Investigating the basis of legitimation of English literary studies: A case study of a curriculum at a South African University

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Abstract

This study explored the kinds of knowledge, ways of knowing and ways of being that are valued in English literary studies. It did so by providing an analysis of what was needed to succeed in a specific English literary studies curriculum. The study used the Specialisation dimension of Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) to investigate what is legitimated in an English literature curriculum at the University of South Africa (UNISA) across three years of undergraduate study. The purpose of this analysis was twofold. Firstly, it aimed to make the academic literacy practices of English literary studies more explicit in order to inform pedagogy intended to enable epistemological and ontological access to the discipline. Secondly, the study aimed to facilitate critiques of the curriculum from a social justice perspective by finding ways to make the basis for legitimacy (the ways of being and knowing that are valued) in the curriculum more explicit to both the academics and the students.

The study found that English literary studies, as practised at UNISA, was underpinned by what LCT refers to as a 'cultivated gaze'. This aligns with the findings of previous LCT studies that looked at English literary studies using the dimension of Specialisation. A discipline that is underpinned by a cultivated gaze requires students to exhibit a specific disposition that develops through immersion in the field over an extended period in order to be considered a legitimate knower. The study also found that two orientations within the cultivated gaze were legitimated in the curriculum: an aesthetic orientation and a socio-critical orientation. This finding adds to the previous research because it helps us to better understand the kinds of dispositions that are valued in English literary studies and how these dispositions are cultivated over time. In addition, the study found that neoliberal factors such as massification, managerialism and academic casualisation caused misalignments between the intended curriculum and the practices employed to teach and assess the curriculum. This placed particular limitations on one of the aims of the curriculum which was to cultivate a socially oriented criticality. This finding has implications for how we teach Humanities curricula that aim to develop critical citizens.

Declaration

I declare that this study is my own original work. Where use is made of the work of others it is indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Rhodes University, Makhanda, South Africa. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Pretoria, October 2024

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Retha Knoetze

Publications and Presentations Emanating from this Research

Publications

Knoetze, R. (2024). Cultivating criticality in a neoliberal system: A case study of an English literature curriculum at a mega distance university. *Higher Education,* 84, 1677-1692. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-023-01084-y

Conference papers

"The impossibility of critical pedagogies centred on trust in a mass neoliberal system", presented at the Higher Education Close-Up 11 Conference, Rhodes University, 4 July 2024.

"Cultivating critical citizens through English literary studies", presented at the LCT5 Conference, University of the Witwatersrand, 17 January 2024.

"Cultivating critical citizens through English literary studies", presented at the 'Shaking the Table' Rhodes Postgraduate Conference, Rhodes University, 9 September 2023.

"Educating for social justice through teaching English literature? Exploring the academic point of view", presented at the 'Crossing the Borders of Knowledge' Rhodes Postgraduate Conference, Rhodes University, 2 September 2022.

"An English literature curriculum study: intersections between the macro and micro" presented at the Higher Education Close-Up 10 Conference, Lancaster University, 5 July 2022.

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List of Acronyms/Abbreviations

ER	epistemic relations
IPMS	Integrated Performance Management System
IR	interactional relations
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
LCT	Legitimation Code Theory
ODeL	Online Distance eLearning
SR	social relations
SubR	subjective relations
UCT	University of Cape Town
UNISA	University of South Africa

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Introduction

What is the purpose of a degree in English literary studies? What ways of understanding the world does the discipline give us access to? This study explores the kinds of knowledge, ways of knowing and ways of being that are valued in English literary studies. It does so by providing an analysis of what is needed to succeed in an English literary studies curriculum at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

Through this case study, I shed light on what kinds of tacit academic literacy practices are valued in the discipline of English literary studies. Morrow (2009) explains that some curriculum practices are opaque rather than explicit. He explains that in addition to the explicit or official curriculum, which is made up of formally stated content or outcomes, there is such a thing as a 'hidden curriculum', "a tacit framework of meaning" that shapes what is learnt in profound ways but is seldom explicitly spelt out to students as we tend not to be conscious of it (Morrow, 2009, p. 31). This 'hidden curriculum' includes "unstated norms, values, and beliefs that are transmitted to students through the underlying structure of meaning in both the formal content as well as the social relations of school and classroom life" (Giroux & Penna, 1979, p. 22). This study works to make explicit what these unstated norms, values and beliefs might look like in the discipline of English literary studies. By making the hidden values of this discipline more overt, I hope this study contributes knowledge that can help academics to be more critical of the demands the discipline makes of students. This contribution to knowledge in the field also has the potential to help academics develop pedagogies that are more explicitly geared towards granting students access to the values of the discipline.

1.2 Personal Background

Like many doctoral studies, this one emerged from a personal interest. The original impetus for this research came from my experiences teaching literary analysis to students while working first in an English Department at a contact university (2011 to 2013) and then at a distance education institution: UNISA, which is the site of this case study. In both departments, I frequently heard my colleagues express frustration regarding their struggles to convey to

students what it means to ‘critically engage’ with literature, and I echoed these sentiments. While academics wanted students to read literary texts critically to come to their own conclusions about what the texts meant and how that meaning was created, they felt that students tended to find and reproduce other people’s interpretations of literary texts instead. Because my personal experience of studying English literature as an undergraduate and postgraduate student had been one of transformative learning, leading me to question previously held biases and to develop a more critical understanding of society, I felt that it was important to make these discipline-specific ways of knowing accessible to students from diverse backgrounds.

In both universities in which I worked, there were concerns about low pass rates of students taking English literature modules. At one point at UNISA, consistently low pass rates for our first-year and one of the two second-year English literature courses caused the modules to become considered ‘barrier modules’ by management. This was because many Education students had to take these modules to complete their degrees, and one or both modules would often be the only course(s) outstanding for students to complete their Education degrees. The department felt pressure to find ways to improve the pass rates for these modules but also felt that the low pass rates were largely out of their control.

At both institutions too, my colleagues and I tended to ascribe students’ struggles with literature courses to their weak literacy skills, and the idea was often expressed that students needed to take generic English grammar courses to improve their language skills before taking English literature courses. However, when I started reading more about academic literacies, I quickly realised that one cannot speak of generic academic literacy skills in any meaningful way: every discipline has its own peculiar set of literacy practices (Boughey & McKenna, 2016; Jacobs, 2007; Lea & Street, 1998; McKenna, 2004, 2012). I thought that this might help explain why some students seemed to have more trouble with English literature modules than with other courses in which English was also used as the language of teaching and learning. For example, the Education students who were struggling to pass our ‘barrier modules’ used English as the language of teaching and learning in all their modules and were managing to pass their other subjects, so perhaps there was more to the problem than a general lack of proficiency in English. In light of the above, I started to wonder whether there was something specific about the nature of English literary studies that students found challenging.

Since academic literacies research suggests that literacies are discipline-specific, it follows that students should be assisted to develop the valued academic literacy practices from within a mainstream curriculum rather than through add-on generic academic literacies courses (Jacobs, 2007). I realised that what was needed was for academics in English departments to find ways of assisting students in taking on the discipline-specific literacy practices that are valued in English literary studies. However, I also came to understand that because these literacy practices are usually tacitly acquired by academics through socialisation into a discipline, it is not always easy for academics to articulate these practices explicitly and to teach them to students overtly (Jacobs, 2007; McKenna, 2004). Thus, I needed something to assist me in making these implicit values explicit to academics, so that we could then make them overt to students through our teaching. I found Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) to be a tool that I could use for this purpose since LCT works to reveal the underpinning organising principles of social practices. I discuss academic literacies research and unpack LCT as my theoretical framework in detail in Chapter Two.

A second impetus that drove my research came after the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements that started in 2015 in South Africa. These movements led to a flurry of discussion at UNISA (and at many other South African universities) regarding the need to decolonise both curricula and the institutional cultures of universities. During these often very abstract and theoretical discussions, I found myself wondering what a decolonised English literature curriculum, in particular, might look like in practice. By the time I started working at UNISA, the English Department had already adopted an inclusive curriculum in terms of the literature prescribed in the programme. African and, more specifically, South African literature was well represented in the curriculum. However, student expressions of alienation from university culture as part of the #MustFall movements gave me an inkling that decolonising curricula might involve more than just changing curriculum content: it could potentially entail becoming more inclusive in terms of the ways of being and ways of knowing that are valued in the curriculum. My reading into academic literacies research and LCT confirmed this suspicion since it led me to understand that disciplines value not only specific content knowledge but also specific aptitudes, attitudes and dispositions (Maton, 2014). I also came to understand that what might seem ‘natural’ or ‘neutral’ to insiders within a community of practice might seem strange and alienating from another perspective. However, I realised that it was necessary to demystify the ways of knowing and being that are valued in a curriculum first before attempting

to critique them from a decolonial perspective. I needed analytical tools that could help me to do this unpacking. Once again, LCT seemed to be the right theory for this application.

These 'intellectual itches' emerging from my work experience drove my reading before and during my doctoral studies. However, the rationale for the study goes beyond my personal background and is rooted in concerns about social justice in higher education.

1.3 South Africa's Higher Education Context

South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid has had significant effects on the higher education sector. Higher education during the period of British colonialism served colonial interests, imposing Eurocentric views and values, subjugating Indigenous knowledges and entrenching the idea of white superiority (Heleta, 2016). Under apartheid, there were separate institutions for white and black students, and black students were offered an inferior level of education, resulting in significantly curtailed occupational and economic opportunities (Bozalek & Boughey, 2012).[1]

South Africa's legacy of educational inequality means that the issue of inclusive and accessible higher education is particularly pertinent. Since the first democratic election of 1994, many policies and procedures have been put in place to increase access to higher education (CHE, 2016). The 2016 Council of Higher Education review of two decades of post-apartheid higher education (CHE, 2016, p. 6) explains that "student demographics at institutions of higher learning have changed dramatically in the last twenty years, with a significant increase in access for black students". The push to democratise higher education and globally increasing demands for workers with advanced qualifications have meant that South African universities have seen a massive increase in student numbers (CHE, 2016). For example, between 2009 and 2020, student enrolments increased by more than 30% (DHET, 2022). However, this is not to say that there is no longer a need for large-scale improvements in terms of equity of access to higher education. The CHE review (2016, p. 6) explains that although "most higher education institutions now have a majority of black students in their student complements", there is still a significant difference in terms of participation rates (that is the percentage of youth between

[1] Only under very particular circumstances could a candidate seek permission from the Minister of Higher Education to attend a university that was not designated for their racial group.

18 and 24 years of age who are in higher education) for black and white students. In 2013, the participation rate was 55% for white students and 16% for African students (CHE, 2016). The 2023 VitalStats publication indicates that, although there were improvements in the following eight years, this disparity in participation rates continues. In 2021, the participation rate for white students was 48% while the participation rate for black students was 23% (CHE, 2019).

Another concern that was highlighted in the 2016 CHE review was that student success rates "remain sharply skewed by race and prior education" (CHE, 2016, p 7). The 2023 VitalStats publication indicates that throughput rates (that is the number of first-time entering undergraduate students who have graduated within a specified period) continue to be skewed in terms of race. For example, out of the 2016 cohort of students registered for three-year degrees, 27% of black students and 47% of white students managed to complete their degrees within three years; 47% of black students and 61% of white students managed to complete within four years; and 60% of black students and 67% of white students managed to complete within six years. The statistics for four-year degrees are somewhat better, but white students continue to have higher throughput rates. 45% of black students and 53% of white students managed to complete within four years; 61% of black students and 66% of white students managed to complete within five years; and 68% of black students and 71% of white students managed to complete within six years.[2] This suggests that while equitable formal access to the university space continues to be a pressing issue, other crucial issues that need to be considered are equitable access to the university's knowledge practices and social justice in terms of *whose* knowledge practices are valued in the university. This thesis concerns itself with these issues.

Concerns about institutional culture in higher education institutions erupted into the public sphere in 2015 with the #RhodesMustFall movement, which called for institutional transformation and decolonisation. The #RhodesMustFall movement started early in 2015 at the University of Cape Town and sparked similar movements throughout 2015 and 2016 (Hlatshwayo, 2018). While the main focus of the protests became increased student fees, #FeesMustFall, Hlatshwayo (2018) explains that there was also an emphasis on transforming the Eurocentric culture of historically white universities. For example, the Black Student Movement criticised Rhodes University for being an "alienating and marginalising space for

[2] All these figures exclude UNISA students. The VitalStats publication did not include a breakdown of throughput rates by race for UNISA.

the majority of the students" (Hlatshwayo, 2018, p. 4). Subsequent calls to decolonise the university have critiqued "the role that colonisation and apartheid has played in centering western knowledge systems through the displacement of local and indigenous knowledge systems" (Hlatshwayo, 2018, p. 3). In October 2015, the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Blade Nzimande (cited in Le Grange, 2016, p. 2), entreated universities to decolonise their curricula, stating that "universities, all of them, must shed all the problematic features of their apartheid and colonial past". This study responded to calls to decolonise curricula by providing a deep investigation into the kinds of practices we expect our students to take on within the discipline of English literary studies. In this regard, I adopted Michel Foucault's (1988, p. 154) stance that:

> A critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices that we accept rest.

This study proceeds from the understanding that for us to be able to critique the academic literacy practices of the discipline of English literary studies, it is necessary to first make these often-tacit practices explicit. I argue that we need to be able to 'see' the hidden assumptions and expectations of a discipline and curriculum before we can know what it is that needs to be dismantled. This study, therefore, contributes to the decolonial project not by offering a decolonial critique of the curriculum under study, but by laying the groundwork that would make a decolonial – or other kind of – critique possible that gets at the heart of what the discipline is really about.

1.4 Rationale

This study thus aimed to make explicit the tacit literacy practices in the discipline of English literary studies. As McKenna (2004, p. 277) argues:

> There is a need to analyse what practices are expected of our students in order for them to succeed in our disciplines. In engaging in such a reflective practice we should become aware of the subtle ways in which such practices act as gate keeping mechanisms. We then have a decision to make as to whether to continue to value such practices and overtly induct our students into them or whether to discard them as irrelevant in terms of the identities that our students bring with them or the workplace identities they may require for successful integration into the industries for which we are preparing them. In cases where we determine that the practice should be retained as valuable, then we need to look at how our students are able to engage with the target practice and find a means of ensuring the target practice is no longer mysterious or alienating.

This study draws on Legitimation Code Theory to make explicit what principles underpin the knowledge practices of an English literary studies curriculum at UNISA. The purpose of this analysis is twofold. Firstly, I make the ways of knowing and being that are valued in an English literature curriculum more explicit as it is important for educators to 'see' how the curriculum legitimates certain practices, thereby including and excluding specific social actors. Once academics have a clearer sense of the ways of knowing and being that the curriculum legitimates, they will be able to make a more informed critique of the curriculum from a social justice perspective. Secondly, I make the values underpinning an English literature curriculum more explicit in order to inform pedagogy aimed at enabling students to master discipline-specific literacy practices.

While this is a study of a specific curriculum situated in a specific context, LCT provides terminology that can be used to compare the underlying values or 'organising principles' across different English literature curricula and also to compare curricula from different disciplines. The findings of my study therefore have application not only for English departments in other mega-distance education universities but for any English literature curriculum informed by similar underlying values. The analysis also has the potential to inform curriculum and pedagogy in other Humanities disciplines with similar underpinning values.

1.5 Research Questions

Two main research questions guided this study. These are:

1. What kind of knowledge and knowers are legitimated in the UNISA undergraduate English literature intended curriculum?

2. To what extent does the English literature curriculum of the Department of English Studies at UNISA enable access to the ways of knowing and the ways of being that are valued?

In answering the first question, the study aimed to contribute knowledge regarding disciplinary-specific ways of knowing and being (or discipline-specific literacy practices) that are valued in English literary studies. This will allow academics to become more aware of the how subtle gatekeeping mechanisms in the curriculum and discipline function to either include or exclude certain social actors and will, therefore, give academics the ability to be more critical of the curriculum and discipline from a social justice perspective. It would also assist academics in

developing pedagogies that can better support students in gaining access to the kinds of knowledge and dispositions valued in the discipline.

In answering the second question, I did not aim to suggest that providing students with access to the ways of knowing and being that were valued in the discipline as practised at UNISA was a sufficient condition for social justice. It is also necessary to critique how the discipline is practised and argue for changes in the curriculum and discipline where they are deemed necessary. However, I offer a reflection on what would be necessary to enable students to access the values of the discipline if they were retained in the form that they took in this case study. This is to contribute to knowledge about what kinds of pedagogical practices are necessary to assist students in gaining epistemological and ontological access to the discipline-specific practices of English literary studies.

Morrow (2009, p. 78) distinguishes between formal access and epistemological access, where formal access relates specifically to physical access to an institution, and epistemological access relates to "learning how to become a successful participant in an academic practice". In other words, physical access to higher education is about gaining access to a university or a degree programme, whereas epistemological access means having access to the knowledge and academic practices that are required to succeed in a discipline. I take this a step further to consider ontological access in addition to epistemological access since LCT shows us that social practices such as academic disciplines are underpinned not only by specific ways of knowing but also by specific ways of being.

I consider epistemological and ontological access to be necessary but insufficient conditions for a socially just curriculum. This is because it is important to give students from diverse backgrounds access to powerful disciplinary ways of meaning making. However, it is equally important for us to critique these socially sanctioned ways of meaning making from a social justice perspective. This entails asking questions about whose knowledge and ways of knowing are being validated and whose knowledge and ways of knowing are being excluded.

Answering my second research question required a three-step process. First, I reflected on what my answers to my first research question suggested about the kinds of pedagogies that would facilitate access to the ways of knowing and being that were valued in the curriculum. Second, I reflected on whether the kinds of pedagogies employed in the curriculum were aligned with the kinds of knowledge and dispositions that the curriculum hoped to develop. Thirdly, I

considered what my data suggested regarding elements that enabled and/or constrained this alignment between curriculum values and pedagogies. In answering this three-part question, I aimed to contribute to knowledge regarding what pedagogies are needed to develop the kinds of knowers that are valued in English literary studies and what conditions enable such pedagogies to flourish. This knowledge will enable academics to assist students to gain epistemological access to the disciplinary practices of English literary studies that they determine to be worth retaining as valuable. I unpack how I went about answering each research question further in my methodology chapter (Chapter Three).

1.6 The University of South Africa

This case study focuses on an English literature curriculum offered by the UNISA Department of English Studies. UNISA is an open distance learning institution that enrols almost one-third of all South African students (CHE, 2023) and is the largest university on the African continent, with over 370 000 students (UNISA, 2023a). Case et al.'s (2018) findings indicate that UNISA plays a major role in supporting South African students who are unable to study full-time for various reasons. In addition, UNISA provides many students access to tertiary education who do not have access to traditional contact universities because of either financial constraints or academic entry requirements. According to UNISA's Open Distance eLearning Policy (UNISA, 2018, pp. 2-3), the university is committed to "responsible open admission" which "promotes equity of access and the provision of appropriate student support interventions aimed at bridging the gaps in students' academic and social readiness for higher education". UNISA provides various alternative admission routes for students who do not meet the normal admission requirements (UNISA, 2011). The university also indicates that it is committed to providing affordable quality education (UNISA, 2018). The 2023 Report of the Independent Assessor into the Affairs of UNISA (Mosia, 2023, p. 85) explains that UNISA's shift to a focus on distance education in 1946 has defined the University's identity as it is known today:

> This identity of UNISA has been its strongest and positive attraction that it is open, flexible and affordable thus serving the needs of the most disadvantaged communities. The University also boasts of being an institution that has given access to tertiary education to all people, irrespective of race or colour, particularly given South Africa's history of apartheid. Its rich history includes a diverse mix of notable and famous alumni.

UNISA (2023d) advertises that it reflects the demographics of South Africa in that more than 84.4% of UNISA students are African, 7% are white, 4.7% are coloured and 3.5% are Indian. According to UNISA's strategy statement (2023b, n.p.), UNISA's vision is "to

become *the* African university shaping futures in the service of humanity" (original emphasis). UNISA's (2023b, n.p.) mission statement includes an aim to "contribute to the knowledge and information society, advance development, nurture a critical citizenry and ensure global sustainability". Thus, the institution expresses a commitment not only to equipping students for the workforce but also to being a force for good in society. One of the university's values is "dignity in diversity", which it defines as striving "to promote humanness, anti-racism and self-worth in the context of cultural and intellectual differences for the attainment of equality" (UNISA, 2023b, n.p.). UNISA (2023c, n.p.) also highlights its initiatives of "[c]urricular change in the interests of asserting **Africa-centred knowledge systems** and research reforms" (original emphasis) that are aimed at "advancing transformation and the decolonisation of scholarship". This study is aligned with the mission and values of the institution as it works to open up disciplinary norms for critique and contributes to pedagogies that can grant students access to the values of a discipline.

1.7 A Brief History of English Literary Studies

This brief history of the discipline of English literary studies provides additional context for my study, particularly the organising principles underpinning the UNISA English literature curriculum, as will be discussed in Chapter Four. I have established above that education has both an epistemological and an ontological component, i.e. it involves both ways of knowing and ways of being. Thus, it is important to consider the ideological purposes that the discipline of English literary studies has historically served. I show below how much of the growth in the study of English literature in formal educational settings during the nineteenth century can be attributed to the pacifying ideological function it was believed it could perform in society. I show how in the latter part of the twentieth century, there were struggles over what should be considered literary analysis, and the discipline came to be put towards more progressive ideological ends such as questioning the existing economic system in society. It is important to keep this history in mind when we consider the ontological aspects of the discipline as it was practised at UNISA. I also argue in my conclusion that it is important to teach students about the history of the discipline and the problematic ideological ends that it served in order to encourage students to take a critical stance towards the discipline. Thus, this history serves a dual purpose of informing the study and providing information that can be included in the curriculum.

English literary studies has undergone many changes since it was first studied at the university level in Scotland during the 1760s under the label of 'Rhetoric and Belles Lettres' (Irvine, 2010). What we now generally refer to as 'literature' (poems, novels and plays) was studied in this subject alongside essays in politics and philosophy as well as historical and biographical writing (Irvine, 2010). At about the same time, this subject was taught in England at the new academies that had been set up by the 'Dissenters' (Protestants who were banned from English universities because they rejected the Church of England) (Irvine, 2010). However, England's only two universities at the time, Oxford and Cambridge,[3] resisted fully acknowledging the study of English literature as a university subject until the late nineteenth century (Baldick, 1983; Irvine, 2010), and a full degree in English literary studies was only on offer by the twentieth century (Irvine, 2010). By this time, English literature was a very different subject to what had been taught in Scotland and at the dissenting academies in the late eighteenth century; a canon of great English writers had been established and 'literature' was now understood to mean poems and plays (whether novels were classified as literature was still a contentious issue) (Irvine, 2010)

Baldick (1983) argues that three main developments during the nineteenth century eventually ensured that English literary studies had a permanent place in higher education. These were the requirements of the British Empire for colonial administrators who were well-versed in English literature; the inclusion of English literary studies in new adult education initiatives aimed at the middle and working classes; and the emphasis on English literary studies in women's education (Baldick, 1983). I explain below how in each of these three instances the study of English literature was employed as a means to exert socio-political control.

English literature formed a significant part of the India Civil Service examinations from 1853 onwards as it was thought that exposing the servants of British imperialism to English literature would provide a moralising influence and allow them to display the superiority of European culture to the colonial peoples (Baldick, 1983; Eagleton, 1996). English also appeared in the Cape Civil Service examinations in 1850 (Doherty, 1989). This was the central factor in the development of English literary studies as a discipline in South Africa (Doherty, 1989). By 1875, 17 different examinations tested an entrant's understanding of English literature, as the

[3] More universities in England were only founded in the early nineteenth century.

example of the East India Company was followed by most other government departments and many professions (Doherty, 1989). Baldick (1983, p. 70) explains that the requirements of the Civil Service examinations did not directly affect universities in England at first, but that "they were an important precedent, officially encouraging the study of English literature for the good of the empire". Furthermore, in India, teaching English literary studies to the colonised people came to be employed as a tool through which the British attempted to shore up their political power by circulating ideas about the superiority of British culture (Viswanathan, 1987). According to Ashcroft et al. (2002, p. 3),

> It can be argued that the study of English and the growth of Empire proceeded from a single ideological climate and that the development of the one is intrinsically bound up with the development of the other, both at the level of simple utility (as propaganda for instance) and at the unconscious level, where it leads to the naturalizing of constructed values (e.g. civilization, humanity, etc.) which, conversely, established 'savagery', 'native', 'primitive', as their antitheses and as the object of a reforming zeal.

Thus, the study of English literature was instrumental in creating an ideological hegemony in which British culture and values were seen as the ideal that all people should strive towards. From a discursive perspective, English literary studies upheld the ideal of the British gentleman as the model to which everyone else should aspire. It is important to be aware of such deeply problematic ideological purposes towards which the study of English literature was historically employed as a part of colonialism when we reflect on the underlying ways of knowing and being that are legitimated in the discipline as practised today.

In England itself, we see a similar exercise of socio-political control in how English literature came to be taught in new adult education initiatives such as Mechanics Institutes, Working Men's Colleges and extension lecturing. British educationists realised that greater provision would have to be made for technical and scientific instruction for the middle and working classes because of the increasing complexity of industry (Baldick, 1983). However, instruction in English literature was incorporated into the curriculum alongside the more technical subjects as it was felt that this would help to curb threats to social stability such as the Chartist movement that sought to extend the vote beyond those owning property (Baldick, 1983; Irvine, 2010). According to a study of English literature written in 1891,

> [The people] need political culture, instruction, that is to say, in what pertains to their relation to the State, to their duties as citizens; and they need also to be impressed sentimentally by having the presentation in legend and history of heroic and patriotic examples brought vividly and attractively before them. (Collins cited in Baldick, 1983, p. 64-65)

English literature was thus seen as a tool that could provide such political and cultural instruction. In addition, Eagleton (1996) explains that during this time English literature came to be taught to the middle and working classes as an ideological replacement for religion (which was losing its sway under the influence of scientific discovery and social change), providing a new affective foundation upon which to curb social unrest and preserve the status quo of an unequal social class system. Because teachers were needed who could teach English literature within the Mechanics' Institutes and other evening classes, courses came to be developed at the university level (Irvine, 2010).

Within these broader movements for adult education, the demand for women's education in particular – first through extension lectures and eventually through women's colleges – was an important influence in the setting up of schools of English at the long-standing universities of Oxford and Cambridge (Baldick, 1983). In the early years of these schools at Oxford and Cambridge, women made up the vast majority of students (Baldick, 1983). While women were excluded from scientific programmes when they started entering the university, English literature was seen as a suitable subject for them to study as "it did not seem to involve straying too far from the acceptable staple of artistic 'accomplishments' which made up the wealthier woman's training for the marriage market" (Baldick, 1983, p. 68). It was believed that an education in English literature could help edify women in their traditional social roles and thus forestall a more profound change in women's traditional positions (Baldick, 1983). In addition, since women possessed more leisure time than men within the mercantile community, it was believed that the process of "softening and humanizing the middle classes through literary culture would be led by women" (Baldick, 1983, p. 69). Thus, the formal study of English literature was bound up with ideological control both in the colonies and in England.

England's victory over Germany in the First World War (1914–1918) led to an upsurge in nationalist pride which helped English literary studies gain further traction as a university discipline (Eagleton, 1996). This was also a time during which the English ruling class turned to literature in search of spiritual solutions after their sense of identity had been shaken by the horrors of the war (Eagleton, 1996). However, the architects of the new subject of English at Cambridge: F.R. Leavis, Q.D. Leavis (née Roth) and I.A. Richards, belonged to the lower middle class who were entering traditional universities for the first time (Eagleton, 1996). These scholars left a lasting impression on the discipline of English literary studies. They transformed English literary studies from a relatively frivolous subject into a rigorous

discipline that came to be seen as "not only a subject worth studying, but the supremely civilizing pursuit, the spiritual essence of the social formation" (Eagleton, 1996, p. 27). Studying English literature now required extensive training in an approach referred to as 'practical criticism' or 'close reading', one that remains significant to the discipline of English literary studies to this day (Irvine, 2010). Doherty (1989) shows that the practical criticism movement had a substantial influence on South African universities from the 1930s onwards.

F.R. Leavis, Q.D. Leavis and I.A. Richards were concerned about what they saw as the decay of English society due to industrial capitalism; they felt that educating a select group of people in rigorous methods of literary analysis would help preserve a more organic form of English culture (Eagleton, 1996). Thus, although the pioneers of the practical criticism movement belonged to the lower middle class, the aim of the movement was of an elitist nature (Irvine, 2010). Interestingly, although the practical critics were critical of a mechanised, commercial society, the kind of literary criticism that they championed was not concerned with the socio-cultural contexts in which texts were produced (Eagleton, 1996). Instead, it was felt that one could judge a text's literary 'greatness' by paying close attention to the linguistic details that made up the whole of a poem or piece of prose while isolating the text from its cultural and historical contexts (Eagleton, 1996). The language of commercial society was felt to be "abstract and anaemic", having lost touch with the sensuousness of lived experience (Eagleton, 1996, p. 32). On the other hand, true English literature was seen as "verbally rich, complex, sensuous and particular" (Eagleton, 1996, p. 32). It was felt that true English literature embodied a health and vitality that had been lost to industrialised society and that reading this literature could help one to "regain vital touch with the roots of one's own being" (Eagleton, 1996, p. 32).

The end of the Second World War saw a massive expansion in higher education worldwide and the formation of a more diverse student body (Klemenčič, 2019). Students and teachers were entering academia who came "from backgrounds which sometimes put them at odds with its governing consensus" (Eagleton, 1996, p. 191). Klemenčič (2019, n.p.) explains that:

> The rapid expansion in student participation in higher education in [the] postwar period was disruptive to the existing higher education institutions and the existing social systems, not the least since this expansion in many parts of the worlds coincided with rapid urbanization, industrialization, and growing consumerism (Weiss et al. 2012) and elsewhere with ending of the colonial and early postcolonial phase. Students entering higher education institutions from modest backgrounds faced striking alienation in higher education institutions which were originally created to serve elites. Not only did the curricula often ignore social problems and social inequalities that many of the students

> experienced firsthand and cared about, but also … with the rapidly increasing student body, it was difficult to upkeep the quality of higher education provision (Weiss et al. 2012). The radicalization of student body and the worldwide spread of student protests in the 1960s and 1970s were in many ways a reflection of clash of values between the students and the academic spaces they entered and student dissatisfaction over quality.

It was during this time of student protests that another significant shift occurred in the nature of English literary studies, which continues to impact the discipline to this day. One can think of this shift in terms of a rejection of two norms that were shared by Richards and the Leavises: a lack of interest in the socio-historical contexts of literary texts and an emphasis on the internal coherence of literary texts and genres (Irvine, 2010). The historical, political and economic contexts in which texts were produced came to be seen as central by approaches informed by the work of scholars such as Karl Marx (Irvine, 2010). Furthermore, the idea that a text could achieve internal coherence was undercut by post-structuralist approaches informed by thinkers such as Jaques Derrida (Irvine, 2010). The outbreak of the student protests in the 1960s coincided with the first emergence of literary theory, and the first works of Derrida appeared "just as French students were gearing themselves up for a confrontation with state power" (Eagleton, 1996, p. 191). According to Eagleton (1996, p. 192),

> Theory of this early seventies kind - Marxist, feminist, structuralist - was of a totalizing bent, concerned to put a whole form of political life into question in the name of some desirable alternative. It went all the way down, and thus belonged in its intellectual verve and daring with the insurgent political radicalisms of the day. It was, to adapt a phrase of Louis Althusser's, political struggle at the level of theory; and its ambitiousness was reflected in the fact that what was very soon at stake was not simply different ways of dissecting literature, but the whole definition and constitution of the field of study.

Furthermore, Mukherjee and Quayson (2023) explain that the 'canon wars' that broke out in the 1980s were prompted by theoretical perspectives that

> sought to decenter long-held reading practices in general and to show that these were complicit with forms of hegemony and oppression in the world at large. Marxism, deconstruction, and psychoanalysis were the most coherent of such models adduced for decentering existing reading practices, and they in their turn inspired models of interpretation such as postcolonialism, feminism, disability studies, and critical race studies, among various others. (Mukherjee & Quayson, 2023, p. 9).

In terms of the English literature curriculum, "[s]teady criticisms … from different interest groups since the late 1960s, rising in intensity in the 1980s, have led to progressive changes to the curriculum in many parts of the world" (Quayson, 2023, p. 258). These changes have included adding writers from much more varied socio-cultural contexts to the curriculum (Quayson, 2023). However, these additions have not necessarily resulted in fundamental

changes to the curriculum. Quayson (2023, p. 258) explains that when students at Euro-American universities are exposed to literatures from the postcolonial and non-White world, these texts are sometimes taught in a sub-literary way in which the writers are merely viewed as "ethnic sociologists and native informants". In addition, in most Euro-American English departments, the curriculum is structured in such a way that postcolonial and world literature are considered electives rather than core requirements, so students can complete their degree in English literature without being acquainted with these literatures (Quayson, 2023).

Doherty (1989) describes a similar phenomenon in South African departments of English Studies in the 1970s, where South African literature was taught in separate and sometimes optional courses. This separation prevented conflicts over the ideology of literature from erupting (Doherty, 1989). Thus, English departments could avoid having to radically rethink the ways in which they taught traditional English literature. It is significant to note that as recently as 2015, at the height of the #Rhodes Must Fall movement, UCT (where this movement started) had nothing close to a transformed curriculum, and that "[u]p until 2018, the pace of change had been so slow that one could hardly claim that a student would graduate in the department of English with a sound grasp of African literature" (Ogude, 2023, p. 494). According to Ogude (2023, p. 496), in South Africa,

> most departments of English remain highly schizophrenic in their content and choice of texts. In their anxiety to placate the authorities and to signal a specific gesture toward curriculum diversity, they display contradictory literary poles without being mindful of coherence.

It is with these critiques in mind that I now turn to a discussion of the UNISA English literature curriculum as it stood in 2021 when data was collected for this study.

1.8 English Literary Studies in the UNISA Department of English Studies

The UNISA English major consisted of ten modules across three years of study. However, as I explain in more detail in Chapter Three, the methodology chapter, because this study was interested specifically in the study of English literature, it focused only on the six modules that formed part of the UNISA English major that contained a literature component. To complete the literature section of the curriculum, students had to take a module called: 'ENG 1501: Foundations in English Literary Studies' at the first-year level. At the second-year level, students had to take one literature module, 'ENG2603: Colonial and Postcolonial African Literatures', and one 'hybrid module' (which had a language and a literature component),

'ENG2602: Genres in Literature and Language: Theory, Style and Poetics'. At the third-year level, students had to take two literature modules: 'ENG3704: Shakespeare's Dramatic Art: Explorations' and 'ENG3705: Modern and Postmodern Literature in English'. They also had to take one hybrid module called: 'ENG3703: Theoretical Approaches to English Language and Literature'. I provide an outline of the UNISA undergraduate English literature curriculum in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: UNISA undergraduate English literature curriculum

Year level	**Module code and name**	**Prescribed texts for literature component in 2021**
First year	ENG1501: Foundations in English Literary Studies	Selected South African poetry Selected South African short stories *Small Things* – a novel by Nthikeng Mohlele
Second year	ENG2602: Genres in Literature and Language: Theory, Style and Poetics	Selected poetry Selected extracts from poetry and prose
Second year	ENG2603: Colonial and Postcolonial African Literatures	A selection from *The New Century of South African Poetry* by Michael Chapman *A Raisin in the Sun* – a play by Lorraine Hansberry *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* – a novel by Phaswane Mpe *Nervous Conditions* – a novel by Tsitsi Dangarembga
Third year	ENG3703: Theoretical Approaches to English Language and Literature	Selected extracts from English literature
Third year	ENG3704: Shakespeare's Dramatic Art: Explorations	*Macbeth* – a play by William Shakespeare *Hamlet* – a play by William Shakespeare *Twelfth Night* – a play by William Shakespeare *The Winter's Tale* – a play by William Shakespeare
Third year	ENG3705: Modern and Postmodern Literature in English	*The Waste Land* – a poem by T.S. Eliot *Waiting for the Barbarians* – a novel by J.M. Coetzee

		Dangerous Love – a novel by Ben Okri *The Bloody Chamber* – a collection of short stories by Angela Carter

By just looking at the names of these modules, one can see some of the 'schizophrenia' present in the curriculum that Ogude referred to (see Section 1.6). There seems to be a lack of coherence in that there is only one module explicitly devoted to African literature while there is an entire module devoted to studying Shakespeare. Upon further investigation, it should be noted that ENG1501 focuses on the basics of literary analysis using poems, short stories and a novel, all by South African authors. ENG2602 and ENG3703 did not have set prescribed texts but rather made use of texts and extracts that could be changed out every year. However, it is noteworthy that South African literature featured strongly in the texts that were chosen as the basis for assignment questions in these modules. ENG2603 focused on a South African poetry anthology, a novel by a South African author, a novel by a Zimbabwean author, and a play by an African American author. ENG3705 focused on a canonical poem by a British/American author, a popular collection of short stories by a British author, a novel by a South African author, and a novel by a Nigerian British author. ENG3704 focused exclusively on four Shakespearean plays. None of the modules were electives, so students would exit the curriculum having completed all of these modules. Thus, overall, I found the curriculum content provided a strong grounding in South African literature. Nevertheless, a module devoted exclusively to Shakespeare can be interpreted as attributing a higher level of prestige to traditional British literature in the curriculum, and it struck me as jarring compared to how the other modules were designed, detracting from curriculum coherence. It should, however, be noted that there were plans at the time to change this module to a module with a broad focus on the drama genre which would include African drama.

