

Secondary English Teaching Resource

Strand 3: Adaptation and Transformation

Writer: Greta Caruso

Introduction

Adaptation of a story or text from one medium to another is a common practice among Film/TV writers and producers. Many stories/texts have been adapted across a wide variety of media, for example, Mary Shelley's story of Frankenstein, while originally it was a fictional novel, it has been adapted into a movie, radio play, cartoon serial /graphic novel, TV series, rock video, computer game, comic book, rock opera, etc.

While the traditional adaptation of novel to film still remains a primary form, the growth of new media and the subsequent marketing opportunities has resulted in a more diverse range of text adaptations. Increasingly, it is common practice that a story or concept is released in a range of media, without a primary form.

Adaptations are frequently motivated by commercial interest and a whole industry has grown up around the notion of interpreting texts for media and merchandising so as to thoroughly exploit the value of the concept. Alternately, transformation into other mediums can breathe new life into a concept and new audiences can be uncovered.

English teachers could consider using visual media as the initial stimulus to introduce a story before asking students to read the original text. The value of this method is that students engage with multimodal literacies and visual images that convey immediate meaning/s about a story concept.

The visual or mediated image can be deconstructed so that students understand how and why it represents the story. Static images can be deconstructed and related to the story through analysis of the medium used, the placement of elements in the composition, the style of representation, the symbolism of colour, line, shape and the contexts of why, when and where it was made and by whom. Mediated images can be analysed through the technical and expressive elements of image, sound and text.

Below are some examples of how multimodal texts have evolved:

The ACTF TV series **Lockie Leonard** is based on the trilogy of novels by Tim Winton. This TV series contemporises the original context while retaining the essential story and characters.

Australian Children's Television Foundation, *Lockie Leonard Series 1*:

<http://actf.com.au/education-programs/lockie-leonard-series-1>

The ACTF TV series **Round the Twist** is based on the short stories of Paul Jennings. To give the stories cohesion they were adapted into a collection of stories about one family and one location.

Australian Children's Television Foundation, *Round the Twist Series 1*:

<http://actf.com.au/education-programs/round-the-twist-series-1>

The ACTF novellas and TV series **Winners** presents opportunities for teachers and students to explore stories presented in two different media. This series is appropriate for students aged 12-14. .

Australian Children's Television Foundation, *Winners and More Winners*:

<http://actf.com.au/education-programs/winners-and-more-winners>

The ACTF novellas and TV series **Touch the Sun** includes some very complex social and emotional issues. This lends itself to a discussion about how such issues are represented on the page and on the screen.

Australian Children's Television Foundation, *Touch the Sun*:

<http://actf.com.au/education-programs/touch-the-sun>

Additionally:

Tomb Raider was originally a computer game; it was then made into a film. The film producers decided to cast an actress who resembled the animated character and hence Angelina Jolie became Lara Croft.

Sin City was originally a graphic novel with a small cult following. The author refused permission for the film rights until he felt that the integrity of the story was going to be assured when it was adapted to film.

ET is an example of film adapted to novel. After the success of Steven Spielberg's film *William Kotzwinkle*, an esteemed American author, was contracted to write the novel. In doing so, he added a whole new emotional dimension and motivation to the character of *ET*.

Beowulf is thought to be the oldest work of literature in English. Actually it is written in Old English. This poem has provided a rich basis for transformation into other forms. Versions of it exist as a poem translated into modern English picture

story book, a film and even a novel told from the point of view of the antagonist Grendel.

Cinderella originally appeared as a traditional oral tale. Now it can be found as written stories, picture story book, ballet, opera, Barbie film and probably many other forms.

Snakes on a Plane was originally an interactive web-based story, where the reader could select the direction of the plot. Out of this grew the unlikely film starring Samuel Jackson.

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Overview

More than twenty years ago, in Dudley Andrew's book *Concepts in Film Theory*, he referred to literary adaptation as '*The most narrow and provincial area of film theory*'.

While adaptation has increased in popularity since the 1980s, it remains an area with little associated theory. In recent times, the cultural move has been from print to visual media, alongside a revolution in increasing the diversity of media forms. Accessibility to this diversity has spawned tremendous growth in the areas of transformation and adaptation of texts.

One of the key challenges for English teachers and students is to consider how the meaning of text changes when the form changes. To help students consider this challenge, teachers should frame questions for students to consider the audience, accessibility, the impact of a text, and the way it is received, perceived and remembered.

