the what and when of the teacher survey). Examining is a means to an end as well as a social practice, and an operation of cultural distinction. Examiners earn on average £2.50 per script marked before tax is deducted (for coursework moderation, they work with samples but the overall figure tends to be less money earned). In order to pay for a holiday or roof repair, a certain volume of scripts must be taken on. What is evident from discussions held previously with examiners is that few would overtly state purely financial motives for marking (a desire for other

reasons inextricably bound up with discourses about teaching as a vocation, project, mission, rather than just a job, perhaps).

The examiners surveyed were asked to respond to a questionnaire which required them to provide qualitative date, using the following 'free text' questions,

- ***Please give your reasons for working as a Media Studies examiner at this time*** (I was interested in what would be added to financial reasons, and to whether I would be able to relate this to discourses about professional identities of teachers, and /or of Media teachers as a specific community)

- ***What do you think makes you a suitable person for examining Media Studies exam responses?*** (I was interested in the degree to which responses would be about qualifications, knowledge, experience and skills and the degree to which they would be concerned with personal qualities, related to professional identities as mentioned above).

- ***Please summarise your academic / vocational background and educational career to date, as well as any extra relevant information in Media ed such as INSET, examining, consultancy etc*** (I wanted brief CVs so I could try to identify varieties in profiles within this group, but I was also interested in how they would organise this information around the distinctions I had made between background and career and academic and vocational experience).

- ***Please offer a brief description of your own media consumption*** (as with other groups sampled, I was interested in responses in terms of cultural distinction and taste).

- ***Please try to describe the history of media education in the UK, as you understand it, in a paragraph*** (again, as with all the other groups asked, I wanted to look for different narratives of history and contingencies within, between and across groups of professionals within the larger community of media educators in the UK)

- ***What do you think are the main differences between academic and vocational versions of Media education?*** (I wanted to find out the degree of consensus over this and also to be able to analyse responses in relation to key discourses about learners and people).

Some reasons given for examining Media Studies papers are as follows,

Enhancing teaching.
Gain more precise knowledge of what is required in the exam.
Additional insight into application of assessment criteria.
Helping with teaching.
To impress students and staff in my new school.
To see what the standards are.
Curiosity about responses to the paper.
Understanding how syllabus works and is assessed.
Informs teaching.
New experience.
Helpful to my students.
To help in delivery of syllabus.
Maintain an assessment discourse with the board and adjusting teaching accordingly.
Gain experience and insight and improve my own teaching.
Gives me a good idea of standards.

60% of respondents also declared a financial reason, but no respondents gave that as the only reason.

In response to a question about their suitability for examining Media students, the following statements were provided,

Experience and attitude of fairness.
Experience.

Patience and interest.
Enthusiasm and desire for fairness.
Subject knowledge and experience.
I like to think I am a sympathetic marker.
Reflective, adaptable, not fixed in attitude / beliefs.
Striking a balance between the achievement spectrum set by the exam board and one set by myself.
Consistency in approach.
Patient, careful, mad!

Clearly, examiners separate being developed / gaining experience (in other words. Getting something useful (beyond the money for a holiday) in their responses to the question about their motives, from what they perceive they are offering to the exam board, which tend to be a mixture of experience, which might be ironic for a subject so associated with 'newness', and personal qualities. A dominant discourse of attitudinal attributes emerges from the second question. Rather than present themselves in terms of their knowledge or skills in an explicit sense, this 'knowing' is couched in umbrella terms as experience. More eagerly foregrounded are statements about mood and personality – fairness, sympathy, balance, patience, enthusiasm are asserted in equal importance to experience. Examining in this sense becomes emotional, personal and subjective, the antithesis of the cold application of already determined criteria presented by the code of practice and procedural technology of the hirers, OCR.

Respondents are seen to be shifting identity, operating within and between discourses of consumption. Within and between discourses of consumption and contribution. Of gaining - an experience, of knowledge and insight that will yield a result in their own teaching, essentially an insider's view, a knowing of 'secrets' or at least a greater understanding of something that is obscured in their everyday practice. And of giving - to the system, of their qualities and

experience.   Underlying this second set of utterances is a hidden discourse about protection, an implication that there might be less sympathetic, fair, balanced, patient and enthusiastic *others* examining students. Understood as a set of binaries, we can identify anxieties about the other motives and qualities that would otherwise be at work in assessment – examiners working for purely financial ends, lacking patience and enthusiasm.   Even the throwaway comment that one respondent is 'mad' demonstrates a sense of a mission – s/he must be mad to do this, but nevertheless makes this sacrifice!

The questionnaire proceeded to ask three questions of examiners that were the same as those asked of the key players in my e-interviews. These asked for a brief description of the respondents own media consumption, a description of the history of media education in the UK, and a summary of the differences between academic and vocational versions of media education. I was interested, again, in the emergence of discursive themes, but also in any differences between the 'mass' of examiners and those contingently linked with 'shaping' the subject at an institutional level. Again, what is of interest is the movement between identities and positions, after all examiners are teachers, and senior examiners have been both. Adopting Fairclough's approach, we can look for moments where these social actors articulate between genres, discourses and styles.

CV responses:

Firstly, information from the 20 responses is listed for the reader without interpretation.

Vocational experience,
Sound engineer
Musician
Singer / Songwriter and Guitarist
Freelance multimedia designer
Grammar school educated former social worker
Print and radio journalist and TV presenter (limited experience)
Journalism qualification
Community Arts / video work
Pig farmer and accountant

First degree,
Communication Studies
English and Film
Media and Communication
Cultural Studies
English and Media
Languages
Philosophy
History
Combined degree (Media was a minor subject)
English and Philosophy
English Literature x 2
Media Studies
Politics and Philosophy
English and American Studies
English

Higher degrees,
MA Womens Studies x 2
MA Media Education
MA in IT
Working towards Masters Certificate in Media Ed
Sessional certificate in Media Ed and subsequently MA Media Studies.
Masters level certificate in Radio Journalism Techniques
Currently undertaking MA
Research degree into Media Education
Currently studying MA Digital Media
MA in Language, Literature and Media Studies
Masters level certificate in Media Education.
LRAM (Performance) and Diploma in Professional Studies (Film and Media)

Teaching qualification,
Working towards PGCE post compulsory
PGCE x 3
PGCE English and Comms (secondary and FE)
PGCE English x 2
PGCE English and Media (secondary)

Teaching experience,
Teacher of Media for 8 years
6 years teaching 16-19 GCSE and A Level + 5 years teaching elements of GNVQ and AVCE
Media teacher
English teacher who has moved into Media in 1980s
Teach part time
22 years teaching – 12 years of GCSE Media, 8 years of A Level, started as English teacher
5 years vocational and academic teaching
Taught English up to degree level (mainly A Levels), taught Media at A Level, AVCE and HND.

20 years experience in teaching English and Media
Originally teacher of English and Drama, later Head of Drama and Media Studies
(both 11-18 school)
4 years secondary / 7 years sixth form teaching.
English and Media Studies teacher.

Other information,
Consultant for QCA on vocational Media qualifications
Vocational consultant in Media at a college
4 years examining A/AS Media
Lots of INSET and BFI consultancy / planned conferences and seminar materials fro Futuroscope
20 years examining and moderating (including Team Leader and Chief Examiner) all sorts of subjects at GCSE and A Level
2 years Head of Department
INSET – attended regularly on various media related subjects
Practical moderator
Revised some C2000 unit specs
Have 'trained' other members of department and have been looked at by other teachers setting up the subject.
Examined for AQA.
'Wouldn't mind getting paid for INSET but you seem to have to live in London and be part of the media mafia'
Varied INSET
Regular involvement in INSET days, Film Studies training etc.
Advisory teacher of Media Ed (ILEA)
Last 8 years Head of Department in 6th form college
Currently Principal Examiner, BFI Associate Tutor and Subject Committee Chair for Film IB / past – Chief Examiner, Chair of Examiners for OCR and moderator for AS/AS, AVCE and GNVQ Media, also acting Subject Officer for 6 months.
Several INSETS attended.

Examiners' own media consumption:

Firstly, the responses are simply listed. Where phrases appear in brackets as

'including,' additional information or context provided by respondents is also

presented.

Newspapers

Observer x 2
Mail on Sunday
Daily Telegraph (mainly secondary)
National daily newspaper
Times Educational Supplement
Guardian x 6
Newspapers
General range of quality and popular newspapers

Film

*Cinema x 4 (including twice a month and can't go now more than once a month, and once a
fortnight ranging from Matrix to Monsters Inc and broad and frequent, full range)*
Film – mainstream / Arthouse
Local independent cinema
European cinema
DVD collector
Don't get much time to see films
Films I have read about in The Guardian
Horror films
Occasional videos
Hollywood movies
Videos

Television

TV Soaps x 4 (including addict)
Big Brother (including fan, addicted)
Lots of TV (including ITV digital!)
TV dramas
TV News
TV documentaries
Not really interested in TV
A range of TV x 2 (including preferably 2-3 hours a day)
American sitcoms
Occasional highbrow documentary
TV – terrestrial mostly
A bit of football
Channel 4 news
Detective / crime TV
Television x 3

Radio

Radio 2
*Radio 4 x 4 (including R4 weekly and except Home Truths and those wittering programmes at
9am)*
Talk-based radio
Today programme (devoted)
Radio 5 Live

Magazines

Marie Claire (fairly passive!)
Sight and Sound
Film magazines
Red, monthly
Novels
Entertainment magazines
Kitchen & Garden magazine
The Garden (brilliant photography – worth a look) magazine
Magazines x 2
No magazines

Music

Big interest in music

Music from Oasis to Schubert
Music
World / classical music
Music – indie, trancey, dancey stuff

Computer
Internet (mostly for work)
Computer-based media
ICT
A little internet

Other
Newspapers / journals books
Theatre

Questions that arise:

1. Why do examiners provide contextual language for some texts but not for others?

2. Why are soap operas described in terms of addiction, when Radio 4 and *The Guardian* are not, and why is *The Today Programme* described as devotion rather than addiction?

3. What does it mean to be a passive consumer of *Marie Claire*?

4. What does '*from Oasis to Schubert*' signify?

5. Why is the photography in *The Garden* provided as a reason for reading the magazine?

6. Why do examiners describe cinema in relation to time / access, which they don't for other media?

7. What is a 'highbrow' documentary?

Interpretation:

The Guardian is the most popular text, as it was for the 'key players.' This is predictable (if we assume that Media teachers are left of centre broadsheet

newspaper reading 'types') but still significant in terms of the cultural meanings of Guardian reading, alongside those of Radio 4 listening. Much television is viewed, across a range of genres, with varying degrees of detail offered. Soap opera and *Big Brother* ('classic' examples of popular culture in the era of de-regulation, although the texts mentioned are broadcast on terrestrial channels) are described by some in terms of addiction or fandom, whereas the only other text to be described in terms of accentuated frequency is *The Today Programme,* to which the respondent is self-described as 'devoted'[79]. Positive and negative connotations are thus presented for essentially the same practice (regular consumption of something). Presumably the loyalty to the serious news service offered by *The Today Programme* is something to be impressed by, perhaps a signifier of a world view remaining from the 'BBC age? Soaps and reality TV, however, are enjoyable but lead to addiction, statements entirely in tune with the 'junk TV' discourse which scapegoats TV for all sorts of societal breakdown. Several examiners, like the 'key players' choose to provide a negative response in terms of cinema-going, reporting that they 'cannot' go to see films, rather than that they 'do not', or indeed rather than not mentioning films at all. The reference to the standard of photography in *The Garden* is added, interestingly (in so much as this examiner does not give a reason for watching horror films, or any other texts / genres listed) and this can be interpreted either as a simple recommendation to me, or perhaps it is used to signal an appreciation of photography (part of the vocation of Media

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79 Many critics make an assumption about the reduction of quality in the era of choice, but a recent Reith lecture by Peter Bazalgette (the creator of Big Brother) made a spirited defence of the quality of digital television and the subscription format in the aftermath of the partial de-regulation of the airwaves.

educating?) as opposed to *just* an interest in gardens (see the earlier question on motives for examining – not ever *just* for money!).

Marie Claire is consumed passively by an examiner who describes other texts as primary (films) and secondary (*The Telegraph*) which relates to a model of media consumption used by some teachers when discussing audiences. Projected here is the sense of never 'switching off' from a theoretical perspective on media audience, but also the presentation of a hierarchy in the value of texts chosen. Reading *Marie Claire* would gain the least cultural capital and hence this activity is passive. The description of musical tastes from Oasis to Schubert is clearly intended to demonstrate this breadth through well known examples, but nevertheless a discourse of hierarchy again is spoken here through the spatial metaphor of distance – it is a long way from the one to the other and perhaps it is ironic that the good Media teacher pays lip service here to a valueless treatment of texts but simultaneously reinforces the distinction between the popular and the canon. Power most forceful when appearing as its other? The reference to the occasional highbrow documentary is a knowing acknowledgment yet reinforcement of the same cultural positioning.

Again, no great claims should be made for conclusions about media assessment from these statements and my interpretation of them. Yet in the arche-writing, the moments of elaboration, of qualification through metaphor (addiction, devotion, passivity, distance, hierarchy, desire), we hear echoes of discourses that are at once internal and external to the social practice of

assessing media students' work, discourses of taste and distinction, from

Bourdieu, semiotic aspects of the social problem, from Fairclough.