While the content of the curriculum under study reveals something about the thinking that went into the curriculum design, it does not tell us much in terms of the knowledge practices (the ways of knowing and being) that were valued in the curriculum. My findings chapters (Chapters Four and Five) are concerned with uncovering the underlying values of the curriculum, using tools provided by LCT. I also draw on the literature on critical pedagogies and the neoliberal university as these become relevant in my findings chapters.

1.9 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is made up of six chapters. Chapter One introduced the study and provided the contextual framework for the study. Chapter Two provides the conceptual and theoretical frameworks for the study. I review the literature on academic literacies to show which academic literacies concepts underpinned the study. I also introduce LCT, the theoretical framework for the study. I unpack the concepts from the LCT dimension of Specialisation that the study uses to make explicit what values underpin the curriculum. Chapter Three outlines the methodology of the study. It discusses the data that was collected and explains how I operationalised my theoretical framework of LCT to answer my research questions.

Chapters Four and Five discuss the findings that emerged from my data analysis. Chapter Four unpacks the underpinning values of the UNISA English literature curriculum and discusses the pedagogies that are necessary to develop the kinds of knowers that were found to be valued in the curriculum. I show that a specific disposition or way of looking at the literary text and the world beyond it was valued and that this disposition needs to be developed through prolonged immersion in the discipline. I also show that the curriculum valued both aesthetic and socio-critical orientations towards the literary text. I argue that it is useful to draw on critical pedagogies literature to understand what kinds of pedagogies are needed to develop a socio-critically oriented disposition. Chapter Five discusses misalignments in the curriculum between, on the one hand, the ideals expressed by academics and found in the course outcomes and, on the other hand, the pedagogies that were actually employed in the curriculum. This chapter also considers what the data indicates regarding the factors that contributed to misalignments between the intended and enacted curriculum. In addition, I discuss misalignments between the intended curriculum and student dispositions.

My concluding chapter (Chapter Six) considers the implications of the findings of the study for teaching literary studies and other Humanities disciplines with similar underpinning values. It also provides some reflections on how the curriculum might be made more inclusive from a social justice perspective.

CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I review the literature on academic literacies in order to show how an understanding of academic literacies as varied sets of socially embedded practices underpins the study. An 'academic literacies' understanding of literacy practices forms the conceptual framework of the thesis. It provides key concepts that served to direct my thinking about the research problem, guiding my understanding of what it was that I was trying to make explicit in the curriculum. I then move on to discussing critical realism which serves as an underlabourer or meta-theory underpinning my theoretical framework. Lastly, I discuss the concepts from LCT that this study draws on for its theoretical framework. LCT provided me with theoretical lenses that I used to analyse my data.

2.2 Academic Literacies

South Africa has a reading crisis: 81% of learners aged 10 years old are unable to read for meaning (Durbin, 2023; Fraser, 2023; Kell et al., 2023). Thus, it is not unexpected that a common explanation for high failure rates in many a higher education space is a lack of language competence. It is also important to note that, while the language of teaching and learning at UNISA (and most other universities in South Africa) is English, the vast majority of students are not first language English speakers. For these reasons, it would seem sensible that generic English language courses instructing students in vocabulary and grammar would solve many of the difficulties that students might experience with university courses in English literary studies. However, Boughey and McKenna (2021: 62) caution that, while a basic competence in the language of instruction is important, "language, if understood as grammar and vocabulary in the medium of instruction, is a very small part of the acquisition of language as integral to academic practice". As Clark and Ivanič (1997: 239) explain, "conventional spelling, punctuation and grammar are nothing more than surface, mechanical aspects of writing, and to emphasise these is to neglect the teaching of writing as meaning-making, and as a means of social action".

This study proceeds from a ‘new literacy studies’ or ‘academic literacies’ perspective of literacy, which understands reading and writing as socially embedded practices and acknowledges that different contexts value different ways of interacting with written texts (Boughey & McKenna, 2016: 3; Lea & Street, 1998). A new literacy studies approach follows what Street (1995) terms an ‘ideological model’ of literacy rather than the dominant ‘autonomous model’. While an autonomous model of literacy views reading and writing practices as a distinct set of skills and focuses on the technical, surface aspects related to the decoding and encoding of scripts, the ideological model recognises that there is a lot more involved in reading and writing, such as specific understandings about what constitutes knowledge, what constitutes truth and what can be considered appropriate sources of authority (Boughey, 2002; Street, 1995).

Academic literacies research has shown that different social contexts value different kinds of literacy practices (Lea & Street, 1998). A seminal text by Heath (1982, p. 49) explains that “ways of taking from books are as much a part of learned behavior as are ways of eating, sitting, playing games, and building house”. For example, the way in which a religious community engages with their sacred text(s) might be very different from how an English literature student is required to engage with literary texts. It is therefore possible to have a good working vocabulary in English and an understanding of the rules of spelling, grammar and punctuation while still making language choices that are inappropriate for the context (Boughey & McKenna, 2021).

Writing in ways that are legitimated (or considered valid) in a specific context – such as a specific academic discipline – involves more than just having knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of a language: it involves access to ways of constructing meaning that are considered appropriate within that context (Homateni Julius et al., 2023; Lea & Street, 1998). Academic disciplines differ in their expectations of how one should be reading and writing. For example, writing a successful laboratory report in Chemistry, an essay in political science or a case brief in Law requires different ways of using language that stem from different kinds of disciplinary knowledge, values and norms (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). Because academic disciplines have their own peculiar ways of constructing meaning, ‘academic literacies’ is referred to in the plural form to emphasise that there is no singular kind of literacy that is valued in all academic spaces (Boughey & McKenna, 2016).

Since taking on a set of disciplinary literacy practices involves much more than proficiency in the vocabulary and grammar of the language of instruction, it follows that changing the language of instruction to a student's home language will not automatically give that student access to disciplinary-legitimated ways of reading and writing (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). This is not to argue against the drive to make higher education more inclusive in South Africa by embracing multilingualism (DHET, 2020). As O'Shea et al. (2019, p. 7) point out, "students undertaking their studies in a language that is not their home language have an additional burden to bear in their moves towards epistemological access". However, it is important to note that changing the language of instruction and/or providing tutorials in students' home languages will not in itself be enough to grant students epistemological access to the peculiar ways in which knowledge is created and legitimated in specific disciplines. In attempting to provide students with access to a specific academic discipline, it is important to understand what specific kinds of literacy practices are valued in that discipline. This is why this study is concerned with investigating the academic literacy practices that are particular to the discipline of English literary studies.

The ways in which a field or discipline is organised, what counts as knowledge, how that knowledge is structured and how this leads to particular literacy practices can collectively be understood to constitute a Discourse. Gee's ideas concerning 'Discourses' have been influential in new literacy studies (Ellery, 2016). Gee (2008, p. 155) explains that Discourses (with a capital *D*) are:

> composed of distinctive ways of speaking/listening and often, too, writing/reading *coupled* with distinctive ways of acting, interacting valuing, feeling, dressing, thinking, believing, with other people and with various objects, tools, and technologies, so as to enact specific socially recognizable identities engaged in specific socially recognized activities. (original emphasis)

It, therefore, follows that taking on a set of disciplinary literacy practices involves taking on a certain identity: becoming part of a group that values specific kinds of knowledge and ways of knowing, and thus understands the world in specific ways.

Gee (2008) argues that people acquire a 'primary Discourse' as a result of the home and community they are born into. This gives us "our initial and often enduring sense of self" and sets the foundations for our culturally specific ways of using language (Gee, 2008: 156). We can acquire many other Discourses – such as school-based and university-based discourses – later in life – these constitute 'secondary Discourses' (Gee, 2008). All secondary Discourses

involve ways of using language and ways of knowing and being that go beyond our primary Discourses, no matter what social group we belong to (Gee, 2008). However, the extent to which a secondary Discourse is compatible with one's primary Discourse will influence the ease with which one acquires the secondary Discourse (Gee, 2008).

An academic literacies approach to literacy thus understands that taking on a specific set of literacy practices involves social and ideological elements that have implications for identity. There could be deep affective and ideological conflicts involved in switching to and using a specific linguistic repertoire in a particular setting and a student's personal identity may be challenged by the forms of writing required in different disciplines (Lea & Street, 1998). Boughey and McKenna (2021) provide a good example of how a student's ways of interacting with texts may be challenged in the higher education space. They explain that part of an academic identity involves questioning the information that we read or hear and understanding that knowledge is always open to amendment in the light of new evidence. However, a student may come from a background in which they have been encouraged to see the printed text as 'truth', and they may need to make an identity shift in order to come to see their role as a writer not merely as someone who repeats information that has been written down elsewhere but rather as someone who makes their own knowledge claims about what they believe to be true based on a critical reading of other texts. The identity shifts required of a student could be challenging on a personal level and could leave them questioning both who they are and the ways they have been brought up to make sense of the world (Boughey & McKenna, 2021).

It is important to understand that Discourses are related to social power (Gee, 2008). Gee (2008, p. 162) explains that "[c]ontrol over certain Discourses can lead to the acquisition of social goods (money, power, status) in a society". He refers to the Discourses that allow us to acquire social goods as 'dominant Discourses'. Thus, the secondary Discourses used in schools, the business world, government and higher education institutions can be considered dominant Discourses.

Dominant Discourses empower social groups that have the least conflicts between their other Discourses and the dominant Discourses (Gee, 2008). People who belong to the middle class are inclined to have home discourses that are more aligned with these dominant Discourses than people from the working class (Boughey & McKenna, 2016). Research suggests that children from middle-class homes tend to be brought up with literacy practices that are more

aligned with those valued in schools (see, for example, Armstrong & Boughey, 2020; Gee, 2008; Heath, 1982). Heath (1982, p. 50) explains:

> As school-oriented parents and their children interact in the pre-school years, adults give their children, through modeling and specific instruction, ways of taking from books which seem natural in school and in numerous institutional settings such as banks, post offices, businesses, or government offices.

This alignment between middle-class literacy practices and dominant Discourses seems to continue into the higher education sphere. There is a strong link between socioeconomic background and higher education success (Case et al., 2018; Roksa et al., 2022). Case et al. (2018) explain that sociology of education research has provided evidence over decades and across contexts of the link between social class and educational outcomes. There is also research that has looked at how non-traditional[4] students found the literacy practices valued at university to be alienating and in conflict with their identities (see, for example, McKenna, 2004; O'Shea et al., 2019). Thus, higher education tends to reproduce the social inequalities that are prevalent in society more broadly, and universities have to be self-reflexive and proactive if they aim to become socially inclusive spaces that contribute to social justice (Roksa et al., 2022).

A major challenge when it comes to discipline-specific academic literacies is that these practices tend to be acquired tacitly by being immersed in a community of practice rather than through overt instruction (Gee, 2008; Jacobs, 2007). Maton (2016, p. 3) explains that what Bourdieu refers to as the "rules of the game" – the "bases of achievement underlying social fields of practice" – are often unwritten and unspoken. This means that 'disciplinary insiders' often have an implicit understanding of the ways of knowing and being that are valued in their disciplines, but they tend to be unable to articulate these practices explicitly (Jacobs, 2007). For example, Lea and Street's (1998) research has shown how assessors in different higher education disciplines used the same generic terms like 'structure' and 'argument' to comment on student writing. However, these terms meant different things in different disciplinary contexts. It appeared that the assessors did not have access to a language which could express more explicitly what counted as knowledge in their disciplines.

[4] 'Traditional students' in South Africa refers to the white, middle-class students who have traditionally occupied and benefited from the most well-resourced higher education spaces.

The normalised nature of academic literacy practices keeps them opaque and obscure (Boughey & McKenna, 2021) and leads to a situation in which the values underpinning our curricula are rarely made overt to students (McKenna, 2012). This means that middle-class students, whose other Discourses tend to be more aligned to those valued in the academy, will have a better chance of picking up on the implicit 'rules of the game', while working-class students are more likely to find these practices mysterious and alienating. In this way, social inequalities are reproduced in the higher education space.

Making disciplinary literacy practices more explicit would go some way towards allowing more students access to some of the dominant Discourses in society that can act as gatekeepers to social power. This is not to say that making these practices overt will automatically enable students to embody the disciplinary practices. However, it could serve to make the practices seem less mysterious and alienating to students whose prior Discourses do not resonate with the disciplinary practices, or at the very least help students to understand what it is that they find alienating.

Something else that should be kept in mind is that most academics are appointed because of their disciplinary knowledge and not because of their expertise in teaching. Many academics have no formal training in the area of teaching. They often begin to teach by mimicking the ways in which they themselves were taught and make adjustments to their teaching through a process of trial and error. Having more explicit knowledge of the underpinning values of their disciplines would help academics to make more informed decisions about how to scaffold students' learning experiences.

There is another aspect to the call for making literacy practices overt as a social justice issue. The unstated nature of academic practices serves to shield these ways of knowing and being from critique, making it difficult to pinpoint ways in which they might discriminate against specific social groups (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). Thus, finding ways to make the values underpinning academic practices explicit is an issue of social justice. Making disciplinary practices explicit can open up the underpinning values of disciplines to scrutiny and critique from a social justice perspective. It would allow both students and academics to be more critical of the Discourses that they are being asked to take on or are asking their students to take on, respectively. As McKenna (2012, p. 58) contends:

> we need to be more reflexive about our disciplinary norms and our expectations as to who our students should be in the process of becoming. We already have these expectations but

> our lack of reflexivity may mean they are opaque to ourselves and we are unwitting in our demands that students acquire these ways.

The question then becomes: How do we study these tacit literacy practices in order to make their underlying values explicit? Jacobs (2007) has suggested that disciplinary experts working alongside language lecturers can be beneficial in this regard. Her research showed that, because of their outsider status, language lecturers who worked alongside disciplinary experts were in a good position to spot the peculiarities of discipline-specific literacy practices. The language lecturers could therefore help disciplinary insiders to turn their tacit knowledge of their discipline's literacy practices into more explicit knowledge which they could then draw on to improve their teaching (Jacobs, 2007). Jacobs (2007) offers one way in which we could go about making disciplinary practices more explicit. However, this requires institutional structures and cultures that enable such collaborative work. It also assumes that the language lecturer is familiar with an ideological understanding of academic literacies and that they do not themselves subscribe to the autonomous model. Unfortunately, research suggests that the autonomous model tends to dominate understandings of literacy in academic literacies courses at university (Homateni Julius et al., 2023). Furthermore, Jacobs' (2007) method does not offer us a language in which to discuss and make explicit the differences between different sets of literacy practices.

Academic literacies research helps us understand that academic literacies are "sociohistorically and socioculturally informed practices, shaped by particular sets of values and norms influenced by disciplinary and broader academic contexts within the university" (Clarence, Sherran & McKenna, 2017, p. 39). However, Clarence and McKenna (2017) have argued that academic literacies practitioners can benefit from more rigorous conceptual and analytical tools that will allow them to 'get at' the organising principles or 'rules of the game' that underlie different academic disciplines. This would allow us to 'see' more clearly what we are dealing with in terms of disciplinary expectations so that we can critique these practices where needed and teach these practices to students more overtly. Clarence and McKenna (2017) suggest that LCT can be of assistance in this regard. This is because LCT offers concepts that can be used to reveal different aspects of the organising principles that underpin social practices (Maton, 2016). I will soon turn to a discussion of how this thesis made use of LCT in order to make the organising principles underpinning English literary studies visible. However, I first discuss how the thesis uses critical realism as a theoretical underlabourer.

2.3 Critical Realism

This study is underpinned by a critical realist understanding of the world. Critical realism is most strongly associated with Roy Bhaskar. It posits that a real world that is independent of our perceptions exists while also acknowledging that our knowledge of that world is coloured by our social positioning and personal subjectivity; thus, a completely objective account of the world is not possible (Ellery, 2016; Maxwell, 2012). According to critical realism, the world consists of three spheres: the 'real', the 'actual' and the 'empirical' (Danermark et al., 2019). The 'real' refers to underlying 'generative mechanisms' that give rise to specific events in the world, while the 'actual' refers to actual events that take place as a result of these generative mechanisms (Danermark et al., 2019; Ellery, 2016). The 'empirical' relates to our observations and experiences of these events, which are filtered through our personal subjectivity (Ellery, 2016). For example, a patriarchal social structure could be considered a generative mechanism which gives rise to actual events of unequal treatment of women. However, how (or whether) these instances of unequal treatment are observed and how they are interpreted at an empirical level could vary widely depending on the subjectivity of the observer.

The data generated for this study exists at the levels of the actual and empirical. The documents that I analysed (curriculum documents and study material) are situated at the level of the actual as they are manifestations of 'real-world events', and there are generative mechanisms that will have influenced the forms that they take. Without a theory that allowed me to delve more deeply, my interpretation of these documents would have been limited to the level of the empirical. Data collected through interviews with UNISA staff and students reflect other people's experiences and observations of the world, so this data is situated at the empirical level. This data was then further interpreted by me, the researcher, meaning that the 'actual' was filtered through two layers of subjectivity. However, LCT was used as a theoretical framework to excavate beneath what was immediately observable and to get at some of the 'organising principles' (Maton, 2014) that underpin social practices (in this case, the practices encompassing the English literature curriculum). This enabled me to ensure that I was not presenting a purely relativist account of my data.

There is, of course, a complex interplay of a myriad of mechanisms that bring about specific social events, and attempting to identify all of these would be an inexhaustible task. However, LCT provides tools to probe some key aspects of what is legitimated in a set of social practices such as an academic curriculum.

2.4 Introducing Legitimation Code Theory

Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) provides a conceptual and analytical framework that can be used to reveal some of the organising principles underpinning social practices. Thus, it can be used to uncover what academic literacies research has shown us to be the often-implicit ways of engaging that underpin practices in different academic disciplines. In this study, the undergraduate English literature curriculum at UNISA was analysed using LCT tools in order to shed light on the basis for legitimacy within the curriculum.

LCT is informed by a realist understanding of knowledge, which sees knowledge as socially constructed but also 'real', in the sense that knowledge possesses "properties, powers and tendencies that have effects" (Maton, 2014, pp. 9–10). Thus, knowledge is understood as something that is constructed by actors and is subject to power relations. In other words, there is an acknowledgement that groups with the most social power tend to dominate what can be considered knowledge in a specific field. However, knowledge is also seen as something which has internal properties that give rise to certain effects, which may be much more far-reaching than the intentions of the authors (Maton, 2014). Maton (2014, p. 13) explains that the internal structures of the body of knowledge within a specific field (for example, the discipline of English literary studies) help shape "the modes of engagement" (the ways of reading, writing, thinking and acting that are considered appropriate) within that field. Legitimation Code Theory provides concepts that can "help excavate the underlying principles generating forms of knowledge" (Maton, 2009, p. 46). I elaborate on how knowledge is underpinned by organising principles and the idea that it possesses internal structures in more detail in the section on Specialisation below.

Legitimation Code Theory currently has four active dimensions: Specialisation, Semantics and Autonomy, and Temporality (Martin et al., 2020a).[5] Each dimension explores a different set of the organising principles underlying social practices (Maton, 2014). While all of the dimensions are simultaneously present in any social practice, Maton (2014) explains that it is only necessary to use as many of the dimensions in a study as the research problem demands. He provides different sets of concepts that can be used to analyse the organising principles that

[5] However, Maton (2014) explains that it is likely that the dimensions of organising principles underpinning social practices are analytically inexhaustible given the complexity and variety of social fields.

underpin each specific dimension (Maton, 2014). In this study, the undergraduate English literature curriculum at UNISA is analysed using the dimension of Specialisation as this dimension is best suited for answering my research questions. This is because Specialisation can be used to investigate the kinds of knowledge and knowers that are valued within specific practices.

2.5 Specialisation

Maton (2014, p. 29) introduces Specialisation by explaining that social practices are always "about or orientated towards something and by someone". Thus, one can distinguish analytically between 'epistemic relations' between practices and the object or focus they are oriented towards and 'social relations' between practices and their author(s) or actor(s) (Maton, 2014). Epistemic relations (ER) govern *what* can be considered legitimate knowledge in a specific field, and social relations govern *who* can be considered a legitimate knower (Maton, 2014).

Different fields place different levels of restriction around what objects their practices can be oriented towards and who can be considered a legitimate practitioner in the field. This determines the strengths of epistemic and social relations. For example, where there is weaker regulation of *what* can be legitimately studied in an academic discipline and less circumscription of *how* it should be studied, we are dealing with weaker epistemic relations: ER– (Maton, 2014). Thus, a discipline that has weaker epistemic relations will allow more flexibility in terms of what objects can be studied within the discipline and what methods can be used to study these objects. Inversely, stronger parameters around *what* can be studied in a discipline and/or *how* this should be studied means that the discipline has stronger epistemic relations: ER+.

Similarly, where there is stronger regulation of who can claim knowledge within a discipline and/or more requirements regarding the specific attributes or disposition that the person needs to have, we are dealing with stronger social relations: SR+ (Maton, 2014). Thus, a discipline that is classified as having stronger social relations will place more emphasis on the kind of person that you need to be and/or the attributes or disposition that you need to have in order to be considered a legitimate knower in the discipline. Fewer stipulations in these areas mean weaker social relations: SR–.

2.5.1 Specialisation Codes

Epistemic relations and social relations are always present in every practice, and they work as independent organising principles that can be analysed separately. However, they can also be brought into relation with one another through specialisation codes and the specialisation plane. Because the relative strengths of epistemic relations and social relations can vary independently, they create four main specialisation codes (Maton, 2014). These specialisation codes serve to reveal one aspect of the 'rules of the game', or basis for legitimacy, that underlie different social practices (Wilmot, 2019). The specialisation codes are represented visually on a Cartesian plane in Figure 2.1 below.

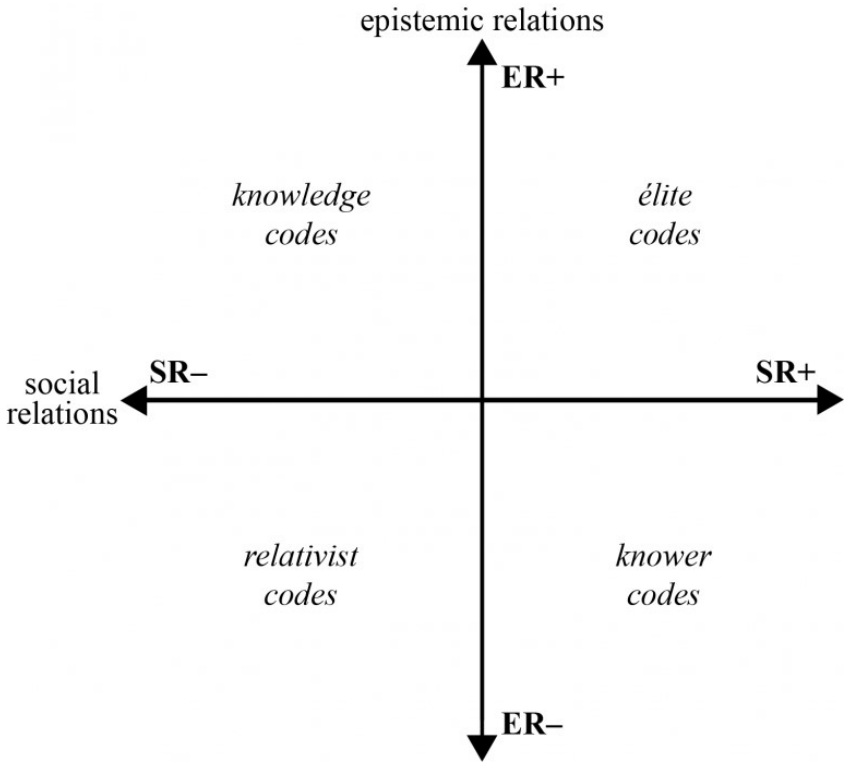


Figure 1.1: The specialisation plane (Maton, 2014, p. 30)

Maton and Chen (2020, pp. 38–39) describe the four principal specialisation codes as follows:

> *knowledge codes* (ER+, SR−), where possession of specialized knowledge, principles or procedures concerning specific objects of study is emphasized as the basis of achievement, and the attributes of actors are downplayed;
>
> *knower codes* (ER−, SR+), where specialized knowledge and objects are downplayed and the attributes of actors are emphasized as measures of achievement, whether these are viewed as born (e.g. 'natural talent'), cultivated (e.g. 'taste') or social (e.g. feminist standpoint theory);

> *élite codes* (ER+, SR+), where legitimacy is based on both possessing specialist knowledge and being the right kind of knower; and
>
> *relativist codes* (ER−, SR−), where legitimacy is determined by neither specialist knowledge nor knower attributes – 'anything goes'.

The specialisation code of an academic discipline reveals something about the underlying values of that discipline: it reveals one set of organising principles upon which the discipline is based. However, it should be noted that the quadrants of these four main specialisation codes allow for any number of positions within them. Thus, while two practices might fall within the same quadrant or same specialisation code, they could still vary quite significantly in terms of the strengths of their epistemic and social relations.

Maton and Chen (2020, p. 39) make an important point regarding legitimation codes when they explain that:

> Not everyone may recognize and/or be able to realize what is required [in a specific field], there may be more than one code present, and there are likely to be struggles among actors over which code is dominant. One can thus describe degrees of *code clash* and *code match*, such as between: learners' dispositions and pedagogic practices; […] different approaches within an intellectual field; curriculum and pedagogy of a subject area; and many others.

Martin et al. (2020a) also explain that the specialisation plane can be used to plot changes in fields over time as relations are strengthened or weakened (ER↑/↓, SR↑/↓). "This enables a more dynamic analysis of code shift (when the dominant code changes – movement between quadrants of the plane) and code drift (changes within a code – movement within a quadrant)" (Martin et al., 2020a, p. 21).

As I explain in more detail in the methodology chapter, Specialisation was used in this study to investigate what kinds of knowledge and knowers were valued in the UNISA English literature curriculum and to explore whether this changed as students progressed through the curriculum. It was also used to look at whether or not there was alignment between disciplinary expectations and the pedagogies that were employed to teach the curriculum (code alignments or code misalignments) and to consider whether or not there was alignment between disciplinary expectations and student dispositions (code alignments or code misalignments). As I explained earlier, disciplinary insiders tend to have an implicit understanding of the ways of knowing and being that are valued in their disciplines and are often unable to articulate these practices explicitly. In revealing the specialisation code(s) of the UNISA English literature curriculum, this study helps to make the basis for success more explicit. Through investigating

the alignment between curriculum values and pedagogical practices, I also contribute knowledge that will help to develop pedagogies aimed at enabling epistemological and ontological access to the discipline.

2.5.2 Knowledge–knower structures

It is useful to understand that the LCT dimension of Specialisation builds on Bernstein's concepts of hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures. Martin et al. (2020a) explain that Bernstein distinguished between hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures within academic discourses. I draw on these two concepts in Chapter Four of this thesis when I start coding the discipline of English literary studies as practised at UNISA. Bernstein (cited in Martin et al., 2020a, p. 11) conceived of a hierarchical knowledge structure as "a coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure, hierarchically organized" which "attempts to create very general propositions and theories, which integrate knowledge at lower levels, and in this way shows underlying uniformities across an expanding range of apparently different phenomena". Bernstein used a triangle to symbolise this kind of knowledge structure, explaining that the motivation within a field with a hierarchical knowledge structure is to incorporate as many phenomena as possible (the base of the triangle) within a powerful proposition or theory (the apex of the triangle) (Martin et al., 2020a).

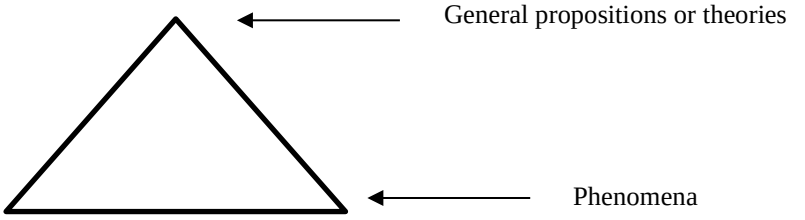


Figure 2.2: Hierarchical knowledge structure

An example of such an attempt can be seen in the search for a Grand Unified Theory in physics that both embraces and extends the existing insights of relativity theory and quantum mechanics (Martin et al., 2020a).

In contrast, a horizontal knowledge structure can be understood as "a series of specialized languages" each "with specialized modes of interrogation and criteria for the construction and circulation of texts" (Bernstein cited in Martin et al., 2020a, p. 11). This segmented kind of knowledge structure can be visualised as a horizontal series of strongly bounded specialised languages (L1, L2, etc.) (Martin et al., 2020a; Maton, 2014).

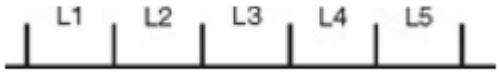


Figure 2.3: Horizontal knowledge structure (Maton, 2014, p. 68)

An example of this can be found in alternative readings of a literary text based on different theoretical lenses such as Marxism, feminism, postcolonialism and eco-criticism.

The LCT dimension of Specialisation extends Bernstein's conception of 'knowledge structures' to include 'knower structures' and provides concepts to analyse the organising principles that give rise to specific knowledge–knower structures (Martin et al., 2020a). A hierarchical knower structure is defined as "a systematically principled and hierarchical organization of knowers based on the construction of an ideal knower and which develops through the integration of new knowers at lower levels and across an expanding range of different dispositions" (Maton, 2014, p. 70). This can be represented through a triangle with the ideal knower at the top and a range of novices at the base (Martin et al., 2020a).

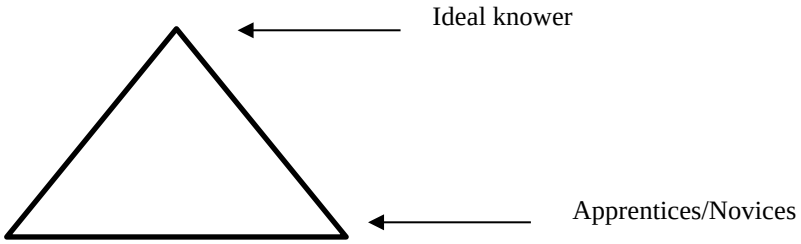


Figure 2.4: Hierarchical knower structure

An example of this hierarchical knower structure can be found in how, over the past century, the humanities have aimed to embrace a greater range of learners while inculcating a particular gaze, such as a literary or artistic gaze (Martin et al., 2020a). Over time, the base has widened to embrace more kinds of learners while the aim has been to move learners up the triangle through cultivating or socialising these novices' dispositions towards becoming similar to that of the ideal knower at the apex of the triangle (Martin et al., 2020a).

Conversely, a horizontal knower structure is "a series of strongly bounded knowers, each with specialized modes of being and acting, with non-comparable dispositions based on different trajectories and experiences" (Maton, 2014, p. 91). This can be visually represented as a series of segmented knowers (Kr1, Kr2, etc.), where each segment represents a different set of dispositions (Martin et al., 2020a; Maton, 2014).

Figure 2.5: Horizontal knower structure (Maton, 2014, p. 92)

Martin et al. (2020a, p. 18) explain that "[a] horizontal knower structure can be illustrated by claims made by many proponents of natural science that the social profile of scientists is irrelevant for scientific insight and anyone can claim legitimate knowledge so long as they follow the correct principles and procedures". Because scientists' non-scientific dispositions can be very different from each other, scientists can be represented as a series of segmented knowers (Martin et al., 2020a).

Specialisation codes bring together knowledge and knower structures and conceptualise the organising principles that generate different kinds of knowledge–knower structures (Martin et al., 2020a; Maton, 2014). "Stronger and weaker epistemic relations generate hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures, respectively; stronger and weaker social relations generate hierarchical and horizontal knower structures, respectively" (Martin et al., 2020a, pp. 19–20). Figure 2.6 below provides an illustration of the specialisation plane with knowledge–knower structures added to make clear how specialisation codes provide the organising principles that underlie knowledge–knower structures in social fields of practice.

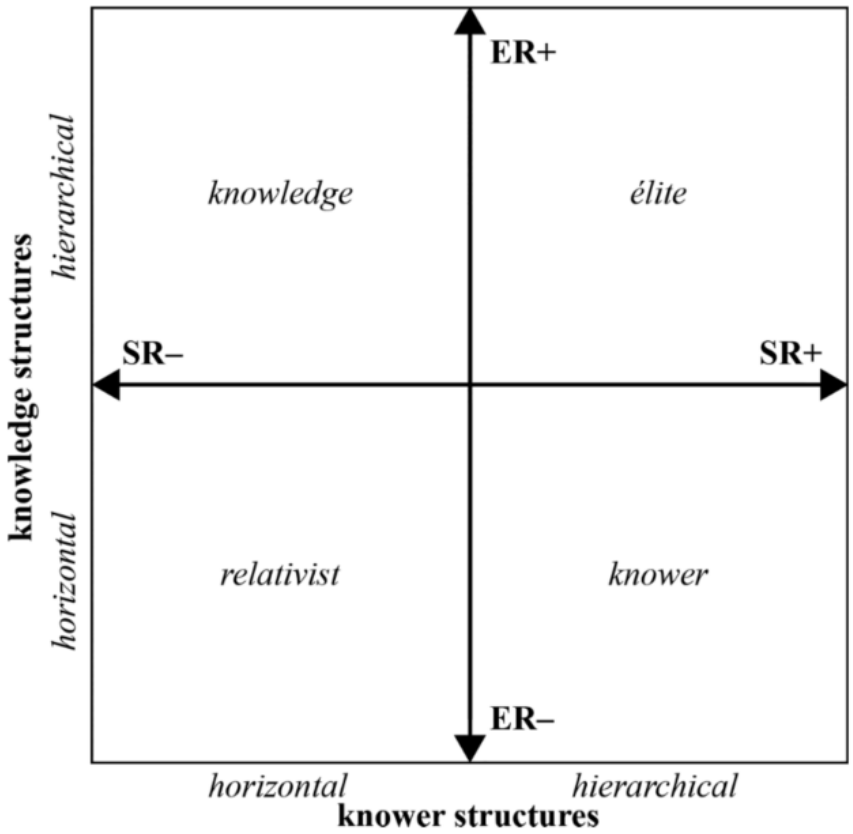


Figure 2.6: Specialisation codes and knowledge–knower structures (Martin et al., 2020a, p. 20)

In Chapter Four, I show how this study found English literary studies to have a horizontal knowledge structure and a hierarchical knower structure, meaning that English literary studies was found to be underpinned by knower code. Thus, specialised knowledge of objects of study was relatively downplayed and the dispositions of actors were emphasised as measures of achievement.

There are also two finer-grained sets of concepts that I used alongside specialisation codes to get at the organising principles of the curriculum: these are ‘gazes’ and ‘lenses’. I discuss these two sets of concepts below. These concepts are useful for drawing more nuanced distinctions between practices that fall within the same specialisation code (Maton, 2014). As I explain in Chapter Three, because my study was interested in uncovering potential shifts in the organising principles underpinning the curriculum across the three years of undergraduate study, it was necessary for me to draw on concepts that could be used to make fine-grained distinctions between practices within the same curriculum.