Literal adaptations

Direct adaptations usually occur from novel to film and where the novel is a much beloved canonical classic; there is great attachment to the text in its original form. In many instances the film maker exerts a tendency to try to represent the text as safely and faithfully as possible. This tendency for literal adaptation is strong in highly literary texts such as the works of Dickens and Shakespeare, where the exact words on the page are highly valued and exist as a public expectation. Diversions and departures from the expectation of a word-perfect rendering are sometimes accepted by audiences, but not without public comment and adjustment.

This tendency to render a film faithfully can also occur when the words on paper read like a film. The highly visual language of the novel *Snow Falling on Cedars* provides a basis for the imagery of the film version. The detailed descriptions of the coastline, the physical nature of the evidence and the beauty of some of the characters gave the novel a graphic/filmic quality.

When written text is highly popular the supposed expectations and demands of the audience, for a flawless representation, exerts enormous pressure. Consider the effort of casting the right actor to play Harry Potter or Lockie Leonard, or conversely, imagine the impact of altering the plot of *The Da Vinci Code*. In these instances, a number of factors come into play, not the least of which is the imperative of the film industry to make money by providing the audience with the product that they want.

Even if the transformation is faithful to the original, and the characters match the audience's imaginings, and the script is directly moved across and the writer of the novel writes the screen play; the film will still make a different type of meaning to the novel. Analysing and discussing what the differences are will be a challenging task for teachers and students.

Adaptations of complex storylines

Many novels have a great many characters and subplots that do not transfer to another medium. Often the central conundrum is maintained and the essential plot twists are kept while the characters are trimmed of excess complexity. This is done in order to make the original story fit in the constraints and expectations of the new form.

For instance, the potential audience, censorship, political and social context and the values of the text adaptor all come into play.

In adapting a text to the stage there is also the need to consider the physical constraints of the size, construction and spatial divisions of the stage. In adapting a text to film there is also the need to consider the running time of the film, the audience, the context of production, etc.

In adapting a text for a webpage there is also a need to consider the size of the screen, the size of the font, the overall layout and relationship of text to image.

In an increasing number of cases, stories are developed in even greater detail. Minor characters can become more complex and are added to flesh out the narrative and add layers of meaning. The Disney studios have adapted and produced many traditional tales into animations. In traditional form, as recorded for instance by the Grimm brothers, some accepted social mores were crossed. Hansel and Grethel's mother urged their father to infanticide, Little Red Riding Hood can be read as sexually threatening and even an awakening experience, and Beauty and the Beast

is certainly more about a story of a young girl who feels sympathy for an overly hirsute bloke. In these instances, the urge to 'clean up' and modify the stories for new audiences is further understood when the political leanings and actions of Walt Disney are considered.

Liberal adaptations

Loose adaptations take some of the ideas and characters from one text and use them in another form. The subsequent text may then be recognisable as an off spring or distant relative of the original. For example, Steven Spielberg's film adaptation of Philip Dick's, *Minority Report*, plays with the plot, character elements, wiz-bang technology and product placement and adds a Hollywood love interest; all while keeping the central science fiction conundrum.

While the adaptation is certainly recognisable, students and teachers need to consider the relationship between the two texts. It is evident that, at a certain point, one text becomes a launching pad for another rather than a translation from one medium into another.

Considerations for the classroom

In dealing with adaptation and transformation, students should define the following terms:

interpretation and meaning-making

intertextuality

influence

technique

form

medium

authorship

audience and reception

comparison

evaluation

primary and subsequent text

homage

appropriation

creativity

plagiarism

Refer to the Glossary at the end of this section.

For all secondary students considering Adaptations:

A grid for considering *Adaptations* and *Transformations*

Original	Adaptation
Primary text	Secondary text
Direct from author to audience	From author via interpreter to audience
Audience is able to see the text for itself, perhaps make their own mind up	Text has been interpreted, selected, possibly pre-digested. Interpreter overlays the meanings that they want
Composed at an earlier date	Transformed /Adapted at a later date
Makes use of the communication technology available at the time	May make use of communication technology or forms not available at the time of the original
May have a limited or specialised audience	May open up the text for new audiences
Usually the text would not have had a social status while it was in composition and possibly only gained status after its publication	The text may have gained status after its original publication, possibly becoming “well-known”, “famous” or even “a classic” long after it was published
Conceptions of audience may be limited, possibly by seemingly simple factors such as literacy	The text may be produced with a particular audience in mind, or may be produced with a very broad audience
The purpose of the production of the text may be known or unknown.	The production of the text in its adapted form may be related to a clearly identified purpose. These might be intellectual ie “to speak the work about how good the original is”, fiscal “to make money” or a combination of other reasons

1. Elements of text on the page

Physical elements

Paper, turning pages, involves physical contact with the page

Font

Punctuation

Line

Stanza

Blank space

Alignment and justification of lines

Shape of the words on the page

Readership

Revisiting

Rereading at micro level

Self-paced

Usually an individual solitary act

Silent

Not necessarily linear

Pausing is possible, easy to withdraw temporarily or permanently from the reading experience

Thought provoking

The reader is unknown and seen by the writer

Private, usually done at home, but can be transported

Mental demands

Requires literacy

Intellectually demanding

Visual imagination is activated for the subject, the narrator and the author

Aural imagination is activated. The sounds of the words are heard in the mind's ear.