The history of (the present of) media education (examiners' narratives) –

moment of consensus:

Media Studies has been built around the practices of English teachers.

Media Studies came out of Sociology / Psychology / Humanities academia and Film Studies from HE.

There is a separate / linked strand of Film Studies which came first.

1990/91 is a key date in origin, before which Media Studies was suppressed as an academic subject.

There are / have been ongoing debates about its place in the curriculum.

Media Studies has been developed around a shared sense of 'key concepts'.

The subject began as a very theoretical discipline and gradually incorporated more of a production emphasis.

The growing popularity of Media courses in the last 19 years is largely a response to technological expansion and access to media.

There are ongoing problems with Media Studies and the National Curriculum.

Media education has become more popular and respected recently, with more emphasis in the new A/AS courses on preparation for HE.

Training for Media teachers is now more thorough and organised as the profile of the subject has risen.

It evolved from Cultural Studies at Birmingham – Stuart Hall etc. / may Cultural Studies degrees began to emerge in the late 70s and whilst Film theory had been around since the 40s and 50s, media education began to emerge as a result of Cultural Studies and feminism in the 70s.

The subject has been taught largely by Art and English teachers, before the recent Media graduates started to train as teachers.

Media studies developed cautiously out of Film Studies.

Now recognised as valid and important as part of the ICT revolution / through digital, technological focus – wider credibility.

The subject was placed under threat by the National Curriculum.

Conflicting statements / other positions,

It is a mish-mash of airy fairy ideas that has developed into an academic subject that challenges perceptions and conceptions.

The subject was filtered from the top, industry to university and more vocational-type courses down to the secondary sector and via English into primary.

Media Studies was previously Communication Studies.

Media Studies has not been taught by many young people or ethnic minorities.

The subject boomed in the 90s and with increasing popularity came decreased credibility.

The BFI and Film Education have played major roles.

Media teachers have had a negative press based on fear.

Statements about academic / vocational versions - consensus views,

Vocational media courses have emphasis on production on work simulated contexts.

Modes of assessment are different.

Academic courses train people to think about the media, vocational more about getting work.

Academic = theory, books and making, vocational = making.

A Level gets you to Uni and has an emphasis on theory underlying practice, largely academic. Vocational gears you towards professional practice, more practice and not so much emphasis on theory but lots of process.

Vocational is hands-on. Academic requires little practical skill.

Vocational mirrors the world of work, academic is highly conceptual. The aim of vocational is to create good practitioners, academic to create effective 'readers' of the media.

Other positions / statements,

Critical skills are paramount on vocational courses also – both types of course increase literacy skills and critical / cultural awareness.

The distinction is blurred, especially in the 16-19 sector.

Academic is coherent, well thought out and challenging. Vocational is a complete mess.

The older the student, the more vocational the approach to the subject. For the younger student it is being sold as training to view the way the world works – or the interesting cousin of English.

There are fewer and fewer differences, but it should be noted that media education is not training for jobs, it is not genuinely vocational – it is not linked to actual work in the same way as Health and Beauty or Tourism are.

Academic media has not really got any usefulness in the real media world, whereas vocational media skills are wanted by institutions in the real world but are not accepted by universities!

THE MARK

Assessment workshop data

A further source of evidence came from a workshop I held at the BFI Media teachers' conference in July 2000. During this session I asked forty delegates to carry out an assessment experiment, during which they were asked to mark an exam paper from a variety of different perspectives and reflect on this phenomenological exercise. Focussing on analysis of television (seemingly the area with the least received academic wisdom, when compared to, say Film Studies or public service broadcasting as a concept), I provided a student analysis of '*The Cops*' for assessment[80]. I asked first for answers to a series of context questions about teaching and assessment, similar to those in the aforementioned questionnaire, alongside an 'audit' of the delegates own media consumption. Next I provided a series of 20 questions for delegates to answer in response to the exam script. These were:

How often have you seen The Cops?

Responses – 40% never, 40% a few times, 20% regularly. This is significant because, in order to preserve teacher / student choice over texts analysed, there has been a tradition of 'generic marking' in Media Studies. Thus this is a fairly typical scenario for only 20% of assessors to have regularly consumed the text being analysed by this student. Nevertheless, for all the worthy intentions of such conceptual assessment, there may be some inevitable

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80 The 'old' UCLES Paper 3 format involved students choosing their own text and then answering generic questions in an exam relating to the medium in question. So for this answer on 'The Cops', the examiner would be prepared for answers on any television programme.

issues of accuracy in these circumstances (could the student make invalid claims about the content of the text?)

If you have seen it, did you like it (and why, or why not?)

Responses – Largely positive, with reasons often relating to the director Tony Garnett's reputation / previous work. In every case, a personal reason was given related to trends in consumption (I enjoy the genre) or a more intellectual reason (documentary style production values). Nobody made a critical judgment, even when the programme was not enjoyed (i.e. nobody said 'it's crap'!).

What do you think analysing representation in a television programme should involve?

Responses – A wide variety of responses were forthcoming, with common elements being 'stereotyping' and 'ideology'. However, from 40 responses, no more than ten were similar in key words chosen.

What was this answer based on? Where does your understanding of representation come from?

Responses – Many delegates listed their academic qualifications here, with some names of thinkers such as Barthes and Althusser and some movements / approaches (e.g. 'structuralist aesthetic). Again, a very wide range of words / names, and in this case some contrasting areas of theory were mentioned. One delegate responded 'a confused understanding based on a range of reading'.

There is a duality of interpretation to such a wide school of thought informing these assessors. On the one hand, Subject Media can claim itself to be rich,

varied and very much of a 'spirit' as opposed to a tradition, but on the other there is clearly such a breadth of phenomenology at work in the marking of students' work that chance plays perhaps even greater a part in success or failure than it does in the rest of the educational encounter?

If you have seen the programme, what do you expect to be the most significant representational issues for a candidate to write about?

Responses – Again, a variety of people / issues were listed, with gender being the common feature of almost all answers. The representation of the police as an institution was common, but not always mentioned.

To what extent does the script give the impression that the candidate is comfortable in the examination context?

Responses - Interestingly, there was a great variety of answers to this question. There was an almost 50/50 divide between responses that were positive (e.g. coherent, clear, confident) and negative (not fully, lack of terminology). More significant even was the tendency in the majority of responses for delegates to contextualise the notion of confidence with extra-textual factors ('*hangs on facts rather than ideas', 'seems rehearsed rather than a response to the question'*).

Confidence was interpreted in a variety of ways, but never was the question challenged. In other words, it as taken for granted that confidence is tangible, demonstrable on an exam script and reasonable as a criteria for judgement.

To what extent does the script give the impression that the candidate knows the television programme well or has done a lot of work in preparation for the exam?

Responses – There was unanimous feeling that the candidate was well informed about the programme.

How well does the script manage to explain what the programme is about sufficiently for someone who hasn't seen it to be able to assess its account of representation?

Responses – Most delegates thought that there was helpful factual detail to compensate for lack of knowledge on the examiner's part, but over half criticised the script for a lack of expansion in terms of style / interpretation.

How much does the script confirm your expectations of what a media student would say about the programme?

Responses – Answers to this question were ambiguous. Several delegates returned to the issue of the script privileging facts over analysis, several did not answer the question, and some were critical of the narrow focus / lack of detail in the answer. But there was not a single, clear positive or negative response.

Does reading the script remind you of any of your own students' work? If so, would this student be one of your strongest, average or one of your weakest? Please give some indication of whether you consider your students to be below or above the national average in terms of their ability to answer this kind of exam question.

Responses – There as a significant lack of consensus. Calculating the response by combining the two parts of the answer (eg this student would be one of our best and we are above the national average would mean the student was very strong), roughly 20% judged the student to be average, 60%

high quality and 20% below average (usually expressed as '*average for us, but we are below average*').

To what extent does the script seem to be 'correct' in its analysis of the programme? Explain how you have decided on this and what you understand by 'correct' in this context?

Responses – Again, wide variety in response, ranging from a simple 'correct', through more negotiated responses, usually suggesting that facts were correct but there is limited analysis of conventions / realism etc, to more critical judgements (e.g. '*wrong on gender representation in Cop shows*').

Are there things you would have expected to read that are missing, and if so what are they and why should they be there?

Responses – Every response suggested there should be more detail and analysis. Several returned to the theme of (the perceived lack of) spontaneity. It is interesting that this response was the most shared, given that the assessment of quality against a notion of 'the average' was so varied.

If you are familiar with the programme, to what degree does the script's account of institutional context / producers reflect your own understanding?

Responses - There was a huge variety of response to this question, so much so that it is not possible to list any common elements of answers. However, over half of the responses were asking for content that I was not able to 'map' easily against any assessment criteria, but which presumably the delegates would place under the umbrella term 'critical response'. This was by far the question that prompted the most varied, personal responses.

Do you recognise appropriate kinds of theory / concepts being used in the script? If so, what are they and how are they applied?

Responses – It as fascinating that whilst all delegates answered 'yes' to the first part of the question, there was a very wide range of theory / concepts listed afterwards, ranging from genre and realism to theory of changing society, and opposition – good versus evil. Whilst this does not necessarily suggest anything flawed in assessments, it does indicate that there is a very large choice of theoretical areas to explore which will fit with an examiners sense of appropriate analysis.

How easy is the script to understand?

Responses - Unanimous positive response.

To what extent does the script give the impression that the candidate is thinking critically about this television programme?

Responses – Answers to this question seemed in the main reluctant to 'come down' either way. Almost all outlined moments of critical thinking alongside other parts of the script that were not evidently critical. Alongside this vagueness, there was some jarring of statements about what critical means – some examiners praised the factual context, whilst others were critical of the same content on the grounds that it 'appears to offer no personal response or sense of engagement with the programme'. It is clear that for some delegates accuracy of contextual detail is considered important as a kind of 'critical awareness' whilst for others critical implies original or enthusiastic / independent in some way of any received ideas about the programme's intentions.

How well does the script provide evidence of personal response?

Delegates were unanimous that there was little evidence of this. Perhaps surprisingly, nobody challenged the relevance of the question or the notion of evidence of such a thing as personal response.

What does thinking critically about television programmes involve?

Responses – Around half the delegates gave a set of criteria for this answer, related to the conceptual / theoretical framework that is traditionally used for the subject. However an equal number listed more personal attributes and less tangible human qualities, from 'enquiring' to 'adventurous'. In some cases there was a tension between delegates' answers to the previous question – whereas the student had been criticised before for a lack of personal engagement, in this answer critical thinking was described as moving beyond opinion or 'I think' and instead using theoretical concepts. In these cases (about a third of delegates), it seems fair to interpret critical as being other to personal.

Based on your answers to these questions, could you give a grade for this answer?

Responses - All but one said yes. However, the 'odd one out' did not actually answer no but instead gave a lengthy account of their thinking process related to whether the script deserved one grade or another.

If you answered yes to 19, what would the grade be?

A variety, ranging from B to D.

The questions that arise from these responses seem to be:

1. Is it a reasonable conclusion to draw that despite the emphasis on generic assessment, it is perhaps more likely in Media Studies than in other subjects that the degree of agreement between the candidate and the teacher about what is and isn't the 'expected' response to a text might be a determining factor in the mark awarded, and that the candidate may have a better chance if the examiner is *not* familiar with the text (nothing to expect)?

2. Is it a concern that there is no requirement for 'spontaneity' in Media studies mark schemes, and yet a number of delegates were critical of the script for not demonstrating this (and indeed, how can a textual response be judged for such a criteria)?

3. Does the lack of consensus as to what constitutes a theoretical response, or what can be presented as evidence of critical autonomy matter? Is this a quirk of the subject which should be celebrated as it shows a breadth of 'inputs' to the subject – an example of horizontal discourse in action? Or does it mean that who the examiner is and what books they have read makes a big difference to the grade a student will end up with?

Data – standardisation meeting recordings

I recorded the entire dialogue of each of the three standardisation meetingsfor the new AS units in January 2001, in Birmingham and Cambridge[81]. These meetings were 'moments' of import in a procedural, contingent fashion because these would be the first times examiners had seen and judged student coursework and exam scripts produced in response to the new specification. Following these meetings of senior examiners, the mass of general examiners would be trained in these standards, the materials used would then be archived and distributed as exemplars, and forever more standards in subsequent exams would need to maintain 'parity' with judgements made in January 2001.

As my role at the time was that of Subject Officer as well as researcher, I was a participant in these meetings at various stages, but never when student 'grading; was discussed. Thus I cannot claim objectivity, or invisibility as a researcher. Also the recorder was visible at all times, examiners were asked permission to record and I had had a number of conversations with several of those present about my research in the months leading up to the recordings. These factors must be considered in analysis of the 'data' recorded.