2.5.3 Gazes

LCT extends Bernstein's concept of 'gazes' to distinguish between four different strengths of social relations, i.e. how strongly a field delineates *who* can be considered to know and what *dispositions* they need to exhibit (Maton, 2014). Fields with stronger social relations may be specialised by knowers in terms of who they are (such as social categories), how they know (such as through cultivation) or both (Maton, 2014). We can therefore distinguish analytically between subjective relations (SubR) between practices and the kinds of individuals engaged in them and interactional relations (IR) between practices and the ways of acting they entail (Maton, 2014). As is the case with epistemic relations and social relations, subjective relations and interactional relations can vary independently. This creates four main kinds of gazes, as seen in Figure 2.7 below.

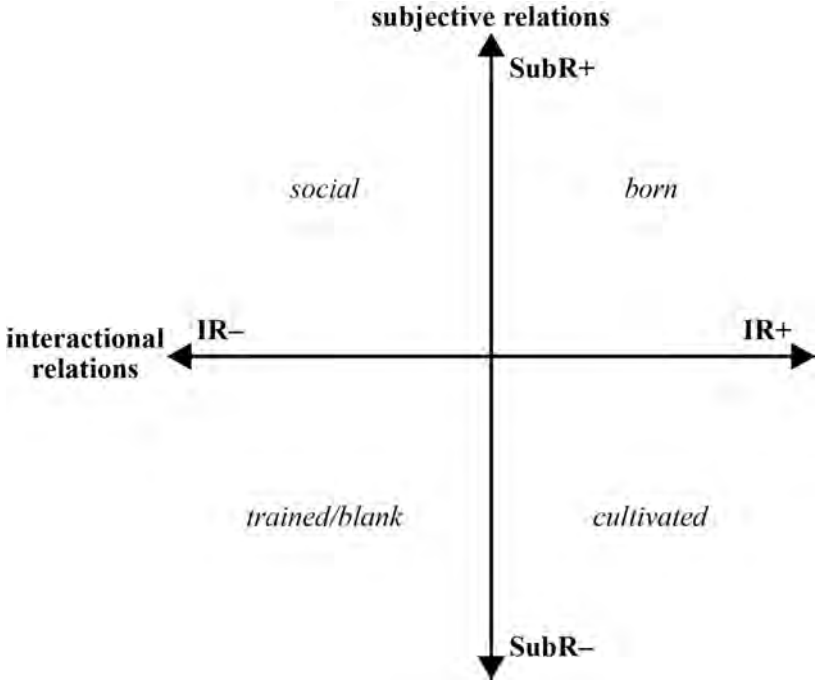


Figure 2.7: The social plane (Maton, 2014, p. 186)

The relatively strongest form of social relations can be found in fields where the legitimate knower is required to possess a *born gaze* (Maton, 2014). Here an actor needs to both be a certain kind of person by nature of their social category or biology and act or interact in a specific way (Maton, 2014). An example of a field that requires a born gaze might be the field of classical music. In order to be a highly successful classical musician, one needs both an inborn 'ear for music' as well as technical proficiency that has been cultivated over an extended period of time. Slightly weaker social relations can be found in fields that require legitimate

knowers to possess a *social gaze* based on possessing an inborn aptitude or belonging to a specific social category such as race, gender or sexuality but less restrictive in terms of the 'correct' way in which a legitimate knower should act (Maton, 2014). An example might be a speaker at a gay rights rally who is considered a legitimate speaker based on their experiences of being a homosexual person. Another level weaker are fields that require a *cultivated gaze*, where legitimacy is based on a disposition that can be inculcated through a prolonged period of apprenticeship or immersion, but where, in principle, given enough time, anyone can be apprenticed into the field (Luckett & Hunma, 2014; Maton, 2014). It should be noted that disciplines that legitimate a cultivated gaze are still considered to have relatively stronger social relations (Maton, 2014). *Cultivated*, *social* and *born* gazes are three possible kinds of gazes found in fields that are classified as having stronger social relations (Maton, 2014).

Lastly, there are fields that have relatively weaker social relations, where legitimacy is based either on a *trained gaze* or a *blank gaze*. A trained gaze is gained through training in the specialised principles and/or procedures of the field (Maton, 2014). Here legitimacy is based on the knowledge that the actor possesses rather than the kind of person the actor is, so subjective relations and interactional relations are both relatively weakly bounded (SubR–, IR) but epistemic relations are strongly bounded (ER+, SR–) (Maton, 2014). For example, the discipline of accounting might require a trained gaze, where technical knowledge is needed but who you are is considered less important. A blank gaze is underpinned by a relativist code (ER–, SR–), so there is no Specialisation of the gaze, and anything goes (Maton, 2014).

2.5.4 Lenses

Maton (2014) provides a third level of conceptual tools that can be used to make more nuanced distinctions between practices that fall not only in the same specialisation code but also within the same gaze. This is the concept of 'lenses'. Lenses have not been fully conceptualised for all gazes. However, for the cultivated gaze, Maton (2014, p. 189) distinguishes between cultivated gazes with ontic lenses, where the valued gaze is cultivated through immersion in the object(s) of study, and cultivated gazes with discursive lenses, where the valued gaze is cultivated through immersion in studies of the object(s) of study. Maton (2014) provides an example of the discipline of British cultural studies to illustrate the differences between these two lenses. He explains that early cultural studies emphasised immersion in a canon of exemplary work of culture (the objects of study), thus the basis of legitimation was a cultivated gaze with ontic lensing. However, recent cultural studies has shifted to emphasise immersion

in studies or theories about the cultural works (studies of the objects of study), thus the basis of legitimation has shifted to a cultivated gaze with discursive lensing (Maton, 2014). While lenses describe finer distinctions between practices than specialisation codes and gazes, Maton (2014, p. 175) explains that changes in lenses might have "profound effects for practices in intellectual and educational field".

Since all of the modules that I looked at for this study were from the same discipline, and housed in the same department, it was not surprising that they were all found to be underpinned by the same specialisation code and gaze. As I explain in Chapter Four, the curriculum as a whole was found to be underpinned by a knower code and a cultivated gaze. I, therefore, drew on Maton's concepts of ontic and discursive lenses in an attempt to conceptualise the more nuanced, yet significant, distinctions that I found between what was legitimated in the different modules within the curriculum. In doing so, I was also able to contribute to LCT by identifying two other kinds of lenses. I unpack this in detail in Section 4.2.4 of Chapter Four.

2.6 Research Gap

It should be noted that this is not the first study that has used LCT or Specialisation to investigate the discipline of English literary studies. Various other studies have used LCT to uncover the organising principles underpinning English literary studies as practised within their contexts. Some of these studies focused on a single institution and others focused on a curriculum at a national level. Because a discipline can be practised in different ways in different contexts, it is possible for a discipline to have a variety of underpinning specialisation codes depending on the context in which it is practised. However, in the case of English literary studies, the majority of studies found the discipline to be underpinned by stronger social relations (Anson, 2017; Christie, 2016; Jackson, G. A., 2020; Luckett & Hunma, 2014; Maton, 2014; Sevnarayan, 2015; Van Heerden, 2017; Wilmot, 2019).[6]

[6] Fiona Jackson's (2016) study of high school classrooms is the only study that I have come across where the discipline was not always practised in a way that was underpinned by stronger social relations.

Most empirical studies also found English literary studies to legitimate a knower code and a cultivated gaze (Christie, 2016; Luckett & Hunma, 2014; Maton, 2014; Van Heerden, 2017; Wilmot, 2019).[7] Thus, students needed to display a specific disposition to be considered a legitimate knower in English literary studies, and this disposition could be cultivated through immersion in the discipline over an extended period.

While many existing studies focus on English literary studies at the secondary school level (Anson, 2017; Christie, 2016; Jackson, F., 2016; Jackson, G. A., 2020; Maton, 2014), two other PhD studies have looked at an undergraduate English literature curriculum at a tertiary level: Sevnarayan (2015) and Van Heerden (2017), and they both focus on South African universities. Van Heerden (2017) uses Specialisation and Semantics to look specifically at feedback on assessments in a first-year English literature curriculum at the University of the Western Cape. Sevnarayan (2015) uses Specialisation to compare the curriculum and pedagogy of English literature and English Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, drawing on data from first-year courses. There is also an article by Luckett and Hunma (2014) that looks at the specialisation codes of four different Humanities disciplines, one of which is English literature, drawing on data from first-year courses at the University of Cape Town. Furthermore, there is a PhD study by Wilmot (2019) that looks at what is legitimated in the writing of PhD theses in a variety of Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines, which includes English literary studies. However, the proposed study differs from previous studies in terms of its scope and context, as outlined below.

The first aspect that differentiates my study from previous studies at the tertiary level is its scope. I look at a curriculum over the course of three years instead of focusing only on the first-year level (or, in Wilmot's (2019) case, the thesis which is the end product of the PhD). As I have shown above, English literary studies has been classified as a knower code with a cultivated gaze in most previous studies. Since a knower code with a cultivated gaze requires an extended period of inculcation into the dispositions valued in the discipline, I was able

[7] While Anson (2017:138) does not expressly state that he is looking at the literature component of secondary school English, the data that he draws on in this paper is feedback on examination questions which required students "to produce some kind of extended and sustained critical response to one or more texts". Anson (2017) emphasises the stronger social relations of school English but believes that there are also stronger epistemic relations at play, so he argues for an elite code. Sevnarayan (2015) seems to categorise English literary studies as a knower code (but also at one point as an elite code). Sevnarayan (2015) and Anson (2017) do not discuss the discipline at the level of Maton's four gazes.

to contribute valuable knowledge to our understanding of the discipline by analysing the trajectory of students across three years of undergraduate study rather than focusing only on a single year level. The purpose of this broad scope was to further our understanding of an English literature curriculum's potential for cumulative knower building across the three years of undergraduate study. Christie (2016) undertook something similar in a study that focused on the changing semantic profiles of successful English literature essays across three different levels of secondary schooling. Semantics was used to consider the context dependence or independence of knowledge (by drawing on the concept of semantic gravity) and to consider the complexity of knowledge (by drawing on the concept of semantic density). However, my study differs from Christie's in several ways. It focuses on higher education rather than secondary schooling. Furthermore, while Christie's (2016) study focused on student essays, which were analysed drawing primarily on Semantics, I looked at a broader range of data, which included lecturer interviews and study material from six modules and used Specialisation rather than Semantics as my analytical toolset.

Using the toolset of Specialisation to analyse the broad scope of my data allowed me to investigate shifts in the curriculum over time. As indicated earlier, what is legitimated in a particular field or programme may change as a student progresses in their studies. Thus, providing an analysis of a 'moment in time' in a curriculum might not offer the full picture that a study over several years might. This study's focus on nuanced distinctions in terms of the legitimation codes of different English literature modules offers a more complete picture of how the cultivated gaze that is valued in English literary studies might be developed over time. Furthermore, this fine-grained analysis has the potential to contribute to debates about how the discipline could or should be practised both in South Africa (bearing in mind the calls on South African universities to decolonise their curricula) and internationally. My findings could also be relevant to other disciplines that may be practised as a knower code with a cultivated gaze, such as history, film and media and cultural studies (Luckett & Hunma, 2014; Maton, 2014).

The second aspect that differentiates my study from previous tertiary-level studies is the context of the study. I looked at a curriculum taught at a mega-distance education institution. Luckett and Hunma (2014, p. 95) explain that the dispositions that are valued in knower-code Humanities disciplines are usually cultivated through "prolonged apprenticeship and immersion in exemplary models under the tutelage of disciplinary masters". However, UNISA students typically have much less direct access to their lecturers and tutors than students at

contact universities. Thus, one of the aims of my study was to investigate how successfully a cultivated gaze can be inculcated through UNISA's distance education model. Specialisation allowed me to investigate degrees of code match and/or code clash between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. In other words, it allowed me to consider whether the curriculum was fit for purpose by interrogating the extent to which there was alignment between the intended curriculum and the enacted curriculum. It also allowed me to consider the extent to which there were alignments and misalignments between the curriculum and student dispositions. My study therefore contributes to knowledge about teaching 'cultivated gaze' disciplines through distance education in a massified system. Since almost a third of South Africa's university students currently study at UNISA through distance education, research into this area is particularly relevant to the national context. Massification in the higher education sector is also a global phenomenon that has coincided with increased pressures on academics to teach larger class sizes with fewer resources (Allais, 2014; Hornsby & Osman, 2014). Thus, the findings of my research are pertinent to many other contexts in which Humanities curricula are taught with high staff-to-student ratios.

2.7 Conclusion

Drawing on academic literacies research, I have argued in this chapter that taking on discipline-specific literacy practices requires far more than proficiency in surface-level aspects of language. It requires taking on norms and values that are specific to a discipline and are often tacit rather than explicit. I explained that, in order to offer a socially just curriculum, it is necessary to make these hidden literacy practices explicit so that they can be interrogated and taught more overtly. I went on to explain how this study draws on LCT to perform the function of uncovering the values underpinning an English literature curriculum. In particular, I discussed which concepts from the LCT dimension of Specialisation I used to analyse the forms of knowledge and knowers valued in the UNISA English literature curriculum. In the next chapter, I explain how I actually applied these concepts to my data, beginning with a look at the data generation process.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Every empirical study needs a methodology and this needs to be articulated so that the reader can make a judgement of the study's credibility. In this chapter, I outline my methodology and explain the various choices I made along the way. The chapter starts with a discussion of why I chose to do a qualitative case study and a of discussion my data generation methods. Next, I provide a detailed explanation of how I went about analysing my data using concepts from LCT's dimension of Specialisation as my theoretical lenses. I then go on to discuss issues of validity and reliability, which include a reflection on my positionality as an insider researcher. Finally, I discuss the ethical clearance processes that I went through for approval of the study and the procedures that I put in place in order to conduct an ethical study.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Qualitative Case Study

This study aimed to contribute to an understanding of the organising principles underpinning the practice of English literary studies and the process through which a curriculum might provide access (or fail to provide access) to the ways of knowing and being valued in the discipline. The UNISA English literature undergraduate curriculum offers a case of the specific phenomenon that I wanted to study. I chose to do a qualitative study as the research was concerned with describing and interpreting a phenomenon rather than measuring how often something occurs (Agius, 2013). Agius (2013, p. 204) explains that "qualitative methods such as observation, in-depth interviews, focus groups, consensus methods, case studies and the interpretation of texts can be more effective than quantitative approaches in exploring complex phenomena".

Qualitative studies can be undertaken from various ontological positions with very different understandings of truth and reality. In this study, as mentioned in the previous chapter, there is a realist underpinning to the qualitative approach. That is, there is an understanding that our knowledge of the world is partial and fallible. Thus, the researcher cannot claim to offer a full account of the objective truth around a research phenomenon. This is not to say that realist

research is inherently relativist, however, as it is accompanied by the idea that the real world exists independently of our understandings. The role of the researcher thus moves from describing the data to attempting to identify the ways in which the (human, experiential, qualitative) data emerged from generative mechanisms. As I explained in Chapter Two, I used the Specialisation dimension of LCT to aid me in performing this task of uncovering what kinds of generative mechanisms underpinned the English literature curriculum under study.

Alongside this realist approach to qualitative research, I used a case study approach. Yin (2018) argues that case studies are particularly suitable for studying complex social phenomena. He explains that "[a] case study is an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (Yin, 2018, p. 50). Thus, a case study is an appropriate research design when you want to understand a real-world case, when the phenomenon under study cannot be clearly separated from its context, and when you believe that the context of the case is important for understanding it (Yin, 2018). All of these conditions are pertinent to my study.

Realist researcher, Maxwell (2008), argues that a strength of a case study is its ability to reveal the processes that lead to certain outcomes rather than merely describe the outcomes. This study was concerned with making a practical contribution to the curriculum and pedagogic choices of the Department of English Studies at UNISA and to other contexts beyond this specific case. Thus, a detailed understanding of the context and the processes surrounding the English literature curriculum was required to be able to make recommendations regarding what kinds of changes could lead to improvements.

Furthermore, Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2012) maintain that one of the key aspects of case study research is that it focuses on collecting rich data – often making use of a variety of data collection methods – in order to capture the depth and complexity of a particular case. This study made use of two data generation methods: conducting in-depth lecturer interviews and collecting course documents, in order to provide a detailed reflection of the phenomena surrounding the English literature curriculum at UNISA. Since this study focused on a very specific context, generalisation of the research findings must be undertaken with care. The detailed descriptions that I provide of the particularities of the case will allow readers to judge the extent to which my research findings apply to their own contexts. Furthermore, the fact that I use a realist approach by using strong theoretical lenses to look beyond the surface

particularities of the case and to get at the organising principles underpinning the curriculum will allow for comparisons with other curricula underpinned by similar organising principles.

3.2.2 The Case of the UNISA English Department

The case that this study focuses on is the undergraduate English literature curriculum in the Department of English Studies at UNISA. The department under consideration is large. In 2021, it had over 50 academic staff members, with about half of these academics teaching courses that contain a literature component (the other courses are English language courses).

As I explained in Chapter One, the UNISA English major under study consisted of ten modules. Four of these modules focused on language, four focused on literature, and two modules were considered 'hybrid' modules that included both language and literature components. The study looked at the six modules that contained a literature component. In the case of the 'hybrid' modules, I looked only at the literature portion of the modules. This was because I was particularly interested in uncovering what was legitimated in English literary studies as it was taught at UNISA. The English language modules may likely have been underpinned by different legitimation codes. I provide an outline of the modules that were included and excluded from this study in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Outline of included and excluded modules from my case study

Year level	**Module code and name**	**Included/excluded from study**
First year	ENG1501: Foundations in English Literary Studies	Full module included in study
First year	ENG1502: Foundations in English Language Studies	Excluded from study
Second year	ENG2601: Applied English Language Studies: Further Explorations	Excluded from study
Second year	ENG2602: Genres in Literature and Language: Theory, Style and Poetics	Hybrid module – literature component included in study
Second year	ENG2603: Colonial and Postcolonial African Literatures	Full module included in study

Third year	ENG3701: The History and Spread of English	Excluded from study
Third year	ENG3702: The English Language: Context and Purpose	Excluded from study
Third year	ENG3703: Theoretical Approaches to English Language and Literature	Hybrid module – literature component included in study
Third year	ENG3704: Shakespeare's Dramatic Art: Explorations	Full module included in study
Third year	ENG3705: Modern and Postmodern Literature in English	Full module included in study

In 2021, when data was collected, the first-year English literature module had more than 12,000 registered students; the two second-year modules had just under 4000 students each; and the three third-year modules had fewer than 120 students each per semester. A major contributing factor to the large first- and second-year student numbers was that, in addition to students who selected the courses as part of their Bachelor of Arts degrees, these courses were compulsory for certain Education students studying to become teachers.

3.2.3 Data Generation

The study made use of two data generation methods: conducting semi-structured interviews with academics and collecting course documents. I had originally planned to analyse student interviews and marked student scripts as part of the study. However, as I delved into my analysis of academic interviews and course documents, I realised that there was too much to unpack just in these two data sources and that analysing the student interviews and marked student scripts should be avenues for future research. Furthermore, these data sets are suited to a slightly different research focus in that they would enable an analysis of the extent to which students did or did not take up the specialisation code(s) and gaze(s) that were legitimated in the modules. While this would be a very valuable study, it was outside of the specific research focus I was able to undertake within the confines of a PhD.

My findings in relation to the academic interviews and course documents also changed the scope of my study as I came to understand that there were forces at play beyond the control of academics that were having a major impact on what could be offered in the English literature curriculum in terms of pedagogies. This led me to focus my attention on how these larger societal forces affecting the institution were causing misalignments between the intended and the enacted curriculum more broadly and, ultimately, assisted me in deciding not to focus on minutiae such as analysing marked assignments. I believe that it is a strength of the thesis that it considers how larger mechanisms in society impact the academic offering, and that it does not assume that all pedagogical encounters are within the full control of the academic. It is arguably this focus on how larger societal forces impact a pedagogical offering that will particularly ensure that the findings of this case study have applicability beyond the context under study.

Interviews with academics

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with lecturers teaching the English literature modules under investigation. All lecturers who had taught the literature component of the English Major in 2020 were invited to participate in the study. This was in order to ensure that the academics had some experience teaching the modules under study, as there were a few academics who had just joined the department in 2021. There was only one exception to this. I included one academic in the study who only joined the department in 2021 but who had prior experience working on one of the relevant modules as an e-tutor. I felt that this individual's experiences as an e-tutor would be useful in gaining a deeper understanding of the pedagogical practices of the department.

Academics were invited to participate in an interview via email. Appendix B contains an example of the email I sent to academics to invite them to participate in the interviews and the follow-up email that I sent upon receiving a positive response to my invitation to participate in the study. Appendix B also contains an example of the informed consent form that I asked academics to sign prior to participating in the interviews. Sixteen of the nineteen academics who were invited to participate in the study granted me an interview, and there was a good representation of lecturers who taught each of the courses. Interview participants ranged from very experienced professors to lecturers who only had a Masters' degree. Although I stated in the invitation letter that there was a possibility that I could ask a participant for a follow-up

interview, I did not perform a second interview with any of my participants. However, there were two cases in which I followed up via email on something that came up in an interview. I included this email correspondence as data for the study.

I made use of semi-structured interviews as this allowed me to explore issues that I may not have considered relevant before they were made apparent to me in an interview. Interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams, as academics were working from home at the time because of Covid-19 restrictions. Microsoft Teams was the platform used for UNISA meetings, so using the same platform that the participants were using for their work meetings helped to ensure that participants would feel comfortable in the online interview space. Most interviews lasted about an hour. The interviews were relaxed and conversational. However, I made sure to cover the following set of core issues in each interview:

- what academics saw as the value of studying English literature;
- the attributes and/or skills academics wished to see in English Studies graduates;
- what attributes and/or skills students needed to possess at which year level;
- the kinds of pedagogies academics employed to help students develop the valued attributes/skills;
- how successful the academics felt the curriculum was at developing the valued attributes/skills, and why;
- whether academics felt that literary analysis was an ability that any student could learn or whether it required some inborn aptitude; and
- what academics perceived to be the most significant challenges that students faced in mastering the curriculum.

These issues were posed to academics as questions, but often, while elaborating on one question, an academic would cover another interview topic, so I would then not ask that specific question. My interview questions were informed by my research questions:

(1) What kinds of knowledge and knowers are legitimated in the UNISA undergraduate English literature intended curriculum?
(2) To what extent does the English literature curriculum of the Department of English Studies at UNISA enable access to the ways of knowing and the ways of being that are valued?

My interview questions were also informed by my understanding of the kinds of data that I needed to generate to conduct an LCT analysis of the underpinning values of a curriculum. I made sure to cover what academics saw as the intended curriculum and the extent to which they felt the curriculum was able to facilitate students' access to these curriculum values. The interviews provided a particularly rich source of data for the study.

The interviews were also used to determine what kinds of pedagogical tools lecturers made use of to teach their module content beyond the written study material that I discuss below. These pedagogical tools were determined by individual teaching teams and could take the form of online activities, videos and/or livestreams. In the UNISA English Department, such pedagogical activities tended to be seen as add-on activities that went beyond the scope of academics' core business of writing study material, setting assignment and examination questions, marking and moderation. The broad scope of this study, which covered six modules across three years of study, did not allow me to look at these pedagogical activities in detail, but the interview questions on this issue enabled me to get a general sense of what was offered in this regard.

It should be noted that the UNISA English Department employs a large number of external markers and online tutors because of its large student numbers. For example, in 2021, the first-year literature course (with over 12 000 students) had six full-time academic staff members, 25 external markers, and nineteen external e-tutors assigned to it. The marking and online tutoring activities were moderated by English Department staff members. The broad scope of this study did not allow me to include interviews with external markers and tutors. However, my interviews with UNISA academics provided some reflection on these activities.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed, and transcriptions were sent to interviewees to verify the accuracy of the transcriptions. Fourteen of the sixteen interview participants got back to me to confirm that their interviews had been transcribed accurately. The other two interview participants did not respond after multiple follow-ups had been made. Transcriptions were slightly cleaned up to improve readability; that is, thinking pauses like, 'uhm'; excessive use of 'like' and 'you know'; and repetitions of the same word were removed for readability. Apart from this, transcriptions were kept as is and data quotes were used verbatim in the thesis. I reflect on my researcher positionality as an 'insider' to the department where I conducted the case study in the section under 'validity and trustworthiness' below.

Document analysis

Documents for the six modules with a literature component that form part of the UNISA English Major were analysed. They were: ENG1501, ENG2602, ENG2603, ENG3703 ENG3704 and ENG3705 (refer to Table 3.1 for detailed information about what was included and excluded from the study). These documents comprised (i) initial tutorial letters and (ii) study guides. The initial tutorial letters were my main data source as they contained information about the structure of the modules in terms of formative and summative assessments; a list of prescribed texts; a list of course outcomes; and the assignment questions for each of the modules. Students would have access to an initial tutorial letter alongside their study guide immediately upon registering for a module. These could be accessed via the online learning management system. An initial tutorial letter comprised between 16 and 30 pages and served to provide students with an outline of the module and information about formative and summative assessment. It also contained contact information for the lecturers teaching the specific module and standard information about library services and student support services. The templates for these initial tutorial letters were standardised across the institution. The templates were populated by academics assigned to specific modules every year with new assignment questions and due dates. The 'purpose and outcomes' statements in the initial tutorial letters for each module were analysed in detail to contribute to answering my first research question regarding what values underpinned the intended curriculum. The assignment questions were also analysed in detail to determine whether there was alignment between the values underpinning the intended curriculum and those underpinning the enacted curriculum in relation to formative assessment.

The study guides were used as needed in my analysis to provide additional information about the course content of the modules. Because UNISA is a distance learning institution, the study guides for modules contain much more content than is usually the case with study guides at contact universities. The study guides typically ranged between 60 and 100 pages and attempted to guide students systematically through the curriculum. They discussed important issues concerning the prescribed texts, unpacked terminology that should be used in the analysis of texts, and provided guidance in terms of how students should go about analysing texts. In sum, they contained the kind of material that would likely be communicated to students via lectures at a contact university. The study guides, in combination with the prescribed literary texts and, in some cases, a few prescribed secondary readings, formed the core content

of the curriculum for each module. Study guides were developed by academics and would be re-used from year to year until a module was revised, which would result in an updated study guide.

3.2.4 Data Analysis

As discussed in the previous chapter, I chose LCT as my theoretical framework because it offered analytical tools that I could use to surface the organising principles underpinning the UNISA English literature curriculum, as required by my research questions. I followed a similar approach in analysing my data to that described by Maton and Chen (2016) in their chapter, "LCT in qualitative research: Creating a translation device for studying constructivist pedagogy". This process entailed first immersing myself in my theoretical framework in order to come to an understanding of the kinds of data that I needed to generate to perform an LCT analysis that would answer my research questions. Because I acquainted myself deeply with LCT during the proposal phase of my study, I was able to craft interview questions that allowed me to generate rich data that I was able to analyse using the Specialisation dimension of LCT to answer my research questions. To answer my first research question about the kinds of knowledge and knowers that were legitimated in the intended curriculum, I asked questions about the following issues:

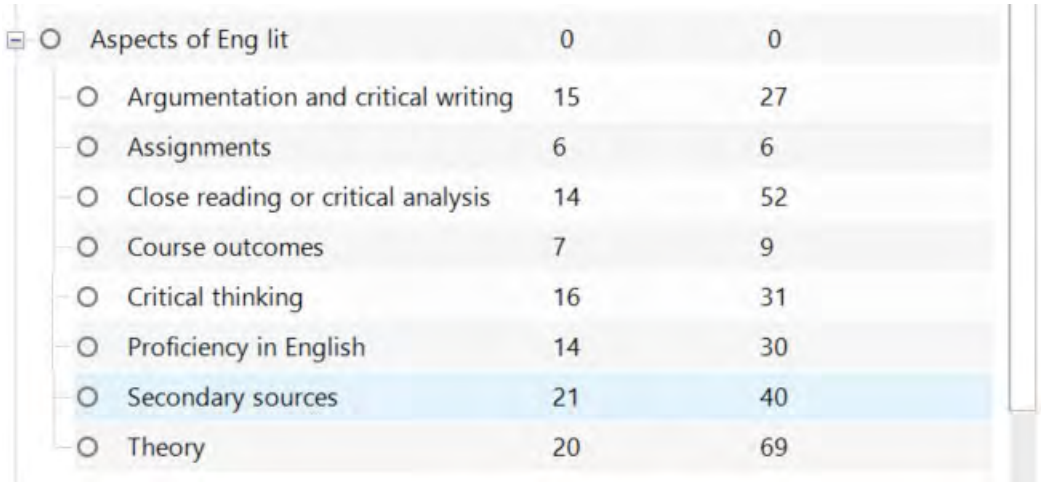
- what academics saw as the value of studying English literature;
- the attributes and/or skills academics wished to see in English Studies graduates;
- what attributes and/or skills students needed to possess at which year level; and
- whether academics felt that literary analysis was an ability that any student could learn or whether it required some inborn aptitude.

Furthermore, to answer my second research question about the extent to which the curriculum enabled access to the ways of knowing and being that were valued, I asked questions about:

- the kinds of pedagogies academics employed to help students develop the valued attributes/skills;
- how successful the academics felt the curriculum was at developing the valued attributes/skills, and why; and
- what academics perceived to be the most significant challenges that students faced in mastering the curriculum.

Maton and Chen (2016) recommend that after generating data, a researcher should not be too quick to impose LCT theory on the data but that one should first immerse oneself in the data, becoming thoroughly acquainted with the data within its context. Chen therefore followed a process of first performing a thematic analysis of her data to avoid rushing to coding bits of data using LCT without an awareness of the broader context of that data. As an insider researcher who works in the department under study, I came to the study with a good understanding of the context already in place. Furthermore, the fact that I had conducted the interviews myself and personally transcribed five of the sixteen interviews served as a further means of immersing myself in the data before moving on to coding the data.

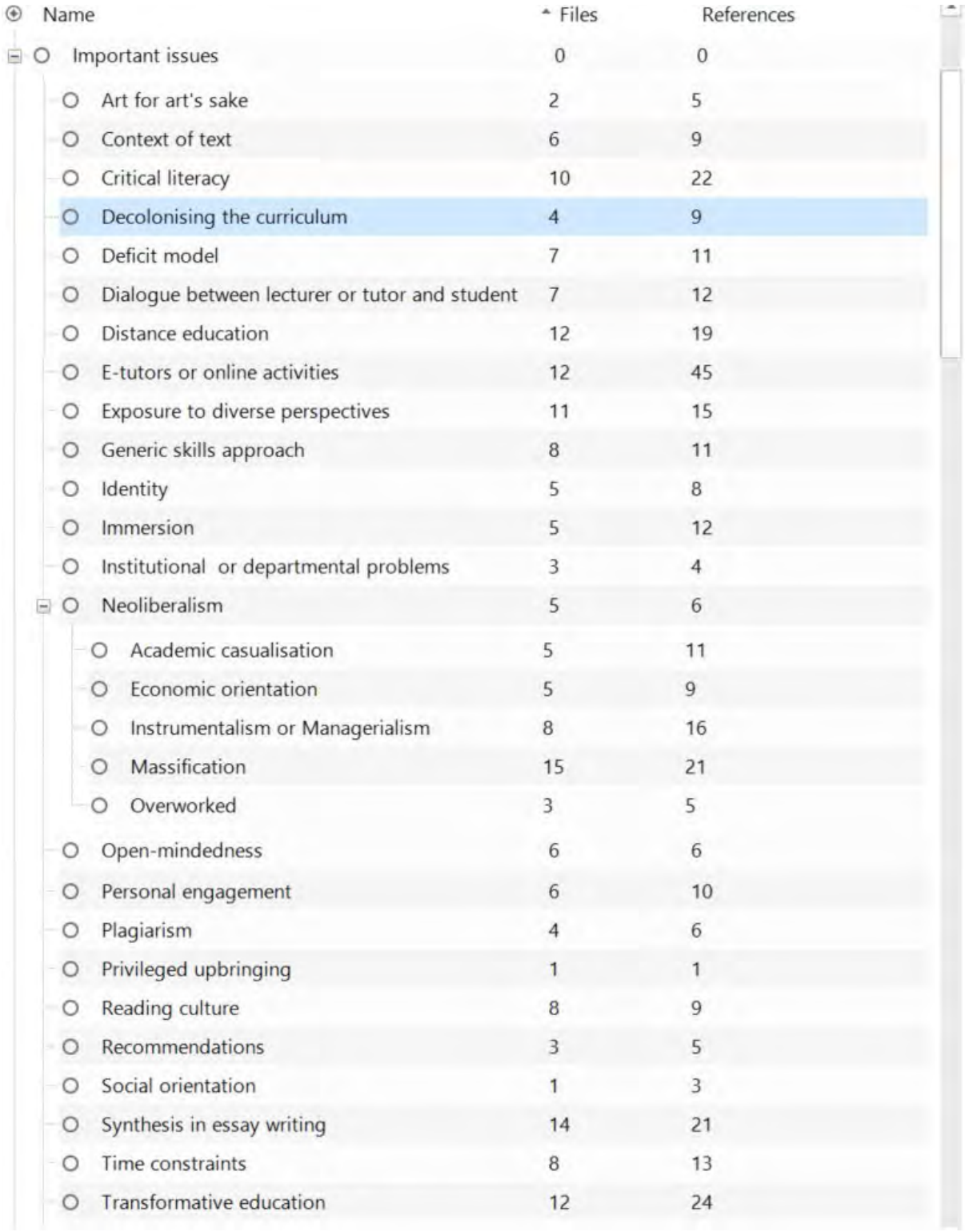
I performed both my thematic analysis and my LCT analysis using NVivo software. I started by focusing mainly on the thematic analysis. In Figure 3.1, below, I provide the list of codes that I used for my first attempt at a thematic analysis of the data. As I worked through the interview data and the course outlines for the six modules under study, I developed a list of topics that came up frequently in the data. I coded data that related to a specific topic to that code in NVivo. After showing my supervisors what I had done, I was alerted to the fact that what I was doing was more a process of organising the data into categories than thematic coding. I was not focusing, for example, on what it was that academics were saying about the topic of critical thinking but rather just coding all references in the interview data to critical thinking to that specific code. Nevertheless, this first attempt at thematic analysis helped me to immerse myself more deeply in the data.



Aspects of Eng lit	0	0
Argumentation and critical writing	15	27
Assignments	6	6
Close reading or critical analysis	14	52
Course outcomes	7	9
Critical thinking	16	31
Proficiency in English	14	30
Secondary sources	21	40
Theory	20	69

Figure 3.1: First attempt at a thematic analysis using NVivo (researcher's own)

After the conversation with my supervisors, I made a second attempt at performing a thematic analysis of my data, this time focusing more on what kinds of ideas were coming up around certain topics. I provide a list of the codes that I produced in the second attempt at a thematic analysis in Figure 3.2, below. Working through the interviews, I kept creating new codes as issues emerged in the interviews that I thought might be relevant to my research questions. I flagged issues that came up from multiple conversations as themes. Some of the themes were also informed by the literature I was reading on important concerns in the higher education sphere more broadly. This included literature on transformative education, academic literacies, and issues around neoliberalism's impact on the university. My reading into this literature allowed me to recognise that many of the concerns in the higher education sphere more broadly were emerging as significant themes in my data.



Name	Files	References
Important issues	0	0
Art for art's sake	2	5
Context of text	6	9
Critical literacy	10	22
Decolonising the curriculum	4	9
Deficit model	7	11
Dialogue between lecturer or tutor and student	7	12
Distance education	12	19
E-tutors or online activities	12	45
Exposure to diverse perspectives	11	15
Generic skills approach	8	11
Identity	5	8
Immersion	5	12
Institutional or departmental problems	3	4
Neoliberalism	5	6
Academic casualisation	5	11
Economic orientation	5	9
Instrumentalism or Managerialism	8	16
Massification	15	21
Overworked	3	5
Open-mindedness	6	6
Personal engagement	6	10
Plagiarism	4	6
Privileged upbringing	1	1
Reading culture	8	9
Recommendations	3	5
Social orientation	1	3
Synthesis in essay writing	14	21
Time constraints	8	13
Transformative education	12	24

Figure 3.2: Second attempt at thematic analysis using NVivo (researcher's own)

As I performed this second attempt at a thematic analysis, I also started coding data to the LCT codes that I believed were relevant. To perform my LCT analysis, I followed an iterative process similar to that described by Maton and Chen (2016). Like Chen, I moved backwards

and forwards between the relevant LCT concepts and my data until I created a 'translation device' that served as an instrument for translating between the LCT concepts from the dimension of Specialisation and my data. Developing a translation device involves developing what Bernstein referred to as an "external language of description" to translate between theoretical concepts and their manifestation in a specific dataset (Bernstein cited in Maton & Chen, 2016, p. 27). Like Chen's translation device, I developed translation devices that:

- provide the relevant LCT concept;
- provide an indicator of how that concept manifests in the data; and
- provide a data quotation as an example of something that has been coded to that specific code in my data.