2. Elements of text on the stage

Acting elements

Physicality

Size, shape, age, gender, colouring, skin

Vocal

Volume, pace and timing, intonation, stress, silence

Gestural

Posture, stance, gait, gesticulation

Face

Expression, eye contact

Staging

Light, shadow darkness, light source

Props

Use of space

Stage design

Entry, exit and transition

Costume

Hair and Makeup

Temporal elements

Exists in a time a place

Cannot be rewind

Experiential elements

Experience shared with other usually unknown audience members

Often a social experience where a small number of people in the audience participate in the viewing together

Theatre is a public space

Common to expect discussion with companions immediately after the event

Can be emotionally demanding

Difficult to withdraw from the experience

The performers can see and respond to the audience

Feedback through body language and facial expression as well as applause at the end

Aural elements

Music

Background noise

3. Elements of text as image or accompanying image

Compositional elements

Size, shape, graphic line, colour, texture,

Space, weight, balance, contrast, direction, movement, position

Communication elements

Topographic style, construction technique, medium/s,

Expressive / aesthetic language

Enhance the meaning of image/s through the design and placement of the text

Express contexts of time, place, gender, socio-cultural elements, etc., through the choice of communication elements

Consider audience response; present them with an unexpected and unforgettable experience

Direct audience viewing through compositional emphasis

Unify the text design through consistency of using compositional elements

Glossary of terms:

Term	Definition
Interpretation and meaning-making	Understanding, explaining or reading what the authors wants the audience to know Meaning making is communicating ideas
Intertextuality	The transference of a text into another form eg. Film, webpage, graphic image.
influence	Persuade the audience that the decision you want is their idea.
technique	Method of writing or making a text
authorship	Belonging to the author
form	Type of text, style of writing, how it was shaped.
medium	What it is made from, its vehicle to communicate the meaning
audience and reception	The viewers responses to text, image or idea
comparison	Contrast, assessment, judgement
evaluation	Assessment, appraisal, valuation
primary and subsequent text	The original text and the adaptation, transformation and appropriation of it into another form.
homage	Respect, honour, revere (the original)
appropriation	Commandeer the text and recreate it into another form.
creativity	Originality, inventiveness, imaginative, inspirational
plagiarism	Copying, stealing, illegal use of a text, image or idea.

Further Reading

Andrew, Dudley (1984), *Concepts in Film Theory*, New York: Oxford University Press

Bazin, André (2000), 'Adaptation, or the cinema as digest', in James Naremore (ed.), *Film Adaptation*, New Brunswick and New Jersey: Rutgers University Press

George Bluestone (1957) *Novels into Film* University of California Press

Giddings, Robert and Erica Sheen (2000), *The Classic Novel: From Page to Screen*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Rothwell, Kenneth S. (1999) *A History of Shakespeare on Screen: A Century of Film and Television*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wagner, Geoffrey (1975) *The Novel and the Cinema*, New Jersey: Associated University Presses Inc.

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Beaut Ideas for the classroom

Ask students to

1. For ages 11-13, From Script to Screen

View the ACTF webpage, listed below, that is a lesson plan providing suggested considerations that are needed when a television series is transformed from book form.

Australian Children's Television Foundation, *From TV to Book: Interpreting the Screen Story*: http://actf.com.au/teaching_resources/res/10035

Read excerpts from the **Noah and Saskia** book, particularly Saskia's diary entries.

Discuss the issues that Saskia is dealing with in her life and how this relates to their own lives.

View the same scenes from the TV series and analyse how the director presents Saskia in these scenes. Observe how she emphasises her concerns.

Compare how the director presents the character of Noah differently to Saskia.

Alternatively, read the original text by Paul Jennings for *Round the Twist*, and compare these stories to the TV series and/or comic books of the same title.

Compare how the story is told in each form (comic and TV) and discuss the effectiveness of each to communicate the meaning of the story.