Firstly, the statements made during the recordings (then transcribed from audio cassette in entirety, to avoid the process of selection) are grouped into

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81 Standardisation meetings take place in the offices of awarding bodies and the conference facilities of various hotels, and include a briefing from the Subject Officer, guidance from senior examiners and then a 'trial marking' exercise during which examiners mark scripts already judged by Team Leaders, and are then asked to bring their judgements into line with this pre-set standard. Examiners who cannot conform to this benchmarking are asked not to mark the paper or to moderate coursework.

discursive categories. Statements about process are those in which concerns, doubts or anxieties about 'doing the job' or rather the responsibility that comes with examining or moderating (the latter is more sensitive since it involves judging fellow teachers) are articulated. These accounted for 22% of the recordings. Roughly the same amount of time (23%) was devoted to statements about the tensions between teacher and examiner / moderator and moments of uncertainty about how to apply the new criteria for the specification. Together, then discussion about the process rather than assertions of judgement accounted for 45% (almost half) of the 9 hours of standardisation, with the remaining 55% devoted to expressions of value (of the work under scrutiny in relation to mark schemes to be applied).

The collection of statements, in their groupings were as follows (these have been transcribed word for word – the only comments left out are those relating to coffee, the standard of lunch or other matters).

Code 1 - Statements about process,

You use the criteria quite a lot because you're feeling your way around but after a while I tend to go that's a gut reaction that's a level 2 or level 3 so you start to use it less.
I would put the video on, although maybe I would look at the planning first and then the tape and then the production log, that way around.

Well some of the planning is in the production log though, isn't it?
What I've said at the INSET days is that the planning should be a combination of teacher observation, what the student has written and to some extent the finished work itself, because my argument is that if the three adverts are good that couldn't have happened by accident.
I suppose the thing is if we went through them logically which for us to begin with I suppose as moderators might be quite laborious but it might actually help us determine that we are right professionally with the quality control standard that we've got to put into place.
With all of these the problem is the word at the top of each, excellent, proficiency, competence, basic - there is going to be a bit of stretching in each case, so it is excellence in terms of what might be expected at AS level.

And in a sense we are setting that standard in terms of this being the first time through.
Our tolerance is 7 across three categories but I would argue in moderation that you couldn't look at tolerance until you had looked at work across the centre because we are looking for parity across the marking of the centre a well as between centres.
As someone who has seen a lot more media than the students and comparing that with my knowledge of media professionally, how far do I think they are along that scale?
There is an initial gut reaction to it as a piece of television, how does it communicate its meaning effectively, is it clear what it is?
We do need to keep in mind the AS thing, we have to take into account that we will expect more from Excellence in the A2 year.
We cannot presume to provide a context for the candidates work which the candidate themselves is Unable to provide

We could change level 1 to be something to do with minimal
What I'm saying is that if the quality of this answer is more level 2 than level 1 then you might need to scale down level 1 a bit otherwise we might end up having difficulty in terms of our understanding of the standard that is AS.
I am conscious of this tape going and what I want to say direct is how many of these do you think we are going to get in which case are we suppressing performance if this is level 1?
When we start taking about grades it will come into play because when we convert this to percentages we might say in old money that was a fail
We have basic, sound, thorough and comprehensive in the descriptors and what do we define as being sound at AS level?
If someone commented on the representation of black Americans in Boyz in the hood I wouldn't want an examiner to say that isn't social class

I'm assuming if this is pitched between GCSE and A Level then there should be more As, Bs and Cs.

But when we are there with our teams they cannot be privy to any of those issues.
I think we should press on with the rest of the scripts and give ourselves some time to review the bigger picture.

Moving those up would signal a jump between this one and the previous one we looked at.

The terrible thing is of course that the more you do, the more your brain slots in to ….
I think that language thing is an issue but we mustn't let it be more than a couple of marks, so I think the crucial thing would be not to put it higher into level 4, not to prevent it getting into level 4.

I'm just trying to anticipate what is going to be said to me tomorrow.
I think that people might not be so entrenched in their positions because we have got a whole new ball game here, we are all beginners so people might not be so wedded to a particular standard, if you like.

What we have just marked - if it had got a B in a November module it would have done very well, it

Probably would have got a C, so if it gets a B for AS, that's OK.

I always think comedy is very difficult to analyse

I have found *Quiz Show* an absolute delight, as it is so clearly marked out.

Code 2 - Statements about tensions,

I feel torn because I can see in terms of the syllabus and that's really all we're
assessing how that grading would make sense with that particular piece of work.
It does say something in the brief about looking like other texts which are around but if they are producing
a supplement for a new Sunday paper you could argue that whatever format they choose is acceptable
because who is to say what a new paper's supplement would look like
The question is - if the candidates are putting forward their ideas of their definition of the brief does it
(not looking right for the genre) really matter?
They are too small, there is white space but there is an attempt at a reasonable layout, use of colour,
breaking up information and it isn't totally generalised and I think maybe sometimes we have a tendency
to reward over-generalised video making higher than more generalised print manufacture

We are going to have these kinds of personal views, which are going to inform us
There is a history of the way evaluation takes place and in this AS there is a difference in the way
evaluation is approached
We understand what's going on and it is quite unpleasant and I don't think that's just because we are
an adult audience, it is because there is more than you need to do what they are trying to do
I get the impression that they were given the brief and they thought right what do we like, we like this
and we like this so let's do it

Our discussion in terms of construction might be something to do with our distaste with the subject matter

It wasn't obvious it was a flashback was it, it is not signified is it, but the teacher is saying it
I wasn't sure if that represented competence in terms of the extraneous things we are looking at in terms
of trying to provide AS standard from the mark scheme

Can an argument be developed if it is only descriptive?
They are giving us very little on which to grade them even though what we have there is borderline
Competence
At first I was hit by all these technical terms, which is why I read some of the other question 1 answers
 to see if the kids generally do and some of them do, but they don't all hit these kinds of technical terms,
and I thought after a term's teaching this probably deserve to edge into the competent because they had
obviously been listening and learned, but I wanted the why.
A good answer on these two films would make more of the contrast between social class in the USA
and here
Can I raise the unmentionable - grades? Because we'll have to think about that - just off the top of
your head what grade do you think this would be worth at AS level? Right, a low C, but this marking
 is likely to bring it out at the bottom of E, and that is something we will have to bear in mind. The standard
we set today is important. We don't want the examiners to think that but we have to. The first script is a
definite fail.

Competent is a relative term - these are all relative terms.
The way to do it is to go to the top of competence with both these answers, as it is quite a shock when
you look at the grade outcomes.

I was thinking, how would I relate it to the old A Level criteria, and then some. So it isn't scientific.

If the spread of marks we have got is too low then it will be very difficult to justify.
In terms of the wording again we are looking at competent and sound - I'm looking at the words on the
page, not what we are doing which is almost a coven-like interpretation.

It just would be so helpful if there was an objective matrix for GCSE, AS and A
We have to think about it because I am not going to stand up in two years time and say we got 1%
Grade A in this system.

This is going to be quite hard on the centre, because these are the two best candidates.
I think we misled people by saying any American film would be OK but actually it does have to be
fairly simple, something like Erin Brokovich.

Code 3 - Statements about judgement

A gut reaction would be I'd expect more for excellence but in terms of the level descriptor there wasn't an obvious absence from within that excellent level so yeah I wouldn't rock the boat over that.
With this being graded so high for construction, what would we be looking for that is higher than this in terms of construction?
Bearing in mind this is the parity between Jan and June, this in a way is a different one, maybe a red herring, but the issue that this is a Foundation piece and they've done this in one term, if we get work coming in of this standard, of a reasonably high standard in terms of one term's work, it seems like we can give this kind of a tick.
One thing that strikes you immediately when students are beginning to understand how to use video is that there was a pace and a rhythm to the editing, it did have a variety of shots within it, shots by and large were not held too long, and it looked as if they has shot sufficient material to edit down into those three ads.
There is a lot of evaluation and in part that could be regarded as a production log but it is not the whole story, and the way they have approached planning is to look at a range of other texts of this sort and analyse the front covers of those texts, and then draft out mainly had drawn ready for the finished pieces.

There was far too much planning and research and not enough construction.

They just don't look like Sunday colour supplements.
I don't this involves a great deal of thought or work, this is what teenage magazines look like, I don't think this is what newspapers ever look like.
You brought the mark right down because of the context of what you had in your head about what newspaper supplements look like.

But I think those videos look like three adverts and I don't think this looks like a newspaper.
We've got to be very careful about how we interpret the briefs and where, in fact, the planning and the production log ties in with construction.
Generally speaking it looks like an artefact you might get be it more so in a teenage magazine even though this is supposed to be a newspaper supplement.
The weakness they all share is this rather imprecise nature of the brief they are working to and I think that is often the case with print.

Which perhaps suggests something about the centre, possibly.
Sketches of covers for planning shouldn't be beautifully produced, they should be sketches of what you are going to do.

But it might be that they couldn't get access to IT equipment.

Does it look like the beginning of a thriller, or a trailer?
We need to find evidence in the production log of their understanding of a modern film noir thriller to support what they are trying to do here and it does raise the concern or the issue about the suitability of material, I'm Ok with the bashing up but the knife is problematic I think.

Once it got to the violence it became self-indulgent and gratuitous.

As this is the opening, where do you go from there?
The crucial thing would be - producing a sequence which is readable as the opening of a thriller - and I don't think it does that, it's a self indulgent load of bashing up.

But did it thrill us?
It doesn't fall into excellence because the audience doesn't read into the piece what in fact the piece is supposed to be about because that is the story, not the beginning.
The criteria for L3 says editing so that meaning is apparent to the viewer but the meaning is not apparent to the viewer, a different meaning is apparent to the viewer.

You don't really get a sense that film noir conventions are organically interwoven into the text.
It is clear for this group that the centre think these students have worked equally hard, but what we are saying is that the text itself does not create the meaning that is required for a text at level 4.

I suspect that these students have really enjoyed working on this production.

There is a problem in the writing in that the academic bit in inverted commas has been tacked on.

Whilst it was mostly descriptive there was evidence of basic knowledge of what a dolly shot, a crane shot etc and they identified shots correctly but didn't necessarily analyse why they were used.

I think it descriptive, I don't think there was any analysis there and it is rather note-like and very brief.

There are undeveloped references to about 15 things, one off points but none of them are developed. I started and read through it and thought it was quite competent in terms of what it is picking up but then I read it again and thought this is just descriptive with no sense of why.
This one seemed to be much longer but almost totally descriptive, the analysis isn't there, it doesn't make any attempt to compare, accurate at a basic level, in fact in a lot of ways the opposite of the other one which was very specific. I struggled with this one, I didn't really like it.
It is a sustained piece of writing, it does show some detailed evidence of study of the text, and the concept of representation, there isn't an attempt at comparison, but nevertheless even though social class isn't dealt with quite as up front as one would want it is acknowledged and there is an understanding even though it is repeated in a mantra like way that representation can be constructed through use of mise en scene etc so therefore I think it goes beyond the basic.
She starts off saying the two characters I am going to compare are… and then she does get on with some comparison and I kept on thinking this needs developing but there are moments when it happens, there is some level of understanding of how representation is constructed but not enough.
To some degree this candidate has possibly been better served by interpreting this as four characters because as we have found at GCSE if you give a lower ability candidate more to write about they make more points so they have been quite well served by this.
Better than the first candidate in that it focuses more on the question so it is competent and it is more than descriptive.
I liked this and enjoyed this much more and it did address the question and tried to compare the two characters, it isn't any better than competent but it is an answer and I quite liked it.
They were both on the border of competent and proficient, those terms that are used are analysed, they are not earth-shattering but things are explained in terms of why they are there.
The answer is mainly about being a narrative, little of the filmic stuff so you could be talking about a book, but it does attempt to compare and contrast the characters throughout in terms of the American dream and thematic areas.
Not as much term-spotting as the previous candidate but it is clearly explained which is what is required.
There was a competent understanding to some extent of social class at this level but I do agree also not really in the context of a film.
There is great deal to say about the mise en scene in this extract but it is not thorough, there is scant reference.
I was prepared to put this into proficient, but the second answer was much more limited, enough to justify competence but very simplistic and not much detail in discussion of the two magazines.
I liked the first answer, I thought it was effective, especially this business about camera angles and the effect that it had, I liked this explaining why they did things, then it tailed off a bit but it was still proficient and I enjoyed it.
The second answer was more descriptive but it is solidly competent, a bit sharper and it would have been quite proficient.
The first answer I thought was just into proficient and then adjusted myself accordingly to get to 29, there was fairly systematic reference to all of the areas they were required to answer. The next one I thought was middle competent because it seemed to be mostly to do with factual knowledge of most of the texts with little comparison and little understanding of the particular concept, the values of a lifestyle.

I want to give it credit for what it's got.
They have tried to make comparisons and to identify aspects of the target audience, so using the levels It does so the things that we have asked them to do.

There is a pretty comprehensive coverage of the aspects they are asked to cover.

First I gave it 27 and then nudged it up to 30 because of its difference to the previous candidate. I think from the criteria for level 3, it does match it even though our own knowledge of the text might make us think that they have misread it, but I think you can't do someone down because their reading is not how we read it because they have actually dealt with the things we have asked them to deal with.

There is lots of textual detail, but it is a bit clumsy in expression at times.

I had a problem with this one, it says a lot but I didn't like the English used which is quite clumsy and I can see people coming down quite hard on this, and I can see people saying you can't give this kid a high level because the English is so poor.

A range of things - takes into account things like promotional material which it then tries to link to the question and it is the most detailed attempt at answering the question that we have seen so far.