Tables 3.2–3.6 below provide the translation devices that I developed for each LCT concept that I drew on for my data analysis. These translation devices use concepts from Specialisation to analyse the data at increasing levels of delicacy. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 draw on the concepts of social relations and epistemic relations. I found a strong emphasis on social relations in the data. Because I was interested in how the curriculum attempted to develop the valued kinds of knowers over three years, it was important for me to look at possible differences in the kind of knower that was valued across different modules and different years of study. For this reason, I proceeded to look at the specific kinds of social relations that were being valued in the data. In order to do this, I drew on the concepts of subjective relations and interactional relations, as can be seen in Tables 3.4 and 3.5. After finding that interactional relations were strongly emphasised in my data in all of the modules under study (in other words, that what was being valued in all of the modules was a cultivated gaze), I felt the need to distinguish further between different kinds of orientations within the cultivated gaze that had emerged from my data. In an attempt to do this, I drew on a third level of conceptual delicacy: I drew on the concepts of ontic and discursive lensing within the cultivated gaze. This translation device can be seen in Table 3.6 below. As I explain in Chapter Four, this third level of my Specialisation analysis was not able fully to capture the differences between the two orientations within the cultivated gaze that manifested in my data. I was thus able to extend LCT theory by providing another set of concepts for the analysis of the cultivated gaze. The translation device for this set of concepts is provided in Chapter Four as part of the explanation of how I extended the theory.

Table 3.2: Social relations translation device for English literary studies

SOCIAL RELATIONS TRANSLATION DEVICE	
Category and indicator	**Examples from data**
Stronger social relations (SR+)[8] You need to be a certain kind of person or display a specific disposition to be considered a legitimate 'literary knower'	…if I've achieved nothing else, I want that person to be an independent thinker… who's able to take any source of information, whether it's an argument or an article or a Facebook meme, and think about it in terms of how it is constructed; for what purpose it was meant to be; and to be able to then derive an opinion or an interpretation of it based on their own perspective. (Interview 1)
Weaker social relations (SR–) Neither personal attributes nor specific dispositions are important to participate in the field of literary studies	N/A – No explicit acknowledgement of an SR– position in the dataset.

Table 3.3: Epistemic relations translation device for English literary studies

EPISTEMIC RELATIONS TRANSLATION DEVICE	
Category and indicator	**Examples from data**
Stronger epistemic relations (ER+) You need to possess specialised principled or procedural knowledge specific to literary texts to participate in the field	Number one, they should be able to know what literature is. That is, they should be able to know that there are various genres of literature. We have got poetry. We have drama. We have prose - short stories and novels. They should be able to know that there are genres such as a tragedy, such as comedy, such as satire, and they should be able to understand that these genres, they have got different ways of representing reality. (Interview 4)
Weaker epistemic relations (ER–) You can draw on knowledge or methodologies that have applications beyond literary texts when you participate in the field, and literary texts are not strongly delimited as the only possible objects that you can study	I mean, an artwork is a narrative, so you can analyse a building as a narrative; you can analyse a painting; an art installation; a photograph. So, it's all interconnected, and they are all narratives … and literature forms part of that big narrative, and it is related to a historical period…

[8] I did not find it useful to try to distinguish further in terms of social relations by making use of a more graded scale of strengths (e.g. SR+ and SR++) as I found that the six modules across the three years of the curriculum differed from each other not so much in terms of the *strengths* of social relations but rather in terms of the different *forms* through which the valued orientation manifested in the different modules under study. Thus, I drew on the concepts of gazes and lenses, as can be seen in the next translation devices, in order to tease out these distinctions.

Table 3.4: Interactional relations translation device for English literary studies

INTERACTIONAL RELATIONS TRANSLATION DEVICE	
Category and indicator	**Examples from data**
Stronger interactional relations (IR+) You need to possess a disposition that is cultivated through immersion to be considered a legitimate literary knower	… as a result of our participation in these meaning events we can learn from those meaning events to become more aware of meanings to ourselves, become forced to think carefully about them and articulate them to ourselves and to others. But to listen to other people's meanings as well and to weigh them against our own. And so, for me this is the explanation why in literary studies we often feel that one of the values of literary studies is that we create the capacity to be critical, to be able to read critically, to be able to write critically, and so on. (Interview 12)
Weaker interactional relations (IR–) You are not expected to have a disposition that is cultivated through immersion to be considered a legitimate literary knower	N/A – No explicit acknowledgement of an IR– position in the dataset.

Table 3.5: Subjective relations translation device for English literary studies

SUBJECTIVE RELATIONS TRANSLATION DEVICE	
Category and indicator	**Examples from data**
Stronger subjective relations (SubR+) You need specific innate abilities or need to belong to a specific social category to be a legitimate literary knower	…I can look at a young person … and make out immediately whether they would be suitable for an Arts degree or not... It takes a special kind of person…. There has to be an innate aptitude, I think. (Interview 13)
Weaker subjective relations (SubR–) Possessing innate abilities and/or belonging to a specific social category are not relevant to whether you can be a legitimate literary knower	… but the underlying skills in terms of, like, how to build an argument and how to argue … or how to think logically and critically: I think those skills can be taught to anyone. (Interview 9)

Table 3.6: Ontic and discursive lenses of the cultivated gaze translation device

ONTIC AND DISCURSIVE LENSES OF THE CULTIVATED GAZE TRANSLATION DEVICE	
Category and indicator	**Examples from data**
Ontic lensing The valued cultivated gaze develops through immersion in literary works	… reading literature teaches you about empathy. … I think you can relate better to people if you read a lot of literature, especially fiction, because it teaches you how to see things through another person's perspective from another person's point of view. (Interview 9)
Discursive lensing The valued cultivated gaze develops through immersion in studies of literary works or scholarship relevant to literary works	And he said 'you must read it and read it and read it and read it'. And luckily with my PhD I had a year … just to go and read theory… He said to me, 'then you'll be amazed how much sticks in your mind and how then you start to think like that'. You start to look at a text like that. You start to employ those theoretical principles but in a very organic sort of way - you are no longer imposing the theory on the text. And that's the very very difficult thing to teach, but I think it's that maximum exposure. (Interview 3)

My research questions helped to guide how I enacted the LCT theory in relation to my data. I focused first on the intended curriculum, so I used the translation devices above to look at the 'purpose and outcomes' statements for each of the modules as well as what academics were saying about the kind of student they hoped to develop. This allowed me to answer my first research question regarding the kinds of knowledge and knowers that were legitimated in the UNISA undergraduate English literature intended curriculum. This is discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis. I then looked at how these values translated or failed to translate into the teaching and formative assessment practices of the curriculum. I also examined the extent to which academics felt that there was alignment between the values underpinning the intended curriculum and the dispositions that students brought to the study of literature. This allowed me to reflect on my second research question: to what extent does the English literature curriculum of the Department of English Studies at UNISA enable access to the ways of knowing and the ways of being that are valued? As part of answering this question, I also reflected on what my data suggested regarding factors that enabled or constrained alignment between the values underpinning the intended curriculum and the enacted pedagogies. This is discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis.

As I explained above, my engagement with the academic interviews caused some shifts in the focus of my study as I came to understand that there were factors beyond the control of academics that had a major impact on what the English Department could realistically offer to students in terms of pedagogies. Thus, I focused my attentions on how these larger forces were impeding alignment between the intended and the enacted curriculum and did not focus on more detailed aspects relating to the pedagogies employed by lecturers, such as the specifics of how academics engaged with students when they were able to provide online engagements or the specifics of what the formative feedback looked like in marked assignments.

3.3 Ethics

All empirical research brings with it ethical deliberations, and this requires a level of reflexivity. Ethical considerations for this study were addressed in several ways. First, I went through the official processes of applying for ethical clearance at the two relevant institutions. I first applied for ethical clearance from the Rhodes Ethics Committee. Thereafter, I applied for ethical clearance and permission to work with data relating to UNISA staff and students via the relevant UNISA committees. See Appendix A for the research permission documents.

Secondly, I endeavoured to treat all research participants and the institution of UNISA with care and respect. When I requested interviews with UNISA staff and students, I provided them with a thorough explanation of the focus of the study and made it clear that their participation was completely voluntary (see Appendix B and C for examples of the e-mails that I sent to academics and students). I made use of informed consent forms that indicated clearly that research participants could withdraw from the study at any time (see Appendix B and C for the informed consent forms). I also made sure to keep all the data quotations that I used in the study anonymous. When I sought permission to use the UNISA English Studies Department as a case study, I informed the university that it would not be possible to keep the university anonymous. This is because information regarding the size of the institution, the size of the department, and the mode of delivery was important in terms of providing context for the case study. This information will allow readers seeking to learn from the study to easily judge the extent to which the institutional context of this case is similar or different from their own contexts. I highlighted in the ethics application that the study's intention was not to harm the reputation of the institution. Rather, the intention was to bolster the institution by contributing information that could assist in creating more effective pedagogies and promote equitable

access to knowledge. Furthermore, it should be noted that the intention of this study was not to highlight the faults of a specific institution. While case study research is by its nature deeply aware of the specific context of the case, through a thorough investigation of the phenomenon under study, it endeavours to provide findings that could be useful far beyond the specific case.

3.4 Validity and Trustworthiness

As outlined in Chapter Two, this study is situated within a critical realist philosophy. This means that it acknowledges the relative nature of our experiences and observations of events, but maintains that a real world, independent of our observations, exists. Since qualitative research involves the observations and experiences of research participants and the researcher, it is not possible to claim that any qualitative research provides direct access to an objective 'truth'. However, this does not mean that all qualitative research is equally valid and reliable regardless of what analytical methods are employed (Maxwell, 2012). I discuss below the ways in which I attempted to mitigate personal bias in my study and the ways in which I went about ensuring the validity and trustworthiness of my data and my analysis.

The position that a researcher holds can greatly affect the validity and trustworthiness of their research. In terms of my positionality, I am an employee of the UNISA English Department where my case study was based. I am also an insider to the discipline of English literary studies. Because I have worked in the UNISA English Department for the last tenyears, I have built friendships with many of my colleagues in the department. This has advantages as well as disadvantages. On the one hand, my knowledge of the internal workings of the department allowed me to ask more relevant and specific questions in my interviews and granted me a deep understanding of the context within which the curriculum operates. I also believe that the professional trust that I built up with my colleagues over an extended period increased their willingness to participate in my study and share information with me. On the other hand, as an insider researcher, I had to take steps to address the danger of my familiarity with the research context leading to common-sense conclusions rather than thoroughly researched findings. I took several steps to mitigate the danger of potential bias in my study. This included member checking to ensure that interview data had been accurately transcribed; doing presentations on my study regularly to a group of peers and supervisors for input; presenting my findings to the English Department where I collected the data for feedback; and making use of strong theoretical lenses for my data analysis.

On my provisional Rhodes University Ethics approval certificate, there was a suggestion that, as an insider researcher, I should think carefully about "the extent to which [my] research participants will feel free to comment on the curricula they are intimately involved with, particularly given the focus of the study - whether or not and how the curriculum enables epistemological access to students" (see Appendix A for the document). The fact that the UNISA English Studies modules were written by a group of colleagues and that the modules tended to be taught by a rotating set of staff members meant that the curriculum content did not reflect on one specific individual. I think that this made it easier for staff members to speak openly about curriculum and pedagogy. My research participants also knew that their comments would be anonymised in my study and that any critiques that my study made would be geared towards improving our offerings rather than levelling accusations. It also helped that I was not in a position of authority over any of the academics that I interviewed. Furthermore, I did not occupy a post level that was higher than any of the academics that I interviewed. This lessened the likelihood that academics might have felt the need to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear.

As I explained in Chapter Two, academic literacies research indicates that disciplinary insiders are often blind to the academic discourses within which their disciplines function, as these discourses have become so normalised for them (see, for example, Jacobs, 2007). My privileged middle-class upbringing could also lead to blindness towards the extent to which middle-class literacy practices might mirror those valued in the discipline. For these reasons, I drew on the strong theoretical lenses and analytical tools provided by LCT to help surface what was legitimated in the curriculum. This allowed me to 'see' the practices of my discipline in a new light and to reveal the discursive practices that were specific to the discipline of English literary studies as practised at UNISA.

Wilmot (2019) explains that while LCT provides a researcher with well-defined theoretical concepts, it is up to the researcher to interpret these concepts in relation to their own data. This, as with all qualitative research, is a subjective process (Wilmot, 2019). However, it is possible to mitigate this weakness by creating translation devices which afford analytical transparency, making explicit how the researcher has mediated between the theory and the data (Wilmot, 2019). These translation devices can then be adopted and/or adapted for the purposes of other studies (Maton, 2014). Translation devices also assist the researcher in conducting a consistent analysis of all the data involved, which bolsters the reliability and validity of the findings

(Wilmot, 2019). Thus, I have provided the translation devices that I used to analyse my data in this chapter. According to Agius (2013, p. 205),

> One way to demonstrate trustworthiness is to present detailed evidence in the form of quotations from interviews and field notes, along with thick textual descriptions of episodes, events and settings. To be trustworthy, qualitative analysis should also be auditable, making it possible to retrace the steps leading to a certain interpretation or theory to check that no alternatives were left unexamined and that no researcher biases had any avoidable influence on the results. Usually, this involves the recording of information about who did what with the data and in what order so that the origin of interpretations can be retraced.

Providing translation devices helps to make the data analysis process more auditable as it allows the reader more insight into how the data analysis was conducted. Throughout my study, I have also cited detailed evidence in the form of direct quotations and thick textual descriptions to support my findings.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the research design for this study and has reflected on why this research design was chosen. I have explained how data was generated and analysed in this study. I have also made an argument for the validity and trustworthiness of the data and the analysis. Overall, this chapter provides analytical transparency by shedding light on each aspect of the research process.

CHAPTER FOUR: UNDERSTANDING THE CULTIVATION OF A LITERARY KNOWER[9]

4.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the kinds of knowledge and dispositions that are valued in the discipline of English literary studies. In order to provide a robust overview of potential understandings of an 'ideal literary knower', I analyse the literature focused on the nature and development of the discipline. I then unpack the values that were articulated in the interviews with academics and the course outlines that I analysed in this case study. I explore understandings from the literature and my data of how one develops this gaze through pedagogic and formative assessment practices. Lastly, I contemplate the implications of my findings in order to make recommendations for curriculum design, pedagogy and formative assessment.

4.2 An LCT Analysis of the Literature on the Discipline of English Literary Studies

As noted in Chapter Two, several other studies have used LCT to investigate the basis upon which success is attainable in English literary studies. While a discipline can be practised in diverse ways in different contexts, the majority of the empirical studies that drew on LCT's dimension of Specialisation (which tells us what kinds of knowledge and/or knowers are valued in a field) found that the discipline was practised as a knower code in their context (Christie, 2016; Luckett & Hunma, 2014; Maton, 2014: 117-124; Sevnarayan, 2015; Van Heerden, 2017; Wilmot, 2019). This means that the attributes or dispositions that students needed to exhibit were key to their success, and specific knowledge related to the object of study (in this case the literary text) was relatively downplayed. Many of these studies also found that English literary studies legitimates what LCT refers to as a 'cultivated gaze' (Christie, 2016; Jackson, G. A., 2020; Luckett & Hunma, 2014; Maton, 2014; Van Heerden, 2017; Wilmot, 2019). Thus, the valued disposition was generally considered to be one that can be developed through immersion in the discipline. It was not a 'social gaze', where you need to be a certain kind of person by

[9] Sections of this chapter have been published as a journal article: Knoetze, R. (2024). Cultivating criticality in a neoliberal system: A case study of an English literature curriculum at a mega distance university. *Higher Education*, 84, 1677–1692. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-023-01084-y

birth or social category (e.g. inborn talent, gender, race or sexual orientation) in order to have the valued disposition.

When I turned to scholarship by literary theorists, critics and educators on the nature of English literary studies, I found support for the idea that the discipline tends to be practised as a cultivated knower code. While these scholars do not use the LCT terminology, what they say about the discipline suggests that it tends to be practised with weaker boundaries around *what* or *how* literature can be studied (weaker epistemic relations) and with stronger boundaries around the *disposition* a scholar needs to exhibit in order to study literature (stronger social relations). For example, Terry Eagleton (1996), a seminal scholar of literary theory, explains that literary criticism cannot be distinguished from other disciplines (e.g. linguistics, history and sociology) in terms of its methods of enquiry and that the discipline makes use of a broad range of methods that have more in common with other disciplines than with each other. This explanation downplays epistemic relations, suggesting that English literary studies places relatively weaker restrictions around the procedures or methods by which literary texts can be studied.

Eagleton (1996) further argues that literary criticism cannot be defined in terms of its object of study, as 'literariness' is not an inherent quality within a text but something that reflects the values of its readers. Which texts are considered 'Literature' can change over time; for example, a piece of writing may have started as a philosophical, historical or religious text but come to form part of a literary canon over time (Eagleton, 1996).[10] Eagleton's explanation once again downplays epistemic relations. In this case, the boundaries around what can be considered a legitimate object of study within the discipline are relatively weakly delimited. Similarly, Doecke and Mead (2018, p. 253) suggest that the discipline has weaker epistemic relations when they explain that "changes in the meaning and status of literary texts have the effect of destabilising any notion of a specific 'content knowledge' (cf. Shulman 1986) that English teachers might be expected to possess". They also argue that "[w]here individual tertiary programmes in English or literary studies survive, they have permeable boundaries and

[10] Examples of this include John Donne's religious sermons and the essays of Sir Francis Bacon. Furthermore, as I explained in Chapter One, when literature began to be taught at Oxford and Cambridge in the late 19th century, whether novels could be classified as literature was still a contentious issue (Irvine, 2010). Today, one would be hard pressed to find an English literature curriculum that does not include the study of novels.

demonstrate a heterogeneous array of modes of literary knowledge, according to national, institutional and local priorities" (Doecke & Mead, 2018, p. 253), a position which correlates with Eagleton's idea that literary studies tends not to draw strong boundaries around *what* and *how* literature should be studied.

If specialised knowledge and/or specialised methodologies are not what make English literary studies a distinctive field of practice, there must be some other kind of shared foundation that allows practitioners to join the academic conversation within the discipline. Eagleton (1996, p. 14) suggests that a shared disposition governs the boundaries of the discipline when he explains that

> the value-judgements by which it [literature] is constituted are historically variable, but … these value-judgements themselves have a close relation to social ideologies. They refer in the end not simply to private taste, but to the assumptions by which certain social groups exercise and maintain power over others.

In LCT terms, Eagleton sees social relations rather than epistemic relations as governing the boundaries of the discipline of literary studies. A shared understanding (which is historically variable) of what constitutes literature sets the boundaries around what can be studied as literature. In terms of how literature is studied, Olsen (2016, p. 45), a specialist in the development of the discipline of English literary studies, explains the following:

> Interpretative criticism … is simply an extension of the 'reading' practice of the common reader. Some readers will have better training than others and will be better at recognising and communicating the features of a literary work of art that makes it worthy of attention. They will have a greater fund of knowledge, that is, they will know more about the literary history of which a particular work or oeuvre is a part, more about literary techniques and conventions, more about the cultural (including artistic), social, economic, and political context in which a literary work or an oeuvre was produced, know more about the provenance and problems of the text of the work, and so on, and *bring all this knowledge to bear in the interpretation of the work.* They will have had a greater *exposure to literature and the arts in general* and will have developed *a sense of what to look for and what connections to establish* both internally in the work or oeuvre they are interpreting and *with other literary works and other arts*. (my emphasis)

What is important to note is that while Olsen (2016) sees more competent literary critics as those who have been acquainted with a larger number of different kinds of knowledges related directly or tangentially to the literary work in question, he is not drawing strong boundaries around a specific set of hierarchically organised knowledge that a literary critic must possess in order to succeed. This suggests that we are not dealing with a discipline underpinned by stronger epistemic relations, where the knowledge forms "a coherent, explicit and

systematically principled structure, hierarchically organized" (Bernstein cited in Martin et al., 2020a, p. 11). Instead, Olsen (2016) recommends exposure to a broad swath of knowledges which includes knowledge of literary techniques and conventions, other literary works, socio-historical knowledge and knowledge of other forms of art. Furthermore, possessing this knowledge in itself does not make for a good literary critic: the person also needs to "bring this knowledge to bear on the interpretation of the work" and have developed "a sense of what to look for" (Olsen, 2016, p. 45) in the literary text and in terms of connections between the text and the other relevant knowledges that the person might possess. In LCT terms, Olsen suggests that successful literary critics rely on a cultivated sensibility or gaze that has developed through exposure or 'immersion' in the field rather than through acquiring a specific set of hierarchically organised knowledge or learning to follow specific procedures (stronger social relations and weaker epistemic relations). Olsen's (2016) ideas align with Maton's (2014) Specialisation analysis of a high school English literature curriculum in which he found that the basis of achievement was a shared 'cultivated gaze': a way of looking at the object of study that develops through immersion in the field over an extended period.

A review of the literature on English literary studies thus suggests that what is valued is a specific disposition in the knower more than the acquisition of agreed-upon knowledge or skills. This aligns with those studies mentioned above that used LCT's dimension of Specialisation to look at English literary studies. In an analysis of my data, to which I now turn, I found the same emphasis on a specific disposition as the basis for legitimation.

4.3 An LCT Analysis of the Data Generated for My Case Study

My analysis of the data generated for my case study correlates with previous LCT studies which found English literary studies to legitimate a cultivated knower code. It might be useful at this point to refer to Chapter Three, which provided the translation devices that I created to translate between the theoretical concepts linked to Specialisation and their empirical realisations in my data. While I show that social relations were more strongly emphasised than epistemic relations in the curriculum under study, it is important to keep in mind that every social practice is made up of *both* knowledge and knower structures (Maton, 2014). However,

> [f]or knowledge-code fields the principal basis for legitimacy is developing knowledge, and training specialized knowers is a means to this end. For knower-code fields the principal basis for legitimacy is developing knowers, and creating specialist knowledge is a means for doing so. (Maton, 2014, p. 96)

I begin by discussing my data from the case study with respect to Maton's broader concepts of epistemic and social relations and the related hierarchical and horizontal knowledge/knower structures. I then move on to discuss gazes before narrowing down to discuss two specific manifestations of the cultivated gaze that emerged in the data.

4.3.1 Navigating Knowledge Through a Cultivated Critical Disposition

The 'purpose and outcomes' statements for the six modules under study suggested that while English literature students were expected to have knowledge of literary devices, literary genres, literary theories, the socio-cultural contexts of literary texts, essay composition and academic referencing techniques, this knowledge on its own would not allow them to succeed in the modules. It was crucial that students harness this knowledge to display their 'literary sensibilities' through formulating critical arguments about how meanings are created in literary texts. Thus, a specific disposition or way of engaging with literary texts was legitimated (stronger social relations). For example, the module 'ENG2602: Genres in Literature and Language: Theory, Style and Poetics' required students "to *evaluate the effectiveness* of particular instances of figurative language (such as simile, metaphor, personification and irony) in writing" (my emphasis); to "read literary language as a means of positioning the reader in order to elicit a particular response"; and "discuss the effects of emotive language, bias and point of view in writing". A student would need something more than just knowledge of literary techniques in order to display the kind of understanding of literary texts valued, and there are no simple steps that one can give a student to follow that will ensure that they will get it right. Instead, students need to draw on their ability to look at literary texts in a specific way (their critical reading abilities) to be able to reflect on how a specific literary technique contributes to the overall meaning of a text (stronger social relations).

Similarly, one of the course outcomes for 'ENG2603: Colonial and Postcolonial African Literatures' read as follows:

> Students explain how the politics of representation shapes literary texts and their reception in postcolonial contexts. Students are encouraged to think beyond the intended meanings of the text. As developing critics, students are also expected to come up with new meanings of texts that relate to students' lived experiences.

In this case, a student would have to combine their knowledge of theoretical concepts with their critical disposition and self-reflexivity to demonstrate that they are a specific kind of knower/critical reader (stronger social relations). The ENG2603 'purpose and outcomes'

statement also highlights that a specific disposition is valued when it states, “Our aim is to motivate you to read the texts we have selected for you with an open mind”.

The course outcomes of all six modules highlighted the knower attributes of critical thinking/writing/engagement. In addition, one of the second-year modules and all the third-year modules highlighted the importance of independent thinking and self-reflexivity. Therefore, there was a strong emphasis in the ‘purpose and outcomes’ statements of the six modules on the kind of disposition that a legitimate knower needed to enact, and this emphasis grew stronger at higher levels of study. For example, ‘ENG3705: Modern and Postmodern Literature in English’ explained:

> We expect you to read the prescribed texts with attention and explore the ways in which they question conventional views of identity and writing. These texts invite *multiple interpretations* (which can be ambiguous or contradictory) and *resist a single or definitive reading*. As you read these works, therefore, you will need to *construct your own views of what they ‘mean’*. You will need to do this in the context of a type of writing that *can be read in many different ways*.
>
> In your Guide, we illustrate *some approaches to reading your prescribed texts, but these are by no means the only possible ones*, or even the best ones. You need to *employ them with critical attention as starting points for arriving at your own understanding*. This will ensure that you respond to this module as an *active reader* and a true student of literature. (my emphasis)

This quotation highlights that students were not expected to arrive at a specific correct interpretation of a literary text by drawing on specific knowledge or a specific set of procedures (weaker epistemic relations). Instead, students were expected to be a certain kind of person who displays the attributes of independent thinking and critical engagement (stronger social relations).

Overall, social relations were also strongly emphasised in the interviews I conducted with academics, and there were some instances of epistemic relations being explicitly downplayed. When I asked about the knowledge, abilities or attributes academics would like English Studies graduates to have upon completing their degree, academics highlighted knower attributes such as criticality, the ability to support individual interpretations through logically persuasive arguments and broad-mindedness. One academic stated that they were not “looking for specific

kinds of knowledge because … we have really reached the age where knowledge is at the end of your fingertips",[11] instead they were looking for a specific open-minded disposition:

> I'm looking for a postmodernist, a person who's not rigid in their thinking, who can see many paradigms of thought together and say, 'Okay, I think I'll use something for this, and something else for something else', and not be … filled with preconceptions and prejudices. (Interview 6)

Another academic said that by the end of the third year,

> …if I've achieved nothing else, I want that person to be an independent thinker … who's able to take any source of information, whether it's an argument or an article or a Facebook meme, and think about it in terms of how it is constructed; for what purpose it was meant to be; and to be able to then derive an opinion or an interpretation of it based on their own perspective. (Interview 1)

A certain disposition or way of engaging with literary texts (and the world beyond them) is emphasised more strongly in these two quotations than specialised knowledge concentrated on a specific object of study. The relatively weaker boundaries around what knowledges the discipline can incorporate (weaker epistemic relations) also come through quite clearly in the following quotation: "English literature is everything. It's history, it's political science, it's sociology: everything, you find it there" (Interview 15).

When we consider the kinds of knowledges embedded in the six literature courses under study, it should be noted that we are not dealing with the "hierarchical knowledge structures" (Maton, 2014) that one would expect to find in fields like science and mathematics (where certain fundamental concepts need to be grasped in order to understand increasingly complex concepts or procedures as you progress through the years of study). Instead, although the literary devices and genre conventions that students learnt about at the first-year level were referred to in the course outcomes as "the basics", students continued to employ these same 'basic' concepts in their analyses of literary texts at all levels of study. While it was possible that students could learn about new literary devices, genres or techniques in later years of study, this knowledge would sit alongside previous knowledge, expanding the toolkit that students could draw on in their analysis of literary texts, but not building cumulatively on the previous concepts that students learnt. At second and third-year levels, other forms of knowledges were also added to

[11] This academic is using the term 'knowledge' in the everyday sense of 'information' rather than in the LCT sense of the word.

the curriculum: one of the two second-year modules incorporated concepts from postcolonial theory, and all three third-year modules required students to engage with scholarly writings (or secondary sources) on the texts under study and to apply concepts from selected social theories[12] to the literary texts. However, these knowledges did not build directly onto the knowledge about literary devices and genres in the first-year curriculum. Instead, these knowledges sat alongside the 'basic' first-year knowledge as other sets of knowledges that students could draw on in their analyses of literary texts. Thus, the curriculum had a horizontal knowledge structure and placed relatively weaker boundaries around epistemic relations.

As students proceeded through their years of study, the data showed that they were expected to become increasingly specialised. However, this was not in terms of mastering increasingly complex concepts that built incrementally on one another, instead, specialisation increased in terms of the more sophisticated analyses that students were expected to produce – integrating different kinds of knowledges in original ways to reflect on literary texts critically. For example, the 'purpose and outcomes' statement for the third-year course, 'ENG3704: Shakespeare's Dramatic Art: Explorations', required students to "adopt a *critical*, *theoretically sound* and *independent* exploration of the prescribed Shakespearean plays", while displaying an ability to "*integrate* their analysis of *primary texts* with *secondary critical* and *theoretical* source material" (my emphasis). In the interviews, many academics highlighted that at higher levels of study, students are required to synthesise their own interpretations of literary texts with the arguments of other literary scholars, knowledge of the socio-historical contexts of texts and/or concepts from theory.[13] For example, one academic working on both a first- and a third-year module explained that

> … at first-year level we want students to learn basic skills, such as, when we teach poetry, basic poetic devices … By the end of the year, the students should have all the skills[14] to write an essay that is logical, that is coherent, and that is relevant, and to extract evidence from a text, … whereas in the third-year module, we expect, certainly, a higher degree of

[12] These social theories are often grouped alongside more literature-specific theories under the umbrella term of 'literary theory'. However, it is important to keep in mind that literary studies draws on a range of social theories that tend to be applied to a variety of humanities and social sciences disciplines rather than being specialised knowledge that is specific to the study of literature. Thus, we are dealing with relatively weaker epistemic relations when we look at the application of social theories to literary texts.

[13] Nine of the sixteen academics spoke about this overtly and it came up more implicitly in at least three other interviews.

[14] The word 'skills' came up many times in the quotations from the interviews and study material used in this chapter. I reflect on what this may reveal about academics' understandings of academic literacy practices in the next chapter.

> *synthesis* between well, on the one hand, primary texts, and we start introducing them to secondary texts as well. But we expect a more *sophisticated* understanding of how literature works. (Interview 2, my emphasis)

The word 'sophisticated' came up in several interviews in relation to the kinds of analyses that academics valued at higher levels of study (Interviews 2, 3, 4, 7, 10). This choice of word indicates that what was being valued was a kind of gaze or way of looking at literary texts that was expected to become increasingly refined over time. In LCT terms, this suggests that academics were talking about a 'cultivated gaze' and a hierarchical knower structure, where students are progressively inculcated into taking on the valued disposition or gaze of the ideal knower.

In my interviews with staff, there was a considerable amount of variance in academics' opinions concerning the level at which they felt certain knowledges should be introduced into the curriculum. For example, in terms of secondary sources, one academic felt that students should be required to integrate sources into their essays from the first-year level; three that this should be required from the second year; eight that the third year was the most appropriate level; and the other four were unclear on the matter. Similarly, two academics felt strongly that students should be exposed to theory from the first-year level; nine felt that the third year was the most appropriate level; and the other five did not provide a clear answer. The varied opinions of disciplinary insiders regarding the level at which certain knowledges should be integrated into the curriculum supports the idea that we are not dealing with a hierarchical knowledge structure where knowledge principles build cumulatively on one another but, instead, with a horizontal knowledge structure where there is flexibility in terms of how knowledge can be sequenced in the curriculum. As the curriculum stood, students were required to start working with concepts from literary theory in one of the modules at the second-year level and only the third-year course outcomes included the outcome that students needed to be able to incorporate secondary sources into their own readings of literary texts.

My data analysis also suggested that there was a reasonable amount of flexibility in the curriculum content in terms of the actual texts that were prescribed. For example, the first-year module, ENG1501, had recently undergone a revision where the British and American literature that formed part of the course had been replaced with South African literature. The flexibility that academics had in terms of choosing what literary texts to prescribe also came through strongly in the following quotation:

> I think that it is good to try and, at a third-year level, introduce some different perspectives to range beyond simply the African context, or the South African context and, ja, explore different horizons. Those don't necessarily have to be European or American, those can also be world literatures, but I think that that expansion is important. As far as American and British literatures are concerned, I think, you know, perhaps there's also a kind of a professional value in dealing with those. (Interview 12)

This relative flexibility in terms of curriculum content once again suggests that we are dealing with weaker epistemic relations.

Other kinds of knowledges that were valued in the course outcomes included the ability "to write … coherently and with compliance to the requirements of academic English" (ENG2602); to "write well-structured paragraphs and essays" (ENG2603); and to "scrupulously identify and cite sources" (ENG3703). Since these course outcomes could easily have come from a different Humanities or Social Sciences module, such as one in History or Education, I consider these kinds of knowledges to be comparatively less discipline-specific and therefore less specialised (i.e. weaker epistemic relations).

There was also some focus on more discipline-specific academic literacies in the course outcomes. For example, 'ENG1501: Foundations in English Literary Studies' required students to display "argumentative skills in the form of a sustained written analysis of a literary text, using subject-specific conventions" and 'ENG3703: Theoretical Approaches to English Language and Literature' required students to "conduct a logical and coherent argument supported by textual evidence" to "express and support their own interpretations of theories and texts". In this curriculum, the argumentative essay was the form through which students were most often required to display the attributes of the 'ideal literary knower'. This requires generic English language skills, such as decoding skills, basic reading comprehension, grammar skills and basic knowledge of essay structure (what goes into the introduction, body and conclusion). However, as I explained in Chapter Two, academic literacies research has shown us that basic competence in the language of instruction is only a small part of successfully taking on discipline-specific literacy practices. It also requires taking on subject-specific ways of reading and writing. As I show below, the interviews that I conducted with academics suggested that these discipline-specific reading and writing practices develop through immersion and apprenticeship into the discipline and cannot be taught by merely providing students with a detailed set of instructions that need to be followed.

4.3.2 Cultivating the 'Literary Disposition'

When asked about the extent to which it is a case of students either 'having it or not having it' when it comes to literary criticism – i.e. Can *anyone* learn to analyse literature or is it an innate ability? – most academics (nine out of the twelve interviews in which this topic came up) suggested clearly that literary analysis was not an innate ability but something that could be developed. For example, one academic said:

> I definitely do not think there's such a thing as an intrinsic ability to analyse English literature. I really would not think that. But that being said, I do think that some students come from backgrounds that's more literary, more friendly to literature… where, say, for example, they read books.... And, also, the educations that students receive are also very important. So, some students bring more skills … more relevant skills to the table, than others do. (Interview 6)

This quotation, and others in the data like it, suggests that we are dealing with a cultivated gaze which can be developed through immersion over an extended period and not with a social gaze, where you need to be a certain kind of person by birth or social category (e.g. inborn talent, gender, race or sexual orientation) to have the valued disposition. A cultivated gaze is open to anyone if there is enough structured support to provide the immersion that is necessary to take on the gaze.