2. For ages 11-14, Film viewing inspired by reading

Select novels and their associated film adaptations which are familiar. Possibilities for these include the novel *Deadly Unna* and the film **Australian Rules**, or the novel and film, *Looking for Alibrandi*, or the novel and film/s *Lord of the Rings*, and comic book series and film/s titled, *X-Men*.

Read the printed text and view the adaptation. Write about your response to both forms and compare the narratives in each.

3. For ages 11-14, Short stories and cartoons

Select and read a short story.

Summarise the story in approx. 20 dot points.

Read the story thoroughly again and visualise the action with the idea you will then produce a comic strip / storyboard of between 6 and 10 frames.

Select a section of text to illustrate and include dialogue, illustrations, background and foreground, as well as a text narration. Students who are not confident in their drawing skills can represent their ideas using 'stick figures' or characters cut from magazines / newspapers.

Share your ideas with the class and discuss and compare each represented story.

* Recommended texts include *The Girl Who Married a Fly* by Chris Wheat in the novel, *The Girl Who Married a Fly and Other Stories* edited by Val Kent and Michael Hyde available through the Australian Association for the Teaching of English.

4. For ages 14-16 Shakespeare scenes on page and screen

Read and discuss the Shakespearian play *Romeo and Juliet* and pay special attention to the quote (1.5.44) '*she doth teach the torches to burn bright*'.

Consider the emotions and images that these words evoke. Focus especially on the word "burn". Explain how this descriptive emphasis could be shown on stage and on film.

Compare the film versions of *Romeo and Juliet* by Franco Zeffirelli (PG) and Baz Luhrmann (M).

5. For ages 14-17, Adaptation of a classic

The novel *My Brother Jack* is narrated by David the younger brother. In the novel, the narrators' perspective is clear because the internal reflections of the character are available to be read.

Read a short section of the novel that contains David's narration.

Find a corresponding section of the film, **My Brother Jack**, and identify how the miniseries communicates David's perspective.

6. For ages 15-17 Shakespeare on page and on screen

Select a Shakespearian text where both a printed text and film version are available.

(If teachers choose to use *Macbeth* and the movie directed by Roman Polanski, please note that it has a M rating.)

Select a scene and read through it carefully.

Work in pairs and develop production notes for your own film version of the scene. In these notes, include vocal expression, costuming, props, scenery, and stage directions for the characters. Explain the reasons for each of your decisions.

Compare your ideas for a film adaptation with how the commercial film presented the same scene and discuss the choices that the director (eg. Polanski) has made and presented.

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Lesson activities for the secondary classroom

ACTIVITY 1: *Beauty and the Beast*

Year Level: students aged 12-14.

Aim

This unit of work is based around versions of *Beauty and the Beast*. It focuses on an early version available on-line and a very modern story that borrows from the traditional tale.

Whether the modern version can be considered an adaptation or whether it is a new story is a matter for discussion.

Resources

Resources for this unit of work include

Love and the Cloned Girl by Catherine Bateson in *Hunger and Other Stories* edited by Michael Hyde and Val Kent, Australian Association for the Teaching of English

Any other written, film, or television versions of *Beauty and the Beast*.

The Structure of this unit involves:

Parts 1 and 2 involve students in developing knowledge about the traditional written version.

Parts 3 and 4 involve students in some detailed comparisons between versions

Part 5 involves students in creatively considering their own reworking of the story with a visual element.

Background

Beauty and the Beast is a centuries old story that has similarities to even older stories such as *Cupid and Psyche*, *Oedipus* and Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*. The tale of *Beauty and the Beast* was first collected in Gianfrancesco Straparola's *Le piacevoli notti* (*The Nights of Straparola*) and Charles Perrault included it in *Contes de ma mere l'oye* (*Tales of Mother Goose*) in 1697.

Ask students to

Part 1: Reading the traditional story

Find a short summary of the traditional Beauty and the Beast Story online. This will help contextualise the modern retelling. An online encyclopaedia such as Wikipedia is a good start.

(a) Respond to the question: Is *Love and the Cloned Girl* a retold story or a reinvented story?

Part 2: Knowing the history

View and read the website below. This site presents the first English version of the story by Jeanne-Marie LePrince de Beaumont but not the original. The immediate source of her material was a collection of tales by Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot, Dame de Villeneuve (1695-1755) entitled *La Jeune Americaine et les Contes Marins* (1740). <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/beauty.html>

(b) Look at the notes at the end and explain the difficulty of reading the original.

Part 3: Comparing the language features

View and read the website below. The language of Jeanne-Marie LePrince de Beaumont is elaborate whereas the language of Catherine Bateson is truncated. <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/beauty.html>

(c) Use Word, Tools, Dictionary then Word, Tools, Thesaurus to find definitions and synonyms for “elaborate” and “truncated”.