This is substantially better than the others I have seen. The second answer is huge for 45 minutes, It discusses so many things well.

This has the same problem as earlier ones - you wouldn't know it was a film - a classic problem in Media Studies.

There is a lot there but it doesn't recognise that they are films.

They are just talking about it as though it is a story, not in terms of any of the formal devices of the medium.

I've put it into proficient, but I did feel that perhaps I shouldn't because it isn't doing the things we are looking for.

It is just so much like an English essay.

Unfortunately, given its clearly a good candidate, it just doesn't meet the criteria, but it still comes out with quite a good score over all.

None of the film answers have come out above competent for these reasons and they are all the same centre, which suggests it is a teaching issue.

Interpretation

Using Bernstein's ideas about modalities and discourses, we can trace some patterns in these statements. For Bernstein, pedagogic practice is a fundamental social process in which cultural reproduction takes place, and we are urged by his work to consider education not as a carrier of power relations external to itself but instead to view pedagogic discourse as a power distributor. Equally, we ought to view interaction as a site of power and control residing between forms – control being a process, power residing in the formation of boundaries. So power itself is a principle of communication, with strong classifications of discourse maintaining distances between forms of knowledge and weaker classifications offering a bringing together. Communication is thus framed in pedagogical relations through codes and their modalities. For this thesis, the 'crux' of the matter is the claim of Media Studies (or Subject media) to be potentially a dislocator of traditional pedagogic power relations, or the unequal distribution of cultural capital to put it more simply. A teacher is principally an agent of control. However, in the codes identified for my transcriptions we can deconstruct the attempts to form classification, to create a coherent pedagogical practice, which in its very intent mobilises an unequal 'keeping apart' of things, a contradiction. The desire to make hierarchical the discourse of Subject Media in the statements about process and tension (for example '*As someone who has seen a lot more media than my students and comparing that with my knowledge of media professionally, how far do I think they are along that scale?*' , and '*we cannot presume to provide a context for the candidates' work which the candidate*

themselves is unable to provide', or '*at first I was hit by all these technical terms, which is why I read some of the other question 1 answers to see if the kids generally do and some of them do, but they don't hit all these kinds of technical terms and I thought after a term's teaching this probably deserves to edge into the competent because they had obviously been listening and learned but I wanted the why*') reveal a (perhaps) logocentric need to compensate for a lack of mastery over standards with a confessional discourse about desire, personal agenda and a collaborative sense of a 'mission.' In other words, in Bernstein's terms we can see these examiners striving for rules of combination by which to judge students, the 'meaning potential' of their work – the potential of the discourse to be pedagogised. Tensions and needs for justification in these recordings seem to be arising from anxiety over the vertigo of just having to decide whether a video piece is 'any good' or not. We might say that the examiners are operating a recontextualising principle, and even that the discussions are more about their own identities and values than the work, which would account for the time spent (almost half) on talking about process. Viewed another way, this group of 'experts' (paid by OCR to be out of the school or college for two days to 'set the standard') are working through the basis on which they are going to decide which students have acquired the legitimate pedagogic (or pedagogised) code and which have not, and this framing activity needs to be given time because without it there is no standard to standardise, because the subject lacks such a strong classification. Returning to our notion of the 'project' of Media Studies, we might suggest that, like Subject English, its very potential to be radical lies in its lack of a

strong classification, and thus the standardisation process offers distributive

rules that reduce any potential for progressive learning to the logic of the

same. So statements made by examiners like '*I get the impression they were*

given the brief and they thought right what do we like, we like this and we like

this so let's do it) reveal a predictable but significant desire to articulate and

reduce uncertainty that arises from media study that is arranged more as a

horizontal discourse, that which '*has its origins in the life world*' (Bernstein,

2000, p207).

By trying to imagine the students' intent, and judge the extent to which it is

justified (presumably against a more measured or considered set of objectives

for the work), s/he is attempting to frame the standards vertically. Inevitably

this will occur as an official institution like OCR frames such discussions within

discourses about standards and grades. We can see that the context of the

meeting gives rise to an energising of a symbolically controlled pedagogy,

> …pedagogic modalities are crucial realisations of symbolic control, and thus of the process of cultural production and reproduction. Symbolic control, through its pedagogic modalities, attempts to shape and distribute forms of consciousness, identity and desire. Here, one can distinguish between official pedagogical modalities and local pedagogical modalities. The former are official symbolic controls and give rise to macro / micro regulation of contexts, practices, evaluations and acquisitions at institutional levels. The latter, local pedagogic modalities, are familial, peer and 'community' regulations.   (Bernstein, 2000, p201)

Bernstein is intrigued by the potential for 'colonisation' by local modalities. I

am

suggesting that the discourse of tension uttered throughout my recorded

discussions

can be understood as an attempt to 'decolonise' or to 'delocalise' the

horizontal range of Media learning and replace it with a vertical, symbolic

framing that matches it with other academic discourses. Thus the personalising of much of the discussions ('*I was thinking*…., '*I suppose I want to*'….'*I think what was in my head was*..') is a public playing out, in the relative safety of the Team Leaders' council, of a discomfort with the duality of being at once a 'carrier' of a local modality and a paid expert charged with setting the standard of its institutional form, the official pedagogical modality of 'Subject Media'.

Let us turn our attention now to the statements made about the students' work itself (in some cases, practical artefacts such as video work or desk-top published print materials and in other cases exam responses to an unseen material analysis (a television game show – *Supermarket Sweep*), a comparative analysis of representation in two texts from prescribed genre based topics (celebrity and the tabloid press, social class / status and American cinema, minority radio and lifestyle magazines and consumerism). As established, my recordings cover around nine hours of discussion, of which a minority is about the standard of the work gathered together. In the case of coursework, team leaders bring with them selected material to the meeting from centres they have received samples from – these are chosen to cover a range of topics and quality or outcomes and to bring to the discussion issues of particular import, with exam scripts. These are requested by OCR from local centres and the Subject Officer – me at the time – selects a range of scripts to be copied for the meeting in order to cover the different grade boundaries.

I am going to return to Kendall and Wickham's application of Foucault to

education (1999), in order to scrutinise the social practice of assessment as

demonstrated by my recordings, in particular Foucault's notion of a 'mark',

> For a Foucaultian understanding of culture, the most important thing to note is that the
> examination and the mark, the production of a new sort of knowledge about the child
> through a specific means of capturing the child in an inscription, is not the operation of
> a negative power…. The intention is not to deny children access to the truth about
> themselves, but to produce them as functioning, maximised citizens, to produce the
> truth about themselves (Kendall and Wickham, 1999, pp. 137-8).

In Foucault's approach, the school is to be viewed as a site of culture

management primarily. The 'mark' of assessment has an improvement /

diagnostic intent, and pedagogic practice arises out the co-existence of a

variety of social practices (or discourses from the life-world, in Bernstein's

terms). Scrutinising my recordings, we find statements such as '*one thing that*

strikes you immediately when students are beginning to understand video', '*I*

suspect that these students have really enjoyed working on this production',

and '*unfortunately, given it's clearly a good candidate, it just doesn't meet the*

criteria', sound like sensitive attempts on the part of these senior examiners to

personalise / humanise a blunt administrative process, and indeed clearly they

are attempts to provide a (perhaps) warmer context for judgements. However,

when considered in the context of Kendall and Wickham's appropriation of

Foucault, we might consider these utterances as diagnostic operations serving

to impose a mark on the 'amplification of capabilities' of these students. The

management of culture operates here by asserting a range of qualities /

intentions for students, for which there is no evidence. After all, the life-world

of students (see Bernstein (ed), 1995) is likely to be very different to that of

their teachers, and of examiners[82]. Why is *enjoyment* of production relevant? How is it clear that students are *beginning to understand* video (and is this a coherent development to assess)? Why is one candidate '*clearly good*' even though s/he has not performed to a high standard in this exam? These 'para-judgements' are, perhaps not extra-textual contextual comments but instead key indicators of examiners' scrutiny of students production of 'self-truth' in each case. According to Kendall and Wickham's application of Foucault to education, the crux of the approach is to understand the importance of change and contingency in the educational experience. The classroom is an arena, above all else of subjectivity and mediation. The relative autonomy of the teacher (despite the apparent increase in centralised control of education under recent governments) arises from the acquisition of some teaching and learning methods (and the rejection of others), belonging to certain communities of practice, the teacher's own educational experiences, and their own socio-political view of the world, to the extent that the transmission of culture through schooling can only be understood as a variable set of contingencies. The teacher becomes one of a network of interventions into a student's life, an agent into the management of culture. At the other end of the process, the examiner, who comes to make their mark on the student when their inscription is secured, herself a teacher, will be subject to the same contingencies and variables, again an agent in an uneasy co-existence of practices (teacher, academic, media consumer, examiner, parent). The statement '*I had a problem with this one, it says a lot but I didn't like the*

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82 Habermas distinguishes throughout his work between the system and the lifeworld, the former having a determining effect on the latter.

English used which is quite clumsy and I can see people coming down quite hard on this, and I can see people saying you can't give this kid a high level because the English is so poor' is telling in so much as the speaker appears to be using a series of disclaimers to frame a statement about standard English. At the same time, this examiner is distancing his self from 'the other' – the conservative examiner who would want to (unfairly?) penalise the student for their language. This tension is introduced as a personal dilemma – 'I had a problem' – the examiner is unsure how to make the mark, or rather, what is articulated here is the co-existence of a number of different discursive practices into which the speaker is embedded.

I am reminded here of Buckingham's concerns about the reductive nature of the British Film Institute's mapping of cine-literacy in the curriculum). Media learning (or any learning) is, suggests Buckingham (2003, p48), a social, interpersonal process of the negotiation of identity. The BFI model imposes normative stages through which learners must progress (and against such benchmarks, they can be assessed). Ultimately, Buckingham seems to conclude, any model of assessment is 'other' to a model of learning. I suggest that my recorded examiners are attempting to reconcile these oppositions through their attempts to provide a narrative context for the work they are assessing.

Modalities –

These various findings / kinds of 'data' afford us the opportunity to consider Bernstein's theories of coding, modalities and discourse within a case study,

specifically statements made by media teachers about their and their students' experiences in response to working with OCR's new AS Media Studies specification in 2000, but more broadly the various versions of the 'ideal subject' (Subject Media, to use Peim's term as he applies it to English). I want to examine my evidence with Bernstein's ideas in mind, pay attention to the influence of Foucault on his discourse theory, and also consider the application of such thinking by Avis, Kendall and Parsons to discourses of care and critical pedagogy mobilised by teachers in further education (the site of most media learning in the UK).

Avis et al interviewed trainee FE teachersand considered their discussions in terms of discourse and coding, from Bernstein[83]. They found that many of the trainees' expressions of intent, and of frustration could be understood to be speaking a discourse of care, of giving (similar to my examiners' reasons and qualities). These values were also linked to a notion of criticality which is also at the heart of the ideal subject as described by many media teachers – of empowering young people with autonomy through the fostering of critical thinking skills (as we shall see, Elliot applies Bernstein to media courses and identifies the 'autonomous modality' to categorise media courses that privilege theory over practice.

For Avis et al, these discursive expressions are highly problematic as they serve to divorce teaching and learning from social-cultural context and imply teacher and learner autonomy simplistically;

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83   Avis, Kendall and Parsons conducted research into the experiences and attitudes of new entrants into further education teaching in the Black Country. Zukas and Malcolm's work identifies a discourse of care at work in the expressions of identity forthcoming from teachers in higher education.