The three academics who felt that students had to have some innate aptitude in order to succeed in the discipline did not believe that this aptitude on its own was enough for students to succeed: they emphasised the idea that the curriculum needed to provide immersion into the legitimate ways of approaching literary texts for students to develop the valued literacy practices. Thus, one could argue that they saw the discipline as a 'born gaze' that requires both inherent aptitude and cultivation. However, what these academics saw as innate aptitude may in actual fact have more to do with whether or not students have been exposed to a reading culture as a child. Several academics suggested that one's exposure to literature and reading as a child affects the ease with which one can succeed in the discipline (Interview 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13). For example, one academic said:

> I think people have the capacity to do anything … depending on what they've been exposed to, how much effort they put in, but also, like, what their opportunities have been. … I think it's easier for students from a middle-class upbringing to succeed in English Studies because they are more literate; they've maybe been exposed to having, like, books at home; or … they've had books at school, so they've been exposed to those things more. And if they … can express themselves well in one language, then they tend to do better in English literary studies… especially when they're English speaking… But the underlying skills in

> terms of, like, how to build an argument and how to argue, you know, just verbally or how to think logically and critically: I think those skills can be taught to anyone. (Interview 9)

Similarly, another academic said:

> And so, I think, for example, a person who grows up in a literature-loving household, already has such a head start on people who don't. And I think those people are seen as what you refer to as "having it". It's not an intrinsic quality in them that makes them "have it": it's the privilege of their childhood and their schooling and different kinds of factors that combined to make it seem as though they just intrinsically have it. Whereas other people I strongly believe that that can be fostered, and whether you learn to love reading as a child or whether you learn to love reading at university level, I think that's the first step towards becoming a literary critic. Because it's your primary engagement with literature. And if you love it, then you're going to want to think about it, and that is the important thing. (Interview 1)

Thus, it seems that although we are dealing with a gaze that can be cultivated, some students are going to come to the discipline with more of that cultivation already in place than others. These ideas correlate with Heath's (1982) seminal literacies research that found that children from working-class backgrounds tend to be brought up with literacy practices less aligned to those valued in formal schooling than children from middle-class backgrounds. Armstrong and Boughey's (2020) case study of a marginalised community in a large South African city also showed how children in this community had limited exposure to written texts which meant that they had limited opportunities to develop the literacy practices concerning texts valued in formal schooling. Furthermore, the context of limited material resources in which these children were being raised meant that they were unlikely to master the forms of elaborate linguistic description valued in formal educational settings (Armstrong & Boughey, 2020). As mentioned in Chapter Two, there is also a lot of research that shows a correlation between socioeconomic status and higher education success (Case et al., 2018). The implication of this is that higher education can inadvertently reinforce rather than challenge social divides by rewarding those from wealthy and middle-class backgrounds while alienating others. What is very important to ensure equity of success, then, is to make sure that the curriculum provides an immersive space where students from all backgrounds can gain epistemological and ontological access to the valued gaze and not just the students who already have a certain level of cultivation in place due to their prior experiences. I discuss this in more detail in the next chapter.

Maton (2014) describes a cultivated knower code as a way of being or seeing that develops through prolonged immersion in a practice. Indeed, when asked about the kinds of pedagogies that are needed to develop the valued ways of reading, writing and thinking in the discipline, academics placed a strong emphasis on the idea of immersion. My interview data suggested that this immersion could take the form of:

- dialogues between students and a lecturer or tutor (Interviews 6, 11, 12, 14);
- lecturers modelling the valued ways of engaging with literary texts, literary scholarship and theory (Interviews 2, 12, 13, 16) and providing opportunities for students to try out these practices (Interviews 11, 12);
- immersion in written models of literary analysis (Interviews 3, 8, 10, 12, 13);
- being steeped in literary theory (Interview 3);
- individualised feedback on writing provided by a disciplinary insider (Interviews 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 15); and/or
- engagement with the diverse range of perspectives portrayed in the prescribed literary texts (Interviews 1, 2, 9, 12, 13, 15).[15]

For example, when asked about how one helps a student develop their ability to engage analytically with literary texts, one academic explained that one needs to take a dialogic teaching approach which entails encouraging students:

> to read, pause, read, understand, get a first impression, pause, and go back to that and see if they can't see it from a different perspective. The way we approach it is to encourage multiple interpretations of a text, you know, and we should do that by perhaps asking questions like, 'Okay, you see it that way, what if I were to disagree with you on your opinion?' That forces them to start thinking differently.... (Interview 14).

Another academic recommended teaching students to engage critically with literary texts by

> …combining a little bit of criticism with metacriticism so that on the one hand you model your deconstructive reading, and on the other hand you explain your deconstructive reading. And then you need to provide the opportunity for the students to experiment with that as well, for the students to then try and model that themselves to do their own sort of deconstructive readings…. (Interview 12)

[15] This last point is discussed in more detail in Section 4.3.3 of this chapter.

Both quotations emphasise interactional pedagogies as a means for developing disciplinary reading practices. Similarly, a few academics talked about how difficult it is to teach the practice of close reading – the ability to reflect on how language choices and literary conventions create meaning in texts – without having regular interactions with students (Interviews 2, 11, 12). For example, one academic said:

> I think if you are in a classroom, … you can have your slides up … and you can demonstrate what close reading is. I think it's a far, far more difficult thing to demonstrate in a study guide. We certainly do that with the first-year module, but you actually... You know, this is just the kind of thing where students need to learn by seeing someone do it and repeating. A lot of it is literally just repeating the same exercise over and over again…. (Interview 2)

As in the previous quotation, the value of learning from a disciplinary insider who models the legitimated literacy practices is emphasised here. Another academic emphasised the value of teaching close reading as a collaborative activity, but suggested that this was a difficult thing to do in the specific distance education context:

> So, I think it is difficult to teach it at first year, and I think it's difficult to – in a distance context – to get students to understand that act of close reading where you do those three things of defining the concept and then finding the example and explaining its function. It's hard to do that in a distance context where, when you're with them in the classroom, you could always turn it into a kind of, like, collaborative activity, which, unfortunately, the ODeL [online distance e-learning] model doesn't allow for, not necessarily because you can't do collaborative things in ODeL, but more because of the technological and... technological constraints and the limited resources that a lot of our students and also our universities have. (Interview 11)

Thus, immersion could take the form of being exposed to other students' attempts at performing close readings in addition to the modelling provided by lecturers, as emphasised in the previous quotation.

In terms of teaching students to engage with theory, a few academics highlighted the importance of providing students with examples of how a theory is applied to a literary text (Interviews 3, 10, 12, 13). For instance, one academic said:

> … I do think examples of theoretical analyses is the best way to go. … And that was also the way that I was taught… And there we were given an introduction to the theory, and it was, sort of… There were three steps. … First give them an introduction to the theory …, then the primary text. So, let's say, introduction to deconstruction, written by Tyson or Peter Barry, then an essay from Derrida [the original theorist], and then an example of how that has been applied. And, to my mind, that's the best way to teach theory. (Interview 10)

Another academic explained that students must be

> guided on how to use [theories] and given examples of how a theory is integrated into a particular argument. As a teacher, I always find giving students examples works best. So, if you give them an example, 'This is an essay…' – you can take it from the previous year if the student agrees – and then you say, 'Look how this particular article… this idea from this particular article has been brought into this paragraph, and this theme, and this is the argument'. So, you know, giving them these directions and boxes and say, 'Look how it's been integrated and how…'. It might work. But it has to be demonstrated to them, you know, even if it's going live sessions and that, but showing them how to integrate theory in their analysis of texts, and do it fruitfully…. (Interview 13)

It would appear that immersion in these demonstrations of theory being applied to literary texts was seen as important because it was not regarded as possible to provide students with a recipe that they could follow in the same way every time to ensure the successful incorporation of theory into their analyses. This is corroborated by another academic's explanation of how one has to work with literary theory. They explained that it is not enough to merely know a theory and then "impose" the theory on a literary text. Instead, one needs to read and re-read the theory until "you start to think like that; you start to look at a text like that; you start to employ those theoretical principles but in a very organic sort of way" (Interview 3). All three of these quotations suggest that a theoretical way of looking at literary texts needs to develop organically from immersion in a theory and/or through exposure to examples of the application of that theory. This is very different from precisely following a set of steps or procedures: something which is often valued in more knowledge-oriented disciplines. This suggests that, as is the case with close reading, producing convincing theoretical readings of literary texts requires a cultivated gaze.

In terms of critical writing, academics reflecting on ways to assist struggling students in developing their essay writing abilities emphasised the importance of personalised engagement between the lecturer and the student (Interviews 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16). This could take the form of individualised contact sessions with students to help them translate their ideas into the literary essay form and/or providing detailed individualised feedback on written work (sometimes involving students doing multiple drafts of the same piece of work, each time incorporating the lecturer's feedback). One academic pointed out the following:

> For those students – for ones that are really, really struggling, they do need one on one. You can give them group stuff … but that is not sufficient if the student is too weak, then it's one on one, and it's drafts. I mean, [specific module code] was a semester module, and I had a couple of students, in that semester module, they submitted me five or six drafts

> before they submitted their assignment. So, they then would pass the assignment and then we would go on and do that for the next and then for the exam. (Interview 5)

Another academic summarised assisting struggling students as follows:

> … the core of it is they need to practise … I need to provide feedback on what they've done, and they need to go back and practise again.... I think in terms of writing skills, it's not something you can read to learn how to do. (Interview 9)

Overall, academics' responses suggested that teaching students to analyse literature requires time-consuming (on behalf of the lecturer and the student), interactional pedagogic and formative assessment practices to cultivate the valued gaze and related literacy practices.

When I engaged with the literature on the teaching and learning of English literary studies, I found similar recommendations for pedagogic spaces in which students can be immersed in the discipline. There was also a strong emphasis on social interaction. For example, Chick (2009) recommends not teaching literary analysis as a set of lectures in which an established academic presents their own polished analyses of literary texts, as this can lead to students thinking that what is required of them is to reproduce the analysis provided by the lecturer. Instead, the classroom should be a space for students to "participate in conversations (oral and written) evaluating and negotiating different interpretations, theories [and] critical responses" so that they can learn how knowledge is made within the discipline and thus learn to produce their own critical readings of texts (Chick, 2009, p. 48). Similarly, Gibson (2017, p. 99) sees "the study of literature [as] dialogic, involving, at its best, rich overlapping conversations between students, the literature they read, and the teachers they meet". Moreover, Doeke and Mead (2018) highlight that there is a long tradition of English educators and literary theorists emphasising the importance of the classroom as a social space where students can collectively engage in the interpretation of literary texts, making meaningful connections between their personal experiences and the world of the writer.

While only three academics that I interviewed specifically emphasised these kinds of participatory teaching strategies (perhaps because the staff-to-student ratios on the first- and second-year modules would make this kind of teaching very difficult),[16] there is agreement between the academics I interviewed and the literature in terms of the idea that effective

[16] I discuss the constraints posed by high staff-to-student ratios in detail in the next chapter.

teaching in the discipline of English literary studies requires time-consuming, immersive and interactional pedagogies. However, as I show below, it is possible for there to be more than one kind of orientation within the cultivated gaze that is valued in a curriculum, and it is important to be aware of these specificities in order to provide students with a coherent curriculum that develops all aspects of that curriculum's ideal literary knower.

4.3.3 Two Orientations Within the Cultivated Gaze

Something else emerged from my Specialisation analysis, where I delved deeply into the six modules under study and what academics were saying about the valued disposition. I found that although they were all emphasising a cultivated knower code (with stronger social relations and weaker epistemic relations) that develops through immersion in the discipline, there was actually more than one orientation within the cultivated gaze that was being valued in the curriculum. I have named the two orientations that I distinguished in the data the 'aesthetic orientation' and the 'socio-critical orientation'. I unpack the nuanced differences between these below (see Section 4.3.4) and discuss the extent to which each was emphasised in different sections of the curriculum. I discuss the implications of this finding for curriculum design and pedagogy in Sections 4.3.5 and 4.4 below.

What I have termed the 'aesthetic orientation' entails the ability to comment compellingly on how specific language and literary features create certain meanings or effects in literary texts. This is often referred to by academics as 'close reading'. For example, a poem might contain a metaphor in which a woman is compared to a rose. Reading the poem through the aesthetic orientation would entail identifying this metaphor and commenting on how it adds to the meaning of the poem. Perhaps one might argue that the comparison between the woman and the rose is a reflection of the temporary nature of beauty. The aesthetic orientation has a lot of similarities to 'practical criticism', which I discussed in my history of English literary studies section in Chapter One. I provide an example below of a passage from the ENG1501 study guide that provides students with an activity as an example of how they should go about studying a poem from an aesthetic orientation:

> Print out a copy of the poem, 'Whales', and circle or underline all of the poetic devices that you can find. In your activity journal, write notes about how each of the poetic devices that you have identified contributes to the meaning of the poem. This is how you should study all of your prescribed poems in preparation for the examination. (ENG1501 study guide)

Thus, reading texts from an aesthetic orientation entails coming to a deep understanding of how specific language choices contribute to the meaning of the text as a whole.

What I conceive of as a socio-critical orientation is demonstrated by considering texts in relation to ideological and social issues. This often entails reading literary texts through the lenses of social theories such as feminism or postcolonial theory. The socio-critical orientation aligns with the kinds of readings that came to be emphasised in the discipline from the 1960s onwards, where the historical, political and economic contexts in which texts were produced came to be seen as central. In the quotation below from the study guide for ENG3705, students are provided with an example of what a feminist reading of Picasso's painting, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, might look like:

> Feminist theory tries to analyse how gender inequality determines the conception of women's social roles and experiences under masculine domination. This theory sees gender as constructed by the social norms of any given time period. A feminist interpretation of Picasso's painting would … draw the assumption that he is equating women with the primitive and as such with the idea of the 'other'. (ENG3705 study guide)

What is clear from this quotation is that the socio-critical orientation can be used not only to read literary texts but also to interpret other cultural artefacts. The socio-critical orientation entails considering how texts (or other cultural artefacts) reflect on and are a reflection of society.

It should be noted that I have separated these two orientations for analytical purposes, but as I show below, ideological readings of literary texts tend to still make use of close reading techniques. Likewise, in close readings of literary texts, ideological issues will often surface. As one academic explained:

> …in first and second level … you can never take theory out of a literary analysis, but the theory isn't made explicit to them. So, in third level they should see, 'Ah, so all this time I've actually been using these lenses'. (Interview 10)

Although the aesthetic and the socio-critical orientations cannot be completely separated, as suggested in this quotation, different year levels of the curriculum placed different levels of emphasis on the two orientations.

The curriculum was structured in such a way that the aesthetic orientation was foregrounded at lower levels of study, while the socio-critical orientation was emphasised in one of the second year and all of the third-year modules. As can be seen from the course outcomes reproduced

below, the first-year module outcomes focused exclusively on the aesthetic orientation, with no mention of ideological concerns or concepts from a social theory. The course outcomes read as follows:

> This module provides a foundation for literary study. Its outcomes develop your ability to:
> - demonstrate an informed understanding of the genre-specific reading strategies required to read a range of literary texts in different genres at an inferential level
> - demonstrate an informed understanding of the literary features that characterize each genre
> - demonstrate an ability to identify these features in literary texts and comment on their significance in the production of textual meaning; and
> - demonstrate argumentative skills in the form of a sustained written analysis of a literary text, using subject-specific conventions and acceptable academic discourse

Thus, an aesthetic orientation is foregrounded in these course outcomes. Although these first-year course outcomes make no mention of ideological issues, it should be noted that the module included texts that dealt thematically with concerns of race, class and gender and that, among other things, students were required to engage with the thematic concerns of the texts in their close readings. For example, according to the study guide, some of the themes in the prescribed novel that students were expected to be familiar with included: "Art and its place/role in society"; "Inequality and class"; and "History and the Transition (of South Africa from an apartheid to democratic state)". This suggests that close reading could rarely be practised without ideological issues being at play on some level. Similarly, one of the second-year modules, ENG2602, placed a strong emphasis on close reading in all four of its course outcomes. However, there was a somewhat implicit suggestion that ideological or social concerns could come up as students interacted with literary texts through the practice of close reading in the third course outcome, which stated that students should be able to "discuss the effects of emotive language, bias and point of view in writing" and "include commentary on how the intended reader is positioned".

On the other hand, ENG2603, the other second-year module, placed a strong emphasis on social concerns in its course outcomes, highlighting that students needed to be able to "employ the key concepts and debates in postcolonial literary theory" and "to come up with new meanings of texts that relate to students' lived experiences". While the socio-critical orientation was thus explicit, the aesthetic orientation was still evident in this module as the first course outcome focused on close reading. The assignment questions for the module did not demarcate questions that required close reading from questions that required students to discuss social concerns.

Thus, it seemed that students were expected to combine the aesthetic and the socio-critical orientations in their readings of literary texts. The same was true for the third-year assignment questions. I found a clear emphasis on both close reading and social theory in the assignment guidelines for ENG3703. Students were provided with a checklist to keep in mind while writing their assignment on eco-criticism. One of the points on the checklist read: "Do your *close reading* and *utilisation of the theory* form a *critical synthesis* that provides a strong foundation for your overall analysis of the chapters from the novel?" (my emphasis).

The idea that students at higher levels of study were required to integrate the aesthetic and socio-critical orientations is also evidenced in the following two quotations from the interviews with academics. One academic explained that at the third-year level, students needed to be able to read critically and write critically about literary texts, and defined critical reading and writing, among other things as

> …the ability to contextualise a text; to place it within its context; to evaluate it *on an aesthetic level* but also on a sort of *social critical level*. (Interview 10, my emphasis)

In a follow-up email based on their interview, another academic wrote:

> I don't think that these different elements of literary criticism can be neatly separated. So I don't think one would ever be able to do simply or only close reading. … Nevertheless, I think that a good deal of close reading in undergraduate studies, particularly in first and probably second year, should serve as an essential foundation of literary studies. Ideally, I think that more and more complex "theoretical" readings should emerge as the student progresses through undergrad – in a manner which continues to emphasize the necessity of a close attentiveness to the details of the text. … One still reads closely, but now *also* "reads" a broader discursive text … – instead of drawing insights towards an understanding of the work as object, one might draw them towards other ends (tracking structures of consciousness; deconstructing violent hierarchies; effecting political change; expressing cultural identity). In this instance too, I believe close reading remains essential. (Interview twelve follow-up email, original emphasis)

These quotations both make a distinction between the basic act of close reading – the aesthetic orientation – and a more socially oriented kind of reading – the socio-critical orientation. However, both also suggest that the ideal literary knower who should emerge at higher levels of study is someone who can integrate these two orientations into their readings of literary texts.

Something else that comes out clearly in the last quotation is the different strengths in terms of the epistemic relations that underpin these two orientations within the valued cultivated gaze. The aesthetic orientation is concerned with understanding a literary text, oeuvre or genre, while

the socio-critical orientation is concerned with understanding and critiquing the text as a reflection of broader social issues. Thus, while both orientations fall within the cultivated gaze, with stronger social relations and weaker epistemic relations, the aesthetic orientation places comparatively stronger boundaries around the object of study than the socio-critical orientation. In other words, epistemic relations are slightly stronger in the aesthetic orientation than in the socio-critical orientation. The aesthetic orientation also draws on more discipline-specific methods of inquiry as it requires students to draw on knowledge that is relatively specific to the literary art form, such as knowledge of literary techniques, as part of displaying their literary disposition in their interpretation of texts. Students are less likely to have to draw on knowledge that is pertinent to other fields of study in their demonstration of the aesthetic orientation. Conversely, the socio-critical orientation often draws on social theories that tend to be broadly applied to the Arts, Humanities and the Social Sciences. In both cases, social relations (the kind of disposition you need to display) are more strongly emphasised whereas epistemic relations (specialised knowledge you need to have that is oriented to a specific object of study) are more weakly emphasised. Nevertheless, the socio-critical orientation places weaker boundaries around epistemic relations than the aesthetic orientation, i.e. epistemic relations are comparatively weaker in the socio-critical orientation than the aesthetic orientation.

I provide a heuristic illustration of how the two cultivated gaze orientations might be plotted onto the specialisation plane in Figure 4.1 below. Since both are orientations within a cultivated gaze (a specific kind of knower code), they both fall under a knower code on the specialisation plane. They both have similarly strong social relations. However, the socio-critical orientation would be found lower down in the knower-code quadrant to signify its comparatively weaker epistemic relations. There was a gradual "code drift" (Martin et al., 2020b, p. 21) identified in the data (which entails a shift that stays within the same quadrant on the plane) in that the socio-critical orientation became increasingly emphasised in the curriculum as students moved from their first year to their third year of study. Furthermore, students were expected to be able to move back and forth between these two positions on the specialisation plane at higher levels of study.

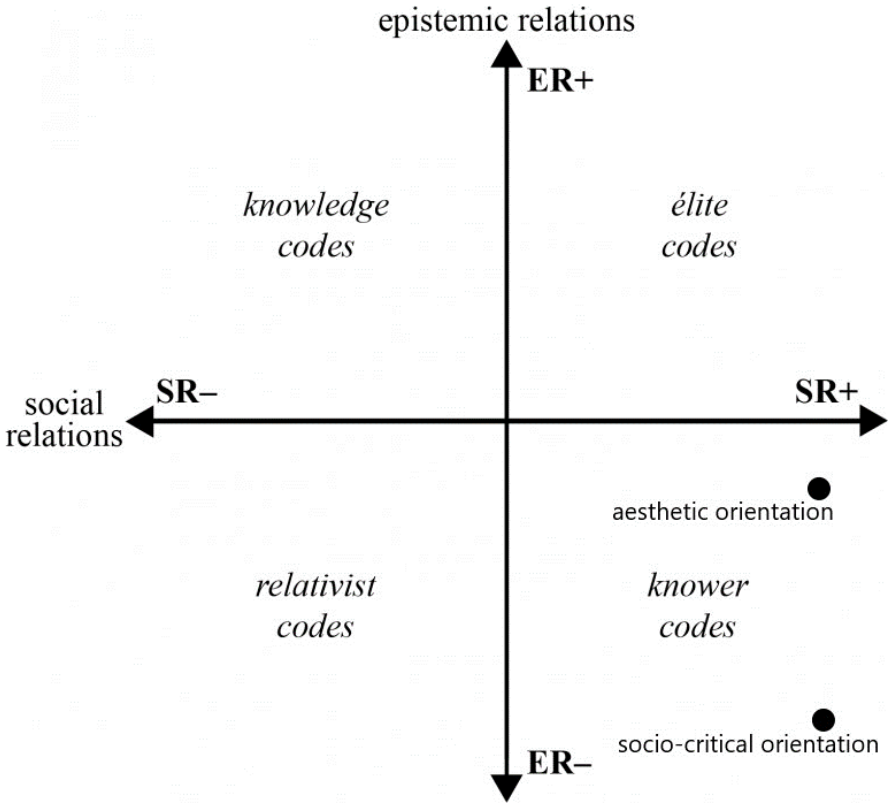


Figure 4.1: Aesthetically and socio-critically oriented cultivated gazes plotted onto the specialisation plane (adapted from Maton, 2014, p. 30)

My interview data suggested that many academics hoped that the socio-critical orientation would become not just a way in which students engaged with literary texts but a way in which they engaged with knowledge and society more broadly. Ten of the sixteen interview participants spoke at some length about the value of literary studies in exposing students to a diverse range of people and perspectives, and/or its value in developing a critical orientation towards society (this was also touched on more obliquely in three of the other interviews). For example, one academic mentioned that the curriculum should give students access to "a certain set of skills" that "should go beyond just English literature":

> I want those same skills to also help them develop their critical thinking so that when they see the way that something is represented in politics, they can use those critical thinking skills to also dismantle what is essentially just another system of signs, and so that they can see the value of these critical thinking skills in the decisions that they take as democratic citizens. (Interview 11)

Another academic felt that studying literature

> … actually contributes to a better society in the end. Because what you want are people who are more compassionate and more insightful and more thoughtful about the world around them and their place in the world. And I think … that sort of exposure to another person's perspective is a very useful one because it … leads you to question yourself and that leads to growth…. (Interview 2)

A third academic articulated the disposition that they wanted students to develop through studying literature in this way:

> I would expect them to have a broader vision of life and a better understanding of people... of surroundings, of settings, of characters, of people.... And also being able to interrogate representations, which are, you know, they're constructed. …[T]hey should be able to look at constructedness in terms of every aspect of society, whether it's individuals, communities or the larger world, and be able to reflect critically on the situations around them. (Interview 13)

All three of these quotations, and others in the data like them, highlight that the academics wanted students to develop a socio-critical orientation that extended beyond the literary text and became a way of engaging with society more broadly. Furthermore, these quotations suggest that cultivating the valued socio-critical orientation has implications for a student's identity that transcend beyond acquiring a specific scholarly identity: students were being asked to take on a worldview, a way of looking at and engaging with the world in general. Thus, epistemic relations were being weakened to the extent that the valued disposition was largely detached from the specific object of study. This is important to keep in mind when it comes to designing pedagogies towards cultivating this disposition, a topic I will turn to in Sections 4.3.5 and 4.4 below, but before this, I unpack what another set of LCT concepts might reveal about the differences between the two orientations within the cultivated gaze that I identified.

4.3.4 Applying LCT's Concepts of Ontic and Discursive Lenses to the Aesthetic and Socio-critical Orientation

As I explained in Chapter Two, LCT provides a further layer of concepts that can be used to perform a finer-grained analysis of differences between cultivated gazes. Maton (2014) differentiates between cultivated gazes with ontic lenses, where the valued gaze is cultivated through immersion in the object(s) of study itself, and cultivated gazes with discursive lenses, where the valued gaze is cultivated through immersion in studies of the object(s) of study. In Chapter Two, I referred to Maton's (2014) example of the discipline of British cultural studies to illustrate the differences between these two lenses. Maton (2014) explains that early cultural

studies emphasised immersion in a canon of exemplary works of culture (the objects of study), thus the basis of legitimation was a cultivated gaze with ontic lensing. However, recent cultural studies have shifted to emphasise immersion in studies or theories about cultural works (studies of the objects of study), thus the basis of legitimation has shifted to a cultivated gaze with discursive lensing (Maton, 2014). As another example, let us consider the study of Shakespeare. If students were required to be immersed in Shakespearean plays and poems (the object of study) as a means of developing the valued cultivated gaze, what is legitimated would be a cultivated gaze with ontic lensing. Alternatively, if students were required to be immersed in examples of academics enacting the valued ways of reading Shakespearean plays and poems (studies of objects of study) so as to take on these ways of reading Shakespearean texts, what is legitimated would be a cultivated gaze with discursive lensing.

Because I found two different orientations within the cultivated gaze in my data, I was interested to see whether applying these concepts would shed further light on the differences between the two orientations. As I explain below, I found that both the aesthetic and the socio-critical orientation were described by academics as being underpinned by a discursive lens. However, the socio-critical orientation was also described by some academics as being underpinned by an ontic lens.

In Section 4.3.2, I showed that academics emphasised immersion as a means to develop the valued cultivated gaze. I then went on to show in Section 4.3.3 that there were actually two orientations within the cultivated gaze that were valued in the data. I now draw on the concepts of ontic and discursive lenses in order to look at what kinds of immersion were seen as necessary for developing the aesthetic and the socio-critical orientations.

In terms of close reading (the aesthetic orientation), I provided quotations in Section 4.3.2 that showed that academics believed that students needed to be immersed in examples of close readings being enacted in order to learn how to enact these close readings themselves. Thus, students needed to be immersed in examples of how to study the object of study in order to take on the valued gaze (discursive lensing). In addition, the ENG1501 study guide, which was aimed at teaching the basics of literary analysis, followed a procedure of modelling to students how to enact close readings of the prescribed texts as a means of illuminating the practice of close reading. Thus, the basis for developing an aesthetic orientation within the cultivated gaze was immersion in examples of studies of the objects of study – discursive lensing.

In terms of the socio-critical orientation, I showed in Section 4.3.2 that the academics emphasised immersion in examples of theoretical readings (studies of objects of study) and immersion in social theories (studies of objects of study) as a means to develop the valued cultivated gaze. Thus, both the aesthetic and the socio-critical orientations were understood to be underpinned by a cultivated gaze with discursive lensing.

However, when it came to the development of a socio-critical orientation, some lecturers also emphasised the importance of students being immersed in the diverse perspectives of the people portrayed in literary texts as a means of developing empathy and broad-mindedness. For example, one academic said:

> … reading literature teaches you about empathy. … I think you can relate better to people if you read a lot of literature, especially fiction, because it teaches you how to see things through another person's perspective from another person's point of view. (Interview 9)

Similarly, another academic said:

> I think studying literature on the most broadest level allows you to step into the shoes of other people from other periods, from other cultures - people who may have nothing to do with you in your life. And it allows you to see things from their perspective. And that is, I think, one of the most important ways in which to see outside of yourself and learn about the world; learn about your position in the world; realise that the world is bigger than only your subjective position…. (Interview 1)

Thus, the socio-critical orientation was described in the data as underpinned by both a discursive lens (immersion in studies of objects of study) and an ontic lens (immersion in the object of study – the literary text itself).

In the previous section, the idea of a code drift and weakening epistemic relations helped us to understand what kinds of shifts students need to make in order to be able to apply both the aesthetic and the socio-critical orientations to literary texts. Applying the concepts of ontic and discursive lenses helps us to see what kinds of immersion are needed to develop the two valued orientations within the cultivated gaze which can then inform pedagogies aimed at developing these two orientations. However, I did not feel that the concepts of ontic and discursive lensing allowed me to completely uncover what was different between the two orientations within the cultivated gaze I had discovered. Through a discussion with Karl Maton (the architect of Legitimation Code Theory), I realised that I was able to build on the aspect of lenses in LCT theory by offering a distinction between two other kinds of lenses within the cultivated gaze. I have termed these 'converging' and 'diverging' lenses. Figure 4.2 below provides an

illustration of how actual converging and diverging lenses refract light rays in different ways. This serves as a metaphor for the difference that I discovered between an aesthetic and a socio-critical orientation within the cultivated gaze.

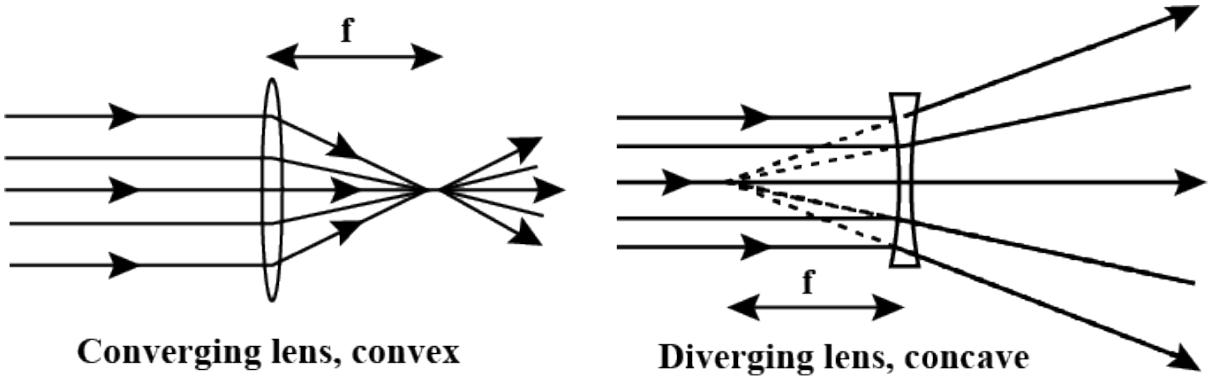


Figure 4.2: Light rays falling on converging and diverging lenses (Shiken, 2024)

The aesthetic orientation draws on a gaze that has been cultivated to make connections between how literary devices or techniques create meaning in texts with the aim of adding to our understanding of texts, oeuvres or genres. The aesthetic orientation is therefore concerned with developing a better understanding of the object of study (the literary text, oeuvre and/or genre). Thus, it can be understood as being underpinned by a cultivated gaze with a converging lens as the cultivated gaze is employed to reflect inwards on the object of study and bring it into sharper focus.

Conversely, the socio-critical orientation draws on a gaze that has been cultivated to think in nuanced ways about social and ideological issues with the aim of considering how texts reflect and/or resist the social constructs of the society in which they are situated. The socio-critical orientation is therefore concerned with understanding and critiquing the object of study in relation to broader social and ideological concerns. Thus, it can be understood as being underpinned by a cultivated gaze with a diverging lens as the cultivated gaze is employed to reflect outwards and make connections between the text and broader societal concerns. The metaphor of applying diverging and converging lenses to literary texts could be a helpful way to make more explicit the kinds of reading and writing practices that are valued in English literary studies. It could help academics for whom these practices are normalised to ‘see’ their disciplinary discourses more clearly, and it could be used to make the reading and writing practices valued in English literary studies a little less mysterious to students. I provide the

translation device that I created for my concepts of converging and diverging lenses of the cultivated gaze in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Translation device for converging and diverging lenses of the cultivated gaze

CONVERGING AND DIVERGING LENSES OF THE CULTIVATED GAZE TRANSLATION DEVICE	
Category and indicator	**Examples from data**
Converging lensing The valued cultivated gaze is concerned with acquiring a better understanding of the object of study	Close reading refers to a way of reading that considers the details of the poem very carefully. When you perform a close reading, you will analyse each word, phrase, line, unit of meaning, and punctuation mark in the poem, as well as the effect of the use of language. In this unit, we have introduced you to a number of tools that can assist you in doing a close reading. These tools are called poetic devices. (ENG1501 study guide)
Diverging lensing The valued cultivated gaze is concerned with understanding and critiquing the object of study in relation to broader social and ideological concerns	**Postcolonial theory** approaches the representation of other cultures and the attitudes, assumptions and values that have been **projected** onto other cultures through colonisation and **imperialism**. If a postcolonial standpoint were to be adopted with regards to Picasso's painting [*Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*] it would analyse how his use of the masks was related to the prevailing views of society at the time with regards to the 'primitive other' or the colonized Other. (ENG3705 study guide, original emphasis)

The concepts of converging and diverging lenses within the cultivated gaze help shed light on the differences between the aesthetic and socio-critical orientations that I found in my data. However, these concepts may have implications far beyond English literary studies. The translation device that I provided above might be adapted to other disciplines that are concerned with gaining both a deeper understanding of specific cultural artefacts and how those artefacts reflect on and are a reflection of their social context.

It should be noted that this analysis that draws on my new concepts of converging and diverging lenses does not replace the previous two analyses that I performed by drawing on the concepts of code drifts and weakening epistemic relations as well as ontic and discursive lenses. The three analyses hold at once and shed light on the data in different ways, each helping us to think more clearly about the kinds of pedagogies that are necessary to inculcate the valued cultivated gaze.

4.3.5 The Socio-critical Orientation and Critical Pedagogies

While it might be argued that my findings concerning the aesthetic and socio-critical orientations are specific to the curriculum under study, the fact that these two orientations overlap with historical developments in the discipline of English literary studies that continue to impact the discipline to this day[17] suggests that it is likely that they will both be present in many other curricula – even if not necessarily to the same extent and perhaps not following the same trajectory across the years of undergraduate study. My identification of these two orientations within the cultivated gaze and my unpacking of the nuanced distinctions between them can help academics teaching other English literature curricula to 'see' and make overt what kinds of orientations might be present in their curricula. It can also help facilitate conversations about what should be inculcated at which year level of the curriculum.

As discussed above, in my interview data, academics emphasised the idea that the socio-critical orientation should extend beyond the study of literary texts and become a way in which students engage in society more broadly. This idea has strong resonances with what scholars seem to be talking about when they make arguments about the potential value of Arts and Humanities programmes in developing the critical thinkers necessary for a more just society (Giroux & Bosio, 2021; Nussbaum, 2010; Parris, 2018).

For example, Nussbaum (2010, p. 10) argues that

> cultivated capacities for critical thinking and reflection are crucial in keeping democracies alive and wide awake. The ability to think well about a wide range of cultures, groups, and nations in the context of a grasp of the global economy and of the history of many national and group interactions is crucial in order to enable democracies to deal responsibly with the problems we currently face as members of an interdependent world. And the ability to imagine the experience of another – a capacity almost all human beings possess in some form – needs to be greatly enhanced and refined if we are to have any hope of sustaining decent institutions across the many divisions that any modern society contains.

Nussbaum (2010, p. 123) goes on to highlight the value of teaching literature and the arts in terms of its ability to cultivate a student's "inner eyes" by exposing them to the experiences of people of many different types. Similarly, Giroux (in Giroux & Bosio, 2021, p. 8) argues,

[17] Refer to Section 1.6 of Chapter One for a discussion of practical criticism, which became prominent after the First World War, and the social theories that gained influence in the discipline from the 1960s onwards.

> The incursion of corporate and military culture into university life undermines the university's responsibility to provide students with an education that allows them to recognize the dream and promise of a substantive democracy. While it is true that the humanities must keep up with developments in the sciences, the new media, technology, and other fields, its first responsibility is treating these issues not merely pragmatically as ideas and skills to be learned but as sites of political and ethical intervention, deeply connected to the question of what it means to create students who can imagine a democratic future for all people.

In addition, Parris (2018, p. 30) argues that the purpose of the humanities is to "foster a profound understanding of the human experience in our diverse social realities" and that "critical reflection and rigorous intellectual inquiry into thought systems and institutions of power … lie at the heart of humanistic study". Thus, finding ways to facilitate the inculcation of a cultivated gaze with a socio-critical orientation seems to be key for any English literature curriculum that hopes to contribute towards cultivating critical citizens. Furthermore, and as indicated in the data discussed above, unlike the aesthetic orientation, the socio-critical orientation extends beyond knowledges, methods and dispositions that are specific to the study of literature. The socio-critical orientation may therefore be relevant to other Arts or Humanities curricula that aim to cultivate critical citizens. Holm (2020) talks about a 'critical disposition' that has strong similarities to what I have termed the 'socio-critical orientation'. He says of this disposition that it is "transposable, and can therefore read almost any object, artefact or texts in terms of its status as a social and political act" (Holm, 2020, p. 152).