(d) Locate and copy out a dictionary definition of the words “poetic” and “prosaic”.

(e) Write two paragraphs comparing the language of each author and include quotes in your answer.

Part 4: Comparing the Traditional Tale with the Modern Story

Analyse the story of Beauty and the Beast in terms of the following components: Plot, Main character, Secondary main character, Main adversary, Setting, Structural options and Theme.

(f) Create a table for each of these of these headings. Add an extra column and write in the corresponding information for “Love and the Cloned Girl”.

(g) Use the table to describe what elements the stories have in common and what elements of the modern story are new.

(h) Consider the benefits of using a classic tale to tell futuristic story.

Part 5: Finding an image to match the words

Search for images online of Beauty and the Beast.

(i) To what degree do any of these images fit the characters in *Love and the Cloned Girl*? Consider qualities such as innocence, maturity, realism, and attractiveness.

OR

(j) Imagine you are the producer at an animation company. Write the production brief for the animators, describing the drawings you would like them to produce. Use the images from the websites as reference points. The images can be copied from the websites and included in the brief to help make the points clear.

OR

(k) Imagine you are the producer at a film company. Write the character brief for the casting agent, outlining the type of actors you would like to cast. Use the images from the websites as reference points. The images can be copied from the websites and included in the brief to help make the points clear.

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Lesson activities for the secondary classroom

ACTIVITY 2: the Metamorphosis

Year Level: students aged 14-16.

Aim

The aim of this activity is for students to develop an understanding of how the meaning changes when the form of the text changes. It is based on an adaptation of Kafka's short story *The Metamorphosis*. In this way students are introduced to a literary classic which has been adapted into a very modern text form.

Resources

Resources for this unit of work include

the graphic novel *The Metamorphosis* adapted by Peter Kuper

the short story *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka

The Girl who Married A Fly by Chris Wheat in *The Girl Who Married a Fly and Other Stories* edited by Val Kent and Michael Hyde

The structure of this unit involves:

Part 1 focuses on gaining familiarity with the texts.

Part 2 focuses on building critical vocabulary.

Part 3 focuses on considering the ways in which meaning changes when a text is adapted to another medium.

Part 4 provides some links to websites about graphic novels.

Ask students to

Part 1: General Questions

(a) View the following website:

Random House, *Metamorphosis*:

<http://www.randomhouse.com/crown/metamorphosis/>

Watch the short film.

Copy out a dictionary definition of 'animation'.

What instruments and sounds are used in the sound track? What mood does the sound track evoke?

Review the sequence of images of Gregor in bed.

How does the animation show Gregor's pain?

Explain how both the animation and the music affect the way the text is read.

(b) View the following website

Peter Kuper, *Home page*:

<http://www.peterkuper.com/>

Make a list of dot points about Peter Kuper. How does the biographical information help build an understanding of Kuper's interest in Kafka?

(c) View the following website:

Kafta, *Biography*:

<http://www.kafka.org/index.php?biography>

Spend 10 minutes looking at this website. Select a quote from Kafka and respond to it in 100 words. Your response may be creative or analytical.

(d) The full text can be found at:

Project Gutenberg:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/>

(e)

Look over the full text of *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka.

- Copy out three sentences. One that you think is a) interesting, b) awful, c) pointless
- Copy out the dedication. How do you respond to the Gregor's of the world?
- Discuss the symbol at the center of the novel — Gregor's transformation from a man into an insect. Select **one** of the five possibilities below and use the statement as the first sentence of a paragraph of 100-120 words.
 1. Gregor's personal alienation is the effect of his deadening job.
 2. Gregor's metamorphosis symbolises problems in his family and how the demands placed on him have worn him down.
 3. Gregor's metamorphosis poignantly illustrates the power struggle within this family and shows how his transformation alters the family's dynamics.
 4. Gregor's metamorphosis is the manifestation of how other people see him.

5. Gregor's metamorphosis is the manifestation of how he sees himself.

(f) Select **one** of the topics below for a creative response. (400-600 words)

Write a story about yourself where you are transformed into another creature.

Search the web for animated gifs and present your story as an animation.

Write a story about a public figure (politician, actor and singer) and cast them as the animal you think best fits their personality. Search the web for images of the selected politician and the selected animal. Manipulate the images by cutting and pasting sections in order to make a transformation. There are many animation programs that will enable you to do this, PowerPoint is probably the most well known and simple program to use to create such an animation.

Write a graphic novel about a person who undergoes a transformation.