It is not enough to emphasis an ethic of care, or a set of values that seeks to offer learners respect and dignity in the classroom, or even a concern with criticality. Education practices need to be underpinned by a notion of social justice that appreciates the pattern of social antagonism found within society. Such a standpoint requires us to think about the contexts within which educational processes are located. This in turn raises questions about the way in which wider social processes constitute learners, the curriculum and even the socio-economic context. The use of a 'possibilitarian rhetoric' can sit with a politics of hope that legitimates struggle, a critical pedagogy moulded to the circumstances in which it is placed. Underpinning this practice lies a recognition of the politics of education and the way they are inscribed in curricula categories which serve not only to engage with social difference but to actively produce these. Pedagogic encounters serve to constitute learners as particular types of students having specific and implied destinies. It is not enough to hold to an ethics of care or a concern to engage students, there is a wider politics inscribed in these practices and it is one that seeks to question the wider social structure that generates patterns of inequality. (Avis et al, 2002, p16)

Avis et al explored self-models of educators in ways similar to the work of Zukas and Malcolm, who suggest that limiting psychological models underpin much educational discourse in ways that serve to set up the learner as a self-determining internal psyche, again divorced from social and political practices. Much of the current interest in learning styles and management styles[84] (supposedly acting to increase differentiation) takes its rationale from such an idea (that the individual has a psychological profile which must be understood (or 'diagnosed') in order for their 'preferred style' to be engaged with ('catered for,' to use the fashionable student as consumer rhetoric of the times). For Zukas and Malcom, this model provides a limited conceptualisation of pedagogy (a 'naïve scientism'), which can often be found in narrow interpretations of Vygotsky's (see Daniels (ed), 1996) work on the zone of proximal development[85], leading to a simplistic technology of behaviour which ignore policy, curriculum and social practices and their determining effects on

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84 Current interest in learning styles – in further education, many colleges are adopting a systematic cross-institution diagnostic model for identifying the 'preferred learning style' of every student in order to cater for their needs through differentiated teaching methods. In addition: psychometric profiling and management training are leading to the circulation of similar approaches to management styles.

learning, if instead the learner is constructed as an object rather than as a

social being,

> 'In psychology, history and culture are removed from the scientific equation in order to discover universal truths that apply to all individuals. But what makes us human, and what distinguishes one learner from another, or one teacher from another, is our very situatedness. Our history and culture precede and construct our self-understandings, our self-consciousness. However to take account of this situatedness would make research in teaching and learning more complex, less generalisable, perhaps less desirable in the quest for practical and applicable knowledge.' (Zukas and Malcom, ****, p5)

The media learner (like any other) is not decentered with an internal, 'sealed

off' personality or learning style. We must consider that the media learner is

usually a distance away in socio-cultural make-up from the more 'traditional'

learner. Many students in colleges studying media may have arrived through

the 'widening participation agenda'. Expansions and changes in the student

body in the UK cannot be separated from research into the politics of teaching

and learning, as these policy determinants will inevitably locate learners within

modalities, codes or co-ordinates of self-understanding. At its most simplistic,

teachers frustrations that the aspirational objectives of Subject Media ('*they*

don't seem to want to be empowered anymore') might best be understood as a

lack of any understanding of the social experiences of those in their 'care'? In

short, the context of learning is significant in terms of enacting certain kinds of

distinctions and identities that are more or less formal. The communities of

practice that offer framing for teachers are described by Zukas and Malcolm in

ways that make it possible and interesting for me to locate my teachers and

examiners within them. The five modelling labels offered are the reflective /

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85 Vygotsky's zone of proximal development offers an alternative model of assessment to the retrospective norm, and encourages teachers to focus more on emerging potential.

critical practitioner, the situated learner, the psycho-diagnostician / facilitator and the assurer of quality and efficiency (the 'deliverer').

Recontextualising

Our media teachers and examiners suggest through their responses that they can most easily be located within the critical practitioner model in the main (which can be understood within the wider, all-embracing label of reflective practitioner). This model persuades the teachers to consider their own position within socio-political contexts. However, I would argue that this very understanding of context does not mobilise any great desire to change it. Instead it appears that realisation, in Bernstein's terms, is privileged over any recontextualisation of professional identities. Peim argues in his critique of English teaching that Media Studies might offer a more radical alternative way of understanding textual meaning when compared to English, freed as it seems to be from the shackles of appreciation and enrichment[86]. However my research seems to suggest that many practitioners believe that understanding how different Media Studies might be to English is enough to recontextualise the learning encounter. In other words, studying soap opera instead of *Hamlet* might make a radical difference to the classroom dynamics, the assessment of learning and the distribution of cultural capital. It seems to be the case that it doesn't. Rather, the *recognition* principle is achieved (teachers, especially English teachers, know there is something at work that is more about engaging with the already-familiar) but the *recontextualising* principle is not (teaching

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86 Peim's suggestions about Media Studies as an alternative to English are explained at length elsewhere in the thesis.

and learning remain pretty traditional, written exams predominate, practical work is understood as an expression of theory, teachers choose texts they feel intellectual about, based on a notion of critical theory which is familiar territory from their own university experiences). To put it more simply still, students studying for 4 AS Level qualifications in one year at a school sixth form or college might notice a difference in subject matter between Media Studies and English, Drama and Sociology, but little difference in the context (lessons in classrooms, with a teacher who 'knows her stuff' facilitating the adoption of an alien, conceptual language that must be learned and then 'applied' to TV programmes and the like).

Avis, Kendall and Parsons (2002) conducted a study into the articulated desires and reflections of new entrants into further education teaching (again, the sector where much of media education resides). Using Bernstein's notions of framing and modalities, they discovered that much of the self-presentation of these individuals is bound up with ideas of critical practice and what Elliot refers to as the autonomous modality (the idea of empowerment through the acquisition of critical skills and awareness, liberation from uncritical thinking). What emerged for these researchers was the clear sense that the teacher training programmes followed, and the institutional contexts encountered in the vocational world were of less significance in framing than the degree courses taken earlier in new teachers' careers, and their own re-negotiated ideas of their own cultural identities,

> Our teachers' expectations of the good and bad student concurred closely with their own positive projections of their own identities…..what might be of concern here is that an articulated sense of critical practitioning might not be cultivated or may be only acquired 'casually' through participation in communities of practice or through the experience of participation in teacher education programmes but rather derives from

There are two issues here to draw together, in order to investigate their significance for my own evidence of Media teachers' projections of self-identities. Firstly, educators are encouraged to accept an overly psychologised model of learning which does not take into account communities of learning practice. Indeed, models of learning which place emphasis on learning styles, individual target-setting and notions of individual autonomy (as opposed to vocational 'belonging') fail to engage with social class, gender, ethnicity, home context and various elements of cultural capital that learners are framed by and spoken by in the 'educational encounter'. To return to Apple, the notion of the internal learning style does not acknowledge any of the myriad determinants of the hidden curriculum (see Apple, 1990). [87]

At the same time, teachers engaging with a subject so invasive into the personal domain as Media Studies may be more influenced in their construction of the 'ideal student' by their own experience of being students (which is always-already coordinated by degrees of cultural capital) than by their vocational training or belonging to communities of practice as educators. Thus what might be at stake in the over-articulation of notions of empowerment, critical autonomy and production informed by theoretical understanding is the projection of a reassurance that teachers are critical, autonomous and empowered, having acquired such liberation when they were students. One could argue that what is ultimately at the heart of such

discourse is a form of educational cloning, a stab at intellectual immortality, the production of students in our own image, or frustration at our failure to do so, a failure which will be perceived as the fault of the student (or indeed based on assumptions about their socio-cultural background) who is reluctant to be granted autonomy.

Vertical and horizontal discourse

As it becomes clear that Bernstein's thinking about modalities, codes and discourse will be useful, it is helpful to return to Bernstein to establish some working definitions. The distinction between vertical and horizontal discourses is useful for our considerations of the different notions of the ideal subject in Media learning. For Bernstein, horizontal discourse is described as segmentally organised sites of 'realisation', often understood as forms of 'common sense'. Vertical discourses, on the other hand, would be those that are coherently self-contained, explicit and systematically arranged. What is of particular interest is the transformation of vertical discourses into horizontal discourses, and vice versa. For example, Bernstein describes the process of recontextualising segments of horizontal discourse (the everyday) into school subjects to make them more accessible (for example, practical application of maths, or personal and social education). Media in English might be an example of the recontextualising of the version of English which privileges vertical discourse elements (the canon and the principles of appreciation and value) through insertion of horizontal discourse (the importance of media in

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87 Michael Apple used this term to describe the normative coercion at work in education, for which the formal curriculum serves as a 'carrier'.

everyday knowledge). Bernstein's interest is in investigating the existence of general principles which transform knowledge into pedagogic communication.

> The move to use seqments of horizontal discourse as resources to facilitate access, usually limited to the procedural or operational level of a subject, may also be linked to 'improving' the student's ability to deal with issues arising (or likely to arise) in the students' everyday world, issues of health, work, parenting, domestic skills etc. Here, access and recontextualised relevance meet, restricted to the level of strategy or operations derived from vertical discourse. Vertical discourses are reduced to a set of strategies to become resources for allegedly improving the effectiveness of the repertoires made available in horizontal discourses. (Bernstein, 2000, p169)

Horizontal discourse has potential for radicality in the sense that different voices can be introduced through pedagogic populism, at the heart of the empowerment thesis at stake in Media Studies. It could be argued that the 'relevance boom' underlying the introduction of horizontal discourses in Media Studies to the vertical curriculum of many schools and colleges in the 1990s provides an example of the recontextualsing principle. However it could now be argued, over a decade on, that Media Studies has become an established code with co-existing modalities (academic and vocational versions), different types of horizontal discourse, designed to cater for different socio-economic stratifications.

In other words, when Media Studies is taught by a range of specialists from various backgrounds (English teachers, sociologists and ex-radio producers) it is likely to inhabit spaces across various fields, horizontally, but it may be the case that the existence of a Masters course in Media education, as run by the BFI / Open University, and the increasing proliferation of media INSET, may vertically arrange the subject, shifting it towards a more coherent, hierarchic discourse within a more contained arena.

Bernstein draws on Foucault when suggesting that discourses cast a gaze (for example Foucault's work on the medical discourse casting an objectifying gaze on the body – see Foucault, 1975) [88]. The recontextualising principle enables a gaze to be possible, an academic subject thus offering the realisation of a vertical discourse.

> Looking through the set of languages and their fractured realities, forever facing yesterday rather than a distanced tomorrow, is rather like visiting a gallery where paintings are in a continuous motion, some being taken down, others replacing and all in an unfinished state. The invisible energy activating this movement is changes in the landscape already taken place or taking place, some disfiguring, some eroding, some opening new prospects.   (Bernstein, 2000, p171)

Pedagogic discourse, crucially is a mobiliser for something 'external' to it, in the

views of traditional 'hidden curriculum' thinking. Indeed the word *hidden* implies

the possibility of unearthing secrets. For Bernstein, however, pedagogic

practice is itself the fundamental social context through which cultural

reproduction takes place. It is the inner workings of the discourse structure

itself which must be considered, as it is the principles of the communication

itself within pedagogic relations which will regulate knowledge and power. The

relationships between categories of knowing is vital. Since the Enlightenment,

certain discourses have found the space to acquire unique places as subjects,

as categories, with knowledge increasingly 'singularised.'

A discourse with a weak classification will arrange pedagogic encounters

around a spread of specialisms, or sub-categories, whereas a stronger

classification will allow a discourse to operate in a more linear fashion,

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88 Foucault related the 'inspecting gaze' to power rather in his discussion of surveillance in a way that can clearly be related to pedagogic discourse at the moment of assessment, the focus of this study.

> Strong classification of discourses is likely to lead empirically to a dislocation in the transmission of knowledge, because, with strong classification the progression will be from concrete local knowledge, to the mastery of simple operations, to more abstract general principles, which will only be available later in the transmission. Thus there is an internal classification and distribution of forms of knowledge. When children fail at school, drop out, repeat, they are likely to be positioned in a factual world tied to simple operations, where knowledge is impermeable. The successful have access to the general principle, and some of these – a small number who are going to produce the discourse – will become aware that the mystery of discourse is not order, but disorder, incoherence, the possibility of the unthinkable. But the long socialisation into the pedagogic code can remove the danger of the unthinkable, and of alternative realities. (Bernstein, 2000, p11)

This case study has covered a range of evidence from teachers and examiners, all of which has been used to raise questions arising from considering it as discourse within a range of socio-cultural framings.   That is to say that there is no attempt here to prove whether or not Media Studies is either empowering or conservative, or that the assessment of the subject is an example of cultural reproduction, despite some claims made by protagonists in the development of the discipline to the radical possibilities it creates.

Socio-cultural framing describes the nature of pedagogic discourse as a reproducer in itself, as opposed to discourse as a carrier of something external to it. We have through this analysis come to view Subject Media as a discourse framed by its own progression from horizontal to vertical discourse, which is in conflict with what I have called the 'double-loosening' of its lack of a coherent teacher-training model, combined with the 'necessary tension' between its 'spirit;' and its 'will to assess.' But I think my most interesting discovery, and subsequently, my concluding suggestion, is that this will for framing has its energy not in reluctant conformity to an externally imposed model, but from the desires of its 'players' for legitimation of their knowledge, for a power of sorts.

MORE QUESTIONS

This thesis has approached an analysis of the official form of Media Studies (which I have called Subject Media, after Peim's critique of Subject English) from a wide range of theoretical positions. I have established a subjective, autobiographical situating at the outset, describing my positions as teacher, examiner, college manager (at the time of writing I am Curriculum Quality Manager – a role entirely about the practice of framing, I would suggest) and employee of OCR - representative of their 'standards' (at the time I began the research) [89]. My starting points in terms of the application of theory to institutional pedagogic framing were Nick Peim's *Critical Theory and the English Teacher* (1993) and '*The Cultural Politics of English teaching'* (1999), in which he interrogates Subject English from a variety of theoretical positions, towards a phenomenology of English as a curriculum technology and as such English teaching (and learning) as a social practice. My intention has been to adopt a similar approach for Subject Media, given Peim's suggestion that Media Studies might offer an 'escape' from some of the framing tendencies of English.

> Media Studies is alert to the social forces that that actually determine meanings, and that set the limits on the meanings in the public sphere. In relation to obvious social issues like gender, or race for example, it is easy to see how ideas and practices might be of great significance in teaching about the generation and reception of meanings in the social sphere, and how these might be questioned, modified or resisted. A range of reading techniques – derived from semiotics and narratology, for example – are intrinsic to Media Studies approaches, and might usefully migrate into English to extend its range of textual encounters, in order to make them more rational, visible and coherent. (Peim, 1999, p173)

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89 My role as Curriculum Quality Manager is described in the job description as being about 'responsibility for the planning, design and the quality assurance of the College's full time course provision'.