However, in order to cultivate this socio-critical orientation we need to reflect on the necessary pedagogy. It is helpful to look at the work of critical pedagogy theorists to shed light on the kinds of pedagogies that may be needed to cultivate a socio-critical orientation. When Nussbaum (2010) argues for the value of a Humanities education in developing empathetic critical thinkers and democratic citizens, she explains the following:

> Teaching of the sort I recommend needs small classes, or at least sections, where students discuss ideas with one another, get copious feedback on frequent writing assignments, and have lots of time to discuss their work with instructors. (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 125)

Similarly, Paulo Freire (2021, p. 42), who spearheaded the critical pedagogy movement, recommends an "active, dialogical, critical and criticism-stimulating method" as the pedagogical approach for cultivating critical literacy, instead of an instructor who just 'transfers' their knowledge to a student in a one-way direction. Therefore, it seems that interactional pedagogies are not just important for developing good literary scholars: they may be crucial to any arts or Humanities curricula endeavouring to cultivate a socially oriented

criticality.

Freire (2021, p. 42) further highlights that there must be a reciprocal and empathetic relationship between an instructor and student who should be "engaged in a joint search" and that this relationship should be "nourished by love, humility, hope, faith, and trust". Freire (2021) is therefore very aware that teaching of this kind has an affective element, and that it is not only a cognitive exercise. Similarly, Zembylas (2022) argues that because a socially oriented criticality involves people's emotions and subjectivities and is not just a cerebral process, higher education programmes need to create spaces that recognise and facilitate the emotional reflexivity that students need to develop in order to explore sometimes radically different ways of understanding the world. Zembylas (2022, p. 13) further argues that

> …nurturing critical thinking in higher education is about inventing new affective practices that instigate empowerment in students to raise their 'critical voice' and take collective action to change that which they think ought to be changed.

It is significant to note that Giroux and Giroux (2004) recommend that critical pedagogies should involve students in the community beyond the university: students should not only be required to do critical analysis and close textual readings but they should also be provided with opportunities to use their knowledge to engage in the community and challenge manifestations such as racism and poverty within society at large. This recommendation for pedagogies that ask students to move beyond the disciplinary context to engage critically with broader social concerns aligns with the hopes that academics expressed in my interview data that students would adopt a socio-critical disposition in their everyday social encounters. In the next chapter, I consider the extent to which the curriculum under study was able to create the kinds of pedagogical spaces recommended by critical pedagogists.

It should be noted that Jansen (2009, p. 151) troubles critical pedagogy when he argues that critical pedagogy theorists sometimes assume that it is a socially homogenous group of teachers and students that are to be led towards "a common understanding of the nature of oppression and how to confront its systemic elements". Jansen (2009, p. 152) highlights that inequality and prejudice are bound to exist within the classroom, especially in a diverse post-conflict context like South Africa. He argues that in such spaces, it is necessary

> first to understand the emotional, psychological and spiritual burden of indirect knowledge carried by all sides in the aftermath of conflict. The teacher takes [a] position, for sure, but in a way that creates safe spaces within which the afflicted on all sides can speak openly and without fear of dismissal.

In other words, the instructor must not be quick to take sides and should try to find ways to engage productively, even with students' understandings that they find problematic (Jansen, 2009). While Jansen (2009) makes a valuable contribution in pointing out the necessity to be aware of diverse social experiences when it comes to enacting critical pedagogies, his pedagogical recommendations align with the critical pedagogy practices described above in that he recommends emotionally engaged, dialogical pedagogies. It should also be noted that the work of Zembylas (2015) that I draw on displays a keen awareness of the need to trouble privileged students' understandings of the world.

I have shown in this section that there are strong overlaps between how the academics that I interviewed envisioned a socio-critical orientation towards literature (and other objects of study) and the kinds of critical literacies that critical pedagogy scholars value. Therefore, the recommendations that critical pedagogy scholars make for particular kinds of pedagogies have relevance for a curriculum that attempts to inculcate a socio-critical orientation towards literature and other objects of study. In my next chapter, I consider the extent to which there was overlap between the pedagogies that were employed in the curriculum under study and those recommended by critical pedagogy theorists.

4.4 Implications and Recommendations

My analysis of how English literary studies is constructed in the literature revealed a cultivated knower code. That is, English literary studies is specialised through stronger social relations (a focus on disposition) and weaker epistemic relations (less emphasis on specific principles or procedures). This finding was also the case across the data for the curriculum under study, whereby both interviews with the academics and analysis of the course guides demonstrated the legitimation of a knower code. The gaze of this knower code was cultivated, meaning that taking on the valued gaze requires immersion in the discipline over an extended period.

However, further analysis of the curriculum revealed that the cultivated gaze took on two distinct and complex forms. I identified two kinds of orientations within the cultivated gaze that were valued in the curriculum: an aesthetic orientation and a socio-critical orientation. The aesthetic orientation entails the ability to comment compellingly on how language and literary features create meanings in literary texts, and it draws on concepts specific to literary studies. To become adept in this orientation, students need to be immersed in close readings of texts that consider how specific literary elements contribute to the meanings of texts. The socio-

critical orientation entails analysing texts in relation to broader ideological and social concerns and draws on a range of theories that are widely employed across the Humanities and Social Sciences. To become adept in this orientation, students need to be immersed in social theories and examples of social theories being applied to texts. In addition, students need to be immersed in the variety of perspectives that are portrayed in the texts selected for the curriculum. The aesthetic orientation was foregrounded at lower levels of study, while in the third year, students were expected to integrate an aesthetic and a socio-critical orientation in their analyses of literary texts. Since this is the first study that has used LCT to look at three years of undergraduate English literary studies, this offers an understanding of the specific development of a cultivated literary gaze that is expected over time.

The horizontal knowledge structures of English literary studies allow for a reasonable amount of flexibility concerning the year level at which certain knowledges should be introduced into the curriculum. Despite the flexibility in knowledge sequencing that the discipline allows for, the data showed that students were required to synthesise their knowledges of close reading, social theories and secondary sources at the third-year level. This suggests that it is important to ensure that the curriculum helps students understand how to integrate the close reading abilities that they develop at lower levels of study with the more theoretical readings of literary texts required at second- and third-year levels and the engagements with secondary sources required at third-year level. While knowledge building might be relatively flexible in the curriculum, it is important to consider knower development (or knower building) when decisions are made about how to scaffold the knowledges that form part of the curriculum.

Something else that came out of the analysis was that although the curriculum foregrounded the aesthetic rather than the socio-critical orientation at lower levels of study, it was not possible to completely sideline social and ideological concerns at lower levels since students were required to engage with themes in the texts that had social and ideological implications. This suggests that it is important not to completely ignore social and ideological concerns in terms of pedagogy at lower levels of study as this could lead to a kind of ‘hidden curriculum’ where only the students who are already familiar with certain ways of critical thinking about social concerns are able to excel in the curriculum. An understanding on the part of academics that they are actually trying to cultivate two kinds of orientations, an aesthetic and a socio-critical orientation, might assist them in designing curricula that work more overtly and synergistically towards developing the valued kind of knower. It might also be useful as a way of scaffolding

student learning to make explicit to students that the curriculum aims to cultivate these two kinds of orientations. The metaphor of diverging and converging lenses might be a useful way to teach students about the differences between these two kinds of orientations.

It is significant to note that the Education students who were required to take modules that form part of the English major as part of their degrees were only required to take these courses up to the second-year level as a requirement for teaching English at the high school level. It is unlikely that these students were getting a holistic understanding of the practices of literary studies. Since it is not uncommon for English literature modules to be prescribed as part of other degree programmes, it is important for English literature academics to have a vocabulary that allows them to express clearly to disciplinary outsiders the values of their discipline and how the year levels of their curriculum work towards developing the valued literary knower. Legitimation Code Theory provides a useful language that academics can use to articulate the values of their curricula and the purposes of their pedagogies more clearly to disciplinary outsiders. An understanding of the two different orientations that I identified, the aesthetic and the socio-critical, can also assist English literature academics in making the aims of their curriculum more explicit to programme developers. In this way, programme developers can be assisted to make more considered recommendations in terms of which courses should be included in specific degree programmes and the level up to which these courses should be taken.

The literature that I reviewed on the teaching and learning of English literary studies and my data suggested that time-consuming interactional pedagogies are needed to guide students into becoming literary knowers. In other words, time-consuming interactional pedagogies were seen as necessary to facilitate students' epistemological and ontological access to the values of the discipline. This aligns with Luckett and Hunma's (2014, p. 95) explanation that the dispositions that are valued in knower code Humanities disciplines are usually cultivated through "prolonged apprenticeship and immersion in exemplary models under the tutelage of disciplinary masters". This suggests that it is important for cultivated knower-code programmes to have enough disciplinary insiders to provide students with an immersive and interactive environment in which knower development can take place.

My analysis also showed that what I have referred to as the socio-critical orientation in my data has strong overlaps with critical pedagogy theorists' ideas about the purpose of education in cultivating critical citizens. This has implications for students' identities as students are being

asked to take on a way of seeing that transcends beyond the literary text to ways of engaging with knowledge and society more broadly. The recommendations that critical pedagogy theorists provide in terms of cultivating critical citizens suggest that there needs to be an element of emotional labour involved on the part of the academics and the students who are involved in this kind of pedagogical process.

There was however a clash evident in the data. On the one hand, we have the specialisation of a knower code with a multifaceted cultivated gaze, as I have outlined in this chapter, which requires immersion, including opportunities to practice and get feedback. On the other hand, we have the pedagogical realities of this case study. In the next chapter, I discuss some of the factors that created misalignments between the intended curriculum and the enacted curriculum.

CHAPTER FIVE: MISALIGNMENTS IN AND RELATING TO THE CURRICULUM[18]

5.1 Introduction

In my theory chapter, Chapter Two, I explained that specialisation codes serve to reveal an aspect of the "rules of the game", that is, the basis for legitimacy that underlies different social practices (Wilmot, 2019). Maton and Chen (2020, p. 39) point out that one can use specialisation codes to

> describe degrees of *code clash* and *code match*, such as between: learners' dispositions and pedagogic practices; … different approaches within an intellectual field; curriculum and pedagogy of a subject area; and many others. (original emphasis)

In this chapter, I discuss three main misalignments that I found in and relating to the English literature curriculum. These were:

(1) A general misalignment between the cultivated gaze underpinning the intended curriculum and the pedagogies employed to teach the curriculum.
(2) A specific misalignment between the socio-critical orientation within the cultivated gaze and the pedagogies employed to teach the curriculum.
(3) A perceived lack of alignment between student dispositions and the disposition of an ideal literary knower.

I make use of the term 'misalignments' instead of 'code clashes' because I did not code the enacted pedagogies or student dispositions using LCT. Instead, I show how the enacted pedagogies and student dispositions were not aligned with the kinds of pedagogical practices or dispositions recommended for developing a cultivated gaze and a socio-critical orientation within the cultivated gaze. I discuss each misalignment below and explain what my data suggested regarding the emergence of each misalignment.

[18] Sections of this chapter were published as a journal article: Knoetze, R. (2024). Cultivating criticality in a neoliberal system: a case study of an English literature curriculum at a mega distance university. *Higher Education*, 84, 1677–1692. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-023-01084-y

5.2 Misalignment Between the Cultivated Gaze Underpinning the Intended Curriculum and the Pedagogies Employed to Teach the Curriculum

In the previous chapter, I showed that the curriculum under study was underpinned by a cultivated knower code, which Maton (2014) explains develops through immersion in a practice over a long period. This aligns with the findings of previous LCT studies that have looked at English literature curricula. My interview data suggested that academics recognised that the literary disposition that they valued needed to be developed through immersion in the discipline. They recommended time-intensive interactional pedagogies as a means to develop this valued gaze. The literature on the teaching and learning of English literary studies also recommended dialogical teaching spaces and interactional pedagogies. However, when it came to the enacted pedagogies of the curriculum, I found misalignments between the ideal that was articulated by academics and the realities of what was actually offered. Such misalignments undoubtedly emerged from multiple causes. While many of these may have been very context-bound, it is useful to consider how larger global forces played out in the emergence of enacted pedagogies. My data analysis suggested that the neoliberal practices that UNISA had adopted had a significant impact in terms of contributing to misalignments in the English literary studies curriculum.

Neoliberalism is both a set of economic policies by which business practices are spread throughout the public sector and an ideology that reduces our conception of human interactions to economic relations (Leathwood & Read, 2022; McKenna, 2022; Monbiot, 2016). The debilitating effects of neoliberalism on the university and/or university curricula have been the focus of much scholarship (see, for example, Ashwin, 2020; Brown, 2016; Giroux & Giroux, 2004; Nussbaum, 2010). Such research shows that commercial values, such as competition, monetisation and metrification, which are antithetical to a belief in higher education as a social or public good, have taken hold. I show below how three neoliberal practices: high instructor-student ratios, managerialism and academic casualisation, manifested in my data. These practices contributed to misalignments between the underpinning values of the curriculum and the kinds of pedagogic and formative assessment practices that were employed, as I shall demonstrate below.

5.2.1 High Instructor-to-Student Ratios

As discussed in Chapter One, South African universities have seen a massive increase in student numbers in the last two decades (DHET, 2022). This means that many university departments in South Africa are contending with large increases in their student cohorts. Massification in the higher education sector is also a global phenomenon which has coincided with increased pressures on academics to teach larger class sizes with fewer resources (Allais, 2014; Hornsby & Osman, 2014). This is because governments and institutions have responded to the dramatic expansion of the higher education sector by turning to cost-saving strategies, including reducing the number of permanently employed academic staff and expanding class sizes (Allais, 2014). High instructor-to-student ratios were found to be a major contributor to misalignments between the intended curriculum (which should cultivate a knower code) and enacted pedagogies. In 2021, when data was collected, the first-year English literature module had more than 12 000 students, with six academics assigned to it: a ratio of 2 000 students to each academic. The two second-year modules had just under 4 000 students each, also with six academics assigned to each module: a ratio of 667 students to each academic. One academic pointed out in relation to the teaching of critical engagement to second-year students:

> … if I think of second-year teaching, for example, where you have really thousands of students and you don't have the opportunity for a consistent engagement with anyone really … I can't think of any way in which one can do it [teach critical engagement with literature], because of exactly all these important aspects of teaching our discipline. They need those things: you need modelling; you need immersion … And so, what I think then happens is that those things which … are potentially of value in the study of literature maybe become bracketed and eventually fall away in lieu of a variety of sort of measurable … more easily teachable sort of outcomes. (Interview 12)

While it was somewhat possible for academics on the first- and second-year modules to model the valued literacy practices of the discipline through online lectures and to provide students with written models of literary analysis, poor lecturer-to-student ratios meant that academics could not provide students with dialogical pedagogical spaces in which students could have an opportunity try out these close reading practices and get feedback on their attempts. Thus, although the cultivated gaze is, by definition, achieved through immersion in a discipline, high lecturer-to-student ratios meant that such immersive opportunities for students were limited. The three third-year modules had much better lecturer-to-student ratios, with less than 120 students per semester, and four or five academics assigned to each module: a ratio of 24 to 30 students per academic. However, most of the academics teaching the third-year courses were

also teaching the first- and/or second-year modules, which placed limits on the time they could devote to the third-year students.

I showed in the previous chapter that when asked about how to help struggling students develop their critical writing abilities (which is the medium through which students were expected to display their cultivated gaze), many academics recommended providing students with regular oral or written feedback on their writing (Interviews 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16). However, several academics also highlighted that the kind of detailed engagement with student writing that they recommended was impossible to provide on the scale that it was needed (Interviews 1, 4, 7, 10). This meant that most students received feedback on their work only three times per year or twice per semester, as this was the number of assignments that students were required to submit for each year or semester module, respectively. The assignments were considered formative assessment opportunities in that the students were supposed to receive feedback on one assignment before the next one was due. However, there were no formally curriculated opportunities for students to receive feedback on drafts of an essay before the final essay was due, meaning that formative assessments were still relatively high-stakes assessments for students.

In the case of the large first- and second-year modules, most of the assignment feedback was done by externally contracted markers rather than the academics appointed to these modules, with the academics performing the function of moderating the marking. External markers were not allowed to provide students with additional feedback opportunities beyond the formally curriculated opportunities, once again limiting immersive opportunities where students could learn to master the literary cultivated gaze. In addition, having personally worked on ENG1501 for several years, I know that the module teams with larger student numbers sometimes struggled to ensure that students received feedback on one set of assignments before the next assignment was due, meaning that students did not always have the opportunity to learn from formative feedback before they needed to hand in the next writing task. Thus, although my data indicated that academics felt that regular feedback on student writing was a necessary pedagogy for developing the literary cultivated gaze, poor instructor-to-student ratios limited the amount of feedback that most students received on their written work.

Because of the large student numbers in the first- and second-year modules, the department also made use of external, part-time ‘e-tutors’ to provide students with the bulk of the online tuition support. The e-tutors provided online activities for students and engaged with students’

responses to these online activities. However, the number of students assigned to each external e-tutor was also very high. In 2021, an e-tutor working on the first-year module, ENG1501, could have had up to 700 students assigned to them (Interview 9). An academic who had previously worked as an e-tutor on one of the second-year modules was not sure what the exact tutor-to-student ratio was but informed me that the course had started with a ratio of 200 students per tutor and that that ratio kept increasing each year (Interview 8). Furthermore, these e-tutors were only employed for ten hours per week (Interview 8).

Based on these tutor-to-student ratios alone, it would have been impossible for the e-tutors to provide students with enough of the kind of dialogical interactions that are important for developing a literary cultivated gaze, as discussed in Chapter Four. The large student numbers would not allow e-tutors to ensure that each student in their group had sufficient opportunities to try out their ideas and get feedback on their attempts to engage with literary texts. In fact, the high tutor-to-student ratio makes one wonder if the term 'tutorial', which is usually used to denote small group sessions between students and a tutor, is at all applicable to the situation in this English Department.

To exacerbate this situation, the e-tutors were also very restricted in terms of the kinds of interactions that they were allowed to have with students. I discuss these issues next as they relate to how two other neoliberal practices: managerialism and academic casualisation, contributed to misalignments between the cultivated gaze underpinning the curriculum and the pedagogies employed to teach the curriculum.

5.2.2 Managerialism and Academic Casualisation

Managerialism and academic casualisation, which both emerged in the data, are underpinned by a neoliberal ideology. I unpack what each of these practices constitutes before moving on to discuss how these practices impacted pedagogies in the curriculum under study. Brown (2016, p. 115) explains:

> Everyday practices of managerialism involve an intensified control and disciplining of the workforce evident through strategies and surveillance tools such as performance reports and outcome measurements…. The emphasis is on productivity and keeping costs low while taking power away from those who do the work and increasing the power of those in administration.

In a similar vein, academic casualisation refers to the tendency for an increasing number of academic staff to be employed on a temporary or part-time basis, combined with a reduction

in the number of permanently employed academic staff, with the security that comes with such a position. Brown (2016, p. 117) notes:

> The aim of university administrations is to keep costs down and academic labour resources docile and compliant. Precarious faculty often feel they cannot speak out or carve out space for their research. A focus of neo-liberal labour reform is to make labour more "flexible." Flexibility is a mechanism that ensures greater profit and control while making it easier to hire and fire people.

The marked increase in academic casualisation in the Global North has been the focus of much concern in scholarship (see, for example, Brown, 2016; Giroux & Giroux, 2004; Leathwood & Read, 2022). Academic casualisation is also a significant problem in the South African context. In 2021, 62% of academic staff across the country were on temporary contracts, with only 38% being permanently employed (CHE, 2023). Having worked in the department for several years, I know that the UNISA English Department struggled with the typical problems of lack of continuity and staff insecurity related to many academics being employed on fixed-term rather than permanent contracts. Furthermore, the department dealt with an even higher level of casualisation in terms of the large numbers of part-time tutors and external markers who performed the bulk of the engagement with students and the assessments for the large first- and second-year modules. For example, in 2021, the first-year literature course (with over 12 000 students and only six full-time academic staff members working on it) had 25 external markers and nineteen external e-tutors assigned to it.

Managerialism and academic casualisation contributed to misalignments in the curriculum when it came to the pedagogies offered by e-tutors in the department. The e-tutors were severely restricted in terms of the kinds of pedagogical encounters that they could have with students. All communication with students had to happen through the online learning platform, and the relevant administrative department had determined that e-tutors were not to post videos or podcasts for students or to set up online classes. The interviewees believed that the reasons for this related to the capacity of the learning management system to store audio and video information as well as the fact that the administrative department was responsible for surveillance of all e-tutor activities, and it was more time-consuming to check audio-visual material than text-based material (Interviews 8 and 9).

This meant that e-tutors were unable to model the valued reading practices through online lectures and that there were restrictions regarding the types of dialogical interactions that tutors were able to have with students. Thus, there was a very limited array of immersive pedagogic

encounters that students could have with their e-tutors. The academic who had previously worked as an e-tutor felt that the main problem with how the e-tutors were managed was that an administrative department rather than the relevant academic department was making pedagogical decisions:

> I don't think they're malicious in it, but I think a lot of their solutions are administrative focused, like, how can we make the administration of this as simple as possible, at the cost of the academic project. (Interview 8)

This is one example of how the neoliberal practices of managerialism and academic casualisation impacted negatively on the pedagogical offering of the curriculum. The restrictions placed on the e-tutors can be understood as emanating from a managerialist impulse to monitor employees to ensure that the institution is receiving the 'goods' the institution is paying its employees for. However, because administrators without knowledge of the pedagogical requirements of the discipline were in control of these monitoring activities, assurance processes that were meant to ensure quality had unintended negative consequences for the quality of student teaching and learning. In order to quality assure materials, the administrative department required those materials to be text based, rather than audio or video. The quality assurance 'tail' was seen to be wagging the pedagogical 'dog'.

Furthermore, as I unpack below, the temporary nature of the e-tutors' employment made it unlikely that they would resist the audit culture that had been imposed on them. Of course, even if e-tutors had been completely unrestricted in terms of the pedagogies they could make use of, it would have been challenging for them to engage meaningfully with their large student cohorts during the ten hours they were employed per week. However, the neoliberal practices of managerialism and academic casualisation created scenarios that offered serious additional impediments to aligning pedagogies with the espoused values of the discipline.

Giroux and Giroux (2004) raise the point that creating a perpetual 'underclass' of part-time higher education workers is not only exploitative but can also lead to the 'de-skilling' of academics; adjunct educators have little power to resist increasing teaching and marking loads and thus can easily find themselves in a position where they have no time for research and are unable to keep up with new knowledge in their disciplines. The fact that e-tutors and external markers at UNISA were remunerated only for specific activities related to teaching and assessment (e-tutors were paid for only ten hours of tutoring per week and markers were paid per script that they marked) meant that if they were interested in furthering their knowledge

through research into the discipline, they had to do so on their own time and at their own expense, decreasing the likelihood that e-tutors and markers would continue to hone their own cultivated literary dispositions. Furthermore, despite being involved in most of the pedagogical encounters with first- and second-year students, e-tutors and markers were not members of the department. This diminished the power and voice of the people doing the actual teaching when administrative decisions were made that impacted their work. The tutors and markers were generally excluded from forums where they could raise their concerns with departmental or university management and were in essence 'outsourced labour'. The contract e-tutors and markers also did not undertake curriculum development work and so were implementing something on behalf of full-time academics. Because tutors and markers were not included in staff meetings, they would also be excluded from any deliberations that might occur in these meetings about the values underpinning the curriculum.

Having worked on one of the large modules in the department, I also saw how the reliance on external workers shifted the nature of the responsibilities of the academics assigned to these large modules away from traditional academic roles. Full-time, permanently employed academics performed more of a quality assurance function – moderating the marking done by others and monitoring e-tutor sites to try and ensure that students received quality engagement. This left little time (if any) to engage with students directly on these modules. Furthermore, the minimum qualification required for e-tutors and markers at the time was an Honours degree in the relevant field.[19] This meant that there was a good chance that first- and second-year students in the English Department would receive tuition support from someone who had had less time to cultivate their own literary disposition than the academics who found themselves increasingly performing an administrative quality assurance function regarding the modules.

Managerialism was also found to have had negative consequences in terms of what teaching activities were provided by academics in the department. The university made liberal use of managerialist practices. Staff had to undergo performance management reviews two times a year, with each round involving completing a detailed self-report and an interview with the departmental management committee. Although multiple sets of managers were involved in

[19] In South Africa, an Honours degree is a one-year degree that a student can enrol for after their three years of undergraduate study. The Honours degree is a requirement for continuing to a Masters' degree in English literary studies.

this process, it usually took the department at least a full week of interviews to get through one round of the performance reviews for their more than 70 staff members (including both academic and administrative staff).

A recent analysis of staffing at South African public universities shows that academic staff at UNISA have a particularly high ratio of their work allocation devoted to administrative activities and that they also have the worst staff-to-student ratios of all public universities (Cloete et al., 2022). My interview data indicated that the multiple demands placed on academic staff at UNISA and the inability of the performance management system to accurately reflect the time and effort that went into tuition activities, had the potential to shift academics' focus away from teaching. For example, in discussing strategies to assist students who were experiencing difficulties with their English literature modules, one academic suggested that it might help to have one lecturer on a module team assigned specifically to providing individual tutoring to students:

> … it wouldn't be a popular position to be in, but that person can be given extra points in the IPMS [integrated performance management system] to help students step by step … The thing is … the IPMS doesn't recognise enough the amount of work that goes into tuition. … I don't know how it can be measured, but there should be different … ways of measuring …. (Interview 13)

In a similar vein, there was great variance in the interview data in academics' descriptions of their online engagements with students on the three third-year modules under study (third-year modules did not make use of e-tutors, so academics were responsible for all engagements with students). One module provided live-streamed lectures for each of the prescribed texts on the module and online activities that students could complete to score extra marks on their assignments. However, an academic in one of the other modules mentioned that their team had not had as much capacity for online engagement with students over the past two years as had been the case previously (Interview 10). An academic speaking about the third module, which they had worked on the previous year, felt that more was needed in terms of student engagement but explained that staff disillusionment and burnout contributed to the limited engagement that was provided to students (Interview 6). This illustrates how regular engagement between the disciplinary insiders and students, which is crucial for the cultivation of the valued literary disposition, can easily fall by the wayside when academics are contending with too many institutional demands.

While the curriculum under study aimed to inculcate a cultivated gaze that develops through prolonged immersion in the discipline, the neoliberal practices of managerialism and academic casualisation served to constrain pedagogical spaces in the curriculum where students could experience the necessary immersion in the practices of the discipline through dialogical engagements with disciplinary insiders in spoken and written form.

5.3 Misalignment Between the Socio-critical Orientation Within the Cultivated Gaze and the Pedagogies Employed to Teach the Curriculum

In Chapter Four, I showed that in the curriculum under study, English literary studies was envisioned as a knower code with a multifaceted cultivated gaze that was made up of two parts. These were an aesthetic orientation, which entails the ability to comment compellingly on how language and literary features create meanings in literary texts, and a socio-critical orientation, which entails analysing texts in relation to broader ideological and social issues. There was a gradual "code drift" (Martin et al., 2020b, p. 21) in the curriculum in that the socio-critical orientation became increasingly emphasised as students moved from their first year through to their third year of study. Furthermore, by the third year, students were expected to be able to move between the aesthetic and socio-critical orientations in their analyses of literary texts.

The misalignments between the cultivated gaze underpinning the curriculum and the enacted pedagogies discussed in Section 5.2 above apply to both orientations within the cultivated gaze as both orientations require immersive and interactional pedagogies. In this section, I show that there were additional tensions specifically between the socio-critical orientation within the cultivated gaze and the teaching and formative assessment practices. The data suggested that these tensions were due to some of the same factors discussed above, but that academics' understandings of their role as educators possibly also contributed to this misalignment in the curriculum.

5.3.1 Instructor-to-Student Ratios, Managerialism and Academic Casualisation

I argued in the previous chapter that it is helpful to look at the work of critical pedagogy theorists to shed light on the kinds of pedagogies that may be needed to cultivate the socio-critical orientation within the cultivated gaze identified in the data. The literature on critical pedagogies suggests that inculcating a socio-critically oriented cultivated gaze would require emotionally engaged, dialogical pedagogies that require nurturing an open and trusting

relationship in the classroom (Freire, 2021; Zembylas, 2022). However, poor instructor-student ratios as well as managerialism and academic casualisation limited the opportunities for students to form connections with their lecturers and tutors. This was particularly problematic in the first- and second-year modules where e-tutors were responsible for the bulk of the pedagogical interactions with students and were limited to communicating with them through a text-based format. It would be very difficult, under these restrictions, where students did not even get to see their tutor's face or hear their voice, to create the kinds of pedagogical interactions recommended by Freire (2021, p. 42) where instructor and students are "engaged in a joint search" through a relationship "nourished by love, humility, hope, faith, and trust". This lessened the likelihood that pedagogical encounters with the e-tutors would encourage students to engage with disciplinary knowledge in ways that could transform their understanding of themselves and how they relate to society.

Academic casualisation also limited the opportunities for students to build open and trusting relationships with their instructors regarding assignment feedback. Students in the first- and second-year modules received formative feedback on their written work from strangers in the form of external markers who were not available to provide further engagement on the feedback that students received. Furthermore, it was likely that students would receive feedback from a different marker for every assignment. If students had questions about their feedback, they could contact the academics assigned to the module, but they would not have direct access to the person who had assessed their work.

I showed above how too many institutional demands and the inability of the performance management system to recognise the amount of work that goes into tuition created a situation in the department where direct engagement between academics and students could easily fall away. By extension, this had negative implications for the potential to develop relationships with students and interactional spaces in which students could develop emotional reflexivity. This aligns with Burke et al.'s (2022, p. 12) findings on the topic of pedagogical care which showed that certain dimensions of student engagement that are key to students' positive online learning experiences – such as a sense of personal connection and developing a relationship with their lecturer – "cannot always be measured by the metrics that are commonly relied upon". They go on to argue that, given that

> academics are under considerable pressure to work more expediently within tight workload provisions for their teaching, the danger is that what 'matters' to students may not be

> adequately enacted if the workload for academics is not provided. (Burke et al., 2022, p. 12)

In addition, as one academic argued, a managerialist approach of trying to squeeze as much output from staff members as possible has negative implications for the quality of what *is* offered in terms of pedagogy and formative assessment:

> … I think there's a lot of things wrong with the way we do things. And starting with the way we treat the staff, it's very *Animal Farm*: you just have to work harder and work harder... And that doesn't work because that doesn't bring the whole person to the task. It doesn't bring a lecturer's kindness to an essay. (Interview 6)

This suggests that managerialist practices could have a negative impact on the kind of relationships that develop between students and lecturers. Overall, the neoliberal academic practices of high instructor-student ratios, managerialism and academic casualisation limited opportunities for students to form the meaningful connections and have the deep engagements with their lecturers and tutors recommended by critical pedagogy theorists. Thus, what was limited was the kind of immersive interactions necessary for the development of a socio-critical orientation within the cultivated gaze.

5.3.2 Lack of Emphasis on Identity Work in Relation to Pedagogies

Institutional constraints were clearly a major contributor to misalignments between the socio-critical orientation within the cultivated gaze and the pedagogies employed in the curriculum. However, an additional contributor may have been how academics understood their roles as educators. Although many of the academics highlighted that they wanted students to become socially critical knowers through studying English literature, there was little in the interview data to suggest that academics saw it as part of their role as educators to create open and trusting relationships with their students to facilitate the development of students' emotional reflexivity. This was despite ten of the sixteen interview participants speaking at some length about the value of literary studies in exposing students to a diverse range of people and perspectives, and/or its value in developing a critical orientation towards society.

One academic stated overtly that they hoped that students' personal engagement with literature would bring about more empathetic ways of thinking but highlighted that this was not something that was directly taught in the curriculum:

> So, I think that is one of the things that students who study literature... it's not something we try to teach them directly, but it's something that I think we sort of hope that they would – by reading a lot – that they'd acquire skills of... like, some empathy skills. (Interview 9)

It is possible that the general silence in the interview data relating to pedagogies that facilitate emotional reflexivity may have been due to this kind of understanding: that students' identity shifts take place through their personal engagement with the prescribed literature and study material rather than through dialogical, affective engagements in a classroom-type setting (as recommended in the literature on critical pedagogies).

Alternatively, it is possible that creating spaces in the curriculum that facilitate identity work could have been implied in some of the other academics' comments like the following one:

> … an educational context should be a thought context. And a thought context should be one in which there's a meeting of minds rather than one person, like, trying to … just download all their knowledge onto paper and then make someone else upload that knowledge into their brain…. (Interview 12)

There is some suggestion in this quotation of a relationship that is needed between the academic and the student as part of the learning process. However, there is no explicit mention of the idea that this "meeting of minds" will involve an affective connection that should facilitate identity shifts in the student and the lecturer. The general lack of mentions in the data of the importance of creating spaces for identity work suggests that, at best, there was only a tacit awareness of the identity shifts that pedagogical interactions needed to facilitate in order to develop a socio-critical orientation within the cultivated gaze. This would mean that newer academics or tutors who had been immersed in the disciplinary practices for less time may not have been as aware of the importance of this pedagogical practice. It also suggests that this is not something that would generally have been made overt to students.

In one rare exception in the data, an academic spoke overtly about how they felt an academic should handle a hypothetical case in which a student expressed problematic values such as homophobia and racism in an essay (Interview 6). This academic suggested that it would be important to set up a meeting with such a student in order to show them:

> a) why their opinion is not supported by the text; and b) why such a view is problematic in the world at large. (Interview 6, follow-up email)

However, beyond this hypothetical example, the academic also did not speak of creating settings in which *all* students could be supported in building emotional reflexivity.

I explained in Chapter Four that Giroux and Giroux (2004) recommend that students should not only be required to do critical analysis and close textual readings to develop as critical citizens but that they should also be provided with opportunities to engage in the community and use their knowledge to challenge social ills such as racism and poverty within society at large. I argued that such pedagogies that move students beyond the disciplinary context to engage with broader social matters align with the socio-critical orientation identified in the data, which was concerned with developing students who could extend their socially oriented criticality beyond the analysis of literary texts and take on a critical orientation towards society more broadly. The curriculum under study did not provide opportunities for students to engage with a community beyond the academic context. This would have been difficult to do considering the instructor-student ratios and other institutional constraints discussed above. However, none of the academics mentioned this as something that they would have liked to do in an ideal scenario, suggesting that this was not something that academics considered as an imaginable pedagogical strategy. Furthermore, there was a missed opportunity in how assignment questions were structured. There was a general lack of overt encouragement for students to transfer their critical understanding of social concerns in the literary text to their personal experiences and other examples of manifestations of these concerns in the real world. I now turn to this question of assessment.

5.3.3 Missed Opportunities in Formative Assessment

In 2021, there were nineteen assignment questions related to the literature component of the six modules under study. None of these assignment questions asked students to relate social concerns as depicted in a literary text to their personal experiences. Only one assignment question asked students to bring their engagement with social concerns in a literary text to bear on other examples of manifestations of these concerns in the real world. This question read as follows:

> In her article, 'On Not Being Deceived: Rhetoric and the Body in *Twelfth Night'*, Lorna Hutson comments that:
>
> > In much earlier twentieth-century criticism, Shakespeare's comedies have been appreciated as temporary aberrations from an established sexual and social order for the purposes of a thoroughly conservative 'self-discovery' and return to the status quo. (Hutson 1996: 140-141)
>
> Does this still hold true for us in the twenty-first century in which we live, or do Shakespeare's comedies such as *Twelfth Night* offer a more radical re-visioning of orthodox sexual binaries? Write an essay in which you critically engage with this question.

While this question could have provided students with more guidance in terms of how to tap into current debates on gender and sexuality, it does ask students to relate representations of gender and sexuality in the text under study to ideas on these matters in contemporary society.