Write a story about a metamorphosis involving a female character.

Adapt a work of classic literature to the graphic novel form.

Part 2: Vocabulary building

a) Provide a definition for each of the terms listed below. You may need to abridge the definition given in the dictionary:

Cambridge Dictionaries Online:

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

Wikipedia, *Wiktionary*:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiktionary>

Terms related to philosophy and literary style

Existential	
Expressionism	
Alienation	
Absurdist	
Bizarre	
Dystopic	
Angst	

o Write one paragraph of 80-100 words on *The Metamorphosis* using at least three of the terms above.

Terms related to form and graphic style

electric	
dynamic	
kinetic	
scratchboard	
expressionistic	
graphic	
animated	
monochrom	
claustrophobic	
wood block	
stoic	
dark	
subtle	
black humour	

- Write one paragraph of 80 –100 words on the style of Peter Kuper’s adaptation using at least five of the terms above.

Part 3: Adaptations

(a) Read the original text and then read Kuper’s adaptation, particularly, pages 11, 12, 16 & 22.

- Describe how Kuper has adapted the original.

- Comment on

perspective, particularly the size relationship of the characters,
the representation of anger,

Gregor’s perception of time (also look at pages 14 and 15 for this)

- Describe how Kuper has adapted the original from page 16.

Comment on how the lengthy description of the voice is captured in image.

- o Describe how Kuper has adapted the original from page 22.

Comment on how the language has been abbreviated and simplified.

Supply quotes in your answer.

- o Describe how Kuper has adapted the original. None of the words of this original section appear in Kuper's adaptation.

Explain in detail how he has captured the idea with out the words.

(b) Complete the table below to compile a comparative guide to the two versions of the text.

	Kafka	Kuper
Date of publication		
Accessibility		
Relevance		
Intellectual demand		
Audience		
Level of literacy assumed		
Time investment of the reader		
Visual imagination		
Emotional impact		

(c) Use the table to comment on the following statement.

“Kuper’s adaptation brings The Metamorphosis to a new contemporary audience. “

Read the original text and then read Kuper’s adaptation, particularly, pages 25, 30 & 42 and describe how Kuper has adapted the original.

- o Explain how compositional space and perspective is used to convey alienation.
- o Comment on the interplay between print and graphic. What is the reader forced to do to decipher the words?

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Lesson activities for the secondary classroom

ACTIVITY 3: Minority Report

Year Level: students aged 15-17.

Aim

This activity is based around the short story *Minority Report* by Philip Dick and the film of the same name directed by Steven Spielberg. The focus is on how the story has been adapted for the screen. There is a particular focus on identifying the links between the context, form and technology work to create meaning in each case.

Resources

Resources for this unit of work include

Minority Report, the short story by Philip K Dick

A copy of the film *Minority Report* by Steven Spielberg

The Structure of this unit

A series of detailed questions lead students through an investigation of how meaning is related, shapes and is shaped by form. The headings under which the questions are organised include Form and Meaning, Representation, Audience, Plot, Character, Internal dialogue, Scene and Mood.

Ask students to refer to both the book and the film, *Minority Report*, when responding to

(a) Form and Meaning

Apart from film, to what other media does this story lend itself?

Here are just a few to get you thinking:

Opera, ballet, interpretive dance, painting, finger puppet play, stage play, computer game, board game, song, game show, comic strip, animation, TV series

Select a short story by Philip Dick other than *Minority Report* and draw up a list of the actors you would cast as well as a short explanation for your decisions.

(b) Representation

How long is this short story? How long is the film?

When was the short story written, when was the film made?

The short story gives written word on page, description, dialogue, internal dialogue and narration. The film gives dialogue, visual and aural information. How does the imagination work in each case?

(c) Audience

What sense of implied audience is present in each medium? Support your view with close reference to the text.

Look at the way the film starts, read over the way the short story starts. Which one requires

- Concentration
- Patience
- Consideration

Which has

- Immediate appeal
- Suspense
- Sex appeal

In the film, what does the technology add? How does this give audience appeal?

(d) Plot

The story is the primary medium. List three significant things that have been left out of the film. List three significant things that have been added. Explain why these things are significant.

Compare and contrast the film and the short story in terms of

- Complexity
- Development of ideas
- Entertainment value
- Ghoulishness
- Action and violence
- The enduring images

(e) Character

How does Witwer assert his youth a) on the page and b) on the screen?

Compare and contrast the role of the *precogs* in the short story and in the film. In particular identify

- the terms used to refer to them
- their physical appearance
- their humanness
- the relationship with Anderton
- their sexuality

How old are the main characters, a) in the short story and b) in the film?