The journey has included an application (selective and pragmatic – using what is helpful to the cause) of the ideas of a number of writers, including most often Foucault (on identity, the subject, surveillance and power), Hunter (on schooling and culture), Bourdieu (on curriculum and cultural reproduction) and a range of writers on language including most repeatedly Fairclough on critical discourse. At times it has been useful (or at least interesting) to put the 'canon' of writing (see Buckingham, 2003 for an overview) about Media Studies itself, from David Buckingham and Len Masterman in the main, into dialogue with post-structuralist writers such as Derrida and Lyotard, in order to question the assumptions and internal logic / claiming impulses of the subject's community, or its identities[90].   And finally, in terms of the appropriation of existing literature, I have come to consider much of my data in relation to Bernstein's models of pedagogic coding and symbolic framing. I have offered close readings of some of the texts of Subject Media (exam papers, specifications, and assessment documents) alongside a critical discourse analysis of statements made through discussion, e-interviews and questionnaire responses by teachers and examiners, including (in the case of the electronic dialogues) interventions by those involved most prominently in the establishment and development of Subject Media since the mid-1980s. Out of all this comes an impulse to 'conclude' in order to justify the work.   I wish to attempt this by returning to the questions raised at the outset, and from these offering further openings for more thought. Given my synopsis above, it

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90 The canon of writing on Media education is formed in the main by Len Masterman, Cary Bazalgette and David Buckingham. The latter has even written a summary of the contributions of the former two, and both Bazalgette and Buckingham offered responses to me e-interview research.

seems prudent to return to these questions by assessing the 'evidence' collected in response to each through a dialogue with Fairclough's work on discourse and Peim's writing about the phenomenology of the educational subject (see Peim, 2000) [91].

At the beginning of this thesis, I write –

The questions asked by this thesis are,

What are the competing ideas in circulation about the 'ideal subject' of Subject Media and the assessment of its learners?
What are the phenomenological positions of differently situated statements about Media learning and assessment?
How can representative discursive data from teachers and examiners be understood to speak to the contemporary condition of the subject?
How is the professional identity of Media teachers and examiners constructed within determining institutional factors, or coordinates?
How are statements about Subject Media and its assessment linguistically coded?

Taking in each turn, then, towards an answer,

What are the competing ideas in circulation about the 'ideal subject' of Subject Media and the assessment of its learners?

Peim identifies a number of assumptions in English assessment criteria, and equally a range of 'gaps' which are legitimised by such assumptions on the proviso that the audience will be well equipped with the capital to apply a recognition principle to the discourse (in other words the criteria address a knowing subject),

> The knowing subject is tied, in this instance, to the institution of English teaching, and tied in turn to the institution of the school. It is part of that knowing subject's professional identity to recognise the terms of the discourse operated within the various institutional contexts it inhabits. And professional identity – impersonal and public – in our culture, at least, is linked closely to personal identity. (Peim, 1993, pp. 33-34)

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91 Nick Peim has analysed the phenomenology of schooling and the school construct as a determinant in the social construction of educational meanings.

My study has addressed the different, competing modes of addressing a knowing subject in Media Studies, in both the formal texts of the subject (specifications, mark schemes etc) and in the responses of teachers, examiners and 'key players' to my various lines of enquiry. Fairclough (1992) adopts Halliday's analysis of *overlexicalisation* (1979) which he appropriates as 'overwording' (see Bakhtin, 2001) and *relexicalisation* (which he re-names rewording), and puts them to work in analysing the semiotic function of performance / competence indicators in various forms of curriculum documentation[92],

> Overwording is a sign of intense preoccupation pointing to peculiarities in the ideology of the group responsible for it. An example of this is the wording of language capacities in the 1988 Kingman Report on the teaching of English in British schools (Department of Education and Science). Wordings include 'competence', 'effectiveness', 'mastery', 'facility'. 'expertise' and 'skill'. This overwording seems to be linked to a preoccupation in the report with the (ideological) projection of a view of language as a set of determinate technical skills that can be taught and acquired in a modular way. It is a view of language that emphasises conventional and appropriate production, and interpretation of ideational aspects of meaning. In addition to overwording, Halliday distinguishes 'rewording' ('relexicalization' in his terms), that is, generating new wordings which are set up as alternatives to, and in opposition to, existing ones. The term ' rewording' is a useful label for the intertextual and dialogic character of wording. (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 193-4)

Fairclough's application of Halliday is helpful in two ways. Firstly his agenda is to think through discourse and social change, and thus he takes Halliday's notion of the social-semiotic function of language and uses it to consider educational discourse in particular, in the English teaching example above. Secondly, I am using overwording and rewording in order to consider educational (or pedagogic) discourse as formulated through dialogic, intertextual actions, he serves to 'connect' a socio-linguistic analysis of discourse to the kind of identity-analysis attempted by Peim and myself. We are reminded of my senior examiners' standardising discussions, during which

they reveal a 'overwording impulse' in attempting to compensate for a lack of confidence in judging the quality of creative work, and a dialogic, intertextual creation of a discourse about standards, in which no utterance can be understood in isolation from its chain of signification – its relationship to comments about other work (and indeed the dilemma that no piece of students' work can be assessed in isolation to other work – a chain of assessment with neither origin nor destination), or in isolation from its purpose (to set the standard by which to make other judgements) [93]. The process of assessment is both intertextual (internal reflections of texts from within the community of practice – specification, exam paper, mark scheme, standardisation scripts, other scripts, archive scripts etc, and also external relations with the media texts offered for analysis, which themselves are written about in comparative reference to other texts) and dialogic – a process of judgement in which ideas about work are over-worded and reworded in order to provide security and safety out of the anxiety of 'not knowing' how good a student really is without knowing them personally. I suggest that the standardisation meeting is a good example of what Fairclough calls 'mixed intertextuality' (1992, p118) – in which it is more difficult to separate the complex relationship of discourse types at any point.

In this sense, the 'boundary maintenance' between student work, mark scheme,

analysed text, and other pieces of student work is loose, or weakened,

> There is considerable variation between discourse types, which can be explained in terms of two overlapping scales , (i) to what extent the boundaries between represented and representing discourse are explicitly and clearly marked; and (ii) to

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92 Halliday's form of sociolinguistics in which language is understood semiotically.
93 Bakhtin's analysis of the 'heteroglot' nature of textuality is what I am referring to here.

> what extent represented discourse is translated into the voice of the representing discourse. (Fairclough, 1992, p119)

I want to suggest that my standardising examiners provide little in the way of such markings and much in the way of overlap, and that this might distinguish their community of practice from that of English teaching and assessment. For whereas the knowing subject of English teaching can be expected to comfortably accept the assumptions of the subject criteria (that certain notions of reading and writing are givens and thus provide an external discourse that is mirrored by the micro-discourse of the subject criteria), the knowing subject of Media Studies is more confused by the anxiety of the jarring between the acceptance of certain post-structuralist ideas about meaning (intertextuality itself is a given for Media teaching), so the boundaries between the discourse of creativity and those of reading and writing are less clearly marked.

An example of a statement which presents a mixed interextuality might be this one from the standardisation meeting recordings,

> I suppose the thing is if we went through them logically which for us to begin with I suppose as moderators might be quite laborious but it might actually help us determine that we are right professionally with the quality control standard that we've got to put into place.

This piece of speech offers a connection between many textual encounters. The 'them' which the moderator is talking about are the coursework folders submitted by candidates for the January 2000 AS Foundation Production unit. These folders contain texts in a variety of media, created by students (eg videos, newspaper materials, advertisements). These texts can only be understood in relation to the conventions of the 'real' texts they seek to imitate, challenge or both. The 'understanding' they demonstrate is thus an intertextual entity, and very hard to describe in the mark scheme, which is another

'forming' text for the utterance above. The mark scheme is only meaningful in relation to the production briefs set for candidates, themselves the subject of long debates about interpretation at both INSET events and standardisation meetings. In addition, as we have seen, the standardisation process itself is an endless deferral of origin – each piece of coursework only has a standard in relation to other work, and the struggle the members of my recorded groups are going through is entirely due to the lack of any previous 'signifier' to use as a source. Furthermore, the speaker here chooses to relate the process to another discourse, that of quality control, which has increasingly in recent years become a determining discourse in education. The moderator making this statement is choosing to understand the role of the awarding body moderator in the context of this notion of control, implying a broader and altogether further reaching sense of responsibility to the implied educational 'customer'.

What are the phenomenological positions of differently situated statements about media learning and assessment?

Fairclough, in dealing with issues of social semiotics, which I am understanding as to do with 'social situatedness', directs us to Pecheux's work (1982) on '*preconstructed*s'. These are, in Fairclough's appropriation,

> ready-formed elements, which circulate between discursive formations, which are perceived as what is 'given' or know to or already said by participants, whereas they actually originate outside subjects.   (Fairclough, 1993, p31).

Fairclough gives the example of 'the Soviet Threat' (or we might now update this with

'The War on Terror'). In these examples of preconstructeds, a range of conflictual and socio-culturally loaded debates are reduced to the status of an epistemological entity – that there IS a threat, or that there IS an enemy which

can legitimately be called 'terror' as opposed to say, the other side.   Clearly

there are some emergent preconstructeds at work in the assessment of

Subject Media, just as Peim suggested there are in English. For Peim, the

glaring preconstructeds reside most confidently, and with least resistance or

challenge, in the notion of the 'great work' and in the constructed, but

seemingly natural preferred status of certain reading practices,

> The liberal model of reading asserts on the one hand that any kind of reading is
> possible – that a single text may contain a range of varied and even contradictory
> meanings. In not acknowledging that this position has a tendency to totally negate the
> idea of literature – since any text can mean so many different things to different
> readers – the liberal model also fails to recognise how its own preferred modes of
> reading are structured and restricted according to established habits of thought. The
> range of readings on offer in established liberal reading practices is in fact a range
> within a very limited notion of what constitutes a reading. (Peim, 1993, pp. 73-74)

Returning to our examiners' meetings and the coded statements I analysed,

we are reminded in thinking about preconstructeds like these of the ways in

which the examiners were reliant on a similarly narrow range of readings of the

media texts students had created. In particular, the phenomenological

situation from which most assessors of such creative work 'start' is that of the

English teacher, immersed in the liberal model of reading described by Peim.

Furthermore, the work of Elliot on theory-practice discourses is echoed here, in

which he puts Bernstein's ideas to work to consider the boundary-setting

practices of many institutions who keep hands and minds separate in their

organisation of time, space and assessment. And my own evidence from

teachers, examiners and 'key players' on their views of the *always-already'*

preconstructed difference between academic and vocational students offers us

another example of phenomenology in action through the 'keeping apart' of

different reading practices, which through their very separation are maintained

as 'givens' in each pedagogic context.

How can representative discursive data from teachers and examiners be understood to speak to the contemporary condition of the subject?

There are, as Peim asserts in the case of Subject English, clearly a politics of grading.

The contemporary condition of any subject can most visibly be considered as it speaks to such a politics. Where Bernstein has led us, and Foucault also less directly, is to the point where we understand that it is the discourse of grading itself which is political. In other words the social activity of the grading (or the mark on the thus-constructed subject) is not a carrier of some external macro-politics or condition.

> Liberal and progressive versions of English, though they may represent themselves as distinct from official definitions, have failed to address the politics of grading and assessment in English, just as they have largely failed to address the politics of language and textuality – preferring to allow certain assumptions about how these things work in the field of English in education to rest untroubled by theoretical analysis (Peim, 1993, p31).

I hope it will be fairly predictable by this point that I want to argue that Subject Media has done little to deconstruct such an avoidance, or to politicise grading in its own practices. Indeed, my 'data' suggests that there are four immediate examples of such assumptions. There is the reliance on the written commentary to 'prove' that creative production work demonstrates theoretical understanding. There is the over-wording (from Fairclough again) afforded to 'critical' skills – a preconstructed par excellence, the politics of which have been studiously avoided in Media education's rationales and reflective accounts. We have the use, in a unit designed to test young people's engagement with new digital technologies, of the most traditional comprehension and language demonstration assessment model imaginable.

And we have the continuation, through the community of practitioners and their statements about their students and their own media consumption, of a very middle-class view of how media texts should be analysed[94].

Which leads us to the 'conclusion' that Subject Media is the domain of a very conservative teacher-culture. Indeed one might observe that there is no other variant of such a culture, as Peim suggests in consideration, this time, of writing practices. He argues that teachers are reluctant to discuss with their students the premise of notions about writing (as we have seen with reading earlier),

> Educational 'philosophy' …. tends to eschew abstract theoretical questions in favour of practical activity. Teacher culture and professional identity have to a large extent preferred a more crisply business-like, more bluffly practical approach to learning. Perhaps assured that its mission is essentially utilitarian – to deal in settled certainties or to be continually practically productive ….. teaching culture has tended to rely on fundamental categories and favourite established forms, ranging from the certainties of formal grammar to the well-established comforts of story-writing. (Peim, 1993, p130)

And again, I will argue that Subject Media, which Peim looks to for an alternative, a deconstructive turn, perhaps, flatters to deceive. The conceptual framework, perhaps 'created' for the purpose of a more questioning pedagogy, offers now a 'criteria' of fundamental categories, not perhaps in its 'spirit' (many teachers are able to discuss with their students how representation works in texts in a way that fosters genuinely 'critical' or reflective learning) but certainly in its assessment politics, which, I suggest, requires examiners to assess the cultural capital of young people through their ability to adopt the language of their teachers – a language more 'progressive' but equally

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94 A middle class view of textual analysis will, I would suggest, be arranged around notions of cultural value, whether or not judgement is imposed, whereas another kind of analysis might be free entirely from notions of relative 'worth'.

conservative in its givens when compared to the reading and writing practices favoured by Subject English.