The other eighteen assignment questions missed an opportunity to ask students to extend their critical engagement with a specific literary text to their personal experiences or other relevant occurrences in society at large. Thus, these assignment questions failed to ask students to weaken epistemic relations in ways valued within the socio-critical orientation in the cultivated gaze as discussed in Section 4.3.3. For example, for ENG2603, there was a question about patriarchy and gender roles that read as follows:

> Lucia is an embodiment of women's empowerment in *Nervous Conditions*, whilst Maiguru eventually achieves a limited level of liberation.
>
> Using the above statement as a starting point, write an essay in which you discuss these two characters, and compare the circumstances and decisions that lead to their differing levels of empowerment.

The question asks about how the two specific women are represented in the text without asking students to relate this to their own experiences of patriarchy or expectations related to gender roles in society more broadly. It is particularly noteworthy that none of the assignment questions for ENG2603 asked students to relate concerns in the texts under study to their personal experiences since the course outcomes for this module expressly stated that "[a]s developing critics, students are also expected to come up with new meanings of texts that relate to students' lived experiences". Similarly, for ENG3705, one of the assignment questions read as follows:

> In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the Magistrate observes that, 'once in every generation, without fail, there is an episode of hysteria about the barbarians' (Coetzee, 1980: 8).
>
> Write an essay of 1200-1500 words in which you discuss the ways in which the Empire encourages fear and suspicion of the so-called barbarians, and at least one postmodern characteristic that the novel uses to undermine the Empire's representation of the 'barbarians'. Your answer should take the form of an argumentative essay in which you:
>
> - Provide a definition of the postmodern characteristic which will be discussed in your essay
> - Identify incidents in the novel in which representatives of the Empire encourage fear and suspicion of the 'barbarians,' and incidents which undermine how the 'barbarians' are represented
> - Show how the postmodern characteristic is used in the novel to undermine the Empire's representation of the 'barbarians'

Once again, we have an assignment question that is specific to the text under discussion. The question does not push students to consider concerns regarding representation and colonialism beyond how they manifest in the text under study. While one might rightly argue that the portrayal of the colonised as barbaric is a socio-historical commentary on the entirety of colonialism, the assignment question does not overtly encourage students to make this connection.

Students would have had to draw on a socio-critical orientation to answer both the question on *Nervous Conditions* and *Waiting for the Barbarians* in the sense that they were asked to look at how the texts reflect on specific social matters. However, even though academics expressed a desire in the interviews for students to develop a critical orientation that extended beyond the analysis of literary texts, thus weakening epistemic relations, most assignment questions failed to overtly encourage students to apply their socio-critical orientation beyond the scope of the text to broader manifestations of these concerns in the real world. While several of the prescribed texts for the modules in question dealt with matters such as poverty, gender stereotypes, patriarchy, xenophobia and colonialism, except for the question on *Twelfth Night* discussed above, assignment questions were limited to the scope of the text under study, and there were no overt indications that students should draw on their understandings of the literary texts to reflect critically on their personal experiences or other manifestations of these concerns in the real world. The phrasing of most of the assignment questions, therefore, also failed to set up opportunities for engagements through assignment feedback on how these social concerns manifest beyond the scope of the literary text. Of course, some students may have made connections between concerns in the texts and their personal experiences or other examples of these concerns in society regardless of the phrasing of the questions. However, because these links were not made explicit, students who did not already know that these kinds of connections were valued, would not have gleaned this knowledge from the assignment questions.[20]

[20] It should be noted that while the kind of interaction with texts that I am arguing for requires students to draw on their personal experiences, this does not mean that I am arguing for an orientation towards literary texts that is underpinned by stronger subjective relations, where the legitimate gaze is based on who the student is in terms of their social position (e.g. race, class or gender). Rather, I am arguing for a socio-critical orientation within the cultivated gaze, where students are required to bring their cultivated gaze to bear on both literary texts and relevant manifestations of the social issues portrayed in those texts in their personal lives and society more broadly.

While some might argue that the study of literature should indeed be limited to writing about social matters as they are represented in literary texts and that students' personal experiences or other real-world situations are beyond the scope of the study of literature, it should be kept in mind that the data showed that many academics hoped that students' critical engagements with literary texts would translate into them becoming more critical of their everyday encounters. It would thus have been valuable to explicitly structure formative assessment questions in ways that stimulate this type of critical engagement. Within the context of the curriculum under study, assignment feedback offered one of the few avenues through which students could receive the kind of individualised engagement with their ideas that might lead to transformative learning. Thus, it is perhaps even more important in this mega-distance education context for assignments to explicitly ask students to bring their critical engagements with literary texts to bear on their personal experiences and other real-world contexts.

Asking students to bring their lived experiences to their discussions of literary texts also presents an opportunity to implement a decolonial pedagogy. Davids (2024) argues that students in higher education programmes should be encouraged to give voice to their personal experiences as a way to affirm pluralist identities, histories, knowledges, values and worldviews.

She explains that

> …until the epistemic harm of colonialism and apartheid are afforded careful recognition and attention—as in focusing on the lived experiences, realities, and stories of individuals—the hard work of delegitimizing coloniality, and its implicit structures of hegemonies and binaries cannot unfold. (Davids, 2024, p. 1)

Therefore, Davids (2024) asserts that providing spaces for students to give voice to their personal narratives and have them heard by lecturers and students is a deeply meaningful decolonial practice. This suggests that students should not only be encouraged to share their personal experiences through formative assessment opportunities but that opportunities should also be created within the curriculum for students to share their personal narratives with one another. Because the discipline of literary studies is deeply concerned with the study of narratives, it is particularly well-suited to creating spaces for students to give voice to their personal narratives and to reflect critically on the implications of the narratives of others for their own worldviews. This kind of pedagogy is also strongly aligned with the recommendations of critical pedagogy scholars, as discussed in Chapter Four. It provides a

potential answer to Zembylas' (2022, p. 13) call for higher education spaces to invent "affective practices that instigate empowerment in students to raise their 'critical voice' and take collective action to change that which they think ought to be changed".

There was thus much in the data that suggested misalignment between enacted pedagogies and the cultivated gaze underpinning the intended curriculum, especially a cultivated gaze with a socio-critical orientation. There was also a different kind of misalignment and that was between the students the academics wanted and those they reported having in their classes, a concern to which I now turn.

5.4 Perceived Misalignments Between Student Dispositions and the Disposition of an Ideal Literary Knower

Because the curriculum under study legitimates a cultivated gaze, it would be crucial for students to immerse themselves in the prescribed reading and to participate in opportunities with lecturers and tutors to see the valued literary disposition being modelled and to begin to take it on themselves. However, many of the academics I interviewed indicated that students did not seem to approach their studies in the ways identified as necessary for developing a literary cultivated gaze (Interviews 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15).

For example, one academic felt that

> … the online exam catapulted us into this, sort of, instant passing mode, where students really, really don't expect to gain any skills. They just see their graduation as a… it's just a piece of paper that they basically bought... They really don't expect to gain skills. (Interview 10)

The idea that students are more concerned with the end product of a certificate that can get them a job than the process of learning was something that came up in a number of interviews (Interview 2, 3, 10). Of course, we are dealing here with academics' perceptions and common-sense explanations of student engagement, so these ideas should be treated with a certain amount of caution. However, it is noteworthy that there was a general feeling across the interview data that student dispositions were misaligned with disciplinary values and so I unpack this further now.

5.4.1 Student Engagement with Texts

There were numerous comments in the interview data that suggested that academics felt that students did not engage with the prescribed texts and study material in the ways that were expected or valued (Interviews 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14). This ranged from suggestions that students simply did not read the material to suggestions that students did not engage with the prescribed texts and/or study material appropriately. For example, one academic felt that, in the case of struggling students,

> … sometimes it's really that students just don't read the texts that they need to read. It's as simple as that. You can break it down to saying to the student, 'Listen, you need to read your prescribed texts. You need to read...'. (Interview 11)

Similarly, another academic said:

> I think a lot of our students only … they read nothing except the assessments - the assignment question; they do the assignment question without really bothering with the rest of the tuition material, and they don't know that this is even there. (Interview 7)

A third academic said:

> I suppose it's a result of social media and whatever and, sort of, the truncated SMS style of writing and whatever, but the students don't want to read. And this is the crucial thing: they don't want to read. Then they say... like with first year, when you'd set twenty poems, they'd say, '20 poems!'. You know, they'd be outraged; they'd actually be angry. … I think there's a fundamental problem in the fact that we don't have a reading culture any longer with many of our students. (Interview 3)

An ability to ascertain the extent to which students really did or did not read their prescribed material is beyond the scope of this study. However, there seems to be a widespread perception in English departments in different countries that students do not read their prescribed material (Douglas et al., 2016; Jolliffe & Harl, 2008). Furthermore, drawing on research done in the United States, Jolliffe and Harl (2008, p. 599) explain that

> an array of national surveys and studies suggests that neither high school nor college students spend much time preparing for class, the central activity of which we presume to be reading assigned articles, chapters, and books. Similar studies argue that college students spend little to no time reading for pleasure and that adults in the United States are devoting less and less of their free time to reading fiction, poetry, and drama.

Since South Africa is considered to have a 'reading crisis', with 81% of students at age ten unable to read for meaning (Durbin, 2023; Fraser, 2023; Kell et al., 2023), there is likely a similar lack of reading ability among the South African university student body. It is also well

known that many students in South Africa come from homes and schools where they have had limited access to books.

Several academics also suggested that many students did not engage with literary texts in the valued disciplinary ways when they answered assignment and/or examination questions. For example, one academic said:

> It's not that students don't understand the content; they do understand. But the problem is that 'what is the difference between analysing and narrating?' So that is where the biggest problem is: to say, 'What is a literary essay? How do we write a literary essay?' (Interview 4)

In a similar vein, another academic said:

> …there's a tendency where they don't understand what critically analyse is. So, the typical thing where you get a summary of the excerpt instead of a critical analysis, but then also this thing – and I think it comes from the school system – where every... they think the point of every essay is: 'this text teaches us'. (Interview 10)

A number of academics highlighted the problem of students providing plot summaries instead of engaging critically with literary texts (Interviews 3, 4, 7, 10, 11). This suggests that students could have been struggling to recognise and then take on the discipline-specific critical reading practices that are valued in English literary studies. I discuss the implications of this for pedagogy in Section 5.5 below.

There is also a suggestion in the quotation above that what might have been valued in terms of engaging with literary texts at the school level is different from what is valued in this university programme. Another academic expressed a similar idea concerning a different topic when they said,

> …independent thought is not something one encounters very often in one's students, unfortunately, because they tend to want to still learn by rote. And I think that probably comes from school where you, sort of, learn the plot of the play.... They say, 'What is the answer?' and, of course, in literature, there's no such thing. But they want that. They don't want to think... have to wrestle with the rubric, for example, and think 'What does this actually … This rubric's quite taxing, but I have to deal with it. I've got to wrestle'. There's no sense of them wanting to wrestle with critical concepts at all …. (Interview 3)

This data quote provides another suggestion that students may have had trouble taking on specific academic discourses that were valued in the given context. The first part of the above quotation aligns with Boughey and McKenna's (2021, p. 138) explanation:

> Academic knowledge and knowing is not necessarily the same as school-based knowing since, in schools, knowledge is generally taught as uncontested, unlike in the universities, where the understanding is that knowledge is always open to challenge and is constantly subject to change and development.

Another academic suggested that students might struggle to engage with literary texts in valued ways because they struggle to differentiate between providing their personal opinion on a literary text and providing a critical engagement with a literary text:

> …and they really have a lot of difficulty with separating their own opinions from the text... from the analysis of the text. So, this is something that is really recurring – it's a really widespread problem. You can set a text on violence in schools – that was the text that we set last year – and we tell the student, 'Analyse this text. Tell us what the author is saying: what argument this author is making about violence in schools, and how they're making it'. The student will write us an essay about what they would think about school violence and why they think it's so terrible. So, you know, they have trouble understanding instruction words. They don't know what it means to critically analyse. They really feel very, very surprised when we tell them, 'I'm not asking you for your opinion on this matter: I'm asking you show me how the author communicates their opinion on the matter'. (Interview 7)

Although this academic suggests that part of the trouble might be that students do not understand instruction words, this quotation also suggests that there was a widespread problem in terms of students not understanding what kinds of engagements with literary texts were valued in the discipline. Thus, as with the previous two quotations, this quotation suggests that there was a clash between the dispositions that students brought to the study of literature and the dispositions towards literary texts that were valued in the curriculum. I argued above that it should be highly valued for students to bring their critical engagement with a text to deliberating on similar issues in society more broadly; however, this is quite different from simply sharing a personal opinion of the topic being addressed in the literature. Unfortunately, it seems that this distinction was not clear to many students.

I mentioned in Chapter Four that many academics acknowledged the role that upbringing and exposure to literary texts from childhood plays in the likelihood of student success in literary studies at university. I argued that this idea is corroborated by the research into academic literacies that suggests that students from working-class backgrounds tend to experience more difficulties when it comes to formal education because they may have more limited exposure to texts (Armstrong & Boughey, 2020) and their literacy practices at home might be less aligned with those valued in formal educational settings than the literacy practices of students

from middle-class, educated backgrounds (Armstrong & Boughey, 2020; Gee, 2008; Heath, 1982).

However, implicit in a number of the quotations from the academic interviews provided above is the idea that students are lacking in a variety of ways and/or unwilling to put in the necessary effort. Thus, while the academics suggested that student dispositions were often misaligned with the disposition of an ideal literary knower, they were at times drawing on a 'student-deficit discourse' to articulate this misalignment. A 'student-deficit discourse' (Boughey & McKenna, 2021) locates the 'problem' as something inherent in the student instead of recognising that students enter the university with highly varied literacy practices and that the English literature curriculum values specific literacy practices that may be strange to many of them. The role of pedagogy is therefore to make these literacy practices visible and accessible to *all* students. A deficit discourse comes through clearly in the quotation below:

> When they get into 1501, they don't have the skills. It's like trying to build up the skills from zero, in some cases, and it becomes very, very hard to get them to the level where at level 2603 they are proficient enough. They're not. They're not. They are very lacking in every way. (Interview 13)

Here, students are not viewed as coming to the university with literacy practices that may be different from those valued in the curriculum but rather as having no "skills" at all. The students are also described as "lacking". One of the problems with this kind of thinking is that academics will not attempt to make connections for students between the literacy practices that they already have and those that are valued in the curriculum. For example, although many academics mentioned a lack of a reading culture among students, none of these academics suggested that one could potentially draw on students' knowledge of oral storytelling or songs to make connections with the texts under study. In addition, oral literature was not represented in the curriculum at all.

Smit (2016, p. 370) explains that a major problem with referring to students in terms of a deficit discourse, e.g. "not traditional, not prepared for higher education, not in a position of privilege or advantage", is that "[t]his discourse sets up higher education in a position of privilege and defers responsibility for any critical examination of practices in higher education itself." The intention of this section that has pointed out academic perceptions of misalignments between student dispositions and an ideal disposition towards literary texts is not to criticise students. Instead, the aim is to point out ways in which disciplinary discourses may be alienating to

students. We then need to critically engage with which of these practices we should continue to value and how we can make those practices that we deem valuable more accessible to students.

5.4.2 Engagement with E-tutors

There were quite a few suggestions in the interviews with academics that there was poor student engagement with the e-tutors on the first- and second-year modules (Interviews 2, 8, 9, 14, 15). One academic who had previously worked as an e-tutor explained that the low participation on their e-tutor site meant that they were able to offer the students who did participate more detailed, individualised feedback:

> The participation rates were so low that I could … say, 'Take a past exam paper' to the students who were actually participating, 'try a question, send it in. I'll assess it for you'. (Interview 8)

This academic also explained that although the module they tutored started with 200 students assigned to each tutor, a number that would already make meaningful dialogical engagement with all students impossible, the relevant administrative department kept increasing this number. They believed that the administrative department justified this decision because of the poor participation rates of students on the e-tutor sites. Unfortunately, rather than addressing the causes behind such low participation, the poor engagement with e-tutors seemed to be used as the basis on which to make the tutor-to-student ratios even more untenable.

I was given access to a statistical report of student participation in 2022 on one of the e-tutor sites for ENG1501. The e-tutor in question was considered one of the best e-tutors on the module with an above-average student participation rate. Despite this, an average of only 9.7% of students participated in the multiple activities that were posted weekly. It is possible that the relatively impersonal ways in which e-tutors were made to communicate with students contributed to the lack of student engagement. I argued in Section 5.3 that the restrictions regarding the ways in which e-tutors were allowed to engage with students made it less likely that students would be able to form the kinds of meaningful connections with their tutors that could lead to transformative learning. The fact that so few students were engaging with the e-tutors via the online forums meant that students were not even benefitting from the little that was available to them in terms of dialogue with disciplinary insiders. It suggests that the

dispositions that learners brought with them were different from those valued in the curriculum and that the curriculum did little to address this misalignment.

5.5 Implications and Recommendations

This chapter has shown that there were three kinds of misalignments in and relating to the curriculum under study. First, there was a misalignment between the pedagogical practices employed in the curriculum and the cultivated gaze (which includes both aesthetic and socio-critical orientations) underpinning the intended curriculum. Second, I found a misalignment, more specifically, between enacted pedagogies and the socio-critical orientation valued within the cultivated gaze. Third, I showed that the academics suggested that there were significant misalignments between student dispositions and the disposition of an ideal literary knower. I discuss the implications of my findings below and make some recommendations concerning these findings.

5.5.1 Neoliberal Practices Contribute to Misalignments Between Enacted Pedagogies and the Values Underpinning Cultivated Gaze Disciplines

Neoliberal practices such as managerialism and academic casualisation contributed to misalignments between the underpinning values of the curriculum and the kinds of pedagogic and formative assessment practices that were employed. This was because these neoliberal practices constrained the ability of the curriculum to provide immersive spaces for students to try out and take on a cultivated gaze. Neoliberal practices also constrained the ability of the curriculum to provide spaces for the identity work needed to cultivate the socio-critical orientation within the cultivated gaze. These findings suggest that neoliberal practices place particular limitations on Arts and Humanities curricula intent on cultivating critical reading practices and a critical citizenry. This highlights the importance of taking into account the pedagogical needs of specific disciplinary fields alongside larger political and economic forces when decisions are made regarding administration, enrolments and staffing.

This chapter demonstrated how LCT provides a useful language that academics in the Arts and Humanities can use to articulate the values of their curricula more clearly to disciplinary outsiders and explain how certain kinds of pedagogies are necessary to create opportunities for all students to gain epistemological and ontological access to the values of the curriculum. This could allow academics to push back more effectively against the neoliberal policies that

negatively impact teaching and learning in their fields. It could also assist higher education activists in challenging the neoliberal framing of the university more generally. It is especially important for permanently employed academics to highlight their concerns in the forums available to them, since temporary staff sometimes have fewer spaces in which they can engage with university management, and their more precarious employment can make it more difficult for them to speak out.

It is also important for academics to point out minor changes (that will not incur extensive costs) that could improve the ways in which their disciplines are taught. For example, in the case under study, changing how tutors were allowed to engage with students had the potential to bring about major improvements in the pedagogy without incurring additional costs. Employing fewer tutors but for more hours permanently would also allow tutors to build their pedagogical expertise, have more of a say in decisions about how they should teach and allow for more synergy between lecturers and tutors in terms of pedagogical strategies.

Academics should also think about how they can engage in conversations about the pedagogical needs of their discipline beyond their university context. This can be done through publication, including writing for academic news sites that are more widely read than journal articles. Conversations about disciplinary needs can also be raised in platforms such as the English Academy of South Africa (EASA) and The Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA).

5.5.2 A Socially Just English Literature Curriculum Must Provide Spaces for Identity Work

I showed in the previous chapter that critical pedagogies research suggests that it is important to create spaces to build open and trusting relationships in the curriculum if we are to aid students in developing a critical orientation towards society. In this chapter, I showed that such spaces were constrained by the neoliberal practices of managerialism and academic casualisation. However, there was little in the interview data to suggest that academics saw it as part of their role as educators to create these kinds of spaces, and this may have been an additional contributor to the shortage of such spaces in the curriculum.

It is important for academics to nurture spaces for identity work in their pedagogic and assessment practices and to speak out when structural constraints impede their ability to do so, as these are spaces that allow for the recognition of a diversity of experiences. Giving students

access to a socio-critical orientation within the cultivated gaze also gives them access to powerful and transformative ways of understanding the world. Holm (2020) explains that socially critical interpretive tendencies have become widespread in online commentary on popular culture. This would suggest that students who have regular internet access and the leisure time to consume online commentary on popular culture are more likely to already have some familiarity with the kinds of social criticism that are valued in many Humanities programmes. It is therefore important that the curriculum provides spaces for *all* students to be able to take on the valued critical literacy practices to avoid reinforcing the social inequalities already present in society. Furthermore, ensuring that students from all social backgrounds get access to this form of critique allows for a more diverse set of voices to provide social criticism. Thus, it is important that the curriculum does not assume middle-class identities but recognises the literacies that working-class students bring with them, scaffolds access to critical reading practices for all students and opens these up to critique.

Holm (2020) further argues that although critical reading practices seek to expose and undermine inequalities in society, these practices have come to be associated with social privilege since privileged groups tend to have access to these ways of reading and writing. This can result in a situation where at its worst, social or political criticism can become

> …caught up in contests of cultural capital: a competitive endeavour to accrue status within a field by demonstrating one's facility with political meaning rather than … a means of understanding and transforming the world. (Holm, 2020, p. 159)

Ensuring that the curriculum fosters spaces for identity work, which includes challenging middle-class students to come to recognise their privilege, makes it less likely that students will practice only this shallow form of criticality – a form of posturing that does not serve the common good. I align myself, here, with Giroux and Giroux (2004, pp. 112–113) who argue the following:

> While we agree that providing students with the knowledge and skills they need to struggle to strengthen democracy does not guarantee that they will do so, it does seem imperative morally and politically to at least afford them the knowledge and skills that enable them, as Edward Said puts it, to uncover, elucidate, 'challenge, and defeat both an imposed silence and the normalized quiet of unseen power, wherever and whenever possible.' At the very least, we believe that such educational efforts are a precondition, rather than a guarantee, to challenge the currently fashionable neoliberal view that there are no alternatives to the way society is organized.

Providing spaces in the curriculum for identity work is therefore a necessary precondition –

though not a guarantee – for cultivating critical citizens.

5.5.3 Valued Literacy Practices Must be Made More Visible

I showed in this chapter that academics' perceptions of student engagement pointed to a misalignment between student dispositions and the disposition of an ideal literary knower. While taking on a cultivated gaze requires prolonged immersion in a discipline, many academics felt that students did not adequately immerse themselves in the prescribed literature and study material. Academics also felt that students often did not demonstrate the valued ways of engaging with literature when it came to how they wrote about literary texts in their assignments. There was also evidence indicating that large numbers of students were not making use of opportunities to try out the valued literary practices through engaging with their e-tutors. This suggests that, as a first step, it is important to explain to students that the curriculum values a way of looking at literary texts and the world beyond it that develops through prolonged immersion in the discipline via engagement with disciplinary insiders, social theories and immersion in the literary texts themselves. It is important, for example, for students to understand that developing empathy in regard to the spaces, places and characters introduced through the texts and broadening one's horizons is not something that can happen if you only read a plot summary, but that they need to engage deeply with the ideas of the people from a variety of backgrounds in the prescribed literary texts in order to immerse themselves in different worldviews. Being more explicit about what the curriculum is trying to achieve and how students need to interact with the curriculum in order to succeed might improve the ways in which students engage in the curriculum.

Beyond merely informing students of how they are expected to interact with the curriculum, students need to be supported in terms of developing the kinds of literacy practices that are valued in the curriculum through more modelling, more feedback and more opportunities to try out the valued literacy practices in low stakes assessments. This is especially important in the South African context which has one of the most unequal schooling systems in the world (Amnesty International, 2020). O'Shea et al. (2019, p. 8) recommend

> an explicit integration of academic literacies development in the curriculum such that the norms and values of the academy are not presented as obvious or common-sense, but rather as disciplinary practices that can be accessed and taken up by all our students and that are also open to critique and change. This pedagogy would also need to focus on the selection of texts and the scaffolding of reading activities, and as academics ourselves, we would need to model the practices of being active and regular readers.

Making the valued literacy practices more overt to students is important not only for scaffolding epistemological and ontological access to the values of the discipline but also for allowing staff and students to be more cognisant and critical of the practices of the discipline. O'Shea et al.'s (2019) recommendation regarding incorporating academic literacies development into the curriculum aligns with academic literacies research that suggests that it is important for mainstream curricula to focus on developing the valued literacy practices of a discipline and that we do not relegate this work to generic academic literacies courses since each discipline has its own distinctive ways of reading and writing (Jacobs, 2007; Lea & Street, 1998).

Furthermore, O'Shea et al.'s recommendation to scaffold reading activities aligns with the research of Douglas et al. (2016) who researched reading practices among students in English departments across four Australian universities. One of the findings of their research was that their students brought highly varied reading skills into their contexts. They explained,

> For us, 'reading skills' refers not only to students' abilities to undertake close reading and level-appropriate interpretation, but also perseverance through a long and/or difficult text, and the time management skills necessary for ensuring reading is completed before class. (Douglas et al., 2016, p. 255)

Douglas et al. (2016) emphasise the importance of making visible and supporting students to develop the reading resilience that they will need outside of the classroom and not limiting interactions relating to reading only to the practice of close reading within the classroom. They recommend several strategies for developing students' reading resilience that they trialled. These include:

- disseminating reading lists before the beginning of the semester in order for students to have time to start reading ahead of the semester;
- providing students with reading 'coaching' in the form of online guides that outline how much time students should allow for reading particular texts and discuss other tools and technologies available to support reading;
- surveying students on their reading experiences and habits in order to determine what kinds of coaching would be most suitable to support them; and
- prioritising and rewarding reading in assessment by setting regular short writing tasks that must evidence reading (Douglas et al., 2016).

All these strategies might assist in developing reading resilience in UNISA students. I would further recommend that academics and e-tutors need to model how to "wrestle with critical concepts" (Interview 3) in their reading as a strategy to build reading resilience. In addition, beyond surveying students on their reading experiences and habits, I would recommend surveying students on their exposure to other forms of literacy practices, such as oral storytelling and songs and then build links in the curriculum between the literacy practices that students already bring with them to the university and those that are valued in an English literature curriculum.

In addition to these strategies, I would recommend more formally curriculating student engagements with e-tutors and lecturers so that these are not seen as voluntary extras which may be easy to avoid or as intimidating options. This could ensure that students participate in the immersive events that the curriculum makes available since such immersion is necessary for developing the valued cultivated gaze. Students should have an opportunity to form connections with their e-tutors and lecturers as they are guided towards engaging critically with literature and broader social concerns. Engagements should ideally take various forms, including synchronous live streams, asynchronous videos, short writing tasks and regular feedback on drafts. However, in order to formally curriculate such engagements, there would have to be serious improvements in lecturer and e-tutor-to-student ratios. Given the e-tutor-to-student ratios in 2021, it would not have been possible to formally curriculate student engagements as it would have been impossible for the e-tutors to engage meaningfully with students in these numbers. A tutor with a group of 200 students, employed for ten hours per week, would be able to devote only three minutes to each student per week, and a tutor with a group of 700 students would be able to devote less than one minute to each student per week. There would also have to be a lot more recognition of the time that needs to be devoted to tuition in the work allocation provision for academics.

This chapter has discussed general misalignments between the cultivated gaze valued in the intended curriculum and the pedagogies employed to teach the curriculum. It then moved on to discuss specific clashes between the socio-critical orientation within the curriculum and pedagogical strategies. Lastly, it discussed perceived misalignments between student dispositions and the disposition of an ideal literary knower. An important finding was that neoliberal practices constrain the curriculum's ability to provide suitable pedagogies to inculcate a cultivated gaze, especially a socio-critically oriented cultivated gaze. In addition to

these broader constraints, there were indications in the data that academics did not understand their role as instructors to include creating spaces for identity work. I also pointed out ways in which students might find the curriculum alienating and made recommendations for how to mitigate this if academics decide to maintain the curriculum in its current form.

The next chapter concludes the thesis by reflecting on the contributions made and the implications these have for the case of English literary studies at UNISA, English literary studies in other contexts and for humanities more broadly.

CHAPTER SIX: CONTRIBUTION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

Through conducting this study, I experienced changes in my understanding of what it is we are trying to teach in English literary studies and how we should be endeavouring to teach it. I start this chapter by reflecting on my research process and the development of my understanding of the phenomenon under study. I then move on to discuss the contributions that this study makes to an understanding of English literary studies and Humanities curricula more broadly. Lastly, I discuss the implications of my research findings and make tentative recommendations based on my findings at a departmental, institutional, national and global level.

6.2 Reflections on the Research Process

Early on in the research process, my understanding of academic literacy practices shifted as I came to understand that teaching grammar and vocabulary was only a small part of enabling students' access to the literacy practices of a specific academic discipline (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). I realised that academic disciplines are made up of specialised ways of reading, writing, thinking and being and that this is a key aspect of what conditions students' chances of success or failure (Lea & Street, 1998; Maton, 2014). That I had been teaching for eight years before engaging with the literature on academic literacies and coming to this understanding is an indictment of how many academics tend to follow an autonomous model in their understanding of literacy practices, focusing on the technical surface aspects related to the decoding and encoding of script. This is in spite of the fact that academic literacies research has been around for three decades to point us towards an ideological model that understands literacy as a set of socially embedded practices and acknowledges that different contexts value different ways of interacting with written texts.

My research into academic literacies also led me to the realisation that the literacy practices that emerge from the norms and values of academic fields are rarely made explicit as they tend to be acquired tacitly rather than through overt instruction (Jacobs, 2007). This influenced my research design as I needed a tool to help me get at the often-opaque ways of being and doing that underpin academic disciplines. This is why I chose LCT as my theoretical framework, as LCT offers concepts that can be used to reveal the organising principles that underpin social practices (Maton, 2016). I chose to use the dimension of Specialisation because I was interested

in finding out about the literacy practices that were specific to the discipline of English literary studies.

I started the LCT analysis of my data expecting to find some practical solutions at a departmental and institutional level that could assist academics to inculcate the underlying values of English literary studies. In other words, I was hoping to establish how the 'hidden curriculum' of the academic literacy practices in literary studies could be made explicit for easier epistemological access by all students. I have indeed been able to contribute knowledge in this regard, as I unpack below. However, through reviewing some of the literature about the kinds of obstacles that academics face, and seeing how this was reflected in my data, I came to understand that much larger forces were at play that impeded the ability of lecturers to teach the discipline effectually. This realisation changed the scope of my study. While I initially intended to take a more detailed look at formative assessment in the curriculum by analysing marked student essays for each of the six modules, my understanding that larger forces were having a major impact on what could be offered in terms of pedagogies led me to focus my attentions more broadly on how neoliberal practices in the institution impacted the pedagogical offering. As explained in Chapter Three, I believe that it is a strength of this study that it concerns itself with how larger societal mechanisms impact a pedagogical offering and that it does not assume that academics have full autonomy in this regard. Educational research often focuses on the skills and dispositions of the individual lecturer at the cost of an analysis of the structural aspects at play. My focus on how larger social forces impact a curriculum also ensures that the findings of this case study will have applicability far beyond the study's context.

6.3 Contributions of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research

This study analysed an English literature curriculum in order to make more explicit the underlying values of the discipline as practised within a specific context. Although disciplines can be practised in different ways in different contexts (and can therefore be underpinned by a variety of specialisation codes), my analysis has contributed knowledge regarding how the discipline of English literary studies might be practised.

As I explained in Chapters One and Two, making explicit what is legitimated in a discipline is vital for epistemic justice as disciplines tend to require the use of specific literacy practices that are not overtly taught. This means that students who come from home contexts that privilege

discourses that are very different from university discourses have less chance of succeeding in university programmes as they have a harder time picking up on the valued ways of knowing and being. It is therefore crucial to find ways to make these literacy practices more overt so that all students can access powerful discipline-specific ways of meaning making. By making more explicit what is valued in an English literary studies curriculum, this study therefore contributes to a social justice agenda. It has also created the possibility for academics to be more aware of the underpinning values of their discipline and the demands that it makes on students. It is therefore possible for academics to take a more critical look at their discipline and curriculum and, as recommended by McKenna (2004), consider which practices should be retained as valuable and which should be discarded as irrelevant.

The research questions that I set out to answer in this thesis were:

(1) What kinds of knowledge and knowers are legitimated in the UNISA undergraduate English literature intended curriculum?
(2) To what extent does the English literature curriculum of the Department of English Studies at UNISA enable access to the ways of knowing and the ways of being that are valued?

The LCT dimension of Specialisation allowed me to answer the first research question thoroughly. I was able to provide a detailed analysis of the kinds of knowledge and knowers that the curriculum aims to develop. I did so by performing a Specialisation analysis of both the course outcomes of the six literature modules under study and sixteen academics' descriptions in the interviews of the intended outcomes of the curriculum. I found that the intended curriculum was underpinned by a knower code with a cultivated gaze. As I explained in Chapter Two, a field that is underpinned by a knower code places a stronger emphasis on the kind of person that you need to be rather than the specific knowledge that you need to have in order to be considered a legitimate participant in the field. Furthermore, if a discipline is underpinned by a cultivated gaze, it means that students need to be immersed in the discipline for an extended period in order to be able to take on the literacy practices of the discipline. My findings in this regard align with the findings of previous LCT studies that have looked at English literary studies in a variety of contexts (Christie, 2016; Jackson, G. A., 2020; Luckett & Hunma, 2014; Maton, 2014; Sevnarayan, 2015; Van Heerden, 2017; Wilmot, 2019). It also aligns with the analysis that I performed in Chapter Four which explores other literature that does not draw on LCT but nonetheless discusses the values of the discipline of English literary

studies. Thus, my recommendations provided in Chapter Five relating to aligning pedagogical and assessment practices to the cultivated knower code of the curriculum will have applicability in a broad range of contexts beyond the study site.

A strength of this study which differentiates it from the two previous LCT studies of English literature curricula at an undergraduate tertiary level (Sevnarayan, 2015; Van Heerden, 2017) is that while they each provided a snapshot of a curriculum by focusing on the first-year level, this study looked at a curriculum across three years of study to provide a sense of knower building over an extended period. Since many previous studies, at both the secondary and tertiary levels, found that English literary studies was practised in their context as a knower code with a cultivated gaze, I believed that performing a Specialisation analysis of an undergraduate curriculum across the full three years could provide deeper insights into the process of knower development in the discipline. This was indeed the case. I discovered that although the curriculum continued to be underpinned by a knower code and a cultivated gaze across all three years of study, two orientations were valued within this cultivated gaze. I termed these an 'aesthetic orientation' and a 'socio-critical orientation'. The 'aesthetic orientation' entails the ability to comment compellingly on how specific language and literary features create certain meanings or effects in literary texts. This is frequently referred to by academics as 'close reading'. The socio-critical orientation is demonstrated by considering texts in relation to ideological and social issues. This often entails reading literary texts through the lenses of social theories such as feminism or postcolonial theory. The aesthetic orientation was more strongly emphasised at the first-year level. However, by the third-year level, students were expected to be able to shift between the aesthetic and socio-critical orientations in their analyses of texts.

Since both orientations to literary texts align with research on historical developments in the discipline (as explained in Chapter Four), many other universities will likely find two similar orientations at play in their curricula. Thus, the metaphor that I unpack in Chapter Four of thinking about these two orientations in terms of how converging and diverging lenses refract light rays in different ways could potentially be a helpful way to make more explicit the kinds of reading and writing practices that are valued in English literary studies. As explained in Chapter Four, the aesthetic orientation is concerned with applying knowledge of literary techniques in order to develop a better understanding of the object of study (in this case, a literary text, oeuvre and/or genre). Thus, it can be understood as a cultivated gaze with a

converging lens because the cultivated gaze is employed to reflect inwards on the object of study and bring it into sharper focus. Conversely, the socio-critical orientation is concerned with understanding how the object of study is informed by and reflects on social and ideological concerns. Thus, it can be understood as a cultivated gaze with a diverging lens because the cultivated gaze is employed to reflect outwards by making connections between the text and social and ideological concerns. This metaphor could help academics for whom these practices are normalised to 'see' their disciplinary Discourse more clearly, and it could be used to make the reading and writing practices valued in English literary studies a little less mysterious to students. For example, one could use these concepts to create a student guide with examples of the two orientations based on the works that students are studying. It is my hope that my findings concerning these two orientations to the literary text will be further tested by others looking at English literary studies in different contexts and studies that look at other Humanities disciplines that are underpinned by a cultivated gaze. This study's focus on nuanced distinctions in terms of the legitimation codes of different English literature modules could also contribute to debates on how the discipline could or should be practised.