What is the impact of casting Tom Cruise as Anderton?

(f) Internal dialogue

Look closely at the first page. Roughly work out the ratio of dialogue to total words on the page. Everything that is dialogue can be represented in the film as dialogue.

How can everything else be represented? How can the thought '*I'm bald. Bald and fat and old*' be shown on screen?

(g) Scene

How is the futuristic world created in a) the short story and b) the film

(h) Mood

How does music work to create mood, suspense, tension, chaos, climax and atmosphere in the film?

Secondary English Teaching Resource

Strand 3: Adaptation and Transformation

Writer: Greta Caruso

Lesson activities for the secondary classroom

ACTIVITY 4: Wind in the Willows

Year Level: students aged 14-17

Aim

The aim of this activity is for students to develop an understanding of graphic novels with a particular emphasis on considering how the form and meaning are connected. The unit of work is based on *When the Wind Blows* by Raymond Briggs.

Resources

When the Wind Blows by Raymond Briggs

The structure of this unit

Students are presented with a range of ideas to consider in order to construct a review for a graphic novel. Intertextual elements are discussed and a list of graphic novels for further reading is presented.

Ask students to

Part1: Review writing

(a) Your task is to write a review of *When the Wind Blows* by Raymond Briggs.

Three aspects need to be covered

- the text in its time
- the text in our time
- the timelessness of the text

Here is a list of terms that you can use:

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| ○ parable | ○ fable |
| ○ black comedy | ○ sentimental |
| ○ poignant | ○ naïve |
| ○ tragic | ○ macabre |

- profound
- cataclysmic
- absurd
- satire
- grim
- social commentary

Most important feature of the review:

The opinion and evaluation is embedded in the description. That means you do not present a recount of the text followed by a rating. The review is much harder and more complex than this. The evaluative comments and the descriptive comments are entwined.

Some aspects of *When the Wind Blows* that could be discussed in a review include the language used:

- dialogue, colloquialisms, errors, malapropisms
- graphic novel format
- the message
- the characters, who they are based on, who could relate to them
- the illustrative style, colours, shapes, line, texture, medium, lay-out, proportion, space
- who the audience was/is
- possible readings or interpretations of the text
- comparisons with other similar books
- quotes
- sales, popularity, marketing strategy
- inter-textuality (texts within texts)
- strengths and weaknesses of the text
- what the text assumes that the reader knows
- things that are implied but not said
- the author's context

Other texts are referred to in *When the Wind Blows*. This includes the nursery rhyme *Rock-a-bye Baby*, the *Psalm of David*, and the poem *The Charge of the Light Brigade* by Alfred Tennyson. In this way layers of meaning are added to the graphic novel.

Find copies of these referred poems as reference to your response above.

Part 2: The Graphic Novel

The Graphic novel narrative is related through a combination of text and art, often in comic strip form.

Examples of graphic novels are:

Cages by Dave McKean

City of Glass by Paul Auster, Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli

Cerebus the Aardvark by Dave Sim

Contract With God by Will Eisner

David Boring by Daniel Clowes

The Dark Knight Returns by Frank Miller and Lynn Varley

Ed the Happy Clown by Chester Brown

From Hell by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell

Gentleman Jim Raymond Briggs (1980)

Ghost in the Shell by Masamune Shirow

Ghost World by Dan Clowes

Incal (L'Incal) by Moebius and Alejandro Jodorowsky

I Never Liked You by Chester Brown

It's a Good Life, if You Don't Weaken by Seth

Jimmy Corrigan by Chris Ware

Louis Riel by Chester Brown

Maus by Art Spiegelman

Palestine by Joe Sacco

Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi

Palomar by Gilbert Hernandez

Road to Perdition by Max Allan Collins and Richard Piers Rayner

The Sandman by Neil Gaiman

The Tin Pot Foreign General and the Old Iron Woman (1984)

Watchmen by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons

When the Wind Blows by Raymond Briggs

Secondary English Teaching Resource

Strand 3: Adaptation and Transformation

Writer: Greta Caruso

Lesson activities for the secondary classroom

ACTIVITY 5: Australian Rules

Year Level: students aged 15-17.

The award winning film **Australian Rules** (Rated:M) is based on the novel *Deadly Unna?*. It has some violence and drug use.

Australian Rules has relevance to students of Cultural Studies, Indigenous education, Australian studies, Studies of Society and Environment, English, Drama and Film and Media studies.