Returning once again to Fairclough, it is interesting now to consider his advice for 'putting Foucault to work' (as opposed to a direct application of method, as attempted by Kendall and Wickham). Fairclough's model for this. TODA (textually orientated discourse analysis) tries to bring to light the rules of formation for subjects – the domains of knowledge. Referring to Halliday (1978), he reminds us of the 'interpersonal' function of language alongside its textual function,

> It is important that the relationship between discourse and social structure should be seen dialectically is we are to avoid the pitfalls of overemphasising on the one hand the social determination of discourse, and on the other hand the construction of the social in discourse. The former turns discourse into a mere reflection of a deeper social reality, the latter idealistically represents discourse as the source of the social. (Fairclough, 1989, p65).

In the example of the exam on New Media technologies, analysed earlier, the lack of an opportunity for a student to demonstrate or engage with digital worlds and meanings through any other outlet than a written account in response to a written text, can be interpreted with Fairclough's suggestions in mind. The dialectic between the economic and technical 'outer' culture which determines the possibility for such material to be the 'subject' of education is translated into the textual, discursive and coded world of assessment in such a way that it is not easy to pin down how one determines the other.

How is the professional identity of Media teachers and examiners constructed within determining institutional factors, or coordinates?

In Bernstein's work on class and pedagogy, he offers a classification of the

agents of symbolic control, within which teachers are given the status of

'diffusers' whose role is to,

> disseminate certain principles, practices, activities, symbolic forms, or to appropriate principles and practices, symbolic forms for the purpose of inducing consumption of symbolic forms, goods, services or activities. (in Halsey, 1997, pp. 63-64).

This dissemination is achieved largely through invisible transmission, in the

sense that

pedagogy masquerades as neutral. Teachers in the main would, I think, be

happier with the label 'shaper', a group who, Bernstein acknowledges, overlap

with diffusers.

However, it seems from the evidence of my study that media teachers are

agents of what he calls an '*interrupter system*' – seeking to transform visible

pedagogy into personalised cultural contexts (which I have discussed

previously as the 'intervention' in pleasure which Subject Media effects,

despite itself perhaps. Peim asks questions about the relationship between the

setting and marking of English exam papers and wider socio-cultural changes

over time, and also the more 'internal' relationship between assessment and

teaching, which has been a major focus of this study also,

> Clearly the subject English in schools has been partly determined by exam processes, and these have had a history of their own. The kinds of questions set for formal exam papers, the criteria of assessment in operation and the ideology of the subject embodied in teachers of English exams and examiners – have all had a bearing on the identity of the subject'…..exam papers might be analysed in terms of their contents and how they get marked, how the markers understand the processes of assessment. This kind of account of the identity of the subject may be related to larger movements and features of the education system. The meaning and 'results' of exams … might also be viewed in relation to changes in ideas and social patterns outside the immediate context of education – changes in the larger political and social context. (Peim, 1993, pp. 202-3)

This thesis has attempted such an analysis of Media exams, in this case the specific assessment practices mobilised by examiners judging papers and coursework for the OCR 'Curriculum 2000' version of the new AS Media. We have seen, through the responses of Media teachers, how a number of competing versions of the 'ideal subject ' are articulated through different discourses about the purpose and 'spirit' of the subject, most often in relation to specifications, exams and marking. Clearly assessment determines the practices of teaching and learning in Media studies to a very large degree, on the evidence of my 'data'[95]. We have also seen how changes in socio-cultural formations have informed the practices of assessment, from the boundaries placed between the vocational course, with its emphasis on hands and portfolio building and the 'academic' route with its conservative and, highly traditional assessment methods. We have also come to understand these issues in the context of the derision given to Media Studies, from the Guardian's cultural protectionist discourse (the 'trendy travesty' to the 'schooling for the dole ' concerns about 'fake vocationalism' in post-industrial Britain[96].

Returning once again to Peim's critique of English, we can see a working through of such a 'tapestry' in the case of an academic discipline,

> There is no English – no real, essential English – outside of its institutional practice. The institutions of English are many and varied and include, for example, the institution of the school, the institution of the teaching profession, the institution of examination processes, as well as institutionalised ideas about literacy and

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95 The 'ideal subject' – this term has a double meaning in the sense that it describes the competing notions of what Media Studies is 'for' that are circulated through discourse, and it also refers to notions of the subject (ie the learner) who is to 'show herself' and be thus embodied in the context of learning and assessment of such.

96 Schooling for the dole is a collection of essays from a sociological perspective exploring issues around 1980s Youth Training Schemes and the advent of GNVQ courses for 'vocational' students.

> learning….the very being of English is defined by the general institutional functions of education. It does not reside in some ethereal, in some mythical space uncontaminated by the material conditions of its world.. (Peim, 1993, p5)

In this way we soon come to regard English, alongside other practices as what Peim calls 'naturalised systematic discrimination', in which language and culture serve as agents of correction and in Foucualtian terms normative coercion. How can we understand Media Studies as an alternative to this model? This study has concentrated entirely on one 'layer' of the institutional matrix Peim describes – that of the institution of exam processes and in particular the identities of examiners. The 'conclusion' we will draw, inevitably, from this enquiry is that whilst Subject Media may 'start from' a more theoretical space, its assessment practices and the increasingly horizontal discourse inhabited by its protagonists are ultimately reductive. That is the radical potential of a subject that begins with an interest in audience and the socio-cultural production of meaning is framed increasingly by forms of assessment that privilege the same modes of expression and ways of demonstrating 'understanding' and even 'appreciation' that it appears to depart from, namely those of English. Coupled with the fact that the majority of Subject Media's professional populace are trained English teachers, we find that the discourse – social dialectic at play in Media teachers' discussions about students' work reinforces many of the 'givens' of English, and hence much of the 'common sense' political reproduction of the 'Hidden Curriculum'. Indeed, it is possible to conclude, perhaps unfortunately, that Media Studies may even be a far more conservative area of activity than any other classroom subject, granted as it is licence to 'reach out' into the lifeworld of its students

and present a framework for an ultimately reactionary understanding of popular pleasure.

How are statements about Subject Media and its assessment linguistically coded?

We have seen throughout this study how we can understand ideas about the subject as coded, most easily when the work of Bernstein has been used as a source for interpreting statements. A subject promotes, through reproduction, certain privileged ideas about culture and it is possible that we have 'discovered' that Subject Media, despite its intent has to date tended to mirror English in its situating of certain views of culture over others, most notably at the point of assessment. Furthermore, whilst English clearly does not overtly recognise its position in relation to cultural practices, preferring instead to normalise and neutralise itself as a seemingly apolitical set of handed down competences and heritages, Media Studies could even be guilty of *mis*recognising its position in so much as it may make claims (in its rationales and its self-reflective writings) that are false when considered in the context of examiners' practices. The criteria of assessment used in Subject Media are produced in such ways that privilege particular kinds of language use (in common with English), by examiners who are almost always English teachers, and they are maintained by an awarding body operating in the most conservative traditions, scrutinised by a regulatory organisation who prescribe criteria immersed in dominant and exclusive methods of grading, and the provision of evidence of understanding which offer little opportunity for more 'progressive' ways of rewarding learning. The practices and procedures of

Subject Media at the determining point of assessment are thus always-already providers of an unequal recognition of language and meaning. They might be changed for the better, but it is hard to see how within the current socio-cultural framework of education.

The crux, linguistically, arises from the possibilities presented by a 'problem' for assessors. Fairclough refers to these moments as 'cruces'; they are moments in a discourse where it is clear that those within the discourse are struggling to maintain it. In other words there is a momentary 'exposure' that the discourse is not sealed, rather like the moments in *The Matrix* trilogy where the coding is fragmented[97],

> Cruces are moments in the discourse where there is evidence that things are going wrong, a misunderstanding which requires participants to 'repair' a communicative problem, for example through asking for or offering repetitions, or through one participant correcting another; exceptional discrepancies (hesitations, repetitions) in the production of a text, silences; sudden shifts of style……such moments of crisis make visible aspects of practice which might normally be naturalised, and therefore difficult to notice; but they also show change in process, the actual ways in which people deal with the problematisation of practices. (Fairclough, 1989, p230)

Where do we look for cruces in this study? Here is one, from the standardisation meeting during which the first textual analysis answers for the new AS exam were scrutinised in order for the 'standard' to be 'set,'

> Can I raise the unmentionable - grades? Because we'll have to think about that - just off the top of your head what grade do you think this would be worth at AS level? Right, a low C, but this marking is likely to bring it out at the bottom of E, and that is something we will have to bear in mind. The standard we set today is important. We don't want the examiners to think that but we have to.

This is a 'cruce' in the sense that the subject matter is presented as 'unmentionable' – a disclaimer for the expression of uncertainty that follows.

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97 The Matrix trilogy consists of three films (The Matrix, Matrix Reloaded and Matrix Revolutions: produced by Warner Brothers from 1999 to 2003, directed by Andy and Larry Wachowski.

Next we have a confession that there is a major discrepancy between a 'gut instinct' – ' a low C' which is code for just below average, and the grading criteria – the words on the page of a text[98].

For example, OCR grading criteria for a C grade in Media Studies –

> Candidates will demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of the key conceptual areas, media texts and their contexts. They will show some awareness of the influences of the historical, political and social context of media texts studied. There should be a competent grasp of the relationship between texts and issues of representation and audience. Work produced, whether in the construction or deconstruction of texts should be thoughtful and conscientious. Candidates will be able to demonstrate appropriate technical skills for specified tasks as well as the ability to evaluate their own media products with some critical objectivity. They will also be able to undertake, with some thought and care, independent research and study. All material will be clearly organised and presented showing a degree of discursive ability. Written communication will be accurate and clear with a competent use of correct terminology. Overall candidates at this level will offer work that is competent and conscientiously produced. Material will be approached systematically with secure understanding of the tasks set. There will be clear evidence of discursive skills but argument may be hesitant in places. (OCR, 2002 – A/AS Media Studies specification, 2nd edition, p18)

Given that the words on the page for this particular mark scheme only have meaning in relation to other texts and to the examiner's experiences of students and their work, the crisis that is revealed here in this statement is that the attempt to 'pin down' the ability of the student to deconstruct a text can only be achieved painfully though deliberately avoiding any deconstruction of the mark scheme itself, with its abundant inconsistencies and illogical nuances. If the 'spirit' of Media Studies were to be realised in practice, if the context could allow, such a 'crisis' would be a cause for celebration. Examiners, teachers and students would have to experience the simultaneous pleasure and pain (the jouissance?) of realising that to put into motion the

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98 In my experience, the mark scheme is used more thoroughly by teachers preparing their students for exams than by examiners, who tend to operate on an instinct based on prior experience of grading students and then, during discussion or moments of uncertainty, refer to the mark scheme in order to fit their 'gut' responses to something textual (as opposed to just a 'feeling').

deconstructive impulse of a subject conceived of to celebrate the deferral of

meaning (the chain of signification), but then to attempt to judge the success of

deconstruction as a moment in time, is folly - inevitably, always-already too

late (see Jardine, 1985) [99]. In other words, the 'inadequacy' of Subject Media's

assessment practices could be seen as a positive symptom of its 'slippage'

from the dominant reading practices of traditional education. We might in this

sense start to see the varying, myriad responses of students to a text, through

their different language practices and fluid, intertextual negotiations as a

(female) refusal of a (male) metaphysics of presence (see Irigaray, 1993)– a

mark scheme is after all a classic logocentric device[100]. The reading may

escape the frame, in spirit at least.

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99 Jouissance is a word used by Alice Jardine in her interrogation of Lacan's notion of the
feminine 'supplementary jouissance' (the ultimate limit to any discourse articulated by Man). I
am suggesting here that a pleasure / pain 'escape' is at work in Media Studies.
100 Female / male fluidity and absence – Irigaray's 'project' is to expose the 'paranoid'
masculine economy which fears the other and annihilates its space. Woman is for man, in
Irigaray's account, the origin of a loss for which thought, as it is (logocentrically) structured,
tries in vain to compensate.