My metaphor of applying diverging and converging lenses to literary texts also makes a theoretical contribution to LCT, as I was able to build on the LCT's aspect of lenses by pointing out two different kinds of lenses: a diverging and a converging lens that can be found within the cultivated gaze. This distinction could have potential applications for many other disciplines that legitimate a cultivated gaze.

Another important finding, as discussed in Chapter Four, was that the socio-critical orientation within the cultivated gaze had strong resonances with what scholars seem to be saying when they make arguments about the potential value of Arts and Humanities programmes in developing the critical thinkers necessary for a more just society (Giroux & Bosio, 2021; Nussbaum, 2010; Parris, 2018). Thus, finding ways to facilitate the inculcation of a cultivated gaze with a socio-critical orientation seems to be key for any English literature curriculum that hopes to contribute towards cultivating critical citizens. Furthermore, I found that, unlike the aesthetic orientation, the socio-critical orientation extends beyond knowledges, methods and dispositions that are specific to the study of literature. The socio-critical orientation may therefore be relevant to other Arts or Humanities curricula that aim to cultivate critical citizens.

In terms of my second research question, "To what extent does the English literature curriculum enable access to the ways of being and knowing that are valued?", Specialisation allowed me

to answer this question on the broader level with which this thesis concerned itself. I was largely concerned with what was possible in terms of pedagogies within the systemic constraints of a large distance education institution. Thus, I did not look at specific instances of how knowledge/knower building was being enacted within contact sessions with students, but rather focused my analysis on course structures and the interview data. Through this analysis, I was able to show that there were misalignments between the intended curriculum and the pedagogies being offered. I found a general misalignment between the cultivated gaze of the intended curriculum and the pedagogies employed to teach the curriculum. Furthermore, I found a specific misalignment between the socio-critical orientation within the cultivated gaze and the pedagogies employed in the curriculum. Lastly, I found a perceived lack of alignment between student dispositions and the disposition of an ideal literary knower.

A major finding of the thesis is that larger neoliberal forces make it very difficult to effectively teach the discipline of literary studies, especially if one is trying to cultivate critical citizens. This is because neoliberal university practices make it difficult to provide students with the immersion over an extended period that is necessary to develop a cultivated gaze and with the emotionally engaged pedagogies that critical pedagogists have argued are necessary for developing critical citizens. The study found that neoliberal practices such as high instructor-student ratios, managerialism and academic casualisation contributed to misalignments between the underpinning values of the intended curriculum and the pedagogies that could realistically be employed. These findings suggest that neoliberal practices place particular limitations on Arts and Humanities curricula intent on cultivating critical reading practices and a critical citizenry. Thus, this study contributes an illustration of how neoliberal forces can undermine an Arts or Humanities curriculum's ability to provide suitable pedagogies for developing critical citizens. A valuable contribution of this thesis is that it looked at how broader societal issues that impact higher education globally affected the curriculum under study. Thus, the findings of this study will be relevant in a broad range of other contexts.

At a departmental level, the study found that although academics hoped to develop socially critical citizens through the English literature curriculum, they did not articulate in the interviews an understanding of what kinds of pedagogies this would require. Critical pedagogies research, discussed in Chapter Four, suggests that in order to develop critical citizenship, students need to be provided with emotionally engaged dialogical spaces. However, there was a lack of emphasis on identity work in the interview data. This suggests

that academics need to be supported to consider the recommendations of researchers of critical pedagogies. It would be useful for further research to investigate the extent to which academics display an awareness of critical pedagogies research in other university programmes aimed at cultivating critical citizens.

Furthermore, the study found that assignment questions that academics set failed to ask students to extend their knowledge of social issues in the text under study to their personal experiences or a discussion of other examples of manifestations of these issues in the real world. This was even though in the interviews, many academics expressed the hope that students would develop a socio-critical orientation that would extend beyond the interpretation of literary texts and become a way of looking at society more broadly. Thus, there was a missed opportunity in the formative assessment tasks to ask questions that would engender a dialogue with students through assignment feedback regarding their personal experiences or real-world examples of social issues beyond the scope of the text. This finding suggests that it may be beneficial in the case of other curricula aimed at cultivating critical citizens to take a careful look at whether formative assessment practices are aligned with the intentions of the curriculum.

Lastly, the study found that academics felt that student dispositions were misaligned with the disposition needed to develop a cultivated gaze. This highlights the importance of making the organising principles of the discipline more explicit to students. This will help students be more aware of the kinds of dispositions that they need to adopt in order to get the most out of their learning.

As stated previously, Specialisation allowed me to answer my second research question on the broad level with which my study concerned itself. Nevertheless, future research looking at other data sets and drawing on other LCT dimensions would allow me to answer the second research question in more detail. For example, a Semantics analysis of formative assessment practices, like the one performed by Van Heerden (2017) in the context of a first-year literature programme at the University of the Western Cape, could offer insights into the extent to which marker feedback is providing access to the underpinning values of the discipline. A Semantics analysis of the teaching practices of academics, such as the one performed by Clarence (2013) in the context of the disciplines of Law and Political Science, could also enhance my understanding of the extent to which the enacted pedagogies are able to contribute to students' epistemological and ontological access to the discipline. Furthermore, an analysis of student

experiences of the curriculum could shed additional light on the extent to which the curriculum is enabling epistemological and ontological access to the discipline. Interviews with students could also allow a space for them to speak back to the curriculum, possibly challenging the status quo and helping with academic understandings of how the curriculum can be decolonised.

6.3 Implications of the Study and Recommendations Based on the Findings

This section starts with a consideration of the implications of my research findings at a departmental level and makes suggestions for improvements that are within the power of the department and individual academics to make. As my findings suggested that changes are needed at a macro level in order to create better alignments between the curriculum under study and the pedagogies employed to teach the curriculum, I then move on to discuss the implications of my research at an institutional, national and global level.

6.3.1 Departmental

My findings regarding the misalignments between the underpinning values of the UNISA English literature curriculum and the pedagogies employed to teach the curriculum suggest that many changes are necessary in order to create better alignments between the intended curriculum and actual curriculum outcomes. While the recommendations I make below relate specifically to the curriculum under study, many of these recommendations may be of use in other English departments in South Africa and internationally. Many of the changes that are required to create better alignments between the intended curriculum and the enacted pedagogies need to occur at an institutional rather than a departmental level; these will be discussed in the next section below. However, I start by providing some recommendations that can be implemented at the departmental level.

First, I recommend that the department make use of the study's findings to better orient students regarding the underpinning values of the curriculum that they are expected to be immersed in across their three years of undergraduate study. This can be done in several ways. I recommend that from the start of the first year, students are made explicitly aware that the discipline values a way of looking at literary texts that will be developed through a prolonged period of immersion in the discipline. Emphasis should be placed on the idea that students need to take every opportunity to immerse themselves in the discipline, including doing the prescribed

reading, attending live-stream sessions, interacting with e-tutors and participating in opportunities to practise academic writing and receive feedback. Given the challenges with attendance that the participants reported, this would need to be consistently and repeatedly articulated so that students come to understand the need to move from an instrumentalist engagement with the curriculum to participating in an immersive process in order to cultivate the valued gaze.

As mentioned above, I also believe that students would benefit from exposure to the metaphor of applying converging and diverging lenses to literary texts. Students should be alerted to which modules in the curriculum are more strongly underpinned by each of these ways of reading and which modules place equal emphasis on both of these ways of reading. Thus, I recommend that students are equipped with metaknowledge about the practices that are valued in the discipline.

While it is important for students to develop the academic literacies required to participate effectively in a field, it is also crucial to enable them to be critical of these discourses. As Clark and Ivanič (1997, pp. 240-241) explain:

> There is a difficult tension between, on the one hand, enabling learner writers to access the powerful forms of language and writing so that they develop the cultural capital that is perceived as necessary for success in education and in the world beyond school or university, and, on the other hand, opening up for them the possibility of challenging those prescriptions.... In our view, explicit discussion of the social origins of conventions for correctness and appropriacy can help to address this tension. On the one hand, such discussion can reduce the extent to which alienation blocks learners from acquiring the conventions by making the reasons for their alienation apparent. On the other hand, it can provide the basis on which they can, when the risk is not too high, contribute to the ideological work of challenging and changing conventions that work to the detriment of values, beliefs and social groups and ideas with which they identify.

In the case of English literary studies, this kind of learning can be facilitated by making the underpinning values of the discipline explicit, as suggested above, and by familiarising students with the historical origins of the discipline. For example, educating students about the problematic ways in which the discipline was historically employed for ideological control could encourage students to engage more critically with disciplinary conventions and the ideological underpinnings of the texts that are prescribed in the curriculum. By encouraging students to think critically about the values of the discipline, we would be empowering them to make calls for curriculum transformation and decolonisation.

My second recommendation relates to educating academics on the organising principles underpinning the English literature curriculum and the kinds of pedagogies that align with those curriculum values. Although academics will usually have an implicit understanding of what is valued in their discipline, my LCT analysis can provide academics with knowledge of how to make these implicit values more explicit to students and assist academics in aligning their pedagogical interventions with these underpinning values to the extent that they can do so within the constraints of the institution. As explained in Chapter Five, my thesis also demonstrates how LCT provides a useful language that academics can use to articulate the values of their discipline more clearly to disciplinary outsiders, such as university management, and to explain how certain kinds of pedagogies are necessary to create opportunities for students to gain epistemological and ontological access to the values of the discipline. This can help academics push back more effectively against the neoliberal policies that negatively impact teaching and learning in their curriculum.

In addition, it is important to educate academics about the kind of affective labour that critical pedagogy scholars recommend in order to facilitate the development of socially critical citizens. As I have shown in Chapter Five, many of the academics I interviewed highlighted that they wanted students to become socially critical knowers through studying English literature. However, there was little in the interview data to suggest that academics saw it as part of their role as educators to create the kinds of emotionally engaged pedagogical spaces recommended by critical pedagogists to develop this kind of criticality. Neoliberal forces such as massification, managerialism and academic casualisation will constrain academics' ability to provide students with these kinds of pedagogical spaces. However, academics cannot push back against neoliberal forces that undermine such possibilities if they are unaware of what kinds of pedagogies align with their aim to facilitate the development of a socio-critically oriented cultivated gaze.

I recommended in Chapter Five that students should be encouraged in their formative assessment opportunities to reflect on how issues in the texts relate to their lived experiences and other examples of manifestations of these issues in the real world. This would be a way to create alignment between pedagogy and the intended curriculum as academics hoped that students would learn to apply their socio-critical orientation in their everyday encounters. As I explained in Chapter Five, this is also an opportunity to implement a decolonial pedagogy. Here, I ascribe to the argument of Davids (2024), who suggests that students in higher

education programmes should be encouraged to give voice to their personal experiences as a way to affirm pluralist identities, histories, knowledges, values and worldviews.

6.3.2 Institutional, National and Global

South Africa's White Paper for Post-school Education and Training (DHET, 2013) emphasises the need for a substantial expansion in South Africa's post-school education sector as a means to stimulate economic growth and provide citizens with a route out of poverty. According to the National Development Plan for 2030 (National Planning Commission, 2012), distance education needs to play an important role in expanding the higher education sector as the use of technology in the provision of higher education can help South Africa to overcome infrastructure limits. This means that UNISA plays a very important role in South Africa's higher education development goals in that it gives massive student numbers access to the university space. According to the Policy for the Provision of Distance Education in South African Universities (CHE, 2014, p. 6):

> Distance education provision needs to rise to the triple challenge of providing greater access (1) (in terms of both numbers and diversity), in ways that offer a reasonable expectation of turning access into success in courses or programmes of proven quality (2) that are also affordable (3).

It is this second challenge – giving students a reasonable chance of turning university access into success in quality courses – that this thesis has largely concerned itself with. My research suggests that currently, UNISA runs the risk of giving students only 'formal access' (Morrow, 2009) to the English literary studies curriculum, while institutional constraints make it unlikely that students will gain epistemological and ontological access to the values of the curriculum if they do not come from a privileged middle-class background. It is highly likely that other Humanities programmes at UNISA that aim to develop critical citizens experience similar challenges. This leaves us with three alternatives:

(1) Change what is valued in the curriculum to something that can be taught within the limited pedagogical contact sessions that are currently possible within the UNISA context.
(2) Allow only a small number of students into the Humanities curricula aimed at developing critical citizens so that small numbers of staff are able to provide the time and emotional investment necessary to cultivate a critical orientation towards society.

(3) Provide *a lot* more resources towards Humanities programmes aimed at developing critical citizens.

Both the first and the second alternative would deny large numbers of students access to powerful and transformative ways of understanding the world. Although the third solution would be by far the most difficult to put in place, South Africa and UNISA's commitment towards providing higher education not only for individual economic benefit but also for the public good, which I will unpack below, suggests that this is the ideal we should be striving towards. If we do not strive to do this at a university like UNISA, we also run the risk of reinforcing inequalities of cultural capital, where only the most elite universities are able to offer students the opportunity of effective mastery of the forms of analysis valued within the cultivated gaze.

In addition to its economic objectives, South Africa's White Paper for Post-school Education and Training also states:

> Given its history, an important over-arching goal of our society is the imperative for transformation, the elimination of racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination, and the entrenchment of democratic norms and a culture of tolerance and human dignity. The postschool education and training system must strive to respond to these transformational goals through all possible mechanisms. (DHET, 2013, p. 10)

The discipline of English literary studies as articulated in the data of this study seems perfectly poised to inculcate the socially just values expressed in the White Paper. Thus, it is important not only for UNISA but institutions nationally to ensure that they are creating working conditions which make it possible for English departments (and other departments that aim to cultivate a socially oriented criticality) to provide students with the necessary pedagogical spaces. Since South African universities are generally contending with large increases in their student cohorts (as explained in Chapter One) – as are many universities across the globe – and neoliberal practices are rampant (as explained in Chapter Five), this implication of my study has applicability in a wide range of contexts.

UNISA's mission statement is in line with the social justice goals expressed in the White Paper. As I explained in Chapter One, UNISA's (2023b, n.p.) mission statement includes an aim to "contribute to the knowledge and information society, advance development, nurture a critical citizenry and ensure global sustainability". Thus, the institution expresses a commitment not only to equipping students for the workforce but also for the common good. UNISA also values

"dignity in diversity", which it defines as striving "to promote humanness, anti-racism and self-worth in the context of cultural and intellectual differences for the attainment of equality" (UNISA, 2023b, n.p.). These values are strongly aligned with the social values of studying English literary studies that academics expressed in the interviews that I conducted. Thus, from an institutional perspective, it is necessary for UNISA to strive to put working conditions in place that enable academics to provide students with the immersion and emotional engagement necessary to develop the socio-critical orientation within the cultivated gaze. This would entail improving staff-to-student ratios, insourcing markers and tutors and finding ways to recognise and create enabling spaces for the affective labour that academics need to put into tuition in order to facilitate the development of socially critical students. It is important for markers and tutors to be permanently employed rather than contract workers so that they have a voice to contend against neoliberal university practices that negatively impact the kinds of pedagogies that they are able to offer students. Furthermore, one of the problems with neoliberalism is the metrification of human activity which generally does not allow for flexibility and nuance – rather it is one size fits all in terms of workloads and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). It is important for universities to acknowledge that fostering critical citizens requires time-consuming, intensive pedagogies. This should be reflected in academics' workloads.

This thesis has shown that there are significant clashes between the kinds of pedagogies required to cultivate critical literacies through a Humanities curriculum such as English literary studies and the pedagogic possibilities that are afforded within a university underpinned by neoliberal values. The findings of the thesis highlight the importance of considering the pedagogical needs of specific disciplinary fields alongside larger political and economic forces when decisions are made regarding administration, enrolments and staffing. The broader implication of this thesis is that if governments and higher education institutions are serious about transforming society and developing a critical citizenry, changes are necessary in how Humanities programmes are staffed and administrated.

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Viswanathan, G. (1987). The beginnings of English literary study in British India. *Oxford Literary Review*, *9*(1/2), 2–26. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43973679.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A1: Provisional Rhodes Ethics Approval

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Education Faculty
PO Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140, South Africa
t: +27 (0) 46 603 8393
f: +27 (0) 46 603 8028
e: e.rosenberg@ru.ac.za

www.ru.ac.za

17/09/2020

Retha KNOETZE

CHERTL

g20k5445@campus.ru.ac.za

Dear Retha KNOETZE

Your application for the study "Investigating the means of legitimation of English literary studies: a case study of a curriculum at a South African university", **Number 2020-1575-4652**, has been reviewed by the Education Faculty Research Ethics Committee (EF-REC).

Ethics approval has been granted pending written permission being obtained from the organisation(s) listed in your application, namely:

Chair, Department of English Studies, UNISA.

Your application can be downloaded as a PDF version and forwarded with your permission letter request. Please refer to the Applicant User Guide for how to do so. Your request to waiver the need to obtain further permission from the Registrar at UNISA is granted, as we believe the judgement of the Chair of the Department of English Studies at the same institution, will suffice.

Please forward the written permission, once received, to the EF-REC Chair (E.Rosenberg@ru.ac.za) and to the Education Research Ethics Coordinators (g.chakona@ru.ac.za; s.manqele@ru.ac.za) in order for your approval to be finalised.

The Education Faculty Research Ethics Committee had a number of comments on your application, which you can view on the ERAS system. This includes the following comment for noting:

This comment relates to the positionality of the researcher. She is an insider researcher and works with the people she will be interviewing. It is necessary that she considers the implications of her insider status in relation to the extent to which her research participants will feel free to comment on the curricula they are intimately involved with, particularly given the focus of the study - whether or not and how the curriculum enables epistemological access to students.

Sincerely

Professor Eureta Rosenberg

Chair: Education Faculty Research Ethics Committee

Appendix A2: Rhodes Ethics Approval

Rhodes University, Education Faculty
Research Ethics Committee
PO Box 94, Makhanda, 6140, South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 46 603 8393
Fax: +27 (0) 46 603 8028
email: e.rosenberg@ru.ac.za

https://www.ru.ac.za/researchgateway/ethics/

22/02/2021

Retha KNOETZE

CHERTL

g20k5445@campus.ru.ac.za

Dear Retha KNOETZE and Professor Sioux McKenna

Re: Investigating the means of legitimation of English literary studies: a case study of a curriculum at a South African university

APPLICATION NUMBER: 2020-1575-4652

This letter confirms that your research ethics application has been reviewed and **APPROVED** by the Education Faculty Research Ethics Committee (EF-REC). Your permission letter(s) where applicable have been received and you are free to proceed with your study.

Approval is granted for 1 year. An annual progress report is required in order to renew approval for an additional period. You will receive an email notifying you when the progress report is due.

Should any substantive change(s) be made during the research process, that may have ethical implications, you should notify the Education Faculty REC Chair via email. This includes changes in investigators. The REC Chair will advise as to whether a new application is necessary.

Do keep this clearance letter secure and accessible throughout your study and after its completion. It will be needed when a thesis is examined and when publications are submitted to journals.

Please also submit a brief report to the REC Chair on the completion of the research. This can be done via email. The purpose of this report is to indicate whether the research was conducted successfully and whether any ethics-related matters arose that the committee should be aware of, in order to guide future studies. XXX

Sincerely,

Prof Eureta Rosenberg

Chair: Education Faculty Research Ethics Committee

Appendix A3: UNISA Ethics Approval

UNISA university of south africa

COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

01 December 2020

NHREC Registration # :
Rec-240816-052
CREC Reference # :
90225945_CREC_CHS_2020

Dear Ms Ms Retha Knoetze

Decision:
Ethics Approval from 01 December 2020 to 31 November 2023

Principal Researcher(s): Ms Retha Knoetze **email: knoetr@unisa.ac.za**

Title: Investigating the means of legitimation of English literary studies: a case study of a curriculum at a South African university

Degree Purpose: PhD

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

The ***Low risk application was reviewed*** by College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, on **01 December 2020** in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the

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confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date **(31 November 2023).** Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **90225945** **_CREC_CHS_2020 should** be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours Sincerely,

Signature :

Dr. K.J. Malesa
CHS Ethics Chairperson
Email: maleskj@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 4780

Signature : PP

Prof K. Masemola
Executive Dean : CHS
E-mail: masemk@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 2298

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Appendix A4: UNISA Research Permission

UNISA university of south africa

RESEARCH PERMISSION SUB-COMMITTEE (RPSC) OF THE SENATE
RESEARCH, INNOVATION, POSTGRADUATE DEGREES AND
COMMERCIALISATION COMMITTEE (SRIPCC)

02 February 2021

Decision: Research Permission
Approval from 2 February 2021
until 31 November 2023

Ref #: 2021_RPC_003
Ms. Retha Knoetze
Student #: 20K5445
Staff #: 90225945

Principal Investigator:
Ms. Retha Knoetze
Department of English Studies
UNISA
knoetr@unisa.ac.za; 072 402 7156

Supervisors: Prof S McKenna; Dr T Niovane

Investigating the means of legitimation of English literary studies: a case study of a curriculum at a South African university

Your application regarding permission to involve UNISA employees, students and data in regard to the above study has been received and was considered by the Research Permission Subcommittee (RPSC) of the UNISA Senate, Research, Innovation, Postgraduate Degrees and Commercialisation Committee (SRIPCC) on 26 January 2021.

It is my pleasure to inform you that permission has been granted for the study. You may gain access to the following:

1. The e-mail addresses of 25 Unisa academics in the Department of English Studies.
2. The e-mail addresses of ten (10) undergraduate English literature students in the Department of English Studies to conduct interviews.
3. Secondary data comprising of study study material and the tutorial letters of the six modules, (ENG1501, ENG2602, ENG2603, ENG3703, ENG3704, ENG3705) from the Department of English Studies.
4. Examples of 60 anonymised high and low scoring assignments obtained from lecturers in the Department of English Studies.

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5. The last five years' aggregated pass rates from the six modules, (ENG1501, ENG2602, ENG2603, ENG3703, ENG3704, ENG3705) from the Department of English Studies.

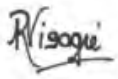
You are requested to submit a report of the study to the Research Permission Subcommittee (RPSC@unisa.ac.za) within 3 months of completion of the study.

The personal information made available to the researcher(s)/gatekeeper(s) will only be used for the advancement of this research project as indicated and for the purpose as described in this permission letter. The researcher(s)/gatekeeper(s) must take all appropriate precautionary measures to protect the personal information given to him/her/them in good faith and it must not be passed on to third parties. The dissemination of research instruments through the use of electronic mail should strictly be through blind copying, so as to protect the participants' right of privacy. The researcher hereby indemnifies UNISA from any claim or action arising from or due to the researcher's breach of his/her information protection obligations.

Note: *The reference number **2021_RPC_003** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants and the Research Permission Subcommittee.*

We would like to wish you well in your research undertaking.

Kind regards,



Dr Retha Visagie – Deputy Chairperson
Email: visagrg@unisa.ac.za, Tel: (012) 429-2478

Prof Lessing Labuschagne – Chairperson
Email: llabus@unisa.ac.za, Tel: (012) 429-6368

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Appendix B1: Example of Email Requesting Academics to Participate in My PhD Study

Dear X

I would like to invite you to participate in my research study entitled 'Investigating the means of legitimation of English literary studies: a case study of a curriculum at a South African university'. The aim of this research is to better understand the disciplinary practices of English literary studies. My PhD research is part of the field of the sociology of education, which is concerned with reflecting upon and improving higher education around the world. I include the abstract of my research proposal below and would be happy to answer any questions about my study.

The research will be undertaken through interviews and document analysis (of study material and student essays). Your participation in the research is anonymous and your identity will not be revealed. The collection of this data will require between one to two hours of your time (about 1 hour for an interview, with the possibility of a second follow-up interview). All interviews will be conducted online.

If you agree to participate, I will explain in more detail what would be expected of you and provide you with any information you need to understand the research. These guidelines would include potential risks, benefits, and your rights as a participant. This study has been approved by the Ethics Committees of both Rhodes University and UNISA. I attach the letters of ethical approval and permission to conduct research.

Participation in this research is voluntary and a positive response to this letter of invitation does not oblige you to take part in this research. To participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form to confirm that you understand and agree to the conditions, prior to any interviews commencing. Please note that you have the right to withdraw at any given time during the study. My supervisors are Professor Sioux McKenna and Doctor Thando Njovane, and their email addresses are s.mckenna@ru.ac.za and t.njovane@ru.ac.za. Thank you for your time, and I hope that you will respond favourably to my request.

Yours sincerely,

Retha

Abstract

This study will use Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) to investigate what is legitimated in an English literature curriculum at the University of South Africa (UNISA) across three years of undergraduate study. The purpose of this analysis is, firstly, to make the disciplinary practices of English literary studies more explicit, which could inform pedagogy aimed at enabling epistemological access to the discipline. Secondly, the study will draw on LCT tools to reflect on the coherence of the current curriculum and make recommendations regarding the facilitation of cumulative learning. Lastly, making the basis for legitimacy (the ways of being and knowing that are valued) in the UNISA English literature curriculum more explicit for both the lecturers and the students can facilitate a decolonial critique of the curriculum.

Appendix B2: Example of Follow-up Email upon a Favourable Response from an Academic to Participate in the Study

Dear X

Thank you. I would very much value you input.

The questions that I will ask in the interview relate to the discipline of English literary studies in general; the UNISA English literature curriculum; and your own experiences of the modules that you teach on. I will make use of pseudonyms in my thesis (and any resulting publications) to preserve the anonymity of my research participants and will avoid providing identifying information.

Because UNISA is a uniquely positioned Higher Education institution in South Africa, it will not be possible to preserve the anonymity of the institution. This was made clear to UNISA in my research application, which they approved. This means that, while I will make use of pseudonyms to preserve the identity of my research participants, readers will be aware that my research participants are academics in the Department of English Studies. It is important to note that, while the study may end up critiquing aspects of the UNISA English literature curriculum, the study aims to bolster rather than harm the department and institution as the study aims to promote student success through equitable access to knowledge.

I am attaching the informed consent form. Please feel free to ask me questions if anything has not been adequately explained yet. Once you feel confident that you are fully informed, could you please sign the document and return it to me? Please also let me know what date and time would suit you for an interview?

Best wishes,

Retha

Appendix B3: Example of Informed Consent Document for Academics

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Project Title:	Investigating the means of legitimation of English literary studies: a case study of a curriculum at a South African university
Researcher:	Retha Knoetze
Supervisors:	Professor Sioux McKenna & Dr Thando Njovane

Participation Information

This PhD study looks at the curriculum of English literary studies. It is concerned with how the curriculum is structured and on what basis students succeed in their studies. Curriculum research, such as this, is central to the broad field known as the sociology of education. This field allows us to reflect upon and improve the ways in which higher education functions around the world.

Before collecting data, the researcher, Retha Knoetze, will chat a bit more about the purpose of the study and will happily answer any questions you may have. Once you are confident that you are fully informed, you are requested to complete and sign this document to indicate the following:

- I understand the purpose of the research study and my involvement in it
- I understand the risks and benefits of participating in this research study
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research study at any stage
- I understand my participation in this research study is voluntary
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will remain anonymous and no reference will be made to me by name or student number or other identifying characteristic
- I understand that interviews and document analysis may be used
- I understand and agree that the interviews will be recorded electronically
- I understand that I will be given the opportunity to read and comment on the transcribed interview notes

• I confirm that I am not participating in this study for financial gain

Information Explanation
The above information was explained to me by: Retha Knoetze
The above information was explained to me in English and I am in command of this language

Voluntary Consent	
I, hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the above-mentioned research.	
_____ UNISA academic	Date: / /

Investigator Declaration	
I, Retha Knoetze, declare that I have explained all the participant information to the participant and have truthfully answered all questions ask me by the participant.	
_____ Researcher	Date: / /

Appendix C1: Example of Email Requesting Students to Participate in My Study

Dear student

I am busy with my PhD studies and I would love it if you were willing to participate in my data collection.

My study is entitled: 'Investigating the means of legitimation of English literary studies: a case study of a curriculum at a South African university'. My research is in the field known as the sociology of education, which is concerned with improving higher education around the world. I also hope that my research will help to inform decisions about how we design and teach modules in the Department of English Studies.

If you agree to participate, you would be anonymous and your identity will not be revealed to anyone.

The data collection will require between one to two hours (about 1 hour for an online interview via Microsoft Teams, with the possibility of a second follow-up interview). I will be asking you to share your experiences of any of the following English literary studies modules that you have taken: ENG1501; ENG2602; ENG2603; ENG3703; ENG3704 and ENG3705.

Participation in this research is voluntary and even if you say yes now, you can change your mind at any stage.

If you are willing to chat to me about your learning experiences, please click on this link and fill out the Google form. I will then contact you to find out when it will suit you to chat to me.

The interview will start by going through a consent form which outlines the potential risks, benefits, and your rights as a participant and to confirm that you understand and agree to the interview before we start.

This study has been approved by the Ethics Committees of both Rhodes University and UNISA (as you can see from the attached letters in case you're interested). My supervisors are Professor Sioux McKenna and Doctor Thando Njovane, and their email addresses are s.mckenna@ru.ac.za and t.njovane@ru.ac.za.

Thank you for reading this letter. If you're willing to participate, please complete this Google form.

Yours sincerely,

Retha Knoetze (PhD student)

Appendix C2: Example of Follow-up Email upon a Favourable Response from a Student to Participate in the Study

Dear X

Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in my PhD research. I am hopeful that this research will benefit future UNISA students as well as students from other universities. I look forward to chatting to you.

In the interview, I will ask you about your experiences studying any of the following English literature modules: ENG1501, ENG2602, ENG2603, ENG3703, ENG3704 and ENG3705.

I attach an informed consent form to this email which we will fill out together before we commence with the interview. You will see that you have the option to allow me to make use of your academic record and/or your marked third year assignments as part of the study. This will assist me in providing a fuller picture of each student that I interview but, as with the interview, this is completely voluntary. Any information that you give permission for me to make use of in the study will be used anonymously.

I would like to find out what day and time would suit you for an online interview. I provide the times that I am available below:

Mondays:

Anytime from 08:00 to 21:00

Tuesdays:

08:00 to 10:00 and

13:00 to 17:00

Wednesdays:

08:00 to 12:00 and

16:00 to 21:00

Thursdays:

11:00 to 18:00

Fridays

13:00 to 18:00

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Best wishes,

Retha Knoetze

Appendix C3: Example of Informed Consent Document for Students

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Project Title:	Investigating the means of legitimation of English literary studies: a case study of a curriculum at a South African university
Researcher:	Retha Knoetze
Supervisors:	Professor Sioux McKenna & Dr Thando Njovane

Participation Information

This PhD study looks at the curriculum of English literary studies. It is concerned with how the curriculum is structured and on what basis students succeed in their studies. Curriculum research, such as this, is central to the broad field known as the sociology of education. This field allows us to reflect upon and improve the ways in which higher education functions around the world.

Before collecting data, the researcher, Retha Knoetze, will chat a bit more about the purpose of the study and will happily answer any questions you may have. Once you are confident that you are fully informed, you are requested to complete and sign this document to indicate the following:

- I understand the purpose of the research study and my involvement in it
- I understand the risks and benefits of participating in this research study
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research study at any stage
- I understand my participation in this research study is voluntary
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will remain anonymous and no reference will be made to me by name or student number or other identifying characteristic
- I understand that interviews and document analysis may be used
- I understand and agree that the interviews will be recorded electronically

- I understand that I will be given the opportunity to read and comment on the transcribed interview notes
- I confirm that I am not participating in this study for financial gain

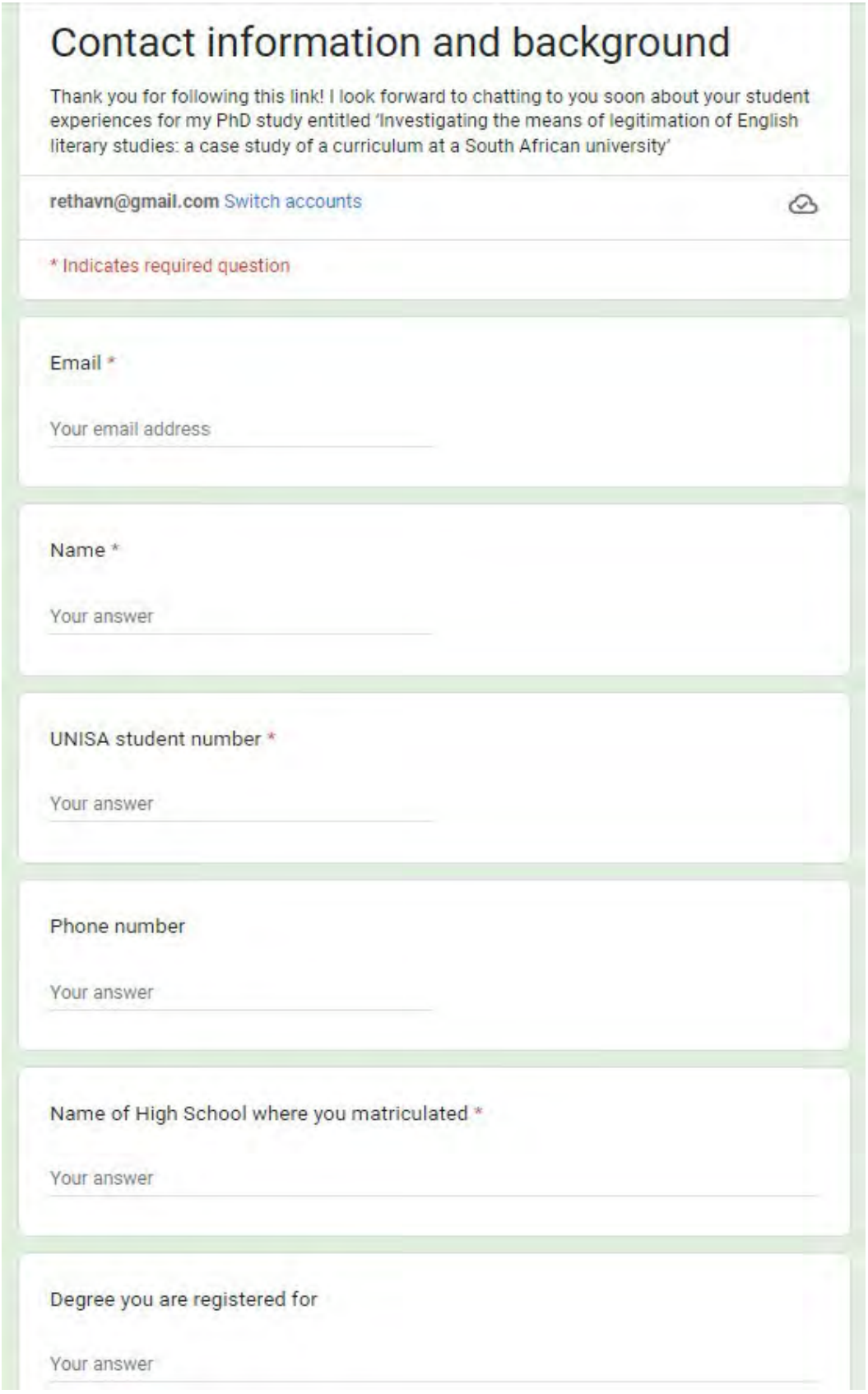
OPTIONAL (please tick the applicable option by double-clicking inside the square and selecting 'Checked' under 'Default value')	
The researcher, Retha Knoetze, may make use of my academic record as part of her research study:	
☐ Yes	☐ No
The researcher may make use of my assignments submitted for ENG3703; ENG3704 and ENG3705 in 2021:	
☐ Yes	☐ No

Information Explanation
The above information was explained to me by: Retha Knoetze
The above information was explained to me in English and I am in command of this language

Voluntary Consent	
I, hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the above-mentioned research.	
_____ UNISA student	Date: / /

Investigator Declaration	
I, Retha Knoetze, declare that I have explained all the participant information to the participant and have truthfully answered all questions ask me by the participant.	
_____ Researcher	Date: / /

Appendix C4: Google Form that Students Were Requested to Complete



Contact information and background

Thank you for following this link! I look forward to chatting to you soon about your student experiences for my PhD study entitled 'Investigating the means of legitimation of English literary studies: a case study of a curriculum at a South African university'

rethavn@gmail.com Switch accounts

* Indicates required question

Email *

Your email address

Name *

Your answer

UNISA student number *

Your answer

Phone number

Your answer

Name of High School where you matriculated *

Your answer

Degree you are registered for

Your answer