The film is suitable for students from middle to senior secondary school and at the tertiary education level. It has wide potential as a classroom resource, providing a rare and valuable first hand account of indigenous issues. **Australian Rules** encourages the development of detailed and balanced understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples but also issues and concerns we all share.

Australian Children's Television Foundation, *Australian Rules*:

<http://actf.com.au/education-programs/australian-rules>

Note: full study guide to the film **Australian Rules** is available

Australian Children's Television Foundation, *Australian Rules Study Kit*:

http://actf.com.au/teaching_resources/res/10010

Ask students to refer to both the book, *Deadly Unna?* and the film, *Australian Rules*, when responding to

1. The novel *Deadly Unna?* was first published in 1989. The film **Australian Rules** was made in 2002.

a) Explain what each title assumes about 1) language 2) accessibility 3) appeal.

b) Explain which title you prefer.

2. Both the novel and the film start with the coach Mr Robertson stating, *'If I've arksed youse boys once, I've arksed youse a thousand times...'*

- a) What impact does this have on the audience?
- b) How does it draw the audience in?
- c) What reason can you imagine the directors might have had for keeping this as the opening scene?

3. In the film **Australian Rules**, Blacky and Red walk together. Red creates a sensual description for Dumby. *'Dumby Red relaxes on red satin sheets; suddenly Madonna appears she is wearing a diaphanous silk negligee.'*

- a) What does this indicate about 1) Blacky, 2) Red 3) their relationship?
- b) How is the relationship between Blacky and Red established in the novel *Deadly Unna?*

4. In *Deadly Unna?* on p 32, Blacky's mother's tactical appreciation is explained.

"Mum loved the footy. She came to every match, and there wasn't much she didn't know about the game, especially tactics. I'm sure she would've been a better coach than Arks. ...They weren't going to listen to somebody's roly-poly mum, even if she was a tactical genius." In other words the novel **tells** about the mother's skill.

- a) In the novel, Blacky's admiration for his mother is captured in his description of her as a tactical genius. How is his admiration of her skill shown on screen?
- b) How does Blacky's mother show her 'tactical genius' on screen?

5. In the end of the film, **Australian Rules**, Blacky and Clarence are shown swimming together.

- a) Explain how the shot shows their relationship. Refer to the weather, the music, the swimming style and the voiceover narrative.

6. A film can never really be a novel just put on the screen. Explain what adaptations have been made. Give an example of plot, character and dialogue. (2 paragraphs)

7. Read the commentary on the adaptation of the novel to the screen, and then answer the following questions.

- a) What is the effect of compressing the timeline from one year to one week?
- b) The act of removing the graffiti is very important in the novel. Why was it so important? With what has it been replaced in the film?

c) How does the strengthening of the relationship between Blacky and Clarence give the film audience appeal?

d) In the novel Dumby Red is shot by the publican Big Mac. In the film, Dumby Red is shot by Blacky's father. Explain how this

- i. compresses the timeline,
- ii. adds dramatic simplicity,
- iii. builds the tension.

FROM THE PAGE TO THE SCREEN . . .

AUSTRALIAN RULES is based on Phillip Gwynne's award winning novel, *Deadly, Unna?*, first published in 1998. Set in the Port, a shabby fishing town, *Deadly, Unna?* tells the story of Gary "Blacky" Black, his troubled relationship with his father and his friendship with Dumby Red, an Aboriginal boy from the Point. The star player in the town team, Dumby Red seems destined for a professional football career. The friendship between the two boys flourishes despite the deep suspicion between the two communities, the Port and the Point.

Adapting a novel to a film requires changes in drama and pace and characters. The action in **AUSTRALIAN RULES** takes place over one week, whereas in the novel it was spread over a year. Parts of the novel - those that deal with the town's reliance on the summer tourist trade, Blacky's infatuation with the glamorous tourist, Cathy, and his single-minded determination to remove the "BOONGS PISS OFF" graffiti at the end of the jetty, have been completely omitted.

Adaptation is not only about leaving things out, but also about strengthening links. By creating a stronger relationship between Blacky and Clarence, Dumby Red's sister, the film brings the crux of the novel's ideas – racism and Blacky's growing awareness of bigotry and hypocrisy - into sharper focus.

Changes were also made to the important dramatic event - the shooting in the pub. In the novel the publican shoots two intruders, but in the film, for greater dramatic effect, the shooting is carried out by Blacky's father. This creates a different kind of tension. The triangle between Blacky, his father and Dumby Red/Clarence becomes a potent symbol for the attitudes within, and between, the communities.

Australian Children's Television Foundation, *Australian Rules Media Kit*:

http://actf.com.au/assets/the_learning_centre/actf_ar_media_kit.pdf