ILLATION

Throughout this thesis a struggle or tension is evident between the 'need' to produce a coherent, linear text which asks questions and attempts to offer at least partial closure on its enquiries, and the inevitably meandering flavour of a text which reflects the experience of research as a journey during which the writer encounters many 'forks in the trail'. For the reader, then, this will show itself as a duality which reflects the shifting identities of the writer. On the one hand, as a researcher I am written by my professional experiences and roles and my existence as a practitioner in the field that forms the object of the critique. Equally, this project is at once attempting to 'prove' a hunch (perhaps a rather obvious outcome) about media learning and the impossibility of its radical otherness to the general curriculum and at the same time (and I will argue at this closing stage that this aspect is more pronounced) the thesis presents a view of the Media teacher as a social agent wrestling with a degree of anxiety about identity, mission, taste and judgement. To infer a conclusion out of this text, I want to suggest that my 'findings' reveal more in the way of questions about Media teachers and examiners, their communities and practices, and the discourses, framings and precepts of the contemporary condition of the subject than they do about Media students and their experiences, radical, empowering or otherwise. Clearly this illation presents a lack which might suggest the need for a different research endeavour, from which we might draw some conclusions about media learning. This research might depart from the work of David Buckingham (2003) who has conducted a range of classroom research framed around questions of learner experience

and identity. For example, his summary of the work of Hyeon-Seon Jeong

(2001) who analysed a series of lessons about the representation of women in

the media, and asked some important questions about the nature of teaching

models of ideological theory in contrast to more loose everyday responses to

gendered texts:

Unlike the analysis in the formal part of the lesson, the debate here centred precisely on the ambivalence of Ally McBeal – her combination of professional competence and personal need. In some ways, a great deal more was raised here than in the critical analysis of magazines; but ultimately it appeared that both teachers and students were expected to set aside these more personal investments as they took up the critical roles that were marked out for them. As a result, Jeong suggests, both appeared to be expected to subscribe to a rather simplistic account of how the media operated in their own lives.
(Buckingham, 2003, p118)

My research has been mobilised within a boundary, focussed as it is on

teacher-examiner identity and the institutional practices of a subject coded

through awarding body regulation, processes and bodies of textual matter.

My suggestion that a student's writing may escape the frame of assessment is

a clear 'call' for some research which tests such a hypothesis, just as my own

enquiries have been framed by such a call from Peim's work on Subject

English. The writer whose work has emerged towards the later (if we insist on

temporal spacing) stages of my research is Bernstein, as it became apparent

that in making the shift towards analysis of pedagogy as discourse as opposed

to pedagogy as a carrier of culture to be reproduced (in other words, pedagogy

as culture, like knowledge as power), he offered me the clearest framework for

questioning Media Studies as culture in itself, as opposed to a vehicle for

teaching and learning *about* popular culture.

Returning to Bernstein for a final time, then, I would like to suggest that my

most powerful 'revelation' has been to do with teacher anxiety experienced as

a result of transformations in the sequencing, pace and distribution (framing) of the grammar of pedagogic practice. This has shifted my research away from some of its earlier questions about whether or not Media Studies is successful in its intentions, towards a more sustained questioning of how Bernstein's recognition and realisation principles apply to the Media classroom dynamic. A final example is this – if the 'stuff' of Subject Media remains conceptual, formed around concepts alien to the everyday lifeworld of some learners, then these marginalized 'consumers' will be able only to recognise their own alienation from such concepts as ideology, that is they will understand that their teacher is communicating to them the notion that 'knowledge' about ideology, or the use of ideological theory, is legitimate and can be used to acquire capital. However by shifting the subject matter in this way but retaining the alien nature of the language required to 'apply' such theory to the everyday, for the marginalized student the space between the everyday (eg computer games) and the academic tools required to present legitimate knowledge (the *recontextualising* of thinking or of ways of seeing) is widened rather than narrowed. The learner comes only to better understand their own lack.

As the interim report of the Tomlinson working party is made the common currency of educational policy and debate in both secondary and post-compulsory sectors, I want to suggest that the element of my research which deals with myths about academic and vocational learners is afforded more importance.

The range of current vocational qualifications is fragmented and confusing. Young people, parents and end-users are often unenthusiastic about the status and quality of the learning on offer. Some vocational qualifications are clearly understood and have credibility with employers and HE, but there is still some way to go in ensuring a consistent and readily understood range of vocational programmes which are, and are seen to be, worthwhile in their own right.
(Tomlinson, 2004, p13)

Perhaps in the 'melting pot' of academic reformulation which Tomlinson appears to be making inevitable and seemingly 'natural', Media Studies will become either one or the other, and this mythic duality will be lost, for better or worse. Some further research into learners' understandings of such labels and territorial boundaries around resources, teaching and departmental 'modus operandi' is required to further test such notions, derived as they are from Classical Antiquity. The Reformation, the birth of labour markets and the role of the state in the formation of civil society have all contributed to the distinction between vocational and academic education as an influence on the structure of European educational systems. The Tomlinson thesis assumes these as a given, without any challenge or reflection whatsoever. Differentiation between academic and vocational education is embedded in tradition and it is impossible to overcome it through one type of education getting the upper hand, whether it would entail the "*scientifization*" of vocational education or the "*vocationalization*" of academic education. Here then is a classic Lyotardian 'differend' in which the idioms of each language game can only be understood through the codings of the other. But it will be interesting to find out the extent to which such framings are understood and lived by students, or what arch-writing can emerge that offers a different set of nuances to those established from teachers in my research.

It is useful to return to some discussion of the political status of my research at this 'endgame' moment. My interest in Foucault throughout has most often arisen from his Panopticon metaphor and how this example of regulation provides for us an understanding of the power / knowledge dynamic that does not establish one as a condition of, or carrier of the other. Power is never exercised without a movement of knowledge, whether it is removed, shifted, distributed or kept stable. In order to reveal this in motion, Foucault requires us to undertake 'micro physics', that is to interrogate dense webs of power relations, in which people are written and transmitted through power, in discourse. My analysis of assessment as an illuminating view of 'the mark' on the body, and the phenomenological positions that bodies (coded subjects) adopt in relation to institutions and power relations, offers the most explicitly political aspect of my research. Politics here is not described in terms of positive or negative findings about policy, practice and 'results' (eg empowering or not, radical or conservative, critical, emancipatory or bourgeois) but instead it is used as Foucault suggests to describe various forms of discipline that have complex social functions, of which resistance is always a part.

However there are clearly other political positions (and understandings of what a political position is) that could be taken in response to this text. Obviously and inevitably, this research could be appropriated neatly for the various discourses of derision about Media Studies that I have deconstructed. If ultimately I have simply set up a 'straw man' in order to reveal its truth as a practice which fails to deliver what it suggests it can offer, then this can only be

understood through a particular reading which operates at the level of essentialist thinking. If instead the work can be understood as a deconstruction of the mirror Subject Media holds to itself, then the very notions of criticality, empowerment and citizenship which are woven through its discourses are challenged, leaving a lingering thirst for its successes or failures unquenched. Equally, the 'micro' nature (and perhaps its compression, competed as it was in four years as a part time research degree) of the exercise makes it important to establish at the conclusion as I did at the outset that this research does not extend out to investigate GCSE Media, higher education or the A/AS specifications offered by the other awarding bodies in the UK (WJEC offer an A/S qualification which is more theoretical in the sense that there is no requirement for practical production, for example). Nor does it deal with the broader range of vocational Media qualifications (such as City and Guilds or NCFE qualifications that deal with very specific skills identified as important by vocational training organisations such as Skillset), adult and community provision (for example adult students attending an evening class on using Adobe Photoshop or Macromedia Direct, in which the boundaries between media education and IT can be blurred) or Media education across the curriculum (for example the media work now done in primary schools), nor various other forms of Media Studies being taught in other countries (Canada, for example, where there are some very interesting shifts in the nature of media learning when compared to the UK). Thus there can be, and is, no claim to universality in the issues raised about Subject Media, merely a range of questions that arise about identity, discourse and framing at work in the

assessment of OCR's AS Media Studies in January 2001. Furthermore, the compressed nature of my data collection (all of the data gathered was acquired between September 2000 and January 2001, and the project itself was conceived in January of 2000) might also provide an inevitable 'skewing' or at least a narrowing of temporal space by way of evidence. However it is important to re-state the significance and indeed signifying energy of that time period, given that the first assessment session for a new specification provides a range of archive material that must always be scrutinised in following sessions, meaning that examiners and moderators were providing for me evidence of some attempts at 'origin,' which would not be the case in subsequent meetings.

The inclusion of transcripts and lists of responses in the main body of the text might also need some retrospective 'justification' before we close. Any research informed by a view of 'Grammatology' will struggle with the concept of the appendix, reducing as it does the writing to binaries and boundaries to do with margins, extra-textual sources and ideas about the subject and object of research. Just as an art historian might include a reproduction of a painting within the body of a thesis, in order for the reader to reflect for themselves on the text as object as well as the interpretations offered by the writer / critic, I wanted to show the texture, shape and nuances of the data as textual matter rather than an optional, marginalized 'source' for my writing to be in some way checked against. An attempt to resist a logocentric presentation, at least.

My own autobiography could be returned to at this juncture, given that this research operates within a postmodern spirit in which the writer is formed by the research and is spoken through it. I have been appointed to a new post, in higher education, working with student teachers and teaching Education Studies to undergraduates. A PHD was a 'desirable' commodity for the post, and as such it is crucial to recognise the further accumulation of cultural capital that this project has provided for me. The research cannot be understood as separate from career development, in the crudest interpretation (but perhaps the most accurate). And yet all research must present itself as abstract from such living practice as job applications (or 'paying the mortgage'). Thus just as I mocked my examiners for their reluctance to describe their motivations for examining in purely monetary terms (they preferred to mobilise a discourse of care and of giving alongside one of professional knowledge, if we recall), so I must also bear witness to the mercenary context of my own work as well as the phenomenological hall of mirrors that 'Teacher Education' presents (another interesting Panopticon for me to dwell in).

Slavoj Zizek is another writer who is fascinated by Kafka's 'The Trial' in terms of what it offers us to think about it terms of identity and regulation. In his study of Lacan (1991) he makes a framing distinction between modernism and postmodernism by claiming that a poststructuralist approach to meaning which privileges language is inherently structuralist in its reliance on the linguistic system. In Lacan's work, Zizek locates a 'postmodern break' in the scrutiny of what is external to the signifier, the slippage between language and the

unconscious. Zizek's "obscene object of postmodernity" (in Wright and Wright, 1999, p38) appears in Kafka's novel as the door to the Law. Zizek extends the reading to consider Josef K's appearance at the door to the interrogation chamber. He compares the appearance at the door to the Law (intended only for the man from the country) to the Washerwoman's assertion to Josef K that nobody else must enter after him. In the first instance Kafka foregrounds lack and absence, in the latter (his encounter with an ordinary female) the presence of knowledge and instruction.

There is no truth about Truth. Every warrant of the Law has the status of a semblance; the Law is necessary without being true. To quote the words of the priest in 'The Trial', it is not necessary to accept everything as true; one must only accept it as necessary. The meeting of K with the washerwoman adds to this the obverse, usually passed over in silence: in so far as the Law is not grounded in Truth, it is impregnated with enjoyment…the Other of the Law appears as incomplete. In its very heart there is a certain gap; we can never reach the last door of the Law. (in Wright and Wright, 1999, p49)

Subject Media, like any educational practice, is 'founded' on such a lack of a 'bedrock' for truth. Rather, in its pedagogical activities and assessment practices, it resides in the domain of the enjoyable, the incomplete other of the Law, in which the necessity of acceptance (of mark schemes, of the idea of empowerment) is privileged over the possibility of the truth of any such notions. But perhaps the difference between Subject Media and, say, English is in its discursive attempts to stop the educational encounter in action for long enough to consider the possibility of its other, or of some transgression of the kinds of cultural reproduction that are maintained by the Guard at the door.

This thesis has raised the possibility of some interesting research into students' understandings of the relationship between pleasure and education, as well as their experiences of the tensions between learning and assessment

that have been suggested by this project. There is also a need for some

identification of competing discourses about the ideal subject, through which

learners, rather than teachers, are written and spoken. I am interested for the

future in researching the notions of subject identity residing in student

teachers' understandings of themselves as they prepare to move in and out of

various new communities of practice. And there are opportunities to extend the

work done by myself and Nick Peim on Subject English and Subject Media to

other areas of the curriculum, with particular import in disciplines that are

'opened up' by the advent of digital technologies. Mackay and O'Sullivan

(1999) suggest a distinction between New Media (eg MP3) and old media in

new times (eg broadcast TV in the era of subscription):

Modern culture is, to a great extent, mediated: 'media' and 'culture' are deeply interdependent.
Culture cannot be understood without foregrounding the media. The dramatic expansion of the
media and their assumption of a role of unparalleled significance have led to new forms of
social interaction and new ways of understanding ourselves….. Modern times, it is argued…
are constituted partly through their mediascapes, as the media not only provide information but
also have profound implications for forms of identity….   (1999, p2)

I would like to suggest that in education in the UK, we might find approaches to

digital futures that could be best described as new media in old times (or at

least old ways of testing knowledge) and there is some interesting work to be

done specifically on the relationship between using technology in learning and

traditional assessment models as well as the other to this, the use of

technology to test 'online' in very old-fashioned ways.

In all of these areas I would propose that an archaeology (a consideration of

what creates the conditions for ways of thinking) of micro-physics will reveal

interesting and useful questions about the assumptions and 'illogics' at work in

the dynamics between teachers and learners. Research can never be more than a form of writing, and I have attempted throughout to resist notions of objectivity which implicitly accept epistemological assumptions. By foregrounding the epistemic relativity, then, of research, one can only expect to provide 'findings' that are open, as all texts are, to a myriad of interpretations and readings. Conclusion can only be illation, that which is inferred.

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